

THE MD CONNECTION

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TABER

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COUNCIL MEMBERS

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REEVE'S REFLECTIONS

MERRILL HARRIS, REEVE

This winter has been relatively mild, except for the strong wind storms that brought down numerous irrigation systems and caused other damage across the MD. This recent cold snap broke many long held records for the coldest temps on February 10th. Council recently received an update on the ReNu Well project which is expected to break ground this spring on an abandoned oil site southeast of Barnwell and one north of Fincastle. These oil well sites will be transformed to smaller scale solar developments. Existing roads and infrastructure will be used so there will be minimal new disturbance to the sites. Each site could produce enough electricity to power up to 50 irrigations pivots for a season. Opportunities may exist ahead for local farmers to purchase this power for their farm operations. Future plans include using some abandoned oil sites on MD owned land for the same purpose, to generate electricity as well as clean up some of these abandoned sites.

We are excited for the twinning of Highway 3 east of Taber to the Burdett area. I have heard that the land acquisition process and project engineering is underway. Shovels should hit the ground sometime in 2022. Safety for the traveling public was a high priority for Council as we did what we could to lobby for this project. The volume of traffic on this road is constantly increasing due to the steady surge of agriculture-related products transported over this stretch of highway.

We are also very excited about the Horsefly Regional Emergency Spillway project receiving funding from both the Provincial and Federal Governments. The engineering services for this project has been awarded to MPE Engineering Ltd and Stantec Inc. The first phase of the project is to create a spillway from Taber Lake to the Oldman River north of Taber. Shovels on this project should be in the ground in 2022 also. Following this, Phase 2 and Phase 3 work will begin.

Continued inside...

REEVE'S REFLECTIONS

Phase 2 is expanding the canal from Horsefly Lake to Taber Lake, and Phase 3 is expansion of the canal from the SMRID Main Canal to Horsefly Lake. The total estimated cost of the project is \$47 million. This project will add another layer of protection for the SMRID Main Canal and the water flow we all rely on for industry, raw water source for many communities as well as the irrigation water needed for the value-added crops grown in southern Alberta.

On Feb 23rd a joint Public Hearing was held with the Town of Taber on the Inter-Municipal Development Plan and has since been adopted by both municipalities.

One thing we have all learned as a result of the coronavirus pandemic is that good rural internet service is almost as essential as running water and electricity. As a municipality we are working towards ensuring that our residents and business owners have access to affordable and adequate upload and download speeds throughout the municipality. The MD continues to work with private industry and other levels of government to ensure our goals are met as it relates to complete coverage, adequate speeds, and affordability. When we talk of getting good internet within the MD, we are trying to ensure that those who are a long distance from the urban centers are included in the plans for better internet.

2021 is a municipal election year. If you are at all interested in municipal government this year the Election will be held on October 18th. Nomination forms and packages, Council division boundaries, and Council Boards and Committee information is posted on the MD website. Nomination deadline is September 20, 2021.

In closing, on behalf of Council, we want to acknowledge our volunteer firefighters throughout the municipality and their employers. We have approximately 90 volunteers in six fire stations throughout the MD. They are dedicated to learning and upgrading their skills and being available at any time to run to our rescue. We also want to acknowledge their employers, who so graciously allow them to leave work and come to our assistance when it is needed. This great fire service would not function without the employers and the employees/ firefighters.

Wishing you all the best in the coming season.

GRAIN BAG RECYCLING PILOT PROGRAM

Recycling grain bags and twine just got easier through the 'Alberta Ag-Plastic. Recycle it!' program.

Grain bag and bale twine recycling is now available at the Municipal District of Taber as part of a three-year pilot program aimed at establishing an environmentally sustainable program to recycle agricultural plastics.

Rolled grain bags and bagged twine can be dropped off, free of charge, at the MD of Taber Operations and Maintenance building just west of Taber on Highway 3, municipal address of 171027. PLEASE CALL AHEAD (403-223-3142) to book an appointment to bring in your rolled grain bags or bagged bale twine.

Grain bags should be machine rolled and secured with twine. Bags should be as clean as possible. Loose, unrolled or very dirty bags will be rejected.

Collection bags for recycling twine are also available at the MD of Taber Operations and Maintenance building west of Taber. Please

ensure twine is clean, dry and loosely placed in collection bags. This helps keep contamination to a minimum and maximizes the recyclability of the material. Non-program material or material not prepared properly could be subject to additional fees or rejected all together. To find out how to properly prepare your materials for recycling visit www.cleanfarms.ca and click on "more info here" tab.

The MD of Taber also has a grain bag roller available for use by residents. Please contact us for more information or to book an appointment to use the grain bag roller.

For those interested in purchasing their own grain bag roller, there is funding available through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP) program.

