



Survey response overwhelming

We had an overwhelming response to our first ever resident survey. We received 735 surveys back from the 2,100 households they were sent to. Local media has had a chance to comment on some of the numbers, and I thought I would add some of my thoughts about what they mean and where we are headed next.



First off, having more than 30% of residents respond to a survey is unheard of. Thank you for taking the time to have your voice heard! In the past, we have held resident meetings, also known as ratepayers' forums. While the name of the meeting is a bit outdated, the attendance was worse. Sometimes there were more councillors than residents at the meetings! When something doesn't work, it's time to try something new. We found out a few things about the surveys as well, such as not to use acronyms in the future (we assumed everyone knew what FCSS meant, for example).

The survey brought forth your opinions loud and clear. For example, many residents had concerns with the Internet. Many households were not able to access anything except dial up. I think this really is a quality of life issue, especially for children who now use the Internet as a research tool for school. But more importantly, we

heard how poor cell phone coverage was in many areas, which brings to light issues with Telus' land line service as well as emergency situations. We have formed a task force of three councillors and staff to look at how to improve phone coverage and Internet access. The task force will meet later this month to come up with an action plan. For those communication business owners reading this, don't worry, we are not trying to get into your business. We just want to find a way to partner with you to serve every resident of Woodlands County.

We also heard many concerns about roadways. Surprisingly, many of the comments were that we were grading the roads TOO MUCH! While the complaints and suggestions were varied, our entire council will be hitting the roads across the county before the snow comes to look at the issues, and see what we can do differently to improve.

The list goes on with your concerns, and council looks forward to looking deeper into each of the issues, as I have touched on only a few. We also look forward in the future to using the survey as a report card to see where we are improving and where we still need to work harder. Thanks again for your participation! By the way FCSS stands for Family and Community Support Services.

Please feel free to contact me at jim.rennie@woodlands.ab.ca or at the county office at 780-778-8400 with any questions, concerns or ideas.