



Strathcona County

LIVING



Keeping you informed

June 2016

Message from your Mayor and County Council

Community welcomes our neighbours from the north

As of May 20, 2016



Mayor Roxanne Carr

On behalf of Council, I thank each and every resident and business for opening your hearts and making the residents of Fort McMurray and area feel so welcome. I also thank the people who were inconvenienced when they were advised they needed to relocate scheduled events to make space for us to open our Welcome Centre. This includes the vendors who

participate in our popular farmers' market that is held each Wednesday in the Community Centre. Your warmth and generosity are why Strathcona County is known as one of the most livable communities in Canada.

About 94,000 people have now been safely evacuated out of Fort McMurray and the surrounding areas. That's a win in itself! At this time, we give the first responders a huge shout out.

Canadian Red Cross reports about 2,200 of our neighbours from the north are now staying in local hotels or with family and friends in the immediate area. Day to day the situation changes and many people ask Strathcona County what it is doing to help support these very special guests.

Strathcona County is using significant resources to ensure the most effective and efficient support in leveraging our community assets to assist provincial efforts. Currently, the County is focused on the immediate needs related to fighting the fire, and ensuring those evacuees who are being housed in our community have access to information and the supports they need. Our short-term goal is to ensure evacuees are safe and comfortable.

We have deployed highly-experienced firefighting personnel and RCMP to assist in battling the fire in Fort McMurray – rotating these teams out every 48 hours. We continue to maintain staffing levels for emergency response in Strathcona County.

There's also a lot going on behind the scenes. Strathcona County had offered and prepared to host an evacuation centre. Because so many evacuees have found safe accommodations elsewhere, the Provincial Operation Centre told us that there's no need to open the centre here.

To give our guests a sense of community and access to needed information, our County opened a Welcome Centre in the Community Centre's Agora, run by trained staff from Family and Community Services. The centre was open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week, to provide those displaced by the fires a place for their children to play, to get information on emotional and mental health services, connect to multi-agency support services, or just connect with others from the northern region.

At the province's request, we also opened a debit card distribution centre in Sherwood Park. This was the third centre in the capital region, and was opened to help reduce the long wait times. The centre operated alongside our Welcome Centre until Friday, May 20. Parents really seemed to appreciate the childcare services while they waited to get their debit cards.

When the debit card distribution centre closed, Family and Community Services' staff relocated the Welcome Centre from the Agora to FCS offices on the second floor of the Community Centre. New hours for the Welcome Centre are Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. To make a very difficult situation a little easier for all evacuees, Council waived fees for evacuees so they can enjoy our recreational facilities and use our Strathcona County Transit.

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Strathcona County fire fighters get some much needed rest after close to 30 hours of helping battle fires in Fort McMurray.

Enviroservice Station opens



Ribbon cutting ceremony for the new EnviroService Station L to R: Estefania Cortes-Vargas, MLA for Strathcona-Sherwood Park; Mayor Roxanne Carr, and Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities

The Broadview EnviroService Station was officially opened on Saturday, April 23 with the Honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities; Estefania Cortes-Vargas, MLA for Strathcona-Sherwood Park, and Mayor Roxanne Carr.

The Broadview EnviroService Station, located at 101 Broadview Road, Sherwood Park, is a new permanent drop-off location for Strathcona County residents to discard household materials in a safe and environmentally-friendly way. The facility is open Thursdays to Sundays.

It makes a difference when items are dropped off here rather than ending up at the curbside. Regular, everyday items like paint, motor oil, aerosols and electronics need special disposal. If they end up in the landfill or sewage system, they can contaminate the air, water and soil.

Visit www.strathcona.ca/enviro for hours of operation and more information.

Built to meet demand

The station is already seeing a 40 per cent increase in its first few months. Over 4,000 cars have already visited the station – last year's 12 drop-off events saw 2,853 users.



We hope you enjoy this edition

There's more news inside, from the issue of industrial taxation, to Pride of Strathcona Awards recipients, to a focus on seniors.



Industrial taxation

Doing our fair share

Recent media stories have reported the province is looking at making changes through the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) review that would standardize and; in some cases, force municipalities to share industrial tax dollars with other municipalities. The *MGA* is the legislative framework under which all municipalities and municipal entities across Alberta operate.

