



Mayor's Introductory remarks at the
Village of Bawlf Community Sustainability Consultation
June 23, 2009

Ladies and gentlemen, as that old motivational poster says, “This is the first day of the rest of your life” and it is certainly the first day of the rest of your lives as citizens of this village.

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedules to come here this evening and offer your opinions and suggestions as to what it will take to make our community strong and sustainable in the long term. Our purpose here this evening is to interact in order to forge a vision and a plan that expresses where we see ourselves in the years to come.

Not only is this process a good idea in and of itself (and long overdue in Bawlf), it is mandatory in that any municipality not completing this plan by the end of the year would cease to be eligible for certain key Provincial grants, and Provincial grants are critical to our well-being.

“Sustainability” is a kind of nebulous – or “airy-fairy” – idea because it’s difficult to know on any given day whether we, as a community, are more or less successful at it than we were a week, a month, or a year ago. However, the place to start figuring that out is by drawing up a plan. They have all sorts of sayings about the consequences of not planning, but my personal favourite is the one that says, “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will take you there.”

As you know from the surveys you have already received, this plan will focus on five key dimensions of any community: the economy, the environment, cultural life, social life, and governance. In other words, the question is: what do we have to do financially, environmentally, culturally, socially, and politically in order not only to scrape by and survive in the long term, but to *thrive*. We want our grandchildren to be able to say, not just “Yeah, Bawlf is still here”, but rather that “Bawlf is still here and it’s an *amazing* place to live, work and play.”

What we will do here tonight is begin writing a story of Bawlf, not of what was, but of what *could be*. It is the start of a narrative that will find common cause among us and describe how we can forge key connections to each other as we journey together from generation to generation.

The good news is that we don’t have to do it alone. Camrose County has seconded a MS co-ordinator from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association in order to prepare such a plan at the County level and to assist all the municipalities in Camrose County to prepare our own plans. Dallas Dyson is our MS co-ordinator and he and CDSS Outreach Co-ordinator and Village of Bawlf resident, Clarence Hastings, will take the lead for the rest of the evening. Thank you again for caring enough about the future of Bawlf to be here this evening.