

COUNTY CONNECTIONS



WINTER 2019

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Reeve's Message



We're heading into a new season, and for the County that means we are preparing for annual interim budget deliberations. Responsible fiscal management and a commitment to growing the County by investing on what matters most to residents and businesses guide our decision-making. This includes investing in critical operations, services and programs that support a strong sense

of well-being, as well as partnerships and initiatives that promote innovation and responsible, sustainable growth. We'll also be considering the current economic environment and government policies (particularly on the heels of two elections), which both influence budget talks.

Read through the following pages of this issue of Connections to dive deeper into some of the priorities underway or on the table for discussion. Budget deliberations are open to the public, so join us starting December 4th.

BUILDING STRONG, SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Safe and healthy communities is about weaving public safety and wellness expectations and practices into policies, programs and infrastructure.

Fostering safe communities is a main priority for Council. There are challenges to policing that the County and rural municipalities face, which is why we developed the first and one of the most comprehensive models of service delivery for enforcement in the province. This model offers a full level of enforcement services ranging in responsibilities and allows the County to address the varied and complex demands our municipality faces.

We recognize that our community's needs are becoming greater and to better address these growing complexities, in August, Council approved funding for two additional

Enhanced RCMP officers, bringing our new total to eight positions. These roles will commence in the new year, with the two individuals working out of the Beaverlodge detachment with Beaverlodge RCMP Officers. Their focus will be on rural crime within the west area of the County. These additional resources will also allow our current Enhanced RCMP Officers to focus their efforts on policing the balance of the County. Read more about the County's Regional Enforcement Services work in keeping our communities safe on pages 6,7 and 8.

We're also looking forward to the 2020 opening of the La Glace Fire Hall. The new hall will accommodate larger, more modern equipment and include a dedicated training area. Infrastructure investments in our hamlets support the well-being of rural communities, helping them prosper and thrive into the future.

During our consultation with the Peace Wapiti School Division Board, they had identified a need for a rural school site. Upon further discussion with the Five Mile Community Agricultural Society, it became evident that there was an opportunity for the County to purchase the hall and surrounding lands to accommodate future growth. The County's acquisition of the hall and lands will take effect on December 31. A search for an operator of the facility is underway. As there is an interest in developing a future school on the site, Council felt it was important to plan ahead, to ensure that the site use complements future plans for the nearby lands.

Road safety also plays a critical role in the overall well-being of the residents and businesses across the entire region. In our last budget, the County committed 53.3 per cent of the entire budget on our transportation network which includes capital and operational costs for capital road construction projects, the bridge program and road maintenance program. While the wet conditions presented several unexpected setbacks for work this year, any delayed construction projects will be completed next year.



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Council also approved an additional \$5 million to repair Spring Creek Road. Some preliminary work has commenced, and we have applied for a permit through Fisheries and Oceans Canada to move forward with the remainder with the rest of the project.

Road safety extends to our winter season and a new season of snow removal. Our crews aim to clear County roads as quickly as possible. A new temporary parking ban process is now in place in Clairmont and select subdivisions to ensure crews can safely and efficiently plow roads in those neighbourhoods. It's easy for residents to stay in the know about County snow removal and temporary parking bans 24-7. Simply visit www.countygp.ab.ca/snowremoval. Thanks for your cooperation as we work to keep our roads safe for everyone.

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Don't let the snow stop you from participating in some great recreation opportunities throughout the County. On page 20 you can learn more about how the County can help your neighbourhood build an ice surface and find out what's available in our County parks over the winter. And don't miss the Winter Family Frostival event over the Family Day long weekend! For more details, see page 19.

I'm also very proud of the enhancements to our Recreation Fee Assistance Program. This program aims to reduce financial barriers for low-income families and individuals in accessing fitness and recreation activities. Today, even more County residents will be able to access subsidies for local state-of-the-art facilities.

I also want to remind you about the local support services available for those dealing with anxiety, depression and mental health issues. This is especially important for our farming sector, which has experienced a great deal of stress due to weather over this past year. Visit the Suicide Prevention Resource Centre website for information about supports.

REGIONAL COOPERATION AT WORK

The County recently signed an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) agreement with the Municipal District (MD) of Greenview and an Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) agreement with Birch Hills County. In many ways, these agreements are "good neighbour agreements." ICFs define how neighbouring municipalities will work together with respect to service delivery and cost-sharing. IDPs establish the framework for cooperative and coordinated land use planning, economic development, and servicing and transportation, while maintaining autonomy for each community to decide how to best manage their services. We continue to work with our neighbours to complete these ICFs by the targeted date of April 1, 2020. Visit engage.countygp.ab.ca to learn more.

We're approaching year two of the Rural Transportation Pilot Project, which provides public transportation on the County Connector from the City to the communities of Hythe, Beaverlodge, Wembley, Sexsmith and Clairmont. Thank

you to everyone who provided their feedback for the service through our most recent evaluation survey.

Once again, we're pleased to partner in the Growing the North Conference. As the largest economic development conference in northwestern Alberta, having an event of this caliber right at our back door is a tremendous opportunity for industry leaders and local entrepreneurs. Stay tuned for an exciting announcement from the MD of Greenview, the County of Grande Prairie and the City of Grande Prairie regarding the Tri-Municipal Partnership.

ADVOCACY

Council received the findings of a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed twinning of the first 19-kilometre stretch of Highway 40. The proposed project is expected to generate a net social benefit of approximately \$483.7 million over 30 years, and most importantly, improve overall safety of those using this busy highway. Additional benefits include travel time cost savings. While initially, the provincial government had originally announced construction would start, the study indicates that Alberta Transportation is projecting a 2022 start, with the road fully operational in 2024, no announcement has since been made on a project start-date. We continue to advocate for a commitment to a timely start to the project.

We also continue our advocacy efforts around a number of other priorities, including local highway projects, the Beaverlodge Healthcare Centre, the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum, rural crime and more.

In closing, I would like to thank our CAO Joulia Whittleton for her leadership in her new role. Over the past six months, Joulia has proven to be a strong and capable leader who brings staff together to work toward the common goal of moving the County forward. We appreciate her great work.

As we head into this holiday season and new year, take the time to enjoy all that it brings. On behalf of County Council, I wish you and yours a very safe and Merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous new year.



County Office Holiday Hours



The County Offices will be closed from noon on December 24 to December 26, 2019 for Christmas break as well as on New Year's Day on January 1, 2020. All essential services will be maintained during office closures.

Regular office hours will resume **Thursday, January 2, 2020.**

If you have any questions, please contact **780-532-9722.**

Community Standards Bylaw Continues to Support Community Vitality and Well-being

The County's Community Standards Bylaw, put in place last May, sets standards aimed at making our growing communities safer, and more attractive and enjoyable for all.

THE FOLLOWING TOPICS ARE COVERED UNDER THE BYLAW:

- Addressing (rural and urban)
- Bullying and Hazing
- Noise
- Cannabis
- False Alarms
- Sidewalks
- Unsightly Premises
- Graffiti
- Nuisance
- Waste Management
- Fire Hydrants

Some sections of the bylaw are new and address emerging issues; other sections were updated from existing bylaws to better accommodate the changing needs of citizens and the County's growing communities. The updated and new standards were combined into one new all-encompassing bylaw.

"The Community Standards Bylaw provides citizens with clear and standardized expectations that promote good neighbour relationships," said Superintendent Stuart Rempel, Regional Enforcement Services Manager. "It also provides officers with additional tools to be more proactive in addressing citizen concerns."

While the County's Community Standards Bylaw has been in place for less than a year, comparable bylaws are very common in progressive communities in Alberta and Canada. Rempel noted, however, that each municipalities' bylaw reflects needs and priorities specific to their own communities.

"Much of the County's bylaw addresses priorities and concerns raised by residents that are fielded by enforcement officers, and County staff and councillors," added Rempel.

Pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter provide a general overview of some sections of the County's Community Standards Bylaw. For details about the new bylaw, including penalties, and to view a copy, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/csb.

How do I Report a Community Standards Bylaw Violation?

To report a bylaw violation to
County Regional
Enforcement Services:

PHONE: 780-532-9727

EMAIL:
enforcementservices@countygp.ab.ca

ONLINE:
www.countygp.ab.ca/occurrencereport

IN PERSON:
Community Services Building
10808 – 100 Avenue, Clairmont

Open Monday to Friday
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Closed 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
and statutory holidays.

Pick up a print copy of the
occurrence reporting form at any
local municipal office, complete
and submit it.

SECURE FAX: 888-779-5895

For graffiti-in-progress, contact
the RCMP non-emergency line at
780-830-5700.

Save the Date: Interim Budget Meetings

Every December, County Council has special meetings to review the upcoming year and following years' financial plans.

The interim budget meetings are intended to review the planned budgets. The final budget meetings, which finalize all the numbers, take place in the spring.

