

Culvert awareness

Melting snow can wreak havoc on drainage systems in the County, with the potential for backups and flooding. That's why we need your help in dealing with blocked culverts.

We're asking all citizens to report blocked or damaged approach culverts on their property. To report a blocked culvert, contact Public Works at: **780-675-2404**



Campgrounds booking now

As of March 1, all County campgrounds are accepting reservations three months in advance.

That means now's the time to get your spots for the May long weekend. To book, contact Kelly Berger at: **780-675-2273**

ASP process coming to Colinton

With the Grassland and Wandering River area structure plans (ASP) complete (and available online) we're moving on to the Hamlet of Colinton.

The plan, once complete, sets the stage for future land use and development in the hamlet.

Much like last year, the process will include a number of public consultations before the ASP is incorporated into our land use by-law.

"The open houses will give us an idea of what kind of development citizens would like to see," explained

Director of Community Services Rob Hersey, adding that local citizens know their community best.

While dates have not been set, the process will include initial public meetings, followed by feedback on the draft ASP. Once finalized, the ASP will go to Council for a final public hearing and approval.

We will also be completing the Rochester ASP that was started a number of years ago.

For more information, contact Rob Hersey at: **780-675-2273**

Hamlet waste pickup proposed

In conjunction with the Athabasca Regional Waste Management Services Commission, we're asking citizens of Colinton, Rochester, Grassland and Wandering River if they are interested in a curbside waste collection service.

Already offered in the Town of Athabasca and Village of Boyle, the service would include weekly pick up of a 64 gallon waste cart as well as recyclables (newsprint, plastic, tin cans and cardboard.)

If a majority are in favour of the proposed pickup, citizens in those hamlets could expect to pay \$9.50 weekly, with the cost added as a line item to their (monthly) utility bills.



We're asking citizens in those hamlets to have their say in whether or not we move forward with the plan. We'll be hosting information sessions in each hamlet, as well as an online option for citizens to offer feedback.

For more information about the proposal, as well as announcements on the open house dates and locations, please visit:

athabascacounty.com/hamlet-waste-pickup

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Farm Women's Conference honours Bessie Speers

At 95 years of age, Bessie Speers is still going strong, a fact made clear in her recent Pioneer Farm Woman of the Year Award.

On February 7th, women from throughout Athabasca County gathered for the annual Farm Women's Conference. The conference honours women who've made a big impact in the community over the years.

This year's honours went to Bessie Speers. Nominated by Shirley Dubie, Speers is a living example of a dedicated, community-minded farm woman.

Born in 1918, Bessie settled in Athabasca County in 1926. She raised seven children while tending to the farm.

"Bessie did whatever she had to do to keep the farm going," wrote Dubie in her speech at the conference. "That included managing it all by herself during the times her husband was absent. She was widowed at 50 and continued to farm alone until she was 66."

Even though Bessie tended to the farm and a large family, she still had time to give back to the community.



Bessie Speers (3rd from right) with her family after accepting the Pioneer Farm Woman of the Year Award.

She let the Rochester Boxing Club use her living room for training, was an original member of the Willow Ridge Ladies Club and volunteered with the Athabasca Royal Purple and Legion Ladies Auxiliary, among other endeavors. She curled in Athabasca until she was 82 and was a member of the United Church for 30 years, and was given the special privilege of being the first to hold a baby after baptism.

"She's an amazing farm woman and well-deserving of the honour," said chair of the conference committee, Councillor Doris Splane. "She's an inspiration to younger farm women and future generations."



Fire season is upon us

With winter on the way out we're entering into another high-risk wild-fire season.

Provincial records for this area, covering the past 10 years, indicate that a large majority of wildfires are caused by humans.

Between 2002 and 2012, recreation and resident-caused fires made up over 60 percent of the total, underscoring the importance of fire prevention measures for all citizens.

"It's really about people taking the



Aerial shot of a 2001 fire.

simple little precautions and being aware of the risks," said Emergency Services Director Ron Jackson.

For fire permits, contact our office at: [780-675-2273](tel:780-675-2273)

For more on wildfire prevention, visit: athabascacounty.com

TED Officer's annual update

Our first ever Tourism and Economic Development (TED) Officer had a whirlwind year of trade shows, events, projects and supporting local businesses.

"We've formed a good base to work off of this year, so it will really set the stage for future economic development," said Jodie Pruden, who took up the position last January.

Picking out a few highlights, she pointed to the ongoing work with the Southern Oilsands Regional Coalition, an inter-municipal and industry committee helping pave the way to further investment in the region, as well as the Local Business Directory aimed at connecting local business owners with



Jodie Pruden presents at the first annual Small Business Week Meet & Greet

industrial players looking to locate in the County.

"But that's only the start," Pruden explained. She's still looking to connect with citizens and local businesses with ideas about improving tourism and economic opportunities. To have your say contact Jodie at:

[780-675-2273](tel:780-675-2273)

jpruden@athabascacounty.com

Permit reminder

We'd like to remind all citizens looking to build this year to get their permits in as soon as possible.

The booming construction season means development and building permits can take between two to six weeks to process.

For more on the permitting process, check out:

athabascacounty.com/p&d

Or give our planning and development department a call at:

[780-675-2273](tel:780-675-2273)

FCSS events

Check out the FCSS office for these upcoming Lunch & Learn sessions. Only \$5.

- Dealing with anger
Wednesday, April 3rd

- Coping with stress
Wednesday, May 1st

To register contact Karen Wintonyk at:
[780-675-2623](tel:780-675-2623)

Agriculture events

- Weed Wise:
Experts on noxious weeds and mitigation strategies
Wednesday, March 20th. 7 pm.
Athabasca Agriplex

- Animal Behaviour and Grazing Strategies
Wednesday, April 17th. 7 pm.
Athabasca Agriplex

- Negotiating Surface Rights Agreements
Wednesday, April 3rd. 6 pm.
Boyle Community Centre

For more info and to register, contact Agricultural Services at:
[780-675-2273](tel:780-675-2273)

Connect with us on social media

Over the past year we've added a number of social media accounts to improve the flow of information and engagement with our citizens. Here are some options to keep up to date with your municipal government:

- Connect with us on Facebook and Twitter for updates on County news.

- Check us out on YouTube for fun and informative videos.

- Sign up for our bi-weekly email, the Athabasca County Digest, for updates straight to your inbox at athabascacounty.com/email-list



Community Peace Officer tackles youth smoking

In an ongoing effort to curb youth tobacco use, Athabasca County's Community Peace Officer, Ryan Alice, is teaming up with an Alberta Health Services Tobacco Reduction Counselor.

Their combined work highlights the health and legal impacts of tobacco use to local kids throughout the region, with in-class sessions and regular patrols of school grounds.

The provincial government's Prevention of Youth Tobacco Use Act, enforced by Peace Officers, makes it illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to possess or consume tobacco products, and comes with a potential \$100 fine.

If charged, youth are given a mandatory court date, before which they can take a three-hour information session hosted by the Tobacco Reduction Counselor. For those who take the session, the charge and fine may be dropped by the judge on their mandatory court date.

Alice, who's done a number of underage smoking patrols, said many of the youth were surprised to find out that there are legal consequences to smoking underage.

"I hope that the combined effort of health awareness and legal conse-



CPO Ryan Alice speaks with students at Edwin Parr Composite school.

quences will go a long way in preventing youth from taking up any type of tobacco use, and hopefully even get some to think twice if they're already smoking," he said.