

2013 Town of Penhold
Community Needs Assessment
Report



Final Research Report
Executive Summary



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between 2006 and 2011, Penhold was one of the fastest growing communities in Alberta. Penhold's population increased from 1971 people to 2375 which was a 20% increase (Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population). Penhold is a community that is centrally located on Highway 2A between Red Deer and Innisfail. The 2012 Town of Penhold Municipal Census Report reveals a population of 2476 people. Of this population, 989 dwellings chose to take part in the municipal census. The largest of this population group; 18.1%, consists of 25-34 year olds, the second largest group; 367 people or 14.8% of the population chose not to provide their age (Municipal Census Report, 2012, pg. 1). The population of Penhold is also quite young as children aged 4 and under account for 8.8% and children aged 5 to 14 years account for 13.5% of Penholds' total population (Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population). The largest segment of the population; 1058 people have lived in Penhold for over 5 years, while the second largest segment; 474 people did not provide a response (Municipal Census Report, 2012, pg. 3). Of the 989 dwellings, 165 homes or 16.7% answered that they had children that attended Penhold schools. The majority response did not answer the question or answered no (pg. 4).

A windshield survey of Penhold will reveal:

A community that has a small grocery store, post office, building supplies store, two schools (elementary and middle school), two gas stations with convenience stores, a community hall, fire station, one family restaurant and lounge, liquor store and bar, hair salon, spa and massage therapy, seniors drop in centre, church, day care and before & after school aged child care program, youth club, service clubs, boards & committees, and a multiplex that houses an arena, gymnasium, fitness centre, running track, library, playschool, Town of Penhold municipal office, dance studio, meeting rooms and a concession and lounge. There is no medical centre with a doctor or a pharmacy and currently no public transit. There are a large number of home based businesses according to the Municipal Census; of the 989 homes surveyed, 70 or 7% indicated that they had a home based business (Municipal Census Report, 2012, pg. 4). A listing of other businesses can be found on the Business Directory page of the Town of Penhold website, www.townofpenhold.ca. In 2013, there were a total of 169 development permits submitted which included 51 single family homes, 8 multi-family homes, 1 manufactured home, 65 additions/garage/deck, 3 commercial, 2 industrial, and 39 miscellaneous permits. Currently in this development is a new school (grades 7-12) located and attached adjacent to the Penhold Regional Multiplex which is set to open in September 2014, a larger competitively priced grocery store, along with a strip mall located along Highway 2A. With the growth and change in the community, the Community Services Department felt it was an opportune time to take a closer look at the community to help identify emerging needs.

A review of soft services was recognized and the Community Services Department were interested in getting to know the experiences and priorities of local families and individuals so that their needs can be better addressed. It is important to the department that their work enriches the lives of Penhold residents by targeting the issues that are important to its community members. In May 2013, the Community Services Department mailed out a needs assessment containing 55 questions to the community, as well as made the survey available via a link to *SurveyMonkey*™. A total of 200 surveys were returned; meaning that a return rate of 18.74% was accomplished.

This survey was designed to provide future direction to the Community Services Department of the Town of Penhold for (up to) the next five years. The vision is that the Community Services Department plays an essential role in encouraging community participation and social investment through the Town of Penhold and to do so, they needed to know the experiences, needs and wants of residents. The survey data should equip the Community Services Department with the knowledge it needs to connect with the community and become more relevant and recognized.

Summary:

In our opinion, further research and evaluation is needed as there are areas of the survey that did not produce sufficient data. Neutral responses (ie. not sure, don't know) and skipped questions in various sections of the survey contributed to the insufficient data. Possible explanations for the neutral and skipped responses include: unclear understanding of the questions or the topic did not affect or concern the respondent. Although we can only provide a theory as to why questions were not completed, we can produce the data in other ways. Engagement with key demographic groups, such as verbal conversations and focus groups will provide insight into areas needing further explanation. Furthermore, evaluation of existing programs and services will ensure ongoing quality of service and that the needs of the participants in the community are being met.

The Community Services department will incorporate information obtained from the needs assessment into their service planning. Given the timeframe of completion on this document, there are areas where work has already begun in order to productively utilize the information obtained from the assessment.

