



## Mardi Gras 2006 Supports The Champions Centre

The annual Medicine Hat Mardi Gras will take place on February 25<sup>th</sup> 2006. The Community Foundation has been presenting this event since the year 2000 as a fun and exciting way of bringing our community involvement to the attention of “Hatters”.

Mardi Gras is well known as one of the most famous celebrations in the world. The most famous takes place in New Orleans each year on Shrove Tuesday or Fat Tuesday, hence the name Mardi Gras which is French for “Fat Tuesday”. Since Fat Tuesday is part of the Church calendar and falls exactly 46 days prior to Easter the date changes each year. In 2006, Fat Tuesday is February 28<sup>th</sup> and the Medicine Hat Mardi Gras is always the previous Saturday.

Mardi Gras creates a Carnival atmosphere, with an exuberant explosion of street parades that involve huge floats and a large number of people. Mardi Gras history goes back to the early 1700s and is heavily influenced by the first Louisiana French and Spanish settlers, the Creoles. Since then many traditions have been established. The mid 1800s saw the emergence of Carnival Clubs or “Krewes”. These clubs put together the now famous parade floats and elect from their membership a King and Queen to oversee their activities. The most famous of these clubs is Rex (*King* in Latin). King Rex is also King of Carnival and he and his Queen reign over Mardi Gras. The Mardi Gras colours are Purple for Justice, Green for Faith and Gold for Power.

For the past four years Mardi Gras has been presented in partnership with the Medicine Hat Real Estate Board “Realtors Raising Resources” Committee. As a result of this partnership Medicine Hat Mardi Gras has really come of age. In the past three years, this event raised over \$18,000.00, shared among organizations like the Medicine Hat Community Housing Society in support of its transitional housing project, Habitat for Humanity and the Medicine Hat Community Foundation.

This year the funds will be divided between the Community Foundation, which supports many worthy local causes - social services, health, recreation, education, arts and culture - and The Champions Centre, a project that provides permanent housing for people who have no opportunity to have a home.

**The Medicine Hat Mardi Gras will take place at the Medicine Hat Lodge and will follow tradition where possible and feature Hurricane Cocktails, a Jambalaya feast and King Cake. Entertainment will include a live band, the parade of costumes and belly dancers in addition to a silent auction.**

**Mardi Gras 2006 tickets are \$40.00. For tickets or more information call the Community Foundation at 527-9038.**