



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT JUNE 25, 2020

COUNTY MANAGER

COVID-19

With the winding down of our ECC on June 10 and the continued loosening of COVID-19 restrictions, we have decided to fully re-open our office and shop facilities to the public effective Monday, June 22. Barriers have been placed on the front counters of our office and shop as a measure to protect our staff and members of the public visiting our buildings.

Lacombe County Fire Chief and Director of Emergency Management, Drayton Bussiere, will continue to attend Council meetings for a COVID-19 Q & A session with Council. He will no longer be providing formal presentations.

Province of Alberta – Municipal Stimulus Funding

We still have not heard any formal announcements regarding municipal stimulus funding from the Province. Hopefully, some of the 18 shovel ready projects we submitted to the Province back in April are selected.

Public Works for Community Organizations

Pursuant to Policy OP(9) where I am granted the authority to approve the use of County equipment and manpower for community projects to a maximum value of \$10,000, we have completed the following:

- Sunset Legion Campground – road improvements adjacent to the main gate
- Ellis Bird Farm – excavation work for a small bridge (Dow Bridge)

Recreational Trail Adjacent to Rosedale Valley

The City of Lacombe has advised us of their intention to commence with the Elizabeth Lake/Lake Ann Trail Connection project. A portion of the proposed trail is located on City of Lacombe Environmental Reserve between Elizabeth Lake and the east boundary of five residences in Rosedale Valley. There are three phases to this project, with Phase 3 being the actual construction of the trail planned for the summer of 2021. Earlier phases will involve environmental assessments of the riparian areas, preliminary and detailed designs, and a determination of the project's financial viability. The City will be engaging all affected landowners, including the owners of the five properties in Rosedale Valley adjacent to the trail, throughout the process.



Burbank Campground

The owners of a Burbank residential subdivision property have expressed concern with respect to a number of issues at the Burbank Campground. This campground is operated by the Lacombe Fish and Game Association (LFGA), who lease reserve land from the County for the group camping area of the campground. We facilitated a meeting between the subject property owners and a representative of the LFGA to discuss these concerns and potential ways to address them. The LFGA has since developed an action plan which has been shared with the property owners. We will continue to monitor this situation.

Police Levy

Shortly after Council approved our 2020 tax rate bylaw, which included establishing a separate tax rate for the police levy, the Province advised in a "Municipal Governance During COVID-19 Outbreak Q & A" bulletin that there is no authority for municipalities to do this. Given that our tax notices have already been revised to show policing costs as a separate line item, we will proceed as planned this year and re-evaluate our process in 2021.

Acting County Manager

Thanks to Michael Minchin for serving as the Acting County Manager in my absence for the past quarter. Keith Boras will be serving in this capacity for the period of July 1st to September 30th.

Communications

Media Releases

- Lacombe County office fully reopens (June 19)
- Zoom used for Council meetings/public hearings (June 9)
- Sandy Point Beach reopens for the season (June 4)
- Playgrounds/Public washrooms reopen (May 29)
- Lacombe County announces relaunch plan (May 29)
- Lacombe County Council Approves 2020 Final Budgets/Tax Rates (May 19)

Promotion

- LRWSC proof of residency promotion (May-July – website, County News, Social Media)
- Verbenone Sales (May-July, website, social media, County News)
- COVID-19 reminders (approaching staff, guidelines, etc.)
- Constructions notifications



Other

- Fixed several County geocaches (light damage from winter)
- Designed School Resource Officer annual report
- Supported Joint Worksite Health & Safety Committee (photo contest, inspections, etc.)
- COVID-19/ECC support (signs, social media, media releases, messaging).

Human Resources

- In collaboration with our benefits broker, H.R. has undertaken an Employee Benefits Program Comparison (Relative Value Index) exercise with 17 other municipalities. Findings will be presented later this summer.
- Our four returning mower operators recently started back up their season with us; rehire payroll sign-ups have all been completed.
- Two new River Weed Inspectors will be starting their season at the beginning of July.

