



Stettler County

CONNECTION

SPRING 2024

FINDING FAIRNESS IN FARM TRANSITIONS

MARCH 12 WORKSHOP
PAGES 14-15



PLANNING TO BURN?

Make sure you get a permit first.

Fire permits are free and will be provided to you by the County of Stettler, visit or call 403-742-4441. There are terms and conditions associated with the permit which you must follow.

Once your permit is issued, it is entered into our database so we know when and where to expect smoke or fire. You may still see a fire truck/unit in your area, but that is ensure that it is indeed you burning and not another wild land fire, and no charges will be incurred by you.

Burning without a permit can lead to charges, fines or court appearances.

Permits are free.

If you burn without a permit, and smoke or fire is reported that we are not anticipating, we could

dispatch firefighters to your fire. This is extremely costly, as well as being a misuse of resources.

Please obtain a fire permit every time you are planning to do any burning.

**Burning
without a permit
can lead to charges,
fines or court
appearances.
Permits are free and
available from
Alberta Wildfire.**



ON THE COVER

Grand Prize Winner of our
2023 Photo Contest!
by Paige Jones

Page 18

CONTENTS

- 3 REEVE'S RAMBLINGS**
Strategic planning and budget.
- 5 FUNDING AWARDED**
Community Investment program.
- 6 EMBRACING FIRESMART**
FireSmart for rural properties.
- 8 SOLAR POWER PLANTS**
An update.
- 10 TREES DURING DROUGHT**
Providing protection.
- 11 SHELTERBELT WORKSHOP**
Tree care and shelterbelt planning.
- 12 2024 AG SERVICES BURSARY**
Students: apply today.
- 13 2024 VEGETATION CONTROL**
Spray exemption forms.
- 14 FARM TRANSITION WORKSHOP**
With Elaine Froese.
- 16 ADVOCACY**
Preparing for more drought.
- 17 DUGOUT WORKSHOP**
With Lynne Melvin.
- 18 2023 PHOTO CONTEST**
Meet the winners.
- 20 HOW SAFE ARE YOU?**
Burn Barrels and Fire Pits.
- 25 WORK WITH US!**
Hiring ASB seasonal staff.



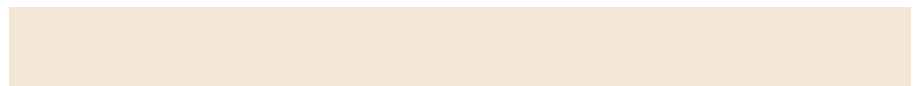
SOLAR POWER PLANTS AND THE COUNTY OF STETTLER



**FINDING FAIRNESS IN FARM
TRANSITIONS - WORKSHOP**



**DUGOUT WORKSHOP WITH
LYNNE MELVIN**





INTRO

“The magic in new beginnings is truly the most powerful of them all.” Josiyah Martin

We were very pleased to join Town and County Councils just prior to ringing in the new year, in order to sign the new, improved and modernized Joint Regional Fire Agreement.

This committee worked hard throughout 2023, to find reasonable, practical solutions that would satisfy both parties while continuing to provide the safest and best fire service for all of our communities and citizens. This isn't the first agreement, nor will it be the last that requires modernization. Change truly is the only constant, but with each time of change, comes the opportunity to make improvements.

Going forward into 2024, we have begun a complete policy review. Each month Council will review a half dozen or so existing policies, along with recommendations or proposed changes. Once reviewed, these policies will be posted on our website for a few weeks to collect feedback from the public. Once the feedback period closes, the policies will go back to a Council meeting for further review and for their consideration. This gives everyone an opportunity to review what worked 5/10 or 15 years ago, consider if it still applies or if changes need to be considered for various reasons. It's kind of like cleaning out the closet and establishing what fits or what may be too far out of style.

Looking forward, we are planning for our next meetings at the Rural Municipalities of Alberta conference this spring. Drought conditions in our region continue to be a huge concern as we measure, plan and prepare for the worst, while hoping for the best. The RMA conference will bring more opportunities for Council and staff to advocate for our region and ensure our local issues and problems are heard and noted by provincial decision-makers. Additionally, Council is preparing for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Conference and Trade Show. Annually, we normally only send 1-2 Councillors to represent us, but with this year's conference occurring in Calgary, Alberta, it is an opportunity to network with more than 1,000 elected officials, right close to home. Looking forward to all of the opportunities that spring presents. Join us by checking out our upcoming workshops!

Niki Thorsteinsson
Director of Communications

County of Stettler

CAO

Yvette Cassidy

Councillors

Ward 1: Byemoor-Endiang

Les Stulberg

Ward 2: Big Valley

Dave Grover

Ward 3: Botha-Gadsby

Larry Clarke

Ward 4: Erskine-South Warden

James Nibourg

Ward 5: Stettler

Ernie Gendre

Ward 6: Erskine-Buffalo Lake

Justin Stevens

Ward 7: Donaldia-Red Willow

Paul McKay

© 2024. All rights reserved. Any reproduction of the contents without written authorization from the publisher is strictly prohibited. The publisher cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions found within this newsmagazine, or for loss of, or damage to, unsolicited material submitted by readers.

Availability: Current Issues of County Connection can be obtained from the County of Stettler Administration Building while supplies last.

Subscription: County Connection is delivered free of charge to taxpayers, with exception to those who do not live in the Province of Alberta or have unsubscribed from our mailing list. If you wish to receive future copies, please make the request to the Managing Editor at nthorsteinsson@stettlercounty.ca. You may also view the current and back issues of the County Connection on our website at stettlercounty.ca.

6602-44 Avenue
Stettler, AB T0C 2L0
Phone: 403-742-4441
stettlercounty.ca





REEVE'S RAMBLINGS

Larry Clarke - Reeve, County of Stettler

As I look out the window the thermometer on January 21 is -13 C with a forecasted high of -12 C. We had a very pleasant fall and early winter but regardless of your beliefs in global warming mother nature showed us what she could do in the last 2 weeks with temperatures reaching into the -40's (metric or imperial) it tested out every freezable thing and gave our country kids snow/cold days off school in the week they had just started in 2024. I hope all made it through relatively unscathed and kept houses warm, water and equipment running and animals fed and bedded. Looking into the next 10 days forecasts it shows highs of + 8 C so the roller coaster continues. One thing we can always count on is changing weather, but let's hope for moisture to replenish water bodies and ground moisture.

