

Council Highlights



An initiative Designed to Keep **YOU** Better Informed of Council Decisions and Initiatives

May 5, 2014

Bezanson Agricultural Society – Audrey Hewings of the Bezanson Agricultural Society made a presentation on a plan to build a community centre for Bezanson to meet the needs of this growing community. Amenities, services and programs that have been identified that the Centre may house and provide is a gym, exercise/fitness facility, new curling rink, playground & spray park, meeting & office space, child care & after school care space, and cultural & social facilities. Council supported the project in principle but deferred a funding decision until all community facility requests are considered.

Economic Development Update – Chris King, County Economic Development Officer provided Council with an overview of the County's Strategic Goals and the Economic Development department's priorities for 2014. The County's Strategic Goals are to think regionally; provide quality municipal service and infrastructure; encourage community development across the region; manage economic development across the County; and promote environmental stewardship. Economic Development's top priorities are water allocation from the Peace; multi-modal site; economic diversification; Growing the North Conference; improved marketing presence; and regional collaboration and partnerships.

FireSmart Program Update – Consultant Jerry Bauer provided Council with a brief overview on the FireSmart work for 2013-2014 and future plans for the program. The County recently received an additional \$1.46 million from the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) in the form of three grants – \$944,810 for the Dunes North Vegetation and Fuel Management initiative; \$485,280 for the Wapiti Sand Dunes

Thinning and Fuel Management initiative; and \$27,600 for the Wildfire Mitigation Strategy. The funding will go towards the following projects that will be taking place in 2014-2015:

- patch cutting 54 hectares of land in the Dunes North area. This involves removing dead and down pine trees in small patches;
- thinning 75 hectares of pine stands in the Dunes North area and 56 hectares of pine stands in Wapiti Dunes. This involves thinning out pine stands to create more open spaces between the crowns; and,
- wildfire mitigation strategy focusing on FireSmart education and awareness programs for residents and businesses.

Previous to the work planned for this summer, the County and ERSD in partnership with Ainsworth, Canfor and Weyerhaeuser has worked together since 2010 to reduce the fire risk in the Dunes, Evergreen Park, Wapiti Nordic ski trails and other heavily forested areas by logging, restoring and re-vegetating these areas. To date, a total of 440 hectares of land in the County has been logged. Another 166 hectares is planned for the winter of 2014-15. Other projects have been completed at Evergreen Park, the Wapiti Nordic Ski Club and several grazing leases. Mountain Pine Beetle infestations is down considerably since 2013. Council made a motion to contribute \$45,000 removing the remaining mountain pine beetle infested trees and put up verbonone pouches in Evergreen Park.

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Pomeroy's Guitars & Wagons Weekend – County approved the contribution of providing policing services (gift-in-kind valued at \$3,750) for the Pomeroy Guitars & Wagons Weekend. Guitars & Wagons Weekend will be taking place June 19-22 at Evergreen Park and will feature live music and chuckwagon races.

Alberta Health Service North Zone Update – Marie Johnson from Alberta Health Services North Zone made a presentation to Council regarding the living options and the placement process for seniors in the Grande Prairie region. Council expressed their concerns in regards to the shortage of hospital beds and accommodations for seniors in the region.

Heavy Duty Forklift RFP – Council awarded the RFP for a new heavy duty/all-terrain forklift to Wajax Equipment for \$99,300 plus GST.

Next regular Council Meeting is May 12, 2014. These meetings will be held in the EOC in the Community Services Building until further notice.

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