

CVA “Council Comments” – February 3, 2022 – Keith Baldwin

{Draft... Prior to Editing For Space}

It's really all about [appreciation](#).

Over the past few months, as a new councillor with a one year term in advance of the full election this fall, I have had the good fortune and honour of observing our competent and efficient municipal team in action. As always, there is a lot going on and everyone has graciously endured and supported my learning process and participation in a hectic, challenging year.

All things considered, I would like to share a few of my fresh perspectives on how incredibly well off we are in Creston.

1. We are super lucky to live right here, right now.

Alone in the known universe, rudimentary life on earth was a stunning event 3.7 billion years ago. To be among the lucky humans living in 2022 is incredible (following 200,000 years of evolution with short, brutal lives), and should not be taken for granted (thanks, Mom & Dad!).

Having gradually escaped many centuries of violence, ignorance, and religious fanaticism, we have in recent years developed to a point where affluence, peace, cooperation, understanding and tolerance is becoming widespread. We have infinitely better health care than ever before, and in spite of substantial global stresses, live longer. Modern living conditions in Canada are astonishing, and our Valley itself is incredibly beautiful.

In early 2020, after several decades in the tourism industry in Victoria/Vancouver, my wife and I selected the Kootenays and specifically Creston from several finalists in the province as our preferred retirement destination. Creston has many unique attributes including spectacular geography and excellent recreational resources, with an effective, dedicated town administration and service network creating a safe, stable and friendly environment. Since we arrived, we found most residents to be optimistic, intelligent, calm and reasonable. And sure, there are always some exceptions to such positive standards anywhere you go. We have absolutely no regrets about our choice – we're thrilled to be here.

Creston was given an “Exceptional” Livability rating of 81 by [Area Vibes](#), with a 2020 crime index just slightly higher than BC as a whole (but very small in real terms). By comparison at 70 Surrey is rated “average”. Nelson scored 72, with its [Crime Severity Index](#) trend reflecting a substantial improvement over previous years.

2. Team Creston: Relax – we've got this.

As constituents, you are the reason we're here. Your support and involvement is very motivating - together, we keep moving forward with kindness and consideration. Just sayin'...

The Town of Creston has a professional team of dedicated managers and staff of a calibre that we're very fortunate to attract and retain, given the intense competition for their talents. The more I learn about what they accomplish with what they have, and how sophisticated their skills are, the more impressed I am. Surprisingly, staff numbers have remained relatively constant over the past two decades...meanwhile, Regional District head-count has increased dramatically over the same period.

The Town administration is fiscally conservative and strictly compliant with all relevant operating rules, yet frequently bold, brave and innovative in implementation. Resilient and reliable would be how I would characterize the operation overall. Led brilliantly by [Michael Moore](#) as CAO, this is a dynamic group and we should be very proud of what they achieve, above and beyond normal expectations for a town of our size. Improved digital access for the public to discuss topics and report issues is terrific and proactive communication is timely, attractive and concise, significantly reducing disinformation and confusion.

With extremely diligent financial management, the Town conducts detailed long term planning and reserve funding to control budget impacts of future events...this extends to asset management activities (replacing major items/infrastructure) many years from now. Very responsible and confidence inspiring.

With just three full-time paid members and the balance on-call, the Fire and Rescue team is extremely lean but passionately committed to service in and around the Valley. We are all very excited to see the department and the BC Ambulance Service transition into the landmark Creston Emergency Services Building this spring. This advanced facility will be a spectacular feature throughout this century, for which all citizens can be proud. Our relationship with the Hospital, Library, Community Complex, RCMP detachment and local businesses is very productive. Together with solid participation by our local media outlets Creston Valley Advance and Juice FM, the community is well served.

The senior members of our current Town Council ([Jen Comer](#), [Jim Elford](#), [Arnold DeBoon](#) and [Joanna Wilson](#)) are basically rock stars in my opinion, with so many amazing traits after long years of service that it will be a difficult task to replace them should any choose not to run this fall. Some of these qualities include: Integrity, intelligence, respect, humour, organization, experience, professional, tolerant, patient, supportive, collaborative, constructive and progressive. Councillor [Norm Eisler](#) and I have great role models to guide us!

His Worship, [Mayor Toyota](#) is an incredibly charismatic, versatile and dedicated leader whose wisdom and vast experience keeps everything running smoothly and democratically...I simply cannot imagine our team without him! With multiple levels of government jurisdiction regularly involved, the challenge of balancing external and core obligations is definitely complex, yet he manages this with apparent ease!

3. Smile and Wave – Share some upbeat Creston energy with our residents and visitors!

Personally, I think that 2022 will be a time to Unify, Celebrate and Promote Creston. We're all in the same boat so it makes sense to paddle together now, whether that's Covid or the Fire Hall. Negative debate is pointless at this stage. Kudos to the entire Creston "Team"!

Perhaps it's time to get out and celebrate what we've achieved together and look to the future, with the Creston Emergency Services Building completed, and significant new local park projects being launched or completed this year.

I noticed even before we actually moved here that [nearly everybody here smiles and waves](#) (it can't hurt!), so that sense of a welcoming community is definitely something to promote as we emerge from our pandemic shells.

Lucky to be here, absolutely. I'm sincerely [grateful](#) for the opportunity to serve.