We know there is a lack of sharing of industrial tax dollars in some pockets across Alberta; however, this is not the case in Strathcona County. Rather, our municipality has evolved into a balanced model that is based on urban and rural sharing. Painting all municipalities with the same brush would be a mistake.

We have a solid governance model. Our rural area, with fewer than 30,000 people, hosts most of our industry, effectively pooling tax revenues with nine urban hamlets, made up of over 70,000 people. In return, our rural residents have access to a broad range of programs and services that are unavailable to rural residents in other municipalities.

Revenue collected from industrial, commercial and both urban and rural taxpayers helps support infrastructure and services in hamlets across Strathcona County, as well as inter-municipal agreements and cost-sharing partnerships with neighbouring municipalities in our sub-region.

If we were not a specialized municipality, the Capital region could have up to 10 different municipal governments and administration instead of one – and a less efficient system of sharing and distributing costs, expenses and services.

We also share revenue through many joint municipal agreements with Edmonton and surrounding municipalities. To give you a good example, 17 years ago, Strathcona County, along with the County of Lamont, Sturgeon County and Fort Saskatchewan partnered to develop the Alberta's Industrial Heartland into the powerhouse it is today.

Strathcona County saw the potential of the Alberta's Industrial Heartland in providing value back to the municipality. Over the years, our County has invested planning expertise and 10s of millions of our taxpayer dollars and resources to realize that potential. This has included ensuring our County is environmentally safe and prepared for any type of emergency in the industrial heartland. As a result, Strathcona County has become the largest annual financial contributor to the Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association. Strathcona County has definitely gained from our ability to be proactive and forward-thinking.

We've worked hard to get where we are today. As one of 24 municipalities that sit on the Capital Region Board, we're all focused on what's best for the future. In fact, we are one of five specialized municipalities in Alberta and the only one that uses this unique taxation/revenue-sharing model.

At the March Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) conference, the Minister of Municipal Affairs stated, "There will be no redistribution of linear assessment from rural Alberta to Calgary, Edmonton, or any other city." The Minister reaffirmed this statement in the House on May 2. Council found these words quite reassuring. And, on May 3, the president of AAMDC advised the Alberta government in writing - it supports status quo. Our Council echoes this same message.

Council and our administration are looking forward to thoroughly reviewing the draft legislation and providing our feedback on the impacts and implications the new *MGA* will have on Strathcona County.

Message from your Mayor and County Council County welcomes our neighbours from the north

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How can you help? You can offer to donate!

We've heard from residents who want to reach out to evacuees to offer accommodations or a range of services.

Donate money through the Canadian Red Cross. By doing so, thanks to the provincial and federal governments, each dollar you donate is worth three dollars.

Donate non-perishable food items at our local and regional food banks. Donations are available to all evacuees, including those who are staying with family and friends.

The Sherwood Park Mall acted as a donation drop off, working in conjunction with local agencies and the Edmonton Emergency Relief Services Society.

You can volunteer your time.

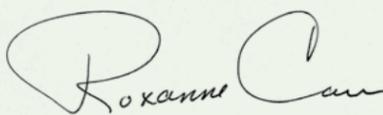
The Information and Volunteer Centre (IVC) for Strathcona County is collecting names of residents who want to volunteer. As requests come in to IVC, the names of willing volunteers are being passed on. IVC has advised us that no official requests for large volunteer efforts have been received from the province. Residents who want to volunteer can also contact the Edmonton Emergency Relief Services Society.

Further details on supports available will be shared on our website as it becomes available at www.strathcona.ca/fortmacfire.

What's next?

Our community is in this for the long haul. We will continue to work closely with our local agencies to assess need and to look for opportunities to leverage the strength of our amazing community over the longer term.

Rebuilding will be a challenge and something that will take time. As the province moves into the recovery phase, our County is sharing resources required to support that effort. Patience, understanding and a willingness to help are the best tools we can supply as things move forward.



Mayor Roxanne Carr

County initiatives

Help is here

Right now, conversations are changing in our community.

Economic realities that we once thought affected "everyone else" are now impacting Strathcona County. Today, most people within our own borders know someone whose company is facing job cutbacks or uncertainty.

