

# athabasca county connection



## FIREFIIGHTERS TO RECEIVE INCREASED TRAINING

There have been significant changes at many of Athabasca County's nine fire departments and many more changes to come, thanks to a new pilot project started by the municipality.

A new position called the Regional Fire Service Co-ordinator has been created to help address some of the challenges of the rural fire departments and to update training procedures for volunteers.

Stuart Larson has been hired to fill the new position and has been hard at work identifying areas that can be improved at the fire halls.

"One of the most important things I'm doing is re-tooling the training program," said Larson. He said he is working to ensure that all volunteers have the highest standard of training and know how to operate all the equipment in each of the halls.

"Without volunteers, we don't have a fire service, so the better we take care of our volunteers, the better they will take care of us," Larson said.

As Larson's job progresses, he will take over much of the administrative workload of volunteer firefighters. The idea is to take as much pressure as possible off the



volunteers, so they can focus on emergency response, rather than paperwork. ■

### FireSmart Quick Tips

- In the last 10 years, an average of over 1,000 wildfires were started in Alberta each year consuming over 120,000 hectares of forest land annually.
- Forest fires can spread as fast as 7 km/h and wind blown grass fires have been known to travel at speeds exceeding 17 km/h.
- In Alberta, 40% of all wildfires are caused by human activity.
- All burning in Athabasca County requires a permit. This includes burning barrels, incinerators, smudges, grass yard debris, brush piles and fireworks. Permits are free.

## ATHABASCA COUNTY OFFICE

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## ATHABASCA COUNTY COUNCIL MEETINGS

July 12, 2011  
July 28, 2011  
August 9, 2011  
August 31, 2011  
September 13, 2011

Everyone is welcome to attend, but residents wishing to address Council are asked to book an appointment in advance by contacting our County Office at 780 675 2273.

## ATHABASCA COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS

<i>Division #1</i> Allen Balay Councillor Rochester / Perryvale	<i>Division #6</i> Jack Dowhaluk Councillor Wandering River
<i>Division #2</i> Denis Wilcott Councillor Colinton	<i>Division #7</i> David Yurdiga Reeve & Councillor Grassland
<i>Division #3</i> Doris Splane Deputy Reeve & Councillor Boyle	<i>Division #8</i> Larry Armfelt Councillor NW, Baptiste/ Island Lake
<i>Division #4</i> Christine Bilsky Councillor SW. Athabasca	<i>Division #9</i> Michael Demko Councillor North of Athabasca River
<i>Division #5</i> Kevin Haines Councillor E. Athabasca	

## NEW COUNTY FLAG

Athabasca County has released its new flag design. The municipality has never had a flag before so Council recently undertook the process of designing one. The flag contains three elements — the Athabasca County logo, a Maple Leaf to signify Canada and Alberta's crest to signify the province. County Manager Gary Buchanan (left) and Reeve David Yurdiga are pleased to present the new flag. ■



## COUNTY TO HELP LANDOWNERS CONTROL WEEDS

Athabasca County is rolling out a new program to help landowners control the spread of noxious weeds.

"Agriculture Services is prepared to work with landowners, big and small parcel owners alike, to control the spread of unwanted and noxious vegetation," said Ron Jackson, Director of Agriculture Services. "It is in all our best interests to target all the noxious weed problems as aggressively as possible."

The three-year program starts this spring and is an incentive program funded by the municipality to help landowners cover the costs of herbicides. Landowners within the County are eligible for a rebate of up to \$15 per acre total over the three year program, to cover the costs of

controlling prohibited noxious and noxious weeds on their property. The incentive will be capped at \$1,200 per year.

The County will send out weed inspectors who will verify that treatment is needed. They will also provide recommendations on how to treat the weeds. Mowing, burning or grazing will not be considered as control options and associated costs won't be eligible for the rebate.

Landowners must submit a rebate form by Sept. 30 each year to be eligible.

It is anticipated that the program will stop the spread of weeds to non-infested land as well as reduce weed growth on infested lands. ■



Summer greetings from your County Council. A reminder to check out our community's campgrounds and our first-ever airport fly-in barbeque this summer on July 16.

## PAINTING PRESENTATION

The Peace River Trail group presented County Council with a beautiful painting to thank them for their administrative and financial support for the Athabasca Landing Trail. The painting is a work by local artist Charity Dakin, who was commissioned for the job. ■



## REGIONAL WATERLINE PROJECT MOVING AHEAD

Construction on the \$25-million Regional Water Pipeline that will link Wandering River and Grassland to the Athabasca Water treatment facility via the regional water line to Boyle is set to start this summer.

The multi-million dollar project includes:

- Decommissioning the two water treatment facilities in Wandering River and Grassland;
- Building an 88-km long pipeline from Boyle;
- Constructing a potable water storage reservoir in Wandering River; and
- Converting a Grassland water treatment facility to a potable water reservoir.

"It's a huge project and we're very excited that the process is underway," said Brian Adamkewicz, Director of Infrastructure Services.

