

Your County in Touch

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Photo submissions for 2017 calendar

Have you taken a picture that shows the County's natural beauty and green commitment? If so, we want to hear from you. The County is now looking for original, high-quality photographs to include in its 2017 Green Initiatives calendar, which is available to all County residents.

Pictures should capture one or more of the following:

1. County festivals and events.
2. Wildlife in the County.
3. The County's natural beauty.
4. The County's green commitment and environmental stewardship.
5. Agriculture in the County.

Pictures must be high-resolution in order to be considered, and photographers are encouraged to look for unusual angles and subjects. E-mail your pictures to Alex Fuller in the Communications department:

alex.fuller@laclabichecounty.com.

Pictures must include the general area of the County where they were taken.

Dora L'Heureux, Stakeholder Relations Manager with FortisAlberta, presented Council with a tree-planting grant of \$2,500 at August 23, 2016's Regular Council Meeting. The trees will act as a wind break for a planned shelter in Alexander Hamilton Park.

The cheque was presented at one of Council's first meetings in new Council Chambers at McArthur Place. Municipal departments are being reorganized to make the lakefront facility the County's civic centre.

County begins planning 2017 budget

A long journey starts with a single step—and finalizing Lac La Biche County's annual budget starts with a preliminary planning meeting.

County Council recently discussed timelines for the 2017 budget. The bulk of budget discussions are expected to take place in January and February, and a tentative deadline for the budget's final approval is February 28, 2017.

County supervisors and senior managers are preparing to present a draft budget before the holiday season in December. By law, the County must adopt what's called an interim budget before the New Year, to make sure that municipal programs and services continue uninterrupted.

The official budget takes more time and planning to finalize, though. One part of it details capital spending like roadwork, water and sewer upgrades and new equipment purchases. Another part of it forecasts the County's day-to-day operating costs and incomes for the year.

To help with decision-making, councillors recently toured different areas and facilities throughout the County to see for themselves what condition certain buildings and local infrastructure are in.

The County is also aiming to pin down a three-year operational plan and a five-year capital plan to guide future decision-making.

County to send consultation report to Municipal Affairs

The County recently held public consultations to inform residents, business owners and other stakeholders about its application to become a specialized municipality. Now the next step is to incorporate feedback into an official report, which will be sent to Alberta Municipal Affairs.

Lac La Biche County has applied to become a specialized municipality so that it can retain its split mill rate indefinitely. The split mill rate allows the County to use a lower property tax rate for small businesses in and around the major hamlets.

The County has been operating this way for the past several years, so changing the municipality's official status is about maintaining the status quo.

“Applying for specialized municipality is vital for the future

growth of our community,” said Mayor Omer Moghrabi. “Council and I wish to preserve the option of taxing small businesses at a lower rate, which has allowed our region to maintain and encourage greater entrepreneurship.”

The County is also looking to expand its Urban Service Areas, the zones where the lower tax rate for non-residential properties applies.

County officials are now in the process of writing a report to send to Municipal Affairs. The Minister of Municipal Affairs, Danielle Larivee, will review it and then make a recommendation to her colleagues in Cabinet.

Property inspections in progress

Assessors from Municipal Assessment Services Group are conducting annual property inspections on behalf of Lac La Biche County.

Throughout September, assessors will be working in these areas:

- Township 63-10
- Township 63-11
- Township 63-12
- Township 64-10
- Township 64-11
- Township 64-12
- Township 68-14, including Blais Resort, Poplar Point and North Beach subdivisions.

Select areas in the hamlet of Lac La Biche will also be inspected. The entire County is regularly inspected section by

section to keep property assessments up to date.

As part of their duties, assessors take pictures and walk properties but do not need access to houses or other buildings. Section 294 of the Municipal Government Act authorizes County representatives to enter and inspect properties for assessment purposes. Assessors carry photo ID and their vehicles are marked.

Residents with questions about property assessment or inspections should contact Dan Small, Senior Manager of Finance and Grants, at (780) 623-6802.

Peace Officers pushing Community Standards compliance

The County's Protective Services department is reminding local residents and business owners that properties need to meet tidiness standards or they may be visited by a Peace Officer.

Overgrown grass and trees, piles of waste and debris in back alleys—the department has been handling complaints about all of these things and others that violate the County's Community Standards Bylaw.

Section 3 (10) of the bylaw says property owners are responsible for keeping grass and other vegetation under control. Trimmers and pruning shears also need to be used in side lanes, back alleys and everywhere else along property borders.

