



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE – For Immediate Release Monday, December 10, 2018

Inaugural Event Marks Launch of County Connector

The Honourable Brian Mason, Alberta Minister of Transportation, was in Clairmont this morning to recognize the launch of the Rural Transportation Pilot Project, which has been named the County Connector.

The first phase of the project officially launched on December 5, with service between the Town of Sexsmith, the Hamlet of Clairmont and the City of Grande Prairie. Phase Two of the project, expected to roll out in early 2019, will extend the service to the towns of Beaverlodge and Wembley, and the Village of Hythe.

Minister Mason and local elected officials from partnering communities, along with students from the Clairmont Community School, gathered at Clairmont's Wellington Resource Centre to celebrate the launch of the new service. The event also showcased a short video about the County Connector, which highlighted the testimonials of local citizens who are taking advantage of the new transit service.

The County Connector is a collaborative project from conception to funding to operation. Alberta Transportation provided \$640,000 in operational funding for the two-year pilot program, plus \$276,667 in GreenTrip funding to help cover the cost of purchasing a bus. The County of Grande Prairie provided an additional \$138,333 to purchase a transit bus. The City of Grande Prairie will operate the service for the County over the duration of the pilot program, while the other partnering municipalities are supporting the service in their communities.

The transit system will run Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays, with operations starting at 6:40 a.m. in the City of Grande Prairie and ending at 7:25 p.m. in the City. Riders pay \$5 for a one-way trip, while children age 11 and under ride for free. For more details, including route maps, schedules and SUPERPASS ticket purchasing information, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/connector.

QUOTES:

“Connecting rural communities in the Grande Prairie region means that residents will be able to travel back and forth across the local area to visit family and friends, shop, get to work and attend medical appointments. That’s why this investment in rural public transit is so important. We are helping to provide affordable, efficient and environmentally sustainable transportation options in rural Alberta.” – *Brian Mason, Minister of Transportation*

“The County Connector will support the growing communities in our area, providing people with public transportation to travel between Sexsmith, Clairmont and the City of Grande Prairie, as well as more local municipalities in the near future. This has been a collaborative initiative with all partners committed to making local communities more accessible and connected.” – *Leanne Beaupre, County of Grande Prairie Reeve*

“The City of Grande Prairie is proud to be participating in this collaboration to better serve the residents of our growing region. The County Connector connects people to jobs, services, opportunities, family and friends. That’s good for our economy and for our overall quality of life, regardless of what municipality you live in.” – *Bill Given, City of Grande Prairie Mayor*



“The Town of Sexsmith is very excited to be part of this public transit opportunity. The County Connector provides an affordable and safe travel option for local residents.” – *Clint Froehlick, Town of Sexsmith Acting Mayor*

“This pilot program helps make local communities, including Beaverlodge, more accessible and connected in a way that considers the environment. Fewer cars on the roads reduces our overall environmental footprint. That’s good for residents today and for our future generations.”
– *Gary Rycroft, Town of Beaverlodge Mayor*

“As a partner in the Rural Transportation Pilot Program, the Town of Wembley is excited to see Phase One of this program, the Community Connector, commencing service. We look forward to Phase Two service for the West County to start up in early 2019. This is another way to improve the quality of life for residents in our region.” – *Chris Turnmire, Town of Wembley Mayor*

“The mobility of our residents is very important to the Village of Hythe and the people who live here. Having the ability to link not only to the City, but to other local rural communities, is an essential way to enhance connectivity around our area.” – *Brian Peterson, Village of Hythe Mayor*

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