



'Lots' of attention in Champion

Residential lots for \$95? Did someone in Champion forget a few zeroes?

No, the price was correct, a reflection of the town's 95th anniversary in 2006, and while there were only a few available unserviced lots to sell at that price, several more were soon snapped up due to the publicity.

Here's some additional math: since it practically gave away those lots three years ago, the town has enjoyed a 7.5 per cent growth rate. That's phenomenal for a small town on Highway 23.

"When you have stagnant growth, no one thinks of you," says Mayor Trevor Wagenvoort. "It hit home to me and the rest of town council that we needed something to turn that around. My father told me about one-penny paint sales.

"The paint sale was intended to bring the customers into the store to buy the paint for a cent; but the customer would spend more money on brushes and tools as they visited the store."

Wagenvoort saw the comparison: sell the lots cheap and people will build, move in and begin paying taxes.

"We generated interest in Champion by showing people what we have," he says.

Each purchaser had to build within one year, pay for service installation, and make the home their principle residence. Since the lot sale, 11 homes, two garages and a commercial property have sprung up, and 18 more lots are being zoned.

The 380-plus folks who make Champion home are now finding folks from larger centres – most from Calgary – have joined them, in part to experience country living, but also to save thousands of dollars on lot prices.

"A few hundred thousand pays for a lot of gas," says Wagenvoort.

Champion has initiated a Communities in Bloom campaign and is intent on beautifying its small main street.

"We wanted to show the personality of Champion. Of course, we always say the best way to do that is to meet our people."

In 1991, Champion was tarted up to resemble a fictitious Wyoming town for the movie Leaving Normal. Now, with its new way of promoting small-town living, "Normal" has become "Champion" once again.

Did you know:

- The village was originally known as Cleverville, after Martin Clever, a local homesteader.
- The Canadian Pacific Railway laid their steel through the area, bypassing Cleverville. The town moved to a new location along the railway and named itself Champion, after H.T. Champion, a banker. The Cleverville Cairn still stands just east of the village.
- In 1911, the first grain elevator was built by the Alberta Grain Co.
- The Village has a land area of 0.88 square kilometres (0.3 sq mi) and a population density of 413.8 inhabitants per square kilometre (1,071.7/ sq mi).
- Champion was once known as the "Million Bushel Town".

For more information contact:

Village of Champion

P.O. Box 367
Champion, Alberta T0L 0R0
Phone: 403-897-3833
Fax: 403-897-2250
Email: champvil@wildroseinternet.ca
Website: <http://villageofchampion.com>

SouthGrow Regional Initiative

P.O. Box 1202,
Lethbridge, Alberta T1J 4A4
Phone: (403) 394-0615
Toll Free: 1-888-989-8488
Email: info@southgrow.com
Website: www.southgrow.com