The interim meetings for the 2020 budget will take place in Council Chambers in the Administration Building located at 10001 – 84 Avenue in Clairmont on:

December 4, 5 & 6 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

If you have any questions, contact Financial Services at
780-532-9722.



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Rural and Urban Addressing Requirements

Promote Safety

ADDRESSING

This section of the Community Standards Bylaw outlines signage requirements for urban and rural addressing to ensure emergency responders can quickly locate addresses.

In an emergency, police, fire and ambulance rely heavily on house numbers and rural addresses. Your address must be well-maintained and visible. Only addresses assigned by the County can be posted.

URBAN ADDRESSING ONLY

Addresses must be:

- Clearly visible from the street
- Attached to a building at least 1.2 metres (m) above the ground, but no higher than the ceiling of the ground floor (or equivalent)
- On a contrasting background

MINIMUM SIZE OF THE CHARACTERS:

Building Setback from Adjacent Roadway	Minimum Character Size
0 - 15 m (0 - 49.2 feet (ft.))	10 centimetres (cm) (4 inches (in))
15 - 20 m (49.2 - 65.6 ft.)	15 cm (6 in)
Greater than 20 m (65.7 ft.)	20 cm (8 in)

Any required changes to rural or urban addressing by the County must be made within 14 days of notification.

Visit www.countygpp.ab.ca/csb for more details.

Attractive Properties Boost Community Well-being

UNSIGHTLY PREMISES

The Unsightly Premises section of the Community Standards Bylaw (CSB) helps support community expectations around general tidiness and appearance of properties. Most County of Grande Prairie residents and business owners take great pride in the appearance of their property and value well-kept properties, which contribute to overall quality of life.

The County relies on public feedback to help identify problem properties. Unsightly premises not only impact the visual appeal of a community, but can create safety hazards.

This section of the CSB addresses community concerns, and applies to properties that do not meet general expectations around the state of tidiness of community properties. The bylaw sets expectations and guidelines around general maintenance and upkeep of properties in the County. It may apply to properties with excessive items such as, but not limited to (see the CSB for a comprehensive list):

- Garbage
- Hazardous materials, cans, paper, manure/excrement, and dirt/gravel/rocks
- Unused or inoperative vehicles, disassembled equipment or machinery, and inoperative household appliances
- Animal material, yard waste, ashes, and building material

Property owners who fail or refuse to improve an unsightly property may be subject to penalties. County Regional Enforcement Services will use their discretion in determining whether or not a property is in violation of this bylaw, taking into consideration such factors as land use zoning, development permits, population density, etc.

To learn about the availability of County waste and recycling management services and programs as well as residential waste collection services to assist with property clean-up, visit

www.countygpp.ab.ca/recyclingprograms.

For more details about this section of the CSB, or to file a complaint about a property of concern, visit www.countygpp.ab.ca/csb.

Business and Home Security False Alarms Could Face Penalties

FALSE ALARMS

Security systems for homes and businesses are becoming increasingly important to people in the County who wish to take extra safeguards to protect their property. With that, false alarms from these security systems are occurring at an increasing rate.

In 2018, the Grande Prairie Rural RCMP Detachment received 343 false alarm calls in the County. False alarms might result from any number of reasons, including – but not limited to – faulty equipment, user testing, weather, or power failure.

Stuart Rempel, Manager of Regional Enforcement Services said, “Not only do these false alarms unnecessarily tie up resources, they put people at risk of not receiving an emergency response when it is most needed.”

The County's Community Standards Bylaw (CSB) seeks to address this issue by prohibiting no more than one false alarm per property within every consecutive 12 months when County of Grande Prairie emergency personnel have attended the property.

Penalties may be applied to property owners or occupants in violation of the bylaw. The CSB does not apply to phone calls made to 911, nor does it apply to alarms installed to keep the elderly or infirm safe in their home.

If you are concerned about the possibility of false alarms on your property, we encourage you to contact your security company to learn about the causes of false alarms and to obtain clear directions about how to prevent them from happening to you.

Learn more about this section of the CSB at www.countygp.ab.ca/csb.

Graffiti in the County is a Crime

GRAFFITI

Graffiti in the County of Grande Prairie is illegal, as regulated by the Community Standards Bylaw. Graffiti is defined as any words, figures, letters, drawings or stickers applied, scribbled, scratched, etched, sprayed or attached on or to the surface of any premises, structure, or other property, without the written permission of the owner.

These acts of vandalism not only ruin a community's attractiveness; they can be discriminatory and hateful toward individuals or groups, and they negatively impact property owners. Offenders can be fined or prosecuted in court.

Private property owners are required to remove, paint over, or permanently block graffiti from their property within a reasonable amount of time, as vandalism in the form of graffiti invites further vandalism.

If you see graffiti in progress, please call the RCMP non-emergency line at 780-830-5700.

For further details, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/csb.

Everyone Has a Right to Feel Safe

BULLYING AND HAZING

Everyone in the community has a right to feel safe. Bullying and hazing will not be tolerated in the County of Grande Prairie.

The RCMP are responsible for investigations and enforcement of this section of the Community Standards Bylaw (CSB). The addition, of this section provides the RCMP with an additional tool to support public safety.

“Bullying” means verbal or physical abuse, threats, taunts, teasing, name calling or repeated abusive communication, direct or through any medium.

“Hazing” is any intentional or reckless act meant to induce physical pain, humiliation or embarrassment that causes physical or mental discomfort and is directed against a person for the purpose of being initiated, introduced into, affiliated with or maintaining a membership in any club, school, athletic team or other similar group or organization in which a person may participate.

For more details, and for information on enforcement, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/csb

Maintaining Safe and Strong Communities within the County

Safe communities play a key role in overall community well-being. Enforcement and safety within rural areas comes with unique challenges related to large geographic areas combined with low population densities. The County of Grande Prairie itself covers a geographic area of more than 5,800 square kilometres of diverse landscape and communities. To put things into perspective, this area is eight times the size of Edmonton or over six times the size of Calgary.



Faced with the challenges that accompany policing in our rural municipality, County Council developed a model of service delivery that would support more effective policing for the unique needs of our communities and our geographic area. The model, the first of its kind in Alberta, is one of the most comprehensive models of enforcement in the province. It is structured to address the varied and complex demands of rural policing within our municipality that includes residences, businesses, farms, industry, and vast agricultural and green spaces.

Under this model, we offer a full level of enforcement services with different responsibilities, though shared priorities, with public safety and security of utmost importance. County Enforcement Services consists of a Patrol Unit; Bylaw Unit; and an RCMP Enhanced Policing Unit.

Within our RCMP Enhanced Policing Unit, the County currently employs six Enhanced RCMP members. Four of these officers work out of the County Community Services Building in conjunction with Regional Enforcement Services. The other two officers work out of the Grande Prairie RCMP detachment with the Crime Reduction Unit and the General Investigative Services Unit.

As our policing needs are becoming more complex, earlier this year County Council

approved funding to hire two additional Enhanced RCMP members. These members will work out of the Beaverlodge RCMP detachment with Beaverlodge RCMP Officers, and their focus will be on rural crime within the west area of the County. Once they are in place in early 2020, our current Enhanced RCMP Officers will have more capacity to focus their efforts on policing in the remainder of the County.

The six, soon-to-be eight, Enhanced RCMP Officers do not take the place of regular RCMP Officers, located in the Beaverlodge and the Grande Prairie Rural detachments. These detachments continue to provide the County with regular policing resources.

The work of our Enhanced Officers supplements the work of those officers, ensuring that on-call RCMP Officers are available to respond in a timely manner and focus their resources in the areas where they are most urgently

needed. Enhanced RCMP Officers work closely with the RCMP and with all of our enforcement officers. Their responsibilities also include crime prevention, range patrol, boat patrol, traffic safety, checkstops and special events. While they do not generally respond to calls, as the type of work they engage in would prevent them from doing so effectively, if they are on





patrol in an area where a call is received, they will respond to that call or complaint.

It is critical in rural policing to have the ability to adapt to changing, and often challenging, situations. Crime reduction is a priority for the County, and a strategic approach requires significant collaboration along with available resources. Our Officers are working on a number of initiatives, including the hiring of our two new Enhanced RCMP Officers, to more effectively deal with rural crime. A great deal of collaboration and partnerships with enforcement in neighbouring communities, along with our own Regional Enforcement Officers, is also taking place. The public is the other piece of the formula, and we work closely with citizens to help keep you informed and to support crime prevention initiatives.

We encourage the public to report crimes. Accurate reports of crime are used to help us identify "hotspots," areas where crime is more prevalent. Read the "All About Enforcement" infographic on the next page for contact information, or visit www.countygp.ab.ca/occurrencereport to report a crime or violation. There are also volunteer citizen groups that are supported by police, to address rural crime such as Grande Prairie Rural Crime Watch. It is a good idea to also take preventative measures in an effort to reduce the opportunity for crime (read about crime prevention measures on the next page).

