

# NEWS & VIEWS



## BARCC Wins

# Provincial Award

Alberta Municipal Affairs Minister, Kaycee Madu, presented BARCC partners with the 2019 Outstanding Achievement Award for their innovative collaboration efforts to reduce regional crime.

What an achievement! Each year, the Province of Alberta, awards Municipal Excellence Awards to deserving communities whose programs and initiatives have bettered or provided improved or innovative services to their communities.

In 2019, the Barrhead & Area Regional Crime Coalition (BARCC) submitted their practice under the Partnership category of

## Outstanding Achievement

BARCC members from the Barrhead RCMP, County of Barrhead, Town of Barrhead, Woodlands County and Barrhead & Region Rural Crime Watch pose for a photo op with Local MLA, Glenn van Dijken, and Minister, Kaycee Madu.

the awards; however, the Awards Committee highlighted many attributes of the initiative that warranted BARCC receive the 2019 **Outstanding Achievement Award**.

As noted by the Committee, the BARCC initiative showcased:

- an extensive partnership in which all members have both something concrete to contribute and benefit from;
- it demonstrates an innovative partnership designed to improve community safety; and
- the outcomes have been measurable and recognized by the communities.

Members of BARCC are not only proud of what has been accomplished as a Coalition and with the alerting system, but honoured to have been recognized for their efforts by Municipal Affairs.

**Register for alerts at [BARCC.ca](http://BARCC.ca)**

# Reeve's Message

Doug Drozd  
Reeve



Thanks for taking a moment to read this Newsletter. It is a goal of Council that we communicate effectively with residents.

Earlier this year the County held a Budget Open house to report on the previous years' activities and provide a preview of what was planned for 2019. We also asked the question "What are your priorities?"

The budget process for 2020 is already underway and Council is looking forward to your input. Watch for dates in the Spring for the next Open House, but also take time to share comments on our survey (details in the newsletter).

People often ask Councillors if we have ever driven a particular stretch of road or if we are aware of a certain problem. Most of the time Councillors are aware of issues in their division, but we also encourage you to report concerns to staff.

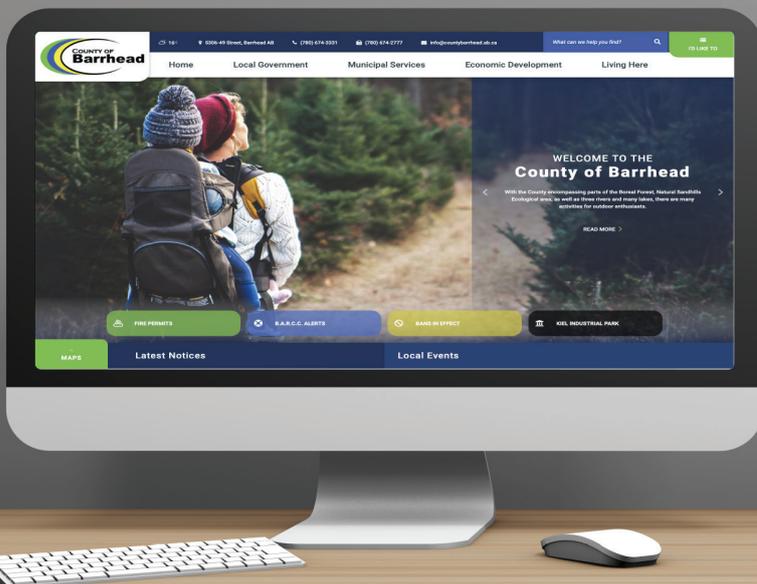
There are many ways Councillors get informed on key issues. One example is, every spring Council and staff tour problem areas and current and upcoming projects. This is an excellent opportunity to listen and learn about infrastructure challenges.

New to the County's workload is the requirements under the MGA to enter into Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs) with all of our neighbours including the revision or development of Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs). For those who may not know what the purpose of this exercise is, it is to get Municipalities to look at how they deliver services and explore advantages to working together.

We are also very proud of our accomplishments with our partners in the Barrhead & Area Regional Crime Coalition (BARCC). As a result of the success in the Alert system, many other municipalities are exploring the potential of the tool. But BARCC is more than just a tool, which was evidenced by the Coalition being awarded the top honour for 2019 of Outstanding Achievement – Municipal Excellence Award.

