

Spring 2017

Stettler County Connection



ANNUAL REPORT

ISSUE

pg 4-15

RECRUITING

STETTTLER REGIONAL FIRE

pg 16-18

Zero%

Municipal

Tax Increase

Inside Cover



ZERO% INCREASE

2017 MUNICIPAL TAX BYLAW

On May 10, 2017, Council gave final approval to the revised 2017, 2018 and 2019 Budgets. Then, Council gave three readings and passed our 2017 Tax Rate Bylaw, with a ZERO Per Cent increase to our municipal tax rate. What this means is that the County of Stettler is not increasing its Tax Rate. Your 2017 Tax Notices will be mailed out to you prior to July. If you see a change from this year over last year, it will be because either the school tax requisition changed and the province is collecting more for school taxes, Stettler Housing requisition changed, or the assessment on your property changed (i.e. your property value has gone up or down). If you have questions about your tax notice you can call our Tax Department or send an email to info@stettlercounty.ca.

We are proud of this budget and being able to accomplish Council's goals and plans while maintaining a tight bottom line. It did not happen without challenges. Like many rural municipalities, we have stood by while several oil companies have struggled and gone into receivership. We then have trouble collecting outstanding taxes and that does affect our bottom line. We've been innovative, frugal, thrifty and proud to be able to maintain our existing services. We are thrilled this Council was able to hold true to a 0% municipal tax increase. It was important to you - so it is important to us.

Tax notices will be mailed out before July so please watch for them in the mail. One big change this year is that we will no longer be accepting Credit Card Payments for taxes. We do accept Cash, Cheque, Debit and Online Banking. The reason for this change is BUDGET. The County was paying over \$50,000 a year in fees to credit card companies, to use their service. This Council decided that was not a responsible allocation of tax dollars. If you have any questions or concerns about this change please let us know. You can call the County at 403-742-4441, email us at info@stettlercounty.ca, or reach out to us online 24 hours a day 7 days a week at www.stettlercounty.ca, and click on 'Submit a Request'.



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COUNTY CONNECTION

INTRO

Celebrating our rural roots!

It's Canada's 150th Birthday this year, and we have a lot to celebrate. We live in a beautiful, safe, vibrant area of Alberta. Our air is clean, and so is our water. Our soil is fertile. Our livestock are raised in relatively stress-free environments. Our winters can be cold but our friends and neighbors are warm.

The stage is set for a big year of celebration in our communities. July 1st will be brimming with events, and at the County our operations staff are looking forward to moving into our new Public Works Facility this spring. We are excited to get settled and then will be inviting you to join us for an Open House so you can come and explore the new facility with us.

In August we will be participating in Open Farm Days, and the Stettler Board of Trade's Farm Tour and Long Table Dinner. What a fantastic way to explain to our urban friends and families how great rural living really is. It will be our time to shine and showcase all things agriculture.

This Easter saw the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. The battle which took place on April 19, 1917 is said to be a turning point in Canadian history, where four Canadian Divisions fought together as a unified force. Over 3,500 Canadian soldiers were killed during this battle, but this victory over German forces is often referred to as the beginning of Canada's evolution from dominion to independent nation.

We are so fortunate to live in a democracy. And before I sign off I want to mention this is a municipal election year. Election Day is October 16, 2017. Please don't forget what our ancestors fought so hard for us to have. Please take time to vote.
Sincerely,

Niki Thorsteinsson
Director of Communications



Stettler County Connection

Spring 2017

Volume 7 Issue 1

Editor-in-Chief

Tim Fox

Managing Editor

Niki Thorsteinsson

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REEVE'S RAMBLINGS

One of the topics I have talked about from time to time is the behind-the-scenes advocating council and administration does for the ratepayers of our municipalities. We believe rural municipalities and rural Albertans should be treated fairly and to that end we lobby government through the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) and also directly by meeting with Ministers and bureaucrats.

Recently we met with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the RCMP K Division, but in the past we have met with Transportation, Health, Environment, Agriculture, Education and other ministries as well. Our message is always: *Do not forget or underrate rural Alberta.*

With the downturn in the oil and gas industry we have been faced with an issue affecting tax collection that we have been lobbying the government to change. Municipalities have been the tax collector for the province, which in theory should work, but the education portion of the linear tax collected must be paid by the municipality by installments and collected by the municipality at tax time. However, when oil and gas companies fail to pay their taxes or go into receivership, the municipality is left holding the proverbial bag. In cases where companies fail to pay their taxes or worse still, go into receivership, the municipality is doubly affected by losing the tax and paying the education portion to the province as well.

As of December 31, 2016 outstanding school taxes owed to the County of Stettler were \$285,517 from three major oil companies that entered bankruptcy. This is an issue we must keep hammering the provincial government on.

Another service the County of Stettler has been lobbying the Minister of Health and AHS for, is a more strategic use of fixed-wing ambulance in our area which would include Stettler and the communities east to the Saskatchewan border.

The County of Stettler administrates the ambulance service in our area and we are proud of the fact we have

the only Advanced Life Support (ALS) service between Stettler and Saskatchewan. The problem arises when ground ambulances are used to transport patients to city hospitals taking them away from our area for hours at a time. If both ambulances are out of the area, service would come from other areas which would likely be Basic Life Support (BLS). The BLS is of course excellent service but they are limited to procedures they can legally do. For example ALS personnel can administer medications such as the life saving injection for heart attack or stroke, while BLS cannot. ALS can also intubate patients, while BLS cannot. Air Ambulance service to the Stettler Airport and to airports to the east would insure our ALS ambulances would be out of the area less often and overall costs should be less and service far greater.

