

211 Expands in Central Alberta

Great news! The 211 phone service is now available to more people in Central Alberta. As of July 26th, residents of Red Deer County, Delburne, Elnora, Penhold, Bowden and Innisfail can call 211 24/7 to find detailed information about social, government, community and health services.

In Red Deer County, Deputy Mayor Christine Moore placed the first call to 2-1-1 in a special launch that included local dignitaries, County staff, as well as representatives from the Calgary Distress Centre and CMHA, which administers the 211 database. Funding for 211 phone service is being provided by the Red Deer and District FCSS and United Way Central Alberta (UWCA) provides funding for the database. UWCA's goal is to bring 211 phone service to all of Central Alberta, and ultimately the entire province.

Later the same day, Mayor Brian Spiller placed the first 211 call on behalf of the Town of Innisfail's 7,800 residents. Innisfail FCSS is providing funding for this expansion.

"It's important that the geographical areas be fairly substantial when new areas are added to the 2-1-1 phone network," said Robert Mitchell, UWCA C.E.O. "That helps with costs and telephone network logistics. Having almost every community in Red Deer County come on board at the same time was a huge plus".

Discussion is underway with Town of Sylvan Lake officials, with the hope that the community will join the network during the next phase of expansion. To the south, the Town of Olds and Mountain View County has announced it intends to join with the next round of expansions. Talks continue as well with Clearwater Water County and its communities, as well as Lacombe County.

"We are still very hopeful that 211 phone service will become a provincial service in the future," said Mitchell. "For the time being, we feel fortunate that Central Albertan communities are seeing the value of 211 and joining the network right away."

This is also the time of year that the 211 database has its annual update. Agencies with services and information in the database are being asked to look at their listings and make any changes and updates where necessary. Changes can be made yearly, or whenever the need arises.

For questions regarding updating your listing, you can contact Christine Curtis at christine@caunitedway.ca