

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR-Bill Matuska

When Bill Matuska went to the Cypress County annual award night and banquet last Wednesday, he had no idea he was going to be honoured for his years of dedicated service in the community and when his accolades were read and his name was called out for the Citizen of the Year award, he was clearly moved.

"Remember the old saying, 'behind every good man is a very good woman' encouraging him every step of the way. Thank you to June for all her help and support over the past 25 years that we have been together," said Matuska.

Matuska was presented the award for his community involvement since moving to Elkwater from Redcliff a number of years ago. Matuska moved to Redcliff with his family when he was eight years old. As an adult, he was employed at the I-XL Industries Redcliff plant until he retired in 2002. In 1993, Matuska purchased his cabin at Elkwater and immediately, became an active member of the Elkwater Community Association and is currently an active director. After his retirement, he and his partner, June Blaquiere, moved to Elkwater full-time and the couple has become active members of the community.

According to Leslie Nemeth and O'Brien Tarnasky, who jointly nominated Matuska for the Citizen of the Year honour, Matuska is always willing to help with work parties, has assisted with planning, organizing, and working at the Summer and Winter fests. As well, he attends meetings and helps out with bingos. During the winter months, he can be found flooding the outdoor skating rink and clearing the snow off the ice. In the summer, he helps with the tennis courts.

Besides volunteering with recreational endeavors, Matuska has also been a member of the Elkwater volunteer fire department since 2003, attends practices, and attends the annual Southern Alberta Fire Conference in Lethbridge. He also volunteers with casinos and public events, such as parades and fundraising for muscular dystrophy, including the annual Walk for Muscular Dystrophy.

He has also been a director for the Cypress Hills Parkwatch Association since 2004 and attends meetings, recruits new members, and helps out whenever he can.

Matuska served as president of the Elkwater golf course from 2004-05, was on the executive for a number of years, as well as serving as past president. He also helped out with maintaining the grounds. Volunteering and being active in the community started when Matuska was a teen in Redcliff. From 1957-61, he was a member of the United Church's Hi-C's youth club, was president of the Re-teen club from 1963-65 and was runner-up for the outstanding teen award in 1963. He also coached minor baseball in 1964-65.

From 1975-78, Matuska was manager of the Redcliff Senior Marlee's hockey club and served on the executive for the minor hockey association in 1978-79. He managed the Goodyear Wrangler hockey team in 1987-88 and was a member of Redcliff's Silver Fox Oldtimers hockey club from 1978-88. Matuska was also one of the founders of the Action Society for Youth in Redcliff and served on the board of directors from 1989-90. From 1993-94, he was president of the Redcliff Lions' Club and was awarded the club's volunteer of the year award in 1995. He also received the Bill Webber Fellowship Award for Outstanding Service, Loyalty, and Devotion to Lionism in 1998.

Matuska was a member of the Medicine Hat Moose Lodge for 30 years and a member of the Redcliff Legion for 40 years.

*Article Courtesy of Cypress Courier
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