

NEWS & VIEWS

The latest news and updates from the County of Barrhead

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A MESSAGE FROM THE REEVE



Greetings -I hope this message finds you all well and that you have had a chance to enjoy the short summer.

You may have seen in the news that the County of Barrhead has been expressing concerns regarding the impacts of the Government of Alberta Oil & Gas Assessment Review Model. Worst-case scenario would see a reduction of property assessment in the Oil & Gas sector that would result in a loss of revenue of approximately \$900,000 to the County of Barrhead. This alone would be devastating, requiring an increase of 19.5% to the mill rate of residential taxes, thus, moving the burden of taxation from the largest Oil & Gas companies to the residents of the County of Barrhead. Let me be clear, Council recognizes the value of natural resource extraction to strengthen the Alberta economy. We are **not** anti-oil. We are the owners of that resource as well and we deserve our fair share.

Let us look at it another way. Reduction in property tax to the Oil & Gas sector would amount to a contribution of \$700 from every Albertan if the proposed stimulus for this sector was spread across the entire province. However, the province is instead putting the burden of the stimulus package on our residents and residents of Counties like ours. We are expected to cover the difference through increased taxes or suffer the cuts to services. That is 16% of the population paying the price to stimulate an industry that benefits 100% of Albertans.

Please be assured that your Council is advocating on your behalf. This is by no means a “done deal.” Please join us in raising your concern to our provincial leaders.

I do have some good news to share regarding grants that were recently awarded to the County of Barrhead. The Neerlandia Lagoon & Forcemain project is now fully funded and work is set to proceed in 2021. The S.T.I.P. program has awarded funding to replace 2 of our most urgent bridge files. In addition, the Province permitted Counties to draw from a pot of COVID-19 stimulus money which is co-funded by the Government of Canada. We have been informed that we are eligible to receive approximately \$747,449 to fund “shovel ready projects” that would need to be completed no later than December 2021.

Thank you for taking the time to stay informed. As always, please feel free to reach out to your local Councillor should you have questions or concerns. Enjoy what I hope will be a spectacular Alberta Fall and stay healthy and safe.

Douglas Drozd

Reeve



Front Row (L to R):
Deputy Reeve Nanninga
Reeve Drozd,
Councillor Preugschas
Back Row (L to R):
Councillor Kleinfeldt,
Councillor Schatz,
Councillor Troock,
Councillor Lane

PUBLIC WORKS



Several road construction and road maintenance projects took place during the summer months.

- Culvert replacement on Twp. Rd. 580 between Range Road 40 to 41
- 2 miles of road re-construction to paving standards on Range Road 22 towards Nakamun Lake (between Highway 651 & Township Road 572)
- 1/2 mile of oil repair in Moonlight Bay South
- 1 1/4 miles of oil repair on Tiger Lily Road
- Gravel Crushing at the Moosewallow Pit (as photographed below)
- 353 miles of graveling
- 76 kilometers of paved roadway crack sealing
- Various culvert repairs and ditch cleaning to improve drainage
- Roadside mowing
- Line painting and paving at the Barrhead Johnson Airport



Transfer Station Sites

<u>Station Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Days of Operation</u>	<u>Hours of Operation</u>
Tiger Lily	60528 Hwy 763	Monday	1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Meadowview	58027 Hwy 764	Tuesday	1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Manola	59416 Rge Rd 24	Wednesday	1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Vega/Neerlandia	62317 Rge Rd 35	Thursday	1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Thunder Lake	NE-20-59-05-W5M	Sunday	1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Dunstable	57403 Rge Rd 21	Sunday	1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.



County Snow Plow Program

Being prepared for snow is key.

- Take advantage of the Snow Plow Flag Program in which a grader can plow your driveway after a snowfall. Flags can be purchased at the County office for \$35 each.

Graders maintain 1,498 kms of roadway; therefore, we kindly ask that residents be patient.

Clearing Snow on Private Property

Public Works is asking residents to be cautious when removing snow from private driveways and yards. It is important that snow **not** be pushed across public roads, rather it must be kept on private property.

Pushing snow across public roadways creates hazards that could potentially result in vehicle and property damage and/or bodily harm.

Preparing for Snow

Driving Near Heavy Equipment

County of Barrhead graders and snow removal equipment aim to keep the County roadways and approaches clear and safe for travel during the winter months.

If you see snow removal equipment, please follow these important safety tips:

- **Stay Back:** A good rule of thumb is to stay back a minimum of 10 car lengths.
- **Be Patient:** Crowding, tailgating and/or passing snow equipment can be dangerous. Do not assume that the operator can see you, especially if you are travelling too close visibility could be poor.
- **Do Not Try to Pass:** Allow the operator time to pull over; pass only when safe to do so.



