

Stettler County Connection

2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN

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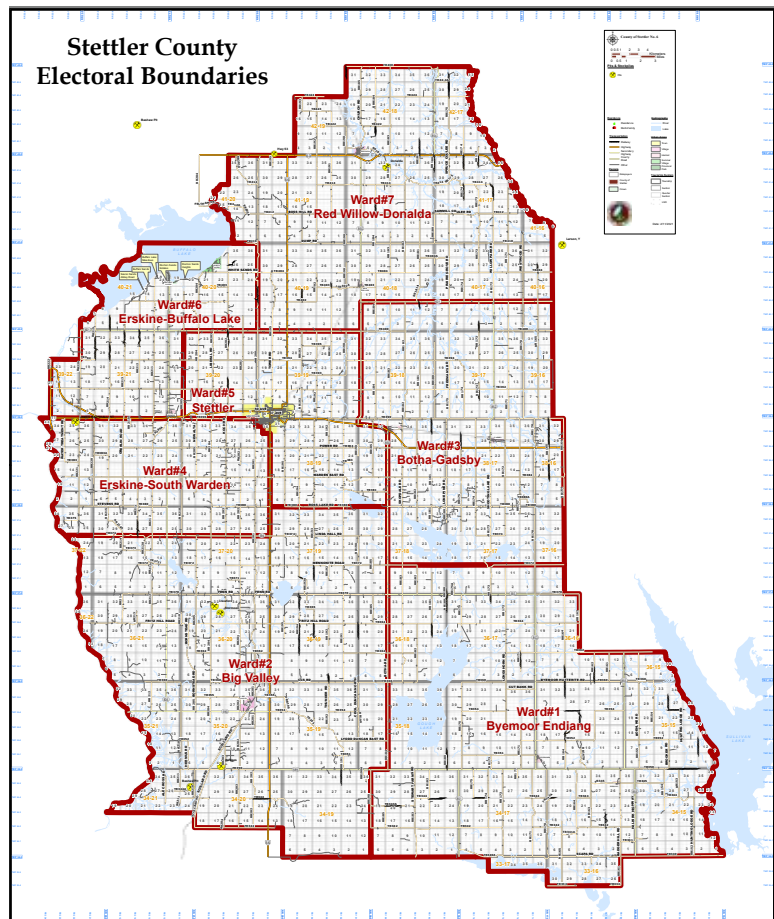
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Contest
Winners**

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2021 PHOTO CONTEST

Show us the beauty of each of our 7 Stettler County Wards.

We are excited to announce it is time to start 'snapping' and submitting your entries for our annual County of Stettler photo contest.

We love getting to see all the beautiful scenery and captured moments from throughout our County and we are equally excited to meet the people behind these beautiful photos every year.

2021 is an Election Year in the County of Stettler and we have decided to have a little friendly photography competition this year to discover 'the best and beautiful of our 7 Wards'. Above, and also on page 21, you will find our map that divides and delineates the County of Stettler into 7 Electoral Wards. This year, we are asking you to identify which 'Ward' your photo was snapped in, as we have a small but friendly competition to crown the 'Most Beautiful Ward' captured by photo, in Stettler County. The Grand Prize Winner won't just win an iPad - but also they will be responsible for crowning one lucky Ward 'the most beautiful ward of 2021'!

Your pictures can capture anything you deem 'beautiful' in ANY ward you choose to snap in. At the end of this year's contest we hope we can fill our calendar with the best of the best as always, and we hope that every ward is represented.

Photos should be uploaded to our website at www.StettlerCounty.ca. Please note - landscape (wider than tall) photos lend themselves to calendar usage better than portrait (taller than wide) photos.

Our photo contest is open from now until October 18, 2021 (election day!). Maximum of 5 photos per person will be eligible. Photos must be taken in the County of Stettler to be considered for our prizes. Questions? Email us at info@stettlercounty.ca.



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COUNTY CONNECTION

INTRO

"What is the bravest thing you've ever said?" asked the boy.

"Help," said the horse.

- Charlie Mackesy

As we enter into year two of a very difficult time in what someday will be 'history', we want to remind our neighbors, our friends, and our families within Stettler County and beyond our borders, that we are here for them.

One small four letter word, seemingly insignificant, for some reason can be the biggest and hardest thing to spit out of our mouths. But once you do get it out, it can provide such a relief you might wonder why you didn't say it sooner.

Help. Type it. Say it. Practice saying it. Somehow, get the words out. We will all be so glad that you did.

We know there is a stigma attached to acknowledging and openly discussing mental health, but we can each take steps to change that and make it easier. So many of us are struggling: stress, anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion and burnout - I don't believe there is anyone who hasn't experienced these symptoms, and maybe more than usual these days.

If you don't want to reach out to someone you know, on the back cover of this magazine we have listed nation-wide supports. Please use them if you need them. Hang them on someone's fridge if you suspect they might. It's a small word. But it holds a lot of power. Help.

Niki Thorsteinsson
Director of Communications



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REEVE'S RAMBLINGS

2020 was certainly a year of change and challenges with Covid and all the social distancing, closures, maximum sizes on indoor and outdoor events. 2020 challenged all municipalities financially with the repeated reduction in taxation due to unpaid/uncollectable taxes and assessment changes that lowered collectable taxes. Staff and Council worked through these challenges and cut staff by approximately 25 seasonal/part time and reduced many projects and activities to try and meet these financial challenges. Mid-July we were informed of the results of a reassessment/review of oil and gas property taxation and told the changes could be passed by the Government of Alberta in the fall session. We met with newly appointed Municipal Affairs Minister Tracy Allard and MLA Nate Horner September 4 to hear the governments plans and voice our concerns. Municipalities were listened to and this plan was dropped, with a plan to complete assessment reviews in 2021. The news in early January shows we need to now create a new relationship with a new Minister of Municipal Affairs. We will continue to do this and continue to lobby for fairness for rural Alberta.

