



Request for Proposals Oral History Project Municipal District of Big Lakes

Introduction

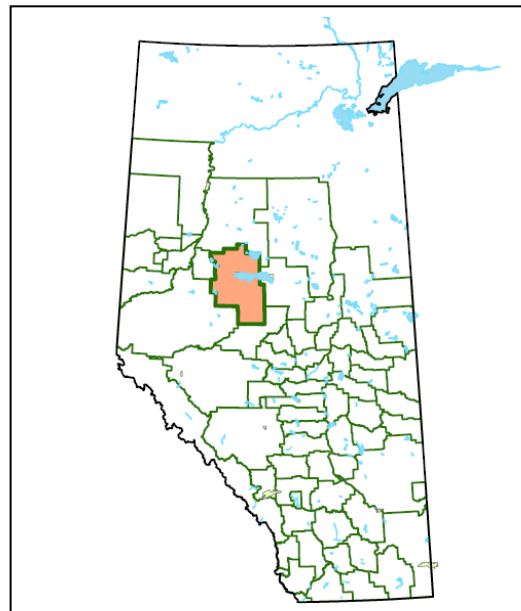
In the spring of 2010, the Municipal District of Big Lakes Council recognised that evidence of our history is being lost every year, and that more must be done to rescue historic knowledge from obscurity. Efforts are underway to attend to our built history, but there was also recognition that saving buildings and artifacts without the stories that bring those artifacts to life is not enough. It is, after all, the stories that make our built heritage truly unique, providing provenance and meaning to the objects themselves, and holding the spirit of our communities.

Our MD Council has embarked on a project that will record some of the oral histories of our older generations. This has required a budget commitment from the MD and further funding from the Alberta Historic Resources Foundation for a research grant. Now that funding is in place, it is time to get the project moving. The next step is to bring in consulting and volunteer personnel.

Municipal Context

The Municipal District of Big Lakes is a rural community in northern west-central Alberta of 4020 people living to the north, south, and west of Lesser Slave Lake, and includes the oil field surrounding the Town of Swan Hills.

The M.D. includes the unincorporated hamlets of Grouard, Enilda, Joussard, Faust, and our newest hamlet, Kinuso, which dissolved from Village status on September 1, 2009. The Towns of Swan Hills and High Prairie, the Gift Lake, East Prairie and Peavine Metis Settlements, and the Kapawe'no, Sucker Creek, Driftpile, and Swan River First Nations are all located within our boundaries. However they are independent bodies: each has its own council and administers its own affairs within its boundaries.



Other facts of note are as follows:

- Incorporated January 1, 1995 after 90 years as an Improvement District.
- Total area - 1,213,094 hectares (2,997,622 acres), stretching from south and east of the Town of Swan Hills to north and west of the Town of High Prairie.
- Most settled areas are along the south shore and west of Lesser Slave Lake.

Project Description

The Municipal District of Big Lakes plans to conduct an oral history research project throughout the municipality, and will take the lead role in the project. This project is a primary research project that will be done in partnership with an Oral History Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives from some of the following organizations within the municipality:

- Pioneer Threshermen's Museum, Triangle
- Native Cultural Arts Museum, Grouard and Area Historical Society and Grouard Seniors, Grouard
- Kinosayo Museum and Kinuso Senior Citizens Club, Kinuso
- High Prairie and District Museum and High Prairie Golden Age Club, High Prairie
- Faust Silver and Gold, Faust.

It is our intention that a consultant (or consultant team) will be hired to accomplish the following:

- establish an approved set of questions to be used to guide the interview process;
- create a list of seniors/elders to be interviewed; interviewees will be selected based on their comfort with the process, their ability to tell stories, their ability to relate their memories to others and their relative importance in the community.
- schedule interviews;
- train volunteers for their role during the interview process; training will include interview tips, photography, use of video and tape recording and FOIP requirements and signed releases;
- interview a selection of Seniors/Elders who are able to relate factual and enlightening stories about their past or the history of the community; interviews may be conducted either with single elders or with groups in collective interviews and may require the presence of volunteers for the comfort of the interviewees; some interviews may require language interpretation services, which volunteers may be able to provide;
- transcribe interview material into readable format; this will include interview tapes, photos and notes, including tapes and notes taken during previous oral history projects where available.
- edit information with respect for individuals and their privacy.
- annotate and index the documentary evidence of interviews for record-keeping purposes.

Three out of our four museums have conducted some previous oral interviews, but there has been no ongoing effort to keep up with the process, and no unified effort to record the stories across the municipality. These past projects have produced recorded video and audio tapes that are now disintegrating on library shelves that will also be lost without some determined efforts to salvage them. This new project will enable either transcription or copying of these irreplaceable prior works, which are currently endangered.

Local volunteers will be recruited primarily from the museum community and seniors groups and will form an Oral History Advisory Committee. This committee will assist with the following:

- Assist the consultant in compiling a list of people to be considered as interview subjects;
- Assist the consultant with contacting interviewees to discuss their potential involvement with the project and to determine their comfort with the project;
- Assist the consultant with scheduling interviews;
- Accompany the consultant on interviews where required and review transcriptions for accuracy of the work;
- In some cases, where appropriate, volunteers will provide translation services for the comfort of Elders/Seniors who are not comfortable being interviewed in English;
- Conducting interviews independently following training and coaching by consultant.

