



Town Council Approves Two New Initiatives Under Business Retention and Attraction Program

(December 18, 2020 – Ponoka, Alberta) – Ponoka Town Council has approved the following two new initiatives under its Business Retention and Attraction Program to help retain, support and attract new businesses to the community:

- A New Business Grant; and
- A Commercial New Build Incentive.

The Town also approved a new Hardship Grant for Ponoka businesses last week which is also part of its Business Retention and Attraction Program.

“These three initiatives demonstrate the Town’s ongoing commitment to invest in economic development by supporting our local businesses and helping position our community to rebound from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the downturn in the oil and gas economy,” said Ponoka Mayor Rick Bonnett.

New Business Grant

The New Business Grant offers a one-time-per-business grant payment of up to \$1000 for businesses that are new to Ponoka, reside and operate in the Town, and have not previously operated in the community. To be eligible, the business must hold a valid 2021 Town of Ponoka business licence or be exempt from requiring a business licence. The application period for the New Business Grant will begin January 1, 2021, and continue until December 31, 2021.

The grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis with grant amounts varying according to the business licence type as follows:

- **In-Town Commercial and Automotive** business licence holders who lease a commercial property may be eligible for a \$750 grant; or \$1000 if they purchase the commercial property;
- **In-Town Trades** business licence holders may be eligible for \$750;
- **Home Business** licence holders - \$250;
- **Home Office** business licence holders - \$100; and
- **Home Catalogue Sales** business licence holders - \$50.

Commercial New Build Incentive

The Commercial New Build Incentive will offer property tax breaks to new or existing commercial businesses in the Town of Ponoka that build a new property (or demolish and build a new property) on commercially-zoned land in the Town.

Eligible businesses will receive the following reductions in their municipal property taxes over a three-year period, beginning the first year after the occupancy permit is issued:

- A 75% reduction in the municipal portion of their property taxes the first year;
- A 50% reduction the second year; and
- A 25% reduction the third year.



The application period for the one-time-per-business Commercial New Build Incentive will begin January 1, 2021 and continue until December 31, 2022. If the owner sells the property during the three-year incentive program, the property tax credits will stay with the property and transfer to the new owner.

Hardship Grant

The Hardship Grant offers financial assistance to Ponoka businesses that are suffering significant financial losses due to COVID-19 impacts. A total of \$50,000 has been allocated to the Hardship Grant through the Municipal Operating Support Transfer (MOST) grant, which is being provided to municipalities by the provincial and federal governments to help offset lost revenue and fiscal challenges due to COVID-19.

Eligible businesses must physically reside and operate in the Town of Ponoka, hold a 2020 Town of Ponoka business licence and plan to have a 2021 Town business licence, or they must be exempt from requiring a business licence. Eligible businesses must also have been significantly impacted financially by COVID-19.

The \$50,000 in grant funding will be allocated to eligible businesses by business licence type, based on the percentage of 2020 business licences in each category. For example, 62 per cent of 2020 Town business licences are commercial, in-Town business licences, so 62 per cent of the grant funding will be allocated to eligible businesses that apply for the grant in that category. Other business licence categories that qualify for the program include automotive in-Town, home office, home business and trade in-Town.

How to Apply

Application forms for the New Business Grant, the Commercial New Build Incentive and the Hardship Grant are posted on the Town website at www.ponoka.ca. Paper copies can be mailed out upon request by phoning 403-783-0127. With the Town Office temporarily closed to public access, completed application forms can be emailed to taxes@ponoka.ca or mailed to the Town Office at:

Town of Ponoka
200, 5604 50 Street
Ponoka, AB, T4J 1G5

If you have questions about any of the new Business Retention and Attraction Program initiatives, please phone 403-783-0127.

For Media Inquiries Only:

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