

2014 YEAR IN REVIEW



OUR VISION

Empress:

engaging, balanced, connected

As an engaging community, we see an Empress that is...

- ❖ Attractive and pleasing to the mind and eye — a Village defined, in part, by both:
 - * Its natural and physical beauty (from the River Valleys, to built forms, to open spaces); and
 - * Our engaging residents — their caring, friendly, courteous, generous, respectful nature.
- ❖ A place with a desirable personality that can attract and hold one's attention — a Village that is charming, appealing and a model of civility.
- ❖ A place that seeks to fully involve people in Village life — an engaged population that contributes to matters of civic interest, enjoys our programs and amenities, participates in our celebrations and fully experiences all that Empress has to offer.
- ❖ Genuine, vibrant, safe and secure — a Village that values its roots, embraces diversity and provides for an exceptional quality of life.

As a balanced community, we see an Empress that is...

- ❖ In harmony — different aspects of the Village pleasingly combined to create an enriched whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.
- ❖ Well planned and provides for an appropriate mix of land uses that contribute to a clearly defined sense of place.
- ❖ Characterized by a willingness and ability to exhibit good judgment and prudence
— with decisions made in the collective interest of residents and that respect a bigger picture, Village-wide view.
- ❖ Meeting the needs of residents of all life-cycle stages and that offers a range of activities to address diverse interests.
- ❖ Tradition-based, but not tradition-bound.

As a connected community, we see an Empress that is...

- ❖ Safely, effectively and efficiently moving people and goods — and enhancing travel to, from and within the community.
- ❖ Prepared for the 21st century — fully maximizing the use of information technology and electronic communication to serve resident, business and community-wide interests.
- ❖ Characterized by a shared sense of concern about and pride in our Village — where people choose to join together in common cause.
- ❖ Plugged-in to societal trends and issues of the day — an influential contributor to regional and provincial affairs.

The Goals

On the basis of this Vision, five goals have been established. They are:

1. A responsible, cost effective and accountable local government;
2. Well managed growth, well planned spaces;
3. A safe, livable and healthy community;
4. A diverse and sustainable economy; and,
5. A thriving natural environment

The above goals are intended to provide the basis for the Directions and Initiatives that are intended to implement the Vision

CORE BUSINESS ONE: A responsible, cost effective and accountable local government

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the website for the Village of Empress. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://villageofempress.com/>. The website features a collage of images and text. At the top, a wooden sign reads "VILLAGE OF Empress" and a road sign indicates the "ALBERTA SASKATCHEWAN" border. Below the sign, a navigation menu lists "Home Council Residents Business Visitors Gallery". A central image shows a field of golden wheat with a dirt road, accompanied by a text box that reads: "The Village of Empress is situated on the West side of the Alberta/Saskatchewan border and serves as a center to the surrounding farming and ranching community of 1,500 people. It has been a focal point for many activities in the area. It is also at the geographical center of many large cities in Western Canada: Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon and Regina." Below this, a "News & Events" section includes the text: "To keep up to date on the events happening in Empress, check this page on a regular basis." A "Our Partners" section features the "Canadian Badlands" logo. The main content area is titled "Village of Empress Open House" and includes the text: "POSTED ON DECEMBER 1, 2014 UNDER: COUNCIL NEWS Council moved to hold an open house for Empress and area residents on December 8, 2014 at the Empress Community Hall from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Council will be reviewing their 2014 Business Plan and the 10 year Municipal Infrastructure Capital Plan. They are looking for the communities input on priority areas". The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the system clock as 5:15 PM on 12/2/2014.

Goal 1: Establish priorities that support the municipal service requirements of the majority of local residents

Strategies

- ❖ Ensure that the services the Village provides are reviewed annually.
- ❖ Ensure that the cost effectiveness of service delivery is a priority when making decisions on how services are to be delivered.
- ❖ Ensure the effective and regular communication of municipal objectives to staff for implementation.
- ❖ Ensure that municipal staff is able to effectively and efficiently deliver required municipal services.
- ❖ Ensure that municipal human resources needs are factored into decisions on what services are to be provided and how.

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ Review all bylaws and policies currently in practice
- ❖ Review current rates on all services and move to cost recovery.
- ❖ Bimonthly staff meetings to review new bylaws, policies.

