
County of Wetaskiwin No. 10

Box 6960
Wetaskiwin, AB, T9A 2G5
Phone: 780-352-3321
Fax: 780-352-3486
Website: www.county.wetaskiwin.ab.ca



INFORMATION BULLETIN

December 31, 2019

2019 Year in Review From Reeve Terry Van de Kraats

It has been my privilege to serve the County of Wetaskiwin as Reeve, during an interesting and somewhat challenging year for the County of Wetaskiwin and our residents.

Several new initiatives that benefit our ratepayers either commenced or came to fruition in 2019. The County Facebook page launched in January and two citizen engagement events were hosted, providing our community more opportunity to provide input. Council changed fire billing, whereby landowners within the County's boundaries who have an accidental fire will not receive a fire invoice.

The Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI) hosted an Ag Forum with seven speakers presenting on various topics from Verified Beef Production Plus and Club Root to hemp and featured international keynote speaker Rob Saik, who presented "Food 5.0: How We Feed the Future." We were very fortunate to have in attendance the Minister of Agriculture Devin Dreesen and the MLA for Maskwacis-Wetaskiwin/Minister of Indigenous Relations Rick Wilson who brought greetings from the Government of Alberta. They engaged in conversations on timely agricultural and provincial political topics. Those who attended went away more aware of various agricultural programs and resources available. We are looking forward to an enhanced AG Forum in 2020.

The County has been working closely with G3 Canada Limited in the development of their first primary Grain Terminal in Alberta, located just south of Wetaskiwin. G3 has recently been given approvals from Council to commence interim operations to a period of no later than June 30, 2020, when it is expected that the required upgrades to the intersection of Highway 2A and Township Road 460 will be completed. As we move forward, the County of Wetaskiwin, both Council and Administration, will continue to work with G3 to strive to ensure that all issues of concern for the County and citizens are mitigated through ongoing discussions and making certain that any approvals and changes are discussed fully before their implementation.

Council has directed Administration to create a Parks & Open Space Steering Committee to explore the development of quality parks and open spaces within the County of Wetaskiwin. The committee, which is made up of four members of the general public and three elected officials, held their first meeting on December 3, 2019. Their report is scheduled to be presented to Council in the fall of 2020.

County of Wetaskiwin No. 10

Box 6960
Wetaskiwin, AB, T9A 2G5
Phone: 780-352-3321
Fax: 780-352-3486
Website: www.county.wetaskiwin.ab.ca



INFORMATION BULLETIN

Council has also directed Administration to create a Recreation Facility Nodes Committee to assist in identifying recreational hubs within the County of Wetaskiwin. This committee is still seeking two more members at large who reside within the County of Wetaskiwin.

The main challenge we dealt with in 2019 was the heavy rainfall, especially in the west end of the county. Many areas suffered extensive damage to roadways, culverts, and bridges and some projects had to be delayed. Disaster funding has been requested, however, we do not yet know if our application will be approved. The weather also resulted in some farmers with reduced yields and some with crops still in the fields.

The Mountain Pine Beetle was discovered in the County in 2018 and we now have 35 locations confirmed within our boundaries. Information about identifying and dealing with this pest is available on the County website.

As we move forward into 2020 we continue to face the challenge of balancing the budget while maintaining levels of service, in spite of decreased revenues and the increasing costs of doing business. The recent announcement regarding Rural Policing will impact the 2020 budget. Although the County supports the thought of more 'boots on the ground' in an effort to reduce rural crime, we are unsure of the local impact this announcement will have and whether the funds we contribute will provide more RCMP members in our area. Council wants to ensure ratepayers are getting value for the money spent.

We are once again in an era of do more with less, and both Council and staff are cognizant of this and wish to maximize our resources to achieve the County's strategic objectives. Council directed a service capacity and organizational structure review of the County of Wetaskiwin. The goal was to identify effectiveness, efficiency and responsiveness in service provision, and analyze cost savings, human resourcing requirements, staff capabilities, and systems for accountability. The service capacity review results are posted on our website and the organization structure review will be presented to Council in the new year.

As we close out 2019, I am grateful to Council and staff for their dedication and loyalty to serving the County of Wetaskiwin. We will continue to work collaboratively to provide services and fulfil our vision of Strong Proactive Leadership and Safe Progressive Communities. Wishing you all the best in 2020!

For further information:

Rod Hawken, CAO

780-361-6225

rhawken@county10.ca

Sharon Radis, Communications Officer

780-361-6220

sradis@county10.ca