

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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RESIDENTS' INPUT SOUGHT ON ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

Medicine Hat – The City of Medicine Hat is reaching out to residents to get their input on the top environmental priorities facing the community.

City residents will have an opportunity to learn more about local environmental issues and concerns, as well as provide feedback on your environmental priorities, at two public meetings, to be held Nov. 23 and 24.

“It is critical that City Council understand the community’s concerns and priorities,” says Mayor Garth Valley. “As we look forward to achieve our vision of being a ‘Community of Choice’ we need to develop strategies on alternative energy options, water and growth management. An important aspect of those strategies is to create a sustainable environment for future generations. We want residents to be a part of this process, so I urge you to attend these meetings and be an active part of establishing the environmental priorities for our community.”

The two public meetings provide opportunities for one-on-one discussions with City experts, as well as the opportunity for in-depth group discussions on the topics of waste, energy, air, land, and water. Individuals can fill in a feedback form with their opinions.

The first meeting will take place on Wednesday, Nov. 23 at Crescent Height High School. The second meeting is set for Thursday, Nov. 24 at Medicine Hat College. Both meetings begin at 5 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m. A light supper is provided.

Individuals who are not able to attend either meeting can provide input through the City’s website. Background information and a feedback form can be downloaded from the website at www.medicinehat.ca.

“This is a great chance for the people of Medicine Hat to have their say,” adds Mayor Valley. “It’s also an opportunity to learn more about local environmental issues. Everyone from age 10 to 110 should try to attend. Establishing the environmental priorities for the community is vitally important for the well-being of generations to come.”

In addition to the public meetings, the City held two meetings with approximately 50 stakeholder group representatives on Nov. 9 and 10. The information gathered at these stakeholder meetings will be combined with the input from the public meetings and the website to determine the top environmental priorities for Medicine Hat.

Here's a sampling of the concerns provided by the stakeholders. Do you agree? What are your thoughts?

Waste/recycling

- Develop waste diversion incentives and recycling education

Water

- Promote conservation, education and regulation, because people need to know how they can influence the quality and quantity of water

Land

- Ensure natural areas are identified and protected; linked to support wildlife and quality of life issues

Energy

- Use funds from rate increases and market sales to develop alternative renewable energy supply

Air

- City must take leadership role in air quality, e.g., incentives, city operations, public education, intergovernmental collaboration, meeting Kyoto targets locally

General

- Strong municipal leadership –to provide the right incentives or signals to consumers to support an atmosphere of conservation and efficiency

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