

FALL 2023

COUNTY CURRENTS



County of Vermilion River Newsletter

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Published: September 21, 2023

COUNTY COUNCIL

GREETINGS FROM THE REEVE

It seems summer soon flies by and we find ourselves on the brink of fall with kids heading back to school and harvest dust soon to fill the air. As large equipment and activities increase throughout the County we ask everyone to slow down and be patient when following or approaching farm equipment.

Some late rain was certainly welcome from the dry conditions over the summer and hopefully we will see some much-needed moisture returned to not only the ground but to sloughs as well.

One of the areas the County of Vermilion River is pursuing is to hold the Government of Alberta accountable for accurate assessments for industrial properties and our concerns regarding the lack of inspection time spent in the County. Accurate assessments play a vital role in ensuring fair and equitable taxation. When assessments are inaccurate or outdated it leads to unfair distribution of tax burdens among property owners. It has come to our attention that there is significant backlog of inspections. Council has urged the Provincial Government to either allocate additional time and staffing resources or provided the County with an opportunity to enter a hybrid inspection contract for the designated industrial properties within the County boundaries. We have also requested to meet personally with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister of Energy and Minerals to discuss this further.

The County of Vermilion River has launched a new website and so please take the time to visit it and give us your feedback. It is important to us that we provide easy access to County information, news, and events not only for our residents but also for those moving into or doing business in our County.

Council invites you to attend an Open House at the Islay Community Hall on November 22, 2023 from 6 to 8 PM. Council as well as staff will be in attendance to speak with you about your issues or concerns that you may have. You are always invited to attend Council meetings either in person at the Council Chambers at the Administration Building in Kitscoty or via ZOOM webinar. If attending via ZOOM webinar, please register (see link on our webpage) to attend both the Regular Meeting of Council and Policy and Priorities Committee meetings.

It was with heavy hearts Council received the news former Reeve & Councillor Lonnie Wolgien passed away. Lonnie, who was elected to Council on March 8, 2016, truly cared about the residents of the County of Vermilion River and it was



because of that, after losing his seat in the election in 2021, he continued to attend meetings via ZOOM Webinar up until just a few months ago. It helps to know that Lonnie had a great summer doing what he loved best, fishing and being with family. In July he caught a 25 pound jack and the next week caught a 27 pound jack, both of which are being mounted. Lonnie will certainly be missed by all of us here at the County and Council and Staff send our most sincere condolences to Vivian and family.

We wish each of you a safe and enjoyable fall season! We welcome your feedback. Should you have any concerns or compliments, please let us know via office@county24.com.

Reeve Stacey Hryciuk



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COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS (June—July—August)

COUNCIL

- Council met with Kitscoty and Vermilion RCMP for quarterly reports
- Reviewed progress with all departments
- Council approved quarterly reports for Departments
- Public Hearings—Bylaw 23-09 amending text of County Land Use Bylaw adding abattoir in HD District
- Rescinded Policies—Policy AG 004 Hamlet Weed Control, Policy AG 008 Roadside Grass Seeding
- Approved Policies—PE 001 Job Protected Leave, PW 030 Roadside Grass Seeding, PD 021 Community Enhancement Funding
- Repealing of Bylaws—Dewberry Bylaw 19-411 Intermunicipal Development Plan, Bylaw 20-412 Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework and Bylaw 17-390 Municipal Development Plan and Bylaw 20-03 Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework
- Approval of AB HUB proposed project: Regional Industrial Commercial Land Buildings Database grant application \$175,000.00

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

- Designated Industrial Properties review
- Letters to be sent to MLA, Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Energy and Minerals regarding Designated Industrial Properties

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

- Appointment of 2023 Ag Pest Act Appeal Committee
- Appointment of 2023 Weed Control Act Appeal Committee
- Agriculture Service Board 2023 Resolution Grading Package
- BRWA Land and Water Committee Terms of Reference

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

- Marwayne & District Ag Society letter of support
- County of Vermilion River and City of Lloydminster IDP and ICF update
- Robinwood Area Structure Plane—what we heard report
- Proposed Cargill Fertilizer blending system letter of support
- Kitscoty Ag Society special capital funding
- Sale of Dewberry property Lot 1 Block 9 Plan 2238HW \$8,000.00

PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Coronation and Jubilee Medallion—nominations

PUBLIC WORKS

- Tender for Range Rode 20 pavement repairs between Hwy. 16 and Hwy 619 to E Construction, a Division of Colas Western Canada Inc. for \$557,541.00 plus GST
- Review of Transportation Master Plan

NATURAL GAS UTILITY

2023 Gas Utility Capital infrastructure Budget amendment

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Meetings begin at 9:00 a.m.