We invite you to visit our website at www.countygp.ab.ca/enforcement to stay informed and updated on enforcement within the County. The site also lists emergency and non-emergency contact information.

Crime Prevention Measures in Your Home and Business

Along with RCMP and County of Grande Prairie Regional Enforcement Services, residents themselves play an important role in crime prevention in and around the County. Carrying out the following measures may help to reduce the opportunity to commit a crime in your neighbourhood or your home/farm.

MAKE YOUR HOME LESS APPEALING TO THIEVES

This includes well-lit exteriors and motion lighting; locking away tools and machinery as much as possible, including RV batteries (which are a popular theft item); and locking all doors, windows and storage compartments. Hitch and wheel locks can also be helpful.

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Look out for one another and be aware of vehicles and people who do not belong in the neighbourhood.

DEVELOP A HOME SAFETY ROUTINE

Make a habit of checking all doors and windows before bed, lock vehicle remotes, and turn on exterior lights.

REPORT ALL CRIME AND SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

Even petty crimes, such as vehicles being rummaged through, should be reported.

Despite taking reasonable preventative measures, sometimes crime does happen:

- Keep a record of valuable property including make, model, and serial number to provide to police. Note any unique features of your items; consider using a marking pen such as a Trace pen. This is especially useful for items that do not have a readily available serial number.
- Speak with neighbours about the crime. They may have seen something suspicious.
- Look out for your well-being.



RCMP OFFICERS



Funded by: Province of Alberta and federal government, under jurisdiction of federal government. The Federal RCMP Act provides the authority and mandate for the RCMP.

Grande Prairie Rural detachment (east County)
Beaverlodge detachment (west County)

Roles:

- Responsible for enforcing federal, provincial, and municipal laws; protecting life and property; preventing crime; and keeping the peace
- "General duty" RCMP officers are the first-response primary call takers
- Are assisted by a number of "Specialized Duty Support Units" and by Regional Enforcement Services

RCMP ENHANCED POLICING UNIT



Funded and contracted by: County of Grande Prairie

RCMP Enhanced Officers:

- Augment the basic level of policing provided by the RCMP
- Six officers work with Regional Enforcement Services, Grande Prairie Rural RCMP, and Beaverlodge RCMP
- Four work out of the County Community Services building with Enforcement Services
- Two work at the Grande Prairie detachment in the Crime Reduction Unit (CRU) and General Investigative Unit (GIS)
- Two are currently being hired to work at the Beaverlodge detachment starting in 2020
- Provide special event policing; traffic safety; liaison with crime prevention groups; school zone, campground, and specialized patrols on water and in greenspaces (jet boat, ATV); checkstops; compliance checks; delivery of schools and crime prevention programs; and conduct proactive patrols of high crime areas (hot spots)

PATROL UNIT



Funded by: County of Grande Prairie

Peace Officers Roles:

- Supplemental enforcement to the RCMP
- Enforce provincial traffic and safety law
- Prevent road/infrastructure damage by overweight commercial vehicles
- Deliver safety and education programs

Patrol area spans from the BC border (west) to the Smoky River (east), and from the Saddle Hills (north) to the Wapiti River (south), and are contracted to provide services to the Municipal District of Greenview, towns of Sexsmith and Wembley, and the Village of Hythe.

VOLUNTEER CRIME PREVENTION GROUPS

- Local volunteer community crime prevention organizations help prevent and mitigate crimes
- Work closely with local law enforcement
- Includes groups such as Rural Crime Watch, neighborhood watch groups, etc.

BYLAW UNIT



Funded by: County of Grande Prairie

Bylaw Enforcement Officers (Level 2 Peace Officers) Roles:

- Deliver safety and education programs
- Enforce select regulatory bylaws related to:
- Unsightly premises, parking, snow removal, animal control; and specific provincial statutes under specific Provincial rules
- Enforce the Animal Control Bylaw, regulating dogs, cats and other domestic animals when required
- Proactive and complaints-driven enforcement

Enforcement and services to the County, Wembley, Sexsmith, Hythe and Saddle Hills County

ALL ABOUT ENFORCEMENT

County Regional Enforcement Services are a leader in policing, safety services and emergency management and one of the most comprehensive departments in the province. Multiple types of enforcement work together to provide a safe, secure environment for residents, businesses and visitors.

REPORTING

All crime and other policing-related calls in the County should be reported to the RCMP.

ALL Emergencies: 9-1-1

Non-Emergencies: 780-830-5700 Grande Prairie Rural Detachment
780-354-2485 Beaverlodge Detachment

For questions, concerns or reports about animal control, bylaw or other non-crime related topics, contact:

County Regional Enforcement Services

P: 780-532-9727 | **E:** enforcementservices@countygp.ab.ca

W: www.countygp.ab.ca/occurrencereport

For animal adoption, pound and shelter services, contact:

Grande Prairie Regional Animal Care Facility

P: 780-830-0199 | **E:** regionalpound@countygp.ab.ca

Report a Drug House

P: 780-830-5689 | **W:** www.countygp.ab.ca/drughouse

New Temporary Parking Ban in Five County Neighbourhoods Aims to Make Snow Removal Safer and Faster



Specific crews are dedicated to snow removal in County hamlets and designated residential areas. Crews are asking residents in these neighbourhoods for their cooperation in helping them get the streets cleared more quickly. New temporary parking restrictions can now be put in place in the following subdivisions, as well as along a key route in the Hamlet of Clairmont:

- Hamlet of Clairmont, from 100 Avenue to 113 Avenue
- Subdivisions of Whispering Ridge and Westlake Village in Clairmont
- Subdivision of Wedgewood
- Subdivisions of Maple Ridge and Taylor Estates

Snow removal crews require plenty of room to maneuver equipment. Any obstructions in the street not only present safety hazards, but slow crews down and prevent proper snow removal. Under the new temporary parking ban, the County requires residents to remove all obstructions, including vehicles and waste carts, while signs are posted to ensure that when the snow falls, crews can be responsive and quickly get the roads cleared.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE NEW TEMPORARY PARKING RESTRICTIONS

The County has installed new signage at the entrances of the neighbourhoods listed. When snowfall starts, or is forecast to begin shortly, temporary parking bans will be announced 24-hours before crews begin snow removal activities in the area.

In situations of extreme weather, crews may need to be on the roads sooner than 24 hours. We will give the public as much advance notice as possible to move their vehicles.

When parking bans are active, “No Parking” signs affixed to posts and as pictured above will be visible in the designated areas. When the “No Parking” sign is visible, parking on roadways is not permitted between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Residents will have 24 hours from the time the sign is posted to make sure their vehicles or other obstructions are not on the road between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Vehicles left on the street between these hours when a parking ban is declared may be ticketed and/or towed.

Once the “No Parking” signs are covered, parking will again be permitted.

Please note that the snow removal schedule is tentative and there may be changes to the schedule in unforeseen circumstances. Information about snow removal is available at www.countygp.ab.ca/snowremoval.

IF YOU ARE OUT OF TOWN AND A PARKING BAN IS DECLARED

If a parking ban is declared and you are away, you are still responsible to remove your vehicle(s) and any obstructions from the road within 24-hours of the sign being visible. Please make arrangements to have someone move obstructions and your vehicle(s) or do not park on a snow route.

IF YOUR VEHICLE IS TOWED

Regional Enforcement Services will attempt to contact the registered vehicle owner prior to towing. If you suspect your vehicle has been towed, contact Regional Enforcement Services at **780-532-9727** or if unreachable, the RCMP non-emergency line at **780-830-5700**.

CONTRACTORS AND CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES

If you are working in these neighbourhoods during snow removal operations, please give County crews and equipment plenty of room to work. This includes removing vehicles and other obstructions, such as disposal bins and construction equipment.

IT'S EASY TO STAY UPDATED

The County has plenty of convenient options to keep you up-to-date on snow removal and parking bans.

- “Like” us on Facebook at County of Grande Prairie
- Follow us on Twitter @CountyofGP
- For 24/7 information about area-specific parking bans, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/parkingban.

The County understands that good winter road conditions in local neighbourhoods are important to residents. Keeping roads clear of snow so they are safe and passable for drivers and pedestrians is a priority for the County and our snow removal crews.



Another Season of Snow Removal is Underway



The County of Grande Prairie Public Works department has geared up for another busy season clearing snow and ice off County roads.

The County's dedicated snow removal crew is made up of 20 graders, five plow trucks, three large tractors, and three loaders which clear and maintain over 3,600 km of paved and gravel roads. Reasonable efforts are made to clear all rural roads within five days following a significant snow fall; however, multiple snow fall events may alter the snow clearing cycle and require extra time to complete.

Each winter season we rely on your help and patience to ensure the season goes smoothly.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- During periods of heavy snowfall or other extreme weather conditions, please have patience as crews work to clear snow from your area as quickly as possible.

