



Temporary Closure of Ponoka Recreation Facilities Results in Shift Cancellations for Casual Employees

(April 6, 2020 – Ponoka, Alberta) – Following the temporary closure of the Ponoka Aquaplex and the Ponoka Culture and Recreation Complex (Arena) on March 13 in response to provincial directives to help stop the spread of COVID-19, the Town of Ponoka made the difficult decision to temporarily cancel shifts for 23 casual employees.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has required the Town to make some difficult decisions,” said Albert Frootman, Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Ponoka. “Upon the closure of our two recreation facilities, the Town immediately made the decision to cancel shifts and stop scheduling non-essential staff who work at these facilities,” said Frootman, noting these casual employees represent roughly 30 per cent of the Town’s work force.

He explained Records of Employment (ROEs) were subsequently issued to these employees due to the shortage of work caused by the facility closures. The ROEs enable these employees to access financial assistance through employment benefit programs until they are able to return to work.

Shift Cancellations Are Temporary

“We value our staff and look forward to welcoming these employees back to work once the COVID-19 threat passes and our recreational facilities are able to reopen to the public again,” said Frootman, adding, “The Town of Ponoka has a responsibility to be a good steward of public funds. We continue to monitor and evaluate the COVID-19 situation daily and are prepared to respond as needed.”

While all Town buildings remain closed to public access, the Town remains ‘open’ for business with remaining staff responding to citizen inquiries by phone, fax and email.

Town Operations Continue

Town operations continue as Public Works employees work to ensure the delivery of essential Town services that are important to citizens’ daily lives such as clean drinking water, waste



water treatment, curbside collection of waste, recycling and compost material and the operation of the Town's Waste Transfer Station which remains open to the public.

Employees also continue to be busy with snow and ice control on Town roadways, and are working to complete header repair and maintenance improvements at the Arena to help ensure smooth operations once that facility reopens.

Facility Improvements Underway

Town staff are also working on maintenance and facility improvements at the Aquaplex with the intention of avoiding the need for an annual shutdown in the fall.

For the latest information on the Town of Ponoka's response to COVID-19, please visit www.ponoka.ca.

For information on how to protect yourselves and others from the virus, please visit www.alberta.ca/COVID19.

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