Council Meetings

September 12 September 26 October 10 October 24 November 14

<u>Policy & Priorities Committee</u> Meetings

September 19 October 17 November 21

The public can access Council Meetings via ZOOM. Please access the link on our website should you wish to attend the meetings.

*This is a tentative schedule. Any changes to meetings are posted on our website on the Events Calendar.



CORPORATE SERVICES

TAX INSTALLMENT PAYMENT PLAN (TIPP)

TIPP is a monthly tax payment plan allowing taxpayers to make automatic payments for property taxes rather than a single annual payment.

How does TIPP work?

TIPP runs from January to December each year with the first payment starting January 15. The first six monthly payments are based on the previous year's tax levy. As a result of increases or decreases to the annual levy, changes to installment amounts will be effective for the last six payments of the year.

Payments may only be made by automatic withdrawal from your bank account at a financial institution. A direct withdrawal form must be completed before participation in the plan. The County of Vermilion River does not charge for this service.

TAXES DUE MONDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2023

All taxes are due October 2, 2023. All taxes remaining unpaid after the due date of October 2 will have a penalty of 8% imposed the day after the due date. A further 6% penalty will be imposed on outstanding balances not paid by January 16, 2024. An additional penalty of 6% will be Imposed on all outstanding balances not paid by May 1, 2024.

Who can sign up for TIPP?

Any registered owner can sign up for TIPP if your tax account is paid up to date (including any installments due prior to signing up as well as any arrears on the account) or If you have banking privileges at a financial institution.

How can I get set up on the Tax Installment Payment Plan?

Complete the <u>Tax Installment Payment Plan Form</u> and include a VOID cheque. Once completed, this form authorizes the County of Vermilion River to draw and issue payment to the County of Vermilion River for your property taxes. Payments will be automatically withdrawn on the 15th day of each month or the next business day if the 15th occurs on a weekend or holiday.

Withdrawal/Non-Payment

You may withdraw from the plan at any time by giving written notice at least 15 business days before the next payment date. At time of withdrawal, all outstanding taxes become due and are subject to penalties in accordance with the County of Vermilion River bylaw. Any payment that is returned from your financial institution is subject to a N.S.F. fee and may result in termination of the plan. If termination occurs, all outstanding taxes become due and are subject to penalties in accordance with the County of Vermilion River bylaws.

What happens if I sell my property during the year?

When your property is sold, participants are requested to inform the County of Vermilion River in writing at least two weeks in advance of the next payment. All installment payments are non-refundable and non-transferrable. If you sell your property, we can provide your solicitor with the most recent tax levy and the total installment payments made to date in the current year. If you have purchased a new property within the County of Vermilion River and wish to continue to be enrolled in the TIPP program, please reapply with a new TIPP form and a VOID cheque.

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

BEFORE & AFTER ALUS

The ALUS Vermilion River program helps farmers and ranchers with stewardship projects that improve their operations. A fence around a wetland, for example, keeps the cattle clean and dry with no chance of getting stuck in the mud. Combined with an off-site watering system, the newly restricted wetland can also be a source of clean water when cattle are in that area. When a producer is motivated to make this change for healthier cows, the result is a much healthier natural system. The vegetation can thrive and outcompete invasives. This means the water gets filtered more effectively, the wetland banks are held in place by strong deep roots, and the wetland has increased capacity to hold more water for more months of the year.



In 2017, ALUS partnered with the Vermilion River Watershed Alliance to support a local farm family to fence several wetlands on their pastures. In this example, after six years without cattle pressure, the wet zone has expanded, the willows are thriving, the sedges and cattails have outcompeted the brome grass, and there is excellent habitat for birds, insects, and wildlife. The other advantage is that, on a dry year like this, if forage is needed, the cattle can be given short-term access to graze late in the season when the ground is less sensitive to damage. For more information about ALUS, contact Chris Elder at 780-853-7844 or celder@county24.com

2023 PEST SURVEILLANCE

Clubroot of Canola: Survey starts in late August and runs through harvest. County Pest Inspectors check 200 randomly selected canola fields in the County for Clubroot.



Canola Disease Survey: Conducted in August/ September, in conjunction with the Clubroot survey. Staff assess blackleg, sclerotinia and clubroot on 16 fields for Alberta Agriculture's pest surveillance program.

Wheat Disease Survey: Surveys are conducted in August/September. Staff collect head samples from 14 fields and submit to Alberta Agriculture's pest surveillance program.

