

Town of Coaldale Receives Annual Police Funding Equalization Grant from the Province

On Friday, April 12, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services, Mike Ellis, travelled to Coaldale to announce that moving forward, Coaldale will no longer be required to pay for RCMP policing at 100% of the cost..



For nearly a decade, the Town of Coaldale has been overpaying for RCMP policing by 30%.

On March 23, 2014, Coaldale Town Council voted to retain the services of the RCMP as the municipality's police provider and enter into a Municipal Police Service Agreement with Public Safety Canada. It did so because by retaining the services of the RCMP, Coaldale Town Council assumed that Coaldale would receive policing at 70% of the cost - a rate that every RCMP policed municipality between 5,000 and 14,999 in Canada receives.

Unfortunately, despite being geographically located on the Red Coat Trail and having been policed by the RCMP up until 1954, from 2015 onward the federal government has maintained that because Coaldale is an entirely "new entrant" to RCMP policing (ie. that because Coaldale never was "previously policed by the RCMP") it must pay for policing services at 100% of the cost.

Fast forward to 2024 and approximately 4 million dollars in overpayments later, and the provincial government has decided enough is enough. On Friday, April 12, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Services, Mike Ellis,

travelled to Coaldale to announce that moving forward, Coaldale will no longer be required to pay for RCMP policing at 100% of the cost. By providing the Town with an annual policing equalization grant, the province will offset Coaldale's uniquely high policing costs and, in so doing, rectify a long-standing federal injustice towards the Town.

"Coaldale's unfair treatment is the result of the federal government's unwillingness to be flexible and consider the needs of small-town Alberta," said Minister Ellis. "Where the federal government is unwilling to act, Alberta's government is stepping in to ensure the residents of Coaldale are safe and protected with stable and predictable police funding. We are committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure our communities are safe places to live, work and play."

"Coaldale has been required to pay the full amount of the policing bill for far too long," said MLA Grant Hunter, Parliamentary Secretary for Agrifood Development. "They are the only community in our country that has been forced to do this. The federal government have been petitioned multiple times to rectify this issue but have refused. Today is a good day! Today our provincial government have stepped up and done what the federal government should have done long ago... funded Coaldale's policing needs."

"As a municipality, we've always been pleased with our local RCMP detachment, especially under the direction of our current Staff Sergeant., Mike Numan," said Town of Coaldale Mayor Jack Van Rijn. "But that doesn't change the fact that for nearly a decade, Coaldale's been the only municipality in Canada under 15000 that receives policing from the RCMP at 100% of the cost. To be sure, we've tried engaging the federal government on this issue, but ever since 2015 our engagement efforts have fallen on deaf ears. Thankfully, with the help of Minister Ellis and his team, we've been able to find a made-in-Alberta solution that will stand to benefit our community for years to come."

Town of Coaldale Adds Esports to List of Official Competitions for the 2024 Southern Alberta Summer Games

Registrations for the Games will open on May 3 via the official Southern Alberta Summer Games website (<https://www.southernalbertasummerngames.ca/>) and remain open until May 31.

On Thursday, April 18, the Town of Coaldale updated its list of official competitions for the 2024 Southern Alberta Summer Games (SASG).

In September of last year, Coaldale was chosen by the Southern Alberta Recreation Association (SARA) to host the 2024 Games, which will be the first to offer full programming since 2019 when the Covid-19 pandemic put a stop to the Games for 4 consecutive years. Since September, Town staff have been busy organizing the Games, including finalizing a list of official competitions which – thanks to the Coaldale Chamber of Commerce – now includes esports.

Esports (short for electronic sports) refers to the competitive world of video gaming where individuals or teams compete against each other in various video game genres. These competitions can range from organized, multiplayer video game tournaments between professional players and teams to amateur level events.

During the 2024 SASG, the Co up to 195 amateur players will compete in a Super Smash Bros. Ultimate tournament on Nintendo Switch, with first, second, and third place players receiving gold, silver, and bronze medals.

“2024 marks the first year that the SASG will host an esports competition and we couldn’t be more excited!” said Mark McIntosh, Southern Alberta Summer Games Coordinator for the Town of Coaldale. “I’d like to give special thanks not only to the Alberta Esports Association for their guidance in adding Esports to the Games, but also to SARA for opening up the Games to a whole new demographic of participants. Finally, I’d like to give a special shout out to our esports chairperson, Andrew Wetterstrand, and to the Lethbridge School Division for agreeing to provide the equipment necessary for the competition. Without that kind of logistical support, this wouldn’t be possible.”

“Esports is a relatively unfamiliar area for many, so upon discovering that competitive video gaming would be includ-

ed as part of the 2024 SASG, we were eager to participate”, said Jesse Sadlowski, Director of Technology Learning and Innovation for the Lethbridge School Division. “Our goal is to educate our community about what esports truly entails, so incorporating esports into the SASG will not only allow our dedicated gaming students to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime experience, but also, help us educate people as to what esports involves.”

Registrations for the Games will open on May 3 via the official SASG website (<https://www.southernalbertasummerngames.ca/>) and remain open until May 31. Registrations for esports will be limited to 15 participants per region (13 regions in total) on a first-come-first-served basis and is open to all ages.

Please also make sure to check out the 2024 Alberta Esports Championship, which is open to all middle school and high school students across Alberta, and will take place on May 3rd and 4th at the Lethbridge and District Exhibition Trade Centre. Find out more at <https://aec2024.ca/>. No entry fee is required for spectators.

What’s Happening in the Community?

On Saturday, May 4, the Gem of the West Museum will hold “Cowpoke Day,” a family-friendly event that includes free admission to the Museum, a blacksmith and sawmill demonstration, and many other activities. Don’t miss out on the fun!

On Saturday, May 11, the Coaldale Public Library will host its annual Spring Craft Fair. The Fair will take place from 11:00am - 4:00pm at the Coaldale Public Library and admission is free!

On Saturday, June 8, the Town of Coaldale Public Works Department will host its second annual Big Truck Petting Zoo! The event will include a free BBQ courtesy of Dennis’ Dirtworx Ltd., food trucks, a jaws of life demonstration, swag giveaways and more! To learn more, please visit <https://www.coaldale.ca/about/events/big-truck-petting-zoo-2024>.