

# 1 Ward

## Ward 1: The backbone of our community

November 2008

### from your County Councillor Vic Bidzinski



Councillor Vic Bidzinski

I would first to thank all my residents for alerting me to concerns that affect their quality of life. While I may not be able to completely alleviate all these concerns, I can promise you that I will do my utmost to help you—no matter how much time or effort it takes on my behalf.

#### Reviewing the Green Routine

The first subject I would like to touch on is our waste management services and the recent report given to Council. Feedback from our community, as detailed in the report, indicated that the new Green Routine has been accepted and embraced by the majority of our residents. However, there seems to be a need for specific tweaking of certain areas in the program.

Council has looked at different methods to try to circumvent problems incurred by our residents and tweak some of these areas. While Council has taken a number of steps to alleviate certain problems, I believe we have been remiss in not foreseeing and therefore planning for possible concerns. I will be keeping

a close eye on any concerns I feel may occur in the future. This will be an ongoing scenario as not all potential problems have been addressed thus far.

#### Proposed electric transmission line

The next subject I would like to expound on is the potential exploitation of the Transportation and Utility Corridor as a possible location for a 550 kV transmission line through the area.

The Transportation and Utility Corridor is the corridor sometimes referred to as the “green belt” west of Sherwood Park adjacent to areas

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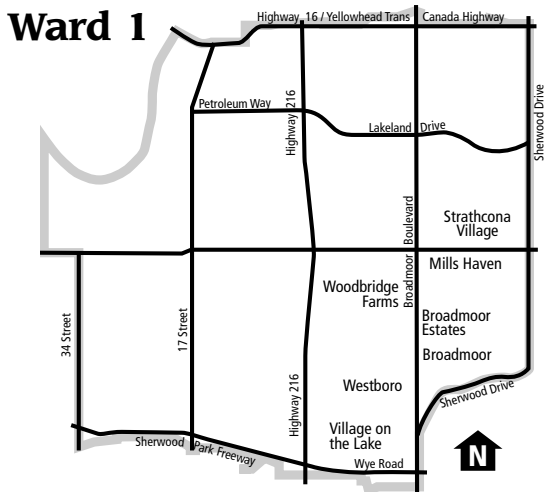


**Strathcona**  
County

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including Village on the Lake, Westboro and Woodbridge Farms.

While an open house held by the Alberta Electric System Operator on June 18 seemed to put the plans into the background, I am not for an instant convinced the plans will not proceed toward construction of the line.

I will be putting forward a motion in the near future that Council outline our position on this concern in a public venue and support this position with whatever resources are needed to get our point across.

However, because of the new Capital Region Board and its role in identifying utility corridors, we may not have a choice in determining whether a transmission line is built in the corridor. If this is the case, the only position I will support is that this transmission line must be placed underground.

I would appreciate your support for my position and would ask that you contact me if you have any comments or other alternatives.

There have been a number of significant projects completed in Ward 1 over the summer but there still are a number that will be addressed and completed in the future. In the next few months, I am looking forward to discussing any possible projects that will enhance the quality of life of the residents in Ward 1 and the County as a whole.



## **Utility emergency?**

**Call 780-467-7785**

If you have sewage backup, or another serious water problem, help is at hand.

The number is 780-467-7785, and if the problem is urgent, the County will respond 24 hours a day.

# **Transit increases in popularity**

## **Many routes busier than ever before**

The new transit routes that started in August expanded service to 11,000 more residents. Overall, Strathcona County Transit reports the public response to the changes has been very positive.

The new routes provide better connections and on-time performance. Service to major destinations such as Millennium Place, County Hall, Sherwood Park Mall, and business and industrial parks has been enhanced.

It is estimated ridership is up about 12 per cent over last year. Improved services, together with fluctuating gas prices and the successful student U-Pass program have contributed to this rapid surge in riders. The route to the University of Alberta, for instance, is now at 900-plus riders a day.

It's great to see more people choosing transit. With transit becoming a very

popular service, also comes challenges. Buses are fuller, which is good, but in some cases, especially during the rush hours, there is standing room only. For some long-time riders, having to stand is a new reality. Having passengers stand on buses is safe and legal, and has long been the norm on many transit systems—now it is the case on some Strathcona Transit routes.

Currently, the entire fleet is in service during rush hour. While six new buses will be arriving in 2009, several are to replace older buses. Within its resources, Transit will look at options to try to ease the commuter rush-hour pressures as much possible. The challenge is to best balance the growing demands for transit within Strathcona County's whole system of local and commuter needs.

## **Budget discussions**

Later this month, Council begins considering the 2009 budget.

It is always a matter of balancing the needs and wants of our community with our resources. We want to minimize the tax increase, while maintaining the services that residents value.

Among the items we expect will receive much attention during the upcoming discussions are the Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy, which calls for significant investment in recreation facilities over the next few years. Decisions will also be required regarding transit, road and street maintenance, emergency services, and much more.

Budget meetings are open to the public. They are scheduled for November 18, 27 and 28; and December 1, 2, 5 and 9. Information is also available on the web at [www.strathcona.ab.ca](http://www.strathcona.ab.ca).

## **Ambulance service**

You may know the Province is in the process of transferring the responsibility for ambulance service to the provincial Health Ministry. Knowing the importance of this service to our community, I want to assure you that Strathcona County is committed to maintain the high standards we now receive.

Over the years, Strathcona County has developed an emergency service that combines fire fighting and emergency medical care. The personnel in Strathcona County Emergency Services are cross-trained in both fire fighting and emergency medical response. For our community, this "integrated service" means excellent patient care, along with efficiencies from the operation of a single, combined service.