CORPORATE SERVICES

General

- PERC and DIRC Credits
 - The Province informed the County that it had approved the County's application for the 2020 Provincial Education Requisition Credit and the Designated Industrial Requisition Credit.
 - These amounts totalled \$128,402 and cover 2017, 2018, and 2019 uncollectible oil and gas School and DIP property taxes.
 - The amounts are credited against the 2020 requisitions for the County.
- Shallow Gas Tax Reduction Credit
 - Staff provided input to RMA regarding the 2020 impact of the Province's Shallow Gas Tax Reduction Credit on the tax revenues for the County.
 - RMA continues to advocate on rural municipalities' behalf about the long-term cost of this credit and subsequent assessment changes on the finances of rural municipalities.
- Recreation Agreements
 - Staff are working on completing updates to the County's recreation agreements with Blackfalds and Lacombe.
 - The updated agreements reflect the terms of the new ICF agreements with the City of Lacombe and Town of Blackfalds.
- Lacombe Regional Tourism
 - Staff have been in discussions with the City concerning Lacombe Regional Tourism's funding request for 2021. The group has presented the same proposal to City and County Councils.



- The City has indicated that the funding request will be considered as part of the group's budget presentation to Council which takes place in September. A decision from the City's side is not expected until late 2020.
- The Flat Iron building currently houses both the Historical Society and Regional Tourism. The facility is leased by the City, and the County shares the cost with the City on a 50/50 basis. The current lease expires at the end of 2021.
- The departure of Tourism would not necessarily mean an end to the lease, although there would be some questions as to why the County would continue to fund its portion of the lease.
- Staff will have further conversations with the City and the community organizations this summer to map out the future for the facility and affected groups for 2021 and beyond.

Assessment

- 2020 Tax Notices
 - Staff have begun the process of generating the 2020 tax notices.
 - The inclusion of the Policing Levy required changes to the County tax notice and software both of which are complete.
 - Staff are working with the County's software provider to resolve some outstanding issues related to individual tax accounts which are preventing the assessment/tax roll from being complete.
 - Tax notices should be ready to be mailed by the fourth week of June.
- 2021 Assessments
 - Staff continue to work on farmland inspections and are about 70% complete.
 - Staff are also working on annual reinspection of oilfield sites.
 - Larger oilfield sites are being left until after Covid-19 restrictions have been eased.

Finance

- Front Office
 - With the cancellation of many conferences, staff are attending conferences virtually.
 - Government Finance Officers Association, Canadian Payroll Association and Questica Budget have offered several webinars that staff have attended.
- 2020 Tax Notices
 - Updates to the tax notice layouts are complete.
- 2019 Year end
 - Payroll staff were involved in providing payroll information to the auditors to assist in completing the year-end for LRSWC.
 - The Sylvan Lake Regional Wastewater Commission are now complete and at the auditors.



- 2020 Year end
 - Staff are investigating options to source CaseWare, a software that will assist staff in preparing year-end documents for the annual audit.
 - This project was carried over from the 2019 budget.
- Budget 2021
 - Staff are in the preliminary stages of budget preparation.
 - A tentative Budget schedule has been prepared.

Information Technology

- Spray Truck
 - Staff have successfully configured the computer and networking components of the County's new spray truck.
 - This work involved integration of GIS and GPS software along with boom control hardware from two different vendors.
 - This spray system allows the County to geographically log all chemical applied during the spraying season.
- Exchange Migration
 - The IT department is now very close to completing the migration of the County's email management system from the server room to the cloud.
 - As mentioned in last month's report, this migration will enable staff to work more seamlessly with the other Microsoft 365 products that are in the cloud.
- Server Replacement
 - Staff have had preliminary discussions and demonstrations from three vendors (Dell, NetApp and PureStorage) for acquisition of the County's new storage server budgeted in the 2020 budget.
 - Staff have pricing from one of the vendors and have been assured that they will receive the pricing from the two other vendors by the end of the week.
 - Based on the demonstrations, staff are very confident that this new storage server will not only provide more storage space, but it will also provide substantial increases in network data transmission rates due to advances in storage processor technology.

