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Northeast leaders come together in united front

CLARE GAUVREAU
St. Paul Journal

LAKELAND - If there is indeed strength in numbers, then it is a numbers game that a 43-member strong group of municipalities, First Nations and Métis Settlements in Alberta's northeast region plans to get some centre stage presence at both the provincial and federal levels.

Loosely based on the corridor that Highway 28 follows from Edmonton to Cold Lake, communities immediately alongside the route and those farther afield to the north and south have come together to speak in a united voice on the challenges they are all facing.

The common ground upon which they have chosen to stand are health care, policing and transportation and the message they appear to want to deliver is simple - 'Hey, what about us.'

"We need to prove to government that we actually have a stake in this game," St. Paul Mayor Maureen Miller said Friday. "You can call it advocacy, because I'm not really a lobbyist, but it will turn into some form of awareness as to what our communities need. We are now talking to each other, and we have aligned behind these three initiatives."

With an election looming, the next three months are a prime time to draw attention to the region.

More than anything else, the alliance is borne out of necessity, with participating municipalities recognizing they cannot operate in silos in the region, but rather have open conversations with their neighbours in the northeast about the challenges they are facing, Miller explained in an interview with *Lakeland This Week*.

Leaders of municipalities coming together is nothing new. The Northern Alberta Mayors' and Reeves' Caucus has been meeting for years, drawing urban and rural municipalities to the table to discuss common issues for the vast area that stretches from Edmonton north, and to the BC and Saskatchewan borders.

See "Northeast leaders" page 2



Heath Williams won the fishing award for youth Walleye with his catch of 63.5 cm. during the Beaver River Fish & Game Association's awards banquet Saturday. Nathalie Thomson presents the trophy. For more coverage please turn to page 20.

One man dead following officer involved shooting on Cold Lake First Nation

LAKELAND THIS WEEK STAFF

COLD LAKE - A 45-year-old man from Cold Lake First Nation is dead, following a confrontation with RCMP on Feb. 4.

The Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) took over carriage of the investigation, looking into the circumstances of the officer involved shooting, according to information from RCMP.

On Feb. 4, at 7:48 a.m., Cold Lake RCMP received a firearms complaint from a residence in Cold Lake First Nation.

"Upon arrival, officers contained the residence and attempted to make contact with the suspect. A confrontation occurred between the suspect and officers resulting in at least one officer discharging a firearm. RCMP entered the home and the suspect, a 45-year-old

male resident of Cold Lake First Nation, was found deceased," according to police.

No officers were injured during the incident. Police confirmed that firearms were found in the residence.

Independent of ASIRT's investigation, the Alberta RCMP's internal review process has been implemented to gather a full account of what took place during the incident.

"RCMP training, policy, police response, and the duty status of the members involved will be subject to review," according to RCMP.

Earlier in the day, RCMP sent out information asking the public to stay away from the area that was being contained by police, which was described as the Cold Lake First Nation town site.

At that time, police noted there was "no threat to the community."

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