Our County was the first municipality to call an agriculture disaster in June 2023 which resulted in many other municipalities following suite in July and August. We as Council and CAO Cassidy along with her staff have spent many hours in 2023 lobbying governments and pushing the dire situation of drought in our region seeking financial aid and after much effort from our MLA's and provincial government a 2023 Canada-Alberta Drought Livestock Assistance Initiative was implemented. This is Federally and Provincially funded and is an attempt to help some aspects of our agriculture portfolio. This program was administered by AFSC. Reports have indicated that many of our provincial reservoirs are at all time lows and serious measures will be taken

in 2024 if there isn't a sufficient run off to replenish these. This has effects on all communities that use these as their potable water source and recreation areas but will greatly affect agriculture in irrigation waters and water for livestock and wildlife. Our Agricultural Services Board is attending meetings in Lethbridge in January and will be discussing 2023 and plan for 2024 regarding drought and other emerging agricultural issues.

We have spent many hours as council reviewing our Strategic Plan which is a listing of Council priorities based on surveys and requests and Council discussions and debate. From this department work plans are formulated and preliminary budgets are developed, then the budgeting process begins.

Council and staff review and rework projects and items to ensure they meet the strategic plan and can we afford to budget them in the proposed budget. There are many sessions and when the final budget draft is complete we have a public consultation meeting to hopefully receive feedback. After this meeting the budget will be taken to a Council meeting for final approval. We had the 2024 public budget consultation Thursday Jan. 11, 2024 with no public attendance and most of our surveys get very few responses. Folks this is one of your opportunities to get opinions on how your funds are being spent, The County has 17 departments that make up the budget as follows: General, Council, Administration, Fire, Emergency Management, Protective Services, Transportation Services, Airport, Water Distribution,

REEVE'S RAMBLINGS

Sanitary Services, Garbage Collection and Disposal, Family and Community Services, Cemeteries, Agricultural Services, Planning and Development, Recreation and Culture (Library & Museum).

All departments require base funding for operations and may require capital additions to purchase new equipment or maintain asset management of existing assets.

Priorities for this years budget include maintaining services, gravel crushing and spreading, proactively monitoring the drought situation "hoping for the best, planning for the worst", expanding water distribution system, continued purchase/replacement of graders, as well as emergency management planning and fire services.

We held seven community engagement sessions last year representing all of the wards. Time of year was not perfect but overall, they resulted in very good conversations and questions. We did this versus the Tradeshow as we felt it was probably a better venue and results would indicate this. They both come with costs and require a large amount of employee time in planning and execution but most felt the town hall option worked very well. Scheduling and frequency will be reviewed for future events.

We have successfully worked with our community partners to approve an updated regional fire agreement which as discussed in earlier editions we were in mediation with the Town of Stettler regarding the Stettler Regional Fire Department. Through mediation we worked to a memorandum of understanding to maintain the Regional Fire Department. Our fire halls in Stettler, Big Valley, Byemoor and once again a functioning fire hall in Donalda are updated and fully equipped to operate.

We along with the Town of Stettler have hired a joint Regional Fire Manager, Ivan Dijkstra, who will report jointly to the Town and County CAO's.

We welcome Ivan and he will oversee the Stettler region and be supported by a Town of Stettler Fire Chief and a County of Stettler Fire Chief (who will be hired through this process).

We are very fortunate to have a great volunteer base of firefighters in these halls. Our rural stations are in the trusting hands of Jeff Klassen, Big Valley Platoon



Congratulations to Reeve Clarke, newly elected Chair of the Division 2 Rural Municipalities of Alberta Zone 2 Meetings.

Chief; Jim Wasdal, Byemoor Platoon Chief and Ben Weins, Donalda Platoon Chief.

We have also approved the continuation of the long-standing Recreation agreement with the Town of Stettler.

Speaking of modernizing agreements, we, in collaboration with the Town of Stettler and Clearview School Board have just reviewed the first year results as a committee with the school resource officer (SRO).

The RCMP officer in this role participates in all schools in the County of Stettler and has his office in William E. Hay School in Stettler. All reports show this revamped, modernized role is working well. We will continue to work through agreements with our neighbours, ensuring County of Stettler needs are met and addressed in these agreements.

Please drive safely on our roads, with the much-needed snowy conditions, be patient as roads are cleared and maintained.

As always, please treat County of Stettler staff, all of our wonderful businesses and frontline workers with respect, as you would your neighbours.

Larry Clarke, REEVE

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM FUNDING

FUNDING AWARDED FOR JANUARY 2024

The following funding was awarded by Council at the January 2024 Regular Council Meeting, under the County's Community Investment Program:

- **Big Jack Classic Fishing Derby** \$1,000
Family Day Weekend - Buffalo Lake
Fishing Derby - February 17-18
- **Big Valley Kids Christmas** \$250
December
- **Donalda Ag Society** \$1,000
Website Upgrading
- **KidSport Stettler** \$500
So all kids can play.
- **Red Willow Ag Society** \$1,000
50th Anniversary Celebration
'Country Fair' - June 22, 2024
- **Stettler & District Music Festival** \$500
April 15-17, 2024

Council introduced the Community Investment Program in order to streamline sponsorship requests from community groups in a more equitable way, tracking funding requests and keeping them to an annual budgeted amount.

Sponsorship requests are accepted by the County June through December 31, and then presented to Council for consideration in January. The next funding request intake deadline is May 31, with approved applications receiving funding in June. Applications are available at www.StettlerCounty.ca.



FIRESMART FOR RURAL PROPERTIES

Embracing FireSmart for a Safer Future

Living in the serenity of rural landscapes offers unparalleled beauty and tranquility, but it also comes with unique challenges, particularly concerning wildfire risks. As we get less moisture in our region, the frequency and intensity of out-of-control fires will be on the rise, posing a significant threat to rural properties. To safeguard your slice of paradise, embracing the FireSmart approach is not just a choice; it's a necessity.

Understanding FireSmart

FireSmart is a comprehensive wildfire mitigation strategy designed to empower property owners in wildfire-prone areas. The initiative, backed by research and community engagement, focuses on creating a defensible space around homes and communities, reducing the risk of wildfires spreading and causing catastrophic damage.

