



Rotary Clubs Blazing trails in the West

by PAUL ENGLEMAN

Calgary's 12 Rotary clubs have teamed up with a local Rotaract chapter and the neighbouring Rotary Club of Cochrane to sponsor an ambitious multiyear project. They're building a network of paths and parks to help people from all walks of life enjoy the Stampede City's natural charms, punctuated with parks, wetlands, recreational sites, and rest stops.

According to local nonprofit Parks Foundation Calgary (PFC), when the Rotary/Mattamy Greenway is completed next year, it will be the longest urban pathway in the world, spanning 138

kilometres and connecting 55 communities and 400,000 residents.

"We wanted something self-sustaining, a signature legacy project that would demonstrate what Rotary does for our community, and we wanted all Rotary clubs in the city to join in," explains Roy Boettger, the past president of the Rotary Club of Calgary who's leading the project, intended to mark the club's 2014 centennial. Several Calgary clubs had done joint projects before, but the Greenway is the first project to include all Calgary clubs. The clubs contributed half of the \$10 million needed

for initial funding, and homebuilder Mattamy Homes provided the other half.

While the clubs' collaboration resulted in construction of the Greenway, the association with PFC had a personal outcome for Myrna Dubé, CEO of the foundation and one of the first people who brought the idea of a greenway to Boettger's attention. An honorary Rotarian and a Paul Harris fellow since the 1990s, Dubé became a full-fledged member of the Rotary Club of Calgary South in 2015 while working on this project.

Calgary isn't the only city going green with help from

Rotary clubs. In Prince Albert, Sask., 750 kilometres southeast of Calgary on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River, work is nearly finished on a 23-kilometre pathway that will encircle the city of 35,000. The Rotary Club of Prince Albert has worked closely with city officials and donated an estimated \$200,000 to the effort, which was also funded in part by the provincial and federal governments.

Although it is only one-sixth the size of the Greenway in Calgary, the Rotary Trail is having an outsize impact on the community, according to Dave Fischl, a member of the Prince Albert club who has chaired the city's trail project committee since work began 15 years ago.

"You can go on that trail any day and see young people, families with kids learning to ride bikes, people getting exercise, everyone from cyclists to older people in wheelchairs," Fischl says. "It's a fantastic endeavour, definitely something that the Rotary club and the city of Prince Albert are proud of."

Like Dubé in Calgary, Fischl also became a Rotary member while collaborating on a project, joining the Prince Albert club in 2011. "The Rotarians we worked with had been so good to us as a committee that I decided to become a member when I retired a few years ago. It's a great club," he says. "I didn't realize just how much work members do for the community."