Our County operates annually on approximately \$9.8 million dollars and we forecast a \$637,000 reduction in MSI funding and a \$404,000 reduction in taxes caused by ongoing lower oil and gas assessment due to Trident Exploration properties that didn't sell and are still included in the orphan well fund, as well as pipeline and well abandonments and shut-in wells. We currently maintain 2,777 km of roads and 117 bridges with many of these requiring replacement as they are

reaching their end of life cycle. These roads and bridges require constant attention or our important infrastructure will degrade, in some cases beyond repair. We continue to meet our gravelling program and with changes in gravel spec and some cases gravel size along with reshaping roads will improve road quality resulting in a longer asset life. In spirit with this Council, staff have secured and continually investigate close quality gravel supplies within or adjacent to county boundaries, ensuring this resource is cost effective and available to the next generation to maintain these infrastructures.

County of Stettler took advantage of the 2020 infrastructure stimulus grants replacing 6 bridges with bridge-sized culverts. We utilized a combination of contractors and staff along with county-owned equipment and some rental equipment, resulting in top-quality bridge replacements, now good for many years of service. Years of lobbying Alberta Transportation also resulted in the completion of the last 5 miles of upgrades to secondary highway 855 in the south eastern part of Stettler County. Stimulus funding eliminated a serious safety concern with school bus traffic and rural residents-upgrading Alberta's longest secondary highway to an acceptable standard. Thanks to MLA Nate Horner and Alberta Transportation Minister Ric McIver in supporting and bringing these projects to life within the County of Stettler.

We have worked through the Strategic Plan, the Asset Management Plan and have finalized the 2021 budget. As we have discussed, the loss in above revenue coupled with unpaid oil and gas

continued...



REEVE'S RAMBLINGS CONTINUED...

taxes and a reducing oil and gas tax base (78% to now 60%) results in a deficit while maintaining the high level of service County of Stettler residents expect. Council and staff have reduced budget spending by \$300,000 and this will have an affect on many departments. To explain our tax losses and struggles with balancing this budget, a 10% reduction in current oil and gas taxes would result in \$787,448.00 loss. If we tried to balance the budget through a raise in taxes, a 10% gain in residential taxes would equal \$266,000 and a 10% increase in Agriculture land taxes would equal \$169,000, still resulting in a net deficit of \$352,448. To make up a 10% loss in Linear and M&E taxes we would be looking at an 18% increase in agriculture and residential taxes. Council will be required to look at reducing levels of service to reduce our operating budget and then adjust to best serve county residents. To translate, a 10% increase in the Agriculture tax rate would result in an increase of \$40.00 to \$79.00 per quarter section, depending on what the assessment is on that specific ¼ section.

The County of Stettler is open for business and actively seeking commercial development and we will continue to work collaboratively with our good oil and gas partners who have and continue to contribute, making our county and Stettler community a great place to live and raise our families. We are currently reviewing all committees Council sits on, and re-looking at an overall level of service philosophy to help guide and set a framework for 2021 to 2025 Council to review

paths forward. Council feels these changes to budget and procedures must be started now. It would not be fair to push it off on the next Council as our crystal ball doesn't indicate a rapid recovery, and further cuts and losses should be expected.

We believe every company, industry and person in our province has benefited from oil and gas, and we believe the burden of responsibility for helping the industry, in turn, needs to be shared. Thanks again to CAO Cassidy and her dedicated staff for keeping county operations running through these issues, and as always putting the future of the County of Stettler in the forefront.

Please be safe in all winter activities, enjoy the great outdoors and practice the required social distancing to prevent further spread of this terrible virus. As stated before, please treat County of Stettler staff, all of our wonderful business frontline workers and Town and school staff with respect, as you would your neighbors. They are trying their best to deliver on decisions made by Council, boards, owners and government, and they are your neighbors.

As always please watch the roads as they are busy with varying road conditions.

Larry Clarke, REEVE



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COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS **POSTPONED**

The 44th Annual County of Stettler Community Service Awards which are to be held in Byemore in 2021, have been temporarily postponed due to COVID-19 gathering restrictions. The Regional Recreation Board will be monitoring the situation closely and will make plans for this event only when it is safe to do so.

This event celebrates the outstanding contributions of our volunteers in agriculture, recreation and culture. If you have anyone that

you would like to nominate for the Stettler Dodge Community Service Award or the ATCO Electric Arts, Culture and Heritage Award, please submit your nomination to Lorraine Hankins – Director of Recreation at the County of Stettler No.6 at anytime.

More information regarding tickets and location can be found on the County website www.StettlerCounty.ca later this year.

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The Strategic Plan is a process undertaken by Council each year. This plan clearly directs the County of Stettler's priorities and goals going forward, plotting the course for staff and setting clear plans and priorities for the operation of our municipality.

The process of developing this plan aligns Council's goals and vision with Administration, and helps guide budget priorities for all departments.

The Strategic Plan before you was developed by Council after consultation with the public in the summer of 2020, and through fall workshops and adopted by Council in February 2021.

2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

Council and Governance

1.1. Expand positive lobbying and educational efforts:

- 1.1.1 Assessment Model
- 1.1.2 Rural Internet and Cell Service
- 1.1.3 Bussing
- 1.1.4 Environmental Delays
- 1.1.5 Transportation deficiencies:
Roadside mowing, spraying, maintenance on primary and secondary highways
- 1.1.6 NRCB Regarding CFO's
- 1.1.7 Ducks Unlimited
- 1.1.8 Reduce Environmental Delays (Minister of Red Tape Reduction)
- 1.1.9 Revitalized Oilfield

1.2. Develop and expand opportunities with community partners in Economic Development & Tourism (Open for Business)

- 1.2.1 Rural Internet and Cell Service
- 1.2.2 Incentives for Economic Development
- 1.2.3 Business Community Directory
- 1.2.4 Credits
- 1.2.5 Development Permit Breaks
- 1.2.6 Promote Tourism Opportunities

1.3. Develop Lot Sales Strategies for Botha, Gadsby, Erskine, Endiang, Byemoor lots. Encourage development through opportunity.

