

Statement from Sussex Mayor Marc Thorne – Nutrien Civic Centre

Like many residents of Sussex and the surrounding area, I was deeply troubled to learn that the Nutrien Civic Centre has announced it will permanently close its doors on August 8 because it no longer has the financial resources necessary to continue operating.

This is extremely disappointing, but unfortunately, it is not an unforeseen situation.

On April 16, 2025, I met directly with Local Government Minister Kennedy, Deputy Minister Awad, and Assistant Deputy Minister Wilkins. At that meeting, I raised serious concerns about the failure of regional partners to meet their financial commitments for shared recreational services and specifically warned that Ministerial intervention would be necessary to ensure the Nutrien Civic Centre continued to receive the funding owed to it through its agreement with the Kings Regional Service Commission.

While Butternut Valley has recently begun making contributions, the financial commitments of both Butternut Valley and Valley Waters toward shared recreational services remain largely unmet for a year and a half, and the amount owing to the Kings Regional Service Commission was allowed to approach almost \$400,000. Despite the Province having been made fully aware of the seriousness of the situation throughout this period, effective intervention has not occurred.

We are now seeing the very real consequences of that inaction.

Sussex has consistently met its regional obligations and has always sought to be a proactive partner in community development, recreation, growth, and regional prosperity. Our residents contribute their fair share toward regional services, and they have every right to expect that other participating communities will be held to the same standard.

This is about fairness and accountability. Sussex should not be expected to shoulder the consequences when other communities fail to meet their financial commitments.

The potential loss of the Nutrien Civic Centre reaches well beyond the doors of the facility. Nearly 40 employees face losing their jobs, while residents throughout the region stand to lose important recreational, wellness, aquatics, youth, and community programming. This facility is an important part of our community and our region.

The Province was warned about this issue before it reached a crisis point. There was an opportunity to intervene, and that opportunity was not acted upon.

As Mayor, I have asked our Administration to demand an immediate response from the Department of Local Government outlining what action it will take to ensure these outstanding financial commitments are honoured and to prevent the Nutrien Civic Centre from being forced to permanently close.

I will also be following up directly with Minister Kennedy to voice my concerns about the lack of action since our April 2025 meeting and to insist that the Province take immediate steps to address this situation.

With the announced closure only days away, there is virtually no time remaining. The residents of Sussex and the entire region deserve immediate action and accountability.

Marc Thorne
Mayor