The Budget Process

The budget process is underway. Given the complexity of the budget process, a considerable amount of time is spent by Council and Administration to carry out the process.

Annually, Council must approve a budget. The budget is a document that creates linkage to the Strategic Plan, establishes a level of service, incorporates a long-term perspective, all while maintaining fiscal responsibility and a reasonable mill rate.

Once the budget is approved, Administration is tasked with delivering the services and programs outlined in the budget, evaluating the results of the program, gathering feedback from residents, and continually scanning the municipal environment to inform the next year's budget cycle.

In order to balance the budget, a careful analysis must be done regarding the level of service required to meet the expectations of the community balanced against realistic taxation and user fee levels. Council annually requests your input to assist them in making informed decisions during this process (see pg. 13).



DID YOU KNOW?

While a municipality can incur debt by borrowing to pay for large capital acquisitions and projects, it must present a balanced budget. This means that budgeted revenues equal budgeted expenditures.



Did you know?
The County financial statements are audited each year by an external financial auditor.

COVID-19 Community Economic Supports

County of Barrhead recognizes that these are times of financial disruption for many residents and businesses in the community; therefore, we are pleased to offer some relief measures.

Property & Education Tax

Deadline Extension - September 30, 2020

To provide cash flow relief to residents and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Council extended the deadline for payment of taxes to **September 30, 2020**.

- Extension applies only to residents and businesses who pay directly to the County of Barrhead.
- Extension does not apply to financial institutions that remit property tax payments to County of Barrhead on behalf of property owners.

DID YOU KNOW?

2020 Property Assessment is based on value as at July 31, 2019.

Utility Payment & Accounts Receivable

Payment Deferral Program - **Ended**

County of Barrhead Council passed a motion to provide options for homeowners and businesses to defer utility bill and accounts receivable payments to **July 31, 2020**.

- These measures were put in place to provide homeowners and businesses some flexibility to manage their finances during these unprecedented times.
- Deferral period has ended and accounts are due.

Tax Instalment Payment Plan



TIPP

Pay your property tax monthly to:

- make budgeting easier
- eliminate the risk of late payment penalties.



For further information regarding any of these supports, please visit our website @ www.countybarrhead.ab.ca, phone 780-674-3331 or email info@countybarrhead.ab.ca

AGRICULTURE SERVICES

Weeds by the Lake: Himalayan Balsam

(*Impatiens glandulifera*)

This annual prefers to grow in wet ground and is commonly found along shorelines and other low-lying moist areas. Also, due to its vibrant color, it is mistakenly grown as an ornamental and can sometimes be found in gardens and landscaping.

Himalayan balsam can be easily identified by their large arrowhead shaped leaves, bright purple flowers, and hollow red stem. Reproducing only by seed, these prohibited noxious weeds can overtake an area by outcompeting the natural vegetation. Due to their annual lifecycle, when these weeds die in the autumn, they leave a dead area with no ground cover. This leads to excessive erosion in the spring as a result of run-off.

The most cost effective method to control this prohibited noxious weed is either by hand pulling or cutting the growth before the plant flowers and sets seed. Chemicals may not be ideal for control as this plant is typically found next to the water's edge. Be sure to discard all plant material in thick plastic bags and dispose of in the landfill or incinerate.



HARVEST SAFETY

Be Alert. Slow Down. Share the Road.



Nuisance Beaver Control

High amounts of precipitation over the past several years has resulted in an environment especially well suited for beavers. Unfortunately, flooding due to beaver activity occasionally impacts agricultural operations at which point the County of Barrhead can assist. Costs associated with beaver mitigation is \$250 for the 1st week and \$150 for subsequent weeks. Dam removal is at cost, depending on requirements. For further information, please contact the County Office.



When a landowner request for beaver control assistance is received, the following procedures apply:

- A no-cost initial inspection is conducted.
- If the beaver complaint is confirmed to be flooding farmland or threatening private buildings, for a fee, the beaver will be removed via trapping or with the use of firearms, and the beaver dam will be removed.

For further information, please contact the Agricultural Services Department at **780-674-3331**, via the County website at **www.countybarrhead.ab.ca** and/or via email **info@countybarrhead.ab.ca**



Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) is taking applications.

