



Town, partners win several CAEP awards

Paul Frey, Olds Albertan, December 7, 2010

The Town of Olds and various partners were recognized in four separate categories last week during a Central Alberta Economic Partnership awards ceremony in Red Deer.

The town and the Uptowne Olds committee and Olds Historical Society were recognized with a gold award in the impact category for their work on the Heritage Management Plan while those organizations also received a platinum nod for the category innovation in business for work on the Uptowne Olds initiative. The town and the Olds Institute For Community and Regional Development teamed up for a submission in the collaboration category, receiving two platinum awards for their work on the OICRD board as well as in the category of impact for the same work.

Michael Dougherty, heritage coordinator for Uptowne Olds, said the heritage award is proof that heritage work is important in maintaining the economic strength of communities.

"I think it's really important for the heritage world, that we're being recognized for that. I think those of us inside the heritage world have known for a long time that heritage is basically economic development in a grassroots form and now being recognized for that is outstanding ... for all the partners involved," he said.

Dougherty said the award will serve to keep heritage at the forefront of people's thinking about economic development. He said this award is a way to help mitigate the marginalization of heritage, which has sometimes taken place in the past throughout North America.

Rob Smith, chair of the OICRD board, said he thought it was important that CAEP handed out the awards as a means to celebrate all the hard work being done in communities throughout Central Alberta.

"It is a great opportunity for us to not only celebrate our successes, but take a look at what is working so very well in other parts of the Central Alberta economic region and learn from that and either take a look at adopting some of those projects in our own community or building on them for slightly different ones," he said.

Smith said the platinum award for collaboration that was shared between the town and the OICRD couldn't have been possible without a wide range of groups working together to promote economic development in Olds.

"The fact that we also got a platinum in the impact (category) tells me that if conceptually the collaboration has been one that would be considered award winning, we are now to a point where the results of that collaboration ... are award winning as well," he said, adding that volunteers make the OICRD what it is.

Leon Durand, chair of Uptowne Olds, said he was both surprised and excited by the platinum award for business innovation.

"It was very exciting to have our efforts noted by other ... municipalities in Central Alberta as being

the best innovators of the group," he said.

Durand said the award was made possible by various volunteers from several different groups banding together to bring a good idea to fruition.

"This is really a nice way of saying, 'good job' and to my way of thinking it's a good job to the volunteers."