- Please use extreme caution, and when approaching, reduce your speed around plows, graders, and other snow removal equipment.
- Do not push snow or ice from private property onto the roads and others property. Bylaws in the County prohibit pushing snow onto or across County roadways or onto any other property other than your own. If windrows freeze, they can cause accidents, or damage County equipment and private vehicles.
- Watch for snow removal equipment operating in your neighborhood and obey any temporary parking bans issued in designated County neighbourhoods to ensure your vehicles are not parked on the roadside while crews are at work clearing your street. For more information, read the article on page 9.
- If you have questions about traffic bylaws or wish to make a complaint about improper snow removal, please contact Regional Enforcement Services at **780-532-9727**, enforcementservices@countygp.ab.ca or use the online reporting system at www.countygp.ab.ca/occurrencereport.

For detailed information about our Winter Road Maintenance Program, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/snowremoval or contact the Public Works department at **780-532-7393**.

Safer Sidewalks

The County of Grande Prairie is much safer when roads and walkways are clear of snow and ice. County crews are responsible to clear over 3,600 kilometres of snow and ice from County roads throughout the winter, as well as from other public areas throughout the County.

Property owner or occupants are responsible for clearing snow- or ice-covered sidewalks, which can create slip and fall hazards and force people to walk on the road. Clear sidewalks mean safer and more accessible communities for all – especially those such as the elderly, those with mobility issues, and for strollers and wheelchairs.

- Property owners and occupants are required to remove snow and ice from public sidewalks adjacent to their property within 24-hours of substantial completion of the snowfall.



- When clearing sidewalks: (1) snow must not be placed on roads as it creates driving hazards; (2) sidewalks must not be damaged while clearing snow.

Remember, it is illegal to deposit snow, ice and other material onto roads, right-of-ways, ditches or property other than your own.

For further information visit www.countygp.ab.ca/snowremoval.

2019 A Busy Year for the County's Regional Fire Service



From fighting wildfires to a heartwarming animal rescue, the County's Regional Fire Service had an eventful and challenging year.

In May, wildfires wreaked havoc on the northern part of Alberta, threatening many communities and forcing hundreds of people to be evacuated from their homes. Responding to these fires required a significant number of resources, including a request from the Province for fire personnel and equipment from the Regional Fire Service to help battle the Chuckegg Creek wildfire. The County's crews, along with others deployed by the province, helped protect the Town of High Level as well as the Norbord Mill site.

"Helping those in need is the cornerstone of our service and a priority of our Council," said Fire Chief Dan Verdun. "Our crews take specialized training that allows them to work seamlessly in wildland fires, and we continue to work with the Province and other agencies to ensure we are ready for this type of incident, whether in the County or elsewhere in the province."



Regional Fire Service's high-angle rescue training also came in handy when a dog named Toby was rescued from a ledge along Red Willow River this summer.

Firefighters attending an incident along the river spotted Toby, who had been missing for nearly a week and was stranded on a ledge. After completing their initial call, crews crossed the river and hiked for an hour and a half to find a location where they could rig rescue equipment to lower a firefighter down to reach Toby and then bring him back up to safety. Once retrieved, the fire service used social media to locate Toby's owners, and he was reunited with his family.

"We have a highly-skilled fire service thanks to the commitment of the individual firefighters, our strong regional partnerships, and the unwavering support of County Council," said Chief Verdun. "No two days are the same in fire rescue, and each incident allows us to utilize our training and experience to the benefit of the community and the region," said Chief Verdun.



Now Recruiting Fire Guardians for 2020 Fire Season

Starting January 1, 2020, the County of Grande Prairie will be accepting applications from the public to become fire guardians for the following areas within the County: Bezanson, Wembley, Beaverlodge, Hythe, Sexsmith and Teepee Creek. Fire season begins on March 1, 2020 and runs until October 31, 2020.

Fire guardians play an important role in the community by:

- Meeting with landowners and inspecting proposed burn sites
- Confirming landowners meet proper guidelines to ensure safe burn practices are in place prior to burning
- Issuing fire permits

Fire guardians use their own vehicle for site inspections and are compensated for each permit issued.

In order to become a fire guardian, you must:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Reside in the County of Grande Prairie
- Complete an interview (if selected) the first week of February
- Attend a training session in February

To learn more and to apply starting on January 1, 2020, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/fireguardians or contact Regional Fire Service at **780-532-9727**.

DID YOU KNOW... the County of Grande Prairie issued a total of 1,669 fire permits in 2018.

New La Glace Fire Hall Targeted for 2020 Opening

Construction continues on the new fire hall in La Glace, with work expected to be completed by the end of the year, and the facility operational in 2020.

“Exterior construction is nearly complete, and work is well underway on the interior of the building,” said Fire Chief Dan Verdun. “We are working closely with the builder to keep the project on track, and we are looking forward to showing off the new facility in the new year.”

The new fire hall will replace the existing facility, which was constructed in 1994. The new building will double the capacity of the current station and will include spaces dedicated to training, maintenance, office space, apparatus storage, and more. The building cost is \$1.925 million, with \$1.57 million of it being funded by a Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) grant from the Provincial Government.

Also, a new piece of equipment will soon be calling the La Glace fire hall home: a new water tender.



Progress is being made on the construction of the new fire hall

“This water tender is specialized equipment for transporting water – it’s like a water truck but with greater functionality,” said Chief Verdun. “Unlike our existing water truck, the water tender has a larger pump and can upload water from static supplies in a shorter period, allowing it to return to the incident in a timelier fashion.”

The new water tender for La Glace is National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) rated and will greatly enhance the fire protection service in La Glace and surrounding areas.

May Your Holidays Be Merry, Bright – and Safe!

'Tis the season for holiday celebrations with family and friends. So, while you are busy making your lists (and checking them twice), be sure to add these simple tips to ensure a happy and fire-safe holiday season.



HOLIDAY DECORATIONS:

- Choose decorations that are flame resistant or retardant.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, not both.
- Replace any strings of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read manufactures instructions for number of lights strands to connect.
- Use clips - not nails - to hang lights so cords are not damaged.
- Keep decorations away from windows and doors.
- Bring outdoor electrical lights inside after the holidays to prevent hazards and make them last longer.



HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING:

- Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside and ensure there is a large, deep ashtray for their use. Do not put smoking materials in planters.

- Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.
- Ask smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed.
- Make sure your home has working smoke detectors and test them at least once a month.



CHRISTMAS TREE CARE AND SAFETY:

- Before placing your tree in the stand, cut one to two feet from the base of the trunk.
- Add water to the tree stand and replenish daily.
- Always turn off Christmas lights before leaving home or going to bed.
- Make sure the tree is at least three feet from any heat source.
- Make sure the tree is not blocking any exits.
- After Christmas or when it is dry, get rid of the tree. Dried-out trees are a fire hazard and should not be left in your home or garage or placed outside against your home.
- For information about Christmas tree collection, visit page 14.

DID YOU KNOW:

- Two of every five home Christmas tree fires started in the living room or den.
- Twenty-one per cent of decoration fires started in the kitchen and 15 per cent started in the living room.
- The top three days for home candle fire are Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Christmas Tree Disposal Now Available for Curbside Recycle and Waste Collection Customers

New this year, residents who receive curbside recycle and waste pickup services, that are billed for waste and recycle collection through an Aquatera utility bill, will be able to dispose of their Christmas Trees from January 6 to 17, 2020. Place your tree(s) one metre from your waste cart on your regular collection day.



PRIOR TO CHRISTMAS TREE COLLECTION:

- Ensure trees are no taller than 4 feet or 1.2 metres
- Place no more than two trees out per household
- Only include live trees, not artificial trees
- Ensure that all tinsel and decorations are removed

County residents without curbside waste and recycle collection services can bring their trees to the Clairmont Centre for Recycling and Waste Management free-of-charge by showing their landfill tag. Don't have a landfill tag? Find out how to get one at www.countygp.ab.ca/landfillaccess.

Curbside Waste & Recycling Collection Schedule Changes for the Holiday Season

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Please note that County residents that normally have their waste carts and blue bagged recyclables collected on Wednesday will be moved to Tuesday (the day before) between December 24, 2019 and January 1, 2020.



Waste and recycle will be collected from the curbside in the following subdivisions on Tuesday, December 24 and Tuesday, December 31:

- Carriage Lane
- Clairmont south of 108 Avenue

Regular collection days will resume January 2, 2020.

Curbside collection dates will remain unchanged for the subdivisions of Taylor Estates, Maple Ridge, Wedgewood, Clairmont north of 108 Avenue, and Whispering Ridge and Westlake in Clairmont.

If you have any questions, please call the Landfill Information Line at 780-513-3967. For more information on the County's recycling and waste management facilities and programs, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/recycleprograms.