Rat Inspections: Farm yards, feed bins and bale stacks within 6 miles of the AB/SK borders are checked for signs of rats, starting in October.

Calling Grain Producers in the Canadian Prairies!

Are you a grain producer in the Canadian Prairies? If so, you are invited to participate in a research survey that will be collecting data on the adoption of winter wheat and ultra-early seeding of spring wheat in the Canadian Prairies. This survey will take approximately 15 to 30 minutes.

To participate in this study you must be

- 18 years old or older
- A grain producer in the Canadian Prairies

If you meet the above criteria and are interested in completing the survey, please go the link below or use your phone camera on the QR code.

Survey Link: https://forms.gle/LkNoQwSBMjehAWez8



The Adoption of Winter Wheat and Ultra-Early Seeding of Spring Wheat in Canadian Prairies

Pro00130833

County of

Principal Investigator: Jacey Toerper

If you have any questions please only contact Dr. Linda Gorim at gorim@ualberta.ca or Jacey Toerper at toerper@ualberta.ca to protect your confidentiality.





PROTECTIVE SERVICES



We are pleased to announce the addition of John Prockiw to the County of Vermillion River Peace Officer Program.

Officer Prockiw comes with ample law enforcement experience, including time with Alberta Corrections and various Peace Officer appointments in communities like Bonnyville (Town & M.D.), St. Albert and N.A.I.T, with his last posting as a School Resource Officer (SRO).

John is involved in youth mentoring/coaching activities, mainly through rugby, and is focused on creating safe communities through interacting with residents.

Give him a friendly hello when you see him on patrol or in our school zones.

NEW!

Request a Fire Permit Online

Click Here to Request a Permit



Fire Prevention Week 2023— October 8 to 14

Cooking safety starts with YOU.



FIRE PREVENTION WEEK**

fpw.org

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NATURAL GAS UTILITY

UNDERGROUND GAS LEAKS

Leaks on gas lines can develop over time as a result of dig-ups, gopher/beaver chews, wash-outs, lightning strikes and other damage. The County of Vermilion River maintains the largest member-owned natural gas pipeline network in Alberta with over 4,500 km of polyethylene, steel, and aluminum gas lines. We patrol our residential gas system on a 5 year rotation, but we also rely on our customers to assist by reporting potential leaks. Smell, dead vegetation, hard/cracked soil and bubbling in wetlands are all potential indicators of gas leaks. If you notice any of these please call us and we'll come check it out.

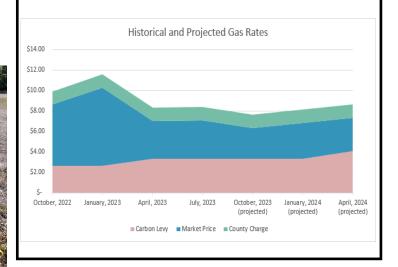


Pictured Above: 2023 Beaver Chew reported by Customer

Pictured Right: 2023 Leak found during Patrol

NATURAL GAS PRICES

Following the spike in gas pricing this past Fall and Winter, natural gas **Market Price** is expected to remain low and stable throughout this winter. The **County Gas Rate** will remain among the lowest in the province, with total gas bills 14% less than ATCO/Direct Energy on typical residential gas accounts. Based on the current Federal legislation, the **Carbon Levy** will continue to increase in April of each year. In 2024 we expect Carbon Tax to represent 1/2 of the customer gas charges.



LINE LOCATING

We often get inquires directly to our office to locate gas lines. While we are happy to locate your primary gas line and we will do our best to locate any secondary gas lines we are aware of on your property, it is important to do this through Utility Safety Partners (formerly Alberta One call) for the following reasons:



- To ensure that all underground facility owners (electric, telephone, oil & gas) are notified and can locate their lines if necessary. It is common for property owners to be unaware of forget about underground facilities on their property.
- 2. To protect yourself, and the County, against liability for damaged lines. The Utility Safety Partners system reduces your liability by ensuring that proper records are kept, all applicable facility owners are notified, and you are provided with all of the information required to dig safely.
- 3. It's the rules. All facility owners who are registered with Utility Safety Partners are obligated to locate lines only through this system.
- 4. It's free. All locating is done free of charge. (With the exception of electricity and telephone as they may not locate all lines on your property for no charge, particularly secondary lines.) County Gas will make all efforts to locate any and all secondary gas lines on your property.

So far, this year County Gas has responded to 4 emergency hit line calls due to property owners/contractors failing to submit a Utility Safety Partners request. These damages are not only costly, but also cause service interruptions to neighbors. Hit lines could also lead to injuries or even fatalities.