1.4. Develop a plan and establish a reserve for the future of the County's municipal needs and infrastructure.

1.5. Amend procedural bylaw and look at Council Scheduling and Meeting Efficiency

1.6. Establish Level of Service and Funding

- 1.6.1 Mowing Villages/Hamlets Lake
- 1.6.2 Roadside Mowing
- 1.6.3 Dust Abatement
- 1.6.4 Driveways
 - 1.6.4.1 Plowing/Grading
- 1.6.5 Brushing
- 1.6.6 Recreation Funding
- 1.6.7 Water Flat Fee Review
- 1.6.8 Water Hook Up Fee Review
- 1.6.9 Recycling
- 1.6.10 Disposal at Transfer Stations
- 1.6.11 Time Spent at Buffalo Lake
 - 1.6.11.1 Protective Services
 - 1.6.11.2 Water
 - 1.6.11.3 Sewer
 - 1.6.11.4 Mowing
- 1.6.12 Villages (Service Agreements)
 - 1.6.12.1 Emergency Management
 - 1.6.12.2 Fire Department
 - 1.6.12.3 Fire Response Expectations/Volunteer Levels
 - 1.6.12.4 Protective Services
 - 1.6.12.5 Mowing
- 1.6.13. Housing Authority Shortfalls (establish fair distribution of losses)

Public Works & Infrastructure

2.1. Develop and adopt road philosophy.

- 2.1.1 Speed Limits
- 2.1.2 Gravel Road Maintenance and Rejuvenation Lifecycle

- 2.2 Adopt a plan for the future of County lands
 - 2.2.1 Continue testing lands for gravel
- 2.3 Adopt Equipment Replacement plan.
- 2.4 Establish and approve plan for future of the old Public works yard site, after reclamation (\$100,000) has been completed
- 2.5 Complete and adopt Town/County Master Servicing Study, Intermunicipal Development Plan and SE Area Structure Plan

Corporate Services

- 3.1 County conducts a Reserve Analysis and Council adopts a policy on reserve levels.
- 3.2 Establish policy on Emergency Funding
- 3.3 Plan and Policy for the future of recreation funding and recreation reserve is adopted
 - 3.3.1 Quantification of facility use
 - 3.3.2 Plan for infrastructure
 - 3.3.3 Delegate distribution of funds to Rec Board
- 3.4 Continue digitization of vault documents
- 3.5 Formalize and adopt a plan for County's aging infrastructure
 - 3.5.1 Halls
 - 3.5.2 Rinks

Municipal Services

- 4.1. Council identifies waterline expansion plan and water servicing policy.
 - 4.1.1 Committee of the whole
- 4.2. Identify water infrastructure repairs and replacement schedule for adoption.
- 4.3 Review and update the Stettler Regional Emergency Management Agency Emergency Response Plans

Planning & Development

- 5.1 Major review of the Buffalo Lake South Shore Intermunicipal Development Plan
 - 5.1.1 Identify public boat launch access and opportunities to provide expanded public access to the south shore of Buffalo Lake

- 5.2 Adopt plan for use of Buffalo Lake Municipal Reserve Funds
- 5.3 Develop Bylaw to govern privately owned sewer systems
- 5.4 Integrate Gadsby in County's Land Use Bylaws
- 5.5 Develop and adopt a calendar on when statutory plans will be reviewed
 - 5.5.1 Budget Dependent
- 5.6 Continue to seek relaxation of Erskine Landfill setbacks

Operational Excellence

- 6.1 Council adopts an asset management/ capital equipment plan
- 6.2 County updates service agreements with villages
 - 6.2.1 Housing Authority
 - 6.2.2 Emergency Management
 - 6.2.3 Fire Department
 - 6.2.4 Protective Services
- 6.3 Provide expanded communications and information to citizens and neighbours with a focus on 'the County lens'
 - 6.3.1 Tax Cuts
 - 6.3.2 Level of responsibility
 - 6.3.3 Where tax dollars come from (break down), and go (break down)
 - 6.3.3.1. Break down of areas tax dollars are raised
 - 6.3.4 Oil and gas revenue and losses
 - 6.3.5 School tax requisitions
 - 6.3.6 Policing requisitions
 - 6.3.7 Housing Authority
 - 6.3.8 Highway Maintenance
 - 6.3.9 Fire Response Expectations
 - 6.3.10 Taxes: Where they come from throughout our County
- 6.4 Tighten bylaws and commit to enforce
- 6.5 Initiate post-project review process for major projects
- 6.6 Council review of existing committees for relevance



2021-2024 BUDGET

View or download our 2021-2024 Budget at www.StettlerCounty.ca.

Assembling an annual budget always begins with an exercise in Strategic Planning. Annually, we survey our citizens to determine where their priorities lie. The results of our public feedback inquiry are presented to Council as they workshop through past strategic priorities and the current status of strategic priorities. Council considers future projects, services provided, current economic climate and emerging trends. This process allows us to identify and consider what our citizens value most and then identify new trends and upcoming initiatives and prioritize the direction of our municipality. You can view the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan on the previous pages.

The County of Stettler 2021-2024 Budget highlights the work of every department and the important services they provide throughout our region. This budget reflects continued work and a commitment to maintaining services and infrastructure, while planning and preparing shovel-ready projects to capitalize on future granting opportunities.

While 2020 began a little differently with the introduction of the COVID-19 pandemic, a short pause to face-to-face meetings while we adjusted processes didn't slow down this important work. We adjusted, we focused on the delivery of core services and sought increased organizational

efficiencies. Council considered how we could build on our strengths, overcome weaknesses, capitalize on our opportunities, and plan and prepare for current or anticipated threats.

Lobbying higher levels of government proved successful for municipalities in 2020, and we will continue this important work through 2021. With no new revenue sources, this budget presents the need for \$150,000 in new revenue, which we anticipate may be accumulated through growth in assessment or through other revenues like grant funding.