Accomplishments

- ❖ Bylaws reviewed and updated as required.
- ❖ Cemetery rates increased
- ❖ Water base rate consumption reduced
- ❖ Bimonthly staff meetings

Goal 2: Engage in transparent and accountable decision making processes and actions

Strategies

- ❖ Use technology to expand/enhance the delivery of online services.
- ❖ Enhance communication between the government and its citizens.
- ❖ Educate the public about what is within and outside of the Villages direct control/sphere of influence.
- ❖ Increase the use of electronic communication to ensure that residents and business owners are aware of municipal opportunities and initiatives.
- ❖ Encourage the community to become more actively involved in civic affairs.
- ❖ Engage newcomers to the Village to participate in community activities and the municipal decision making process
- ❖ Encourage openness in the decision making process
- ❖ Enhance the customer service function to respond to the needs of the community

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ New website developed to enable staff to keep updated
- ❖ Place Council agendas, minutes and meetings dates online
- ❖ Advertise all events in the community and region

Accomplishments

- ❖ New website launched in August
- ❖ Open House
- ❖ Placed local residents on Boards and committees
- ❖ Formed a new Cemetery Committee

Goal 3: Properly fund municipal services and community infrastructure through a combination of fiscally responsible operating budgets, capital budgets, effective reserves and reserve funding, and partnering

Strategies

- ❖ Ensure that fiscally responsible operating and capital budgets are established and maintained on a yearly basis.
- ❖ Ensure the maintenance and effective management of reserve funds
- ❖ Ensure the efficient management of capital assets and municipal services to meet existing and future demands
- ❖ Enhance communication and coordination with the region and other levels of government in the provision of services.
- ❖ Require that an annual report be prepared to provide an overview on how the municipality's objectives have been met and how funds were budgeted, allocated and spent.

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ Budget developed and reviewed in November
- ❖ Budget to actual report for Council at all Council meetings
- ❖ Financial statement placed on website
- ❖ Review Capital Plan with Council

Accomplishments

- ❖ Financial Statements on website.
- ❖ Updating 10 year capital plan
- ❖ Monthly budget to actual reports to Council
- ❖ Capital Budget based on strategic plan and business plan priorities identified

Goal 4: Demonstrate leadership on matters that affect Empress

Strategies

- ❖ Participate fully in Region led exercises that are intended to maintain and enhance quality of life
- ❖ Engage other levels of government to ensure that the interests of Empress residents and business owners are known
- ❖ Ensure that Federal and Provincial programs that may benefit Empress are considered whenever possible.
- ❖ Ensure Empress's interests and needs are known at the Regional level.
- ❖ Continue local political and staff participation on Boards and Committees both within and outside the Empress Community.

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ Participate in SAMDA Economic Partnership meetings, AGM and initiatives.
- ❖ Participate in Palliser Economic Partnership meetings, AGM and initiatives
- ❖ Participate in Canadian Badlands AGM and initiatives.
- ❖ Participate in Palliser Regional Municipal Services for cost effective service delivery.
- ❖ Participate in Big Country Waste Management for cost effective service delivery
- ❖ Participate in Acadia Foundation for cost effective regional senior housing
- ❖ Participate in Big Country Medical/Dental Board for maintenance of cost effective essential services.
- ❖ Participate in Red Deer River Watershed Commission

Accomplishments

- ❖ Attend AUMA Conference and meet with Ministers
- ❖ Participate in the Alberta Rural Development Round table discussions and action plan development
- ❖ Participate in regional Boards to promote Empress
- ❖ Investigate opportunities for Empress
- ❖ Partner and Participate in the Empress Centennial

CORE BUSINESS TWO: Well managed growth, well planned spaces



Goal 1: Encourage the provision and maintenance of an appropriate mix of residential, commercial, industrial and recreational uses.

Strategies

- ❖ Encourage the development of a range of uses that will support Empress as a place to live, work and play
- ❖ Create a sense of civic identity and pride through a high standard of urban design for all new development
- ❖ Encourage the provision of a full range of housing opportunities for present and future residents of all ages and incomes
- ❖ Encourage infilling and intensification in the existing urban area
- ❖ Encourage the development of home based businesses in the area
- ❖ Maintain a reasonable amount of commercial and industrial land for future expansion
- ❖ Assure appropriate recreational and cultural opportunities for residents and visitors.

