



## News Release – For Immediate Release – Thursday, June 27, 2013

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### Municipalities make Grande Prairie Regional Emergency Partnership Official at Ceremony

**County of Grande Prairie, Alberta** – The County, City of Grande Prairie; Towns of Beaverlodge, Sexsmith, Wembley; and Village of Hythe gathered today in a ceremony to sign the Grande Prairie Regional Emergency Partnership (GPREP) Agreement.



From left to right: Town of Wembley Mayor Chris Turnmire; City of Grande Prairie Mayor Bill Given; Town of Beaverlodge Mayor Leona Hanson; Town of Sexsmith Mayor Claude Lagace; and County of Grande Prairie Mayor Leanne Beaupre. Missing: Village of Hythe Mayor Gary Burgess.

Effective July 1, 2013, under the GPREP agreement, participating municipalities together as one now have powers under the *Emergency Management Act of Alberta*.

“So much time and effort has been invested over the years to form the framework for GPREP; it is great that this regional partnership has been formalized,” expressed County of Grande Prairie Reeve Leanne Beaupre. “The floods that recently took place in Southern Alberta have served as a reminder of how important it was for us to form this strong, healthy relationship with surrounding communities. Southern Alberta communities are the perfect example of successfully working together to get through a crisis.”

“This is a vital regional partnership to better protect citizens of our communities,” said Grande Prairie Mayor Bill Given. “The flooding last week in Southern Alberta and, closer to home, the Slave Lake forest fires last year illustrate that no community is immune to disaster. The more co-ordinated we can be as a region, the better.”

GPREP was created to provide a coordinated response to large emergencies or disasters affecting GPREP and/or any of the individual municipalities in the partnership which include the County, City of Grande Prairie; Towns of Beaverlodge, Wembley, Sexsmith; and the Village of Hythe. The new agreement establishes the Regional Emergency Management Committee; GPREP Planning and Coordinating Group; Regional Emergency Management Agency; and the GPREP Coordinator Position. It also outlines the duties and powers of the Committee, Group, and Agency.

Town of Wembley Mayor Chris Turnmire stated “we are pleased to be a member of this partnership. Our working relationship with the other five partnering municipalities has been tremendous – tools for planning; training; education; and hazard identification are a few examples of what GPREP has already provided to us. This regional approach will help our community access emergency resources that we may not have. Also, each municipality now no longer requires their own individual emergency plan because a regional response plan has already been developed. Most importantly, if disaster ever strikes our community, we will have GPREP at its entirety supporting us.”

“GPREP has been and will continue to greatly benefit Hythe. As a small community, it is challenging finding the time and resources to do Emergency Management Planning. This regional partnership gives us the external expertise we need to accomplish better planning,” commented Village of Hythe Mayor Gary Burgess.

“The Town of Sexsmith is very happy to be a part of GPREP, working cooperatively for the mutual benefit of our whole area,” said Town of Sexsmith Mayor Claude Lagace.” This partnership will give our residents comfort and peace of mind knowing they’ll have pooled extensive resources, response and leadership to effectively and efficiently handle emergencies or disasters if they arise.”

“The Town of Beaverlodge is proud to be in this partnership with our neighbouring municipalities,” declared Town of Beaverlodge Mayor Leona Hanson. “We commend and thank the GPREP Committee and past members for their diligence, hard work and commitment in bringing this agreement to fruition.”

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