



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL KOOTENAY MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Pioneer Arena and Nelson Civic Centre to close for the season

Nelson, BC: The Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) will close the Pioneer Arena in Castlegar on January 18 and the Civic Centre in Nelson on January 29 for the remainder of the winter season. The decision was made after much discussion at both the Castlegar and District Recreation Commission meeting on January 12, 2021 and the Nelson and District Recreation Commission meeting on January 14, 2021 to close the two ice sheets.

On [January 8, 2021 the Public Health Order](#) which restricts adult participation in sport was extended without an expiration date on sections of the order that apply to sport and fitness. Adults have not been able to participate in team sports since November 19, 2020. The restriction on adult participation in team sport and other public health restrictions has resulted in arena rental revenue decreasing \$118,000 across the RDCK's five arenas between September 14 and December 31, 2020 versus the same time period in 2019. The closure of the arenas is being done to reduce expenditures in response to the reduction in revenue.

"We recognize the shared hardship of this decision and do so with an eye on next year," said Keith Page, Chair, RDCK Recreation Commission No.5. "Moving to a single ice sheet for the remainder of the season recognizes palpable cost and personnel constraints. The community expects us to provide quality, safe and diverse recreation opportunities within budget for all members of our community. Operating a single rink is the service level that can be reasonably delivered within our budget."

The impact of COVID-19 on the RDCK's community services has been significant. Usage of all its facilities throughout the region has dramatically dropped. Adult indoor team sport is not permitted, while minor hockey, the Kootenay International Junior Hockey League (KIJHL) and British Columbia Intercollegiate Hockey League (BCIHL) cannot play games or travel. No games or tournaments have been booked in any RDCK facility, which has impacted revenue. With reduced usage of rinks throughout the RDCK, ice needs can be accommodated by only keeping the ice sheets at the Creston, Castlegar and Nelson and District Community Complexes open for the remainder of the winter season.

"The RDCK supports the Provincial Health Officer and the Province of British Columbia's efforts to keep communities safe by limiting social interaction, but this comes with sacrifices for everyone," said Joe Chirico, General Manager of Community Services. "However, these restrictions have seriously affected the

rental revenue of our recreation services. Decisions like this, although difficult, are important to ensure that the cost of our recreation services are balanced between user fees and taxation.”

The RDCK will continue to deliver recreation programming to support our community’s physical, social and spiritual well-being while adhering to all public health guidelines and ensuring the safety of our community and staff.

Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit www.rdck.ca.

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