



## ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT APRIL 23, 2020

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### COUNTY MANAGER

#### COVID-19

Planning and response efforts to Lacombe County organizational impacts of COVID-19 have slowed down somewhat. As such, our Emergency Operations Centre (ECC) has reduced its meeting frequency to once per week. Due to exhibiting COVID-19 like symptoms a number of our staff have been tested. All tests have been negative.

Lacombe County Fire Chief and Director of Emergency Management, Drayton Bussiere, will continue to provide presentations at each Council meeting on our efforts and actions throughout the duration of this pandemic.

#### Province of Alberta – Municipal Stimulus Funding

No formal announcements have been made regarding municipal stimulus funding from the Province. However, during his May 19<sup>th</sup> virtual town hall meeting, Municipal Affairs Minister Madu stated that stimulus funding would likely be rolled out through the existing STIP (Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program) and the Water for Life grant programs. Minister Madu also mentioned that an announcement would be made in the days or weeks to come. Bridge projects, of which we had five on our shovel ready projects list that was submitted to the Province in late April, are STIP grant eligible.

#### Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) and Basic Municipal Transportation Grant (BTMG) – 2021 Allocations

The Province has posted the 2021 MSI allocation estimates as follows:

MSI Capital - \$2,794,008: decrease of \$166,345 from 2020

MSI Operating - \$147,237: decrease of \$769 from 2020

GTMG - \$523,566: same as 2020

In 2022 and beyond, municipal grant funding amounts will be determined by the *Local Government Fiscal Framework Act*.



## Lacombe Fire Hall Lease Agreement

Our fifteen-year fire hall lease agreement with the City of Lacombe expired on December 31, 2019. A new three-year agreement which includes updated, market value lease rates has been executed. The new lease rates represent an annual increase of \$5,565.60 to the County, which has been provided for in our 2020 budget.

## Communications

### COVID-19

- With the assistance of Cajun from Planning Nicole has completed six videos (internal and external), maintained the COVID-19 information page on our website, drafted several media releases, surveyed our staff on our COVID-19 response efforts and internal communications and communicated the survey results back to them.

### Website

- Set-up the Option Pay (credit card payment) section
- Assisted in setting up the Utility Deferral section

### Media Releases

- Fire Advisory
- Option Pay
- Final Budgets/Tax Rates
- Lacombe County Relaunch

## Human Resources

- There have been 25 returning/new seasonal employees that have recently started their season with Lacombe County; offer letters and rehire/new hire payroll sign-ups have all been completed.
- Participated in a Reynolds Mirth webinar focused on key OH&S best practices and managing employment contracts going forward.
- Reviewing group benefit mid-year premiums and claims experience and working with Hillcrest on communication materials for employees.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **General**

- Community Recreation Projects
  - Staff have been updated by two community groups currently undertaking recreation projects in the County. Both projects received funding from the County.
  - The first project is the Morningside Community Playground. The installation of the equipment was expected to be complete prior to the beginning of the May long weekend and landscaping completed by the end of the month. Opening of the playground remains uncertain.
  - The second project is the Haynes Community Hall which commenced construction earlier this month. To date, the footings, pony walls, backfill, and landscaping had begun. A new septic system has been installed and a new well pump and underground services are in place. Walls were expected to be constructed after the long weekend.





### **Assessment and Taxation**

- 2020 Tax and Assessments Notices
  - Final assessments have been transferred to the County's assessment roll.
  - With Council's approval of the annual tax bylaw, staff will now complete tax calculations for all assessments.
  - Updates to the Town's tax/assessment notices are being made, specifically the inclusion of the police levy on the tax portion of the notice.
- Annual Reinspection
  - Staff have completed the reinspection of Mirror. This reinspection was a curbside inspection. Additional physical inspections haven been identified and will be completed once physical distancing requirements are eased.
  - Staff are also processing requests for information that were mailed out in March and April. The area covered by this process was expanded this year given the limitations on physical inspections.
  - Staff have also been reviewing farmland properties using the County's newly acquired aerial photography. Many of the changes identified were minor and did not require a physical inspection. However, there 100 properties that did require an inspection. Staff have started this process which will take the next couple of weeks to complete. The department is using this as an opportunity for cross training, so staff are traveling together and taking time to look at as many different soil types and other farmland characteristics and influences as possible.



