



## **NEWS RELEASE** – For Immediate Release April 27, 2009

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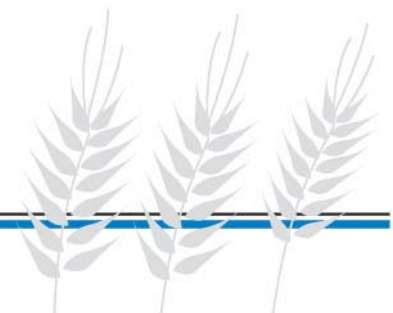
### **Final 2009 Operating and Capital Budget Approved**

County Council approved its final 2009 operating and capital budget today. Council directed Administration to develop a Tax Rate Bylaw for review and approval at their May 4, 2009 Council meeting. Council's approval of the Tax Rate Bylaw will signal the final legislative approval to the 2009 Budget.

The 2009 budget totals \$98 million and includes estimated expenditures of \$42.5 million for operating, \$31 million for road construction and rehabilitation, and \$24.5 million for other capital projects. The budget represents a 17% increase in the general operating budget from 2008.

The road construction and rehabilitation budget will see the paving or overlay of approximately 27 kilometers of roadways throughout the County. Provincial infrastructure grants will fund a portion of the road construction projects. However, the County's debt load is anticipated to increase \$7.5 million to a total of \$37 million by the end of 2009 to meet the demands of road construction, capital facilities and water infrastructure. In addition to road construction, the 2009 capital budget includes:

- \$3 million for landfill upgrades
- \$5.9 million to complete construction of the new Protective Services, Parks and Agricultural facility in Clairmont
- \$7 million for waterline projects
- \$5.4 million for resources road projects including grading Pipestone Creek Road (Range Road 82), paving Township Road 714 to the Dennis Ray Gravel Pit, and developing the intersection on Resources Road in the vicinity of Weyerhaeuser to facilitate gravel extraction from pits in the area
- \$4.7 million for vehicle and equipment replacement units
- \$711,000 for new vehicles and heavy equipment
- \$1.2 million for computer system replacements, including \$400,000 to construct high speed Internet towers in hard-to-reach areas (with 75% funded by the province)
- \$432,000 over two years to install rural addressing signage



- \$50,000 to Grande Prairie Roman Catholic School Division for playground development at Mother Teresa and St. Mary's (Sexsmith)
- \$60,000 to Grande Prairie Minor Baseball (a total of \$300,000 over a five year period) for development of new ball diamonds at Evergreen Park

The County of Grande Prairie's interim budget was established in December of 2008. Some of the major items that reflect the increases in the 2009 operating budget include:

- \$935,000 increase to the fire contract with the City of Grande Prairie
- \$1.2 million increase in debt payments to fund the Protective Services, Parks, and Agricultural Building, the Wellington Resource Centre in Clairmont, and road surfacing
- \$464,000 increase overall to grants given to community groups and municipalities
- \$106,000 to cover the addition of an enhanced rural RCMP officer for Protective Services

### **New Tax Bylaw**

A Tax Bylaw will be presented to Council for approval at Mondays Council meeting and reflect an overall decrease in taxes for residential properties and a slight increase in taxes for non-residential properties; however some properties may see an opposite change in rates from the average due to assessment and location within the County.

The County's taxable assessment base saw a net increase of 7.4% due to growth from new development combined with a reduction in market value for residential properties.

Changes in residential property taxes will reflect the varying increases or decreases in market value across the County. For example, a Residential property assessed at \$310,000 which had an 4% decrease in assessment due to a drop in market value, would see a reduction of \$47 in municipal taxes and \$3 increase in education taxes, for a net decrease of \$44. However, this will vary across the County based on market change. This would bring the total tax levy for this property, including education and requisition, to \$1,846 for 2009.

The non-residential tax rate is set to increase by 0.6%. However, many properties will experience an increase reflective of their market value change.

Farmland will see no change in total municipal taxes.

For further information on the 2009 budget and taxation rates, please contact our office at (780) 532-9722, or for assessment information call (780) 513-3952.

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