



Ag facility finds a home

The location announcement for Strathcona County's multi-purpose agricultural facility was a long time coming for members of the agricultural community.

"I really believe in this project," said Gary Millar, a 40-year resident and local businessman who has been advocating for an agricultural facility since 1998.

"I have visited so many other communities that have taken the plunge and built a facility like this, and the whole community, the cultural fabric, has benefitted by the way it attracts new people and opportunities to the community. It has helped the community grow," said Millar.

"One only has to look at Ponoka, Alberta, or Brandon, Manitoba. The development of multi-

"Helping the public become more engaged with agriculture—be aware of it, support it—we have the opportunity with a facility like this."

- Gary Millar, resident and local businessman

Active in the local Arabian horse community, Millar is also a former member of the County's Agricultural Service Board. He currently runs an equine business from his farm in northeast Strathcona County that offers equine-assisted therapy and the Arabian Horse Reading Literacy Program.

Millar explains that without a local facility for major equine events, County residents are required to travel to Ponoka, Red Deer or Calgary, or even out-of-province locations in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the United States.

Having personally travelled to venues near and far, Millar has seen the benefits of building a recreational agricultural facility—not just for user groups, but for the community at large.

purpose agricultural facilities has helped those communities, both from an economic growth standpoint and by revitalizing the community. While Strathcona County does not require revitalization, the economic impact will be huge."

Location supports local business

Last spring, the County announced the multi-purpose agricultural facility will be located on a 150-acre parcel of land surrounding the historic Bremner Heritage Site. This site is on Range Road 225 north of Township Road 534, approximately 15 minutes northeast of Sherwood Park.

Millar says the proximity of the Bremner location to Sherwood Park will ensure the economic

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Mark your calendars!

Here are a few of the upcoming events in Strathcona County this fall.

Deville Community Market

Every Tuesday | 4 - 8 p.m.
Deville/North Cooking Lake Hall

Pickle workshops

September 26 and 27 | 6 - 9 p.m.
Ardrossan Recreation Complex
Visit strathcona.ca/calendar to register

Celebration of Lights

November 17 | 3 - 5 p.m.
Community Centre

Christmas in the Heartland

November 24 and 25 | 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
780-400-3880 for more details

Christmas in the Country

December 1 | 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
780-400-3880 for more details

Visit the Strathcona County events calendar for more events and info!

strathcona.ca/calendar



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benefits of those who visit the facility will stay in the County.

"We now have an opportunity to really support local businesses by all of the people who are going to be coming and using our facility and visiting our community," he said, pointing out that statistics from other venues suggest that for every dollar an exhibitor or visitor spends at an event, they spend \$10 in the local community.

Both the facility and site will draw people from across Strathcona County and the region. Amenities will include an indoor arena and a covered outdoor arena to support agricultural events. The site will include trails and day-use spaces with the potential for farmer's markets, barbecues and camping.

Rediscover rural roots

Building this facility is about more than meeting the needs of agricultural groups. It aligns with the County's vision to preserve its agricultural heritage and to invest in recreational programs and facilities that set it apart as a specialized municipality with rural roots.

Millar is excited about how the new facility will bring the agricultural community together with the broader public.

"What an incredible opportunity for our ag folks here in the County to work to rebuild our agricultural community. Helping the public become more engaged with agriculture—be aware of it, support it—we have the opportunity with a facility like this," said Millar, mentioning his own interest in using the facility as a place to bring his horse literacy program to elementary students from across the County.

"Who knows how creative our ag people could get out here to help the urban population become more aware of what's going on in our rural community and how it all fits in."

For more information about the multi-purpose agricultural facility, visit strathcona.ca/agfacility.

FireSmart chipping program

Reducing the wildfire risk in Strathcona County

Each year, Strathcona County Emergency Services responds to wildfires in the community. These fires have the potential to impact communities and threaten homes.



Since 2014, Emergency Services has identified several subdivisions where all properties are offered an annual wildfire risk assessment free of charge. To date, over 1,000 residential structures have been assessed.