Recycling Cardboard this Holiday Season

The holidays are right around the corner. Here are some handy tips on recycling cardboard this season for when you're swimming in boxes and packaging!

CARDBOARD ONLY, PLEASE!

Just one piece of Styrofoam, plastic and other materials that aren't cardboard can contaminate an entire load of cardboard recycling! Make sure to remove all Styrofoam, plastic and other materials from your cardboard boxes before they hit the recycling bin or curbside.

FLATTEN YOUR CARDBOARD BEFORE YOU RECYCLE IT

Whether you have curbside pickup or you're bringing your recyclables to the Clairmont Centre for Recycling and Waste Management, one of our 13 recycling bin locations, or one of the many other recycling facilities in the County, flattening your cardboard saves space in our bins, and makes it easier on you AND the collectors.

OTHER HOLIDAY TIPS

- Recycle old Christmas lights, extension cords and other electronics at the Clairmont Centre for Recycling & Waste Management, West Grande Prairie Regional Landfill or at the Demmitt, Teepee Creek, and Elmworth transfer stations
- Receive a great new present to replace an item that still has a useable life? Drop it off at the Shelf and Share in the Clairmont Centre for Recycling & Waste Management where new or gently used items can be shelved and reused in a new home!
- Christmas trees can be dropped off at the Clairmont Centre for Recycling & Waste Management, West Grande Prairie Regional Landfill or at the Demmitt, Teepee Creek, and Elmworth Transfer Stations



Alberta Ag-Plastic. Recycle it! Program Comes to the County

The County of Grande Prairie has been selected to participate in the Cleanfarms and Alberta Plastic Recycling Group's agricultural waste pilot program. The Clairmont Centre for Recycling & Waste Management is one of 20 locations across Alberta that will be collecting agricultural grain bags and twine for recycling as part of the three-year pilot.

"Disposal of agricultural plastics such as grain bags and baler twine has long been a source of concern," said Sonja Raven, Agricultural Fieldman. "Burning plastics can result in dioxins, which are highly toxic chemicals leaching into the

soil, and fumes contaminating the air. The only other option was to landfill the plastics. Now we have a great alternative that will help farmers be stewards of the environment."

More information on the agriculture waste recycling program can be found at

www.cleanfarms.ca/alberta-ag-plastic-recycle-it-program

Information on County's waste and recycling programs can be found at www.countygp.ab.ca/recycleprograms.

Recycling and Waste Management Facilities Holiday Hours

The County of Grande Prairie wishes to inform County residents that the County landfill/transfer station holiday hours between December 24, 2019 and January 1, 2020 are as follows:

CLAIRMONT CENTRE FOR RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT	WEST GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL LANDFILL	DEMMITT TRANSFER STATION	ELMWORTH TRANSFER STATION	TEEPEE CREEK TRANSFER STATION
OPEN: December 27, 28 & 30 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. CLOSING EARLY: December 24 & 31 open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CLOSED : December 25, 26 & January 1	OPEN: December 27 & 28 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. CLOSING EARLY: December 24 & 31 open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CLOSED: December 25, 26 & January 1	CLOSED : December 25 & January 1	CLOSED: December 25 & January 1	OPEN: December 24 & 26 from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Regular hours of operation will resume January 2, 2020.

cut here and place on your refrigerator

Recycling and Waste Management Facility Regular Hours of Operation

CLAIRMONT CENTRE FOR RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT	WEST GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL LANDFILL	DEMMITT TRANSFER STATION	ELMWORTH TRANSFER STATION	TEEPEE CREEK TRANSFER STATION
OPEN: Monday to Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.	OPEN: Tuesday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	OPEN: Wednesday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	OPEN: Wednesday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.	OPEN: Tuesday and Thursday from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Visit www.countygp.ab.ca/recyclingprograms to view an interactive map of all the County's waste management and recycling service facilities and to learn more about our various recycling programs. For landfill and transfer station information please call our Landfill Information Line at 780-513-3967.



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Visit the Shelve and Share at the Clairmont Centre for Recycling & Waste Management!



The Shelve and Share (previously known as the Drop N' Swap) is a place to drop-off gently used and new items that may be appreciated in a new home. Reusing items is one of the best ways to reduce waste and energy use!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SHELVE AND SHARE:

- Drop-off items that are in good condition and working order. If an item is broken and can't be reused, it should be recycled.
- Place items for reuse on the shelves provided. Bags or boxes of items will be discarded.
- Hours of operation are Monday to Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

ITEMS TO DROP-OFF AT THE SHELVE AND SHARE:

- Sports and recreation equipment
- Arts and craft supplies
- Home décor
- Office and school supplies
- Paper products
- Kitchen and household items
- New or reusable construction materials

NOT ACCEPTED AT THE SHELVE AND SHARE:

- Broken or soiled items
- Baby cribs and car seats
- All types of helmets
- Stuffed animals or cloth toys
- Lawn darts, knives or similar items
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including hard hats, boots, gas masks, etc.

Questions? County of Grande Prairie staff are available to help! County staff have the final say on what items are accepted at the Shelve and Share.

I WANT TO DONATE

Bedding and Clothing can be placed in the **Diabetes Canada clothing donation bin** at the Clairmont Centre for Recycling & Waste Management or at other bins located throughout Grande Prairie area communities. To find clothing bin locations, visit declutter.diabetes.ca

Large Appliances like refrigerators, stoves, washers, dryers and dishwashers can be dropped off in the **White Goods Section** at the Clairmont Centre for Recycling & Waste Management .

Electronics can be dropped off in the **E-waste Section** at the Clairmont Centre for Recycling & Waste Management.

For more information about recycling in the County, please visit www.countygp.ab.ca/recycleprograms.

County Recycling & Waste Management Program

QUICK FACTS & TIPS

DID YOU KNOW: You can recycle used automotive oil at the Clairmont Centre for Recycling & Waste Management or the Demmitt, Teepee Creek and Elmworth transfer stations? Put your used oil in containers no larger than five gallons. Note: used cooking oil or other fluids like diesel and antifreeze are not accepted for recycling.

QUICK TIP: Plan your trip to the Clairmont Centre for Recycling & Waste Management! Ensure your household waste is in a bag, bin or bundle, and only bring permitted items. When loading your vehicle, keep household waste separated from other materials (metals, tires, wood, etc.). Ensure your load is tarped and secure to prevent littering and to avoid fines for having an unsecured load.

QUICK TIP: To avoid tipping fees, ensure you have your landfill access tag before heading out to the Clairmont Centre for Recycling and Waste Management Centre.

DID YOU KNOW: Landfill/transfer station attendants are available to answer your waste and recycling questions, including helping ensure you put materials in the right place.

DID YOU KNOW: Single-use plastic grocery bags are not accepted in the County's recycling program.

QUICK TIP: Don't throw your plastic bags in the trash as they can be returned to some local grocery stores. By returning the bags to the store, enough bags can be collected to recycle them into more plastic bags.

For more information about the County's recycling and waste programs, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/recycleprograms.

Agriculture Update

As many of you know, this past summer was a challenging one for the Agriculture sector. The County experienced a tremendous weed boom because of the wet growing conditions. You may have noticed that crews took a little longer to mow County ditches and roadsides and weed control didn't seem as fast and efficient as in previous years.

The wind and rain made the scheduling and completion of these activities very challenging; however, with our excellent staff, we were able to effectively address the over 100 weed complaints and mow all County ditches; and our Problem Wildlife Crew removed 170 dams. We thank you all for your patience. We are hopeful that next year will be a more "typical" year!

START PREPARING YOUR WEED CONTROL STRATEGY FOR YOUR PROPERTY TODAY!

Winter is an excellent time to develop control strategies for weed problems your property may be facing. By being prepared in advance, you will be ready to implement those weed control strategies in early spring. Don't know where to start or need help developing a weed control plan? Contact the County's Agriculture department at **780-532-9727**.

Wapiti Area Synergy Partnership



Are you interested in energy industry activity in the Wapiti area? Check out the Wapiti Area Synergy Partnership (WASP).

WASP MEETINGS:

Second Tuesday of the month at the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum
9301 112 Avenue, Wembley
from 7 – 9 p.m.

Stop by to connect with area industry representatives, learn about upcoming projects, and listen to expert presentations.

Visit www.wapitiasp.ca for details.

11th ANNUAL



GROWING THE NORTH

CONFERENCE

Registration is now open for the 11th annual Growing the North Conference, taking place February 19 and 20, 2020 at Evergreen Park.

The conference helps leaders in local government and entrepreneurs examine innovation and explore economic development opportunities in the Peace Region of Northwest Alberta and Northwest BC. Attendees will listen to a wide range of speakers who provide expert insight into the industries that are vital to our area and its economic diversity, along with endless networking opportunities.