CAP provides funding to agricultural producers through several programs including the “Environmental Stewardship & Climate Change” program. Funding is provided for projects and equipment upgrades such as:

- Sectional control systems for applications of granular, liquid, or gaseous fertilizer
- Shelterbelt establishment
- Ag-Plastic rollers (Grain bag Roller)
- Off-site cattle waterers
- Sectional control systems for pesticide management
- Riparian fencing

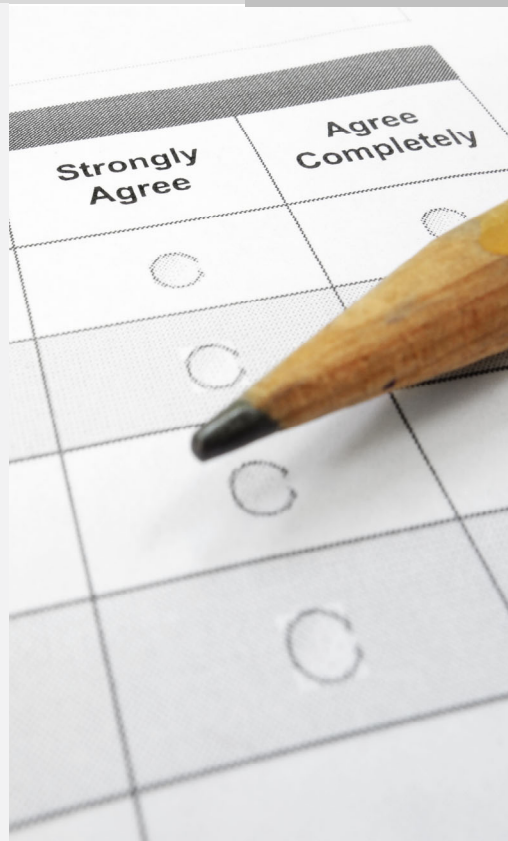
If you are interested in learning more about the CAP program or if you would like to put in an application for a project please contact Lisa at 780-674-3331.

We want to Hear from YOU!

Agriculture Services Priorities Survey for 2021

Let your voice be heard! The Agricultural Services Department survey will soon be available via our County website which can be found at **www.countybarrhead.ab.ca**

The survey will be accessible **online** and in **paper format** which can be picked up and returned during regular hours at the County Office.



Recycling

Ag Plastics Partnership: Alberta Ag-Plastic “Recycle-It” program is underway!!

Farmers and producers in the Barrhead region can now recycle grain bags and twine under the Alberta Ag-Plastic **Recycle It!** pilot program.

Why recycle?

Presently, farmers and producers are faced with the challenge of disposing agricultural plastics. Even though processing recycled plastic is not a new concept, it is not yet well-established in Alberta. In a collaborative effort, the **Recycle It!** pilot program aims to keep agricultural plastics out of our landfills.

What are We Recycling & Where?

Grain Bag Collection Site:

Neeralta Manufacturing Inc. which is located at 3216A Hwy 661.
ONLY CLEAN grain bags are accepted.

Twine Collection Site:

Westlock Regional Landfill, is located at 59424 Rge Rd 262, and focuses on the collection and baling of twine.

AG-PLASTICS



Twine collection bags are currently available at the County of Barrhead Administration Office & Westlock County Office.

Please follow these 3 steps to ensure that your grain bags and twine is accepted and recycled:

- 1. Shake** to remove as much debris as possible. Excessively dirty twine and grain bags may be rejected, or subject to a landfill tipping fee or additional charges at the time of drop off.
- 2. Roll Grain Bags** and tie with twine.
Bag Loose Twine and tie to close. Please do not knot the twine.
- 3. Returning Grain Bags** Please contact Neeralta prior to dropping off material @ 1-866-497-5338
Returning Twine Bags Please contact Westlock Regional Landfill prior to dropping off twine to confirm hours of operation @ 780-307-2456





POTENTIAL REASONS FOR HIGH WATER BILLS

An unusually high water bill is most often caused by a leak or change in water use.

Some common causes of high water bills may include:

- A leaking toilet, or a toilet that continues to run after being flushed.
- A dripping faucet.
- Filling or topping up a hot tub or swimming pool.
- Watering the lawn, new grass, or trees.
- Water-cooled air conditioners.
- A broken water pipe or obvious leak (pipes in the basement or crawlspace or a water heater may be leaking)
- Water softener issues (cycles continuously)
- Running water to avoid freezing pipes during cold weather.
- Additional house guests utilizing the shower and washroom facilities.

Do-It-Yourself Toilet Assessment

The most common leak is a deteriorated or defective flush valve (flapper) ball at the bottom of the toilet. If it does not make a tight seal, water will leak into the toilet bowl. To check for this, follow these simple steps:

- Take the lift off the tank behind the bowl, flush the toilet, then wait for it to fully refill.
- Put a few drops of colored dye in the tank.
- Wait at least 20 seconds; longer if suspected that there is a small leak.

Water Saving Tips

Regardless of whether or not you have a leak, it is always a good idea to use water efficiently. Consider the following steps to help lower your water use.