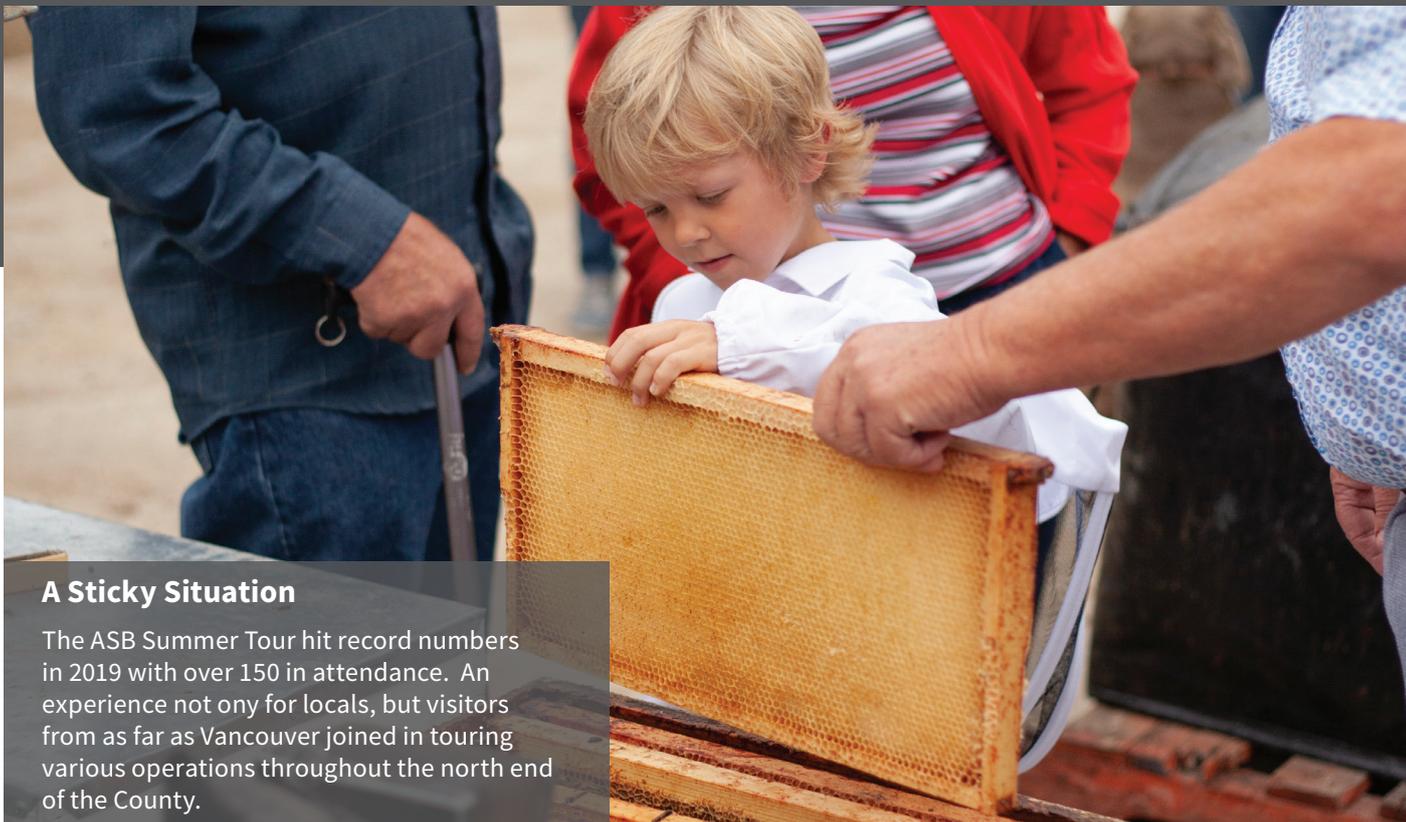
As always, the successful operation of the County relies on the hard work of our County Manager, Debbie Oyarzun and all the staff. Thank you, folks, for all you do!

countybarrhead.ab.ca



OUR NEW SITE IS

Live!



### A Sticky Situation

The ASB Summer Tour hit record numbers in 2019 with over 150 in attendance. An experience not only for locals, but visitors from as far as Vancouver joined in touring various operations throughout the north end of the County.

## Get to Know Our Ag Programs

### H2C Soil Testing Program

This FREE program is offered by the County of Barrhead to demonstrate to farmers the value of soil testing. Soil sampling can provide valuable information to assist producers in crop planning and decision-making processes. The key to the success of soil testing is conducting the process consistently. Long term records of soil analysis can provide a snapshot of the impact of fertilization, and whether those plans need to be modified.

If interested in conducting a single free soil test, visit our office to borrow a soil probe and take a sample from your subject site. Once returned to the office, the samples will be sent for analysis.

### Environmental Farm Plan (EFP)

An environmental farm plan is a process of answering questions about your operation, with the goal of identifying the environmental risks in your farming or ranching business and aid in the creation of a plan to address mitigating those risks.

For more information, or to start the online process of completing your Plan, go to [www.albertaefp.com](http://www.albertaefp.com). Once registered, Lisa Card, the EFP technician for this area, will contact you to assist in creating your Plan and its implementation.

Or, you can call Lisa at **780-674-8069** for assistance or more information on upcoming EFP workshops.