OPERATIONS

Public Works Shop

- Scheduled monthly services and commercial vehicle inspections were completed on heavy equipment and light/heavy duty trucks.
- Two new half tons and the Agriculture Tool Cat have been rigged up.
- Numerous repairs and services for LRWSC, more work on the sites has been requested.
- The equipment for Sandy Point was prepared for the opening of the site.



Maintenance Crews

- The spring calcium program was completed despite the challenges with weather.
- Pothole filling and asphalt patching has been ongoing.
- Gravel road soft spot repair has been ongoing and is more prevalent with the weather.
- The gravel program has completed 80 miles as well as gravelling for road construction.
- Small projects for the Ellis Bird Farm and the Sunset Legion Campground were completed.
- Repaired damage due to a manure haul on Range Road 4-1.
- Culvert replacements due to damage caused by spring runoff is ongoing.

Construction

- Construction on C0211 (Blissful Beach Road) is substantially complete with fencing and reclamation to finish.
- Construction on C2812 (South of Woody Nook) has commenced.
- Construction on C2741 (Rge. Rd. 27-4) is complete with fencing almost completed.
- Construction of C2621 (Rge. Rd. 26-2) is complete with reclamation and fencing nearly complete.
- All regulatory approvals are in place for 2020 projects.
- Most landowner consultations are complete for 2020 projects with a few remaining.

Parks

- Weekly/monthly playground inspections are complete with all sites in good repair.
- All facilities have now reopened with updated signage and cleaning procedures.
- A cable fence was installed at the trail in the South Aspelund Industrial Park to prevent motorized vehicle access.
- New signage for Sandy Point has been delivered and will be installed shortly.
- Tree bed maintenance and replacement of trees is ongoing.
- A number of tree complaints have been dealt with regarding dead or dying trees in reserves.

Health and Safety

- There were two incidents reported this reporting period.
- Monthly safety meetings were held for all Operations staff. Due to COVID these were completed via handouts.
- Hearing tests were completed for all noise exposed staff.
- New and returning staff orientations are now complete for the season.
- Driver abstracts obtained for all returning Operations staff with no concerns noted.
- Various staff have completed training for ATV, defensive driving and WHIMIS.

Additional Information

- BF 9495 (Forshee Bridge) construction has begun with work on borrow beginning by the contractor.



- The Centreview project is ongoing and has experienced some weather delays. The widening should be completed by the end of June, followed by base and paving.
- Paving of the Woody Nook road has been completed. Base work on Range Road 27-4 south of Highway continues to progress but has seen some weather delays as well.
- The lift station for the West Area Servicing Project has moved to the masonry, mechanical and electrical phase. Work continues on the lines within the Wildrose Rose Business Park. All drilling under QE2 and Highway 12 has been completed with no significant issues.
- Discussions with CP are ongoing regarding the lack of communication with up and coming CP projects specific to road closures. Of late the County has not been notified of road closures due to rail line work.
- Preparations for the fencing at the Mirror Dog Park are underway.
- Line painting is underway, the contractor started in the northeast portion of the County and is working their way west.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

AGRICULTURE/ENVIRONMENT

The office of the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Devin Dreeshen, issued a press release on June 3, 2020, announcing the signing of a Ministerial Order removing *Fusarium graminearum* from the Pest and Nuisance Control Regulation.

Mowing operations began on June 16th with road shoulder cut and gravel operations beginning in the Joffre/Haynes area.

2020 Mowing Schedule:

Shoulder Cut Gravel = Central and West Mowing Zones - June 16th to July 31st

Full Cut Gravel = East Mowing Zone - July 31st to September 18th

Full Cut Pavement East, Central, and West Zone – September 21st to October 16th

Roadside Spraying Operations began on June 16th to maintain brush on completed 2018 and 2019 roadside brush removal operations.

Spraying operations began May 25th on County-owned gravel pits, stockpile sites, and municipal reserves.