The MD of Big Lakes will provide coordination for the project as a whole, conducting regular meetings with the Oral History Advisory Committee and the Consultant, and providing correspondence, reporting and other resources as required. The MD will not be directly involved in interviews, but will be involved in reviewing transcriptions, tapes and other material produced during this project.

Project Budget

The budget for this project is \$38,960, including \$30,000 cash and the remainder in labour contributed by volunteers and MD staff. This budget cannot be increased and must pay for interviews, transcription, volunteer training and expenses, and reporting as outlined above.

Expectations and Goals

The anticipated outcomes of this Oral History project are as follows:

- Increased awareness of our unique but often overlooked local history, both within and beyond our community;
- Increased community pride and respect for our Elders and Seniors through storytelling;
- Educational benefits for our youth and museum visitors.

This project is a very positive step in claiming and documenting the important history of the people of the MD of Big Lakes.

Since this project will be done in conjunction with our four museums, one of which is associated with Northern Lakes College, there is great potential for the information gathered to be used in exhibits and programs throughout our region, and beyond. Ideas for the use of this material include:

- Travelling exhibit, which can be used both within and outside our region
- Interactive website exhibits, both on museum and municipality website
- Video and audio recordings for school use, compiled for distance learning or classroom use
- Book(s)
- Vignettes for television or website distribution
- Family genealogy use of materials
- Archival documentation for research use.

None of these ideas are within the scope of this project, but this project will lay the groundwork for a variety of potential projects for future consideration either by the municipality or the participant museums.

Final Product

This project will result in interviews, fully transcribed, annotated and indexed. The information will be ready for publication as a technical research document, but not necessarily for commercial publication in book format. In addition, the project will provide transcription of previously undocumented archival interviews existing in partner museums. These works will be separated from the current project, but will also be ready for publication as research documents.

The Municipal District of Big Lakes will maintain ownership of the information and documentation gathered during the project. Each museum within the MD will have a copy of the entire project summary and final transcripts, but original information and media will be kept by the Municipal District of Big Lakes.

Deliverables

The consultant will provide at the completion of the project six (6) copies of the transcribed interviews in both printed and digital format. All audio and video recordings, signed FOIPP forms and other research material gathered during this project will be presented to the M.D. at the close of the project.

Time Frame

The project will begin on May 2, 2011, or as soon as possible after the hiring of the consultant and assembling the committee. The project will begin with:

- Meeting with the Grants Manager at the MD of Big Lakes to confirm arrangements and requirements.
- Meeting with project volunteers.

The project shall be completed no later than December 31, 2011.

Project Reporting Criteria

The Consultant will work closely with the Municipal District of Big Lakes Grants Manager and Oral History Advisory Committee throughout the project and will report directly to the Grants Manager. A final report and interview transcripts will be presented to the MD of Big Lakes Council at the completion of the project.

Consultant Requirements

The Municipal District of Big Lakes is seeking to engage the services of a consultant (or team of consultants) with demonstrated knowledge and skill in the following:

- gathering Oral Histories;
- working with volunteer committees, particularly Seniors/Elders;
- exceptional written and verbal skills;
- knowledge and sensitivity to people of varying ethnic backgrounds, including Aboriginal Elders and senior members of our immigrant population, some of whom may require translators;

- working knowledge of FOIP legislation and documentation required so that this project is in compliance with FOIP legislation;
- willingness to travel within the Municipal District of Big Lakes.

Your proposal shall include:

- an outline of your experience on similar projects, including three references for other relevant projects that you have completed in the past three years;
- list of members of your consultant team, and the involvement of each person on the project; include relevant experience and resumes of key staff who will be involved in the project;
- methodology to be used for the project, including a summary work plan identifying “milestones” in the project and a schedule for completion of the projects. The amount of time required for meetings with the MD representative or the Oral History Advisory Committee should be clearly identified.
- description of how the consultant intends to keep the MD informed of project status.
- Working within the prescribed cash budget of \$30,000, the consultant will produce a detailed breakdown of spending, including:
 - Drafting interview questions
 - Training for volunteers
 - Number of interviews to be completed during the project.
 - Recorded interviews wherever possible, either audio or video
 - Transcription services
 - Writing and printing of final report and oral histories
 - Expenses for travel, accommodations, per diems, report printing and other expenses directly related to this project, including volunteer expenses.

The proposal shall also identify any costs that would be the responsibility of the MD. ***Please note that the M.D. is not liable for any costs incurred in the preparation of your proposal.***

Selection Process

Proposals will be reviewed by the M.D. beginning April 18, 2011, taking into consideration the following criteria:

- Compliance with the requirements of this request for proposal;
- Qualifications and demonstrated expertise of the consultant and any other personnel assigned to the project;
- Assessment of the consultant’s proposed methodology for the project;
- Demonstrated experience with oral interviews and transcription;
- Knowledge of the Municipal District of Big Lakes and its history and culture;
- Scope of projects according to budget available;
- Ability to complete the project within the allotted time frame.

Short-listed consultants will be interviewed. Final selection will take place by April 27, 2011.

Proposal Deadline:

Your proposal must be submitted either by mail, fax or electronic format to the following contact no later than 4:30 pm, April 15, 2011:

Cathy Wilcox, Grants Manager, Municipal District of Big Lakes

Box 239, High Prairie, AB T0G 1E0

Phone: 780-523-5955 Fax: 780-523-4227

Email: grants@mdbiglakes.ca