### City Slickers

Designed to bring agriculture back into the classroom, City Slickers is a program offered by the County's ASB to grade 4 and 5 classes in the Town of Barrhead & Neerlandia.

240 children spent a day at various demonstrations around the County learning where their food comes from, what the agricultural industry is all about and, most importantly, farm safety.

Stops for grade 4 students included KNM Farm Equipment, Baas Dairy and Barr-North Vet Clinic. Grade 5 students visited Van Der Muelen Farm, and participated in a pulse/grain field "walk".

Farm safety demonstrations were also conducted in-school, where students were able to learn how to ensure their safety around horses, dugouts, as well as in and around grain storage facilities.

# The Budget Process

The 2020 budget process is already underway. Find out where you can get more info and share your comments on priorities for the next year.

## Budget Timeline & Process

Annually, Council must approve a budget, a 3-year financial plan and 5-year capital plan. The budgeting process is the most important task that Council undertakes. The budget is a complex document that creates a linkage to the Strategic Plan, establishes levels of service, incorporates a long-term perspective, all while maintaining a reasonable tax rate. The budget requires public consultation to determine resident's priorities and expected levels of service.

### Did you know?

Unlike provincial or federal governments, municipal budgets are required to be balanced. That means, the revenues must equal the annual expenditures.

Given the complexity of the budget process, a considerable amount of time is spent by Administration and Council on the process. The 2020 budget timeline at the County of Barrhead is planned as follows:

	Timeline	Activities
2019	August	Budget Timeline Approved by Council
	October	Budget Priorities Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment with Strategic Plan</li> </ul>
	November	Budget Outlook Discussion Review Budget, Operating & Capital Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Engagement (online survey)</li> <li>Input from outside boards/committees</li> </ul>
	December	2020 Interim Budget approved by Council
2020	February - April	Budget Review & Revisions as data becomes available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment data</li> <li>Provincial funding</li> <li>Public Engagement (Open House)</li> </ul>
	April	2020 Budget approved by Council

Once the budget is approved, Administration is tasked with delivering the services and programs in the budget, evaluating the results of the program gathering feedback from residents and continually scanning the municipal environment to inform the next year's budget cycle.



## Choices

A municipality is required to adopt a budget for each calendar year in order to incur expenses and conduct business beginning January 1, 2020. This gives the County 2 options - adopt a 2020 budget by December 31, 2019 or adopt a 2020 INTERIM budget by December 31, 2019.

The County chooses to adopt a 2020 Interim budget. An interim budget is based on preliminary information and estimates and therefore limits spending in the 1st quarter of the year. The intent is that the final budget and associated tax rates are not set until Council has as



## Challenges for 2020

Changes in Alberta's economic environment leaves municipalities like the County of Barrhead experiencing financial challenges. Shifts in responsibilities from the province to local government, increased expectations, increased expenses, decreased revenue created by uncollectible taxes and uncertainty of grant funding are all examples of impacts on the budget.

As more oil and gas companies become insolvent, the County is challenged to maintain the status quo. Recent court decisions have decided we are not a secured creditor leaving us little to no recourse to collect taxes.

What happens to services when a municipality loses millions in uncollectable revenue?

### Budget Priorities Survey

online

[www.countybarrhead.ab.ca](http://www.countybarrhead.ab.ca)

### Did you know?

The largest form of revenue for the County is taxation, making up approximately 70% of the revenue in 2019. Other forms of revenue include grants from other levels of government, sale of goods and services, user fees, and the use of reserves established in prior years.

Does Council increase taxes to maintain existing level of services, maintain the existing tax rates and cut expenses and reduce services, find other sources of revenue and efficiencies or a combination of all the above?

No matter what challenges are faced, Council aims to provide good stewardship of County funds. This is accomplished by meeting legislative requirements, providing an appropriate level of service, and maintaining a prudent level of funding in reserves all while keeping taxes affordable.

### Did you know?

The County financial statements are audited each year by an external financial auditor.

To view the 2019 Annual Budget visit the County website at [www.countybarrhead.ab.ca/p/annual-budget](http://www.countybarrhead.ab.ca/p/annual-budget).

Check back to participate in the **online survey**, find the survey results, additional budget information and date of the Budget Open House scheduled for early 2020.

much information as possible such as property assessment values, grant funding and government requisitions. Much of this information isn't available until the new year. Informed decision making at this point reduces the potential for over or under-taxing. Council continues to review and refine the budget, with final adoption in April 2020. Once the final budget is approved the interim budget ceases. The County then has the responsibility and the authority to prepare and issue property tax notices to collect the revenue required to accomplish what is set in the budget.



## Preparing for Snow

# Driving near heavy equipment

Graders and snowplows moving slowly ahead of you might be an inconvenience in that moment; however, they're doing their job to keep the roads clear of snow and ice. Please stay back from the graders and snowplows to give them room to do their jobs safely. The operators will do their best to let you pass when they can - but only pass when it is **safe to do so**.

