



Westerner Park

Media Release

Westerner Park Preparing for Leadership Transition

December 8, 2022 | Red Deer, AB – Westerner Park is preparing for its next era of leadership in 2023, with current CEO Mike Olesen stepping aside as of July 31st.

Westerner Park Board Chair Deb Beck says Olesen, who has served since the fall of 2019, has accomplished many of his leadership goals, and he feels the time has come to hand over the reins.

“Mike has led the organization well through a period of crisis, modernizing systems and rebuilding operations, all while also adeptly managing the extreme challenge a pandemic posed to an events organization,” says Beck. “His management skills were put to the test, and he delivered as promised.”

In addition to implementing a new events management system and creating a more efficient and effective financial management structure, Olesen helped the board negotiate a new partnership with the City of Red Deer, was instrumental in the establishment of the Westerner Foundation, and reinvigorated the volunteer base.

“I’m proud of my time at Westerner Park,” says Olesen. “Our journey over these years has taken us through some of the most significant crises of the organization’s history. But I feel confident we’re now in a place of being ready for the next chapter, where this important community asset can thrive once again.”

“I’m thankful for the support of our staff, Board and the many volunteers that make Westerner Park such an important organization for Red Deer and central Alberta.”

Olesen will be busy with his ongoing mission in the New Year, and through the next Westerner Days, but wanted to give sufficient time to provide a strong transition between leadership.

“That’s the kind of thoughtful planning and transparency Mike has brought to us right from the start, and while we are sad to see him move on, we are grateful for the opportunity to seek our next leader while he provides us with a strong finish,” adds Beck.

Although Westerner Park may be nearing its most stable position in recent history, much work remains to have the non-profit organization operating at an expected capacity and poised for sustainable growth. The Westerner Park Board will begin its search immediately, with a goal of having the next CEO in place by early summer.

“Through Mike’s dedicated and business-like approach in rebuilding a solid footing, we are set up for success. As Westerners, we are ready to keep moving forward with a focus on being a source of pride for our community,” adds Beck.

About Westerner Park

Westerner Park is central Alberta's largest tradeshow, agricultural, sports, entertainment and convention facility. A not-for-profit organization and agricultural society, Westerner Park typically generates \$150 million annually in economic activity, hosting over 1,500 events and 1.5 million visitors each year.

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