

Citizen Satisfaction Survey results online

The results of our 2019 Citizen Satisfaction Survey have been published online at laclabichedcounty.com.

The Citizen Satisfaction Survey is a way for us to learn more about residents' needs by asking how they feel about the programs and services we offer. We are happy to report that almost 90 per cent of survey respondents rated the overall quality of life in Lac La Biche County as good or very good.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the survey. We will take residents' responses into consideration. If you want to read the full survey results, visit laclabichedcounty.com and go to the page called "Documents," under the tab marked "Learn about us."

Coming soon: 2019 Year In Review

With another year in the rear view, we have started work on 2019's Year In Review report.

Year In Review is a look back at the County's activities throughout the year, and a look ahead at our plans for the future. The document gives residents a meaningful look into how the County operates and where their tax dollars are being spent each year.

Year In Review will be mailed to all local residents in the first quarter of 2020.



We would like to thank everyone who attended an information and input session last month, to give us feedback on our proposed Clubroot Management Agreement. The proposed agreement will help us work with affected agricultural producers on a case-by-case basis to control clubroot, a soil-borne disease that can harm crops like canola.

Council approves municipal budget for 2020

Council has approved Lac La Biche County's budget for 2020.

Operating costs for next year are set at \$53.2 million. Council and Administration looked for reasonable efficiencies, and cut around four per cent (about \$1.5 million) from the base operating budget. Residents should not expect to see any changes to municipal programs and services as a result of this change.

For the first time, the County is setting money aside in a "fiscal stabilization reserve," to help soften the blow if the County faces any losses in revenue sources in the coming year.

Capital spending for 2020 is set at \$24 million. At this point, the County is predicting a surplus of about \$900,000, which gives us some room

for unforeseen changes to the budget throughout the year.

Public engagement

Two open houses were held in late November, to give residents an opportunity to learn more about the budget and provide feedback on its contents. Council will take residents' ideas and suggestions into consideration, as part of current and future financial planning.

Council will review the budget again in March, after provincial and federal budgets have been tabled. The last step in budgeting is setting local property tax rates. This will be done in April, so that tax notices can be mailed to ratepayers in May.

Looking for budget highlights? Turn to page 2 of this newsletter.



Budget Highlights: Eight initiatives to watch for in 2020



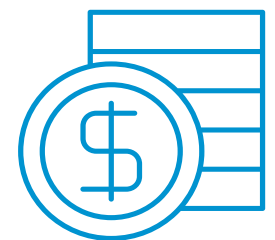
Our Council has a strategic plan that includes five pillars — economic development, recreation and culture, social wellness, tourism and the environment — and outlines a vision for our community. The eight initiatives listed below are among those that have been included in our budget for 2020. They align with the strategic plan’s priorities, and they will help make Lac La Biche County a better place to live, work and visit.



- 1 Community Trails Master Plan — \$40,000**
 This new plan will guide the expansion of our walking trail network. The goal is to use pedestrian and cyclist-friendly paths to link more areas of the County, to encourage outdoor recreation and community connectivity.
- 2 Outdoor Sports Fields at the Bold Center (Phase 2) — \$4.2 million**
 Phase 1 of this project (building an artificial-turf field and rubberized track) will be completed in the spring. Phase 2 will add three baseball fields, a natural-turf soccer field and spaces for jumping and throwing events.
- 3 Community Facility Inspections Program — \$7,500**
 Through this program, the County will work with community groups who receive operational funding from us, to inspect local facilities like community halls, proactively identify issues and create preventative maintenance plans.
- 4 Fork Lake Beach Public Access and Day Use Area — \$150,000**
 To ensure the public can safely access Fork Lake’s beach, without harming environmentally sensitive areas, we are going to build a day use area with proper parking, washroom facilities, a picnic shelter and a trail to the beach.
- 5 Owl River Campground — \$250,000**
 We plan to re-establish a previous campground on the Owl River. This will increase outdoor recreational opportunities while adding to the region’s tourism offerings north of Lac La Biche Lake.
- 6 Interpretive and Wayfinding Signage Inventory and Needs Assessment — \$75,000**
 This project aims to help visitors discover our community’s attractions and heritage and find their way to points of interest. In 2020, we will research and examine where signage is needed, and then create a plan for the future.
- 7 Lac La Biche Watershed Management Plan (WMP) Update — \$30,000**
 The WMP is designed to help keep Lac La Biche Lake and the water bodies that feed into it (like the Owl River) healthy and sustainable. The plan balances environmental, economic and community needs in the area around the lake.
- 8 Youth Restorative Justice Committee and Youth Engagement — \$10,000**
 This program will bridge gaps between community services, working with high-risk youth and young offenders in the area to encourage positive actions and responsible behaviour.