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ Facilitated Strategic Planning session with Council and staff
- ❖ Adopt an updated Land Use Bylaw
- ❖ Designate a mobile home park
- ❖ Advertise serviced land for sale in Empress on website
- ❖ Promote SAMDA and PEP websites and opportunities on website
- ❖ Review current facilities and forge partnerships with community organizations

Accomplishments

- ❖ Updated land use bylaw
- ❖ Village property advertised on website
- ❖ Work with local organizations

Goal 2: Encourage cost effective and timely municipal/community infrastructure development.

Strategies

- ❖ Encourage the efficient use of land to make the best use of infrastructure and services.
- ❖ Ensure that the village demonstrates leadership in the future urban expansion to ensure that new development is as cost effective as possible
- ❖ Ensure that appropriate financial plans and infrastructure strategies are in place before development occurs.

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ Adopt new Land Use Bylaw
- ❖ Develop new strategic plan
- ❖ Developed new website to promote opportunities
- ❖ 5 year capital infrastructure plan

Accomplishments

- ❖ Peter Fidler Park upgrade completed for centennial
- ❖ New Land Use Bylaw
- ❖ Advertising available serviced/unserved land on website for infilling
- ❖ Update the 10 year Municipal Yearly Capital Infrastructure Plan
-(Identifies projects and where funding will come from)

Goal 3: Encourage well timed service delivery.

Strategies

- ❖ Ensure that hard and soft service needs are identified up front and then appropriately prioritized and delivered either before or at the same time as new development.
- ❖ Encourage the development of public facilities in appropriate locations at the right time to meet the needs of present and future residents.
- ❖ Ensure that appropriate capital works forecasting/planning is done before the works are required.

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ Engineered assessments on hospital, water tower and new water sewer servicing for mobile home park
- ❖ Contract paving for streets in town
- ❖ Upgrade town shop, town office, centennial park power and P.F. shower house for extended life and operating efficiencies
- ❖ Look for quotes on Water park
- ❖ Partner with Ag. Society, and apply for grants to upgrade Community Hall

Accomplishments

- ❖ Engineered Assessments on Municipal Buildings
- ❖ Street Improvement -paving
- ❖ Village Office building stabilization
- ❖ Upgrade power at centennial park and Peter Fidler Park

CORE BUSINESS THREE: A safe, livable and healthy community.



Goal 1: Promote and facilitate active and healthy lifestyles and lifelong learning.

Strategies

- ❖ Encourage the establishments of a healthy community that is made up of an interconnected system of open spaces, walking trails, bicycle routes and natural heritage features.
- ❖ Facilitate involvement for people at different life cycle and physical stages and of varying social-economic status- including youth and senior oriented initiatives.
- ❖ Enhance leisure, cultural and educational opportunities/experiences that contribute to personal enjoyment, growth and development.
- ❖ Encourage the exploration of all partnership opportunities in the delivery of leisure/community/library services.
- ❖ Encourage the development of new partnerships and maintain existing partnerships and strategic alliances to encourage community ownership and responsibility
- ❖ Encourage residents to play an active role in the decision making process by participating on boards and committees.

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ Continue the partnership with Empress/Bindloss Ag. Society for delivery of recreational and educational opportunities
- ❖ Continue partnering with Marigold Library for library services.
- ❖ Advertise all events on website.
- ❖ Include residents on SAMDA board, Library Board, FCSS Board,
- ❖ Advertise Train Museum, Peter Fidler Park walking trails, bird watching opportunities, and all events (i.e. art tour, apple festival, curling/sturling, ball, Canada day, Christmas event, etc.

Accomplishments

- ❖ Support Ag. Society Arena operations
- ❖ Support Marigold Library
- ❖ Place events on website
- ❖ Formed a cemetery committee with Community members, as well as placing community members on the Library, SAMDA and FCSS Boards

Goal 2: Maximize community safety and security.

Strategies

- ❖ Encourage the development of fire service facilities that provide the maximum benefit to all residents/businesses
- ❖ Enhance relationships with regional emergency service providers in adjoining jurisdictions so that cost effective and timely emergency response and support functions are maintained
- ❖ Ensure the preparation and implementation of comprehensive emergency plans
- ❖ Encourage the establishment of public facilities and open spaces that are designed to be safe and which provide for appropriate emergency support services and/or equipment, lighting, visibility and for public surveillance/open sight lines.

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ RCMP attend at Council meeting.
- ❖ Meet with Special Areas to discuss new Fire Hall
- ❖ Purchase additional Fire equipment.

Accomplishments

- ❖ Meeting with RCMP and quarterly RCMP reports
- ❖ New Firefighting Equipment purchased
- ❖ Partner with Special Areas for training

Goal 3: Protect and enhance our heritage, identity and character.