We plan to maintain current levels of service throughout all operations with regional agreements including fire and emergency management being renegotiated in 2021 to adjust current needs, expectations and to reflect actual costs of providing these services. Recreation, library and cultural funding provided by the County will be re-evaluated as well, and adjustments to funding will reflect provincial funding cuts we are currently sustaining.

Continuing to invest in an excellent long-term gravel supply has been a strength for our County. Having secured one new source in 2020, we continue testing existing county lands for new opportunities and securing future finds which are currently estimated to constitute a 100-year gravel supply for our County. Solidifying a secure source



of gravel for the 2,777 km of existing gravel roads will enable future generations to continue the good work of tomorrow and ensure we are able to keep Stettler County on the move today.

General Tax and Requisitions

The County of Stettler collects taxes to conduct our own operations and we also collect taxes on behalf of the province and other organizations and remit these as requisitions. Requisitions are generally paid before they are collected.

We currently collect the Education requisition and a new Policing requisition and remit those to the province. We also collect for the County of Stettler Housing Authority which funds Seniors Housing in our region. We have had to absorb large amounts of unpaid taxes from the oil and gas sector over the past five years. In addition to absorbing these tax losses, we have been required to pay their requisitions to the province and to the Housing Authority, on their behalf. We will continue to advocate for changes to this system so that County of Stettler revenues are not being used to pay uncollectable requisitions for defunct oil and gas properties.

Breaking down the budget

When planning the budget, the County estimates how much money will be spent (expenditures) to maintain services and infrastructure, and how that

money will be generated (revenue) to meet the anticipated expenditures. Once these estimates are made and plans are set, staff develop the budget for Council's consideration. The budget can be broken into two categories: operating and capital.

OPERATING BUDGET

The operating budget includes the anticipated expenses to keep the municipality operating on a daily basis. This portion of the budget is used to ensure essential day-to-day services are provided – from rural water distribution, to snow plowing, to drainage and road repairs, gravelling and grading.

CAPITAL BUDGET

The capital budget focuses more on long-term planning for investments in infrastructure to ensure the County can operate in an efficient, effective and economical manner. This portion of the budget is used for one-time purchases: investments for the future of our community, such as roads, utilities (water, wastewater and stormwater), technology, vehicles and equipment.

BALANCING THE BUDGET

The goal of Council and Administration is to maintain or improve services, while anticipating and planning for our future needs. View our full budget document at www.StettlerCounty.ca and forward questions to info@stettlercounty.ca or call 403-742-4441.



CANCELLATION OF STRYCHNINE

Last day of permitted use: March 4, 2023.

Under the authority of the Pest Control Products Act, Health Canada is cancelling the registration of all 2% liquid strychnine products used to control Richardson ground squirrels (Registration No. 30433 PCP Act).

Despite the fact that the Agricultural Services Board, Council and Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) has lobbied hard to keep strychnine around, registration at this point is still scheduled for cancellation.

Environmental consequences associated with the use of strychnine to control Richardson's ground squirrels have been deemed not acceptable.

The registration of 2% Liquid Strychnine Concentrate will expire after March 4, 2023 - which will be the last day of permitted use. Continued possession and/or use of the product after this date is a violation of the Pest Control Products Act. For more information on the regulation of pesticides, you are encouraged to contact Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) at hc.pmra.info-arla.sc@canada.ca or phone 1-800-267-6315.

Important Dates:

- Last date of sale by Registrant is March 4, 2021 (Manufacturer)
- Last date of sale by Retailer is March 4, 2022 (Municipalities)
- Last date of permitted use is March 4, 2023 (User)

To order your strychnine please call us at 403-742-4441.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, appointments must be made for purchases and pick-ups. Paperwork required for strychnine purchases can be obtained via email or fax, and appointments for pick-up are available on Tuesdays or Thursdays from 9:00 AM until noon.

Payment will be taken over the phone and a receipt sent electronically. Strychnine can be picked up at the County Public Works Facility, one mile south of Stettler on Highway 56 (19561 TWP RD 384). Please follow the signs posted upon arrival.

*Please note, there is a maximum limit of 2 cases/48 bottles.



PUBLIC WORKS: ENHANCED SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Call 403-742-4441 for service requests.

You may have seen the above signs in the windows of our machinery, such as graders or plow trucks this season.

Our equipment operators at the County of Stettler are considered essential services for our municipality.

Due to COVID-19 and general safety concerns associated with approaching working machinery and equipment, combined with the essential service these operators provide our municipality, all of our operators have been instructed to remain in their machinery and stay isolated at this time.

Please know, these County employees have been instructed not to stop or pull over when members of the public attempt to flag them down. This decision is in the best interest of all parties involved with safety being our number one priority.

Please do not attempt to stop or approach County equipment as it is unsafe to do so.

The County has dedicated supervisory staff trained to respond safely and appropriately to service requests and will deploy operators and equipment assets as necessary while allowing our operators to focus on their jobs without distraction.

This process ensures operations continue to run smoothly and service requests are triaged and handled in appropriate timelines.

Please be patient and phone our office at 403-742-4441 for all service requests. We will be happy to help you. Thank you very much for your cooperation in this matter.

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MEMBER AT LARGE NEEDED

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ATTRACTION & RETENTION COMMITTEE

If you are passionate about health care in our community and would like to contribute to the efforts of the Stettler Health Professionals Attraction and Retention Committee, they are seeking a Member at Large to sit on their board. If you are interested in further information about joining the committee please contact:

STACEY BENJAMIN

403-742-3181

S.BENJAMIN@STETTLERBOARDOFTRADE.COM

SEEKING MEMBERS AT LARGE

The Stettler and Regional Health Professions Attraction & Retention Committee was established to help in the attraction and retention efforts of health professionals in the Town and County of Stettler. We're extremely proud of our caring community and our health professionals are an important part. We need your help to show off our beautiful community.

