

PRESS RELEASE

December 14, 2017

South Okanagan partners pool efforts
to explore possibility of indoor aquatic facility



The region's three local municipal governments and the Osoyoos Indian Band, the local First Nation government, are working together to explore the potential of adding an indoor aquatic facility to the South Okanagan community.

The Towns of Oliver and Osoyoos have long discussed the idea of building an indoor aquatic centre that would serve both communities; now the Osoyoos Indian Band and the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen are also engaged in the conversation.

On behalf of the four government entities the Town of Oliver has applied for a \$100,000 provincial Rural Dividend Fund grant to enable a feasibility study that would detail potential services, capital and operating costs, site assessment, facility layout and design and also develop a cost sharing, governance and operating model. The feasibility study process will include extensive community consultation.

All four governments have provided letters of support for the project and are excited about working together on a project of this nature that would see improved services for all the communities.

"An indoor public pool continues to be a high priority for many local Osoyoos residents," said Osoyoos Mayor Sue McKortoff. "Our Community Services review showed that this issue is top of the list for families.

"But since the cost of a pool and the ongoing cost for operating a pool is steep and could be difficult to manage for any single municipality, I am pleased that our local governments are looking to cooperate on a feasibility study."

Added Town of Oliver Mayor Ron Hovan: "The conversation is very early but I am excited that we are able to have this discussion. It is great to see our local governments looking into opportunities that would in the end benefit the entire region."

Historically, an indoor pool facility was considered too big a project for one local government acting alone to handle. However, says Mark Pendergraft, Area "A" director for the RDOS, including all four partners brings the project closer to reality.

"I am excited about the potential pool as a partnership," he said. "Between communities is the only way to keep the cost to a potentially reasonable level, and will result in a higher-quality facility that has higher use."

In the next few months, the government partners will work towards establishing a steering committee that would include representatives from member councils and staff to administer the grant and move the project forward.

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The feasibility study is the first step in what is expected to be a lengthy process. The steering committee will work to maintain positive energy among the partners and report progress to the member constituencies.

“Working together for the good of all residents in the south Okanagan is a very positive forward-thinking initiative,” concluded Mayor McKortoff.

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