



## Media Release

October 2, 2020

### GPRTA Board Expands Scope

The Grande Prairie Regional Tourism Association Board has welcomed several new members to ensure greater representation of key sectors within the region.

During a policy and bylaw review earlier this year, it was recognized the board would benefit from a broader range of tourism industry partners.

“The people who know the tourism industry best are the people in the tourism industry,” says Board President Johnathan Clarkson. “They hold the experience that operators and individual businesses face every day. The industry needs to be more fully represented to really round out our board more.”

Clarkson is entering his fourth term as President.

“This is a positive change for the tourism association and will be of great benefit for our industry partners. It is important to have the pulse of the industry and to be informed of current successes and struggles. The new makeup of the board allows us to achieve an important goal which is to be the voice of tourism for our Region and have a strong Regional representation at the Travel Alberta table as we work to recover tourism for the Region” says Executive Director Terry Dow.

“Our Board includes representation from Indigenous tourism, professional services, the event sector, sport tourism, marketing, and industry that represents business, community and service organization focus,” she says.

“Earlier this year, we spent a great amount of time reviewing policy and bylaws. We realized adding categories that will allow us to emerge from COVID successfully was the way to move forward,” she says. “The committee recognized we needed more diversity and wider industry representation. Another goal that is top of mind is to make tourism more top of mind for residents, municipalities and visitors.”

To help increase the GPRTA's profile in the region Dow now sits on the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum and Grande Prairie DownTown Association boards in reciprocal arrangements. The executive directors of those organizations also serve on the GPRTA Board.

There is now alignment between the Association and the Destination Marketing Fund (which supplies virtually all of the GPRTA's marketing funds) terms of reference. A reciprocal board representation arrangement is now in place with Sandi Neville (Four Points by Sheraton) serving on the Board as DMF Chair.

The new members are:

- **Dave Anderson** offers his flair for the entertainment realm as President of BuckWild, bringing world-class bull riding to Grande Prairie. He's a former Stompede president.
- **George Emmett** is the co-founder of GR8 Solutions Ltd., specializing in customer service and team building training, helping clients improve business focus and developing hidden talents within their organization.
- **Francois Fournier**, retired Athletics Director at Grande Prairie Regional College, was also general manager of the 2010 Arctic Winter Games, and part of the 1995 Canada Winter Games sponsorship committee.
- **Charmaine Willier-Larson** is owner/operator of Bannock n Bed Inn, located on the Sucker Creek First Nation offering a bed and breakfast and Indigenous cultural experience. She helped create and served as a member for the Indigenous Tourism Alberta Board.
- **Joanne Peckham** is the Network Co-ordinator for IMPACT Grande Prairie (formerly Prevention of Family Violence). Her vast career experience includes being a chamber of commerce manager, managing a radio station and serving as a town councillor.
- **Christine Young** is a member of the sales and marketing team at Image Design. As an avid traveller, she is looking forward to the opportunity to promote tourism in the region.

Clarkson was re-elected as President at the GPRTA Annual General Meeting. Recently promoted as General Manager at the Nitehawk Year-Round Adventure Park, Clarkson has worked at the venue for 16 years. He's also a member of the Destination Marketing Fund.

Paulette Butler, General Manager at the Sandman Hotel where she's been employed 12 years in a variety of positions, was re-elected to the Board. She's also a Destination Marketing Fund committee member.

Returning Board members are Vice President Karna Germsheid (GP Regional Sport Connection), Wendy Bosch (DownTown Association), Linden Roberts (Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum), and Don Moon (Evergreen Park).

Municipal appointments include: Cyndi Corbett (Town of Beaverlodge), Chelsea De Ruiter, (Village of Hythe), Daryl Beeston (County of Grande Prairie), Isak Skjaveland (Town of Sexsmith), Jackie Clayton (City of Grande Prairie), and Tyler Olsen (Municipal District of Greenview).

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