



building communities together

2019 Business Plan Communications (1011)

Emily Epp, Manager of Communications

Working in partnership with communities, large and small, to make the Cariboo Chilcotin a socially, economically and environmentally desirable region to live, work and play.

Department/Function Services

The Communications Department falls within the Administrative Services function and budget and provides communication services to all departments of the Cariboo Regional District.



The Communications Department manages the Regional District’s internal and external communications. The department publishes the spring/summer and fall/winter editions of the CRD UpFront Newsletter and news releases. Communications is also responsible for all media relations activities, corporate events such as Board on the Road meetings, news conferences, managing the CRD’s social media channels, website and graphic design standards. The department also plays a key role in issues management, emergency communications and crisis communications. The Communications team provides graphic design services to all other departments and is responsible for all promotional literature and materials.

Administrative Services is a mandated service under the *Local Government Act* and as such, has no taxation limits attached. Each Electoral Area, the City of Quesnel, the City of Williams Lake, the District of 100 Mile House and the District of Wells all participate on the basis of assessed value of land and improvements.

All members of the Board are responsible for the governance of this service.

Business Plan Goals, Rationale & Strategies

- 1. Goal:** Increase staff resourcing for the Communications Department.

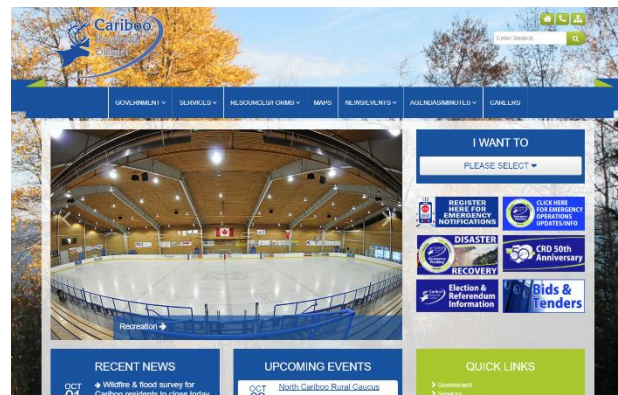
Rationale: Communications demands on the Cariboo Regional District are increasing. Additional resources are required to meet the current and upcoming communications needs. The addition of a Communications Officer means the Communications Department could provide strategic communications support to the various CRD departments, meet the CRD's corporate communications needs and goals, and support CRD functions that have not been able to be supported previously (such as libraries, emergency education and preparedness, and volunteer fire departments). *Please see the attached business case for additional details and rationale.*

Strategy: Add a full-time Communications Officer to the department and hire a qualified individual.

2. **Goal:** Seek funding for website development.

Rationale: The CRD plans to update its website starting in 2019, with the support of external funding if possible. Other municipalities have recently received funding for website upgrades and the CRD would like to explore similar opportunities.

Strategy: Continue to investigate funding options and apply for grants for website development.



3. **Goal:** Completely redesign the Cariboo Regional District website.

Rationale: The website is one of the CRD's main communication tools and is the public face of the CRD online. In general, websites need to be redesigned every 4-5 years; the CRD website was last redesigned in 2014. The 2017 and 2018 wildfire seasons clearly demonstrated that the website is not sufficient in terms of ease of updating and flexibility of content. Currently, the process to update content on the website is highly technical and takes a long time to update. Further, members of the public find the website hard to navigate and important information is buried and challenging to find. As a main communication tool for the CRD, the website needs to be user-friendly with accessible information and it needs to be easily updateable, especially during emergencies.

Strategy: Submit an RFP and hire a web design company to redesign the website. This will be at least a two-year project.

4. **Goal:** Conduct improvements on the CRD website to streamline the process to update the website during an EOC activation.

Rationale: The website is one of the CRD's main communications tools during an emergency and is a key source of information for the public. Currently, updating the website for emergency updates is very time-consuming and requires multiple steps and inputs. This creates a bottleneck when speed is of the essence and leaves room for error when items have to be posted in multiple places.

Strategy: The Communications Department will work with the CRD’s website developer to improve the back-end workflow on the website specific to EOC updates.

5. **Goal:** Develop a public engagement policy and build staff capacity to conduct effective public engagement processes.

Rationale: The public has a growing need for information that allows them to make informed choices in their personal lives as citizens. They want and need to be involved in decisions on public issues. Further, engaging the public is part of the legislative requirements for local governments. The Cariboo Regional District has made extensive efforts around education, outreach and engagement on a wide variety of projects and operations and these projects have been very successful. Yet, the CRD does not have a corporate policy to guide public engagement. Developing a policy would ensure public engagement is done with purpose and is consistent and organized across all departments.

IAP2’S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

The IAP2 Foundation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.



		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION				
		INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To provide decision-making in the hands of the public.	
	PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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Strategy: The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) has developed an international standard in public participation processes (www.iap2.org). Many local governments in B.C. are adopting the IAP2 spectrum of public participation as the standard for public engagement. Funding is allocated for IAP2 training for key managers and staff as well as for the Board.

