

# Focus on sustainability: social and culture

BY MARK LAYCOCK  
*Courier Staff*

*In part two of an ongoing series examining the Town of Carstairs' Municipal Sustainability Initiative, the Courier discusses the unique cultural and social traits of Carstairs with sustainability coordinator Jan Thompson.*

Many community leaders and residents agree that Carstairs sets an example of what community volunteering can accomplish when dedicated individuals organize to tackle an event.

It is this commitment by countless residents that helps support the cultural and social characteristics of the town. Without it, events such as the Mountain View Music Festival and Beef and Barley Days may never have achieved the appeal they enjoy today.

This volunteerism is driven by the community spirit and dedication that residents share with one another. Through it various talents have been discovered across the community, and many of them have fostered new talent and growth in both pillars.

"They just want to make Carstairs a great place to live and it's a great place to come home to," says Thompson.

"It's nice when you see people who aren't paid to do

this but they have a dream and have some really good suggestions and thoughts about what they would like to see in the town for their family or families like theirs."

As part of the foundation for the plan, Thompson is asking for those kinds of individuals (and you shy folks too) to provide suggestions on how to preserve the town's unique social and cultural elements, while not impeding further progress.



Thompson defines the cultural pillar as: development of a cultural dimension within the community to ensure the creation of a vibrant and festive community that exudes a sense of identity and belonging.

Social is defined as: development of social and community services including the recognition of the historical and cultural context of the community and the ability to develop inclusive neighbourhoods and housing to meet wide ranges of demographics and economic markets.

Some possible descriptions of success would be:

- Carstairs retaining its friendly, welcoming community atmosphere.

- Carstairs providing expanded artistic and cultural opportunities for residents and visitors.

- Heritage facilities that appeal to all age groups.

- Visitors and residents able to enjoy healthy living opportunities

- A safe community with visible policing and emergency services

- Adequate and accommodating services for seniors

Thompson admits some residents may be put off by the word "sustainability," but says that residents have always been doing it without knowing.

"Sustainability may be a new word for some people and a new concept, but I think Carstairs all along has tried to add culture and social aspects to the community such as the arena and the curling rink. All those sorts of things make a community a place you want to be."

To help encourage residents to start thinking about ways to improve these pillars, residents are invited to a sustainability workshop on April 22 from 6 to 9:30 p.m. at the Legion during the town's first Sustainability Week, which runs from April 20 - 24.

Thompson says attendees will take part in exercises, activities and brainstorming sessions.

"Five people will have some great ideas, but 2,700 people will have even more ideas," adds Thompson.

In addition, a questionnaire for residents has been drafted that can be picked up and dropped off at the town office or the library.

*Next week: Economics and governance.*

## How to get involved:

- 1) Stop by the town office or call in at 403-337-3341
- 2) Fill out a questionnaire and let your voice be heard
- 3) Sign up to participate in the sustainability workshop on April 22
- 4) Visit the soon to be completed sustainability website: [www.carstairssustainability.ca](http://www.carstairssustainability.ca)
- 5) Send a letter to council expressing your ideas or concerns