



Alderman Diane with The Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety

## **November 2008 Newsletter**

### **Alderman Diane Colley-Urquhart**

#### **STOP Marihuana Grow-ops Coalition Receives Excellence Award**

The efforts of our Calgary based coalition were rewarded this month as the Minister of Municipal Affairs recognized our years of hardwork with an Excellence Award in the "Safe Communities" category of the 2008 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence.

The award is presented to those practices in municipalities across Alberta that demonstrate excellence and will be beneficial to the overall practice of local government in Alberta. The STOP Marihuana Grow-ops Coalition has been recognized as an example other municipalities can learn from to improve their own communities and local government. This year's awards were presented at the fall conventions of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA), and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC).

This award reinforces the fact that the STOP Marihuana Grow-ops Coalition is an excellent example of a community based initiative where stakeholders have come together and turned a problem that has traditionally been handled by the police into a community problem. Our coalition recognizes that the proliferation of marihuana grow operations is a complex, multi-faceted problem that requires an innovative problem-solving approach that must not only focus on seizure, but also on prevention, regulation and supply reduction. The STOP Marihuana Grow-ops Coalition is the first action-oriented initiative of its kind in Canada. The strength of our approach has been to build the Coalition and share its model and learning's with other jurisdictions not only in Alberta, but across Canada, the first of which was the City of Edmonton.

#### **Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods**

This award falls on the heels of the Province's announcement of the new Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods (SCAN) legislation. This powerful new legislation has come as a direct result of the work of our Coalition and will give citizens a chance to combat illegal activities associated with gangs, drugs and prostitution in their neighbourhoods.

The SCAN act creates a new sheriffs branch within the Solicitor General's Office to investigate public complaints about properties used for illegal activities. The sheriffs will investigate all public complaints and will be given the authority to close dangerous properties for up to 90 days if necessary.

The new legislation follows similar legislation that has been enacted in several other provinces including Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The act enables the SCAN investigative unit to mediate, investigate or apply to the courts for a Community Safety Order that requires individuals to vacate and/or close the property. Any subsequent criminal investigations are given over to the police to investigate.

The SCAN program is a powerful tool for citizens to get involved and help tackle crime that plague our communities.

## **Your Community Association**

Community association volunteers are very important to their communities and to the City of Calgary as a whole. Volunteers are the key to a community. Successful communities are those with active memberships and Board of Directors. Residents should be motivated to join and participate in their community associations which exists for the community's benefit. By joining your community association, you have a voice in your community, become aware of planning and development issues, special events, as well as a great social network.

**As always, you can contact my office regarding this or any other civic matter at 268-1624, by email at [dcolley@calgary.ca](mailto:dcolley@calgary.ca). Alternatively, you can contact '311.'**