

Another new business opened in Bow Island in December. After several months of renovations, **Discount Plus** opened in the corner space of Pinto Plaza downtown, and we welcome them to the community! It is also a pleasure to welcome **Back Forty Foods** to Bow Island. The Sindhu family, who operate grocery stores in Cardston and Foremost have purchased Len's Foods on Main Street. The store is open while they are busy with renovations and appreciate your patience while they give the store a facelift. Len's has been a mainstay of our business community for a couple of generations, and we welcome this new version to Bow Island.

The Bow Island and District Health Foundation was beneficiary of the very successful **ATB** silent auction held at the Bow Island and Foremost branches in November and December. Congratulations to the staff at both locations that organized the donated items and raised over \$20,000! The Health Foundation fundraises to support local healthcare, whether for needed equipment, training for healthcare professionals or community initiatives. Foundation volunteers have been working for the benefit of our community for almost 30 years and, I am sure, are very grateful for the support of the ATB staff, the donors and the bidders.

Last year, Council created the **Safe Streets and Community Protection Committee** to collaboratively address crime prevention and enhance safety measures within our community and ensure the well-being and security of all residents. The Committee intends to foster cooperation between community members, local authorities, and relevant stakeholders, through proactive initiatives to keep Bow Island and area safe. Last week they created a Facebook page that has attracted over 200 followers so far. This page is intended to provide the public with helpful tips on making ourselves and our property safer as well as warnings about scams and other criminal activity. Check it out.

The Town of Bow Island **Mass Notification** system is operational, and everyone is encouraged to sign up. You can select the type of notification you wish to receive as well as the method. Go to bowisland.com and click on the Mass Notification icon for more information and to get registered. The previous Bow Island app was a link to our website and is no longer available.

As outlined in last month's Note, 2024 was a busy year for development in Bow Island. The Town issued 54 development permits last year, totaling \$11.5 million dollars, as well as 162 business licenses. Current estimates show our growth in residential property at 2.8% and non-residential at 1.5%, based on completed and occupied properties as of November. As the new residential and commercial projects finish in the months ahead, the growth rate for 2025 should be higher yet. The operating and capital budgets are nearing completion, and we will see what the Provincial budget has in store for us before the tax rate is finalized.

After much discussion, the Town has signed a new **Joint Fire Services Agreement** with the County. I appreciate the patience of our Firefighters as we worked to get clarity on a deal that would be fair and workable for all concerned. Like many agreements it might not be perfect, but the intent is to make every effort to work with it and if necessary, make improvements along the way. I am sure our Firefighters will continue to provide great service and dedication to Town and County residents, as they always have. At the same time, Council has passed a **Regional Emergency Management bylaw**, whereby the Town will be a member of a Regional Emergency Management Agency along with the County and the Village of Foremost. We recognize that in the event of a major emergency or disaster that any or all of the three could be impacted and this will be a way to share resources, from planning to response. Collaboration with the neighbouring municipalities is good for all of us and I look forward to both of these agreements being successful.

2025 marks the 50th year that Bow Island has had a library! The Susan Andersen Library has grown and come a long way from the days it operated in a small space downtown. The staff and board are planning events throughout the year to celebrate this important milestone. *Congratulations and Happy Birthday!*

I heard a while ago that **Diane Gilbertson** had retired after **50 years** of service as a lab technician at the Bow Island Health Centre. That is some pretty exceptional service to our community, and I thank her and wish her all the best. Now she will just be on call for her irrigation customers.

Stay Safe and Stay Warm Everyone.



Mayor Gordon Reynolds