Friends and neighbours are having hard conversations about finances. Stress and anxiety are penetrating the mindset of many, regardless of address or age.

As an organization, we're paying close attention to the increased use of mental, social and financial supports in our community.

Over a one year period, Family and Community Services measured a 171 per cent increase in calls inquiring about financial issues (increase of 781 cases). Calls asking for support around family relationships, mental health, family violence, housing, suicide risk and work have also increased.

We're also talking with our partners in the community, such as the Information and Volunteer Centre and Heartland Housing Foundation. They are seeing the same need. The Strathcona Food Bank has seen an average increase of 53 per cent in the number of residents needing the Food Bank (Jan-March 2016) compared to



Congratulations to our 2016 Pride of Strathcona Awards recipients

The 2016 Pride of Strathcona Awards recipients have distinguished themselves, and contributed to our community, in many ways. Leadership in climate change, agricultural stewardship, care and compassion for those in need, and excellence in arts and athletics are some of the achievements that will be celebrated at the Pride of Strathcona Awards ceremony on Friday, May 27, at Festival Place. Everyone is welcome to attend this no-charge event.

Mayor's Award

Bridgette Hardy-Crytes

Community Service

**Moyra McAllister
Jordan Smith**

Arts, Culture and Heritage

Renee Lippa

Agricultural Leadership

**Greg and DeeAnn Knott
Rob Sproule**

Professional Achievement

**Satish Pandya
Tim Wiwchar**

Youth

**Teagan de Seguin
Annalena Thiesen**

Sports and Recreation Development

**Brian Jolly
David Kozicki**

Athletic Achievement

**David Elliott
Gwendolyn McGuire
Christina Sanders**

Outstanding Group

**Sherwood Park Curling Club League Executive
Strathcona 4-H Rein Riders**

For more information about the Pride of Strathcona Awards, visit www.strathcona.ca/pride.



last year. That translates into 769 more people needing food than in the same three months last year.

But there is good news.

There is help in place. There is someone to listen.

As we move through these times of uncertainty, we can hold firm to the power of our community. Through education, we can encourage those affected to contact the County for information on available supports.

As a resident of Strathcona County, you are an important part of this education. You are one of nearly 96,000 voices that can point people to the resources in place. As a community, we can continue to help each other by continuing to donate to the Strathcona Food Bank and second-hand clothing stores.

We know the importance of individuals and families, of all ages and backgrounds, to have access to necessary social, mental and financial supports.

Please share. Information is available on our website at www.strathcona.ca/communitysupports or by calling 780-464-4044.



Fire ban in effect

Ever wonder what factors are considered before declaring a fire ban?

Every day leading up to a fire ban (or during a fire ban), fire weather values such as current humidity, current and forecasted wind speed, forecasted temperatures, recent precipitation and possibility of rain are reviewed and evaluated by Strathcona County Emergency Services staff.

These factors, along with moisture content values of fire fuels such as grass, needles, and leaves on the ground, indicate the potential rate and intensity of fire spread. In combination, they help determine the hazard level in Strathcona County. The hazard level is one of the primary factors when deciding if a current fire ban should remain, or in times of no fire ban, if one should be declared.

Other factors considered include:

- risk of a fire getting out of control
- relation between temperature and humidity
- water restrictions or water bans and/or
- staffing and equipment capacity due to other fires being fought within the County

When declared by Strathcona County, a fire ban means no outdoor burning of any kind is allowed, including the use of fireworks. All fire permits are temporarily suspended. Cooking and recreational appliances that produce heat and can be turned off using a switch or knob can be used during a fire ban. This includes, but is not limited to, gas barbecues and propane fire pits.

Do not hesitate to call **9-1-1** to report a fire!

Fire bans are communicated to residents through:

- Strathcona County's website www.strathcona.ca
- Strathcona County Alert system (sign up today at www.strathcona.ca/scalerts),
- Strathcona County's burning information line at 780-464-8464.
- The UPDATEline at 1-866-653-9959
- Sherwood Park News newspaper
- radio
- media
- road signs
- www.AlbertaFireBans.ca

Remember to use extreme caution when ATV'ing. Ensure the ATV is equipped with the spark arrestor.