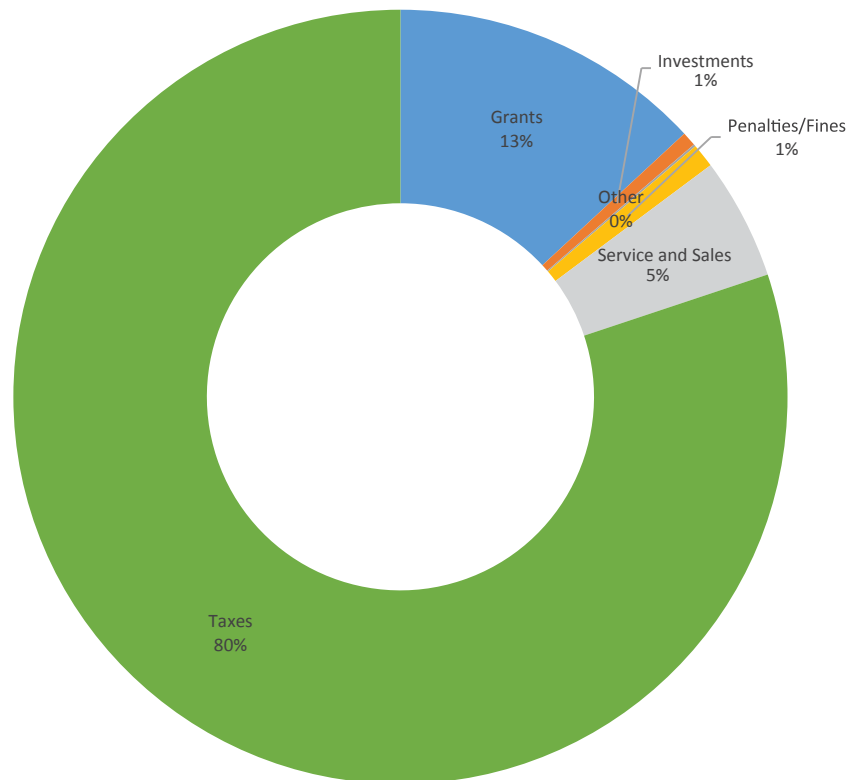
You may have read or heard that the County of Stettler in discussions with the Village of Donalda and consultation with Regional Fire Chief Mark Dennis, has temporarily suspended fire services from the Donalda Fire Hall. Fire Underwriters have recommended the minimum number of volunteers for a fire station is 12 with 15 being a more realistic number. Donalda has only 4 members and most of those members have jobs which take them away from the community at times. Our objective is to have a sustainable fire department as quickly as possible. If you are able to volunteer or may know someone who might consider being a firefighter, please contact the County of Stettler.

Personally I am looking forward to the opening of our new Public Works Facility which should happen in early summer. This will be a much-needed and well deserved facility for our county staff and should be a source of pride for our residents.

From a farmers' perspective, moisture conditions are great and I am looking forward to another great year. Wishing everyone a wonderful summer with just the right amount of rain and sunshine.

Where does the money come from to operate our municipality?

4



2016 ANNUAL REPORT

The financial condition of Stettler County remains strong. Cost savings measures have allowed the County to continue to reinforce its fiscal condition. This situation has enabled the County to maintain the operating tax levy rate while still undertaking new projects and serving a key role in area development efforts.

It is estimated the County will continue to maintain healthy fund balances throughout the upcoming three-year budget cycle. Nonetheless, the County is closely monitoring the financial situation and reviewing the effect of the economy. We are committed to responsible fiscal management and will adapt as needed to continue serving the community in a cost-effective manner.

Over the last few years, Stettler County has taken important steps to focus on what matters most — service delivery. In 2017, we established our three-year operating budget plan. This new approach will result in Stettler County being more proactive, strategic and effective in program delivery.

While we are still working towards the full implementation of this new three-year budget process, we were still able to use some of the early

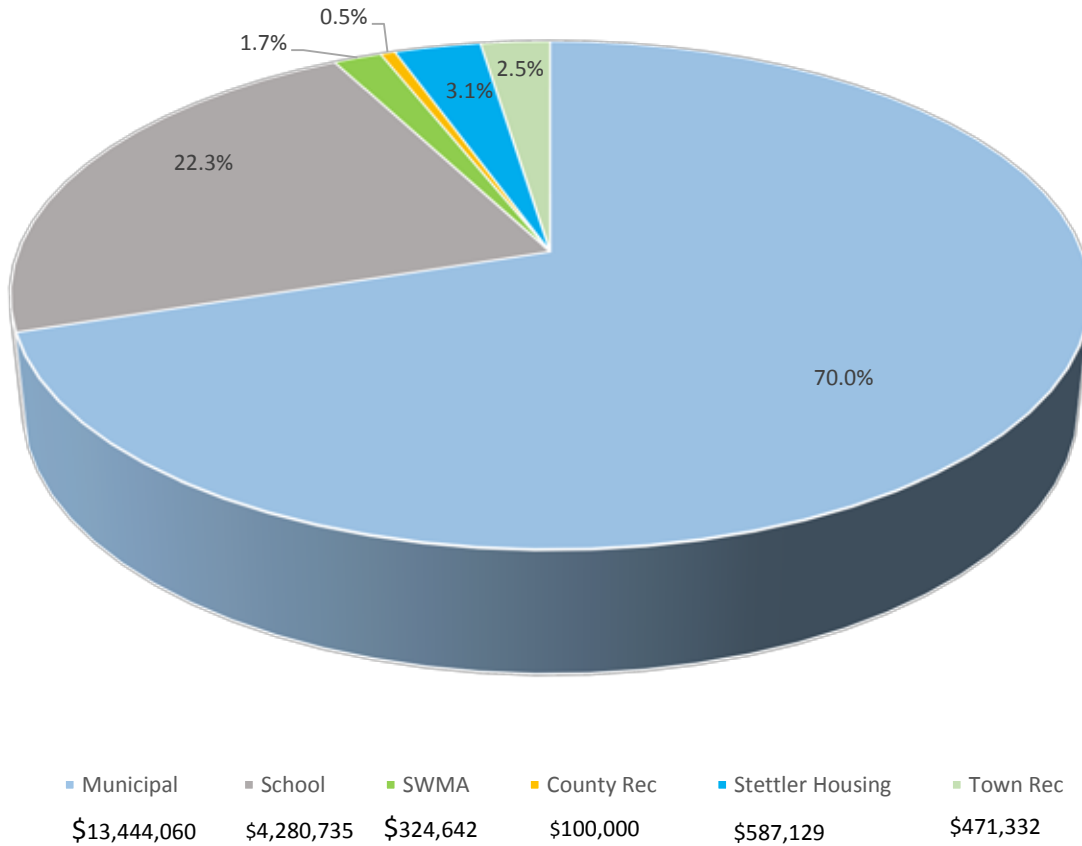
work to help shape our 2017 budget. This type of budgeting will help the County to better adapt when faced with economic uncertainties. Through this new lens, we are better able to strategically assess how effectively a particular program or service is in achieving the intended objectives. This, of course, is critical for our ongoing success.

Since we launched our “Ratepayer Request” line — our ability to fulfill immediate and effective service delivery has been very successful and addresses the emerging needs of our ratepayers.

The “Ratepayer Request” line, used by our community to request municipal services is very important. It improves Stettler County’s ability to track and ensure timely response to requests. From this system, we also gather important data for more efficient operational planning and resource allocation, which fits nicely with another objective of the 2017-2019 budgets — informed or “evidence-based” decision-making.