- Staff did have an incident with one property owner, who was concerned that she was not notified they were going onto her land. Staff have changed their practices to ensure that they are checking in with the owners (when possible) prior to going onto their land.
- Oilfield re-inspection process is also underway, except for larger sites (ones with field offices and on-site personnel) which have been delayed until after the Covid19 restrictions are relaxed. This policy falls in line with the direction sent out by the Provincial Assessor.

## **Finance**

- Front Office
  - Front office staff have been busy, with dust control registrations and assisting County ratepayers with payment options.
  - With the assistance of the Communications Coordinator, OptionPay is now available on the County website. In the one month that OptionPay has been operational, the County has collected just over \$14,000 of payments for dust control, utility payments and development permits and licenses
  - The department encountered a few technical challenges in getting the cheque scanner for electronic deposits up and running but anticipate that this initiative will be complete by month-end.
- 2019 Year end
  - County financial statements have been filed with the Province.
  - Statements for the Highway 12/21 Commission were approved by the Board and are being filed with the Province.
  - Statements for the Sylvan Water Commission are complete and with the auditors.
  - Work continues to finish the year end and statements for the Sylvan Wastewater Commission.
- 2020 Budget
  - Staff have completed work on the 2020 capital and operating budgets for the County.
  - Staff are preparing systems for entering data for the 2021 budgets.

## **Information Technology**



- Telus Mobility Contract
  - The County has signed a new 3-year contract with Telus with the net result being a \$7/month savings per user who subscribes to the typical 3 GB data plans. Currently, the County has 35 staff on this 3GB data plan. The County also now has the option to bump up users who consume more data on a monthly basis to a 5GB data plan.
  - Staff needing this additional monthly data will still see a \$2/month savings as compared to the old 3 GB data plan in our previous contract. Additionally, the County received a 1-time \$5,300 loyalty credit for its continued business with Telus.
- Exchange Migration
  - The IT department is currently in the process of migrating the County's Microsoft Exchange email management system from a server in the server room to the Exchange Online management system hosted in the cloud.
  - This migration will enable County email to work more seamlessly with the other Microsoft 365 (cloud) products while also allowing for higher quotas on email storage and archiving.
- Server Replacement
  - The major hardware upgrade for 2020 that the IT department will be performing this year is the addition of a new server dedicated to high speed and high capacity storage for the County's physical and virtual servers. The County is getting close to capacity on a few servers, and this new storage server will solve this issue for both the short and long term.
- Lacombe County / Stettler County Border Rural Addressing Border
  - The IT department has been in contact with Stettler County to discuss some confusion raised by area residents with respect to rural addressing along a border road.
  - The confusion stems from the two counties utilizing different address intervals to create their respective addresses. Lacombe County utilizes a 100m rural addressing interval while Stettler County utilizes a 40m rural addressing interval.
  - What this means is that Lacombe County has 16 address intervals on a typical section of land while Stettler County would have 40 addresses along that same section in their county.
  - To alleviate this potential confusion, the IT department came up with a solution to add respective logos of each county to the existing rural address signposts along the border road in question. This solution was recently presented to Stettler County and the solution received endorsement at that time.



## **OPERATIONS**

### **Public Works Shop**

- Scheduled monthly services and commercial vehicle inspections were completed on heavy equipment and light/heavy duty trucks.
- Both new gravel trucks have been retrofitted and out working.
- All road construction equipment has been serviced and is in the field working.
- All parks and agriculture equipment are ready for the season.

### **Maintenance Crews**

- Traffic count program continues with the implementation of new traffic counters.
- Repairs to gravel roads is complete after the spring thaw utilizing approximately 4,300 tonne of gravel, 1,000 tonne of 2" and 200 tonne of pit-run.
- The gravel program has commenced having completed approximately 11.5 km.
- Grader operators are prepping calcium spots for application. Applications started May 19 and crews will be working from east to west this first application.
- Labor crews have been busy with potholes, signs, and garbage.
- The Sunbreaker Cove boat launch is operational, but the bathroom facilities remain closed. Repairs were made to the boat launch at the Sunset Legion Campground.
- Street sweeping on County main and subdivision roads are complete. Spot sweeping will still be required at times as we get through seeding season.

