

# Lumby residents urged to join jail debate

By [Richard Rolke - Vernon Morning Star](#): June 19, 2010 12:00 PM

Lumby's mayor insists residents must get directly involved in the debate over a proposed prison.

Village council will hold a public input session on a regional correctional centre Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at the White Valley Community Centre.

"This is the type of meeting that helps provide direction with our decision," said Mayor Kevin Acton, adding that he wants to hear from people on both sides of the issue.

"It's important for everyone to get out so when council makes a decision, it's based on what the community wants."

Council has had some preliminary discussions with the provincial government about a facility possibly being located in the community, but Victoria has made no commitment or even entered into negotiations.

Council has asked the government to provide some details around a prison, including security and potential economic impact. But none of those details will be available in advance of Tuesday's meeting.

"The reality is they're not forthcoming," said Acton of the government.

The concept of a prison first surfaced about a month ago as village council and staff were looking at ways to create jobs and bring new residents to town.

Acton has heard that there could be about 70 jobs at a facility that houses 200 inmates being remanded for custody or serving sentences of two years less a day.

He says land is available in Lumby for such a facility, and the community is close to court houses in Vernon and Kelowna for transporting inmates.

While there was an initial surge of positive interest in a prison, Acton admits that is starting to change.

"We're hearing more of the negative now than before. We haven't got enough answers for people yet."

Tuesday's meeting will include a panel of individuals who have experience with correctional centres, including a person who worked in them.

"I hope to see the whole community there," said Acton, adding that the meeting may also be of interest to residents of rural Lumby, Cherryville and Coldstream.