



Diane serves up flapjacks and sausages at Hull Child & Family Services / Woodcreek Community Stampede Breakfast

September 2005 Newsletter

**Alderman
Diane Colley-Urquhart**

I hope that all of you were able to take some time away from the routines of work and home to spend some time relaxing in the sun. For many of you, the erratic back to back rainstorms of June and early July caused unexpected and unforeseen challenges and stress and again Calgarians came together to help one another through this historic level of devastation in the city and throughout the province. Some native Calgarians have told me that that the last time they recalled similar rainfall levels in the city was 40 years ago, even though Environment Canada considered it a one-in-200 year event. Calgary alone sustained over \$49 million in damages, hitting on average, one in ten homes, with the Insurance Bureau of Canada estimating that losses could top \$400 million in Alberta. The City of Calgary sustained significant damage to numerous bridge and pedestrian bridges over the Elbow and Bow Rivers, and Nose Creek. It is anticipated that all of the required bridge repair work will be completed by September 15th at a cost of between \$500,000 and \$1 million, to be funded by the Province's emergency relief program.

COUNCIL IMPLEMENTS AISH LOW-INCOME TRANSIT PASS

On June 27, 2005, Council approved a new monthly low-income transit pass for AISH recipients under 65 years of age that began on August 1st. A low-income transit pass for a larger proportion of low-income residents based on Statistics Canada 75% of Low Income Cut Off (LICO), will be implemented on January 1, 2006. The price of these monthly passes has been set at \$35.

To be eligible for the AISH low-income transit pass, recipients must be Calgary residents between the ages of 18 and 64 and must be the AISH recipient, that is, you must provide proof that you are registered with the Province to receive AISH. Spouses and children of AISH recipients do not qualify for a pass at this time, however, once the eligibility process for low income recipients is in place, those family members may be eligible for the low-income transit pass on January 1st, 2006.

Applications must submit a completed application form and a copy of a current AISH Health Benefits Card to Calgary Transit that is available through The City's website at

www.calgarytransit.com, or by phone at 262-1000, or picked up at the Calgary Transit Customer Service Centre at 224 – 7 Avenue SW, and at the Government of Alberta AISH local office. Eligible recipients will receive a letter of confirmation which will be required to purchase the AISH transit pass at the Customer Service Centre on 7th Avenue. Monthly renewal must take place in person at the Customer Service Centre as well. ACCESS Calgary customers can make arrangements to purchase their passes and renewals through The City's On-Line Store or through the mail. Customers who are unable to purchase their monthly pass in person at the Customer Service Centre can make arrangements to have a caregiver do it on their behalf. Please call the Customer Service Centre at 262-1000 to more information and to make arrangements.

STOP MGOs! CALGARY COALITION UNVEILS ITS WORKPLAN

After many months of review and analysis of the problem and synthesizing many possible solutions, the Coalition has produce and endorsed a comprehensive workplan that outlines all of the strategic initiatives that will be their focus over the next 3 years. The workplan was launched at the Crime Stoppers International Training Conference in August, and the Coalition members were joined by Deputy Chief Rick Hanson and The Honorable Harvey Cenaiko, Solicitor General of Alberta, both strong supporters of the STOP MGOs! Calgary Coalition and the work we are doing. As a result of the partnerships and information sharing within the Coalition, some initiatives have already been implemented. These include:

- Development of an internal policy within The City of Calgary Planning & Building Department that will require the Calgary Health Region Order, an air quality report from an environmental consultant, and a cost estimate to remediate a grow op property prior to an occupancy permit being issued.
- A Safety Team has been assembled consisting of an electrical inspector and a building inspector to accompany police, fire, and the Calgary Health Region when a grow op is taken down so they are aware first hand, of the structural and electrical modifications to prevent cover-up during remediation efforts.
- A manual for first aid responders has been developed and adopted by Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec as the standard for dealing with MGOs. The manual also identifies a standard of Personal Protective Equipment required to enter an MGO.
- A training program for first responders attending MGOs has been developed and is currently being delivered to Fire, EMS, Police and Health Regions in Calgary and throughout the province. Currently this program is on the Provincial Fire Commissioners website and is one of the top 10 downloads in North America from this website.

A large part of the workplan involves a public education and awareness component, and we are currently seeking funding that will allow us to hire a Communications Manager who will develop a communications plan that includes community awareness seminars, a website, collection and publishing of community impact statements, e-Learning opportunities, a reference library as well as brochures and presentation materials.

As always, you can contact my office regarding this or any other civic matter at 268-1624, by email at dcolley@calgary.ca, or through my website, www.aldermandiane.ca. Alternatively, you can contact "311".