These are highlights only, featuring projects that may interest the general public. A full summary of Lac La Biche County’s 2020 budget will be available online at laclabichedcounty.com soon.

Note: About \$5.65 million has been set aside in capital reserves (similar to savings accounts) so the money is not being put to use right away, but it has been earmarked for specific projects like roadwork and utilities. In March, Council will meet again to review our capital and operational spending plans and make adjustments.



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Did you know there's an environmentally friendly way to receive news and program updates from Lac La Biche County? Sign up for a digital subscription to *Your County In Touch* and every new edition of the newsletter will be delivered right to your email inbox. To join our e-subscription list, simply email intouch@lclabichedcounty.com.



What if your side job was saving lives?

Are you looking for a new way to give back to your community in the New Year? New recruits are always welcome at Lac La Biche County Fire Rescue. We invite you to join a well known and well-respected organization that serves and protects our community.

Our firefighters are paid for attending training, responding to calls and performing other duties as assigned. The County covers the costs of all necessary training and equipment, and you can be a firefighter while holding a full-time or part-time job elsewhere.

Our firefighters each work in one of five districts:*

- 1 Hamlet of Lac La Biche and area
- 2 Hamlet of Plamondon and area
- 3 Hylo and area
- 4 Owl River and area
- 5 Rich Lake and area

*Calls may require members from multiple districts to respond.

For more information about joining Lac La Biche County Fire Rescue, please call (780) 623-6774 or email fireservices@lclabichedcounty.com.



Teen Chill Zone: Appetizers & Improv

Local teenagers are invited to join us for a night of creativity in the kitchen and on the stage. The next Teen Chill Zone will combine cooking and comedy, with participants making and enjoying their own appetizers and playing improv games.

Who? Teenagers ages 13-17

Where? McArthur Place

When? Friday, January 24 / 4-7:30 p.m.

Why improv? Improv is a great way to practice creativity and teamwork on the fly. Don't worry if you're not an experienced actor — audience members are needed, too! And don't worry if you've never tried improv before, because after all, the whole point is to make it up as you go along.

This Teen Chill Zone session is free to join, but registration is required. Call or text Community Outreach Worker Christine Martin at (780) 520-7183 for more information or to register, or email christine.martin@lclabichedcounty.com.

Coming soon: Art Therapy

Stay tuned for details of art therapy classes on February 6. Creating art together is a great way for parents and youth to connect and learn new ways to communicate.

Be the first to know about Lac La Biche County Family & Community Support Services' upcoming programs. Follow us on Facebook (@llbcountyFCSS) for program news and updates.



Dates to Remember

January 24, 2020

Teen Chill Zone, featuring appetizers and improv, at McArthur Place. See page 3 for more details.

February 17, 2020

Family Day Festival. See next month's newsletter for more details.

County offices, landfills and transfer stations will be closed.

February 29, 2020

Leap Day.

Check out the **Community Events Calendar** on the County's website (laclabichcounty.com) for more events happening in our area.

Your County in Touch is produced by Lac La Biche County and is available to every resident.

An electronic version of this newsletter is available. All you need to do is call (780) 623-1747 or provide your e-mail address to intouch@laclabichcounty.com.

Use the same contact information for any address changes, additional copies or to unsubscribe.



SPONSORED SKATES

Too cold to go skating outside? Join us for **free public skating** at our indoor rinks this winter. Chase away the winter blues and keep your healthy, active lifestyle going through the coldest season.

At the Bold Center:

Saturdays from 10:15-11:30 a.m.
Sponsored by Cenovus Energy

Sundays from 5:30-6:45 p.m.
Sponsored by Boom 103.5

At Plamondon Arena:

Sundays from 3:15-4:45 p.m.
Sponsored by Plamondon Co-op



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:



PRESCRIPTION TO GET ACTIVE

Sometimes physical activity is just what the doctor ordered — literally, if you take advantage of the free Prescription to Get Active program. The County, Portage College, the Primary Care Network and the Associated Medical Clinic are working together to provide this program in our community, to help residents stay active and reduce their health concerns.

How does it work? Patients can be prescribed physical activity by a doctor or healthcare professional. Patients who bring their Prescription to Get Active to participating facilities will receive free general admission for a specified period of time. Participants receive a complimentary facility orientation, equipment demonstration and ongoing support from staff members to help reach their physical activity goals.

Participating local facilities include:

- Bold Center
- Portage Pool
- Portage College