



**Arts Centre for Edson Society Press Release
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artscentreforedson.ca**

Why is ACES Not Fundraising Right Now?

If there is one question that the Arts Centre for Edson Society (ACES) is asked the most, it has to be "why aren't you fundraising right now?" And when ACES answers the question, people always say, "that makes a lot of sense".

"I can't count how many times I've been asked that question," says ACES President Peter Taylor. "I feel like I should walk around with a tape recorder so I can just hit play when people ask it."

The question of why they are not fundraising is a good one as the group is lobbying to build a multi-million dollar expansion onto the Edson and District Recreation Complex. The expansion would include a 500 seat performing arts theatre and visual arts gallery, as well as some much-needed renovations including an insulated curling rink, bleachers in the curling rink, an expanded deck next to the lounge and upgrades to the electrical and sprinkler systems.

ACES answer all boils down to their willingness to work with the Town of Edson.

"First of all, Edson Town Council suggested that we shouldn't fundraise at this time," says Taylor. Even though Council approved the concept in principle in June 2011, they officially told ACES in December 2011 that they are not currently in the financial situation to afford a facility of this size. Instead of pursuing with the ACES project, the Town felt it needed to address two needs in the community first: developing Hillendale Phase Two and a sewer line in the west of Edson. "We completely understand where the Town is coming from," says ACES Secretary Treasurer Shari McDowell. "When they told us they couldn't move forward with our project at this time, we said that is fine. Remember, they didn't say 'no', they said 'not right now.'" The Town has been encouraging ACES to become 'shovel ready' by having all their architectural drawings in place for when large funding is available.

ACES also feels that by fundraising they would be misrepresenting the Town. "If we show up at local businesses and ask for money for this facility, we are also implying the project is going ahead right now," says Taylor. "And we would also be implying the Town is financially supporting us." Taylor added to imply such things would have very negative affect on the relationship between ACES and the Town. "The most important thing to remember is that it would be nearly impossible to fundraise the entire amount of the facility," adds Taylor. "Our research on other facilities around the province has proven this." He adds that ACES will need the financial support from the local governments to cover most of the capital cost and the operational costs. "When the time is right, we are optimistic that the Town will back us financially, and our research shows that private donations will follow public support," says Taylor.

On top the relationship with the Town is the fact that the future of the facility may still evolve into something else. Currently, the concept is to attach the arts centre to the Rec Complex, however that idea could change. "Lots of things could happen," says ACES Vice-President Dave Michie. "We might continue with this idea; local governments may want to build a brand new facility; or perhaps we could attach to another complex." Michie added that it would be wrong to fundraise for something that hasn't been officially approved. He also added that no matter what shape the arts centre takes, that it will still happen. "A lot of people strongly support this facility. And with ACES hard work combined with the great partnerships we are making in the community, it will become a reality."

In the meantime, ACES is still preparing to fundraise in the future. They have officially approved their fundraising packages, which are available on their website at artscentreforedson.ca. However, those packages will be put to use once the Town gives the go-ahead on the project.

“Numerous businesses have approached us willing to donate funds,” says Taylor. “But we have stayed the course and told them to hold onto their money until the time is right.” He adds that the business support is there, which is a great indication that the project is seen as a need in the community.

If you would like more information on this article please feel free to contact Peter Taylor, President of ACES at 780-725-2006, visit their website: artscentreforedson.ca or join the Facebook page: “Arts Centre for Edson Society”.