Thank you for helping Alberta build an agricultural plastics recycling program that helps keep our agricultural community clean and environmentally friendly.



Tightly rolled grain bags.



Clean twine in a collection bag.

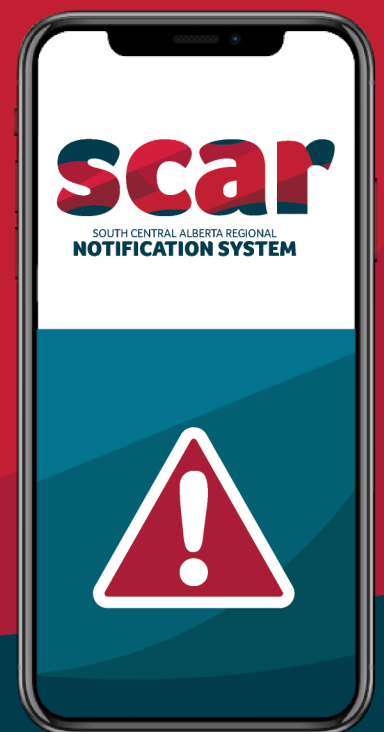


The MD of Taber's grain bag roller.

Regional alerts and real-time information sent directly to your mobile device.

The SCAR Notification System is a FREE, automated communication tool designed to deliver real-time, critical alerts and essential information to MD of Taber residents by way of text, e-mail, and voice messaging.

Registering also allows you to stay up-to-date with all the latest news, upcoming events, emergency and weather alert messages affecting the region from Canada's national emergency alerting system – Alert Ready. For more information, or to register visit:



www.scarnotify.ca

HERBICIDE APPLICATIONS

The Agricultural Services Department will begin its annual herbicide applications in the hamlets starting on April 15. Please watch out for the spray crews and give them space and time to work.

The annual roadside herbicide applications will begin around May 1.

If you have any questions in regards to the MD of Taber's herbicide applications, please contact us at 403-223-8735.



MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TABER PROPERTY OWNERS

PROPERTY ASSESSMENT NOTICES

MAILED MARCH 24, 2021

Pursuant to sections 310 and 311 of the Municipal Government Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter M-26 and amendments thereto, the Municipal District of Taber hereby notifies all Municipal District of Taber property owners that the Property Assessment Notices for the taxation year 2021 have been prepared and mailed as of March 24, 2021.

It is important that you review and ensure the accuracy of your Assessment Notices. If you have not received your Assessment Notice please contact the Municipal District of Taber at 403-223-3541.

If you have questions about your property assessment, please contact Benchmark Assessment Consultants Inc. at 403-381-0535.

For additional information regarding property assessment you may visit our website at:

mdtaber.ab.ca/p/property-assessment

HAVE YOU BEEN PAID FOR YOUR OIL & GAS WELL?

Surface Rights Board Surface Rental Recovery

The MD of Taber, not unlike many landowners in the municipality have been financially and environmentally burdened by the presence of inactive oil and gas wells on their lands. Over the past several years, many companies have either entered into receivership or gone through bankruptcy proceedings leaving many sites to be cleaned up by the Orphan Well Association (OWA). It is estimated that there are over 500 well sites assigned to the OWA within the MD of Taber, with more being added. In other cases, still operating companies are unable to or choose not to address their financial or maintenance related obligations as determined by the surface lease agreement. This leaves the landowner on the hook for unpaid surface rentals and unsightly and sometimes contaminated sites on their land without a timeline for

payments stretching out beyond 2 years in many cases.

In order to apply for rental recovery, a landowner will be required to provide documentation to support their application. Supplying the following information with your application will ensure there are not unnecessary delays in processing outside of the normal capacity issues they are experiencing.

- Original signed copy of the surface lease and survey plan with any amendments to the original lease displaying the date the lease was signed (never send originals).
- Any rental amounts payable that were amended as a result of a rental review.
- Proof of your last payment referring the rental amount paid and the land description.



them to be reclaimed.

The province of Alberta has established a process through the Surface Rights Board (SRB) to recovery lost surface rentals for companies that are delinquent in paying landowners their rents. Under section 36 of the Surface Rights Act, a landowner may apply to the SRB for rental recovery when an operator fails to make its annual rental payments or offers a unilaterally reduced payment under a private surface agreement or right of entry order.