We are seeking individuals who will contribute to and participate in the selection of activities and how they are budgeted and delivered on the Stettler Regional Health Professionals Attraction and Retention Committee, especially during these trying times.

The committee meets once every two months + additional activities.

For more information or to put your name forward and contribute to our community via Health Services, please contact: Stacey Benjamin by email at s.benjamin@stettlerboardoftrade.com or call 403-742-3181.



Ice Hut Identification

As per the Alberta guide to Sportfishing Regulations, it is now mandatory to identify your ice fishing hut if the hut will be left on a lake in Alberta for more than 24 hours. These requirements have come into effect to address issues such as trash accumulating around huts, as well as shacks being left on ice late in the season. Identification requirements include either your WIN Number, or your name, phone number, and home address. These must be clearly displayed on the outside of huts. Ice huts must also be removed before March 31, or earlier if conditions require it. The goal of these regulations is to benefit everyone using the lake, and to foster and preserve the health of our lakes and to responsibly maintain our environment.

FREEZING LINES CAUSING YOU HEADACHES

Prevention is the medicine.

- Make sure heat tape is plugged in and working during the winter months (mobile homes and trailers).
- Ensure your skirting is secure and no openings of any kind exist.
- Insulate waterlines and sewer lines (mobile homes and trailers).
- If needed, open up cabinet doors to let warm air circulate inside cupboards that house plumbing lines.
- Seal up cracks and holes where the pipes run through the floor.
- If leaving for long periods of time, make sure heat is left on, have water shut off and winterize.
- If you have a problem pipe that is always freezing up or threatening to freeze, you can, in an emergency, leave a faucet or toilet dripping or running a little, however this costs you money and is only a short-term band-aid.



Pelicans and Kayaking Grand Prize Winner - Submitted by Natasha Whynot



Frosty Day in January
Submitted by Sharron Smith



Siblings
Submitted by Janet Adam



Tubing
Submitted by Christel Shuckburgh



May Long Weekend
Submitted by Steve Maruk

2020 Photo Contest Winners

Congratulations to the finalists of our 2020 photo contest whose photos are all featured in our 2021 Calendar. Copies of the County of Stettler 2021 Calendar are free and still available at the County Administration Building at 6602-44 Avenue, Stettler.

Congratulations to Natasha Whynot. Her photo of kayaking at Buffalo Lake was chosen as the winner of the 2020 grand prize - an iPad Mini!

Our 2021 Photo Contest is now underway and you will find all of the details pertaining to this year's theme and contest on the inside cover of this magazine and our website at www.StettlerCounty.ca. Photos must be taken in the County of Stettler.



Stopping for a Break at the Teepee
Submitted by Tammy Peterson



Relaxing and Breathtaking
Submitted by Elaina Anderson



Our Cohorts
Submitted by Karyn Tateson



May Long Weekend - Buffalo Lake
Submitted by Steve Maruk



Country roads, take me home.
Submitted by Christel Shuckburgh



Skeet Shooting
Submitted by Tammy Peterson



Gadsby Harvest
Submitted by Tara Davis



You are not alone.
Submitted by Karyn Tateson



ON THE HORIZON 2021 PLANNING PROJECTS

The following projects are proposed to be undertaken by the Planning and Development department in 2021:

- The County of Stettler and Town of Stettler have obtained funding through the Alberta Community Partnership Grant to provide for updates to the Town and County's Inter-Municipal Development Plan and the South East Area Structure Plan. The project is anticipated to commence once a designated consulting firm has been selected amongst the proposal received.
- The County and Town of Stettler's joint servicing study is nearing completion. The study was initiated to determine water supply and sanitary sewer servicing standards within the Intermunicipal Development Plan area. The results of this study will be incorporated in the updated County and Town of

Stettler's Intermunicipal Development Plan and South East Area Structure Plan.

- The Buffalo Lake Inter-Municipal Development Plan Steering Committee, consisting of the County of Stettler, Summer Village of White Sands, Summer Village of Rochon Sands, Camrose County and Lacombe County, completed a minor review of the Buffalo Lake Inter-Municipal Development Plan in 2020.

Third and final reading of the Bylaw by the Council of all members municipalities to provide for the adoption of the updated Plan is anticipated to occur in February 2021. The updated copy of the BLIDP will be available on the County's website once implemented.

- An online survey was conducted by Alberta Environment and Parks in November -December 2020 seeking public input on



a draft copy of their docking and mooring policy. AEP is currently reviewing the survey results. The County will endeavour to work closely with lakeshore communities and Alberta Environment and Parks to implement AEP's updated policy.

Further, in conjunction with the Buffalo Lake South Shore Management Plan Council adopted bylaw 1569-16 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.

The intent of the shoreline management plan is to address improvement of public lake access points and the regulation of seasonal docks/boatlifts/piers.

- County Council included in the draft 2021

budget (pending final approval) the acquisition of new aerial photography for properties within the County of Stettler. Current aerials being used were taken in 2015.

- The Planning and Development Department is drafting amendments to the County's Land Use Bylaw to provide for the merger of the Village of Gadsby and County's Land Use Bylaw. The amendments will include rezoning of properties to align with the provisions of the bylaws.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Planning and Development department at 403-742-4441 should you have any questions or concerns regarding your proposed planning projects.



ADVOCACY: CURRENT HOT TOPICS

We are continuing advocacy efforts to have the Provincial Government's assistance, through changes in the Municipal Government Act (MGA) to be able to collect unpaid taxes on oil and gas properties.

The County of Stettler was previously very successful in collecting taxes from defunct oil and gas properties until the *Virginia Hills Decision* made on February 12, 2019 (Northern Sunrise County v. Virginia Hills Oil Corp.)

The Court of Appeal of Alberta (Court) held the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta's decision that the taxation provisions of the MGA do not grant special lien priority to municipalities for tax arrears related to linear property (property that includes electric power systems, telecommunications systems, railways, wells and pipelines). In this decision, the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta granted an order declaring that the pre-receivership linear tax claims owed to three Alberta municipalities were unsecured claims against the estates of the debtor and were not secured claims against the estate property.