Key FireSmart Principles

1. Defensible Space

FireSmart encourages the creation of defensible space by strategically managing vegetation around homes. This involves thinning and pruning trees,

clearing debris, and maintaining a safe distance between structures and flammable materials. By doing so, property owners create a barrier that helps prevent the rapid spread of wildfires.

2. Home Ignition Zones

FireSmart divides the immediate surroundings of a property into three ignition zones. Zone 1, the area closest to the home, requires the most attention, focusing on reducing the risk of ember ignition. Zones 2 and 3 extend the protection zone further, addressing potential fire threats in a broader context.

3. Fire-Resistant Landscaping

Incorporating fire-resistant plants and landscaping materials is an essential aspect of FireSmart. By selecting vegetation with lower flammability and maintaining proper spacing, property owners can create an aesthetically pleasing landscape while minimizing the risk of fire spreading.

4. Community Collaboration

FireSmart emphasizes community collaboration and engagement. Organizing workshops, training



Reeve Clarke and Mayor Nolls signing the modernized Joint Regional Fire Agreement on December 18, 2023.

Consider a call to your insurance company to check out exactly what your fire coverage is in the event of a fire on your property. Depending on the policy, a little extra on a premium may bolster coverage, which could provide for more adequate insurance replacement costs on buildings and equipment.

sessions, and community events fosters a collective effort to implement wildfire mitigation measures. Shared responsibility ensures that everyone in the community plays a role in reducing the overall fire risk.

Benefits of FireSmart

1. Property Protection

Implementing FireSmart measures significantly reduces the vulnerability of homes and structures to wildfires. A well-maintained defensible space acts as a crucial line of defense, giving firefighters a better chance to protect properties during wildfire events.

2. Insurance Savings

Many insurance companies recognize and reward proactive wildfire mitigation efforts. By adopting FireSmart principles, property owners may be eligible for discounts on their insurance premiums, making it a financially savvy decision in the long run.

3. Peace of Mind

Knowing that you have taken proactive steps to protect your property can provide a sense of security and peace of mind. FireSmart empowers property owners to take control of their destiny, mitigating the potential devastation caused by wildfires.

For rural property owners, FireSmart isn't just a set of guidelines; it's a lifeline to safeguarding the cherished way of life. By embracing the FireSmart approach, you're not only protecting your property but contributing to the resilience of your entire community. Take the first step towards a safer future by implementing FireSmart measures today, ensuring your rural paradise remains a haven for generations to come.



SOLAR POWER PLANTS IN THE COUNTY OF STETTLER

An update.

As of the start of 2024, two proposals for the development of solar power plants have been presented to the County's Planning & Development Department for properties within the County of Stettler.

The first is the Stettler Solar Project put forward by ABO Wind Canada Ltd. on one and a half quarter sections of land on the south side of Township Road 38-4 one mile east of Highway 56. The proposed plant would have a capacity to generate 34 megawatts (MW) of electricity. Details can be found on their project website at www.stettlersolar.com.

The second project is the Red Willow Solar Energy and Storage Project proposed by Westbridge Renewable Energy Corporation. This project encompasses the majority of thirteen (13) quarter sections along the south side of Highway 601 to the east of the Hamlet of Red Willow. It would have a capacity of 280 megawatts (MW) and battery storage for 100 megawatts (MW). More details can be found on their website at www.westbridge.energy.

Provincial Approval Process

The approval of the size and location of proposed commercial scale solar power plants rests with the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC).

Proponents are expected to complete landowner and public consultation and a list of studies of potential impacts to submit to the AUC. The AUC process affords an affected party the ability to express concerns and participate in a hearing to address concerns. More details about this process are available at www.auc.ab.ca or by contacting the AUC at 403-592-4500 or info@auc.ab.ca. In late 2023, the Province announced a

moratorium on any approvals by the AUC for any alternative energy (solar and wind) projects. This is expected to last until the end of February 2024. Roll out of any new regulations and policies may add more time beyond February before approvals are again being given by the AUC. In the meantime, proponents of projects have continued to prepare their applications by completing consultations and the required studies.

The County's Role

As the local planning authority, the County of Stettler will consider development permit applications for each proposed project once a project has obtained their approval from the AUC.

The County approval comes second so that the development permit conditions can be consistent with the AUC approval. This is a requirement of the Provincial planning legislation. The County's decision can not set aside the AUC decision nor can it make it impossible for the proponent to meet the requirements of the AUC and the County.

As the host municipality for the proposed projects, the County of Stettler also has the ability to provide input into the AUC decision making process. This gives the County the opportunity to express views on issues relating to topics like weed and vegetation management, farmland impacts, road impacts during construction, visual appearance on the land and similar land use planning matters.

For more information about the County's role in the approval of solar power plants, please contact Craig Teal, RPP MCIP, at 403 742 4441 ext. 119 or cteal@stettlercounty.ca.

Visit [youtube.com/Stettlercounty](https://www.youtube.com/Stettlercounty) to watch the 'Let's Talk Property Rights and Solar Facilities' presentation we hosted in Fall 2023.



STARTING DEVELOPMENT BEFORE APPROVAL? APPROVAL FIRST, CONSTRUCTION SECOND.

Starting to clear land and build before obtaining development permit approval comes with significant risks. You may be faced with a financial penalty in the form of an additional fee or fine. You could also be required to undo all the work that has been done.

The County of Stettler requires development permit approval for most changes to property. This approval must be given in writing before construction of the development begins. Some forms of development, like agricultural buildings, do not require a development permit approval. These are listed in the Land Use Bylaw under the heading "Development Deemed Approved." If you are not certain about the permit requirements for your project please contact the County Development Officer at 403-742-4441.

The County's Fee Bylaw includes penalties for developments that are started before a development permit application has been

approved. Our policy is to apply these penalties based on a zero-tolerance approach. Our preference is to work with applicants as they plan their project.

Please contact the Planning and Development Department when you start planning your development in order to ensure you obtain the required development permit and other approvals in a timely manner. This could also avoid any expenses that you may incur if your idea for your development does not comply with the County's policies and bylaws (e.g. yard setbacks, road upgrades, etc.), so that you can make the necessary adjustments before you start digging or laying down concrete.