Among other highlights is the nearing completion of the Erskine water distribution system and the building of the new Public Works Facility with a plan to fund the \$9.6 million dollar facility

2017 Breakdown Of How Our Taxes Are Distributed



When we collect \$1 in taxes: .70 cents stays in our municipality to operate our County; .22 cents is given to the province for school taxes; 1.7 cents pays for Waste Management; 1/2 cent is contributed to County Recreation; 3 cents goes to Stettler Senior Housing; and 2.5 cents is paid to the Town for operating recreational facilities.

through the Municipal Sustainable Initiative “MSI” grant funding. We were able not only to balance the budget, but fund the new facility without borrowing. Administration and Council were also able to find savings in the 2016 budget at year end to contribute to a better much brighter picture in retained reserves.

We are very impressed with Scott Builders’ management of the Public Works Facility project, and their excellent detail to timelines and cost-savings at the same time being able to sub-contract to a number of local business to help their bottom line during this down turn in the economy. We are also very excited to list phase one (21 lots) for sale in the Hamlet of Erskine. This opportunity for the community is a product of Council’s future planning. Forethought to purchase property has brought a water reservoir to the Hamlet and now water distribution to the hamlet.

Our County is accessible. It’s important we pause

and engage in conversations with our ratepayers. These conversations are the positive connections with people, between neighbors, alongside business and industry that help to make for a strong community. In fact, for our organization to meet any one of our strategic goals it is necessary for us to make these connections both externally and internally. It is our commitment.

In closing, I would like to thank County Council for having a commitment to their vision and strategic plan. It is this kind of commitment that will lead to success. To our dedicated people, thank you for your continued efforts and focus each day that strengthens service excellence to businesses, industry, visitors and our residents that in turn will lead us to be one of Alberta’s most livable communities.

Tim Fox, CAO for the County of Stettler

COUNTY OF STETTLER #6

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2016

	Budget (Unaudited)	2016	2015
REVENUES			
Net municipal property taxes (Schedule 3)	\$ 15,519,086	\$ 15,508,589	\$ 15,970,288
Sales and user fees	1,117,556	1,343,279	2,215,423
Government transfers (Schedule 4)	570,228	596,334	402,919
Investment income	117,021	132,310	230,465
Penalties and costs on taxes	40,000	245,949	129,617
Rentals	100,000	117,103	116,069
Licenses, permits and fines	26,000	40,272	38,239
Other	2,300	26,061	25,469
Recovery of amortization to capital projects	-	-	-
Gain on disposal of tangible capital assets	385,000	33,230	31,153
Total revenue	<u>17,877,191</u>	<u>18,043,127</u>	<u>19,159,642</u>
EXPENSES (Schedule 5)			
Legislative	383,700	321,650	352,536
Administration	2,887,300	2,524,232	2,521,178
Protective services	1,205,727	989,654	1,039,103
Roads, streets, walks, lighting	13,161,387	11,193,645	14,062,982
Water and wastewater	1,442,390	1,365,576	1,208,166
Waste management	338,974	326,378	282,632
Family and community support	233,738	226,400	204,391
Ag services	737,120	669,918	689,055
Subdivision land and development	484,355	463,476	728,827
Recreation, parks and culture	964,612	962,525	956,989
Provision for allowances	-	1,299,412	470,511
Other	61,521	57,521	74,220
Total expenses	<u>21,900,824</u>	<u>20,400,387</u>	<u>22,590,590</u>
EXCESS (SHORTFALL) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES – BEFORE OTHER	<u>(4,023,633)</u>	<u>(2,357,260)</u>	<u>(3,430,948)</u>
OTHER			
Government transfers for capital (Schedule 4)	4,355,483	4,068,697	4,157,232
Local improvements levies for capital	50,000	55,000	55,000
	<u>4,405,483</u>	<u>4,123,697</u>	<u>4,212,232</u>
EXCESS (SHORTFALL) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$ 381,850	1,766,437	781,284
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS, - BEGINNING OF YEAR -		<u>106,823,126</u>	<u>106,041,842</u>
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS, END OF YEAR		\$ <u>108,589,563</u>	\$ <u>106,823,126</u>

COUNTY OF STETTLER #6

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2016

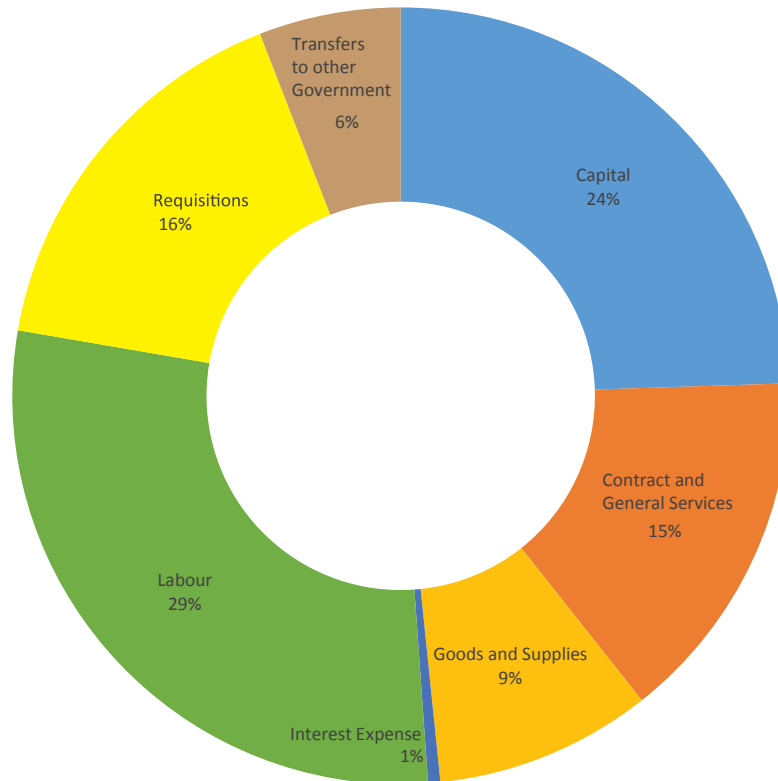
RESERVES

Reserves for operating and capital activities changed as follows:

	2015	Increases	Decreases	2016
OPERATING RESERVES:				
Public Trust	\$ 145,464	\$ 25,357	\$ -	\$ 170,821
General	3,021,441	-	1,173,280	1,848,161
Disaster projects	175,000	-	-	175,000
Bridges	825,751	130,000	-	955,751
Digital services	10,000	18,000	-	28,000
Road plan registration	100,000	-	-	100,000
Agricultural services	10,000	-	-	10,000
Planning and development	75,980	-	-	75,980
Rural development fund	258,288	72,350	16,428	314,210
Municipal reserve	972,136	8,524	-	980,660
Doctor recruitment	10,041	34,568	-	44,609
F.C.S.S.	17,110	-	-	17,110
Recreation	45,267	397	-	45,664
Recreation – Special Projects	362,880	50,000	65,617	347,263
Recreation – Extra Projects	<u>445,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>470,000</u>
	<u>6,474,358</u>	<u>364,196</u>	<u>1,255,325</u>	<u>5,583,229</u>
CAPITAL RESERVES:				
Administration	1,292,229	-	1,290,000	2,229
Fire	453,934	132,000	144,272	441,662
Protective services	-	20,000	-	20,000
Public works	1,561,317	362,576	1,923,893	-
Water/Sewer projects	1,309,633	1,349	142,703	1,168,279
Agriculture services	<u>88,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>88,000</u>
	<u>4,705,113</u>	<u>515,925</u>	<u>3,500,868</u>	<u>1,720,170</u>
TOTAL	\$ <u>11,179,471</u>	\$ <u>880,121</u>	\$ <u>4,756,193</u>	\$ <u>7,303,399</u>

* To view the full 2016 Financial Statement, please visit our website at www.stettlercounty.ca or call the County of Stettler at 403-742-4441.

Breakdown of how funds are allocated



PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works has maintained a steady commitment to maintain the integrity of our rural road network. They have, and continue to use innovative ways to solve issues that arise. Public Works strives to ensure operational efficiency and stability, by setting aside funds in reserves for bridge infrastructure, gravel and supplies.

As of the end of 2016 all bridge structures in the County have been inspected and coring has been completed over the past three years. Annual inspections will be required on some structures, provided by Alberta Transportation. Findings reveal our bridge structures will require major repairs or replacement over the next 5-10 years. This information helps us understand and prepare our future budgets. We have accepted a proposal to repair five bridge structures in 2017. Moving forward we will look at single span bridge replacements with bridge sized culverts which can be completed by county forces.

Gravel - 2016 - 428 budgeted miles Gravel 2016 Actual - 396 miles.

Over the years, our surfacing gravel program has built up residual gravel on our roads though a primary three-year rotation for gravelling most roads. With a downward trend in industrial traffic combined with drier than annual weather conditions, we were able to decrease our annual budgeted spread rate from 340 t/mile to 310 t/mile on average, and have commenced switching to a four-year rotation going forward.

In 2016 we introduced two types of dust control for residential sites: calcium and a light oil. These options will continue into our 2017 program.



Fixing a Byemoor drainage problem.



The new Public Works Facility under construction.



Safety Meetings are part of our daily routines.

ENGINEERING

Engineering Services provides support to Public Works construction projects, gravel inventory, our gravel program and also leads capital improvement projects.

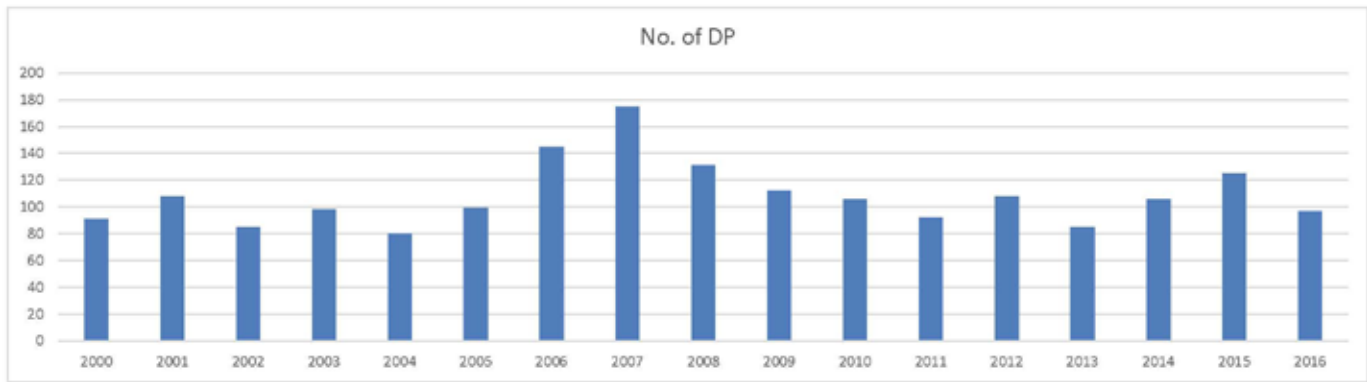
Engineering assists Planning and Development with site inspections, development, subdivision reviews, technical reviews of design plans and encroachment surveys. Engineering provides additional support in design, staking and construction, regulatory approvals, gravel pit development, project controls, maintenance practices and oversees the mowing program.

Key Projects Undertaken in 2016:

- Development of Erskine East Subdivision
- Erskine Water Distribution System
- Public Works Facility Construction Management
- Gravel inventory measurements
- Gravel program management
- New driveway applications, approvals and completion inspections
- Byemoor drainage improvements
- Erskine landfill offsite testing and setback reduction planning
- Regional Master Drainage Plan - Red Willow Creek
- Master Servicing Study in collaboration with the Town of Stettler for the IDP area as funded through the Regional Collaboration Grant

Development Permits

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Average
No. of DP	91	108	85	98	80	99	145	175	131	112	106	92	108	85	106	125	97	108
Value	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$18,781,600	\$18,995,335	\$14,049,130	\$10,905,570	\$9,327,700	\$16,070,333	\$14,726,615	\$12,123,000	\$13,531,000	\$18,585,850	\$22,766,055	\$15,305,653



SUBDIVISION AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY – COUNTY OF STETTLER No. 6 from 2000 to 2016

The tables and charts above represent the number of development permits and subdivision applications processed by the County of Stettler No. 6 Planning and Development department for the past 17 years from 2000 to 2016. It also shows the annual estimated value of the development permits. These charts show the cyclical nature of development and subdivision activity, and how these cycles more or less correspond with each other and with the cycles of economic activity in the province and the country.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Planning and Development Services provide an advisory service to landowners, ratepayers, developers, contractors, County Administration, Council and the Municipal Planning Commission in order to support the County's mandatory functions relative to the following:

- Maintaining a Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan
- Subdivision of land
- Development permitting
- Providing for the orderly long range planning of future developments
- Inter-municipal Development Planning

In 2016, projects undertaken were the Buffalo Lake Shoreline Management Plan and the conversion of the Rural Addressing system for hamlets and multi-lot subdivisions to an urban-style. The Stettler IDP Review was delayed, due to the Joint Servicing Study not being completed. In 2017, work will continue on the Buffalo Lake Shoreline Management Plan and the urban style addressing in the hamlets and multi-lot subdivisions.