[Carpe diem...Peace out.](#)

COLUMN

Council Comments: Lucky to Be Here

By Councillor Keith Baldwin

It's really all about appreciation.

As a new councillor with a one-year term before the election this fall, I have had the good fortune and honour of observing our competent and efficient municipal team in action over the past few months. As always, there is a lot going on and everyone has graciously endured and supported my learning process and participation during a hectic, challenging year.

All things considered, I would like to share a few of my fresh perspectives on how incredibly well off we are in Creston.

• Our beautiful valley

Alone in the known universe, the beginnings of rudimentary life on Earth was a stunning event 3.7 billion years ago. To be among the lucky humans living in 2022 is incredible, especially following 200,000 years of evolution with short, brutal lives. We should not take this for granted.

We have gradually escaped many centuries of violence, ignorance, and religious fanaticism. In recent years, we have developed to a point where affluence, peace, co-operation, understanding, and tolerance is becoming widespread. We have infinitely better health care than ever before, and in spite of substantial global stresses, we live longer. Modern living conditions in Canada are astonishing, and the Creston Valley itself is an incredibly beautiful place to be.

In early 2020, after several decades in the tourism industry in Victoria/Vancouver, my wife and I selected the Kootenays (specifically Creston) from

several finalists in the province as our preferred retirement destination. Creston has many unique attributes including spectacular geography and excellent recreational resources, with an effective, dedicated town administration and service network creating a safe, stable, and friendly environment. Since we arrived, we found most residents to be optimistic, intelligent, calm, and reasonable. And sure, there are always some exceptions to such positive standards anywhere you go. We have absolutely no regrets about our choice, and we're thrilled to be here. Creston was given an "Exceptional Livability Score" of 81 by the website Area Vibes, with a 2020 crime index of just five per cent higher than the provincial average. By comparison, Surrey is rated "Average" with a score of 70. Nelson scored 72, with its Crime Severity Index trend reflecting a substantial improvement over previous years.

• Town of Creston's team

As constituents, you are the reason we're here. Your support and involvement is very motivating, and with that, we will keep moving forward.

The Town of Creston has a professional team of dedicated managers and staff of a calibre that we're very fortunate to attract and retain, given the intense competition for their talents. The more I learn about what they accomplish with what they have, and how sophisticated their skills are, the more impressed I am. Surprisingly, staff numbers have remained relatively constant over the past two decades... meanwhile, the Regional District of Central Kootenay headcount has increased dramatically over the same period. The town administration is fiscally conservative and strictly compliant with

all relevant operating rules, yet frequently bold and innovative in implementation.

Resilient and reliable would be how I would characterize the operation overall. Led brilliantly by Chief Administrative Officer Michael Moore, this is a dynamic group. We should be very proud of what they achieve, which is above and beyond normal expectations for a town of our size. Improved digital access for the public to discuss topics and report issues through Let's Talk Creston is terrific. This digital format allows for proactive communication, significantly reducing misinformation and confusion.

With extremely diligent financial management, the town conducts detailed long-term planning and reserve funding to control budget impacts of future events many years from now, such as replacing major infrastructure.

With just three full-time paid members and the balance of paid-on-call volunteers, the Creston Fire Rescue team is extremely lean, but passionately committed. We are all very excited to see the department and BC Emergency Services transition into the new Creston Emergency Services Building this spring! This facility will be a spectacular feature for decades to come, for which we can all be proud of.

The Town of Creston's relationships with the Hospital, Library, Community Complex, RCMP detachment, and local businesses is very productive. Together, with solid participation by our local media outlets, I am confident that our community is well served indeed.

The senior members of our current town council (Jen Comer, Jim Elford, Arnold DeBoon, and Jo-

anna Wilson) are basically rockstars in my opinion, with so many amazing qualities after long years of service that will make it difficult to replace them should any choose not to run in this fall's general municipal election. Councillor Norm Eisler and I have had great role models to guide us!

Mayor Ron Toyota is an incredibly charismatic, versatile, and dedicated leader whose wisdom and vast experience keeps everything running smoothly and democratically. I simply cannot imagine our team without him! With multiple levels of government jurisdiction regularly involved, the challenge of balancing external and core obligations is definitely complex, yet he manages this with apparent ease!

• Supporting each other

Personally, I think that 2022 will be a time to unify and celebrate the Town of Creston. We're all in the same boat, so it makes sense to paddle together now, while we're facing COVID-19 and other contentious topics. Negative debate is pointless at this stage.

The Creston Emergency Services Building nears completion and significant new local park projects are being launched this year. It's time to get out and celebrate what we've achieved together and look to the future.

I noticed even before we actually moved here, that nearly everybody here smiles and waves. That sense of a welcoming community is definitely something to embrace as we go forward in the pandemic. Share some upbeat Creston energy with your neighbours and any visitors!

I'm lucky to be here, absolutely, and sincerely grateful for the opportunity to serve.

Working together to make our town awesome...

Thanks to you,
“Team Creston”

Gracious Valley residents, dedicated Mayor & Council,
 responsible Town staff, resilient businesses, dynamic
 support organizations and enthusiastic volunteers
 – it’s all of us.

Relax...we’ve got this!

Carpe Diem

Be Happy



Keith.Baldwin@Creston.ca




ice Award

Best Local Politician/ Councillor	Gold	Keith Baldwin
	Silver	Ron Toyota
	Bronze	Tanya Wall



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