For further information, please contact the County's Planning and Development Department at 403-742-4441.

TREE PROTECTION DURING WINTER DROUGHT

From Toso Bozic, P. Ag and CEO/Tree Expert at ATTS Group Inc.

Many parts of Alberta are under drought conditions since June of last year. Severe droughts cause widespread tree mortality across the landscape (urban, acreage, farm, county or province-wide) with profound effects on the function of tree/forestry ecosystems and overall environment. As summer and fall drought continued into winter with no snow on the ground to protect root system, tree roots will further suffer from winter drought and physical damages.

Cold winter damages can happen due to a trees inability to survive cold weather, lack of snow in some parts of Alberta, strong cold and dry wind, or heavy snow and ice in late fall or early spring. As winter casts its dry cold and icy spell, trees face a unique set of challenges, especially in regions already experiencing drought.

Winter drought, characterized by a scarcity/lack of water insulation and snow protection to roots during the colder months, poses a threat to the well-being of trees. Despite the leafless appearance and apparent dormancy, trees are engaged in a complex dance of survival during this period. Roots remain mostly inactive but can and do

Tree Workshop

Visit www.StettlerCounty.ca to read Toso's full article and winter drought protect - or join him at our Tree Workshop (Page 11)!

function and grow during winter months whenever soil temperatures are favourable, even if the air aboveground is brutally cold. Unlike the more conspicuous summer drought, winter drought often goes unnoticed, as the ground may appear frozen and devoid of visible signs of moisture scarcity. However, trees and their roots continue to lose water through transpiration, albeit at a slower rate compared to the growing season.

It's important to note that newly planted trees are at a higher risk of sustaining injuries from the winter cold compared to mature trees. Additionally, coniferous trees, during the winter months, might lose water through their needles faster than their roots can absorb, resulting in brown needles during the spring—an occurrence known as winter browning in coniferous trees.

As many parts of Alberta experience horrendous drought, a warm winter and then sudden deep cold, many trees are suffering. Here are just a few key points from Toso Bozic, Tree Expert. Visit our website for his full article.

- Do not water trees now or even if it warms up, until probably mid-March or April when soil temperatures reach 10 C.
- Add mulch - if you don't have snow on the ground, or very little snow (up to 5 cm) you can still add 4-6 inches of wood chips.
- Don't prune (unless it is a safety issue).
- Avoid any salt around trees
- Avoid driving near the root zone.
- Add some physical barriers to protect trees from cold winds, which could also help trap snow for spring.

SHELTERBELT

& TREE CARE WORKSHOP

MARCH 27, 2024
5-8 pm

Snacks
will be provided

Cost \$25.00

Rumsey
Community
Hall

IT IS ALL ABOUT TREES INCLUDING FRUIT TREES.

Trees and shrubs that make up shelterbelts and Eco buffers can help to prevent soil erosion, and combat climate change. They provide snow capture, are habitat for pollinators, wildlife and provide wind break/protection, food and beautifies your landscape.

Presented by TOSO BOZIC
ISA Certified Arborist

Previously a Forestry Expert with Alberta Ag and now a current CEO of ATTS Group, Toso Bozic has over 25 years of experience as a tree-planting consultant. Toso has knowledge in agriculture and forestry systems at the local, provincial and global level.

Please Join Us for this workshop and your take away is;

- ◆ Choosing select trees to fit your land, soil and location
- ◆ Site Selection & Preparation of trees & shrubs
- ◆ Maintenance & Care (Planting, watering ,weeds and mulch)
- ◆ Basic Pruning including roses & fruit trees, possible demo
- ◆ Minimizing Environmental Damage
- ◆ Managing Pests & Diseases
- ◆ County Funding programs
- ◆ Drought -Working with it and around it

To Register and for more information contact:

Marcia at
marcia@starlandcounty.com or
403-772-3793 ext. 325
HOSTED BY STARLAND COUNTY

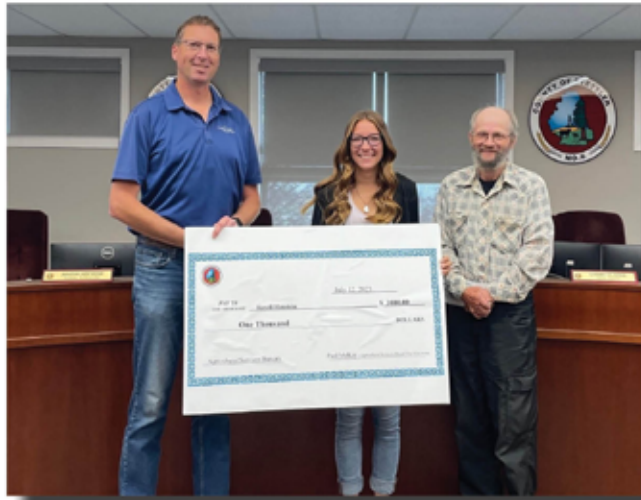
STARLAND
COUNTY



Kneehill
COUNTY



APPLY TODAY!
ASB BURSARY 2024
\$1,000



2023 Bursary winner Rayell Haustein; photographed with Manager of Agricultural Services Quinton Beaumont and ASB Vice-Chair Paul McKay

Submissions are accepted until April 15, 2024.

- Applicant must have successfully enrolled into a post-secondary institution in any year of studies.
- The applicant may only receive the award once.
- The applicant must be a resident of the County of Stettler No. 6.
- The applicant must supply the Manager of Agricultural Services with:
 - Proof of enrollment in a college or university.
 - Proof of High School Diploma or eligibility.
 - Two personal references of no relation to the applicant.



To view the application, scan the QR Code or visit StettlerCounty.ca/ASBBursary

2024 COUNTY OF STETTLER VEGETATION CONTROL PLAN

As legislated under the Alberta Weed Control Act, the County of Stettler Agricultural Service Board will be conducting roadside vegetation control for invasive species in the south third of the County (south of Township 37-0, to the south border, Township Road 33-4 and West of Range Road 164 to Buffalo Lake and the Red Deer River). Adhering to Industrial Vegetation Management Association of Alberta standards, we will carry out the program for these reasons:

- **Ease snow removal in the winter.**
- **Reduce the risk of hitting wildlife by increasing the visibility and sightline.**
- **The roots of trees and shrubs and do damage to roads, by removing them, the road will last longer.**
- **After heavy rainfall, the road will dry faster with less vegetation in the ditch to hold moisture.**
- **Control and Destroy Prohibited and Noxious weeds.**

If you would prefer to control weeds and brush, using methods that differ from the County's program, you are required to fill out a spray exemption form annually, the deadline of acceptance of these forms is 4:00 pm, May 3, 2024.