Strategies

- ❖ Respect and honor the Village's rich history
- ❖ Promote the development of strong arts and cultural community that builds upon local knowledge, history and experience.
- ❖ Protect, maintain and enhance the open space character of lands outside of the urban area for enjoyment by present and future generations
- ❖ Encourage key community events that help shape identity and contribute to community spirit
- ❖ Establish and maintain a community identity that sets Empress apart from others through the holding of community events, promotion and branding.
- ❖ Encourage the development of public spaces that foster community involvement and interaction
- ❖ Build on the strengths of our urban and rural character
- ❖ Foster civic pride by recognizing the contribution that cultural heritage resources make to the rural and urban fabric
- ❖ Encourage economic activities in the area that support the values and character of our region
- ❖ Recognize and value diversity

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ Participate in the Special Areas Cultural Center task force
- ❖ Strike a committee to research the possibility of a music school
- ❖ Partner in Empress Centennial celebrations.
- ❖ Advertise all events on website, facebook, twitter etc.

Accomplishments

- ❖ Formed the Empress & District Fine Arts Summer School Society
- ❖ Successful Centennial Celebrations
- ❖ S.A. Cultural Center Feasibility Study completed
- ❖ Bird, Flower, and Wildlife Photo Gallery on Website

CORE BUSINESS FOUR: A diverse and sustainable economy



Goal 1: Attract and retain employers that provide a range of employment opportunities and assessment growth

Strategy

- ❖ Leverage Empress's high quality of life and community identity to attract investment
- ❖ Encourage the development of the business infrastructure required to attract uses that will contribute to the quality of life on the village.
- ❖ Work with other levels of government to encourage additional investment in Empress
- ❖ Work with existing businesses to establish initiatives to attract additional investment
- ❖ Continue to encourage the availability of an appropriate supply of land for future employment uses.

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ Update Website
- ❖ Participate in Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor

Accomplishments

- ❖ Website developed
- ❖ Village profile developed for EATC, PEP and Village use
- ❖ Leverage Canadian Badlands website & promotional materials

Goal 2: Encourage the private sector to meet the retail needs of a growing population in a reasonable timely manner.

Strategy

- ❖ Encourage the further development of retail and service uses in the Downtown business core
- ❖ Provide opportunities for a wide range of retail uses in the village
- ❖ Encourage the development of home based business and e-commerce utilizing the high speed internet services available in the region
- ❖ Encourage the development of appropriate commercial and tourist uses in the region.

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ Promote the services available through SAMDA, PEP, Meridian Community Futures, EATC
- ❖ Participate in Canadian Badlands inventory/opportunity identification survey
- ❖ Promote businesses in village and region on website

Accomplishments

- ❖ Promote tourism operators on website
- ❖ Bird, Flower, and Wildlife Photo Gallery on Website
- ❖ Place links to SAMDA, PEP, Meridian Community Futures and EATC on website

CORE BUSINESS FIVE: A thriving natural environment that is a valued community asset to be protected, maintained and enjoyed



Goal 1: Protect and enhance natural features

Strategy

- ❖ Encourage the decision-making process to be supported by an understanding of the natural environment including values, opportunities, limits and constraints
- ❖ Protect and enhance significant natural heritage features and their associated ecological and hydrological functions
- ❖ Maintain, restore and where possible, enhance or improve the diversity and connectivity of natural heritage feature and ecological functions

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ Upgrade Peter Fidler RV Park
- ❖ Inventory bird sightings, and promote bird watching opportunities
- ❖ Inventory walking trails and create master plan

Accomplishments

- ❖ Upgrade Peter Fidler Park RV Sites
- ❖ Bird, Flower, and Wildlife Photo Gallery on Website
- ❖ Start work on a boat launch in Peter Fidler Park

Goal 2: Promote the enjoyment and responsible use of natural areas

Strategy

- ❖ Encourage the integration of the parks and open space system with the natural heritage system wherever possible.
- ❖ Encourage through proper planning that the features and related functions of natural environment areas are not negatively impacted by public use.
- ❖ Educate the public on the benefits of the natural environment and the positive contribution the natural environment has on the village.

Key Actions 2014

- ❖ Place garbage receptacles at prominent locations
- ❖ Advertise on website

Accomplishments

- ❖ Garbage receptacles placed in prominent locations.
- ❖ Advertise on website