

Council meets ministers

By Vernon Morning Star

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Lake Country officials hope face-to-face lobbying with their provincial counterparts pays off.

Council members met with Premier Christy Clark and cabinet ministers at the recent Union of B.C. Municipalities convention in Vancouver.

"The face-to-face meetings with the ministers were encouraging," said Mayor James Baker.

"Not only was there a high level of awareness of the issues our community is facing, but also agreement to work towards resolution of the challenges that are important to our residents."

Among the issues raised was the transference of the old Highway 97, now known as Pelmewash Parkway, to the ownership of the municipality.

"Transportation Minister (Todd) Stone understood the issue is something the public is interested in and the devolution of the road corridor is actively being negotiated between the ministry and the district," said Baker.

Another ongoing concern is the lack of family doctors in the community.

Council requested that the Ministry of Health support a multidisciplinary clinic pilot project and consider assisting the district with incentives to attract and retain physicians.

Lake Country politicians also joined the Okanagan Basin Water Board in urging Clark to increase funding to prevent zebra and quagga mussels from infesting Okanagan lakes.

The other issue pursued by council was the need to build a middle school in the community.

"As Lake Country is B.C.'s fastest-growing community and the three elementary schools have become over-enrolled, council believes a middle school to house the Grade 6 to 9 student population is necessary to relieve the pressure on the elementary schools," said Baker.

While at UBCM, Baker received a long-term service award for 25 years as an elected official.

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