Our program already states that there is not any vegetation control performed within 30 meters of your yard. For any questions regarding this program, or to fill out a Spray Exemption Form please call the Manager of Agricultural Operations Quinton Beaumont 403-742-4441.

FINDING FAIRNESS IN FARM TRANSITIONS

TOOLS TO TALK ABOUT TOUGH ISSUES

Farm succession planning has been noted as a top stressor in multi-generational farm families. Stressors include a loss of control, fear of failure, loss of purpose, loss of wealth, and family friction.

However, as families procrastinate and avoid succession planning, these fears become a reality. A transition plan, where the current generation can step back but not step out, helps give founders and the next gen farmers a clear path forward; a sense of security creating certainty around transition. It allows the farm family to move away from anxiety and overwhelm enabling them to chart a harmonious path forward to sustainability and increased profitability. Asking powerful questions about what you want for the next chapter of your farm will help you reach your goals.

Farm transition is a difficult topic, but it is a vital one for the long-term sustainability of Alberta farms and Ranches. Central Alberta is heavily dependent on agricultural production, but over the last 20 years, the number of active farmers in Alberta has dropped significantly while the average age of farmers has risen.

Farm succession planning can be a significant source of stress on the farm and only 14% of farm families have a written succession plan.

A transition plan that allows the current generation

to step back from the day-to-day operations but not step out, helps give founders and the next generation of farmers a clear path forward. It allows the farm family to move away from anxiety and overwhelm enabling them to chart a harmonious path forward to sustainability and increased profitability.

The County of Stettler No. 6 Agricultural Service Board (ASB) is proud to be hosting Canada's Farm Whisperer, Elaine Froese, to present her famous "Finding Fairness in Farm Transition" workshop. Through this workshop, Elaine will give attendees tips and pointers for successfully working through the 'undiscussable.' Elaine is the go-to expert for farm families who want better communication and conflict resolution to secure a successful farm transition.

Register Today!

Call 403-742-4441 x3 to register.

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

9:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Stettler Community Hall

Tickets: \$65 each

Lunch included.





Elaine Froese,
speaker



The County of Stettler Agricultural
Services Board Presents

Elaine Froese, Canada's Farm Whisperer
Finding Fairness in Farm Transition
Tools to Talk About Tough Issues

March 12, 2024
9:30 am - 3:30 pm
Stettler Community Hall
Lunch is provided

Register Now!

Call to secure your seat: 403-742-4441 x3.

Early Bird Tickets (until January 26): \$55 each.

Regular Price: \$65 each

Credit Cards, Cash or Cheques accepted.

Cancellation fee of 25% before Feb. 29.

No refunds after Feb. 29.



For more information, visit
StettlerCounty.ca or scan this QR Code



About our speaker:

Elaine Froese (pronounced 'phrase'), CSP is a certified professional speaker, certified coach, and author. She's a go-to expert for farm families who want better communication and conflict resolution to secure a successful farm transition.

As a farmer and mother to the successor of their farm, she understands the culture of agriculture intimately.

Her superpower is helping families find harmony through understanding.

Her expertise is to discuss what she calls the Undiscussabull™ - the bull in the middle of the farm family that no one wants to talk about.

She is an award-winning author who's written 5 books over the past 25 years.



ADVOCACY

Agricultural Disaster and Continuing Drought

On June 14, 2023, the County of Stettler became one of the first municipalities in Alberta to declare a State of Agricultural Disaster. This decision was in response to the drought conditions affecting crop and livestock producers throughout the County.

Conditions at the time predicted low yields of crops, with hay fields being utilized for grazing and as feed for livestock, affecting the bottom line for our producers. Throughout 2023, the County of Stettler was aware of increased usage of water stations (potable) and agricultural tank loader (non-potable) stations and increased demand for water access through rural waterlines.

To better understand the needs of residents throughout our County, we collected and analyzed responses to our Rural Water Survey. Over the two collection periods, we received 144 of completed surveys. Council is using the information collected to base future plans and future installations.

The County of Stettler has diligently communicating with members of both the Provincial and Federal Government levels, advocating for financial assistance for agricultural producers to minimize the financial burden of the drought. Last fall, financial programs were announced and accepting applications. Notably, this included the AgriStability and AgriRecovery programs, in partnership with Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC).

However, concerns about the continuation and possible worsening of the drought have become more prevalent with the mild winter Alberta and our County has experienced up to this point.

Our County, along with other municipal leaders, received a letter from the Alberta Minister of Environment and Protected Areas (AEPA), discussing drought conditions.

Alberta is currently experiencing Stage Four drought conditions (there are five stages of drought, with five being the most severe) with concern

EPA Drought Management Stages



conditions could worsen. If Stage Five drought is declared, under the Provincial Water Act, a state of emergency could be declared.

The province is preparing a Drought Emergency Plan and has mobilized a Drought Command Team.

In the Minister's letter, it was requested municipalities do the following:

1. Initiate efforts to monitor water supply infrastructure proactively, paying particular attention to water intake relative to water levels.
2. Begin a review of the terms of your municipality's water licence so you are aware of any conditions that may limit your ability to withdraw water during a drought.
3. Alert municipal water managers to prepare to be engaged with officials from the Drought Command Team, should conditions within your municipal water licence need to be triggered.
4. Develop a water shortage plan so your municipality is prepared to respond if water availability decreases.

With the uncertainty of water access, there will also be additional burden placed upon municipalities. Council and Administration will continue to advocate for our residents, and strive to maintain and expand water services as part of the Shirley McClellan Regional Water Services Commission (SMRWSC). The County of Stettler will also strive to provide education opportunities, and open communication as the situation continues to develop.

DUGOUT WORKSHOP

PRESENTER
LYNNE MELVIN
FROM CLEAN WATER PRO



Alberta has 5 Stages in its water management plan. Stage 1 is minor drought, Stage 5 is a province-wide emergency.