As of February 18th, the MD of Taber has 153 active SRB rental recovery files with seven companies where rents have not been provided. One company accounts for 112 of these lease sites, owing more than \$325,000 to the MD. In total, this equates to over \$400,000.00 of revenue that the MD depends on to fund annual municipal operations. Admittedly, the SRB is inundated with Section 36 applications, resulting in

- Other documents you wish to include that are not required but may assist the SRB in understanding your application (correspondence with company, photos of the site, etc.)
- Applications can be mailed to the Surface Rights Board at: 1229-91 Street SW, Edmonton, Alberta, T6X 1E9 or emailed to srb.lcb@gov.ab.ca

The two page application is not difficult to complete but you will want to ensure all the information they require is included to avoid delays in processing. If you have a lease site(s) on your land in the MD of Taber that you are not being compensated for, and have questions about the process, require help filling out the application, or would like help compiling documentation, please contact Brian Peers at **403-715-0985** or email at bpeers@mdtaber.ab.ca

DUST SUPPRESSION

The Municipal District of Taber Dust Suppression Program allows residents to apply for dust control on rural roads in front of residences. Dust suppression involves the application of a product called MG 30, which is a blend of calcium chloride and magnesium hydroxide solution. It not only suppresses dust but also helps to bind the aggregate into the roadway, which in turn creates a hardened road surface.

Some frequently asked questions include:

I used to have oil in front of my house to control dust, is that an option?

The municipality has migrated away from oil in front of residences as these sections of roadway become difficult to maintain and can become a hazard due to pot-holing. Applied MG 30 dust suppressant is a product that can be maintained through grading intervals when required.

When is dust suppressant applied?

Application of dust suppressant product is done mid-to-late May and mid-to-late August, weather permitting. The applications are done in large batches which are volume controlled, and in an order meant to promote efficiency.

How much does it cost and how can I get some?

The municipality charges \$1.25 per linear foot, per application. Minimum length of roadway treatment is 400 feet.

Order forms must be filled out and submitted for each application (Spring and Fall).

Order forms can be found on our website or at the following locations:

- Municipal District of Taber – Administration Building
4900B - 50 Street, Taber
Call 403-223-3541
- Municipal District of Taber – Operations and Maintenance Facility
171027 Highway 3, Barnwell
Call 403-223-3142

mdtaber.ab.ca/p/dust-suppression



THANK YOU

TO ALL OUR
REGIONAL FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEER
FIREFIGHTERS AND TO THEIR EMPLOYERS

for your continued support and dedication to keeping our communities safe.

REGIONAL FIRE SERVICE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

April 18 - 24, 2021 is Volunteer Appreciation Week. The Municipal District of Taber and the Municipal District of Taber Regional Fire Services would like to recognize and applaud our regional fire service volunteer firefighters and their employers for their continued support and dedication to keeping our communities safe.

"The importance of our volunteer firefighters cannot be underestimated or underappreciated," said Joe Bruyere, Deputy Regional Fire Chief and Deputy Director of Emergency Management. "As the Deputy Regional Fire Chief, I have had the opportunity to support volunteer firefighters within the MD of Taber by advocating for the needs of our volunteers. Our goal of recruiting essential volunteers and ensuring easy access to the resources needed to have a successful volunteer experience is extremely important to the success of our Regional Fire Services Volunteer Firefighter program."

In addition to advocacy efforts, the Municipal District of Taber Regional Fire Services offers training, a yearly honourarium, and a social bond like no other!

"We are extremely proud and fortunate to have a dedicated group of volunteers who have spent countless hours providing fire and emergency services to our municipality," said Jesse Kurtz, Interim Regional Fire Chief for MD of Taber and Director of Emergency Management. "I see the benefits daily of the hard work and dedication of approximately 90 individuals within 6 fire stations throughout our area ensuring the safety of our community. The Municipal District of Taber Regional Fire Services recognizes, respects and supports their work and will continue to look for ways to ensure they are available, equipped and trained for the future."

Those interested in participating with the Municipal District of Taber Regional Fire Services should visit mdtaber.ab.ca/p/employment

ENGINEERING SERVICES AWARDED FOR INITIAL PHASE OF THE HORSEFLY SPILLWAY PROJECT.

The Municipal District (MD) of Taber Council, on behalf of the Southern Regional Stormwater Drainage Committee (SRSDC) has taken the next step in securing an engineering consultant for Phase 1 of the Horsefly Emergency Regional Spillway Project.

During a council meeting on Tuesday, January 26, 2021, the MD of Taber passed a motion awarding the contract to MPE Engineering Ltd and Stantec Consulting Ltd who submitted a joint proposal to provide engineering services for the design, engineering, construction supervision and for obtaining regulatory approvals for the project.

"MPE and Stantec are pleased to have been awarded the engineering for this exciting and vital project," says Ron Hust, Vice President of Water Resources at MPE Engineering Ltd. "The recent flooding events in southern Alberta have shown that this project is required to help alleviate damages caused by runoff events. Our team brings together a blend of local experience and global knowledge to ensure a sound design that will protect the area and environment from flood damage. MPE has been involved with the project since its inception in 2014 and cannot wait to see construction start."