### **Construction**

- Crews are back to work and are currently on C0211 (Blissful Beach Road).
- Construction on C2741 (Rge. Rd. 27-4) is complete with fencing still outstanding.
- Construction of C2621 (Rge. Rd. 26-2) is complete with reclamation and fencing yet to do.
- All regulatory approvals are in place for 2020 projects.
- Most landowner consultations are complete for 2020 projects and the last few will be wrapped up this spring.

### **Parks**

- Weekly/monthly playground inspections are complete with all sites in good repair. Playground inspections still need to be complete despite closures due to COVID requirements.
- All summer parks staff have been through orientation and have commenced with parks maintenance.
- Sandy Point remains closed until further notice. Signage is in place to inform the public.



- Prices for washroom facilities at the Mirror ball diamonds are received and being reviewed. It is anticipated that it will be awarded first part of June and construction is slated for later this summer.
- Molehills were detected at Anderson Park, so traps have been placed. There has been nothing caught yet, but we will continue to monitor the area.
- All parks staff is confident with Lacombe County's COVID measures and are working very well with each other. We have set up our own meeting room in the north east parking bay to comply with social distancing.

### **Health and Safety**

- There were no incidents reported this reporting period.
- Monthly safety meetings were held for all Operations staff. Due to COVID these were completed via handouts.
- Alberta OHS is releasing special edition e-News with the latest developments in OHS and Employment Standards. These are being emailed to County staff.
- Annual fire extinguisher servicing is re-booked for the last week of July.
- New and returning staff orientations are nearing completion with 21 for Operations, one for Community Services and three for Corporate Services (two of which were for the Chamber of Commerce).
- Driver abstracts obtained for all returning Operations staff with no concerns noted.
- Various staff have completed ATV, defensive driving, WHIMIS and JWSHSC courses. Future training recommendations will be revised based on current COVID restrictions.

### **Additional Information**

- BF 9495 (Forshee Bridge) was awarded to Formula Alberta Ltd. with construction slated for July.
- BF 1415 tender closed May 12 and the contract was awarded to Tar-ific Construction. The project is anticipated to start in August.
- The Centreview project started on April 14, with work commencing on the culverts. Expect delays and road closure over the next couple weeks until the bridge culverts have been completed. Roadway notching and widening started the week of May 19.
- Paving of Rge. Rd. 27-4 and Woody Nook Roads has started with pavers working on the Woody Nook road and base crews working on Rge. Rd. 27-4.
- Regarding the West Area Servicing Project, the lift station has started back up with piling being completed and work on the foundations have started. The wet well and deep services were previously completed. Pidherney's have completed the water line work throughout the Wild Rose Business Park and are shifting focus to the gravity sewer and force main. This work will be much more disruptive to the businesses and will required significant coordination with business owners. The force and water mains have been drilled under the QE2, with no visible issues. The drills under Highway 12 are going to be starting this week and take 2-3 weeks to complete.



- 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.
- A landowner doing unauthorized work within our road allowance was sent a letter and advised that we will be invoicing them for the cleanup.
- A landowner doing unauthorized tree cutting in a County Reserve was discovered and a letter is being sent to them to rectify the situation.
- A lease agreement has been developed for the implementation of the permanent dog park at Mirror. We are just waiting on feedback from the owner of the property.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICES**

### **AGRICULTURE/ENVIRONMENT**

Application has been made for the Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Agricultural Service Board Grant. The grant application is for a four-year period from 2020 to 2024. Funding for 2020 Agricultural Service Board Grant was reduced by the Government of Alberta. Lacombe County has not received official notification, but the expectation is that the Legislative Funding Stream portion of the grant will be reduced from \$168,360 to \$126,270. The Environmental Funding Stream portion of the grant has been renamed to Resource Management Funding Stream and funding levels (\$58,000) speculated to remain the same as previous years.