- Replace older toilets with high efficiency toilets.
- Turn off water while shaving or brushing your teeth.
- Only wash full loads in the dish washer.
- Switch to low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators.
- Take shorter showers and use less water when bathing.



PAYMENT OPTIONS



County of Barrhead offers the following payment options although electronic payment is encouraged.

1. Online banking
2. E-transfer
(payments@countybarrhead.ab.ca)
3. Cheque (mailed or a drop-off box is available)



BARRHEAD *Johnson Airport*

The airport is vital to our community as it serves government travel, medical evacuations, Search & Rescue, RCMP transfers, industry, agriculture and recreational purposes.

Annually, the airport accommodates approximately 300 aircraft and we welcome all newcomers.

The airport offers 24-hour access, no landing fees and is designed for light commercial and recreational aircraft operation.

- Asphalt runway is 3,506 feet long and 100 feet wide.
- Equipped with WAAS system for GPS navigation and weather monitoring station

LOGISTICS:

- Airport Name: Barrhead CEP3
- Elevation is 2,121 feet

Hanger plots are available for lease

For information regarding available lots and competitive lease rates.

- Call: [780-674-3331](tel:780-674-3331) or
- Email: info@countybarrhead.ab.ca

CHANGE of ADDRESS

Has your address changed?

If you are a landowner and your address has changed, you must notify Alberta Land Titles of your new address.

Please notify us and we can assist with address changes.



B.A.R.C.C.C.
Barrhead & Area Regional Crime Coalition

Receive the
ALERTS you
NEED



via the device you
WANT

Local alerts **YOU**
choose

- Crime near you
- Fire bans
- Emergencies
- Road Construction
- Service Interruptions
- News & Events

RCMP Crime Mapping Tool

Crime mapping is an innovative tool implemented by the Alberta RCMP. This new tool aims to provide residents with information about where local crime has occurred.

B.A.R.C.C.C. has added this feature to the website to ensure our residents stay informed of current crime trends. Visit **BARCC.ca**

NEW

B.A.R.C.C.C. alerts are sent out as a means of advising registrants of important information. We kindly request that when you see the County phone number on your phone - please check your voicemail prior to calling the office.



Fireworks

To sell, purchase or discharge fireworks in the County of Barrhead, you **must** have a valid fireworks permit.

While there is no charge for obtaining a fireworks permit, there are penalties (\$100 to \$5,000) for discharging without a permit or for being in violation of a fireworks permit regulation.

For further information or to obtain a fireworks permit, please contact Barrhead Regional Fire Services at 780-674-2087 or FireAdmin@barrhead.ca





JOIN A COMMITTEE

BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBERS REQUIRED:

County of Barrhead has opportunities for the following board positions for the 2021 calendar year:

Agriculture Services Board

Agricultural Pests Appeal Committee

Fire Services Committee

Economic Development Committee

Library Board

Weed Control Appeal Panel

Visit www.countybarrhead.ab.ca

for more information on board & committees and how YOU can apply! Deadline for applications is December 1, 2020

Budget 2021 Priorities

Public Engagement Survey

County of Barrhead conducts regular citizen engagement surveys designed to garner public input that can be utilized to inform the budget process. The surveys are a key method for public participation.

Stay tuned for the upcoming survey!!

www.countybarrhead.ab.ca



- **NEW!!! September 30, 2020**
Payment Deadline for 2020 Property Taxes
- **September 30, 2020**
8% penalty calculated on outstanding taxes
- **October 2020**
2021 Budget Priorities Public Engagement Survey
- **October 12, 2020**
Office is closed.
- **November 11, 2020**
Office is closed.
- **November 30, 2020**
4% penalty calculated on outstanding taxes
- **November/December 2020**
Agriculture Services Public Engagement Survey
- **December 1, 2020**
Deadline to submit interest in Public Member positions on Committees

Regular Council meetings are held on the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month commencing at 9:00 a.m.

Vision:
“To Foster a Strong, Healthy and Proud Rural Community”

Please Join Us in Thanking Our Front-Line Heroes



Thank you to all of the front-line workers for continuing to keep us safe!

While many people stayed home to help flatten the curve of COVID-19, front-line workers remained on the job. The efforts of front-line workers such as law enforcement, healthcare workers, grocery store workers and so many more, are critical to keeping society functioning, ensuring that every one of us is safe, healthy and has access to all of the resources we need.

We would love to hear from you!

If you have any questions or would like more information contact the County of Barrhead at:

Phone: 780-674-3331

Email: Info@countybarrhead.ab.ca

For information on programs, upcoming events or local notices visit the website at:

Website: countybarrhead.ab.ca