Note: Any person who ignites, fuels, supervises, maintains or permits an outdoor fire within the municipal boundaries of Strathcona County during a fire ban can be fined \$1,000. Should the fire get out of control, and emergency fire response is required, the person responsible for the fire can be charged the full firefighting costs.

FireSmart your property

Are you concerned about the risk of wildfire affecting your property? The FireSmart program works with landowners to reduce or eliminate fire hazards and fuel sources on private property. Some things residents can do right away to reduce risk can include removing any dry and dead plant debris from under decks, in the gutter and accumulations against any structure. For more information on FireSmart or to download a structure and site hazard assessment form which helps to assess risk, www.strathcona.ca/firesmart

Always there

Find out more about the people who plan, build, manage and maintain our infrastructure to contribute to quality of life and place in our community.

www.strathcona.ca/alwaysthere

Rain or shine, snow or freezing rain, grader operators work year-round in Strathcona County. A team of men and women are always there to keep you moving safely on over 1,700 km of roads.



Grader operator
We're always there...keeping our roads safe.



Sign crew
We're always there...keeping our community moving safely.

Community Heritage

Buzz around Strathcona County!

This year, 2016, marks a 20-year milestone for Strathcona County as a specialized municipality. We are marking this milestone with a number of different activities.

Explore & Win!



www.strathcona.ca/buzz

Pick-up
your Buzz Around Strathcona County Passport starting **June 15** at any Strathcona County facility.

We're creating a Legacy Forest at Centennial Park in Sherwood Park. This themed forest will involve planting a pollinator habitat — a special garden home to a variety of perennials that bloom from spring until fall, as well as native plants, trees and shrubs. Together they will create a habitat to support and encourage pollinators, including bees, butterflies and birds. It will be a welcoming area for people to come and enjoy nature, and even to observe the pollinators at work.

Coming later this spring watch for more information on Buzz around Strathcona County:

- Starting June 15, pick up your passport at any Strathcona County facility.
- Explore Strathcona County hamlets and take photos.
- Learn about our history as a specialized municipality that offers both rural and urban lifestyles.
- Share your experience for a chance to WIN sweet prizes!

Questions?

Call 780-467-2211 or go to www.strathcona.ca/buzz

Your community

Lawn Busters needs your help

Are you looking for a flexible, meaningful opportunity? A little bit of your time will make a big difference in someone's life. Lawn Busters matches eligible seniors with volunteers to help mow their lawns when needed. You can be matched to a senior close to your school or home. You let us know your ideal location. Interested and would like more information? Ready to join the team? Call 780-464-4044.

Your time and commitment are important. Why?

- You will make a significant difference in a senior's life.
- You will be building a stronger and safer community.
- You can build a meaningful connection.

Lawn Busters matches seniors with volunteers to assist them with lawn care. It is your decision if you would like to offer help with other yard maintenance tasks, such as weeding or trimming. Volunteers may be individuals (14 years+), families, teams or groups, who enjoy working outside, want to connect with others in their community and prefer a flexible volunteer schedule and commitment.

You can join the team to assist a senior for the season, or add your name to the casual volunteer list and help out when you can.



Volunteers Needed!

Help a senior with lawn care

Lawn Busters matches eligible seniors with volunteers to assist with lawn mowing.

Two ways you can help:

- 1 When caring for your own yard, give someone else a hand.
- 2 Become a registered volunteer with Lawn Busters

Ideal volunteer opportunity for those who:

- Enjoy working outside
- Want to make a difference in the community
- Prefer a flexible volunteer schedule

To volunteer or request help with your lawn, contact Family and Community Services at 780-464-4044.

www.strathcona.ca/lawnbusters

STRATHCONA COUNTY

Dig into a growing trend



Urban agriculture is a “growing” trend across North America. Here in the County, residents, businesses and community groups are being asked to share their vision on urban agriculture.

Urban agriculture – the practice of cultivating food in an urban area – is the first strategy to be developed as part of Strathcona County’s Agriculture Master Plan.

During the first phase, which runs to the end of June, resident input will be gathered to find

Types of urban agriculture production include:

Home gardens where food can be grown in creative ways. Gardens can be in yards, on a roof, or even in an empty swimming pool!

Community gardens are areas cultivated by a group of people, primarily growing for themselves, for their community, or for food banks.