According to Adamkewicz, the project was started for a few reasons, one being more stringent water treatment standards and not enough water available for the plants to treat. Also, the proposed route for the twinning of Highway 63 will run right through the existing Wandering River treatment facility.

The majority of the pipeline will be built within County road right of ways, with only a 10-km stretch on private land. The Wandering River reservoir will be built on existing County property.

Currently, the County is finishing up the RFP process with a contractor expected to be selected at the end of June. Construction is expected to start shortly thereafter. Adamkewicz said the target date for water to be flowing to Grassland is Dec. 31, 2011 and Wandering River should be receiving water by December 2012.

Once online, the system will be operated by the Aspen Regional Water Services Commission.

The Alberta Government will pay for 90 per cent of the waterline project with Athabasca County kicking in the remaining 10 per cent. ■

## SANDCASTLE CONTEST

Get your shovels and buckets ready for the first-ever sandcastle building contest being held at Hope Lake Campground and Forfar Recreational Park.

The contest will take place on the August long weekend (July 30-August 1).

Visit [www.athabascacounty.com](http://www.athabascacounty.com) for more details. ■

## AIRPORT HOSTS FLY-IN BARBECUE

Athabasca County is ready to show off its newly upgraded airport and they are inviting residents and pilots from across the country to have a look.

The County is hosting its first ever fly-in barbecue at the airport on July 16. County officials are estimating between 50 and 60 pilots and their planes will make the flight into the airport for the barbecue.

The event will also host pilots who are attending 100 Aircraft Adventure in 2011, which is taking place

in the skies over Saskatchewan this year. Every year pilots from across Canada attend the event, which is hosted by the Century Flight Club. About 30 pilots from B.C. who are heading to Saskatchewan for the event will make a stop in Athabasca County and take in the barbecue. Those pilots will then carry on to Laronge, Saskatchewan.

"The barbecue was organized to raise awareness of our airport and the upgrades that we've made," said Nicole McDonald of Athabasca County. "We really want to show off the work we have done."



## GEARING UP FOR PAVING PROJECTS AS CONSTRUCTION SEASON BEGINS

With winter now behind us, it's now time for construction season. There are five major projects that will be underway this summer.

One project on the County's to-do list is the Aspen Ridge Road, which will be a one-mile project. Crews will also be working in the Century Estates subdivision completing a two-mile road extension.

Skeleton Narrows will also benefit from a road extension project. There will be one mile of paving completed. Pine Grove Estates will also see one mile of paving

completed. The other project that is planned is the access road for White Gull, which is approximately 400 meters of paving.

All these projects are existing gravel roads that will now be paved.

"We're always trying to improve the roadways and improve our municipality," said Brian Adamkewicz, Director of Infrastructure Services. "I think the paving of these roads will be a huge improvement."

In 2010, new runway edge lighting, Runway Identification Lights (R11S), a strobe airport beacon light and a new illuminated windsock were installed. All of the runway markings were also repainted.

The event is open to the public and costs \$2, which includes a serving of beef on a bun. The event is free for pilots who fly in. The local Air Cadets squadron will be on site selling ice cream as a fundraiser for its programs. The barbecue will run from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. ■

Knelsen Sand & Gravel has the contract for completing the paving. Work is expected to start at the beginning of July.

The projects are expected to take approximately one month, depending on the weather.

Athabasca County is also working on completing the last section of paving on the Al-Pac Connector K-Road to Highway 63. ■

## YOUR GUIDE TO CAMPGROUNDS

Athabasca County is home to many great campgrounds, as residents and visitors from across the province can attest. We've included information about a few of our excellent facilities.

Jackfish Lake Campground and day use area is located 20 minutes North East of the Town of Athabasca. This campground offers a great getaway without the long drive. The lake provides opportunities for swimming, fishing, canoeing and recreational boating. It is open from May 15 to September 30.

The Forfar area dates back to the early 1900s, according to residents and has boasted a school, hall and the park. The hall and park both proudly remain. The Park is located on the shores of Long Lake, and offers two beaches, swimming, fishing, canoeing, recreational boating and hiking. It is open from May 1 to September 30.

Reservations may be made 30 days prior to the first night of stay. Please call the campground directly at 780.675.5253, May 15 to September 30 or call 780.675.2273 during the off season.

Hope Lake Campground is located just 17 km Northeast of Boyle. This campground is a great getaway for anyone looking for a quiet family-oriented vacation. The campground offers a great beach, swimming, hiking trails, fishing, and canoeing. There is a boating restriction on the lake of 12 km/hr. Hope Lake also has excellent ATV trials close by, though we do not allow ATVs in the campground we do have a locked ATV compound located just outside of the campground. It is open from May 15 to September 30.

Reservations may be made 30 days prior to the first night of stay. To reserve please call 780.689.7911.

We have so many great spots, we can't cover them all in one newsletter, so check our next issue or our website for more campground information. ■