The needs assessment reveals:

- 51.22% of respondents volunteer outside of Penhold with the remaining either volunteering solely within Penhold (31.71%) or split between Penhold and elsewhere (17.02%). Majority **volunteer preferences** include: Community Events and Celebrations, School based activities or events, Church or other places of worship, and Sports Teams.

- **The most common ways people receive information** include: 1) Penhold Reporter newsletter (87.96%), 2) Family and Friends/Word of Mouth (40.31%), 3) Innisfail Province (39.79%), 4) Town of Penhold Website (22.51%), 5) Town of Penhold Facebook page (22.51%), 6) School Newsletters and Handouts (14.66%), and 7) Other sources (10.47%) include Red Deer Advocate, sign boards, bulletin boards, and Penhold Happenings Facebook page.
- **42.62% of respondents answered “yes, most of the time”, to having the supports to effectively cope with crises or stressful life events.** 24.59% responded “all of the time”, 18.03% responded “sometimes”, 6.56% responded “rarely”, and 8.20% responded that they “never” have the support(s) to cope.
- **85.13% of respondents have not had difficulty affording basic needs** such as groceries, clothing, housing (rent/mortgage) or medical services within the last two years.
- 46.25% of respondents are able to afford extracurricular activities (i.e. sports, dance, arts, etc.) for their children and/or youth to their satisfaction. **40% of respondents expressed challenges affording extracurricular activities for their family to the extent that they wish they could** and 13.75% are not able to afford extracurricular activities for their children.
- **78.44% of respondents prefer to access community services (supports and resources) in Penhold.**
- **12.50% of respondents reported that members of their household would be “very likely” to use public transportation should it be available.** 97.34% of respondents typically travel to places driving their own vehicle and few have difficulties obtaining needed services or resources due to lack of transportation.
- **41.79% report that either they or someone in their household has personally known a victim of family or dating violence/abuse.** There is expressed interest in attending information sessions and workshops about family violence/abuse. **Respondents are most interested in learning about topics that deal with healthy relationships, elder abuse, how to spot an abuser, the effects of family violence on children, and how to help a friend/family member or co-worker who is being abused.**

- **Current childcare needs:** 28.26% of respondents answered “No, but I anticipate a need for childcare in the next five (5) years,” while 16.85% of respondents answered “Yes” to their household needing childcare.
- Youth programs that respondents feel are/would be valuable include: **recreational activities and organized sports. Other areas deemed valuable include after school drop-in programs, workshops and information sessions on youth-based topics and concerns, mentorship programs, church led youth groups,** and sixteen (16) respondents answered “Other.” Three (3) of these respondents that answered “Other” mentioned a skate park would be valuable in Penhold.
- **85.99% of respondents stated that Recreational Activities for families are/would be valuable in Penhold.** Other areas deemed valuable include Family Events (78.34%), Sporting Activities (71.97%), and Support Groups/Informational Workshops (44.59%).
- **65.06% of respondents stated that Penhold should offer more educational workshops and community information sessions.** Topics of interest include: **health related topics such as weight management, heart health and chronic disease management. Second popular topics include, bullying and financial topics such as budgeting and saving. Thirdly, there was interest in parenting support and child development topics.**

Recommendations:

1. Children, Youth, Families and Seniors

- Develop a collaborative approach to childcare to solve issues such as childcare space, while at the same time promoting the development of healthy children.
- Provide programs and activities for children, youth, adults, families and seniors.

2. Community

- Create a sense of belonging and community spirit in the community; forging connections between groups and between community members to create an inclusive environment.
- Empower the community to take ownership of activities and programs that are offered.
- Encourage community-focused sponsorship and funding to support individuals and families with affordability needs enabling participation in fee-based activities.
- Continue to monitor service opportunities for a range of individuals.

3. Workshops & Programs

- Enhance current educational and information-based sessions/workshops and programs; specifically topics identified in the survey: health-related topics, financial topics, parenting, child development, youth-based topics and healthy relationships.

4. Communication

- Review methods of communication to ensure that the community is affectively receiving information and ensure that the community can also affectively communicate their needs and concerns.
- Promote awareness of services the Community Services Department provides to the community. This will help educate and reach those in need of services and increase participation in events and programs.