FireSmart Canada works with Strathcona County to support subdivisions that work together and reduce their collective risk to wildfire through the FireSmart Canada Community Recognition Program. Strathcona County further supports these subdivisions with additional risk reduction programs. Most popular among these has been our chipping program. The chipping program is an option for any subdivision in Strathcona County that wants to reduce their risk to wildfire.

How the program works:

- 1) Contact Strathcona County Emergency Services. A member of the department will complete a community report, identifying the wildfire risks within the subdivision. This report is valid for three years.
- 2) Establish a subdivision FireSmart Board, made up of residents in the subdivision. Based on the information from the community report, the Board may choose to host a chipping event within the subdivision.
- 3) The County will support one community chipping event free of charge over the three-year report duration.
- 4) Residents can remove any deadfall accumulations within 30 metres of their structures and pile at the end of their properties for the County to chip and remove.*

*Note: The County will only remove deadfall and conifers that are free of disease and dirt.

For more information about this program, contact Emergency Services: firesmart@strathcona.ca or 780-464-8468.



Poster Contest winners

Grade 3

1st Place - Zoe Jackson
Win Ferguson Elementary

2nd Place - Caleb Buechler
Brentwood Elementary

3rd Place - Walker Koza
Fultonvale Elementary Junior High

Grade 4

1st Place - Olivia Giebelhaus
Pine Street Elementary

2nd Place - Grace Kim
James Mowat Elementary

3rd Place - Jordan Helgeson
École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic Elementary

Grade 5

1st Place - Tristan Pertras
Lakeland Ridge School

2nd Place - Natalie Kurylo
Wes Hosford Elementary

3rd Place - Sloan McLure
Wes Hosford Elementary



In the spring of 2018, the Agricultural Service Board held its annual poster contest for grades 3, 4 and 5 students from the Elk Island School District. Art was chosen for the creative representation of the theme, "How does your garden grow?"

Over 800 posters were received. The contest winners were each presented a cheque by Council at the June 12 Priorities Committee Meeting.

The Agricultural Service Board would like to thank all the students who entered the contest.



RENEW YOUR PLAN, ACCESS FUNDING, REVITALIZE YOUR FARM

If your Alberta Environmental Farm Plan is more than ten years old, you will need to update it for your farm to be eligible for some funding programs. Renewing your plan gives you better access to markets and funding. With our new online platform and our network of trained technicians across Alberta, it is easy to update your environmental farm plan on a regular basis. Connect with us for more information at www.albertaefp.com



Stop invasive species in your tracks

Invasive species include non-native plants and animals that adversely affect the natural balance and beauty of the landscape, from lakes and trails to your own backyard. If not controlled, they can also impact your ability to enjoy many outdoor activities.

“They’re called invasive because they can take over an area very quickly,” said Lori Morgan, an agriculture technician with Strathcona County Transportation and Agriculture Services.

She explains how invasive species can stop native plants, animals or fish from being able to do what they would normally do in nature, and how that affects people: “Where you used to bird watch, the birds stop coming. Places where you used to be able to go boating can essentially turn into a marsh from flowering rush and you can’t get your boat into the water.”

She also said that a resident could plant a seemingly harmless invasive in their garden like creeping bellflower that can spread throughout their yard, and require regular pulling for years to come.

Contamination comes from many sources

Camping, quadding, hiking and boating—recreational activities can lead to contamination when people unknowingly bring invasive species into the County on their vehicles, clothing or gear.

A more blatant example of contamination includes when people empty their aquariums into a local body of water, such as a pond or a lake.

“They believe they are doing something good when they set their pet fish free, not realizing that what they’re letting go isn’t native to Strathcona County or Alberta or even North America,” said Morgan, noting that the Prussian carp is a species of wild goldfish that has been illegally released into various waterbodies in Alberta.

“When you suddenly introduce a species not native to the area, it throws everything out of whack; now there’s a predator that the rest of the ecosystem has not learned how to deal with.”

Once established, invasive species are very difficult and costly to manage, control and remove, so Strathcona County is proactive about looking for them. This includes regularly checking bodies of water, such as stormwater ponds, wetlands and lakes. The County also monitors public lands for potential issues and uses the annual Weed Inspection program to monitor residential properties.