The goal of the Community Standards Bylaw is to keep the County looking clean and orderly. One of the bylaw's key points

is that people should take steps to remove brush, garbage and “anything else which is considered untidy or unsightly” from their properties. Serious violations may result in a fine of \$200.

Appearance standards aside, some violations might even cause safety problems. For example, trees and shrubbery must not interfere with power lines and other infrastructure, and anything blocking or encroaching on a public sidewalk needs to be corrected.

The full Community Standards Bylaw is viewable on the County's website.



From August 8 to 12, 2016, instructor Morgan Cheyne (back row, third from the left) led local teens through the Teen Leadership & Team Building Camp. Teens volunteered with seniors, played team games, went on outdoor hikes, and more while they learned skills. The FCSS department plans to hold the camp again next summer, so keep an eye out for more information in 2017.

County Proud events to feature free meal, music, door prizes

The County Proud community appreciation events are almost here.

These events, planned in partnership with Big Dog 103.5 FM and the Lac La Biche Post, will thank the local community for its strong support during the Fort McMurray area evacuations earlier this year.

When a severe wildfire drove thousands of people from their homes in Wood Buffalo, many came to Lac La Biche County seeking shelter and emergency assistance. The Bold Center was named an official evacuation centre, and shows of compassion and humanitarian spirit were seen across the region. Hundreds of local residents, businesses and community groups stepped up—and the County wants to thank all of them.

Attendees at County Proud can expect a free meal of roast beef, mashed potatoes, salads and dessert. A vegetarian option will be provided.

There will also be live background music, door prizes and other family-friendly entertainments.

Each event will run from 5-8 p.m. Plamondon's will be on Friday, September 16 and Lac La Biche's will be a week later on September 23.

Both events will be followed by Movies in the Park, so families are encouraged to stick around and mingle. The movie after Lac La Biche's event will be a drive-in movie, held in the Bold Center's back parking lot.



Upcoming FCSS events

It's been a busy summer, but Lac La Biche County's Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) department has a variety of events planned for the fall and beyond. Some upcoming events include:

Golden Days Tour (Seniors)

On September 14, visit the Mayfield Dinner Theatre. \$95 per person, including meal, show, and transport.

Babysitting Course (Youth)

On October 28, get up-to-date information about childcare and safety to become a qualified babysitter.

Spooktacular Halloween Party

On October 29, join Bold Center and FCSS staff for a free community Halloween party! Come in for games, activities, music, food, and dancing.

Bold Center / 1 to 4 pm / Ages 0 to 12

National Child's Day

On November 20, join the C.H.I.L.D. Coalition at the Sunshine and Broccoli concert for brunch, information, and a family-friendly performance.

Bold Center / 11 am to 2 pm / Families

Seniors Holiday Social

On December 8, join FCSS staff for an afternoon of cheer! We'll have games, lunch, and music. Free transportation is available.

Bold Center / 11 am to 2 pm

For more information about these programs, please call 780-623-6763.

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@laclabichedcounty.com.

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



Dates to Remember

September 16, 2016

County Proud community appreciation event at Plamondon's Festival Centre. 5-8 p.m.

September 23, 2016

County Proud community appreciation event at Bold Center. 5-8 p.m.



Local Parent Link expanding programming outside Lac La Biche

Parent Link is a province-wide program with local assistance from Lac La Biche County to offer programming for families with young children. The local program is based at the Bold Center, but this year it's expanding to include more activities and sessions in other areas of the County.

"We're going to make an effort to have a presence in more communities like Plamondon, and offer more outreach programming," said Parent Link programmer Amanda Cheyne. "It's not always easy to bring your kids to the Bold Center. We have a lot of families outside Lac La Biche who want to access programming."

With September here, Cheyne says there will be more consistent programming offered for infants, toddlers and pre-school-age children. The three age groups are handled differently, but the common goal is helping kids grow by offering programs that assist with social development and supporting children's skills.

"Parent Link is a step before school that helps kids developmentally," said Cheyne, adding that the program also provides a forum for parents and kids to mingle. "It's a great opportunity for families to connect and share experiences."

Parent Link has partnered with Lac La Biche County Libraries and Alberta Health Services to offer joint programming. Another partnership is with Portage College, which makes evening Gym Jam sessions at the Lac La Biche campus possible.

"One thing we are committed to is offering programs during the evenings and weekends like Gym Jam, which is open to everyone, not just college families," said Cheyne. "We're always changing and adapting to fit families' needs and we're always open to feedback."

For more information on Parent Link activities, visit the program's Facebook page for updates or call (780) 623-6365.