## Clearing snow on private property

Public Works is asking residents to be cautious when removing snow from driveways and yards. It is important that snow **NOT** be pushed across public roads, but rather kept on private property. Pushing snow across public roadways creates hazards that could result in vehicle and property damage or bodily injury.

## Let Graders & Snow Plows do their jobs

Giving graders enough room to do their job safely, ensures everyone arrives at their destination.

## Are you ready for winter?

Being prepared is key. Do you know about the County Snow Flag Program?

- Take advantage of the **County Snow Flag Program** in which a grader can plow your driveway after a snowfall. Snow flags can be purchased at the County office for \$35 each. Buying flags in advance ensures you have them ready for snow events. Please keep in mind that graders **cannot** enter and do work on your property without a snow flag.
- “The snow stopped, where is the grader?” We ask that County residents understand that the graders are on their way, taking care of all 1,498 km of roads as quickly as they can. **Plan ahead** when a snowfall is forecasted. Extra time may be needed when travelling on local roads and highways; ensure that you drive to the road conditions.

# Recycling

## Ag Plastics Partnership

The County of Barrhead, together with Westlock County, Woodlands County and the MD of Lesser Slave River partnered with Neeralta Manufacturing Inc. and the Westlock Regional Waste Management Commission (WRWMC) on an application to be a part of the Alberta Ag Plastics Recycling Pilot. Due to the nature of the partnership, the submission was selected as one of 20 locations throughout the province for this new **Recycle It!** program.

### Why recycle?

Processing recycled plastic is not a new concept; however, it is not yet well-established in Alberta. Currently, farmers are faced with the challenge of disposing ag plastics otherwise left in their yards or filling landfills. Recycling ag plastics ensures that these materials are disposed of properly. Environmental stewardship promotes the health of our environment and our farms for years to come.

### What are We Recycling and Where?

To ensure accessibility to farmers within the region, the **main collection site at Neeralta Manufacturing** is in the north end of the County of Barrhead, which is central to the four municipalities. Neeralta will **collect grain bags and baling twine**.

The second collection site, located at the **Westlock Regional Landfill** and operated by the WRWMC, will focus on the **collection and baling of twine**.

Twine collection bags will be available for pick up at recycling sites and the County shop.



## Prepping Recyclables

# FYI

### Neeralta Manufacturing Inc

#### Grain Bags & Twine

3216A Hwy 661  
Mon - Fri: 8 am - 5 pm  
866-497-5338

### Westlock Regional Landfill

#### Twine

59424 Rge Rd 262  
Tues - Fri: 10 am - 5:45 pm  
Sat: 9 am - 4:45 pm  
780-307-2456

For more information on what can be recycled and where, contact **Neeralta Manufacturing** and **Westlock Regional Landfill** during regular business hours.

Information regarding the Provincial **Recycle It!** program, and how you can ensure used grazing bags and twine are accepted and recycled can be found at [www.cleanfarms.ca](http://www.cleanfarms.ca).

**Need a grain bag roller?** Alberta producers can apply for **50% funding** towards the purchase of a roller under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) program. Visit [cap.alberta.ca/program/STEW\\_PROD](http://cap.alberta.ca/program/STEW_PROD) for more information. A valid **Environmental Farm Plan (EFP)** will be a requirement for this program. Check out **Page 3** for details for developing an EFP.



# JOIN A COMMITTEE

## BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED

The County of Barrhead has openings for the following board positions for the 2020 year:

- Agricultural Service Board (ASB)
- Agricultural Pests Appeal Committee
- Barrhead Regional Fire Services Committee
- Barrhead Library Board
- Economic & Community Development Committee
- Weed Control Appeal Board

Visit [countybarrhead.ab.ca](http://countybarrhead.ab.ca)

for more information on board & committee requirements & how **YOU** can apply!

## Upcoming Dates

**OCT 31:** Outstanding taxes due.

**NOV 1:** **4% penalty** calculated on outstanding taxes.

**NOV 11:** County office CLOSED

**NOV 29:** County office **CLOSED at 3 pm**

**DEC 24-26:** County office CLOSED

**JAN 1:** County office CLOSED

**MAR 2020:** Annual Budget Open House

**SPRING 2020:** Check the County website regularly for upcoming workshops, events, **shelterbelt tree program, dust control program** & so much more.

## We Want to Hear from *you!* Budget Priorities for 2020

Let your voice be heard! The County is looking to our ratepayers to identify what you think priorities should be for the 2020 year.

Information about the upcoming survey will soon be made available via our County website, [www.countybarrhead.ab.ca](http://www.countybarrhead.ab.ca).

The survey will be accessible **online** and in **paper format** which can be picked up and returned during regular hours at the County office.



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