For the first time in 2020, Lacombe County retailed Verbenone patches to assist residents in protecting susceptible Pine Trees from Mountain Pine Beetle attacks. Lacombe County is sold out of stock for 2020.



Lacombe County Administration has been coordinating with ALUS Canada in exiting the Lacombe County ALUS Program. ALUS Canada has communicated that they wish to assume responsibility for annual ecosystem services payments to participating County residents.

Lacombe County Environmental Coordinator prepared and presented a new Environmental Improvement Grant objective and an Environmental Action Plan on behalf of the Environmental Steering Committee. Updates have been completed to the Environmental Management Policy and Environmental Improvement Grant for future Council review. The five-year Alberta Environment and Parks renewals were completed for Keeton, Murphy, and Heatburg gravel pits.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Occurrence Reports	Road Use Agreements 3	Community Hours Required 99	Lacombe County	Communities
	Travis MJ Permits 61		Citations Issued 11	Citations Issued 2
County 8	Planning & Development Occurrences 0	Community Hours Completed 133	Written Warnings 1	Written Warnings 14
Comm. 4				

Peace Officer Highlights:

Officers have been working day and evening shifts, alternating weeks for May to help with isolating staff and enhancing coverage during COVID. Officers have also been working weekends to help monitor Sandy Point beach and other rec area closures.

Two additional RADAR speed signs were deployed in May, bringing the total number in the County up to four. These signs were deployed per the Lacombe County Traffic Safety Plan.

School Resource Officer:

The Lacombe County SRO continues to engage local schools and bring educational videos to students virtually through online learning. Planning has begun for the next school semester and work is being done on presentations for when students get back into the classroom.

FIRE

Incidents

As of this writing, County Fire departments have responded to a total of 60 incidents, with 36 of those being in the County response districts. Including these calls, the Countywide total for 2020 so far is 271 incidents with the largest two responses being Alarms Ringing and EMS Assists.



ALIX		BENTLEY		BLACKFALDS	CLIVE		ECKVILLE		LACOMBE		TOTAL	
Village	County	Town	County	County	Village	County	Town	County	City	County	Muni	County
0	5	0	11	1	0	3	4	4	20	12	24	36
5		11		1	3		8		32		6	
Largest Type EMS Assist		Largest Type MVC		Largest Type Outside Fire	Largest Type Outside Fire		Largest Type MVC		Largest Type Alarms		Largest Type MVC	

Fire Permits

186 Fire Permits were issued in May. In 2020 so far, 81% of permits have been auto approved by the system with the remaining 19% approved manually.

Activities

In-person training and certified training continued to be suspended for May. With the loosening of COVID related restrictions, call volumes began to return to a more average volume. Also, seasonal calls such as outside fires and water-related incidents started to increase as usual throughout the month.

Even though calls were slower at the onset of COVID restrictions, the call volume for 2020 (271) so far is above 2019 (235) and 2018 (238) for the first five months of the year. While many factors can be considered here this increase in calls is consistent on an annual basis.

Through our involvement with the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association, we have learned of some significant changes in Municipal Affairs with the newly appointed Fire Commissioner. This change in direction is unlikely to have a significant effect on Lacombe County directly but is something we will monitor closely to ensure compliance with any changes.

Emergency Management Activities

Lacombe County's ECC remained open throughout May although at a reduced frequency. COVID related work was the primary focus for emergency management with continued monitoring of restrictions and their application to Lacombe County's operations.

Dickson Dam held its annual stakeholder information session virtually which was an excellent opportunity to reinforce the part this dam plays on the rivers in our area. With a significant potential hazard for many communities, these sessions help with preparedness in the unlikely event something were to happen to the dam. Impress

UTILITIES

Mirror

Staff is working with a contractor to replace the generators at the water pump house and sewage lift station.



Lakeview Estates

No issues to report.

Highway 12/21

No issues to report.