Growing the North is a partnership between the County of Grande Prairie, City of Grande Prairie, Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce, MD of Greenview, Community Futures Grande Prairie Region, Farm Credit Canada, Grande Prairie Regional Innovation Network and the Grande Prairie Regional Tourism Association.

Visit www.growingthenorth.com to stay up to date on scheduling, speaker lineups, sponsors, and networking opportunities.

To register, visit the website or contact Janice at the Grande Prairie and District Chamber of Commerce at janice@gpchamber.com. For details on sponsorship opportunities, contact Cindy at cindy@gpchamber.com or call 780-532-5340.

Registration \$299 + GST



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Nominate a Farm Family



2019 Farm Family Award Recipient - The Balisky Family

Do you know a farm family in the County of Grande Prairie that is deeply committed to agriculture and actively involved with helping their community?

If so, the County of Grande Prairie Agricultural Service Board, in partnership with the Peace Country Classic Agri-Show, want you to nominate them for the 2020 Farm Family Award.

The winning Farm Family will be honoured at the Peace Country Classic Agri-Show during the Annual Banquet event.

The deadline to submit nominations is 2 p.m. on December 13.

Nomination packages are available online at www.countygp.ab.ca/farmfamily or can be picked up at the County Community Services Building located at 10808 – 100 Ave., Clairmont (1.5 km west from Highway 2 on Township Road 724) during business hours (8:30 a.m. – noon, 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday).

RETURN COMPLETED NOMINATION FORMS BY:

Fax: 780-567-5589
Attention: Sonja Raven
Agricultural Service Board

DIRECT MAIL:

Sonja Raven
County of Grande Prairie
Agricultural Service Board
10001 – 84 Avenue
Clairmont, AB, T8X 5B2

IN PERSON:

County Community Services Building
Located at 10808 – 100 Ave, Clairmont
(1.5 km west off Highway 2 on Township Road 724)

For more information, please contact Sonja Raven, Agricultural Fieldman, at **780-532-9727**.

Raise Money for Your Non-Profit Group this Summer

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Learn how to apply and become a Weed Warrior!



Are you a local non-profit organization or community group looking to raise money? The County Agriculture department has the perfect opportunity awaiting. Become a Weed Warrior! In becoming part of the Weed Warrior Team you're not only raising money for your group; you're also benefitting your community and the environment by helping combat noxious weeds.

How does the program work? The County chooses up to seven groups to pick weeds in different areas of the County. The Agriculture department coordinates a convenient date for each group to attend a morning information session on how to identify and control noxious weeds such as Scentless Chamomile, and then finishes off with a four-hour weed picking session. Each group is teamed up with one of our own professional weed pickers. After each group finishes their shift, they receive \$500. An extra \$100 goes to the group that picks the most weeds.

For more information, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/weedwarrior or contact the Agriculture department at **780-532-9727**.

Thank you to the groups who volunteered last season. Due to your efforts, a total of 27,170 lbs of Scentless Chamomile was removed from the County. That's a lot of weeds!

Congratulations to the Grande Prairie Garden Club who won the Grand Champion Award for picking the most weeds – 10,010 lbs and Hillcrest Christian School who won the Team Spirit Award this season.



Apply for Your 100 Years of Farming Award!



The County of Grande Prairie recognizes the significant contributions that our agricultural settlers made in building our County into what it is today.

The 100 Years of Farming Award recognizes these contributions and celebrates the descendants of these pioneers. The award has two categories: The Heritage Homestead Award, available to families who still own or reside on their original homestead from a century ago; and the Pioneer Farming Family Award, which recognizes families who have lived and farmed in the County for over 100 years.

Congratulations to the other families who received the award this year. Thank you for your contributions to our community and for enriching the County's heritage!



The recent award recipients being presented with their gate sign. Agricultural Service Board (ASB) Chair Corey Beck and Councillor Harold Bulford presented the Marcy Family with their Heritage Homestead gate sign.

HERITAGE AWARD RECIPIENTS:

Everton Family – have settled in the County on their homestead in 1919.

Marcy Family – have settled in the County on their homestead in 1919.

Matheson Family – have settled in the County on their homestead in 1915.

PIONEER AWARD RECIPIENTS:

Reaume Family – have lived in the County since 1919.

For further details or to apply for a 100 Years of Farming Award, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/100years or call the Agriculture department at 780-532-9727.

Apply for the Dust Control Program Starting on February 3rd!

Does the road in front of your residence, rural subdivision, or business require dust control? The County has a program for that! In order to have dust suppressants applied to your gravel road, you must apply.

Starting on February 3, 2020, interested candidates can fill out application forms online at www.countygp.ab.ca/dustcontrol, or in person at the County Public Works Building at 10001 - 84 Avenue Clairmont, AB. Interested candidates have until April 30, 2020 to apply.

RATES

CALCIUM APPLICATIONS:

- Residential Cost Share **\$4.40/meter**
- Commercial/Industrial **\$6.60/meter**

OIL APPLICATIONS:

- Residential Cost Share **\$19.20/meter** first 150 meters
\$21.95/meter after 150 meters
- Commercial/Industrial **\$21.95/meter**

Residents who apply for dust control will have pink stakes pegged by Public Works personnel, adjacent to the road where they want the dust suppressant applied. The work will begin once spring road bans are lifted and continues until the program is complete.

For more information on the County's Dust Control Program, please visit www.countygp.ab.ca/dustcontrol or contact the Public Works department at 780-532-7393.



Winter Family Frostival

MONDAY | FEBRUARY 17, 2020 | 12-3PM

Located at the Crosslink County Sportsplex

Bring the family outdoors and get "unplugged" at this FREE Family Day Weekend Event! Stop by for sleigh rides, tobogganing, snow sculpture/snow painting, snowshoeing, bonfires and snacks.

Stay tuned to the County's social media channels and our website at www.countygp.ab.ca/recreationprograms for more information.





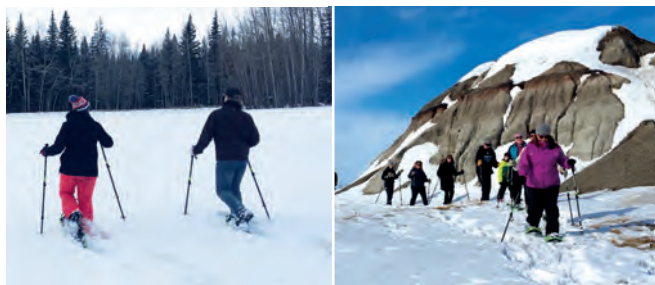


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Bundle Up and Head Outdoors!

Staying active in the outdoors during the winter season is a great way to experience the vast natural landscape that's right in our own backyard. There's plenty to do in and around the County throughout the winter from snowshoeing and skating, to picnicking and campfires. Watch our website and social media channels for updates, as we're continually adding new information about winter programming.

View www.countygp.ab.ca/recreationprograms for upcoming events.



SNOWSHOE RENTALS

Ever wondered what it's like to walk on sunshine? Come visit us at Kleskun or Pipestone parks and ask our park hosts about renting a pair of snowshoes. There's really nothing like trekking over untouched snow glistening from the brilliant winter sunshine overhead!

Visit www.countygp.ab.ca/recreationprograms for rental times, costs and availability.

TRAIL BLAZING

The popular paved trail system that runs through the Dunes is maintained throughout the winter months, making it easy to step out of the house and step into nature. You can park and walk to the trails using the lot on the south side of Highway 668, between Highway 40 and Resources Road/Range Road 60A. The lot also has a space for disabled parking.



You are welcome to bring your dogs (on a leash please), but please remove any pet waste using the new dispensers provided. Vehicles and motorized equipment, overnight parking or camping, and chopping down trees is not permitted in these areas.

It's easy to check the status of trail maintenance. Visit www.countygp.ab.ca/parks to stay up-to-date.

SPEAKING OF PARKS ...

Don't forget that during the winter season (and spring too), day-use areas in County parks are open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on weekends. During park hours of operation, the public has free access to picnic tables and seating areas, as well as fire pits and fire wood. Washrooms are closed, but outhouses are available.

WINTER ICE? BRING IT ON!



Looking for a way to keep active this winter? How about converting a piece of County greenspace into a community ice surface for families to enjoy this winter!

The County's Seasonal Neighbourhood Ice Surface Program is available to help residents build temporary ice

surfaces in communities with greenspace that is owned and managed by the County of Grande Prairie (also known as Municipal Reserve greenspace).

The program requires a volunteer group of four people minimum to apply to the County. The Parks and Recreation department will conduct a pre-inspection of the site. Once the application and pre-inspection is approved, the group is responsible for building, flooding and maintaining the ice surface over the winter.

Need some help getting the project off the ground? Your group can apply for up to \$1,000 for their ice surface to help with the costs of purchasing of boards or having water trucked in if a hydrant is not present on site. Note: high boards and competitive hockey play are not permitted under this program. Stormwater ponds are not suitable for ice surfaces due to constant run-off and salt content, which makes the ice unstable.

