

September 27, 2013

From: Richard Murray, High River Resident
217 10 Avenue SW, T1V 1A7
rgmurray@zidim.com
(403) 652-9360

To: The Honourable Heather Klimchuk, Minister of Culture

Re: Rebuilding High River

Dear Ms. Klimchuk,

I'm very pleased that you have come to our town to celebrate our Culture Days. As you can may know, High River has a strong Arts community. We need to support and leverage our arts community to maximize its power in rebuilding the town by making High River a Destination.

The arts are a renewable, sustainable resource. Already, artists provide full- and part-time employment to many in High River. They do this with little support from the town or province.

Arts = Jobs.

And High River needs all the help it can get in getting its economic engine revving again.

To grow the arts in High River, I believe that the following is needed:

- **A low-cost grant to promote the Arts community in High River.**
To bring folks to High River we need to promote who is here. This was in the works before the flood. As you can understand, resources are limited now. The town staff and the artists themselves are working almost around the clock dealing with rebuilding issues. A grant to allow the town to hire a consultant to complete this task, gather the information on who is still here and prepare it for both print and web publishing is what is needed. This is a short, low budget task that will have a large, long term impact on our town. **We need the Ministry of Culture to join us in advocating for such a grant.**
- **A permanent facility dedicated to the Arts in High River.**
We do not have a permanent venue to promote the arts here in High River. Our library was damaged and was schedule for a rebuild as it no longer met the building code. The building itself is undersized for our community. When it becomes time to rebuild it is possible that the library may move to a new location. There are two possibilities here, turn the existing location in to a building to support the arts or add the necessary space and facilities to a new library. **We need Alberta Culture's presence to explain, to all levels of government, how important such a facility would be to this community.**
- **Make High River a breeding ground for new artists.**
There are government-supported "incubators" for small businesses in many communities. Here in High River we could establish an incubator for new artists. With our strong arts community, we could help artists to become established in the arts world. They need space and mentoring. An "Artist in Residency" program administered by our town and funded as a government-supported incubator can help nurture artists starting out in business, who can not only grow High River's arts community, but also the Province's arts community as well. **We need the**

Ministry of Culture to advocate in creating such an incubator to help High River become an Arts Destination.

- **An Arts Conference for both Artists and members of Government.**

I've been the vice-chair of the High River Arts and Culture Board for three years now. One thing I've learned is that many in government do not understand how artists work and most artists do not understand how government works. An "Art and Rural Government" conference should be considered. This would be a chance to bring artists and members of small community governments together and have them meet, exchange ideas and attend workshops on how things work and how they can work together. High River would be a natural host for such a conference yet the whole province would benefit. **We need Alberta Culture to spearhead such an initiative.**

Please use these suggestions, which I have compiled from my many conversations with High River residents and artists, as a guiding point for your conversations with your colleagues on how to best support High River in its recovery and renewal.

Thank you for your time and your support of High River,

[Original Signed]

Richard Murray