We are currently in Stage 4.

Find out what you can do to prepare for the worst, and make the most of the water you have.

- Common Problems
- Dugout Design Best Practices
- Remediation Recommendations for specific ponds
- Register today and upload your photos and questions!

MARCH 6, 2024
STETTLER COMMUNITY HALL
9 AM- 5 PM

LUNCH IS PROVIDED

TICKETS ARE \$30 EACH
CALL US TO SAVE YOUR SEAT
(403) 742-4441 X3

County of Stettler Agricultural Services Board

2024 County Calendar



**Grand Prize Winner:
'Indy the Baby Donkey'
by Paige Jones**



Front Cover: 'A view with my Partner' by Stacie Hunter



January: 'Winter Wonderland' by Robert Brennen



Honourable Mention:
'Amazing Northern Lights'
by Kylar Cornelssen



Honourable Mention: 'The Corn's as High as an Elephant's Eye' by Karyn Tateson

Congratulations to the 2023 Photo Contest winners who are featured in our 2024 calendar, and thank you to everyone who took the time to enter our contest.

Copies of our 2024 County Calendar are still available for pick up at our County Admin Building, at 6602-44 Avenue, Stettler.



February: 'Frosty Snow' by Paige Jones



March: 'Nature's Spring Bouquet'
by Brenda Meyer



April: 'Bee'
by Trissell Diegel



May: 'Relaxing in the Sun'
by Adrianna Forre



June: 'Smile Pretty'
by Janet Adam



July: 'A Landmark of the Byemoor
Community' by Tulsa Smith



August: 'Sunset Light'
by Alicia Scheerschmidt



September: 'Cereal Grains at
Harvest time' by Brenda Meyer



October: 'Combining near Boss Hill
after the Rain' by Tyler Hassett



December: 'Frozen Warmth'
by Tana Nixon

HOW SAFE IS YOUR FIRE PIT OR BURN BARREL?

Don't let your fire pit/burn barrel be the cause of a wildfire.

Making it safe is easy.

- Always cover your fire pit/burn barrel with a metal screen. This contains any stray sparks and burning debris that could fly out of the barrel and start a wildfire. Mesh screen with six mm (1/4 inch) holes is recommended.
- Drilling holes in your burn barrel will ensure proper ventilation and burning.
- Clear any debris or grass for at least three metres (10 feet) around your burn barrel or fire pit location.
- Scrape down to mineral soil.
- Surrounding your barrel or pit with small stones, gravel or sand will help to contain embers and hot ash.
- Choose a site that is at least 30 metres (100 feet) away from any structures, standing trees or other combustible materials.
- The ideal location will be close to a water supply and sheltered from the wind.
- Never burn when winds are greater than 12 km/h (8 mph).
- Avoid burning in the heat of the day.
- Ignite burn barrels in the evening, if possible.
- Have water and tools on hand.

- Never leave your fire unattended.
- Reduce the need for burn barrels by composting, recycling or using waste transfer sites.



Stay focused on your burning. There's always a risk that sparks and embers could escape your fire pit/burn barrel and ignite grass or other materials and start a wildfire. Keep watch for creeping fire. Have water and tools on hand to extinguish potential spot fires that may ignite. Never leave your fire unattended.

Check on your winter burns

Winter is a great time to burn brush piles, windrows and other projects. With a good amount of snow, the risk of your fire spreading is limited. You should still have appropriate tools and water on hand to manage your fire. Use caution if drought conditions are high to extreme, as the fire may tend to dig in and burn underground.



Inserting a metal rod into your fire is a good way to tell if it is extinguished or if it's still burning underground. If the metal rod comes out hot or warm to the touch, you know the fire is still smouldering. Follow the 'soak it, stir it, soak it again rule', you may have to use heavy equipment to stir up your fire or dig down to allow water to reach the fire.

BYLAWS AND POLICY UPDATE



Bylaw 1706-23: Fire Protection Bylaw

Over the past year, the County of Stettler has worked on updating Bylaw 1240-03: Fire Permit Bylaw. These updates, to catch up with the last twenty years, include: permitting for fireworks, prohibiting the lighting of burn barrels in hamlets, and updating the associated penalties and fines.

QUICK COUNTY CONNECTION
BYLAWS & POLICIES

Get more
info online



Policy AF 6.28 – Asset Retirement Obligation

At the December 13, 2023 Council Meeting, Council approved Policy AF 6.28. This policy structures the accounting treatment for assets and the end-of-life obligations required. Policy AF 6.28 continues to keep the County of Stettler in-compliance with provincial requirements.

An Asset Retirement Obligation is a liability associated with the eventual retirement of a fixed asset. The concept is primarily used in accounting and financial reporting. It's an obligation for the future costs of dismantling and removing an asset and restoring the site on which it is located.



Budget

Our 2024-2027 Budget is now available for viewing on our website at www.StettlerCounty.ca. Our public budget presentation held on January 11 is available on Stettler County YouTube. Contact Council with questions or concerns. We were proud to celebrate our 15th clean audit in 2023 at the County!



Bylaw 1714-23: Fee Bylaw

The Fee Bylaw is updated to align with the expectations that arise out of budget discussions with Council. This included updates to the penalties associated with offences under the Land Use Bylaw, service fees for fire calls, and additional clarifications on the costs of regulatory or warning signs.

Also, due to rising costs, an additional 10% Administration fee was added to the sale of services or materials without prescribed costs. Additionally, Road Use Agreement fees have been added to the Fee Bylaw, and Council rescinded Policy PS 5.1 – Road Use Agreements.

Bylaw 1718-24: Town and County Water and Wastewater Agreement Bylaw

Council approved Bylaw 1718-24, the Town and County Water and Wastewater Agreement, during the January 2024 Council Meeting. The third reading of this Bylaw approved the draft Town and County Water and Wastewater Agreement. The agreement is based on the Town's experience and ability to providing water and/or wastewater services to lands in the County. For some topics, more information is provided to clarify expectations and roles between the Town and the County.

STETTLE ADULT LEARNING CENTRE

Lend a hand, try something new - or learn a new skill!

VOLUNTEER TODAY!




MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

- Adult tutor for basic Math concepts and reading
- Free Professional Development
- Rewarding, flexible and enriching

403.742.6700

4911 - 51 Street, Stettler

info@stettlerlearning.com

Adult Learning Programs and Family Learning Program

Stettler Learning Centre promotes and provides affordable, accessible and quality life-long learning opportunities. Supporting adult learners in GED readiness (High School Equivalency), English for Newcomers, Basic Computer Classes, FREE Post Secondary and Career Advising, Exam Proctoring and much, much more.

Did you know they have accredited post-secondary programs right here in our community? Be part of a community of lifelong learners by coming to our safe, inclusive and welcoming environment.

If you are looking for support then look no further. There are so many exciting ways to learn and we are here to help you!

To find out more visit them at 4911-51 Street, Stettler Monday through Friday from 9:00 am - Noon or between 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm, or call 403-742-6700, or check out their website and current workshops and programming at www.stettlerlearning.com.



SALC
Stettler Adult Learning Centre

FREE DIGITAL DROP-IN

Need help with your email, technology, internet security, navigating your computer or filing documents?

Please come see us!
Thursday mornings from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

CONTACT US
403.742.6700

OR VISIT US
4911 - 51 Street, Stettler






QUESTIONS? CONTACT YOUR COUNCIL.

Do you have questions or concerns about the County of Stettler?
Reach out to one of your Council members.

Larry Clarke | Botha-Gadsby Ward

403-740-5482 • lclarke@stettlercounty.ca

Ernie Gendre | Stettler Ward

403-740-6032 • egendre@stettlercounty.ca

Dave Grover | Big Valley

403-740-2973 • dgrover@stettlercounty.ca

Paul McKay | Red Willow-Donalda Ward

403-323-0779 • pmckay@stettlercounty.ca

James Nibourg | Erskine South-Warden Ward

403-741-9493 • jnibourg@stettlercounty.ca

Justin Stevens | Erskine-Buffalo Lake Ward

403-323-0568 • jstevens@stettlercounty.ca

Les Stulberg | Byemoor-Endiang Ward

403-740-5003 • lstulberg@stettlercounty.ca

YELLOW TOADFLAX

This issue's weed of concern.

Is a noxious and invasive, perennial weed. Toadflax invasion is favoured by disturbance, invading degraded areas such as roadsides, abandoned lots and fields, gravel pits, clearings, and overgrazed rangeland. Yellow toadflax was first introduced to North America in the late 1600s as an ornamental plant; it was widely distributed by the mid 20th century.

You may know it as: common toadflax, butter and eggs, common linaria, eggs and bacon, wild snapdragon, flaxweed, impudent lawyer, and Jacob's ladder.

Flowers: Distinct snapdragon-like flowers that are pale cream to yellow depending on growing conditions, with a "bearded" golden to orange throat. They grow to about 2.5 centimetres long. The flowers grow in dense terminal clusters and bloom between July and October, depending on growing conditions.

Leaves: Numerous pale green, narrow leaves pointed at both ends. Leaves are about 6-7 centimetres long and grow alternately on the stem but may appear to be opposite.

Height: 30 to 60 centimetres tall but depending on growing conditions may be shorter or taller.

Habitat: This plant prefers well-drained, coarse-textured soils that can range from sandy loams to heavy clay to coarse gravels. However it grows better when in moist, fertile soils. They grow in fields, along the side of roads, waste areas and they can even make their way into people's gardens.

Why is it a problem? Contains a glucoside that is mildly poisonous to cattle, but poisonings are rare as it is generally not eaten. The plant competes with native grasses and alters species diversity. Dense populations can reduce forage production for livestock and wildlife. The plant spreads rapidly from buds on creeping root systems, as well as by wind-borne seed.

Management: All toadflax species are difficult to control. The plants are most susceptible when they are young, before they have established a large root system or flowered.

Tillage: Toadflax can be controlled by frequent and thorough tillage. Tillage should be started after harvest and continued throughout the following summer, be sure not to let plants flower. Then seed to a competitive crop such as wheat or barley between summer fallow years.

Competition crop: A grass could check the spread of toadflax but it is doubtful if it will ever eradicate it. Seed heavier than usual, do not overgraze the grass. It must be allowed to compete with the weed. Using the area for hay is preferable to grazing. Mowing yearly to prevent seed production is advisable.

Chemical: Use herbicides registered on Toadflax to control it. The best time to spray is early in the season before flowering, or if you mow to prevent seed production spraying at this time is also helpful.



AGRICULTURAL SERVICES SEASONAL STAFF:

The County of Stettler Agricultural Service Board has an opportunity for seasonal positions starting May 6, 2024. Basic work week of 7 am – 5 pm Monday to Friday, some weekend may be required.

Duties will include:

- Operating a roadside spray truck.
- Vegetation management along roadsides and agricultural land.
- Enforcing provincial legislation.
- Weed inspection and weed control on Battle River and Red Deer River.
- Operating and maintaining a variety of chemical application equipment.
- Courteous and effective communication with the public.
- Identify and control prohibited noxious and noxious weeds.
- Land reclamation work.
- Education and awareness workshops for ratepayers.
- Other duties as assigned.

Preferred skills and experience:

- Agricultural and Industrial Pesticide Applicator's License (or willingness to obtain) would be an asset.
- Valid Class 5 Drivers License.
- Good computer skills along with knowledge of GPS.
- Ability to work well with others along with strong written and verbal skills.
- Strong organizational abilities.
- Ability to identify and control prohibited and noxious weeds.
- Experience in operating ATV's/UTV's, boats and other equipment would be considered an asset.

Eligible applicants must be able to lift a minimum of 23 kg (50 lbs). We are willing to train the right candidate. Resumes will be accepted until all positions are filled.

Send resumes to: Quinton Beaumont, Manager of ASB
asb@stettlercounty.ca

DISCOVER THE MAGIC OF YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY

News from the Stettler Public Library

As winter bids farewell and spring starts to appear on the horizon, let's talk about the wonderful things waiting for you at the Stettler Public Library this spring! Our library is not just a place for books, it is a community hub where you can meet other members of the community over shared interests.

Your Gateway to Library Collections across the Province:

Ever wondered about the benefits of having a local library? Did you know you can access a world of books, movies and games not just from our shelves but from libraries across the province through resource sharing networks? If that is not great enough news, did you know it is all free? No membership fees and no charges for overdue books. Just bring back the materials and we'll keep the good vibes flowing.