To learn more about the program and for details on how to apply, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/icesurfaces or contact the Parks and Recreation department at **780-532-9727**.

County Enhances Funding for Recreation with Updated Fee Assistance Program



Research shows that poverty impacts people's participation in sports and exercise; people with fewer economic resources have lower rates of participation in physical activities.

The County's Recreation Fee Assistance (RFA) Program, which started in 2018, is aimed at helping break down financial barriers to recreation for low-income families and individuals. The newly enhanced program provides subsidies for eligible families and individuals. Approved applicants can qualify for punch passes to access the Crosslink County Sportsplex, Eastlink Centre or the Beaverlodge Pool and Recreation Centre. Families and individuals can apply to the RFA Program once per year and the punch pass must be used in full before reapplying.

The County has also increased the qualifying income thresholds by 30 per cent, making the program available to a greater number of those with limited financial resources. Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) works with residents to apply to the program and to provide successful applicants with passes that work with their needs.

"Recreation is something that all people have a right to access, regardless of income," said Lisa Watson, FCSS Child, Youth, Family and Community Team Lead. "We believe these updates to the program will encourage even more residents to apply."

The program allows County residents to engage in activities that promote their health through access to facilities and programs such as weight rooms and fitness and wellness programs.

To qualify for the RFA program, primary applicants must be at least 18 years of age, live in the County of Grande Prairie, and must not exceed the following yearly income threshold totals:

1 Person	2 People	3 People	4 People	5 People	6 People	7+ People
\$25,554	\$31,811	\$39,107	\$47,484	\$53,855	\$60,740	\$67,635

For more information about the RFA Program or to apply, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/rfa or call FCSS at 780-532-9727.

Nominate a Kind Heart Today



Kind Heart Awards are given to County residents who deserve to be recognized for their good deeds or altruistic acts. Recipients willingly give their time and energy to help others without being asked or paid.

Eligible acts of kindness include any good deed, like helping a farmer clear a crop, shoveling the neighbour's driveway, or bringing a warm meal to a family experiencing hardship.

The awards were created to honour those who go out of their way to help others and create community spirit.

To learn more about the Kind Heart Awards Program or to nominate a deserving person, go to www.countygp.ab.ca/kindheartprogram or contact Family and Community Support Services at 780-532-9727.



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Public Libraries are Thriving!

We live in an age of advanced technology, with personal computers and phones that can access information, research, digital books and more anytime and anywhere. Libraries are thought by many as becoming extinct like dinosaurs; however, this is not the case. Public libraries are still very much thriving.

Libraries are much more than a building full of books, especially in our smaller communities. They are a hub in our communities where people regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or income gather to learn, grow and connect.

The County operates three libraries located in Elmhurst, Valhalla Centre and La Glace, each offering unique programs. We also support local libraries in neighbouring communities, including the Beaverlodge Public Library, Grande Prairie Public Library, Hythe Public Library, Sexsmith Shannon Library and Wembley Public Library.

Take advantage of all the opportunities our libraries have to offer and visit one near you!

Here are several reasons why you should visit your local library:

- Memberships to access resources from County libraries and all libraries in Alberta through the interlibrary loan program are FREE for everyone.
- It's a place to find and share local information. Library staff interact with so many different people on a regular basis, they are a great source of information for community events.
- There's always a comfortable place to sit, have a coffee, browse or sign out books, and meet others in the community.
- You can access more than just books – there are current magazines and periodicals, audio books, CDs, DVDs, newspapers, reference materials and much more.
- They are place of learning for all ages – from computer literacy, crafts, genealogy and horticulture to robotics, these are just a few of the many programs hosted at our libraries.
- There is plenty of fun for kids – story time for little ones, summer reading programs, and collections of children's and teen books all play a role in building literacy skills and the love of reading.
- Libraries are a welcoming space for newcomers, with support and resources for English language learners.
- Become more environmentally friendly and cut down on paper waste by signing out books and other resources from the library instead of purchasing your own.
- Save money and valuable storage space at home. On average, hardcover books sell for at least \$25 and paperbacks \$10 each. Keep more money in your pocket and borrow them from the library instead!
- You can access collections, information and resources about your community and its history that may be difficult to find elsewhere.
- It is a safe, friendly place where you can access information without judgement.
- View cultural and artistic displays featuring local and provincial artisans.

If you're already a dedicated library patron, you know they are thriving. If you're not - stop in for a chat and a coffee and see for yourself these little gems in your communities! For information about County operated and supported libraries, including hours of operation and links to each library's website, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/libraries. You can also find up-to-date information for each library on their individual Facebook pages.

Climb on Board the County Connector!



The County Connector is on the road making transportation easier around the Grande Prairie area. Operating on weekdays, the first route of the public transit service connects Grande Prairie, Clairmont and Sexsmith. A second route links Grande Prairie, Wembley, Beaverlodge and Hythe.*

Since its launch last December, rural and urban riders are finding the service a convenient, easy and affordable way to access medical appointments, jobs, community services, shopping, recreation and more.

Young riders are loving the County Connector service for helping them travel where they need to go!



"The County Connector is important in our community because it helps people get to town, even if they don't have a car!"

- Rubee, 7



"The bus takes me shopping at the mall! And brings me home again!"

- Pearl, 4

Transportation is available to anyone, with fares set at \$5.00 per passenger (12 years and over) for a one-way trip. Children aged 11 and under ride free and must be accompanied by an adult. Bus fare can be paid with coins (no bills) or with a SUPERPASS reloadable tap-and-go smart card. Visit www.countygp.ab.ca/connector to learn how to purchase and reload a SUPERPASS card.

Buses are accessible: each has visual signs, makes audible announcements at each stop, and has two spaces for wheelchairs or walkers. Buses are also bike-rack equipped.

For routes, schedules, fares, Where's My Ride? Bus Tracker, SUPERPASS card purchase locations and other information, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/connector or call the Citizen Contact Centre at **780-538-0300**.

This Rural Transportation Pilot Program is a two-year program funded by the Province of Alberta. The County of Grande Prairie, City of Grande Prairie, towns of Beaverlodge, Sexsmith and Wembley and the Village of Hythe are proud to partner on and support this important project.

*The County Connector does not operate on statutory holidays and weekends.

County Assessors Conducting Property Inspections

It's that time of year when County of Grande Prairie assessors are out in the County conducting property inspections. Inspections determine the characteristics of the property needed in order to determine fair and accurate property values.

All assessors will be driving County-marked vehicles and will be carrying visible County identification (ID). Upon arrival at your property, assessors will obtain assessment information from you. If you are not at home, callback cards may be left at your door. Property inspections should be complete sometime in January.



Assessors will be wearing a County ID badge similar to what's pictured above.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN COUNTY ASSESSORS VISIT YOUR PROPERTY

When County Assessors visit your property, they will conduct an inspection outdoors and may also require inspecting the interior of your property.

ASSESSORS WILL BE:

- inspecting new development, based on permits acquired from the County
- inspecting year-to-year progress of a building project
- inspecting status of parcels of land, considering legislation set out in the Municipal Government Act as well as associated regulations
- verifying sales information as our valuation each year is based on market value
- following up on requests to re-evaluate and verify all information collected on a property

For more information, visit www.countygp.ab.ca/inspections. If you have any questions, call the Assessment department at **780-532-9722**.



countygp.ab.ca

Commerce and Industry in the County Showcasing Sustainability and Community Spirit

Commercial and industrial businesses who participated in the annual Landscaping Recognition Program this year showcased not only excellence in landscaping but pride in community. The County's Planning and Development Services department hosts the program, now in its third year, as a way to encourage commercial and industrial businesses to think about creating an attractive space in industrial/commercial areas with the environment in mind.



Valard Foundations



Valard Foundations in Clairmont picked up this year's award for Best Landscaped Lot.

"Valard Foundations is very proud to have been included in the commercial properties chosen for this award," said Corporate Communications Manager Carrie Willemssen. "We shoot for high standards in everything we do, including the exterior appearance of our property."

Willemssen added that as a 40-year member of the local business community, Valard takes pride in having a long term presence in that community. Valard's landscaping makes use of native vegetation, demonstrates effective year round landscaping and features plenty of trees, shrubs and perennials to enhance the look of their business.



Horizon North Transportation

This year's People's Choice Award went to Horizon North Transportation. The public selected the People's Choice Award winner by voting on the County's Facebook page over the summer.

County Planning and Development Director Nick Lapp said the program not only showcases businesses' landscaping, it shows businesses growing community pride.

"The County encourages the business community to show pride in their properties," said Planning and Development Director Nick Lapp. "The emergence of this recognition program shows that many companies are making a real effort to have aesthetically pleasing grounds that are welcoming for customers, employees and the community."

Ten commercial and industrial businesses throughout the County were nominated for awards. The judging committee considered a number of factors, including each nominee's use of landscaping design principles from the County's Land Use Bylaw.