Lacombe County is currently sold out of 2% Liquid Strychnine Concentrate and supply continues to remain extremely limited. The supplier for Western Canada is Agromax Distributors Inc. located in Regina Saskatchewan. Agromax provided an update on May 6 explaining the challenges associated with sourcing 2% LSC out of India during the Covid pandemic. India has been in a lock down for 5 weeks and had extended the lockdown an additional 2 weeks. They do have some capability to work, but it is limited to a small number of hours per week. The ability to ship any product out of India this season is dependent on the availability of cargo flights originating from India.

Lacombe County will retail Verbenone patches in 2020. Verbenone is a specialized pheromone product used to protect susceptible pine trees from Mountain Pine Beetle. Verbenone packages contain 10 patches and retail for \$125 + GST.

Field work has begun on two ALUS projects for 2020. The first project is mounding and planting 13,000 seedlings in pasture tributaries, which was historically bison grazed all season long. A couple years of livestock rest has been completed along with the seedling mounds. Planting of the trees will take place in a couple weeks along with wetland restoration. The second project involves fencing of sensitive riparian area.

New ALUS - Lacombe County road signs and mailbox signs have been ordered and will be installed this month. The new design will represent a more equal partnership.

Environmental Coordinator returned from maternity leave on April 27th. Organized and finalized wetland regulatory requirements for 2020 road construction season. Currently updating the Environmental Management Plan.

**LACOMBE  
COUNTY  
PROTECTIVE SERVICES**

Occurrence Reports  County 16  Comm. 2	Road Use Agreements 0	Community Hours Required 99	Lacombe County	Communities
	Travis MJ Permits 36		Citations Issued 5	Citations Issued 3
	Planning & Development Occurrences 1	Community Hours Completed 124	Written Warnings 9	Written Warnings 15

- Officers received a complaint regarding Township Road 39-4, near Eckville. The road was being damaged from heavy traffic during the thaw period, frost coming out of the ground. (Occurrence 2020-0030)
- April 28 – Officers assisted the Operations Department on Rainy Creek Road. Received complaint regarding vehicles speeding through construction zone and officers attended to improve worker safety and public awareness (Occurrence 2020-0036).
- Officers attended the scene of a collision on Highway 771 and Township 41-0 on April 30th. Officers aided the RCMP and provided traffic control and scene management.

**School Resource Officer:**

- Online Videos are being provided to students and staff; these videos are included in lesson plans and as optional activities for the elementary students.
- On April 29th, officers attended a meeting with Wolf Creek Public Schools and other SROs to talk about the remainder of the year and moving forward into next year. Wolf Creek expressed their gratitude towards Lacombe County and the work our officers are doing in the schools.

**FIRE**

**Incidents**

As of this writing, County Fire departments responded to a total of 50 incidents, with 26 of those being in the County response districts. With these calls included County wide total for 2020 so far is 217 incidents with the largest two responses being Vehicle Accidents and Alarms Ringing.

ALIX		BENTLEY		BLACKFALDS	CLIVE		ECKVILLE		LACOMBE		TOTAL	
Village	County	Town	County	County	Village	County	Town	County	City	County	Muni	County
6	4	1	7	3	0	4	3	0	14	8	24	26
10		8		3	4		3		22		50	



Largest Type EMS assist	Largest Type Vehicle Accident	Largest Type Outside Fire	Largest Type Outside Fire	Largest Type	Largest Type Alarms	Largest Type Alarms
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**Fire Permits**

193 Fire permits were issued in the month of April. For the year so far 82% of permits have been auto approved by the system with the remaining 18% approved manually.

**Fireworks Permits**

Fireworks permits for 2020 so far remain at one issued. This will likely increase as we approach the summer

**Activities**

April was the first full month of changes for fire departments related to COVID-19. Measures in place include; cancellation of all in person practices, reduction of members performing monthly equipment checks, increased sanitization of apparatus and equipment and increased hygiene protocols for all members.

April also brought a slight increase of call volume later in the month with dry conditions contributing to grass fire type incidents. In an attempt to mitigate some of this risk and reduce nuisance calls a Fire Advisory was put in place on April 29<sup>th</sup> and remains in place. The new Lacombe Fire Chief also started on April 1<sup>st</sup> and is getting settled.

**Emergency Management Activities**

Emergency Management activities focused primarily on COVID-19 related items for the entire month of April. The Lacombe County ECC was active throughout the month and remains open to date. Numerous measures have been implemented throughout this time that have been detailed in regular updates to staff and council.

