



STAFF REPORT

Title: Letter of Support - Portage College

Meeting Date: August 8, 2023

Executive Summary:

Portage College is requesting a letter of support to accompany a grant application to PrariesCan for funds to establish a drone training program in the environmental sciences department.

The program will include basic drone pilot training and virtual simulations that pertain to well monitoring, wildlife identification and vegetation identification.

The college's goal is to offer the training to any company, community, municipality that is completing environmental monitoring.

Background:

Portage College offered the following information in a draft letter of support. Some of this information is included in the attached draft letter for council's consideration.

Funding would be used to create and expand Environmental Sciences programming offerings and will include associated basic drone pilot training. The initiative includes the development of virtual training simulations for various environmental scopes that will target and inspire our youth and both current and upcoming environmental and energy professionals in a safe and fun learning environment. The three environmental virtual training programs with associated practical drone training will focus on:

1. Well site reclamation with setup for monitoring and assessing well site reclamation. This virtual program will also include soil identification.
2. Wildlife identification. This virtual program will focus on foundational wildlife identification.
3. Vegetation identification. This virtual program will also include weed identification with an emphasis on noxious and controlled weeds.

This virtual environmental training will allow graduates to "visualize" their future combined with the drone training will enable students to "fly" towards contributing to a highly-skilled and specialized workforce to ensure Alberta's ability to grow in multiple sectors in an environmentally conscience and sustainable manner.



Alternatives:

Council may:

- authorize a letter of support from the City of Cold Lake for Portage College's proposed Environmental Simulation and Drone Training Program.
- respectfully decline to authorize a letter of support from the City of Cold Lake for Portage College's proposed Environmental Simulation and Drone Training Program at this time.
- request additional information about the grant application and the proposed program.

Recommended Action:

Administration recommends that Council pass a motion authorizing a letter of support from the City of Cold Lake for Portage College's proposed Environmental Simulation and Drone Training Program.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

No

Submitted by:

Kevin Nagoya, Chief Administrative Officer