

***OUR PEOPLE....***  
***OUR COMMUNITY....***  
***AND YOU....***



***Foam Lake Community “New Citizens” Initiative***

***A report addressing a changed and diverse population in  
the Town of Foam Lake and Surrounding Rural Municipality***

Foam Lake Leisure Services  
in partnership with  
TC Consulting - Shelley Thoen-Chaykoski - Foam Lake

## Foam Lake Community “New Citizens” Initiative

Our community and our population (in Foam Lake and surrounding RM) has changed significantly over the past number of years and it has been increasingly more difficult for residents to confidently say: “we know the people in our community. More often than not, local residents have been heard to declare: “I do not know most of the people I meet on the street”. This is a disturbing comment, as we in rural Saskatchewan have always been proud to say how close knit our people are. To address the issue of our changing community, local resident Shelley Thoen-Chaykoski, who operates a community consulting business (*Total Community Consulting* or TC Consulting), partnered with Foam Lake Leisure Services and Jaime Helgason the Community Leisure Services Director. We wanted to learn about how people in the community are feeling, and possibly some solutions to what appears to be disconnection in our community.

### WHAT DID WE DO?

In the winter of 2016-2017, TC Consulting and Foam Lake Leisure Services organized focus groups, which gathered people together to share thoughts, experiences and ideas on a particular subject.

Two focus groups were organized to discuss issues specific to new citizens and consisted of:

1. People who are or were NEW to the community (Including People from other parts of Canada who have re-located here as well as people who have immigrated from outside of Canada) AND;
2. People who were BORN AND RAISED in the Community

### The purpose of the focus groups was:

- *To be able to gather the people’s opinions of what it was and is like, moving into a new community and learn how they felt and learn how they were or were not engaged and/or involved;*
- *So the people and organizations who already live and work and volunteer in the community may better involve and understand new citizens feelings and needs as we plan for the community service;*
- *As community planners and workers we want to make sure ALL people have the chance to participate and be a part of the community;*
- *So that everyone can access services for themselves and their families to fulfill their leisure time needs;*
- ***So that ALL Citizens may attain overall wellbeing and have a good quality of life in the community. (This is the ultimate outcome of this initiative).***

## WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THE **NEW CITIZENS** FOCUS GROUP?

- The First Impressions of the community were a clean, safe, quiet, friendly community
- The community lacked the variety of choices we were accustomed to
- All local people do not welcome and accept new citizens very readily
- The perception of a friendly community changes here
- If you were not in the community to work, or because of some existing connection, you were “suspect”
- Having a connection helped people to feel welcome (church, kids in school for example)
- Having a contact or friends or family already in the community helped the new citizens transition
- There is a disconnection and initial mistrust (by some) of new citizens to the community
- Local citizens did not always lay out the welcome mat and be good hosts, and made some assumptions about new citizens
- New citizens have moved to a community and the residents attitudes and actions did not make them feel welcome or engaged or respected in some cases
- There is a lack of community information available for new citizens to access
- There is a lack of “personal” contact by local citizens to make people feel welcome to the community
- Poor or no communication from community leaders (councils, boards, organizations etc.)
- The community is lacking in organized resources for new citizens, as well as education for resident citizens
- That moving to a new community is a learning experience for new citizens AND NEW CITIZENS NEED TO BE WILLING TO ASK QUESTIONS
- That new citizens bring with them diversity in culture and customs AND NEED TO BE WILLING TO SHARE THEM
- That connecting with new citizens takes time and effort and caring
- New citizens need to also earn trust of the community through actions and involvement
- There seems to be a sense of hopelessness - that as new citizens we will never be accepted or feel welcomed
- We only feel welcome through our connections (kids, school, activities etc.)
- Personal contact communication and sound customer / public relations with new citizens is highly valued
- Front line workers PR skills with new residents is very important
- That media platforms like newspaper, social media and website are HUGE and are often the first line of access of information and hospitality