The County of Stettler has over \$4 million outstanding in unpaid oil and gas property taxes. Companies are abandoned and company

owners often fold and then unfold under a new name. Alberta's property tax system needs to be amended to prevent oil and gas companies from refusing to pay property taxes, if not, many rural municipalities will struggle to remain viable.

In 2019 the Alberta government implemented the Shallow Gas Tax Relief Initiative (SGTRI), intended to support struggling shallow gas companies by allowing municipalities to provide them with a 35% reduction on their property tax bills. In 2019 the province reimburses municipalities, but now we are shouldering this 35% SGTRI ourselves.

Other topics we are advocating for in our area include:

- Improved Broadband for rural Alberta
- Police Funding Model/Rural Crime Prevention
- Investigating the Government of Alberta's idea and full costs behind creating a provincial police force.
- Predictable Municipal Sustainable Initiative Funding (MSI)
- Cancellation of strychnine

Watch our website, www.StettlerCounty.ca for developments and announcements on these topics as changes unfold.

DEVELOPMENT SETBACKS

Please remember that you do not need a development permit from the County for any agricultural operation as long as any structures such as hay sheds, granaries, dugouts, livestock shelters and barns meet the 125 feet setback from the center line of the County road.

Shelterbelts must be set back 75 feet from the center line of the road. If you would like to vary from these setbacks for any agricultural operation, you would require a development permit.

You may need a license/permit from the Natural Resources Conservation Board if your agricultural operation includes a confined feeding operation (please call the NRCB at 1-340-5241).

If development is proposed along a provincial highway a Roadside Development Permit issued by Alberta Transportation is required. Please contact Alberta Transportation at 403-854-5550 or visit their website at <http://www.transportation.alberta.ca>.

For more information regarding development please contact the County's Planning & Development Department at 403-742-4441.

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ZERO TOLERANCE

Please contact our Planning and Development Department when you start planning your development in order to ensure you obtain the required development permit and other approvals in good time. Anyone who intends to undertake a non-agricultural development in the County of Stettler No. 6 is required to first obtain a development permit from the County. This could also help you avoid any unforeseen expenses 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 you may make the necessary adjustments before you start digging or laying down concrete.

The County does not want to penalize anyone. Rather, we want to work with ratepayers to ensure the proper development approvals are issued in order to comply with municipal, provincial and federal regulations. The County's Fee Bylaw states a penalty of \$1,000 for residential developments and \$2,000 for commercial developments that are started without the benefit of a development permit.

The County of Stettler No. 6 has adopted a zero tolerance approach to persons who start construction without the benefit of a development permit. All relevant penalties required pursuant to the County's Fee Schedule and other actions under the Municipal Government Act (MGA) for such a contravention will be strictly imposed on anyone who fails to obtain a development permit prior to construction start. This information has been made widely available and no exceptions will be made.



Nomination Period _____

January 1, 2021 - NOON on September 20, 2021

Location of Local Jurisdiction Office
County of Stettler No. 6
6602-44 Avenue
Stettler, AB T0C 2L0
Phone: (403) 742-4441

Local Authorities Act
(Section 26)

Local Jurisdiction: **County of Stettler No. 6, Province of Alberta**

Notice is hereby given that the Nomination Period for the 2021 County of Stettler Municipal Election begins January 1, 2021 and ends at NOON on September 20, 2021. Nominations for the election of candidates for the following offices will be received at the location of the local jurisdiction office set out above, by appointment only.

Councillor	1	Byemoor Endiang	Ward 1
Councillor	1	Big Valley	Ward 2
Councillor	1	Botha Gadsby	Ward 3
Councillor	1	Stettler	Ward 4
Councillor	1	Erskine South Warden	Ward 5
Councillor	1	Erskine Buffalo Lake	Ward 6
Councillor	1	Donalda Red Willow	Ward 7

Nomination Forms and Councillor Information Packages are available on our website at www.StettlerCounty.ca. Click on Council/Elections/Running for Council.

You must make an appointment to submit your nomination papers. Contact Doreen Nixon, Returning Officer, at 587-799-1132 or email ro@stettlercounty.ca. A \$100 fee must be paid when submitting your nomination papers. Nominations will be accepted until Noon, September 20, 2021. No late applications will be accepted.

Nomination papers may be submitted BY APPOINTMENT ONLY with Doreen Nixon, at the County of Stettler Administration Building, 6602-44 Avenue, Stettler, AB.



2020 ASB Bursary Recipient - Jace Thorsteinson

My name is Jace Thorsteinson and I am 19 years old and I'm currently taking the AST-Equine program at the Lakeland College in Vermilion. Outside of school I operate two companies (JWT Announcing, JWT Custom Hats). I started announcing back in 2017, and I started shaping hats for people back in May 2020. With this bursary money I plan on graduating Lakeland College with my diploma in Ag Sciences, and going on to grow both of my companies.

2021 AG SERVICES BURSARY FOR STUDENTS

Apply no later than April 15 at 4:30 PM.

We are accepting applications for the 2021 Agricultural Services Board \$1,000 Bursary.

The County of Stettler No. 6 Agricultural Services Board Bursary will recognize a high school graduate who is:

- a resident of the County of Stettler
- enrolled in post-secondary education, and
- who has made a contribution to their community.

This bursary will provide assistance to a graduate who demonstrates an interest and awareness about the importance of agriculture to the survival of rural communities. A one thousand dollar (\$1000.00) bursary will be awarded each year.

To qualify, applicants will be successfully enrolled in a postsecondary institution in any year of studies.

An applicant may only receive the award once.

Applicants must supply the Director 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.

Find ASB Bursary application forms at www.StettlerCounty.ca and complete requirements and questionnaire and return to ASB@stettlercounty.ca.

For more information call 403-742-4441 x110.