The Commission Chair and Manager had a conference call with the Minister of Transportation in place of a meeting that was canceled by that office in early June. The meeting was positive. The Minister recognized that our application for the lines to Clive and Edberg were forwarded to the ICIP program. The Minister also alluded to the fact that grant funding formulas will remain the same as previous years.

Sylvan Lake Lift station & Main

Summer rainstorms have contributed to some very large water flows through this system. These are fed by inflow and infiltration problems in the Town of Sylvan Lake. We have had to divert flows on two occasions to the emergency storage lagoon. We are working to keep this lagoon level low in anticipation of summer events that will trigger overflow or emergency storage conditions.

Loads through the SRS have been steady.

The OMF is scheduled to be commissioned as of June 18th.

Wild Rose Business Park

This project is progressing right on schedule despite frequent heavy rainstorms. The crossings of Highway 2 and Highway 12 are complete as well as the drill through the wetland along the Fairview Road. Servicing inside the Wildrose Business Park is nearly complete with a few hundred meters of sewer left to install. Arrangements have been made with owners to drill their connections later this summer. The balance of the install on the Fairview Road will be open cut, causing closure of this segment of road for about 30 days. Affected owners have been made aware of this and a detour will be developed.

PLANNING

Degraff's RV Resort – Phase 2A

The developer has been working on Phase 2A of the development since early in the year and is nearing completion of it. Staff understand the developer intends to submit an application for Construction Completion Certificate shortly, as well as finish the outstanding items for subdivision endorsement of Phase 2A as soon as possible.

Buffalo Lake Intermunicipal Development Plan (BLIDP)

The Buffalo Lake Intermunicipal Development Plan committee is set to meet on June 26, 2020. All committee members agreed to meet in person instead of a digital meeting. The committee had previously sent a number of items back to staff to formulate some options for them to consider which staff have been busy working on. Staff will present these options and seek committee direction on final policy development.



Greenway Pharma

Staff have recently completed a preliminary inspection of the Greenway Pharma cannabis production facility in the Aspelund Industrial Park. The building, formerly occupied by Strata Energy, is rated as a "Class A" building, meaning it has been built with the highest quality materials and construction methods. That said, significant renovations needed to be undertaken to both increase the security within the building, and to accommodate the growing of cannabis. The developer had asked for an inspection for fire code compliance as the renovations to the building are nearing completion. Staff can report that they are well on their way to meeting their conditions of approval and plan to be operational this summer.

Vehicle Storage in Mirror

The County received complaints regarding vehicles being stored on a vacant property in Mirror. The property owner of the vacant lot had also contacted the County regarding operating a business and living on the property. Staff informed the property owner of the approval process and advised that the vehicles needed to be removed. No development permit application has since been submitted, and staff found that the vehicles have not been removed. Staff have sent a letter to the property owner requesting that the property owner contact Planning Services to discuss how the issues can be resolved.

Whistle Stop in Mirror

Staff have also received a complaint regarding the drive-in movie theatre events that the Whistle Stop has been hosting as a way to allow people to get out and enjoy a movie safely during COVID. The main concern is that the bright lights from the movie projectors are distracting for motorists and may cause accidents. Other issues brought up included if the business has all of the required development permits that they require such as the campground and hosting a drive-in movie theatre event.

Staff have spoken to the owner and received confirmation that the events are small scale community events that are temporary in nature. All of the funds raised from the drive-in have been donated to local initiatives such as the Mirror skating rink and skate park. As these events are small-scale, temporary, and non-commercial, staff have the discretion to exempt the event from requiring a development permit under the Land Use Bylaw. If the landowner wished to formalize the events into a permanent fixture of the business, it is a use in the Hamlet Commercial district. Staff are working with the landowner to get the approvals in place for the campground.

COVID-19

While the Emergency Coordination Centre has concluded for COVID-19, Senior Planner (Cajun) continues to assist for communications regarding COVID-19. Measures put in place by the ECC still remain in effect, and we have shifted from pandemic management to the new way of doing business. It will be important to continue to communicate to both the public and staff the continuing public health measures in place, to ensure there is continued assistance in keeping everyone safe and healthy.