In 2016 Planning and Development also assisted the engineering department with the design and survey of land for the Erskine East Subdivision, review of study reports and projects, the site development design and the development permit approval for the new Public Works Facility.



Touring a state-of-the-art dairy operation south of Erskine, Alberta



ASB awards a \$500 4H Bursary each spring to a student entering post secondary education.

AGRICULTURAL SERVICES

Our Agricultural Services Department carries out weed control on land in the County of Stettler. ASB continually inspects and sprays gravel pits and lands, and providing weed control services to ratepayers who do not have the proper equipment to do so on a small acreage basis (20 acres or less). A key initiative of Ag Services is to continually assist the public in identifying unknown plants and organisms that are affecting their gardens, trees or crops. Ag Services also gives advice on how to best control or eradicate these species.

All 2,463 km of gravel roads are travelled four times per season inspecting fields and pastures for unwanted vegetation.

In 2016, the middle 1/3 of the County was controlled for roadside weeds. In 2017 the north 1/3 of our County will be controlled for roadside weeds.

In 2016 Agricultural Services conducted seven surveys throughout the season: Clubroot, grasshopper, Fusarium, Bertha Army Worm, Diamondback moth and crop inventory.

Other activities carried out throughout the year include: Pest and nuisance control; beaver dam removal; equipment rentals including cattle scales; water pumps; hand and truck-mount sprayers; pest traps; noise cannons; plastic mulch applicator to name a few.



Regional Fire Department members responding to an incident at Content Bridge in 2016.

STETTLER REGIONAL FIRE

The Fire Department exists to enhance the quality of life within our communities by providing innovative protection and safety to life, property and the environment. We are emergency response, education and training.

Fire prevention is provided through Public Education, Pre-Incident Planning, Fire Inspection/Fire Code Enforcement and Fire Investigation. We provide various public education services by providing visits to schools, daycares and public institutions. Fire Smart activities are being reinforced at Buffalo Lake area. We conduct pre-incident planning activities on key facilities and locations such as the south shore of Buffalo Lake.

The Regional Fire Chief and Deputy Chief are qualified level 2 Fire Inspector/Fire Investigators. Our joint QMP requires mandatory completion of investigation of all fires within our region. Fire inspections and plan reviews are completed upon request or demand.

Fire suppression, rescue and medical first response delivery consists of four fire stations located throughout the region. We provide emergency response to all municipalities within the region in addition to mutual aid requests outside of our normal area of responsibility.

In 2015 the Regional Fire Department responded to 239 incidents, provided 2,548 staff hours with an average of 5.31 firefighters per incident.

In 2016 they responded to 200 incidents, 2,662 staff hours with an average of 5.96 firefighters per incident. The department currently has 21 pieces of apparatus and a multitude of small equipment.

In 2017, the firefighters salary budget was increased to provide a pay scale based on a combination of rank, training level and seniority. The goal is to provide incentive for firefighters to complete their basic training level requirements and ultimately improve retention levels making this essential service sustainable for the future.



Operation Wicked Wind - Director of Emergency Services leading the Regional Emergency Management Training Exercise in 2016.



Playground inspections occur annually throughout the County conducted by our Recreation Director.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Protective Services is primarily responsible for ensuring our roads and infrastructure are not damaged by overweight commercial vehicle traffic or other activities. They supervise 2,777 km of County roads and have enforcement authority on Provincial Highways 601, 835, 855, 850, 851, 853, 589 and 590. They also have jurisdiction over Highway 12 within the boundaries of Erskine and Nevis. Protective Services enforce the Traffic Safety Act and Regulations; the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act; the Fuel Tax Act; and the Gaming and Liquor Act. They are also responsible for the enforcement of all County of Stettler Bylaws and assist other enforcement agencies as required.

Protective Services Officers are also the Director and the Deputy Director for the Stettler Regional Emergency Management Agency covering Emergency Management leadership for the Town of Stettler and all municipalities within the County of Stettler. Further to this responsibility, they maintain the regional emergency response plan for all municipalities within our borders and are actively involved in training County staff and participating with industry partners in emergency exercises.

RECREATION

The Recreation Department is responsible for the distribution of the Operational Assistance grant and the Recreation Special Project Funding that enables our rural organizations to be able to maintain, upgrade or renovate their recreational facilities. Our Director of Recreation actively participates on the board of the Steel Wheel Stampede, the Stettler Adult Learning Council as well as the Canadian Badlands Pheasant Festival. This department works closely with neighboring communities to host the County of Stettler Community Service Awards, conduct annual playground inspections and showcase a variety of fine arts presentations as part of our Performing Arts for Schools program.

Priorities are to continue to support and distribute current funding levels to rural community organizations from the operational assistance Grant and the Recreation Special Project Funding; to actively engage in the community on behalf of the County of Stettler; to provide annual playground inspections; to host the annual County of Stettler Community Service Awards; improve and support recreation in the County of Stettler in a supportive and positive atmosphere.



Erskine Truck Fill and RV Dumping Station, next to Erskine East Subdivision.



ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Environmental Services and Utilities maintain the water and waste water service to our hamlets (Byemoor, Endiang and Erskine), the Villages (Big Valley, Botha, Gadsby, Donalda) and to the Shirley McClellan Regional Water Services Commission (SMRWSC) through 11 km east of Monitor, AB and to the multi-lot subdivisions of Buffalo Sands and Buffalo View Estates.

In 2016, SMRWSC installed an additional 15 km of waterline to Monitor, AB, plus 11 km beyond that due to surplus budget from the initial extension project. A waterline was also extended to the new Public Works Facility.

In 2016, clean-up was completed on the SMRWSC lines to Donalda and Big Valley.

Environmental Services ensures the lines are installed and cleaned up to the satisfaction of our ratepayers and the standards set out by the Alberta Government. Through 2016, 14 water services were connected to our rural water system maintaining a priority to provide clean, safe, potable water to those who need it throughout eastern Alberta.

Spot an issue?
Have a problem?

Call us and submit a Ratepayer Request at
403-742-4441 or go to our website at
www.stettlercounty.ca and click on 'Submit a
Request', 24 hours a day/7 days a week!
We're here to help.



Reeve Nixon accepting a presentation from STARS for the County's long-term municipal support.



Assistant CAO Yvette Cassidy swearing in Councillor Gregory Jackson for his term as Deputy Reeve in 2016.

ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE

Administration is responsible for implementing the direction set out by Council, and being the liaison between Council and ratepayers. The administration team ensures policies, priorities and programs are carried out. Administration provides necessary advice and information to Council to allow for informed decision making. Many departments comprise administration including finance, taxation, communications, information technology and legislative services. Staff strive to provide ratepayers with a high level of service while remaining efficient and cost effective.