On January 18, 2021, six of the SRSDC partners – The Town of Coaldale, the Town of Taber, County of Forty Mile, County of Lethbridge, St Mary River Irrigation District (SMRID), and the MD of Taber – formed a technical committee to rate and rank qualified proponents and to provide final recommendations to the main drainage committee. The request was then submitted to the MD of Taber Council for the final decision on Tuesday.

"We all recognize the importance in controlling stormwater drainage to prevent damage to homes and infrastructure," explains Gary

Franz, co-chair of the SRSDC. "In addition, southern Alberta has proven itself as a leader in Canada's Agri-Food Processing Sector. The extra layer of water security the Horsefly Spillway provides will enable continued diversified investment in agriculture and food processing. I am extremely happy to see this project moving forward."

Total cost for Phase 1 has been estimated at just over \$22 million. Contributions include \$7.4 million through the Alberta Communities Resiliency Program (ACRP) Fund by the Province of Alberta and \$8.8 million through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) by the Government of Canada. Municipal partners are responsible for funding the remainder while the SMRID and Taber Irrigation District (TID) have committed to the acquisition of required land for the project.

"We are pleased that with collaboration and shared funding, this integrated irrigation and stormwater system will help our regional partners and our high-value irrigation sector manage extreme flood risks together," states Chris Gallagher, District Manager of the TID.

Phase 1 components include 5.65 km of channel enlargement to existing TID canals to drain and connect Taber Lake to the Oldman River. Major structures include a concrete chute spillway structure into the Oldman River, and two gated water control structures (downstream of Taber Lake) to control flow into the spillway and TID's Big Bend Canal. Construction is scheduled to start in the fall of 2022.

"Getting the engineering consultants in place to begin the task of designing this project is a big step for the SRSDC," says Reeve Merrill Harris, co-chair of the SRSDC. "All of our regional partners were unanimous in our selection of MPE and Stantec for engineering services and momentum is building to get shovels in the ground in 2022."

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Bridge File 80175 Complete.

On Wednesday, February 17 construction on Bridge File 80175 was completed, reopening to traffic on Range Road 17-3 between Township Road 13-4 and Township Road 14-0.

The MD of Taber would like to thank contractor VHL Construction Ltd, their sub-contractor Ground Tech Enterprises Inc, and Roseke Engineering Ltd for a job well done coming in within budget and ahead of schedule.



Roughing It Has Never Been Easier.

Introducing our new easy-to-use online booking and payment system with CampSpot. Plan for your next visit and book with confidence at the Taber Municipal Park.

BOOK NOW:
mdtaber.ab.ca/p/taber-municipal-park

MD PARKS

MD OF TABER VIRTUAL AGM 2021

THE MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TABER IS GOING VIRTUAL!

Please join us for our Annual General Meeting featuring an update from our Reeve, Merrill Harris, our Councillors, and more.

mdtaber.ab.ca/p/virtual-AGM

DETAILS:

Date: Tuesday, April 27, 2021

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: A link to the meeting will be sent to registered participants.

REGISTRATION:

Residents wishing to participate must register at the web link provided.

WE HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US!



PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY

HAVE YOUR SAY

The Municipal District of Taber is working to review and improve its current communications efforts to better serve its residents. We are interested in finding out more about the effectiveness of how we communicate with you. We invite you to take a few minutes of your time to fill out our survey on connecting and communicating with the MD of Taber to help us gain insight into all your communication needs. To participate please visit:

mdtaber.ab.ca/p/surveys

PROPERTY ASSESSMENT INSPECTIONS ARE SCHEDULED FOR THE ENCHANT AREA.

Residents should expect to see consultants from Benchmark Assessment performing routine property inspections from March until the end of summer for the 2022 taxation year.



For information on property assessments visit: mdtaber.ab.ca/p/property-assessment

2021 CALL FOR NOMINEES

Do you have an interest in influencing local government policy decisions?

Nominations for next municipal election will open between **January 1, 2021 to September 20, 2021** for each division.

To Qualify:

- You do not have to own land/property, but you must reside in the local jurisdiction or the division you want to represent for the consecutive months immediately preceding nomination day (September 20, 2021)
- You must be 18 years of age
- You must be a Canadian citizen

Election day is October 18, 2021

For more information visit: mdtaber.ab.ca/p/election

For more information on detailed qualification requirements visit: alberta.ca/municipal-elections-overview.aspx



THANK YOU!



VOLUNTEERS



THANK YOU TO ALL THE VOLUNTEERS AND THOSE WHO DONATED.

Your love for the coulees and support for Taber Trail 77 will be appreciated by generations of trail users. Learn more at mdtaber.ab.ca/p/trails-paths