

**Arts Centre for Edson Society
Election 2013
Responses Town of Edson Candidates**

1. How do you feel arts and culture enriches our community?

Greg Pasychny: Arts and culture enriches our community by enhancing our quality of life and providing a much needed balance to our everyday routines.

Robert Wilkinson: I feel art and culture enriches the community like sports a lot like sports it gets people together and focused on achievements. Giving life to the community really.

Trevor Bevan: Did not reply.

Brian Boyce: Arts and culture: literature, performing arts, visual arts, music, etc. provide beauty, enjoyment/entertainment, education and inspiration to patrons and participants. These experiences bring people together and enrich our lives.

Gean Chouinard: Arts broadens your mind. From the young to the old, the arts is something everyone can enjoy.

Louise Connolly: Arts and culture are key to any community as are sports and recreational activities. These are the things that make a community liveable, what takes us beyond our work.

Jim Gomuwka: Living a significant part of my life in Edson, I can honestly say that the arts and culture community of Edson has flourished. We have some amazing talent in our community. Moreover, we are offering the next generation an opportunity to succeed and enrich their lives in Edson.

Terri-Lynn Hamilton: It is through arts and culture programs that a community is able to express its self. It provides valuable experiences and opportunities to our youth to be creative and constructive. These programs need to be supported by town council.

Peter Lavallee: See below.

Troy Sorensen: Arts and culture broaden our ability to share ideas and accept opinions, creating an empathetic community that supports one another.

Tammy Strang: The arts and culture inspires vision, provides leadership, encourages arts education and supports artistic and cultural excellence that enriches our lives. All these things make up a healthy, full-enriched life where we can grow or kids, youth and families can be creative and be involved.

John Walker: I think arts and culture are extremely important. Arts and culture are what separate us from the animals. I do not want to live in a community that does not have a strong love for the arts. Culture is just as important. Culture is what identifies us and what we can be proud of. I think a community without the enriching power of arts and culture ceases to be a community all together.

Janet Wilkinson: As a teacher, I am aware of the benefit that art has in a child's learning. A colleague once pointed out that there is nothing that cannot be learned, if it is accompanied by music. Our community has many art and culture events such as the Palette and Pottery Exhibit and Arts on Fire. Classes are offered in different mediums through the arts center located at the library. We have many talented artists and potters in the community who share their talents as instructors. I have attended most of the Rotary in the Park performances. The attendance has been disappointing for a town that desires to have a larger venue for performances. I often attend functions at the library and the Red Brick, I am a season ticket holder for the Chautauqua performances.

2. Do you support the proposed arts centre project in Edson? Why or why not?

Pasychny: I definitely support new projects and the arts centre being one of them. I really like how much thought was put into make an existing facility more functional, you can tell a lot of planning and thought went into the design. Like any new project it would be a huge asset to our community.

Wilkinson: No I think ACES should consider the current hospital with a east side theatre

Bevan: Did not reply.

Boyce: I do support the arts centre, although it is currently not my first priority. The recreation centre has a large under-utilized curling rink and the synergy of combining some of that space with an arts centre would make it a more valuable regional asset.

Chouinard: Yes I support the arts centre. The proposal put forth to Council was complete. It will upgrade and modernize an already existing building (Rec Complex), making it useable year round. It will be used by everyone (ie school concerts) and event functions (ie 100th anniversary like the ESO and Shumpka Dancers).

Connolly: I am not campaigning to make a choice on which facilities will happen and which ones won't. The next Town Council must make these choices along with many other infrastructure projects on the town's future agenda. The town's ongoing infrastructure plan must be adjusted to ensure all required facilities can be built while at the same time not overburdening the tax payer.

Gomuwka: In one word, no. Peter Taylor and I have had a couple conversations in regards to my position on this project. Although I applaud ACES for its attempt at renovating and recreating use for the Edson and District Recreation Complex, I hold strong in my position that this community can only operate one facility. I am only in full support of one multiuse facility that houses both the Fieldhouse and Arts Centre. Why?

- One building. One operation. One set of operating costs.
- If the Municipality is to lobby for Provincial funds for one project, we will lessen the chance of the second project from receiving the same funds in the future, or delaying the start of the second project.
- If both projects are in one building, you will increase your usage and lessen the potential operational deficit.

Hamilton: There is an obvious need for an arts center in Edson and I do believe that we will see this project to completion. However prior to breaking ground there needs to be a plan in place to fund the construction, maintenance and all programs that will be run out of the facility.

Lavallee: See below.

Sorensen: I absolutely support this project. It has an excellent business plan, a wide variety of user groups, and would revitalize the Edson & District Recreation Complex.

Strang: Venues such as hockey rinks, pools, museums, and art galleries are all important places in the community, because it's just as important to be able to access sports facilities and parks as arts and culture spots.

Walker: I do support the proposed arts centre project. I am very impressed with the work that ACES has done so far in order to get the project going. I think an excellent arts facility like this one would benefit the town and county exponentially. It is clear the people working on this project are extremely passionate and eager to make things happen and I really respect that. Of course, the drawback of this project is the cost. Excellent facilities do not come cheap. So I think we need to make sure the project is economically viable. I really like ACES' business plan and I believe if the right people are put in charge, the project can recoup its costs quickly and eventually even turn a profit. As long as the project continues to be a net benefit for the community, it has my full support.

