

Swift Current an excellent retirement community, according to survey

Swift Current has an extremely high rating as a retirement community, which should be used to help promote the city, according to findings in a recent survey.

The Action Swift Current Seniors' Committee survey found that more than 90 per cent of respondents indicated they felt safe and secure in the community.

The committee heard from 485 Swift Current and area residents, most of whom were older than 70 and retired.

Although nearly 20 per cent had some concerns with shortages of health care workers, long waiting lists and poor hospital facilities, seniors were generally very positive about the quality of care provided by doctors, nurses and health professionals, said committee Chair Glenn Hanke, who summarized the survey results at Monday's City Council meeting.

Homecare services, hospital services, private care providers and pharmacists and drug stores also were rated either good or excellent,

"In general terms, we should be blowing our horn, to put it mildly. This survey gives an overwhelming positive response to Swift Current as the place to retire," Hanke said.

Hanke noted, however, transportation is an area the committee said needs improvements.

"The committee feels that an integrated bus service with school children and regular passengers would make a more efficient system rather than having two systems. We realize that government funding and coordination of the systems are hurdles to overcome, but not insurmountable," he said.

"We urge (The City Transit Committee) to use innovative 'out of the box' thinking to solve this problem. Small vans may even be an option," said Hanke, who praised the city's special needs transportation service operated by the

Saskatchewan Abilities Council as a reasonable, cost effective system.

The City Transit Committee represents Action Swift Current, the City of Swift Current and a number of public and private agencies. The committee is now conducting a survey, which is not limited only to seniors, to review the need for and interest in scheduled bus service.

However, Swift Current's Chief Administrative Officer Matt Noble cautioned that municipality-operated transportation services come with a high price tag.

"Transportation and bus service is one of the largest losers in any municipal operation in any community with the exception of the city of Toronto, which has a tremendous population base, and which also was just granted \$2 billion from the federal government to enhance their transportation system," said Noble, who suggested a partnership between business and the community is one option the committee should explore.

Councilors also indicated at the meeting that the present City Transit system would be more heavily utilized if residents were aware of the service, which will pick up passengers anywhere in Swift Current and transport them to wherever in Swift Current and transport them to wherever they want in the city for \$1.50 per ride.

*Press Release Date:
The Southwest Booster
April 24, 2004*