“If we see anything that might be an issue, we act on it quickly to control and remove it,” said Morgan.

Play, Clean, Go

To help raise awareness of the impact of invasive species, Strathcona County has teamed up with Play, Clean, Go, an education and outreach campaign that is becoming a North American movement.

Residents may notice the Play, Clean, Go logo on signage along the River Valley Alliance Trail, the Beaver Hills Biodiversity Trail and at the Strathcona Wilderness Centre. Some of this signage also includes information about invasive species in the area. In all cases, the signage is a call to action for people to clean their footwear before and after leaving the area.

Morgan adds that if residents see something overgrown, out of place or maybe a single plant where there isn’t much else growing, they can contact the County to investigate, whether it’s on private or public property.

“If you notice something odd or a single species that is starting to outcompete nature, let us know,” she said.

For more information, and to see photos of invasive species in Strathcona County, visit strathcona.ca/invasives.

Give invasive species the brush off

Here’s what you can do to help prevent the spread of invasive plants and animals:

- Remove plants, animals and mud from boots, gear, pets and vehicles.
- Clean your gear before entering and leaving a recreation site.
- Stay on designated roads and trails.
- Use certified or local firewood and hay.



**STOP INVASIVE SPECIES
IN YOUR TRACKS.**



Hunting changes for Strathcona County

Know the rules and regulations that are in place before you plan your hunt.

The 2018 hunting season runs September 1 to December 7. Alberta Fish and Wildlife, Edmonton District, is responsible for wildlife management and enforcement of Alberta's Wildlife Act.

The 2018 Alberta Guide to Hunting Regulations is now available. Important changes for 2018 include:

- Lands previously in Strathcona County and within WMU 250 have been transferred to WMU 248. This increases hunting opportunities in the area that previously fell within WMU 250.

For other changes, licence fees and locations of hunting licence issuers, please visit the Government of Alberta website at albertaregulations.ca or call 1-877-944-0313.

Further information

- Alberta Fish and Wildlife, Edmonton District Office - 780-427-3574
- Transportation and Agriculture Services - 780-417-7100 strathcona.ca/hunting

24-hour numbers

- Strathcona County RCMP - 780-467-7741
- Report-a-Poacher - 1-800-642-3800

Roadside mulching

You may have noticed a new piece of equipment in the ditch last fall and winter.

We began a roadside mulching test project in 2017 and have extended it for the fall of 2018. The machine will be clearing back trees and brush that are overgrown within the road right-of-way.

The goal of the project is to improve the right-of-way for drainage and traffic sightlines, and to enable a larger mowing path. The machine is used to shred trees and brush into mulch chips that will naturally decompose over time.

Ornamental trees near approaches and shelterbelts will not be removed by this program.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact 780-417-7100.



Watch for agricultural equipment on roads and highways

Farmers use a variety of machinery for various agricultural operations. Today's farmer may have fields in several locations, resulting in having to cross public roads with large machinery.

According to Canadian Agriculture Injury Surveillance, 13 per cent of farm-related fatalities are traffic related.

Left-turn collisions, rear-end collisions and passing collisions are the most common.

Take your time - don't follow too close!

Defensive driving tips

- **Be alert.** Watch for farm vehicles on rural roads.
- **Keep your distance.** Stay at least 15 metres or five car-lengths back.
- **Slow down.** As soon as you see a slow-moving vehicle, slow down immediately.
- **Be patient.** Don't pass until the road is clear of traffic and you are positive it is safe to pass.
- **Make sure you're clear.** When passing, make sure you can see the farm vehicle in your rear-view mirror before you change back into the right lane.

Country Talk

News for rural residents provided by Strathcona County's Agricultural Service Board



The Agricultural Service Board (ASB) acts as an advisory body to Council on agriculture matters, while promoting and developing agriculture policies and programs to meet the needs of residents and the municipality.

Agricultural Service Board
Carol Maier, Chair

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780-417-7100

 STRATHCONA
COUNTY