While the details of the transfer to provincial responsibility are yet to be completed, Council is optimistic that Strathcona County Emergency Services will continue to be the primary emergency medical service provider for our community.

## Graffiti

If your neighbourhood is targeted by graffiti, be sure to report it to the RCMP at 780-467-7741. Graffiti needs to be cleaned up as quickly as possible on both private and public property.

If a fence has been hit by graffiti, Strathcona County residents can apply for a free removal kit. Here's how:

- Report the graffiti to the RCMP.
- Take a photo and complete the Graffiti Removal Kit application online at [www.strathcona.ab.ca/graffiti](http://www.strathcona.ab.ca/graffiti) (kit includes one gallon of paint, paint brush, roller, a tray and gloves).
- Drop off the form at the Recreation, Parks and Culture office at 2025 Oak Street or email [graffiti@strathcona.ab.ca](mailto:graffiti@strathcona.ab.ca).

Here are different methods of removing graffiti.

### Paint

A patchwork of paint or a large block of different color invites more graffiti. Please be sure to paint the entire surface evenly. If your fence has been hit by graffiti, apply for a free Graffiti Removal Kit.

### Chemical removal

Solvent works well to remove graffiti from most surfaces, including stucco, natural brick and cement.

### Power washing

Power washing may be used after applying a paint solvent to the area.

### More information

[www.strathcona.ab.ca/graffiti](http://www.strathcona.ab.ca/graffiti)  
780-464-8470

Prompt and continual removal of graffiti is the best way for you to protect your property and preserve the image of your neighbourhood.



## Work moves ahead toward regional plan

Strathcona continues to participate on the Capital Region Board. This group of 25 municipalities is developing a Regional Growth Plan, which the Province has mandated must be completed by the end of March 2009.

Work has begun in earnest on all of the sub-committees; regional transit, land use, social housing, geographic information systems (GIS) and Board governance. The Capital Region Board has formally approved vision statements and guiding principles for the Transit Committee, the GIS committee and Housing Committee.

The information and data collection process has included discussions with a broad range of stakeholders, including business organizations (such as the Chambers of Commerce), industry, non-profit organizations, social, educational and environmental agencies, as well as staff from the member municipalities.

Independent consultants have been brought in to lead the planning

process and several of the committees have established Blue Ribbon Panels of experts to provide third-party feedback on the material that is being developed. All committees are looking at existing information and studies previously undertaken in our region, as well investigating best practices in other jurisdictions inside and outside of Canada.

The board will begin to review initial concepts and draft plans in November and December.

The Board recently appointed a new Chief Administrative Officer, Kathleen Leclair. Although she has been on the job only for a short while, she has taken the time to come out to Strathcona County and tour part of the community.

I am pleased to say that while the task of developing a regional plan is complex, a spirit of cooperation is evident among the partners involved in this work.

## With our MLA



Councillor Bidzinski and friends at the annual Halloween gathering hosted by the Honourable Iris Evans, Minister of Finance and Enterprise and MLA for Sherwood Park.

## Snow clearing

Responding to the wishes of our community for improved snow clearing, Council recently approved some changes that should result in some streets being plowed sooner.



Collector roadways (Priority 3 roads such as Main Street and Strathcona Drive) will be plowed within eight days following 15-21 centimetres of snow accumulation. The previous standard was 20-30 centimetres.

Residential streets (Priority 4s) will now be plowed when there is 10 centimetres of compacted snow. The previous standard was 12 to 15 centimetres. Snow will be windrowed and cleared as conditions require.

In some years, compacted snow on residential streets has created deep rutting. To address this, the County may clear these streets if there is seven centimetres or more of compacted snow on or after February 1.

Road and weather conditions vary greatly from year to year, and it is difficult to establish a policy that addresses all circumstances. The changes we have approved are a positive direction and another step in continuous improvement.

## Bulletin board

### Register your alarm system

New this year: alarms in homes, businesses and other buildings must be registered with Strathcona County Enforcement Services. Registration is free until December 31, 2008; after that, a charge applies. Visit [www.strathcona.ab.ca](http://www.strathcona.ab.ca) for details.

## Talking of trees—Urban Forest Conference

Environment and the benefits of trees have received much attention as our community hosted the national Urban Forest Conference in September.

It started with the Arbor Day celebration last spring, one of the largest of its kind in Alberta. Every Grade 1 student was invited to Broadmoor Lake Park for an exhilarating and educational event designed to help build respect and understanding for trees and our environment.

Then in September, over 60 Grade 4 students participated in the Children's Talking Tree Conference. This conference was the first of its kind in Canada endorsed by Tree Canada. This

program was developed to enhance the Grade 4 curriculum. A child-inspired video captured the students' thoughts and was presented at the national conference in September 2008.

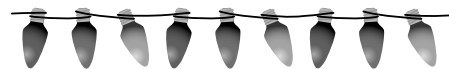
The Canadian Urban Forest Conference itself drew more than 300 delegates and a series of national and international speakers who discussed key issues related to the environment and forestry, from the mountain pine beetle to preserving our forests. Dr. David Suzuki gave the keynote presentation to an audience of more than 1,000. His presentation was also webstreamed to junior and senior high school students in the County.



David Suzuki, keynote speaker at the successful 2008 Canadian Urban Forest Conference hosted by Strathcona County and Tree Canada in September at Millennium Place, is welcomed by members of Council.

### Celebration of Lights

Sunday, November 30  
3 – 5 p.m. at Festival Place  
Crafts, cookie decorating, carolling and visits with Santa.



### New Year's Eve Festival

Wednesday, December 31  
4 – 8 p.m. at Broadmoor Lake Park  
Family activities. Fireworks at 8 p.m.

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