



October 13, 2017

SUBJECT: MOUNTAIN VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLOSURE

Dear Resident,

On October 6, 2017, the Town of Mills Council passed a resolution opposing the closure of Mountain View Elementary School. This action was in response to the Natrona County School District's September 29th announcement that the staff recommends Mountain View, along with three other schools, be closed at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. Additionally, the Town held an emergency meeting to discuss the issue and encourage residents to provide public comment at the October 9th School Board meeting.

As you are likely aware, the closure of Mountain View, a Title 1 school, would leave the Town of Mills without a neighborhood elementary school. At the end of the 2016-2017 school year, the Natrona County School District closed Mills Elementary School, the only elementary school within our Town's boundary.

Property owners in the Town of Mills collectively pay approximately \$1.2 million to the 32-mil levy for the operations of schools. We also pay approximately \$450,000 to the 12-mil levy that goes to the State for the construction and maintenance of school buildings. Generating this amount of revenue for the Natrona County School District and State, shows that our community fairly contributes to the system.

The Town of Mills Council and Staff wants to be clear that we have had no input or communication with the Natrona County School District on this matter; and we adamantly disagree with the recommendation to close Mountain View Elementary School. We believe it's critical to our resident children, parents and families to have a neighborhood elementary school available. The west side of the Casper Metropolitan Area and the Town of Mills, adding 268 homes since 2010, continues to experience residential growth. The 178 students that currently attend Mountain View, and the hundreds of future students deserve the opportunity to choose a school in their community.

If you are interested in providing comments before this monumental decision is made, send an email or letter to the Natrona County School Board. Email and address information can be found at the end of this letter. Public comment was heard at the Oct. 9 Board Meeting. The decision will be voted on by the board at the Oct. 23rd meeting at 7:30 PM at Kelly Walsh High School. All input will need to be received and reviewed prior to this date.

The Natrona County School District has stated that they believe Mountain View School would need \$500,000 in repairs to bring it up to standards. According to the District's FY 2018 Capital Projects Budget, two new preschool projects will be built, costing nearly \$2 million together. Each of the three elementary schools recommended for closure currently house preschools.

Mills is the 20th largest community of the 99 in Wyoming. With the verbal commitment by the Natrona County School District 1 School Board to not reduce or lay off any staff other than by attrition, it appears that the cost saving by the school district would be \$100,000 to \$200,000 a year. If considered in the overall budget of the Natrona County School District, this would be small in comparison to the entire budget; however, it will be detrimental to the community of Mills.

Excluding Mountain View, the closest elementary school, Paradise Valley is 3.7 miles or seven minutes from Mills Town Hall while Oregon Trail, the second closest school, is 4.5 miles or 9 minutes. The Town of Mills has heard from parents that there is a wait list at both schools. Additionally, with reports of already overcrowded busses and long hours on the bus for young children, the Town of Mills is concerned bussing students to other elementary schools will be a significant issue.

In addition to receiving federal funding as a Title 1 school, local businesses and the Town of Mills continue to support Mountain View Elementary School financially. The Mills Police Department recently provided funding to the school from their Crime Prevention Program for a new security system and the Town just completed the 3rd Avenue Rehabilitation project in front of the school. The 3rd Avenue Rehabilitation project refinished the street in front of the school and added critical school signage in the area. In addition, the Mills Police and Fire Departments are involved in ongoing activities and programs with the school. The bottom line is our community is deeply invested in Mountain View School and we continue to provide support in any way we can.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact Christine Trumbull, Mills Town Clerk, at (307) 234-6679 with questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Seth Coleman, Mayor
Town of Mills

NATRONA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ADDRESS:

Attn: Natrona County School Board
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Central Services Facility
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Casper, WY 82601

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