Within finance, there have been a number of changes with software updates. Finance is currently automating more of the accounting functions allowing the software to work for us. Automated functions include direct downloads from the bank, utilizing e-send for invoices and ensuring continued advancements within payroll and accounting functions. Further to this, Finance will begin the process of creating our capital plan for years to come. This will include a reserve policy to assist the County with identifying where our capital and reserves need to be. Over time, this will lead to helping us develop an asset management plan.



STETTLER REGIONAL FIRE RECRUITING MEMBERS

Just about every day the media in Alberta reports on an incident that has occurred in Alberta where a Fire Department was required to mitigate an emergency situation. Did you know that Alberta has over 430 fire departments? Of these, approximately 95% depend entirely on volunteer firefighters. Alberta has more than 10,000 volunteer firefighters - this is approximately 3 times the number of Alberta's total career firefighters.

In the County of Stettler we currently have four fire stations, they are located in the Town of Stettler, Village of Big Valley, Village of Donalda and the Hamlet of Byemoor. The fire department is operated jointly by the County and Town of Stettler. This is our Regional Flagship of the joint municipalities known as the Stettler Regional Fire Department. The Regional Fire Stations are managed by a full time Regional Fire Chief and Deputy Chief with offices located in the Stettler Fire Station. We currently have a total of 59 volunteer

firefighters with 27 volunteers in Station 1 Stettler, 13 volunteers in Station 2 Big Valley, 4 volunteers in Station 3 Donalda and 15 volunteers in Station 4 Byemoor.

We strive to have a minimum roster of 12 fully trained volunteer firefighters in each fire station to safely operate and respond to emergencies. Many of the firefighters on the various fire stations either do not live or work in close proximity to the fire station they respond to.

Each fire station has a defined response area which is also correlated to your home phone land line. These areas include the town, village or hamlet the fire station is located in as well as a portion of the County of Stettler. When an incident occurs in a specific response area volunteers reporting to that station are paged out. Pending on the type of incident additional fire stations within the County of Stettler would be paged out to assist. In the event the incident is beyond the capabilities



FIREFIGHTERS WANTED - DONALDA STATION 3

of the Stettler Regional Fire Department a request for mutual aid for resources outside the municipal boundaries of the County of Stettler can be made by the Regional Fire Chief or his designate.

Volunteer numbers for the Donalda fire station have been consistently low over the past decade.

Recently we implemented a temporarily suspension of fire service response from Fire Station 3 located in Donalda. Fire service response from Station 3 will be suspended until sufficient volunteers are recruited and trained. Regional Fire Station 1 will continue to maintain fire service in the Donalda region.

The continuation of the Donalda Fire Station is contingent upon community support. Support from the community-at-large residents is key to successful recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. Typically a County of Stettler resident may not think he or she can be part of the local

fire station because of the travel distance however that is not true. The response area for the Donalda fire station runs south to Township Road 41-2 and to the County border in all other directions. If you live within this response area you could be eligible to become a volunteer firefighter. Your perception may be the fire department is an “old boys club”. This is absolutely NOT THE CASE, and we are welcoming new members. Call the County at 403-742-4441 if you are interested in learning more about becoming a firefighter with Stettler Regional Fire Department.



BECOMING A VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER

Are you ...

- ..a team player
- ..a quick thinker
- ..a natural leader
- ..an excellent communicator
- ..able to thrive in high-stress situations
- ..older than 18
- ..ready for a challenge



Our Mission:

The Stettler Regional Fire Department exists to enhance the quality of life within our community by providing innovative protection and safety to life, property and the environment.

We are a professional organization that accomplishes our mission through prevention, emergency response services, education and training.

You have:

- A Canadian Class 5 drivers license
- Grade 12 education certificate or equivalent
- Ability to communicate in English (written and oral)
- Good physical condition (physical test or medical checks are required)

Responsibilities:

- Work as a team to respond to emergency situations
- Protect citizens in times of crisis
- Rescue and evacuate people from hazardous environments
- Learn the trades of emergency responder including different jobs such as pump operator
- Respond to a broad range of emergency situations
- Be a community role model
- Responsible for upgrading and maintaining skill/knowledge and physical requirements
- Maintain fire station and cleaning of firefighting equipment

Environment:

- Fast paced and ever changing
- Team-oriented

Interested?

Learn more by simply calling the County of Stettler at 403-742-4441 and submitting your name and phone number. We will be happy to contact you.

We owe it to our first responders, firefighters, corrections officers, paramedics, veterans, military and police personnel to provide direct and timely access to PTSD support.



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**A hero in the East
should be treated
the same as a
hero in the West.**



#BillC211

#PTSDframework

BILL C-211 AND PTSD

On February 9, 2017, I Brian McMeekin, Advanced Care Paramedic for Stettler District Ambulance Association, had the pleasure and distinction of attending the second reading of Bill C-211 in Ottawa at the House of Commons. I attended the reading under the invitation of Todd Doherty, MP for Caribou – Prince George, who introduced the bill. Bill C-211 as proposed is a Federal framework for PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) care for first responders and military personnel in Canada.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in first responders typically occurs after a critical incident. Symptoms can include depression, anxiety, hyper vigilance or a higher state of arousal, avoidance of places, people or senses like smells that are reminders of the incident, vivid and intrusive flashbacks, nightmares and loss of sleep. One study performed by the city of Ottawa of its first responders discovered that paramedics are most at risk for PTSD. Reported cases vary from province to province but studies state that the incidence of PTSD in paramedics in Canada is between 15-25% with 33,500 paramedics in Canada according to the Paramedic Association of Canada. That equates to approximately 8375 paramedics suffering. Suicide rates of paramedics in Canada are also three times higher than the national average and two and a half times higher than other first responders in Canada, according to data from the TEMA Conter Memorial Trust.

With these statistics in mind Todd Doherty MP introduced Bill C-211 which is a national framework for PTSD care for Canadian first responders

(Police, Firefighters, Paramedics Correctional Officers, 911 dispatchers and Military personnel). Bill C-211 would also require industries to perform accurate and meaningful studies into the causes of and effective treatment of PTSD.

