

# Team unveils concept design for permanent exhibit

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ADVOCATE STAFF

The public received its first taste on Wednesday on what a new \$1.5-million permanent exhibit could look like within the Red Deer Museum and Art Gallery.

The design team of Reich and Petch unveiled the concept designs for the 4,500-square-foot space in front of about 20 people.

The Toronto-based firm, which has worked on a number of international projects large and small, was hired in December to work with museum staff on making a first-class exhibit that will entice thousands more visitors annually.

"We think we're on our way to having a compelling and exciting exhibit," said principal Tony Reich during his evening presentation inside the museum.

The museum and art gallery is set to open the exhibit by March 2013. The temporary exhibit gallery will have a lot of rotating exhibits in support of the permanent exhibit.

Anna Robertson, a Red Deer-based interpretive planner with Reich and Petch, said they want to appeal to a range of visitors — from those who want to touch, to those who want to read, to those who want to move quickly through the exhibits.

"We want people to leave saying, 'this is our Red Deer,'" Robertson said.

People will learn more about the 100-plus years

history of Red Deer, as well as the present and future life of Red Deer.

The central theme will revolve around Red Deer's unique settlement history in Western Canada that was shaped by the ingenuity, leadership and community spirit that is still evident today.

The permanent history exhibition will consist of four separate themes — Unique Settlement History, Community Spirit, Innovators and Leaders, and Our Red Deer. Reich said they are ultimately looking for things that make Red Deer unique.

He's particularly intrigued by the museum's top-notch textile collection.

"The textiles are really world class," he said, regarding the collection that includes clothing, quilts, and banners. "They've been really well looked after here."

School groups will be able to gather easily in open spaces, or if they wish, they'll be able to meet in small buildings, like the Stevenson Mall, representational of former

landmarks in the city. Speakers will share their stories inside a space called Club Cafe, named after a restaurant that operated downtown for about 80 years.

"People will be able to circulate freely," said Reich. "It's a very comfortable circular route."

The exhibit will use new technologies to make it a great interactive learning experience.

The stories of various people, such as new and past immigrants as well as city founder Leonard Gaetz, will be told through different forms of media.

## RED DEER MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY



Anna Robertson and Tony Reich

And it's not just the stories of long ago that will be told. The designers are also looking for ideas on who are the interesting entrepreneurs and innovators of today.

Several people in the audience shared their enthusiasm for the project, including one man who said he was glad the room is not "just one big box."

Another woman said she hoped the exhibit will give the history of Red Deer's trails and parkland.

One woman wondered how she would be able to donate to a new fundraising campaign that was just launched.

The exhibit received \$1 million in city dollars, so the museum will need to raise the rest.

The more detailed schematic designs will be coming up next and will be unveiled sometime in May.

Lorna Johnson, executive director of the museum, invited people to check out the concept designs when they are posted on the museum's website within a week. Public input is being sought through the design stage.

Reich encouraged people to participate.

"Sometimes these galleries are once in a generation," he said.

"A million dollars is a lot of money for culture, so it's great if a community can participate to their greatest degree. Come and share your stories, show us things."

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NEWSPAPER RETRACTION FOR THE BEST BUY FEBRUARY 24 CORPORATE FLYER

Please note on page 25 of the February 24 flyer, the Philips PD9012/37 Portable 9" Dual Screen DVD Player (WebCode: 10167009) incorrectly advertised a 5 hour battery life. The portable DVD player is ACTUALLY powered by its adapter and NOT by a built-in battery. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused our valued customers.

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