Please remember to dig responsibly or Call or Click before you dig!





PLANNING & COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Planning and Community Services department has been working on a number of projects over the summer. Some of the highlights:

- Repeal Village of Dewberry Intermunicipal Development Plan (Bylaw 19-411) and Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (Bylaw 20-412)
- Repeal County of Vermilion River and Village of Dewberry Intermunicipal Development Plan (Bylaw 20-02) and Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (Bylaw 20-03)
- Alberta Community Partnership (AGP) Grant for the County of Vermilion River and City of Lloydminster Intermunicipal Collaboration Component: \$200,000 and Mediation and Cooperative Process Component Stream—Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework Negotiation: \$50,000
- Request for Proposal (RFP) to Alberta Purchasing Connection (APC) for City of Lloydminster Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework & Intermunicipal Development Plan

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

Two engagement sessions are being planned for mid-to late fall 2023:

- Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and Municipal Development Plan (MDP)
- Robinwood Area Structure Plan



Watch for dates and times in the local newspaper, visit our <u>website</u>, or follow our social media pages.

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUNDING

There are a variety of grants available from the County of Vermilion River. These grants include operational, project and capital funding options for facilities and community halls along with programs and events funding. Applications can be found on our website.

CATEGORY

Community Halls
Facilities
Programs & Events

DEADLINE

October 13, 2023 October 13, 2023 October 13, 2023





PUBLIC WORKS

SNOW PLOW FLAG PROGRAM

County residents may purchase a snow plow flag for the Winter Season (Fall 2023 to Spring 2024). The County will plow from the approach to the residence for access only. This does not include plowing to barns, corrals, etc. The priority order for snow plowing is as follows:

- 1. Main Roads
- 2. Bus Routes
- 3. Grid Roads
- 4. Yard Sites (with a snow plow flag)

If you would like to apply for a snow plow flag and it is your first time applying, you must first fill out an inspection request. Once a laneway has been inspected and approved for snow removal, a waiver must be filled out an signed by the Landowner on Title and pay the fee. You will then receive your snow plow flag. Residents who have purchased a snow plow flag within the last 3 years do not require an inspection. Waivers must be filled out each year (this includes Buffalo Trail Public School (BTPS) Division essential turn around). If you have a Blue or Pink flag from last year, place it at the end of your driveway. The grader operator will pick it up.

Snow Plow Flag Fees				
Ratepayers	\$200			
BTPS division yard service				
Parent Choice	• \$200			
Essential Turn around	No charge			
Seniors 65+ years	\$50			
Person with Disability Must have disability number	\$50			

MA	INTENANCE CHECKLIST
	1. Inspect Your Faucets
	2. Disconnect & Insulate Outdoor Connections
	3. Look for Leaks Under the Sinks & Toilets
	4. Check & Insulate Pipes
	5. Clean Out Drains & Gutters
	6. Check Water Heater & Sump Pump

FALL PLUMBING

All County Heavy Vehicle Permits expire on December 31. All vehicles registered for 22,500 kg and over require a permit to travel on County roads as per Traffic Bylaw (Bylaw 21-04). To renew your permit, contact Public Works.





PUBLIC WORKS

2023 ROAD PROJECTS

Crews are continue working to complete the road projects for the year.

The Rehabilitation Crew has completed road repair on:

- TWP 544 from HWY 893 to RR50
- TWP 540 from HWY 897 to RR33

They are currently working on:

• RR 80 from TWP 520 to TWP 522

The next project (weather permitting) is:

• TWP 474 from HWY 17 to RR 12

Contracted Projects Updates:

- RR 20 from HWY 16 to HWY 619 approximately 1 mile of patchwork paving has been completed
- Crack sealing has been completed and line painting will be completed by the end of September.

Other Road Projects

- Work on Railway Avenue in Dewberry is underway. The underground replacement of infrastructure is nearing completion and surface work will start once the underground work has been completed.
- The crew has finished the final clean up of the bridge maintenance on RR 80 TWP 511.
- Crushing at Eidsvik Pit was completed in June. Currently, there is a tender out for crushing at Unwin Pit.
- The patching crew is still working on various oiled surfaces in the County. Grading and graveling of County roads continues.

Check the County website, Facebook or Twitter for important updates with regards to roads.

Policy Review

The Local Priority Policy PW003 Is under review. Some items for consideration are renaming the policy to Undeveloped Road Maintenance Policy and a fee for service for snow clearing of undeveloped road ways after December 1, 2023

Did you Know?

ROAD

AHEAD

The County applied 3,309,000 L of MG30 to 203,692 meters of County roads this year.

