

Remarks from PRRA Chair, Janet Shindle

As Chair of the Portage Regional Recreation Authority, it is my job to introduce you to the Authority – or the PRRA as it has come to be called.

I would like to begin by clearing up any confusion you may have about other committees that have contributed to the building of the PCU Centre, because it has taken many people to come to the place we are at today, and for some of you the committees may have begun running together.

The first group instrumental in the development of the PCU Centre was the Portage Recreation Committee - a committee of community members who came together in partnership with the City and the R.M. to conduct the original Recreation Needs Survey – the results of which gave us the blue print for the type of facility the community both wanted and needed. Representatives of this group continue to be active with the second committee – the Portage Multiplex Committee.

The Portage Multiplex Committee was established to guide the building process once the decision to build the PCU Centre was made. Members on the committee include appointees from each Council, the Portage Recreation Committee and the Fair Board. The Multiplex Committee has made hundreds of decisions related to the construction of the PCU Centre. It still meets on an as needed basis to make decisions related to the capital side of this project and in a few short months we will all have the opportunity to see what they have achieved.

Most recently you may have begun hearing about the PRRA or Portage Regional Recreation Authority ...

The Portage Regional Recreation Authority is the organization that will oversee the PCU Centre and all recreation and leisure facilities and services that are presently owned or operated by the R.M. and the City of Portage la Prairie.

It will be an independent corporation with its own Vision, Mission, by-laws, policies, procedures, budgets, staffing and decision making responsibilities.

It will be limited in its powers only by the need for City and R.M. Council approval of its budgets, since a portion of the funding to operate these facilities and services will continue to be provided by the two municipalities.

The Board of Directors of the PRRA will consist of three Councillors appointed by the City, three Councillors appointed by the R.M. and one citizen representative appointed by each Council. At this time I would like to acknowledge those who have been appointed

by Councils – His Worship Mayor Ken Brennan, Reeve Toby Trimble, Councillor Dave Quinn, Councillor Garth Asham, Councillor Owen Williams and City appointee Dale Brownlee. The R.M. has yet to make their formal appointment to the PRRA. These people will form the Board of the PRRA.

I say “will form the Board” because, while the group has been meeting weekly as a Steering Committee since November of 2008, the Board will not formally become a Board until incorporation takes place – likely in the next few weeks.

Since November the Steering Committee of the PRRA has been working with Jenn Sarna and the existing staff of the Recreation and Leisure Services Department of the City to lay the foundation for establishing and running this new corporation.

A great deal needs to be accomplished by the Board and staff to achieve this goal. During our strategic planning sessions, there were just under one hundred key activities identified – many of which are very substantial. The majority of these tasks are add-ons to the existing workloads of the Department, so these are very busy times in Recreation and Leisure Services.

If I was to summarize the job of the Board and staff of the PRRA in as few words as possible, I would say that it is to ensure that on day one of the PRRA Board assuming responsibility, the Board will be functioning well, our budget and financial systems will be in place, our by-laws, policies and procedures will have been developed, our staff will be hired and carrying out their responsibilities, the PCU Centre will be complete and well equipped, our existing facilities will be operating as usual, both new and existing programs will be operational, user groups will be on board - and the citizens of Portage and Region will have received the information needed to have the most positive recreation and leisure experiences possible.