



Mayor's address on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the UFA in Bawlf

July 23, 2008

Ladies and gentlemen, I am thrilled to have been asked to say a few words in honour of the Bawlf UFA's 40th anniversary today. You know, my family and I spend so much money here in any given year, I thought that, when head office called me, I thought it was to offer us a partnership in the business! Instead, it was to ask me to speak...

But you know what? The reality is that, if you live in Bawlf or any other place not named Calgary or Edmonton, you have to drive to get places, and I don't begrudge the Hecks or the Yuhas a single penny of what we have to spend at the UFA on our transportation needs. The money we spend here goes to support a treasured local business run by two highly-respected Bawlf families, and the truth with local businesses is that we either use 'em or lose 'em. Local businesses are critical components in our rural communities: they provide us with choice, they provide us with convenience and, with the UFA in particular, they provide us with a place to gather and catch up with our neighbours. That makes the UFA a real integral part of many of our lives around here.

But there's more than that in terms of the UFA's role in the community. When's the last time any of you attended a community function or fundraiser in or around Bawlf, where you haven't seen donations of money, items, or time from the Hecks and the Yuhas? This is, of course, largely true for all our businesses in Bawlf, but we're here today to celebrate the fact that the Hecks and the Yuhas have not only been doing business in Bawlf for the past 40 years, but have been giving back and making this community a better place for that whole time as well.

Businesses like the UFA and people like the Hecks and Yuhas are the reason I ever left the city and made rural Alberta my home in the first place and, when we moved here, it didn't take long for us to find out how right we were. When my former wife, Laura, and I moved here in 1995, we took possession of our house several weeks before we moved in so that we could do some cleaning and preparation (and, if you know which house it was and remember what it looked like in the mid-1990s, you'll know that it needed plenty of cleaning and preparation!). Anyway, I was still in Edmonton, but Laura and her friend, Heather, were doing some of that work. The first day, when they turned the water on, they discovered that one of the pipes was broken, which caused a small flood in the basement. They didn't happen to have a mop or a squeegee yet, so Heather decided that the UFA might be her best bet to borrow some items of that sort. Sure enough, Greg was there that day, and cheerfully lent her exactly what was needed. Heather came back to the house, telling Laura how kind *and cute* the fellow at the UFA was...

Since I arrived here 13 years ago, which is less than one-third of the time these folks have been in business, much has changed in Bawlf. Aside from the fact that I myself experienced a change in the wife department nine years ago, the Village is not the same as it was in 1995. There is all sorts of new development, a new hall, many new people, and many old friends who are no longer with us. In many ways, it's a new era. Yet, through all those changes, we've been able to count on the Hecks and the Yuhas to be there when we needed them, not only as businesspeople, but as fellow community members, as neighbours, and as friends. If anyone doubts how much they mean to this community, think back to a few years ago, when we almost lost the UFA. The number of people who came out to voice their displeasure and show their support for the Hecks and the Yuhas left no doubt about the role that this business and these people play in our lives.

Ed and Elaine, Greg and Jody, congratulations from the Village of Bawlf and all Village residents. You are among the finest of the many reasons why we who live here are proud to call this community our home.