I have been working on my own to help end the stigma of mental illness and PTSD within emergency services by participating in studies, talking at schools offering paramedicine programs, speaking with the producers of a documentary and talking with Todd Doherty, MP. The invitation to attend the reading and debate of this bill in the House of Commons was an honor that could not be passed up. I joined other first responders in solidarity in Ottawa with representation from Ottawa EMS (Ontario), Halton regional EMS (Ontario), Simcoe EMS (Ontario), Montreal Paramedics (Quebec), Gatineau Paramedics (Quebec), Ontario Provincial Police and Military officers. I was the only representative from western Canada at



this event and I was proud to wear my service uniform representing Stettler District Ambulance. I also had the opportunity to meet with the MP's from Oshawa and Victoria regarding this issue. On the floor during the debate bill C-211 had support from all parties. I am proud and honored to be even a small part of a bill that could help countless first responders and Military men and woman nationwide.

I would also like to thank Stettler District Ambulance for supporting me and encouraging me not only during this trip, but to help end the stigma.



BOOK YOUR SITE INSPECTION

When you make an application for a development permit or a subdivision, the County's development officers need to do a site inspection so that we are able to make informed recommendations to the subdivision and development authorities and referral agencies.

A site inspection helps to confirm there are no potential issues with future development. We need to evaluate the roads leading to the land, the approaches, the slope of the land, and that it does not infringe on any wetlands, as well as any other concerns we might have in regards to a specific application.

As a result, the processing of your application is not complete until we do an inspection. In order to be as efficient as possible, the County's Planning and Development department has "Site Inspection" days twice a month on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. To ensure your application gets a site inspection as soon as possible after you submit it, and is not delayed too much pending the site inspection, it would be prudent to submit your application by the Friday previous to these scheduled site inspection dates.

Please note sometimes we have to move the scheduled site inspection days around to meet other commitments or due to the weather. In order to provide you with the benefit of submitting your application in time for the next scheduled site inspection (which could reduce your waiting time), please review the schedule below:

The upcoming Site Inspection dates for the remainder of 2017 are:

- June 13 and 27
- July 11 and 25
- August 8 and 22
- September 12 and 26
- October 10 and 24
- November 7 and 21
- December 12

We encourage you to contact Cara McKenzie, Jacinta Donovan or Johan van der Bank at (403) 742-4441 with any questions or concerns you may have. We will be happy to answer your questions and provide whatever assistance we can to assist you with your development permit or subdivision.

PLASTIC BALE WRAP RECYCLING!



Plastic bale wrap can now be recycled at the Stettler Transfer Site and all County of Stettler transfer sites:

The plastic wrap must be CLEAN of all debris (no twine, hay, dirt, manure).

Roll it into a compact shape.

Place it in the Plastics Recycling bin at your local transfer site.



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ASB VEGETATION WEED CONTROL PLAN

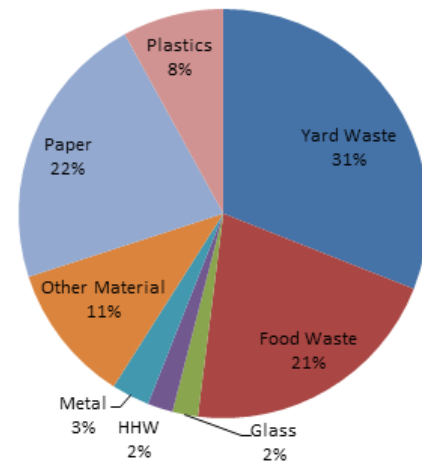
As legislated under the Alberta Weed Control Act, the County of Stettler Agricultural Service Board will be conducting roadside vegetation control for invasive species in the NORTH third of the County (north of Township 400, to the County of Camrose Border and west of Range Road 164 to Buffalo Lake and 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 sight line.
- 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. Our program already states that there is to be 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 Director of Agricultural Services Quinton Beaumont 403-742-4441.

Composition of Residential Waste

Recycling Council of Alberta



DUMPED IN OUR LANDFILL? LOST FOREVER

ORGANICS are our BIGGEST form of residential waste at 53%.

- Organic waste that is sent to the landfill cannot decompose because it doesn't have access to oxygen. Instead, it produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.
- Organic materials are a very valuable soil resource and they are lost forever when they are landfilled.
- Putting compost on soil lessens the need to water and add fertilizers.
- Organics are a huge part of household waste. Choosing to compost is the largest single action that residents can take to reduce garbage volumes in landfills.

'ORGANICS: Just put 'em back!'

What to do?

Just Put Organics Back into the Soil

1) Compost:

- Compost food waste in a backyard composter that allows in air and has no bottom.

Live on a farm?

Just make sure food waste gets back into the soil.

2) Go Bagless - Leave the clippings on the lawn sometimes.

Compost it other times. Just put it back into the soil.

MYTH: Leaving lawn clippings does not cause thatch. Thatch is caused by over watering/fertilizing that makes the grass grows new shoots faster than it can decay the older blades on the stem.

Leaving lawn clippings reduces the need for watering and fertilizing.

Ol' MacDonalds Music Festival

SEPTEMBER 8-10



Star LineUp

The Dead South



Almost Johnny Cash



Gary Fjellgaard



The Popovich's



Give Em Hell Boys



Calvin Vollrath



Steve Arsenault



Canadian Country



North American Fiddle Champ

Lucky Sonne



Jess Lee



Music Legends

Michelle Wright



JD Carlyle Band



Tim Hus



Lou Paul



Cowboy Church Sunday Morning with Larry Krause

Food service available, including buffets on Friday & Saturday evening.

For more ticket and festival information...

www.olmacdonalds.com

OR call 403-742-6603





OPEN YOUR GATES

ALBERTA OPEN FARM DAYS

The County of Stettler is proud to sponsor and be a part of Stettler Board of Trade's Taste of the Heartland Long Table Dinner and Farm Tour on August 19, 2017. They are hosting this event in conjunction with the province's Open Farm Days this year on August 19 and 20. We are excited to share with our urban neighbors, friends and families, what agriculture and rural living is all about.

Stettler Board of Trade will be taking a bus load of urban neighbors, throughout the county to experience farming, ranching and rural life at its finest. They will tour a grain farm operation, a dairy farm operation, a goat farm and a cattle farm. Urban friends and neighbors will ride a bus on this tour of our beautiful County. We are encouraging County farm operations interested in having visitors, to open their gates too for Open Farm Days and we will be happy to advertise your farm as a local location for visitors to our area who wish

to go for a drive in the country and see what the good life looks like. Invite your neighbors too.

Alberta Open Farm Days is a province-wide open house. It's about farmers and ranchers inviting urban and rural neighbors to stop in for a visit. Whether it's seeing animals or learning about your work, Open Farm Days celebrates agriculture in Alberta. For more information about registering your farm, visit albertafarmdays.com, or call the County.

In conjunction with this event, the Stettler Board of Trade will be hosting a Long Table Dinner on Historic Main Street Stettler on August 19 as well. This event will feature locally sourced food with 5 chefs from our area preparing it all so our urban friends and families can have a real taste of Alberta. Stettler Board of Trade will need many volunteers for this great event.

