

**2015 ANNUAL REPORT Of The
Medicine Hat Interpretive Program Operations Committee
For GN AGM, Tuesday, March 22, 2016**

The committee operating the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program has been comprised of the following GN members in the past year: John Slater (Chair; replacing Gary Martin and previously Phil Horch), Bob Townsend (Vice-Chair), Elaine Spitzer, Lorine Marshall and ex-officio voting member Dave McKenzie (GN President). Also, non-voting ex-officio members were Eileen Cowtan (GN Treasurer and MHIP Bookkeeper, and initial committee Secretary replaced by Anne Bernhardt), Corlaine Gardner (Chief Interpreter) and Randy Taves representing the City of Medicine Hat Parks Department.

During the past year, due to change in chairperson, we held only two meetings of the committee in June and October at which time reports were received about Interpretive Program operations and programs, budgets monitored and approved, the committee "Terms of Reference" reviewed with new Policies and Procedures approved, the City contract was reviewed and adjustments recommended, and Staff Benefits Plan was selected and approved.

One of the major responsibilities of this committee is to carry out the contract obligations that exist between the Grasslands Naturalists Society and the City of Medicine Hat to operate the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program. We are midway through the latest five-year contract between the Society and City which was signed January 2013 and is scheduled to expire at the end of 2017. Under the terms of our current contract it is necessary to raise supplementary funds beyond what the City of Medicine Hat supplies which the Program has been doing successfully for years. Bob Townsend met with the new Parks general manager, Todd Sharpe, to discuss the need for Staff Benefits Health coverage, and was very successful in getting an additional grant from the City to cover the costs of the OASSIS Health Plan for the three IP staff members. Meetings were also held through the year to discuss the contract; particularly the revision of the list of City equipment as it relates to the insurance coverage requirements. Finalization of the equipment list and amendment to the contract is continuing.

Another major responsibility of the committee is to ensure that the Chief Interpreter's position is adequately staffed. For the past several years that position has been admirably filled by Corlaine Gardner who continues to give the program excellent supervision and direction. The program is staffed by a core of permanent staff that includes Val Martins and Marty Drut. In addition, other seasonal staff are employed often made up of students and interns. The program is also supported mightily by a small army of volunteers especially for special public events such as the Kiwanis' sponsored Family Day, Easter Chicks & Bunnies, the IP Fall Festival & GN's 30th Anniversary, and the Lion's sponsored Christmas Hayride.

Our committee believes that the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program is one of the finest in the country and it is because of the quality of people that staff the program. Our thanks go out to them and all those members of the Grasslands Naturalists who support the program with their donations and volunteer time.

The people of Medicine Hat are the ultimate winners because of the Medicine Hat Interpretive Program. The quality of life in our city is dramatically impacted by this program and the Police Point Park experience is richer and more deeply felt because of it. But the program extends well beyond the bounds of the park to helping people experience and appreciate the wonderful natural history world that we live in throughout the City and Southeastern Alberta.

Submitted By John Slater, Committee Chairperson