Seniors, Children, and Everyone in Between:

For our seniors, we have large print and audio books, home delivery for people who are housebound, and engaging programs like Gentle Seniors Yoga every 3rd Tuesday at 10:30 am. We also have the Minds in Motion program every Thursday at 1 pm, specially designed for those facing cognitive challenges and their care partners.

For adults of all ages join us for Film Circuit at the Library on the first Monday of each month at 6:30 pm. Bookworms, we have the Reader's Circle Book Club that meets every last Wednesday at 6:30 pm where minds meet over great books.

For craft enthusiasts, Crystal's Craft Club meets every 1st and 3rd Thursday offering a new and interesting craft each time. On Tuesdays at 1 pm, join Afternoon Friends for crafts, games, and matinees – something different each week.

Parents, we've got your little ones covered too! Something Cool after School brings arts and STEM programming on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4 pm. Plus, LEGO, Chess, and Coding Clubs on Saturday afternoons ensure your child's creativity is always in full swing.

Mark your calendars for March Break (March 25-28). From matinees to a captivating presentation by Time Jeffries on "Frozen in Time: Secrets of the Polar Dinosaurs", to "Surprise Egg Eruptions" on March 28 we're turning March into a month of wonder.

For the littlest ones (ages 0-5) we have Read and Rhyme on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 10:30 am. If you haven't signed up for 1000 Books Before Kindergarten yet, what are you waiting for? For every 100 books you read together you get one to keep. Sign up at the library and pick up a log or download the free app to track your reading.

Teens and Tweens, we haven't forgotten you! Teen Scene runs every Wednesday at 4:30 pm for ages 10+. From cooking, to crafts, to really cool fun, we have something different and fun every week. Dungeons and Dragons and game nights for teens aged 13+ happen every Tuesday from 5:30 to 8 pm.



Plus, tutoring for youths in grades K-12 by appointment. Call 403-742-2292 for more information.

Special Events:

Calling all bakers! Cake Decorating with Ben Huo on March 21 at 6:30 pm at the Wm E Hay Secondary Campus Cafeteria. Channel your inner “Cake Boss” and pick up tricks to add an extra pizzazz to your home baking.

Vision Board Night! With Ashley of Ashley King Photography. This fun creative night is all about embracing your true self and envisioning your dreams. A vision board is a powerful tool that helps you visualize your goals, dreams and set intentions. What better way to celebrate the spring equinox and new beginnings. All materials will be provided, but feel free to bring anything with you that speaks to your vision. Wednesday, March 20 at 6:30 pm. 18+

Writer’s Workshop with Leslie Greentree: Leslie is the author of four books with *Not the Apocalypse I was Hoping For* being her latest collection of stories. Join us for an afternoon workshop where you will identify

and develop the inner drives of characters you create in order to develop engaging and relevant plots. You will be sure to enjoy time spent at this workshop. Please call 403-742-2292 to register, the workshop will be held on Saturday, May 11 from 1 pm to 3:30 pm.

As spring unfolds, so does a season of programming at the Stettler Public Library. Join us, explore, create, and make your next few months amazing!

Submitted by Stettler Public Library



STETTLER WASTE MANAGEMENT RECYCLING PROGRAM.

Visit our website's 'Where to Recycle' page at www.stettlercounty.ca/Recycle hosting recycling.

You can scroll through and have a good look at where all sorts of things can be recycled in our communities, or, there's a 'Search Bar' at the top of the page. Simply type in your 'what', which will take you to the list of places where you can recycle your item.

Stettler Waste Management Authority just finished their strategic planning workshop at the beginning of 2024. Their priorities continue to be to encourage re-using and recycling, in order to keep items out of the landfills. Please find ways to do your part.

SAVE A TREE!



Get e-versions of County Connection Magazine by scanning our QR code. Email info@stettlercounty.ca to cancel your paper subscription.

COMMUNITY



Sheep Research Showcase

March 20, 2024 | 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.
Werklund Agriculture and Technology Centre | Olds, Alberta
Dinner provided



Co-hosted by Olds College of Agriculture & Technology and Lakeland College, this free event will showcase emerging technologies and management practices to support sheep producers by:

- Providing “hands-on” learning of devices currently being researched for the sheep industry.
- Presenting results of research conducted in Alberta.
- Demonstrating animal handling techniques.
- Improving the agriculture industry through research.
- Providing an opportunity to speak with researchers one-on-one about future research that meets the needs of producers.

Scan the QR code to sign up



Community Service Awards: *March 14* *Rochon Sands* *Community Hall*

The 46th Annual County of Stettler Community Service Awards celebrates the outstanding contributions of our volunteers in agriculture, recreation and culture. We have many organizations present awards annually to recognize youth, adults or couples that have made their communities a better place to live.

If you have anyone that you would like to nominate for the Stettler Dodge Community Service Award or the ATCO Arts, Culture and Heritage Award, please submit your nomination by Feb. 22 to recreation@stettlercounty.ca.

Stettler & District Music Festival 2024

April 15-27, 2024

Hosting live performances, adjudications and audiences!

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Community Investment Program



Our next deadline for applications, for events happening in the second half of 2024 is May 31, 2024.

- Applicants can only submit one application annually
- Must benefit the community
- Provide community involvement and support
- Have long term viability
- Program or event must be open to the public
- County of Stettler will be recognized as a source of funding

Application forms can be found on the County of Stettler website www.stettlercounty.ca.

If you have any questions, please contact Lorraine Hankins at 403-742-4441, ext. 109

KIDSPORT
SPRING FLING
STETTLER COMMUNITY HALL

DOOR PRIZES **LIVE SILENT AUCTION**

GAME DAY
DOORS OPEN: 5:30
DINNER: 6:30
LIVE AUCTION AND DANCE TO FOLLOW

SATURDAY APRIL 20, 2024

LIVE BAND - THE RIVER JACKS

CATERING PROVIDED BY TC CATERING

KidSport
So All Kids Can Play!

The poster features a pink header with the event title, a photo of children in orange soccer uniforms, and a yellow starburst graphic. The background is white with blue and yellow accents.

Public Mail Agreement #41398593
Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:
County of Stettler No. 6
Box 1270
Stettler, AB T0C 2L0