The LREMP Director of Emergency Managers met each week to keep each other informed of activities across the region and to discuss and work through any issues members may be having.

**UTILITIES**

**Mirror**

Staff completed a couple of repairs:

- 5315 – 49 St. repair to sanitary wastewater line from property to main, service was only installed 2008 (Trans-Alta) the sag was very deep.
- 5220 – 52 St. repair/insulation of water service, when excavated it was approx. 2m deep.

Two power outages this last month in Lakeview (3 hours longest outage), wells and distribution pumps came back online as they should. Camenex, electrician and Fortis have no explanation for faulting – investigations have provided possible expensive theories but no reliable information. Investigation is ongoing.

### **Highway 12/21**

EQ tank is showing a chlorine residual in the puddle on the north side of the pad. The attempts last year by STT to resolve this reoccurring issue appear to be unsuccessful unless this is a new leak. STT's plan will be determined this next week.

### **Sylvan Lake Liftstation & Main**

An electrical blackout on May 8<sup>th</sup> in Sylvan produced some electrical anomalies: Bioxide pumps faulted but PLC showed that they were still operational, Biorem recirculation pump faulted and didn't come back on line and the grinder faulted and didn't come back on line. Staff are troubleshooting this issue.

The SRS (septage Receiving Station) valve failed twice this month and had to be extensively flushed and worked to get working. This valve is flushed daily as part of its regular maintenance. In a year, this valve has been replaced twice and reconfigured for optimum operation with no results. Summit Valve has been asked to come up with a better solution, Rob is putting together a more resilient pinch valve proposal.

The deficiency list has been a slow process during Covid19 but we should be seeing some repairs in the next few weeks. As well the Odor Management Facility is complete but awaiting commissioning when travel is allowed.

### **Wild Rose Business Park**

Construction portion of the project has been going smoothly. We discovered a "snake pit" of black dirt on the MR that caused a bit of a problem. Some high-water table issues in the park are also crating some issues for the contractors. The County has spent time with businesses discussing existing systems and forwarding concerns to Pidherney's. The goal is as little interruption as possible.

### **General**

Single operator maintenance has been a little restrictive, but the operators are in good spirits...but they can't wait to get going with 2020 maintenance!



## **PLANNING**

### **Sylvan Lake Intermunicipal Development Plan**

First Readings of the eight municipal bylaws for the *Sylvan Lake IDP* are completed. The Joint Public Hearing on Saturday, March 28, 2020 has been POSTPONED due to the restrictions on public gatherings, further details will come at a later date. Even though it has been postponed, one public submission has been submitted for consideration at the future Public Hearing.

### **MDP/LUB Updates**

The Public Hearing for the MDP and LUB revisions was tentatively scheduled for July 9, 2020. Based on public health guidance at this point, we are not sure if that date will be possible. Once announcements have been made by the Province for Stage 2 Relaunch, we will have more details to confirm or reschedule this date.

### **Business Inquiries**

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic staff have been fielding increasing numbers of calls for potential business startups as well as expansions to existing businesses. The key area of interest seems to be the central corridor. After speaking with a number of potential business owners staff have found that most are optimistic that things will return to normal soon, and that they wish to be up and running so that they are not scrambling to catch up when it does.

### **Economic Re-launch Discussions with CAEP**

Staff have been meeting digitally with members of CAEP to discuss economic development strategies and business supports that are available during the pandemic. Two grant programs have opened up, the Attraction and Retention Partnership (ARP) grant and the Labour Market Partnership (LMP) grant. These grants are intended to help spur the economy and get Albertans back to work and can be provincial, regional, or municipal focused. One of the other strategies discussed included integrating business resiliency into emergency management plans. This integration has been shown to get businesses up and running more quickly after a disaster.

### **Neighbor Complaints in Rosedale Valley**

Staff received complaints regarding a property in Rosedale Valley that had chickens and an unlicensed tractor truck and trailer. Staff found that the truck was suitably screened and did not warrant further action. Staff though did send a letter to the property owner requesting that the chickens be removed. Staff also sent a letter to all property owners in Rosedale Valley, informing them that keeping chickens is not permitted in the hamlet.