Can you help? Call 403-742-3181.

Learn about the Agriculture Industry From
THE GROUND UP

OPEN FARM DAYS



August 19, 2017 | Stettler, Alberta



6 hours on a multi-farm bus tour and you'll see why it's not just a career, it's a lifestyle.

403-742-3181
www.tasteoftheheartland.ca
Limited Tickets

Taste of the
HEARTLAND

TASTE OF THE HEARTLAND

Long Table Dinner

AUGUST
19
2017

ONE NIGHT ONLY
Historic Main Street
Stettler, Alberta
Limited Seats

Local Producers | Field to Table | 5 Renowned Chefs | 4 Course Dinner
403-742-3181
www.tasteoftheheartland.ca



PLANNING PROJECTS 2017

The following Planning Projects are budgeted by County Council to be undertaken by Planning and Development in 2017

- The joint servicing study with the Town of Stettler that was started in 2014 will be completed in 2017. The purpose of this study is to determine water supply and sanitary sewer servicing standards within the Intermunicipal Development Plan area. This project is being undertaken by a consultant. The results of this study will provide input to an in-house review of the Stettler Intermunicipal Development Plan in 2018. Both

these projects will culminate in the preparation of a new Southeast Stettler Major Area Structure Plan in 2018/19.

- The first phase of a 21 residential lot development on County-owned land in the east part of the Hamlet of Erskine is nearing completion. This project is part of the implementation of the Erskine Concept Plan which was adopted in 2012.

- The Rural Addressing Bylaw was amended in 2014 to provide for urban style house numbering in multi-lot subdivisions and hamlets. In 2017 new street name signs in hamlets and multi-lot subdivisions will be installed, and houses will be assigned new numbers where required to comply

LOTS FOR SALE
Erskine East Subdivision
Call 403-742-4441
for more information.

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with the bylaw. All affected residents will be notified of their new addresses in the regular mail.

- Continue work on preparing a shoreline management plan, working closely with lakeshore communities and Alberta Environment and Parks (formerly Sustainable Resource Development). One result of this project to date is that in 2016 Council adopted bylaws to provide for landowners to apply for a development permit to store boatlifts and docks on Environmental Reserve land during the winter, where no other options for storage are available. Ultimately, the project will address matters such as the improvement of public lake access points and the regulation of seasonal docks/boatlifts/piers.

- Preparation of a new Intermunicipal Development Plan with the Village of Big Valley. Other Villages will follow in the next couple of years. These plans are a new requirement under the modernized Municipal Government Act, which will be adopted and released by the Provincial Government in due course.

If you have an interest in any of these projects, please do not hesitate to contact the Planning and Development department at 403-742-4441.

Looking for County Made Products!

Are you a County ratepayer? Do you make, grow, raise or build something? Do you have a business on your farm? We want to help advertise our local business' and artisans.



Please contact info@stettlercounty.ca or call the County and register your County product(s) and services and we will start spreading the word. Small or big - it's time to ring our own bell!

www.stettlercounty.ca

ATV'S ON? HELMETS ON!

Bill 36, an Act to Enhance Off-Highway Vehicle Safety received Royal Assent on April 11, 2017 with an in-force date set for May 15, 2017.

This means that effective May 15, 2017, helmets will be mandatory for those riding off-highway vehicles (OHVs) on public land. OHVs include any motorized vehicle built for cross-country travel on land, ice, and snow. Common types of OHV are all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), snowmobiles, dirt bikes, utility terrain vehicles, and side-by-sides.

The details in the amendments to the Traffic Safety Act and Off-Highway Vehicle Regulation reflect the valued input received from individual Albertans, organizations, and communities, like ours.

The law aligns helmet safety standards with those used for motorcycles, creates requirements regarding the condition and use of helmets, sets fine amounts for those not complying, and specifies exemptions. These include exempting OHV users from the requirement to wear a helmet when riding on private property; riding on First Nations Reserve and Metis Settlement lands; using an OHV with safe, manufacturer supplied rollover protective structures and seat belts that are worn; and riding for work where Alberta's occupational

health and safety laws do not require helmet use, for example for farming and ranching workers.

Alberta was the only province in Canada without a provincial law requiring OHV riders to wear helmets.

The details in the law seek to recognize the diversity in OHV use and in OHV riders in Alberta. More information on new OHV helmet law is available through the following links:

- OHV Helmet Law Webpage–
www.transportation.alberta.ca/ohv_helmets.htm
- OHV Helmet Laws Frequently Asked Questions
www.transportation.alberta.ca/documents/OHVHelmets-FAQ.pdf
- Bill 36
http://www.assembly.ab.ca/ISYS/LADDAR_files/docs/bills/bill/legislature_29/session_2/20160308_bill-036.pdf
- Traffic Safety Act and Off-Highway Vehicle Regulation –
www.qp.alberta.ca

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Annual Stettler Steel Wheel Stampede
June 9-11, 2017 - Stettler Agricultural Grounds

Rodeo Performances Friday and Saturday at 6:30 PM

Slack Performance Friday at Noon

- Parade Saturday at 11 AM
- Rotary Pancake Breakfast Saturday 8 AM-11 AM
- Ladies of the Heartland
- Junior Steer and Heifer Show
- Tractor Rodeo and Antique Display Saturday at Noon
- Mini Buckers Rodeo on Sunday
- Beer Gardens and Entertainment
- Cabaret
- Stampede Market
- Cowboy Church
- Town & County Free Pancake Breakfast on Sunday
8 AM-10 AM, Ag Society
- Show & Shine - Main Street
- Art Walk - Main Street



The Stettler Community Hamper Society would like to sincerely thank everyone for the donations to this year's Christmas Hamper campaign. This support allows us to provide a more joyful holiday season to those less fortunate in our community.

Big Valley Bust Out Rodeo

RESCHEDULED to July 28 and 29, 2017

At the NEW Leonard Watson Memorial Fair Grounds, North Side of Big Valley, AB

Admission \$10

Saturday Night Dance \$10 Cover - No Minors

COMMUNITY EVENTS

25th Anniversary - Heartland Youth Centre
Awesome Auction
Stettler Community Hall
June 3, 2017



Stettler Regional Fire Department



To Serve To Protect Your Community

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Ordinary People - Extraordinary Service

To apply call : 403-742-8305

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

August 19 - Taste of the Heartland -Long Table Dinner &
Open Farm Days. Call Stettler Board of Trade at 403-742-3181



Proud to Celebrate Canada's 150th and

Seniors' Week

June 5 to 11
2017



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