

# Special status for local group

## Eagle staff

Rosetown may be the first community yet with an Age Friendly organization that has received recognition for maintaining its status, some council members and group leaders learned last week.

Provincial officials have conducted ceremonies at the legislature to honour the 15 communities that have received the Age Friendly designation.

"We thought, 'Why not start recognizing communities that have been doing Age Friendly for some time,'" said Doug Still, who heads the provincial organization, before presenting a certificate to local organizer Hugh Lees. "We don't know of any other province or territory in Canada that does that."

"You are probably first in

the country to be recognized for maintaining recognition," Still said. "You're updating your action plan; you're working into the future with more activity."

"It's something we're really excited about because we see Rosetown and area as a model for other Age-Friendly communities," said the former Humboldt mayor at the town office.

Three other communities, including Moose Jaw, recently attained Age Friendly status and the 15 communities now represent over a half a million residents, Still said.

Age Friendly Rosetown met all the requirements for starting up, including surveying residents about community needs and creating a plan to address some of the concerns, he noted.

The provincial body has learned that "age friendly" means "all ages friendly," he said. Improvements to sidewalks and parks, such

*Continued on Page 3*



# Special status for Age Friendly group

*Continued from Page 1*  
as benches, "benefit everybody," Still said.

"You do some things that are quite unique," since it's "very entrepreneurial" compared to others, with the memorial bench program and for maintaining a social media presence and joining forces with service groups for some projects, he said.

"Those are things that other communities are learning about," Still said.

"We have had fantastic co-operation from town council," Lees said.

Council passed a resolution endorsing the group "before we even had a committee," noted Crystal Storey.

In communities where Age Friendly efforts "are struggling a little bit," it's partly due to their not having a very strong relationship with the local council, Still said.

"The question they often get locally is, 'What's it going to cost?' and Age Friendly brings "no additional cost," he said.

In communities with the designations, municipal



Age Friendly Rosetown organizer Hugh Lees (R) accepts a framed certificate from Age Friendly Saskatchewan chairman Doug Still that recognizes the local committee for maintaining its status, during a ceremony in council chambers on Wednesday afternoon.

staff and councils are to consider building projects "through an Age-Friendly viewpoint," he said. "That doesn't cost extra money. That's just really good co-operation."

Regina administration staff, before approving "anything they spend money on," have to consider it through "an Age-Friendly lens," Still said. "It doesn't cost extra money but it makes for smarter spending."

"We're fortunate to have

Age Friendly to have that view, that lens, to say, 'when you're doing corner sidewalks downtown, could you please add a sloped ramp?'" Mayor Trevor Hay noted. "Well, that makes sense."

"Some ideas they've brought forward are very forward thinking, very thoughtful" and that the average person might not think about, Hay said. "It's been very nice to have this organization to help us with the vision of what Rosetown can be in the

future. As we move along, and these things are to be addressed, we can make those changes. It doesn't all have to be done at once," the mayor said.

Lees noted that the effort to get Canada Post to install doors that open by pushing a button has benefited people of all ages.

Saskatchewan is the only jurisdiction that doesn't help pay for Age Friendly bodies, Still said.

"We beg and steal where we can from other organizations," he said. The provincial organization is part of the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism.

The provincial body comprises eight volunteers who "co-ordinate with local groups," who are "very independent but must meet the Age Friendly model," he said.

Age Friendly Saskatchewan has a redesigned website "and we've asked the local committees to send us their profiles," Still said. "All their activities, we put them online so that other Age Friendly committees can see what others are doing and learn from it."