



MAYOR'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Tena koutou katoa.

Serving the Rotorua community as your mayor is a special privilege and I

welcome this opportunity to extend season's greeting to you all.

It's been another successful year for Rotorua District Council but a particularly challenging

one given the economic climate. However I'm proud that we have been able to fulfil our commitment to provide high quality services to the community. The clear audit reports we've had from the Office of the Auditor-General for our forward planning and annual reporting confirm that the council is well run and in good shape.

There have been many highlights throughout the year and a few come to mind immediately. These are the impressive array of national

awards the council and our staff have won during the last year; the community's very high levels of satisfaction with council services as revealed in the independent National Research Bureau survey of residents; and our record over recent years of maintaining some of the lowest rates increases of any council in the country - without slashing service levels. I'm also encouraged by the real progress we and our partners are making in improving lake water quality so we are all able to enjoy our beautiful lakes over summer.

Particularly pleasing to me was the view of 82% of residents who said they had been able to have an influence on council decisions to some extent. My colleagues on council regard community engagement as a vital component of good governance and we thank residents for participating with us in our decision-making processes.

Finally, on behalf of all elected members, council staff and Mayoress Sue, I wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas and I hope 2013 will be a great year for us all.

Nga mihi nui mo te Kirihimete me te Tau Hou.

ROTORUA'S 37KM SECTION OF CYCLE TRAIL OPEN

Rotorua's 37 kilometre section of Nga Haerenga, New Zealand Cycle Trail, has been officially opened.

Cyclists can now travel from downtown via Te Puia through Te Whakarewarewa Valley to Rainbow Mountain.

'Thermal by Bike' or 'Te Ara Ahi,' is one of 20 'Great Rides' throughout New Zealand, which together form the New Zealand Cycle Trail. Rotorua's trail will finish at Orakei Korako when completed.

Mayor Kevin Winters says the opening of Rotorua's new cycleway means another exciting boost for the city's growing international reputation as a world class cycling Mecca.

"The great thing about Te Ara Ahi is that it will be enjoyed by people of all ages and cycling abilities. They will set their own pace through some amazing scenery and uniquely Rotorua environments. In many cases these are locations and experiences you won't find anywhere else and, as a cyclist myself, that makes it very special.

"As the cycleway develops further over time I'm confident it's going to become one of Rotorua's 'must-do' experiences for many of our visitors, but importantly, it will be enjoyed by our local community as well," said Mayor Kevin.

BRIEFLY

ACCLAIMED ARTIST NEW COMMUNITY ARTS OFFICER

Marc Spijkerbosch has been appointed as the council's new Community Arts Officer. Marc is a prominent local artist and has won numerous art awards in New Zealand and overseas for his realistic works. His work includes the pink terraces replica at Rotorua International Stadium.

He is due to start early in January 2013.

GUIDE TO HELP KEEP VISITORS SAFE

Rotorua's Visitor Safety Group has launched a new fold-out pocket guide to help keep the city's visitors safe.

The handy wallet-sized brochure includes safety tips, travel guides, a map of the CBD, and other useful information.

Copies are available from City Focus, the i-SITE information centre, local accommodation providers and Hertz car rentals.

SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR DISTRICT PLAN

RDC has extended the deadline for submissions on its proposed District Plan to the new date of 1 March 2013 following a number of requests from local organisations for more time to prepare submissions.

The plan is available on the RDC website or hard copies can be inspected at the RDC Civic Centre, Library and City Focus. Submission forms are available from the council or submissions can be made online from our website.

RUBBISH BAG COLLECTION DAYS UNCHANGED

Council's rubbish bag collection service continues unchanged throughout the holidays including on Christmas Day. Bags must be at gates before 8am.

RECYCLING CENTRE CHRISTMAS HOURS

Open 8am-5.30pm Monday to Saturday and 9.30am-5.30pm Sunday and public holidays, except Christmas Day (closed).

COUNCIL CIVIC CENTRE HOLIDAY HOURS

Weekdays 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday except for:

- Monday 24 December closed from 12 noon
- Christmas Day and 26 December closed
- New Year's Day and 2 January closed

For hours of other council operations call the council on 348 4199 or visit www.rdc.govt.nz

Did You Know?

- You can get in touch with the council via post, email, fax, telephone, TXT, website, Facebook, Twitter, or by calling in to the RDC Civic Centre.
- Rotorua Aquatic Centre, Rotorua Museum, Recycling Centre, Rotorua Visitor Centre & i-SITE, and Rotorua Landfill are open every day of the year except Christmas Day.
- GLO is Rotorua's new three-day New Year's festival for 2012/13 from 30 December to 1 January.
- On 30 December parts of Tutanekai St will be closed for GLO Rotorua's Buskers & Bazaar.
- For information and events in the GLO Festival visit www.rotorua.glofestival.co.nz or www.facebook.com/rotorua.glofestival



Mayor Kevin Winters

TWO HOURS FREE PARKING UNTIL CHRISTMAS

Mayor Kevin says 2-hours free parking in the central city for 12 days leading up to Christmas Day is the council's gift to Rotorua residents and retailers.

The free parking applies to metered and 'pay and display' parking spaces up to and including Christmas Eve (24 December). However a 2-hour limit applies and is being enforced.

Mayor Kevin Winters said the council was happy to provide a little Christmas cheer during what are tough and challenging economic times for many people.

"For shoppers it's a chance to save a few dollars off those numerous trips into town for Christmas presents. We know every dollar counts at this time of year.

"And for retailers we hope it helps stimulate

some extra foot traffic and retail business during the year's most important trading period.

