



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**CONTACT: Mike Christie (403) 527-9038**  
**mikec@mhcf.ca**

## **COMMUNITY FOUNDATION RELEASES *VITAL SIGNS*, A REPORT ON OUR COMMUNITY'S QUALITY OF LIFE**

**Medicine Hat, Alberta (October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011)** – The Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta today released the fifth annual 2011 *Vital Signs* report, giving Hatters more insight into their community.

The reader-friendly report card tracks and grades Medicine Hat's quality of life in key areas such as the gap between rich and poor, health, housing, and the environment – transforming local facts and figures into a user-friendly comprehensive report.

“Vital Signs takes the pulse on Medicine Hat,” said Rick Redmond, Chair of the Foundation's community leadership committee. “This report touches all things ‘Medicine Hat’. Many people have helped us create this report – those who provide us with the local statistics and the many that have helped grade the indicators.”

Vital Signs is used year-round by the Community Foundation to assist in its grant giving and community leadership activities, Redmond said.

“We use the information from this report to provide insight into the community, thus enabling us to be better grant-makers. Additionally, it positively affects our community leadership functions and we can therefore impact the community on a greater level.”

This year's report shows that, while Hatters may not have seen an increase in leisure trail development, we did see significant investment in our playgrounds.

### ***Medicine Hat's Vital Signs 2011 - Highlights***

- Those surveyed feel that finding quality health care is difficult to get.
- The net worth of individuals has seen a drastic shift since 2007.
- Attendance at the Public Library is up 9.5% since 2006.
- Volunteer hours are up 117% at the Food Bank from 2007-2010.
- Medicine Hat has the highest percentage of low wage earners in all of Alberta's 7 major centres.
- Our Youth (15-24) represent 18.7% of the population.
- Medicine Hat surpasses many communities in Alberta for our participation in the Provincial Rebate program.
- Photo radar sites see a 22.5% decline in motor vehicle collisions.
- Multi-family housing accounts for 40% of construction from 2005-2010.
- Even with a decrease in obesity rates, we continue to be above provincial and national rates.

The report also found that the gap between rich and poor is increasing. From April 2010 – March 2011, 432 individuals presented as being at risk of homelessness. In the same time period homeless shelter beds saw a decrease of 35.7% over 2009.

The report will be formally presented to the community on Thursday, October 6 at a community luncheon. The event will take place from 12-1:30 in Chinook Village's Terrace Room. Tickets are \$25 each and can be purchased through the Foundation office or by calling (403) 527-9038. A panel of local media members will comment on the report, followed by open discussion time for community members in attendance.

### **Vital Signs: Twenty-two Local Reports Released Today**

Vital Signs is part of a growing nation-wide initiative by Canadian community foundations to measure quality of life and take action to improve it. Today, 22 local Vital Signs report cards are being released by community foundations across Canada. A full list of this year's participants and their local reports can be found at [www.vitalsignscanada.ca](http://www.vitalsignscanada.ca).

### **Vital Activity**

Vital Activity is the "so what" of Vital Signs. It will provide advice and pointers about the questions raised by Vital Signs. Questions like "So what's next?" or "What can I do?" and "How can the Community Foundation contribute?" Throughout Vital Signs 2011 there are suggested Vital Activities that everyone can undertake.

Vital Activity is featured in a number of Community Foundation publications and profiles people, programs and projects that enhance the quality of life in Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta.

"Vital Activity demonstrates the very valuable contribution that organizations, governments and individuals make for the well being of our community," said Mike Christie, Executive Director of the Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta. "Vital activities are like the pieces of a jigsaw; when combined, the whole picture makes sense. Our job, with the help of our supporters and donors, is to make sure there are no important pieces of the picture missing."

### **About Community Foundations**

Canada's 178 community foundations are local charitable foundations that help Canadians invest in building strong and resilient places to live, work, and play. They are one of the largest supporters of Canadian charities, providing \$149 million to local organizations. Find out more at [www.cfc-fcc.ca](http://www.cfc-fcc.ca)

### **Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta**

The local community foundation covers the entire Southeastern region of Alberta and was founded in 1992. Over the past 19 years assets have grown to nearly \$7 million. The foundation operates a comprehensive grant making program that has resulted in over \$2.9 million in charitable grants to a wide range of local charities. Funding requests from local agencies always heavily outweigh the available funds. The Community Foundation strongly encourages the support of caring local citizens to help build permanent endowments to keep pace with the needs of our rapidly changing communities.