



## **News Release** – For Immediate Release Thursday, December 5, 2013

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**(County of Grande Prairie)** County Council today approved an interim operating and capital budget for 2014 that balances rapid growth with a continued focus on delivering quality services.

The \$109.7 million budget includes estimated expenditures of \$62.4 million for general operations and \$47.3 million for capital. The County has once again earmarked considerable funding to enhance the quality of roadways.

“I would like to commend staff and Council for producing another fiscally responsible budget that reflects the needs of a growing region while continuing to meet the varied needs of our residents,” stated County Reeve Leanne Beaupre. “At the forefront of every Council decision was the challenging balance of growing demands for service and investment in capital infrastructure with the long-term financial needs of tomorrow. I believe we have been able to achieve an effective balance that serves the people of the County.”

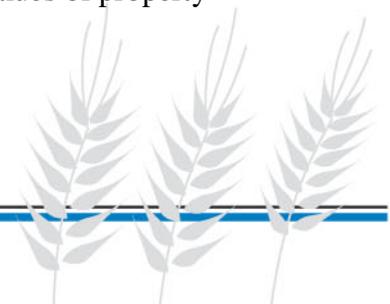
As well, the overall assessed value of all properties is estimated to increase by 4.2 per cent due to changing economic conditions and new developments.

### ***What impact does the budget have on taxes?***

Even though the County did not increase the mill rate at the interim budget deliberations, residential taxes will increase by about 3 per cent for an average residence due to an increase in market value. For example, a residential property assessed at \$312,400 would pay about \$2.83 a month or \$34 more in municipal taxes a year. Of course residential property taxes will vary based on the different market values of property throughout the County.

Farmland taxes will remain the same.

Non-residential taxes, including machinery and equipment, and linear (pipeline), may experience an increase due to market value. Similar to residential taxes, individual commercial properties will vary depending on the different market values of property throughout the County.





The County of Grande Prairie's budget is an interim budget since the assessment figures used in the budget include some assumptions. County Council cannot complete the 2014 budget until final assessment numbers are received in the spring. At that time some changes may be required and final tax rates will be set then.

For additional details on the breakdown of budget costs, see the attached Backgrounder document.

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## **Backgrounder Budget Breakdown**

### **Capital Budget**

In the 2014 interim budget, a large portion of the capital budget, \$19.8 million, is allotted for capital road projects.

The proposed new construction includes 14.2 kms of road surfacing, which includes 8.8 kms of paving of gravel roads and 5.4 kms of surfaced road overlays, and re-construction to be determined under the Divisional Program. Grant funding for road projects is estimated at \$4 million, including a \$1 million Federal Gas Tax Grant, and \$3.06 million in funding from Provincial Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) Grant.

The following is a list of road projects for 2014:

- Clairmont/Willowdale Rehabilitation (96 Street from 100 Ave to back of Clairmont Community School) – base and pave 0.5 km
- Clairmont Country View North Phase 3 – base and pave 0.5 km
- Township Road 732/Emerson Trail (Highway 2 to Range Road 60) – grade, base and pave 1.6 km
- Township Road 732/Emerson Trail (Range Road 55 to Range Road 60) – base and pave 1.6 km
- Range Road 63 & Bauman Road – extend turning lane
- Aspen Ridge Rehabilitation Phase 2 (Township Road 713) – overlay 2 kms
- Township Road 713A (Silver Pointe entrance) – base and pave 0.8 km
- Range Road 63 (Township Road 710 north to 711A Dunkley Meadows) – overlay 2.4 kms
- Evergreen Park Access Management Study
- Range Road 54 (North of Hwy 43) - grading 3.2 km (carried over from 2013)
- Range Road 54 (Hwy 43 to Township Road 721) – new surfacing 1.6 km (carried over from 2013)

In addition to road construction, the 2014 capital budget includes:

- Additional \$932,000 for the construction of the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum bringing the County's total contribution to \$13.5 million.
- \$2.2 million carried over from previous budget year to complete the Highway 43 east (McRae) Water & Sewer Servicing and Paving Local improvement project
- \$1.8 million carried over from previous budget year to complete the County Administration Building renovations and Shop expansion
- \$3.1 million for replacement of vehicles and equipment



- \$753,000 for new vehicle and mobile equipment
- \$250,000 for Pond Development at the County Sportsplex
- \$210,000 for a maintenance shed
- \$200,000 for Pipestone Park Campground lights and power
- \$165,000 for GIS aerial photos
- \$30,000 Teepee Creek chlorination system

## **Operating Budget**

The operating budget proposed for 2014 includes:

- \$4.9 million in Community Grants including continuing support of STARS, Prairie Art Gallery, 18 community halls, six community arenas, seven curling rinks and two swimming pools.
- \$400,000 for operations to the Grande Prairie Agriculture & Exhibition Society.
- \$333,334 over three years for a total contribution of \$1 million to the LaGlace Arena Project.
- \$225,000 over two years (2013-2014), \$150,000 over three years (2015-2017) for a total contribution of \$900,000 to the Teepee Creek Ag Events Centre.
- \$225,000 over two years for a total contribution of \$450,000 to the Odyssey House supportive housing facility.
- \$20,000 over five years (2012-2016) for a total contribution of \$100,000 to the Compassion House Foundation.
- Hiring of 8 new employees (full-time equivalent); and 8 temporary, seasonal or contract employees for services including Public Works (Grader Operator to meet service levels in hamlets and subdivisions and a Project Technologist), Administration (Administrative Assistant), Agriculture (Seasonal Sprayer and Weed Inspector), Finance (Data Entry Clerk and Insurance/Risk Management Coordinator), FCSS (Program Assistant), Fire (Deputy Fire Chief), Planning (Planning Officer), Park & Recreation (4 seasonal positions), Enforcement (Seasonal Parks Patrol Officer and Regional Poundkeeper cost-shared with the City of Grande Prairie).