Award winners receive free advertisement in local media outlets, a feature in the County Connections newsletter along with a plaque and banner to display in their businesses. Valard Foundations received a barbecue lunch for their staff and are featured on a County banner that will be displayed at events throughout 2019 and 2020.

Check out this year's 10 nominees, go online for a "tour" to see the winning landscapes, and learn more about the Program – all just a click of a mouse away at www.countygp.ab.ca/bestlandscaping. Of course, make sure you stop by these businesses and congratulate them.

RECOGNIZED IN FRIENDLY LANDSCAPE COMPETITION

This year's County of Grande Prairie Landscaping Recognition Program saw 10 businesses recognized for their commitment to the environment and to "shaping and pruning" a more beautiful neighbourhood. Congratulations to our two winners and to all nominees!

Nominees:

- Decca Industries Ltd.
- Cross Country
- Finning Canada
- Fountain Tire
- Horizon North
- McClelland Oilfield Rentals Ltd.
- STEP Energy Services
- TAHK Projects Ltd.
- Tradesmen Enterprises
- Valard Foundations

“Change of Use” of Farm Buildings: Know the Code

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If you are planning on modifying a farm building on your property for another use, it's important to do your homework prior to making changes. Informing yourself about different classifications of farm buildings in the Alberta Building Code will ensure your building is meeting regulations.

Currently, Alberta does not require a safety code building permit for most farm buildings if the structure is classified as having low human occupancy (see Sifting Through Definitions). However, it's important to note: 1.) Other building codes are required in farm buildings, such as electrical, plumbing and gas. 2.) The building code exemption may no longer apply if you make changes to how you are using the building.

For example, when you are considering a change of use to a farm building to, say, a commercial, industrial or home business, the occupancy classification changes, the structure no longer conforms to the definition of a low occupancy farm building and, as such, must comply with the Alberta Building Code. Meeting this code can be a significant undertaking.

The County is aware that there are a number of former low occupancy farm buildings within our boundaries that are now being used for different purposes yet have not been brought up to the proper code. This presents health and safety risks and can also have legal implications.

Regardless of whether you are planning to change the use of a farm building or have already done so but are not yet compliant with the Alberta Building Code, we advise you to call the County as soon as possible. Our employees are ready to work with you to make sure your structure is in compliance within a reasonable timeframe and ensure that you have the information to do so. The County will not fine an owner if they are actively working to bring the structure into compliance within a preset timeframe.

If you have any questions regarding safety codes, contact the Planning and Development Services department at **780-532-9722**. Further information about the exemptions can be found in the Alberta Safety Codes Act Permit Regulations, Alberta Building Code at www.countygp.ab.ca/permits.

Sifting Through the Definitions

Low Occupancy, Not Low Occupancy Farm Buildings

The following provide a few examples of farm buildings that are classed as low occupancy, and those classed as other than low occupancy. For more details and examples, see the Alberta Building Code.

FARM BUILDINGS CLASSED AS LOW OCCUPANCY:

Livestock and poultry housing; manure and machinery storage facilities; horse exercise and training facilities where no bleachers or viewing areas are provided; and building used for storage of materials and produce.

FARM BUILDINGS CLASSED AS OTHER THAN LOW OCCUPANCY:

Farm retail centres for feeds; horticultural and livestock produce; auction barns and show areas where bleachers or other public facilities are provided; and farm work centres where the number of workers frequently exceeds the limit for low human occupancy (not more than one person per 40 square meters during regular business operations).

The Crosslink County Sportsplex has a program for everyone!

780-830-7407 | info@cgpsportsplex.com | www.crosslinkcountysportsplex.com

UPCOMING EVENTS & PROGRAMS

U4, U6, U8 & U10 Indoor Soccer Fun Leagues

Register your children for these fun-filled Saturday leagues! Information will be posted on www.crosslinkcountysportsplex.com, in mid-February, 2020. Registration includes a t-shirt and a season-ending medal. Parents who coach or assistant coach will receive a \$30 refund at the end of the season.

Santa Skate & Play

Santa Claus Is Coming To Town! Join Santa in the Trican Fieldhouse and on the ice in Overland Transport Rink on December 8, 2019. Santa will be available to play games with the kids in the Fieldhouse from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and to skate with everyone from 12:15 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. Join Santa, Sparky and our County Firefighters for some hot chocolate and candy canes! Admission is by donation of a non-perishable food item or cash.

Learn to Skate

This introductory program for skaters aged 3 – 12 years old places an emphasis on fun in a structured class environment! Skaters of all abilities will learn new skills and improve their overall skating. The first session will run from January 6 to February 13, 2020 and following will continue running six-week sessions until March 2020. Register your child at www.crosslinkcountysportsplex.com.

Catch a County of Grande Prairie JDA Kings Game

The County of Grande Prairie JDA Kings joined the North West Junior Hockey League (NWJHL) when the league began operations in 1994. The County of Grande Prairie JDA Kings home ice is on the Overland Transport Rink. Come cheer on your local Junior B hockey team at one of their upcoming games. Visit www.grandeprairiejdakings.com for game times and to find out how to become a "King".

Winter Break Kids Camp

Let your kids join us for our Winter Break Kid's Camp, taking place on January 2 and 3, 2020! Kids will stay healthy and active while having fun. Activities include indoor play in the Trican Fieldhouse; crafts, activities, and games; as well as making new friends. For parents who have to go back to work, early drop-off and late-pick up is available.

Introduction to Hockey

Designed for aspiring young hockey players, this program focuses on the fundamental skills of skating and explains the game of hockey in simple terms. Age and skill appropriate drills will focus on power skating, puck handling, passing and receiving. To sign up, participants should already be able to skate forward, fall down and get up without assistance. Full hockey equipment is required. Sign up for this session at www.crosslinkcountysportsplex.com.



Hockey 101

Hockey 101 focuses on the fundamentals of the sport and is designed for players who are new to the game of hockey as well as first year house league players. This program improves overall skills teaching proper technique in power skating, puck control, passing and receiving.

Seniors Walk & Talk

Seniors are invited to take a walk, jog or run around the Happy Trails indoor track. This free event runs on Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. until May 31, 2020. Enjoy free track admission, hot coffee, and meet and greet with other seniors. All other drop-in dates and times require a \$3 drop-in fee, or you can purchase a 10 punch pass for \$30.

Book Your Next Party or Event at the Sportsplex!

The Sportsplex is the place to be for your next party or event! Book the ice rink, fieldhouse, meeting room, KnockerBalls or bouncy castles! You can leave the catering to us – choose from a wide variety of food and drinks from the Over-Time Family Sports Lounge. Contact the Sportsplex for more information about party costs and packages, to view catering information, and to secure your booking. For more information about the Sportsplex and the programs and events available, visit www.crosslinkcountysportsplex.com or contact 780-830-7407 or info@cgpsportsplex.com.



GET FIT WHILE HAVING FUN!

Sign up or drop in today for one of these exciting programs offered at the Sportsplex:

- Introduction to Hockey and Hockey 101 programs
- Stick and Puck
- Fieldhouse Activities
- Adult Shinny and Stick and Puck
- Lunch Time Stick and Puck
- Tender Tots
- Bouncy Castle Days
- Seniors Walk and Talk
- Aerial Yoga
- KnockerBalls
- 13 and Under Stick and Puck and Shinny
- Lacrosse
- U4, U6, U8 and U10 Soccer League
- Learn to Skate
- Indoor Batting Cage
- Adult Non-Contact Hockey League and Industrial League. Register your team for the next season!

For more information about these programs and drop-in activities, including class descriptions, times and locations, visit www.crosslinkcountysportsplex.com.



countygp.ab.ca

Return undeliverable
Canadian addresses to:
The County of Grande Prairie No. 1
10001 – 84 Avenue, Clairmont, AB T8X 5B2



TOP ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Councillor Harold Bulford, Councillor Bob Marshall, Deputy Reeve Peter Harris, Councillor Corey Beck

FRONT ROW FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Councillor Linda Waddy, Councillor Daryl Beeston, Reeve Leanne Beaupre, Councillor Ross Sutherland, Councillor Karen Rosvold

COUNCILLOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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Councillor Corey Beck

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COUNTY CONTACT INFORMATION

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info@countygp.ab.ca

ADDRESS:

10001 – 84 Avenue
Clairmont, AB T8X 5B2

WEBSITE:

www.countygp.ab.ca

OFFICE HOURS:

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Closed from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.
and on statutory holidays

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDINGS

Administration, Assessment,
Economic Development, Finance
& Systems, Communications, Human
Resources, Public Works, Planning &
Development Services

780-532-9722

COMMUNITY SERVICES BUILDINGS

Agriculture, Family and Community
Support Services, Regional
Enforcement Services, Regional Fire
Service, Parks & Recreation

780-532-9727

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