

Project's PR office a bit early

By **ANDREA MAYNARD**
of The Advocate

ALIX — The Alberta government is gearing up public relations efforts on the controversial Buffalo Lake stabilization plan.

An information office was opened in Alix this month to give people an overview of the plan and answer questions, said John Lund, member of the project advisory team.

"It's good for public relations and the public should be aware of the plan whether they are opposed or supportive," said Mr. Lund.

"I don't really think it is an attempt to quell opposition," he added.

But a well-known environmentalist says the office is premature.

Martha Kostuch, a Rocky Mountain

House veterinarian, noted the project has yet to receive full provincial licensing and approval from the federal government.

"As far as I'm concerned, the project can't proceed," she said, adding the province may repeat the same mistakes as it did with the Oldman River dam if it constructs without proper federal approvals.

The office which will be open Fridays through the summer is located in a construction trailer which has been on main street for several years.

The work to raise Buffalo Lake is part of a water management project that began in 1985 with dredging work on water channels.

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Ken Looten, project manager for part of the project, said the information office wants to hear from people opposed to the plan. Many people have difficulty contacting a government department, but the office can help provide answers, he said.

It is not unusual for the government to open an information office, said Mr. Looten. The same step was taken in the Oldman dam and the Dickson dam project, he said.

The office, manned by a information officer who can consult with construction managers operating out of the same trailer, includes displays such as aerial photos and blueprints of plans, said Mr. Lund.

Officials said they did not know the cost of the office.