Wilkinson: I do support the concept of an arts center in Edson. I have always been troubled by the location. I feel it is very dangerous to cross the main highway. We do need a venue that is large enough to support performances in Edson. I feel the public need to be included in the decision making and a plebiscite is warranted.

3. If elected, how much of a priority do you place on the proposed arts centre?

Pasychny: Like all projects it will come down to funding. With the new Yellowhead County deal that we struck in the last term, it definitely allows us to move forward and look at new projects. It will be up to the new council as a whole to set that priority and not an individual decision.

Wilkinson: With the changes I would be for it, if it was in the golf course I would not invest such a positivity toward it.

Bevan: Did not reply.

Boyce: Project priority will be set by the new council during the budget process. My personal priorities are: (1) a new pool with a walking track (2) Arts Centre. Priorities may change due to grant availability such as happened with funding for the new museum. A new sewer line to our west boundary is a must and is pending the results of the scoping study. Part of that project funding will come from off-site levies. Construction of major, new projects could not likely start until 2015.

Chouinard: As a want of the community I put a high priority on the arts centre. It will be heavily used and bring in many new users to the Rec Complex.

Connolly: My decision will keep in mind the existing facilities that are found in Edson. We need to ensure these facilities are kept up to date. We need a plan that works so we can have both new facilities while modernizing our older facilities.

Gomuwka: If elected, I would commit myself to sitting down with both the Arts Centre and the Fieldhouse to come up with one vision for both projects. When both projects agree on one concept, I will commit my support to a financial plan that will bring an Arts Facility and Fieldhouse to Edson, but I will not support a tax increase to do so. I will support the future fundraising and lobbying that will need to be done to bring this project to reality.

Hamilton: My main priority is going to be working on the budget to get the funding in place for projects such as the arts center.

Lavallee: See below.

Sorensen: I would strongly encourage Council and town administration to do an in-depth review of the ACES project for eventual scheduling and inclusion in Edson's capital expenditure plan.

Strang: Comes down to what the Edson Resident decides and wants to support when Capital Funding comes available.

Walker: I can't really answer this until I get a better idea of the priority that residents place on the proposed arts centre. If elected, I will want to hear from as many people as possible what is important to them and hopefully together, we can decide on our priorities. For me personally, I think it is one of the top five priorities for the town. But I think I need to spend more time listening to what residents have to say about the subject and see if there are some creative ways we can make this project a reality.

Wilkinson: I feel the Arts Center is needed as well as many other facilities. Our Citizens will have to make choices and decisions that will affect their lives, either Through use or taxation.

Lavallee's Response: Thank you for this opportunity to talk about this matter. We are fortunate in this election to have an excellent group of candidates any of whom will do a superb job of representing our community. This is an exciting time, in that, whomever forms our next town council will have an opportunity to make decisions that will reflect our community's vision of what they want our town to represent. Edson is the gateway to the rest of Yellowhead country. It is a major community on a highway that gives access to north, central and southern British Columbia; with already developed, rail, motor transport and air access.

Your questions deserve considerable thought; they reflect not only the interests of your group; but also the interests of other groups in the community they represent everything from youth sports, to community parks and trails, to the arts. All of the recreational and cultural interests in any community that enhance the quality of life and enjoyment for not only the residence of our town; but, the county and communities around us. Neither I nor any of my fellow candidates would argue against any of these projects in principle.

Limitless resources would mean that we wouldn't have to choose between Field House and Arts Centre; enhancement of the Leisure Centre and the variety highly successful programs, such as Edson Bully Free.

Nor would we have to balance all of the projects against the very expensive prospects of renewal of basic town infrastructure, such as the water and sewer system.

In the real world All of these projects must be kept in balance by the need to keep the tax burden on the citizens of Edson as reasonable as possible. At the same time the town must undertake to attract new industry and business to our community to provide jobs and resources to plan and support projects such as you represent. The questions cannot be boiled down to three simple questions representing the interests of any one group. This is not an abstract argument; a seat on the town council is the most basic form of representation. Those who seek this office are not faces for any one group but we are your neighbors and members with you of this community. We have to find a balance of all of these competing interests and the need to make our community an affordable place to live and provide the cultural and recreational facilities that are affordable and maintainable.

Having Chaired the Culture and Recreation Board in Jasper I absolutely appreciate and support the arts and culture in our community. I recognize the value of the proposed arts centre; but, I must tell you I also recognize the value the proposed Field house. I also know that while both of these projects immeasurably enhance the quality of life in our community; they are expensive to build and expensive to maintain. I have, prior to my retirement, been involved with 9 community's and in none of them were these facilities; either, always used to their fullest potential; nor, did they make sufficient revenue to pay for themselves. I look forward to seeing your plans and proposals for these projects. After looking after the basic requirements of our community, the infrastructure renewal and creating a safe and caring community of our tax payers and our youth. Then we can turn to projects such as your group proposes creating partnerships that bring these facilities to our community.