## WHAT DID WE LEARN FROM THE **BORN & RAISED** FOCUS GROUP?

- Residents value safe and friendly community where we belong and have a sense of community
- People who are from here have the perception that our services are ok and we do not lack too much as far as a small community goes
- We may not have all WE WANT locally, but we have most of what WE ACTUALLY NEED
- A low number of 14% of those asked – said they for sure knew new citizens
- 85% of those asked said they knew “some” new citizens but only because of connections through kids in school, or church etc.
- There is definite room for growth in awareness and knowing who are the people in the community are
- People feel our community will be a better place if we welcome and engage new citizens
- Very few things are being done to engage new citizens
- Most initiatives to involve and engage new citizens are things that WERE done in the past, but are not ongoing now
- People are not sure how new citizens feel, they hope they feel welcomed
- Communication and awareness and being good neighbours is important
- It seems new citizens end up sticking to their own “cultural groups” and not getting involved
- Most initiatives by people to welcome and engage new citizens has been done on an “individual” basis
- The community and its leaders have not addressed the issue of new citizen engagement
- There seems to be a general desire to welcome new citizens
- Info that new citizens may require to needs be available and accessible
- More effective use of media platforms
- More effective personal contacts would be good
- Get active and be approachable, get involved
- Be willing to share their culture and customs
- Appreciate that this community is different than what they may have come from and also respect that difference
- In person communication is critical for new citizens
- Usage, Expansion and updating of media platforms newspaper, social media and websites will assist new citizens and existing citizens greatly
- Most importantly, asking new citizens to the community one simple question: WHAT DO YOU REQUIRE AND/OR NEED FROM THE COMMUNITY? (not just pushing info about what we have got and bombarding them with info packages) Let us find out what our new citizens value and require
- All sectors of the community need to be involved in the solutions to welcoming and engaging new people to the community (leaders, councils, organizations, businesses, church, healthcare education etc.)
- Together we can be an inclusive welcoming community

**WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS?**

- Both new citizens and born and raised citizens want very much the same things from our community; both want a safe, friendly place to live work and play
- There is common ground, as people we now need to join on the same common ground to overall wellbeing
- There is diversity like never before in our community, and through education and sharing of our differences, we strive for respect and inclusion of all
- The disconnection and not feeling welcome made us as facilitators feel very uneasy and perhaps ashamed that we have not been good people or hosts
- This info needs to be compiled and shared with the community and the leaders in the community
- That solutions need to be worked on towards making this a better place for ALL to be
- Caring and engaging all people is a priority and accepting and embracing diversity and change with the people who now reside here

**NOW WHAT? WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE AND HOW TO ACHIEVE IT PLAN**

<b><u>DESIRED OUTCOMES</u></b>	<b><u>SUPPORTING GOALS</u></b>	<b><u>SUCCESS INDICATORS</u></b>	<b><u>ACTIVITIES</u></b>
1. All citizens attain overall wellbeing and have a good quality of life in the community	Re-visit citizen focus group issues on a regular basis to gauge whether progress has been made towards improved engagement and involvement	Increased positive Feedback Responses re: New Citizens issues as compared to initial Focus Group Responses	Focus Groups re-convened for responses in Jan-Feb 2018
	Call to action all sectors of the community to be involved in the wellbeing of our citizens	All Community Sectors informed/educated re: New Citizens issues; including: Municipal Comm Non Profit Org Education Religious Health Business	Create/Compile a New Citizens Initiative Information Document (1 page)

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2. Increased trust and relationship building between community citizens	The Focus Group information be presented to All sectors & community leaders	New Citizen Info Presentations (town and RM)  New Citizen Initiative Packages to all sectors: Municipal Comm Non Profit Org Education/Religious Health/Business	Book Time and present new citizen info to Municipal Councils  Share New Citizen Initiative Info with All Sectors in Community: Municipal Comm Org Education/Religious Health/Business
3. Increased connection to the community for new citizens	Connect with local media platforms – newspaper/local newsletters  Updated & current community Websites & Social Media Usage  Updated community info packs – hardcopy  Community Welcome Ambassador Team Established  Strive for personal contact with consistent Customer Service	Media Platforms will have been reviewed and updated with current info: electronic, written    A team of welcome ambassadors will have been established and trained	Establish ad hoc group to advise on material and actions; group to consist of new and born here citizens (max 6) Group to advise on, but not limited to: -website New Citizens FAQ section -new citizens section local newspaper -new citizens need assessment form -guidelines for Welcome Ambassador Team -best practices for front line workers/new citizens -tips for public education

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4. Policies be developed encouraging continuous involving and engaging of new citizens in the community	Adopt/Support a Good Neighbour Policy	Community Leaders officially adopting: good neighbour policies	Research and write a Good Neighbour Policy for community consideration  Research, develop and present communications and social media guidelines for community leaders to consider
	Community Leaders (municipal) adopt Communications & Social Media Usage Guidelines	Community Leaders adopting Communications & Media Usage Guidelines Including newspaper, other print, social and website media	List and review other sector new citizen and community action resources that may be of use to our community
	Identify other sector resources that exist re: new citizens and community action	Other Sectors new citizen resources located, listed, reviewed and shared with local community	

*Where do we go from here?*

*How can you or your organization get involved?*



**We are asking all people, organizations, businesses to step up and join in helping to make our community the best it can be for everyone.....ASK YOURSELVES - what can we do - and how can we be involved?**

To get involved or ask more questions:

Contact either

Jaime at Leisure Services [foamlakerec@sasktel.net](mailto:foamlakerec@sasktel.net)

272-8019 (phone/text) OR;

Shelley at TC Consulting [shamrockgreenhouse@sasktel.net](mailto:shamrockgreenhouse@sasktel.net)

269-7684 (phone/text)