"This short-term initiative for our CBD is part of a wider package of other medium to longer term programmes aimed at revitalising the central city, including free WiFi, further development of our Eat Street dining precinct, and our new Walkable City information panels project."

Mayor Kevin said the success or otherwise of the free parking initiative would be assessed in the New Year and findings would be incorporated into a review of parking policies that could form part of the planning and consultation process for next year's annual plan.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD FOR RDC



RDC celebrating the council's national leadership award. (L-R): Kim McGrath, Jean-Paul Gaston, Rex Moore, CE Peter Guerin, Azeem Mohammed and Linda Towers.

Rotorua District Council has picked up another national award, this time in the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants' 2012 Leadership Awards.

The council's 2010/11 annual report was judged New Zealand's top report in the Best Sustainability Reporting category.

A message from the judging panel was read out on the evening of the awards when the winners were announced. It said:

"Rotorua District Council's report brought together many elements of sustainability in a very comprehensive report that noted not only target outcomes that were met, but also where they were not.

"It was evident considerable effort had gone into considering who might wish to access this report and how it might be used.

"This report included commentary on the

operations and financial management of the district council, its people - with a particular focus on how Maori are involved in its decision making - its governance, the ongoing challenge of having to effectively and efficiently managing its environment and maintaining a high level of community involvement," said the judges.

Mayor Kevin Winters said it was very pleasing that the enormous amount of work that goes into preparing annual reports by RDC staff and elected members had been recognised on a national scale.

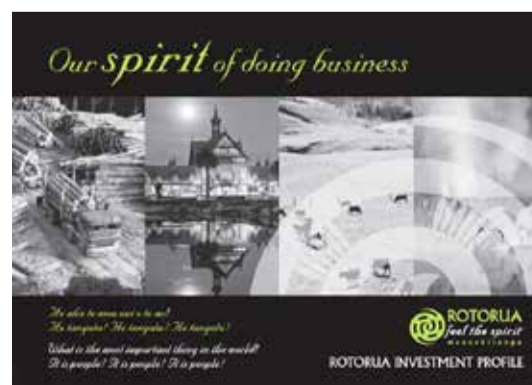
"It's clear that with this particular annual report the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants are of the view that Rotorua District Council has achieved this objective better than any other organisation in the country," he said.

NEW BUSINESS INVESTMENT AND TOURISM MARKETING TOOLS LAUNCHED

RDC's Economic Projects and Destination Rotorua Marketing teams recently launched three important new marketing tools. They are the new Rotorua Investment Profile, a new Live, Work & Invest website, and the latest Famously Rotorua publication.

The 30 page Investment Profile is an informative publication aimed at potential investors to Rotorua. It is complemented by the new Live, Work & Invest website at www.rotoruanz.com.

And the Famously Rotorua publication is a 76 page glossy magazine which is being distributed in the key target market of Auckland to all NZ Herald subscriber households. Half of the Famously Rotorua publication is devoted to attracting Aucklanders to visit Rotorua to enjoy the attractions and experiences the city has to offer, while the other half is aimed at



people thinking about Rotorua as a place to invest, work and live.

RDC business marketing manager Renee Nathan said the new high quality and innovative marketing tools for our city are important steps in the council's programme focussing on growing the Rotorua economy.

TXTING, FACEBOOK AND TWITTER INTRODUCED

RDC has introduced TXting as another communication channel for the local community to use when contacting the council.

The new service enables residents and visitors to TXT the council on 4343, then enter 'RDC', followed by their message if they notice any issues, damage or other problems around the district that need the council's attention.

RDC acting Customer Centre manager Valeta Duncan said people can already get in touch with the council via post, email, fax, telephone and via our website rdc.govt.nz, or by calling in to visit the RDC Civic Centre. So TXting was an inevitable next step in communication for residents.

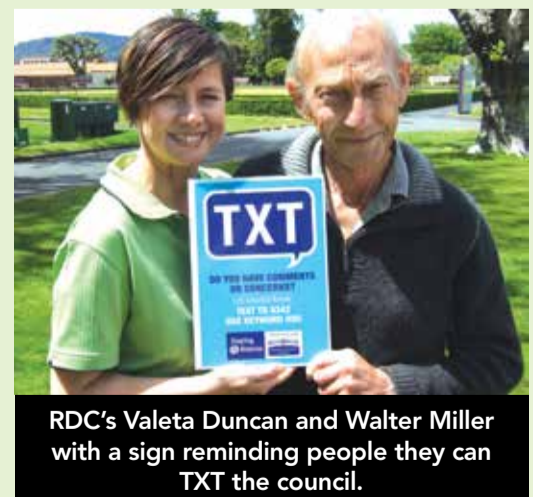
RDC parks operations manager Walter Miller said the council needed extra eyes and ears in high-use areas to help maintain the city's parks and reserves in good condition.

If a problem requires urgent attention and it is after business hours, people should telephone the council on the regular council

number 07 348 4199 rather than TXting.

In addition to this publication, Our Rotorua, and the council website, Rotorua residents now also have Facebook and Twitter to help keep up-to-date with council news, events and activities.

Go to www.rdc.govt.nz and click on the Facebook or Twitter icon to view RDC postings.



RDC's Valeta Duncan and Walter Miller with a sign reminding people they can TXT the council.

Meanwhile the council is farewelling the popular and respected Walter Miller this week as he is retiring after 40 years of outstanding service to the council and the Rotorua community. Rotorua's reputation as a beautiful garden city is a legacy Walter leaves behind. The council thanks him for his contribution and wishes him well in his retirement.