You can report a concern in the following ways:

Call Public Works at 780-846-3309 Monday to Friday 8:30 to 4:30

Use the Report a Concern available on our website

Email publicworks@county24.com

Report a Concern is not monitored after business hours.

If you need to report an emergency after hours please call the emergency line at 780-846-2929





NOTICES & UPDATES

INVITATION TO ATTEND THE OPEN HOUSE

This is a great opportunity to be informed about what is going on in County.

- Learn what is happening with current and future projects.
- Share your thoughts—Council and staff will be in attendance to listen to your questions & concerns.

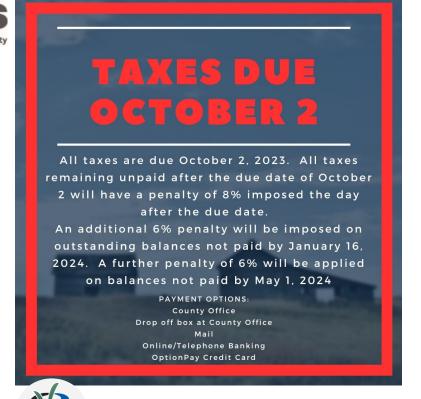
This is a come and go event, everyone is welcome stop by the Islay Community Hall between 6:00 and 8:00 pm.



FCSS FUNDING

Programs that support Support Support Services strengthening the protective factors of individuals, families, and communities to promote wellbeing, reduce vulnerabilities, enhance quality of life and empower them to meet the challenges of life may receive funding through the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) funding program.

Community groups interested in applying for FCSS funding can find an application on our <u>website</u> or contact the <u>Community Development</u> <u>Coordinator</u>. Deadline to apply is September 29, 2023.





WASTE MANAGEMENT

TRANSFER STATION OPERATION HOURS

Summer Hours: May 1—September 30 & Winter Hours: October 1—April 30

DEWBERRY/CLANDONALD TRANSFER STATION (NE 11-53-5 W4)		PARADISE VALLEY TRANSFER STATION (NW 7-47-2 W4)	
Thursday	12:00pm—4:00pm (year round)	Wednesday	10:00am—12:00pm (year round)
Saturday	9:00am—2:00pm (year round)	Saturday	9:00am—2:00pm (year round)
KITSCOTY	TRANSFER STATION (SE 35-50-3 W4)	MARWAYNE TRANSFER STATION (SE 34-52-3 W4)	
Wednesday Thursday	2:00pm—5:00pm (winter) 2:00pm—7:00pm (summer) 1:00pm—5:00pm (summer)	Wednesday	2:00pm—5:00pm (winter) 2:00pm—7:00pm (summer)
Saturday	10:00am—4:00pm (year round)	Saturday	10:00am—2:00pm (year round)
TULLIBY LAKE TRANSFER STATION (NW 6-55-1 W4)		PRESTON TRANSFER STATION (SW 30-48-6 W4)	
Wednesday	5:00pm—9:00pm (summer)	Wednesday	4:00pm—8:00pm (summer)
Saturday	10:00am—2:00pm (winter)	Saturday	10:00am—2:00pm (year round)
		VERMILION TRANSFER STATION (SW 5-51-6 W4)	
		Monday thru Saturday	9:00am—4:45pm (year round) Closed on Sunday and all Statutory Holidays

KEY CVR CONTACTS

Chief Administrative Officer: Alan Parkin, MBA, CLGM cao@county24.com

Director of Agriculture: Cathie Erichsen Arychuk, PAg covragenviro@county24.com

corpservices@county24.com Director of Corporate Services: Viren Tailor, MBA, CPA, CMA

Director of Natural Gas Utility: Louis Genest gasut@county24.com

Director of Protective Services: Kirk Hughes, cd fire@county24.com

Director of Planning & Development: Roger Garnett, CET planning@county24.com

Director of Public Works: Marshall Morton publicworks@county24.com

OFFICE HOURS

Regular Hours: Monday—Friday, 8:30a.m.—4:30p.m. Closed Holidays

Upcoming Office Closures:

October 9 Thanksgiving Day Remembrance Day November 13 (In Lieu of Nov. 11)

CONTACT US

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ADMINISTRATION

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NATURAL GAS UTILITY

Phone: 780.846.2222 gasut@county24.com

PUBLIC WORKS

Phone: 780.846.3309 Fax: 780.846.2985

publicworks@county24.com

AFTER HOURS EMERGENCY

780.846.2929

^{*}For your convenience and safety, please contact the Main Office prior to visiting our maintenance yard and work sites.