DOWNY BROME AKA CHEATGRASS

Downy Brome, commonly known as Cheatgrass, was introduced to North America from the Mediterranean many years ago. Cheatgrass is an annual or winter annual grass that emerges quickly in the spring, allowing it to obtain moisture before other plants become active for the year. This, coupled with the rapid growth, allows Cheatgrass to quickly form dense stands in areas of bare ground, fall seeded crops, overgrazed pastures, and disturbed sites such as burned forest or rangeland.

While grazing animals appreciate the early green growth in the spring, the plants quickly mature and become hazardous. When dry, the long awns can puncture and irritate the mouth, feet, and eyes of grazing animals. The plants remain dry much of the year, creating a fire hazard that is difficult to manage and has contributed to large fires across the continent.

Downy Brome has invaded nearly 100,000,000 acres across the arid western United States, from

Texas to Montana. Downy Brome has spread across thousands of acres in southern Alberta, and has been identified in pockets throughout central and northern Alberta. Seeds are carried on wildlife, livestock, and on vehicles and boots, allowing the seeds to travel great distances and establish. Cheatgrass can be identified by its early spring growth and quick senescence in June, as well as its long awns and purple and brown colouring.

Control methods for Downy Brome may include herbicide application, rotation management, and managed grazing. Prevention is often much less costly than control, meaning identification of small patches can prevent an outbreak that becomes difficult to fully control. The earlier this invasive noxious weed is found, the less costly and time consuming control will be. For more information on this or any invasive plant, contact your local Agricultural Fieldman or Alberta Invasive Species Council.



PROTECTIVE SERVICES ANNUAL UPDATE

As we begin another new year Stettler County Protective Services would like to remind everyone to drive safely and for the conditions, and be especially careful around intersections. Under Alberta's Traffic Safety Plan January was intersection safety month, with February focusing on distracted driving. March is a reminder that seat belts save lives.

In 2020 Stettler Regional Emergency Management Agency (SREMA) activated an Incident Command Post in response to the Covid-19 pandemic back in March. This was activated for a 3 month period which allowed us to assist the public while providing SREMA with a stress test to a number of aspects of our response plan and activation setup. As a result we are even more prepared to respond to an emergency or disaster event.

In December, members of the Central Region All Hazard Incident Management Team (CR-AHMIT) had a chance to partake in a 'virtual' emergency exercise to test the capability of responding to an emergency (in this case a dangerous goods release from a semi-truck rollover).

The exercise was a success and proved there is the potential to have emergency management professionals able to take over incidents with emergency management response remotely, if needed. Further time, training, and exercises will iron

out some of the wrinkles that were identified. We have five SREMA members trained and participating on the Central Region-All Hazard Incident Management Team, which is a team trained to deploy and assist with emergency incidents across Alberta. In the event of a major disaster in our area, this team would assist us as well. Another example of joint municipal collaboration which benefits smaller municipalities like ours.

Last year was busy for SREMA, and concluded with our Director of Emergency Management, Lee Hardman, departing the agency to work for the City of Fort Saskatchewan. In his place, Clinton Sime has been appointed as our new Director of Emergency Management, with Chad Jackson remaining as a Deputy Director of Emergency Management. Clinton has been the Deputy Director of Emergency Management for a few years now and is well trained and versed at assuming the Director roll for our region.

Some of the highlights from 2020

- SREMA has a representative that sits on the Central Region All Hazards Incident Management Team Advisory Group. This is facilitated by Red Deer County. We meet annually in order to foster partnership across the central region in regards to responding to incidents.

- All regional partner staff are trained in Basic Emergency Management and Incident Command System 100.
- Regional council members trained in the Municipal Elected Officials Course.
- New Bylaws were created/adopted for each municipality in the region.
- Activated our Incident Command Post in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This was activated for a period of 3 months tackling the challenges of Covid-19 in our region. Each municipal partner Chief Administrative Officer received daily situation updates directly from the Director of Emergency Management.
- Attended weekly Covid-19 phone updates with the Alberta Emergency Management Agency.
- Attended the Central Region All Hazards Incident Management Team multiple day training exercise.
- Ensured and assisted each municipal partner in completing their required Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments.
- Facilitated the hiring of a consultant (The Response Team) to assist SREMA in the development of a new and updated Regional Emergency Response Plan (ERP). The scope of work includes populating the ERP into the program CEMP for ease of access for all regional partners.
- Location of Incident Command Post for future incidents has been moved to the County of Stettler Public Works Facility located on Hwy 56.

This location was indicated as the new location due to challenges with activating an ICP back in March attempting to follow social distancing. The new location has the space, facilities and equipment SREMA needs to respond effectively to an incident in the future.

Expectations for 2021

- New Stettler Regional Emergency Response Plan will be rolled out.
- Continued partnership with the Central Region All Hazards Incident Management Team.
- Facilitate Incident Command System 200 training to all regional staff when training becomes available.
- Facilitate Agency and Committee meetings for the region.
- Facilitate regional table top exercise by the end of 2021.
- Review and renew mutual aid agreements.

We value each and every member of SREMA and will continue to tackle any challenges that present to the region in 2021. The Stettler region is resilient with readiness to address challenges effectively. We look forward to working with our regional partners in 2021.



CATCH UP ON READING OR LEARN A NEW SKILL AT SPL

This past year has passed with the speed of a tortoise and hare, fast and slow. Here we are well into 2021 and it looks like this fast and slow lifestyle will be with us for a few more months.

Are you looking for an escape, or a positive way to pass the extra time you have on your hands? Consider joining the Stettler Public Library if you haven't already. We have books, movies, magazines and video games to help you while away the hours.

These cold evenings present the perfect opportunity to learn a new skill or hobby and make positive gains in your life. Membership at the Stettler Public Library is free to residents of Stettler and Stettler County thanks to the generous support of Town and County Council.

At the writing of this column we are closed to the public, but we hope to re-open for in-person

visits soon. While the library is closed to in-person visits, we are offering curbside service. Just call 403-742-2292 and tell us what you would like and we will find it and run it down to the front door for you. We are also offering curbside printing, faxing and scanning services. We will continue to offer this service even after reopening for members who would prefer to minimize contact.