6. **Goal:** Conduct media

training with elected officials and key managers.

Rationale: It has been several years since the CRD Board and management have received professional media training. After the election in 2018, it is the perfect opportunity to provide this training for newly elected or re-elected Board members.

Strategy: Funding is allocated in the 2019 budget to host a professional media training session. This training could be coordinated with member municipalities and/or local First Nations to increase the cost-effectiveness of bringing in a trainer.

7. **Goal:** Review the CRD’s electoral area signs.

Rationale: The CRD Board requested a review of the CRD’s electoral area signs. Many of the signs are in disrepair. The CRD previously had a contract with Ministry of Transportation contractors to maintain the signs, but that agreement is no longer in place, meaning no one is currently maintaining or cleaning the signs.



Strategy: Review the status of the signs in the region, work with the Ministry of Transportation to acquire permits for the signs and determine the costs associated with maintaining the electoral area boundary signs, before deciding on next steps for the signs.

2020 Goal

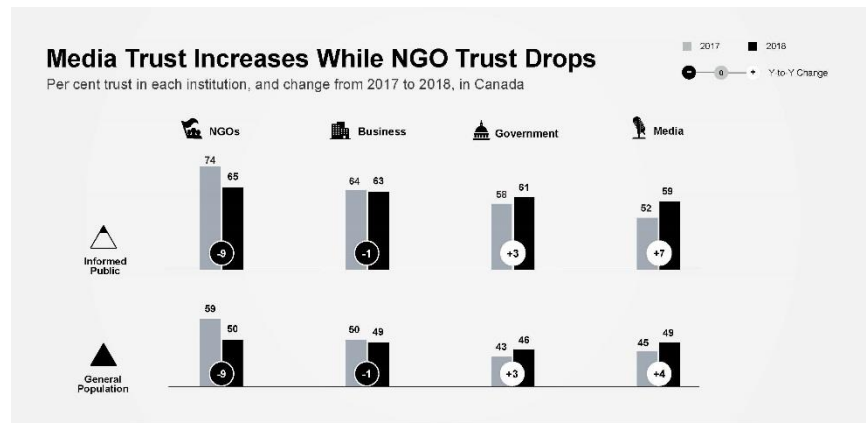
Goal: Continue with the redesign of the Cariboo Regional District website.

Rationale: The website is one of the CRD’s main communication tools and is the public face of the CRD online. In general, websites need to be redesigned every 4-5 years; the CRD website was last redesigned in 2014. The 2017 and 2018 wildfire seasons clearly demonstrated that the website is not sufficient in terms of ease of updating and flexibility of content. Currently, the process to update content on the website is highly technical and takes a long time to update. Further, members of the public find the website hard to navigate and important information is buried and challenging to find. As a main communication tool for the CRD, the website needs to be user-friendly with accessible information and it needs to be easily updateable, especially during emergencies.

Strategy: Work with a web design company, IT and CRD departments to transition and update content and launch the new website.

Significant Issues & Trends

In our 21st century reality, the public has high expectations for instantaneous communication, transparency and public engagement and has a lack of trust in government institutions.



Communicating well has a ripple effect on the organization, because the heart of communications is relationship building. Building relationships is key for transparency, connecting with the public and rebuilding trust. The need to communicate effectively and cohesively has never been more critical or demanded.

While trust in government has slightly improved in Canada in 2018 compared to 2017, the general population still only indicates 46% trust in government institutions, which is lower than their trust in media, NGOs or business.



Goal: Celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Cariboo Regional District.

- Completed. Six birthday parties were hosted throughout the region, 50th anniversary promotional items were purchased and distributed, float decorations were purchased, and a photo contest was hosted on social media. We received nearly 700 photos through the contest and saw a significant increase in engagement on our corporate CRD Facebook page. CRD staff also held a 50th anniversary spirit week and an internal photo contest to celebrate the anniversary.



Goal: Conduct system and content updates on the Cariboo Regional District website.

- Completed and ongoing. Worked with several departments to update web content including Protective Services and Environmental Services, and will continue to make content updates as needed. Significant system updates are in progress on the back-end of the website and will be completed by the end of 2018.

Goal: Seek funding for website development.

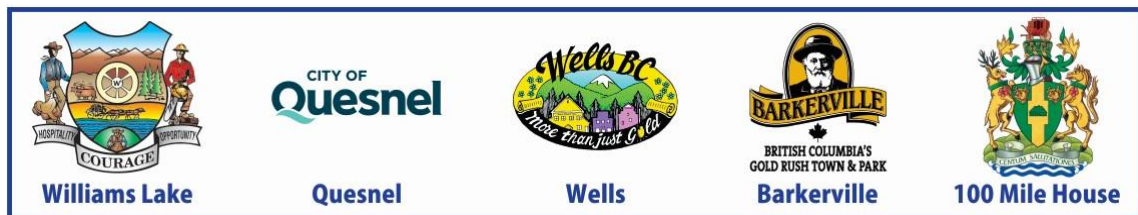
- Partially completed and ongoing. Explored several funding options, including NDIT and Rural Dividend grants, both of which indicated our project scope does not fit within their funding criteria. Currently working with Red Cross about the possibility of funding.