Commercial urban agriculture, or urban farming, comes in many shapes and sizes and is designed to grow food for market. Examples include farming a collection of small parcels; large operations on vacant lots or utility easements; rooftops; greenhouse operations; indoor hydroponic and aquaponic (combined fish and veggie) systems.

Urban animal husbandry involves the management and care of animals. Raising animals is a potential aspect of home gardens, community gardens, and urban farms.

Let’s talk about urban agriculture.

Details on public engagement and online survey at www.strathcona.ca/urbanag



out which topics should be explored as the urban agriculture strategy is developed.

Urban agriculture includes growing fruits, herbs and vegetables, or raising animals. It is becoming more popular as communities look for ways to increase food security. These practices support local, alternate choices to the traditional food system, and allow communities to grow niche foods.

Strathcona County, let’s talk urban agriculture.

The urban agriculture strategy project team is holding open houses and attending events and meeting places in the County’s nine hamlets, to hear from the community. An online survey is also available. Sign up for the Let’s Talk: Urban Agriculture e-newsletter for updates on engagement opportunities and the urban agriculture strategy development. Visit www.strathcona.ca/urbanag.

Community events

June: Focus on seniors

In 2011, the baby boomers began turning 65. With nearly 9,000 residents over the age of 65 in Strathcona County, older adults are a growing demographic. By 2031, the number of seniors in Strathcona County is expected to double - resulting in seniors outnumbering the children and youth in our community, for the first time.

Strathcona County is proud to honour the contributions of seniors in our community, while working to provide the necessary health, safety and community supports.

Celebrating our seniors!

Seniors are an asset to our community. As an age-friendly and caring community, Strathcona County is proud to celebrate our seniors’ contributions during Seniors’ Week! Join us for our 30-year celebration on Thursday, June 9 from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, 13 Brower Drive, Sherwood Park (mobility accessible).

Enjoy light refreshments and entertainment amongst the company of friends. Tickets are available for \$5 at the Family and Community Services office (200-501 Festival Avenue, Sherwood Park) or the Information and Volunteer Centre (100 Ordze Avenue, Sherwood Park). Transportation is available by calling 780-464-4044.

Seniors’ Transportation Forum

This year, the Seniors’ Transportation Information Series offers sessions that are arranged on different days, so seniors can pick and choose sessions based on their individual needs and areas of interest. Seniors are welcome to attend one or all sessions. Sessions are offered free of charge and refreshments will be provided. Please register in advance by calling Family and Community Services at 780-464-4044.

Sherwood Park sessions

Sherwood Park 55 Plus Club
50A Spruce Avenue, Sherwood Park

- **Wednesday, June 22: 10 a.m. – 12 noon**
AHS Home Care, Society of Seniors Caring about Seniors and Driving Miss Daisy
- **Wednesday, June 29: 10 a.m. – 12 noon**
LIFT Drive Happiness and Care for a Ride

Rural Strathcona County sessions

Strathcona Area 5 Senior Citizens’ (Josephburg)
Drop-In Centre, 57A-54569 Rge. Rd. 215, Josephburg

- **Monday, June 6: 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.**
AMA and Strathcona County Mobility Bus
- **Monday, June 13: 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.**
AHS Home Care, Society of Seniors Caring about Seniors and Driving Miss Daisy
- **Monday, June 27: 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.**
LIFT Drive Happiness and Care for a Ride



June 15

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Learn the signs and break the silence. If you, or someone you know, is impacted by elder abuse, there is help available. Contact the Strathcona County 24 hour Elder Abuse Line for more information and support: 780-464-7233.

More information

Visit www.strathcona.ca/seniors or call Family and Community Services at 780-464-4044 to learn more about our senior-specific programs and services.

Canada Day fun!

On July 1, join us as we celebrate Canada’s birthday at Strathcona County’s largest festival! Free family activities, performances and fun for everyone. Find out more at www.strathcona.ca/canaday



COUNTY CONNECT

— your online window to service —
www.strathcona.ca/countyconnect



Connect with us...

Twitter: @StrathcoCounty

Facebook: facebook.com/strathcona.county

YouTube: youtube.com/strathconacounty

eNewsletters: strathcona.ca/enews

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FSC logo here