Have you explored our e-library at <https://spl.prl.ab.ca/elibrary/latest/>? In 2021 we have added Libby to the collection of resources available for you to use. Libby is replacing RBDigital and will contain e-audiobooks, magazines and comics. You can also find e-books and e-audiobooks on CloudLibrary and magazines and newspapers on PressReader. Download the apps from your app store. If you need assistance signing up for any of the e-content services, call 403-742-2292, we'll help walk you through the process.



The Stettler Public Library is pleased to offer an assortment of virtual programs and activities to keep you busy at home this winter.

For children we are livestreaming Read and Rhyme on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 10:30 AM. Join Alix for fun rhymes, songs and stories live, or watch the recording whenever it is convenient for you. For older children we have lots of great activities and take-home kits for Something Cool After School (Thursdays at 4:00 PM) and Brain Train (Saturdays at 1:00 PM).

For Teens and Tweens, we have weekly activities and take-home kits on Wednesdays at 4:00 PM. We also have online gaming tournaments with patrons of Rocky Mountain House Library every Monday at 8:00 PM.

Are you looking for homework support? Why not book an appointment with Megan on Zoom for

free tutoring on Mondays and Thursdays? You can also try Solaro, an e-resource that provides homework help and practice tests for the Alberta grades 3-12 curriculum. You can find Solaro in our e-library.

For adults we have the Readers' Circle Book Club and a Business Book Club. This winter we are also streaming classic movies and documentaries online and Crystal is reading Classics with her cats on Facebook Tuesdays at 8:00 PM. We are also preparing take-home kits for adults.

For more information about upcoming programs and activity kits, check out our website at <https://spl.prl.ab.ca>, follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/StettlerPublicLibrary or sign up to receive our newsletter by emailing spl@prl.ab.ca.

Save a Tree

Sign up for e-versions of County Connection magazine by contacting nthorsteinsson@stettlercounty.ca or by calling 403-742-4441.

It's also available on our website at www.stettlercounty.ca.



GREEN CHECKLIST-WHAT ARE YOUR 5 GREEN HABITS?

No one can do everything.
Everyone can do something.

We all have an impact on the planet, with many small actions.
We are all able to lessen our impact in some ways.
Those ways are different for everyone.

Are you already doing at least 5 of the following green habits?

What additional 5 are possible for you?

Every small action makes a difference.

	In our house:	Yes	No	Maybe could
1	we take reusable bags to the grocery store			
2	we take reusable produce bags to the grocery store			
3	we walk or bike to local destinations when it's possible			
4	we try to never idle our vehicles			
5	we recycle items such as cardboard, paper and plastics			
6	we keep our organic waste out of the landfill			
7	we take Household Hazardous Waste (paint, batteries, fluorescent bulbs, toxic symbol items) to the Stettler Eco Centre			
8	we plant a vegetable or herb garden			
9	we collect rainwater			
10	we leave grass clippings on the lawn			
11	we always use leftover food			
12	we wear a warm sweater in the house in winter instead of using more heat.			
13	we always use dishware instead of throwaway plates, cutlery and cups			
14	we take a reusable mug/water bottle for drinks outside our home			
15	we line-dry clothes (inside or outside) most of the time			
16	we try to repair things			
17	we use local re-use locations (Take it or Leave it, Superfluity, Rummage Sale, Consignment Closet) – when they are open			
18	we use mostly LED lights			
19	we use a power bar to turn off appliances and devices when not in use to avoid "phantom power" usage			
20	we never litter (including cigarette butts if a smoker)			

WHAT'S YOUR 5?

COMMUNITY NEWS

Stettler History Book Deadline is here!

The Stettler History Book is still collecting submissions, but the deadline is quickly approaching. Please submit your family's history to stettlerhistorybook@gmail.com or call 403-740-4799 for further information.



Canadian Blood Services Blood Donor Clinic

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Monday, April 26, 2021
Stettler Community Hall
5101-46 Avenue



4720 50 St
Stettler AB T0C 2L0
1-403-742-2337
www.stettlerfcss.com

- ◆ Community Information & Outreach
- ◆ Counselling Program
- ◆ Trauma, Grief & Loss Counselling
- ◆ Community Volunteer Income Tax Program
- ◆ Life Coaching Program
- ◆ ASIST Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
- ◆ Senior Support
- ◆ Financial Literacy
- ◆ Harm Reduction
- ◆ Rent Smart

Stettler & District Family Community Support Services strives to be recognized as the agency that builds a better community by advocating and providing support that strengthens, enriches and enhances the quality of life for our community members.

Stettler Festival of Lights Update

Stettler Festival of Lights 2020 broke the \$100,000 mark. All money raised will buy Emergency Room equipment for the upcoming renovated Stettler Hospital.

Of note:

- Cash donations last year were \$51,843.93. This year \$72,456.15.
- All eight local Hutterite colonies donated for a total of \$16,500.00.

THANK YOU! We very much appreciate all the support that this annual fundraiser for the Stettler Hospital receives.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

ALBERTA

MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE (Toll Free)

Call: 1-877-303-2642

Visit: mymentalhealth.ca

Nation Wide Supports

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Call 911

CRISIS SERVICES CANADA

Call 1-833-456-4566

Text 45645

Visit www.crisisservicescanada.ca

CENTRE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

Visit www.suicideinfo.ca

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

Visit www.suicideprevention.ca

MENTAL HEALTH LINE

Call 211

Visit 211.ca

KIDS HELP PHONE

Call 1-800-668-6868

MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA

www.mentalhealthcommission.ca

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

www.cmha.ca

SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTRE

www.sp-rc.ca



2021 Stettler Pheasant Festival

The hunt continues....

October 15-17, 2021

Registration opens March 2021.

www.stettlerpheasantfestival.com



Public Mail Agreement #41398593

Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to:

County of Stettler No. 6

Box 1270

Stettler, AB T0C 2L0