Goal: Develop a public engagement policy and build staff capacity to conduct effective public engagement processes.

- Carried forward. Have received quotes from training consultants and working to schedule training for early 2019. Will develop the policy in conjunction with training and with newly elected Board.

Goal: Update the four main CRD welcome signs with current municipal logos and conduct any required maintenance of the structures.

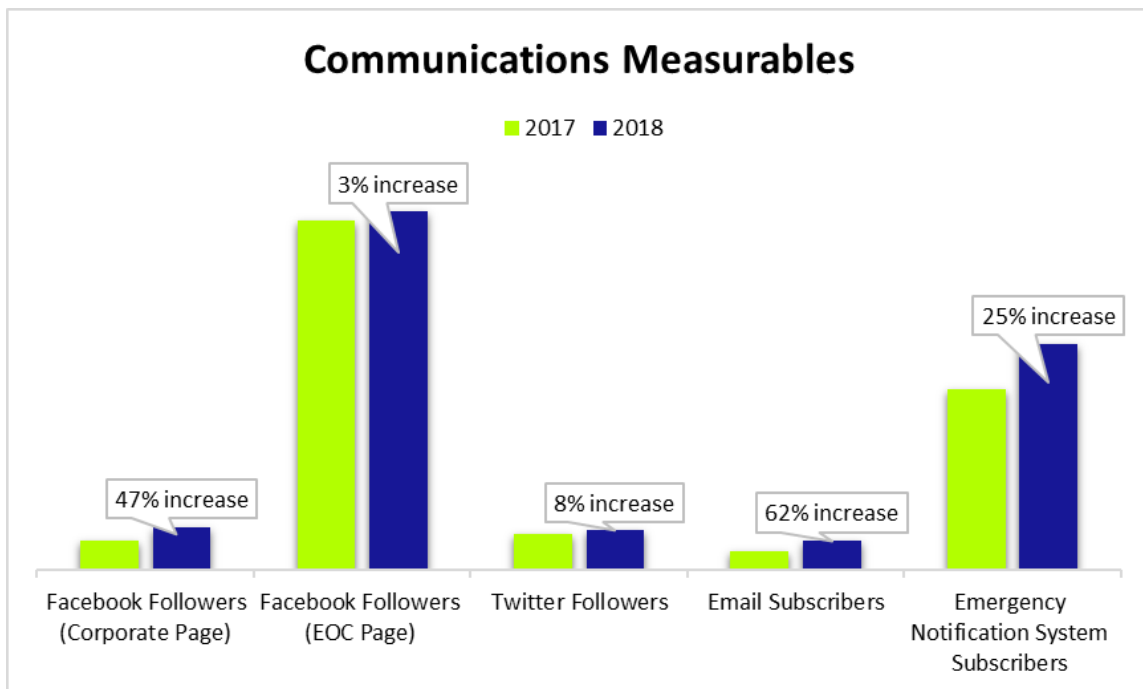
- Completed.



Other Accomplishments

- Hosted two multi-agency information fairs in the spring for the North Cariboo and South Cariboo, focused on emergency preparedness.
- Provided communications and public consultation support for three referendums and the general election:
 - o South Cariboo Recreation Centre expansion referendum

- Interlakes fire truck referendum
- North Cariboo airport service referendum
- Delivered emergency communications during the EOC activations for spring flooding and summer wildfires (spanning 10 weeks).
- Presented about emergency communications at five conferences, educating other local governments and communications professionals and raising the profile of the Regional District's emergency communications efforts and learnings.
- Published the annual UpFront newsletter in spring and winter.
- Worked with the Heritage Committee to develop a communications plan and updated heritage driving guide brochure.
- Updated the CRD's corporate communications plan.
- Provided event, booking and speechwriting support for CRD Directors attending local events and conferences such as LGLA, NCLGA, FCM and UBCM.



Communications Tactic	Measurables
Facebook (Corporate Page)	890 new followers (47% increase)
Facebook (EOC Page)	593 new followers (3% increase)
Twitter	195 new followers (8% increase)
Email Subscriptions	734 new subscribers (62% increase)
Media Interviews	59 media interviews (since Jan. 1, 2018)
Emergency Notification System	2,903 new subscribers (25% increase)
News Releases <i>**doesn't include EOC news releases</i>	41 news releases (58% increase over 2017)
Website	220,800 website visits (70% less than last year)

****Note:** Statistics are calculated from Sept. 2017-Sept. 2018, unless otherwise indicated