

Saddle Hills County Living

Volume 1, Issue 3

November
2018



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Busy Road Construction Season In 2018

The Operations Department accomplished a great deal during the busy summer road construction season this year. Projects Council had planned for this year were completed as well as a large number of repairs and replacements of damaged culverts and other infrastructure repair as a result of the spring flooding in April.

The County submitted an application to the Province of Alberta for a Disaster Recovery Program (DRP) and, on October 1st, the Alberta Government announced that the County's \$1.5 Million application had been approved.

County crews spent a great deal of their time this summer making the necessary infrastructure repairs caused by the flooding as well as regular updating and maintenance of County infrastructure.

Accomplishments

The Operations team completed over 500 kms of re-graveling by the end of September and had replaced over 100 culverts. Three large culverts were replaced and over 500 road washouts from the spring flood were repaired. A total of 35 culverts were installed throughout the County.

Some of the major erosion caused by the flood was repaired including stretches along the Pouce Hill, Doe Hill and Henderson Hill totaling approximately 4 kms.

Major Projects

Projects completed in 2018 included some 37 kms of road repairs and shoulder pulls on Rge. Rds. 64, 72, 82, 95 and 134 together with major work on Twp. Rds. 774 and 800. White Mountain road saw almost 6 kms of road repairs. Rge. Rd. 80 South of Twp. Rd. 791 (Field Road) was upgraded and approximately 950 meters of new road was built along Rge. Rds. 94 and 75. Crews completed 10 kms of ditching on Rge. Rd. 122 and Twp. Rd. 774.

New Graders

This year the County replaced seven of the graders in its fleet. The new graders will certainly help in our ongoing efforts to maintain the quality of our infrastructure as they provide increased reliability.



2018 Resident Survey Summary

Saddle Hills County, in collaboration with Banister Research, performed its second Resident Satisfaction Survey in August of 2018. The results of the survey are scheduled to be presented to Council on November 13. The County's first Resident Satisfaction Survey was performed in March/April of 2017. The results of both surveys can be found on the County website. Printed copies are available on request from the County office.

How do you feel about your County? 2018 Citizen Satisfaction Survey Results

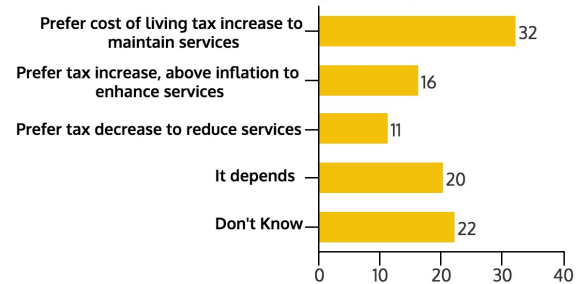
In collaboration with Banister Research, we asked our residents their thoughts on living in the County of Saddle Hills*



County Strengths & Areas for Improvement:

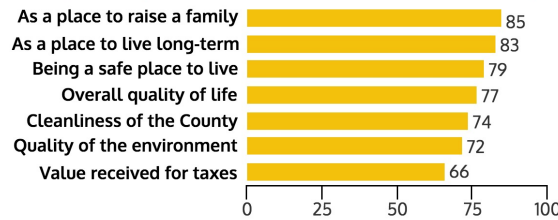


Balancing Taxes and Service Delivery: (% of respondents)



Perceived Quality of Life

(% of respondents who rated each as 4 or 5 out of 5)



5 in 6

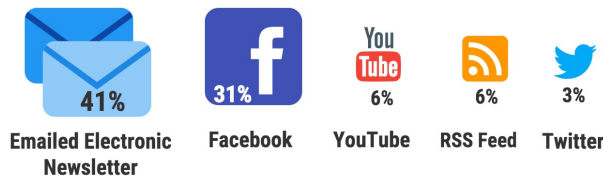


Are satisfied with County Employees

Effectiveness of Communication Methods



Using Online Methods to Stay Informed



at least 4 in 5

agreed that employees...

- Were courteous
- Showed interest in their needs
- Were accessible
- Were knowledgeable
- Were responsive

*195 residents completed the survey, yielding a margin of error no greater than +/- 6.6% at the 95% confidence level

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Bonanza to Bay Tree Water Supply Line Project Begins

When Saddle Hills County Manager of Environmental Services Darren Lubeck and Dale Gour from Tri-Line Contracting Services talk about rural water it is with a passion for maintaining a lifestyle and building opportunities for the future in rural Alberta, which is infectious.

Both men have long histories with the delivery of potable water in the Central Peace and other rural areas of Northwestern Alberta, and both men get real enjoyment out of working with landowners, farmers and residents to make potable water more accessible to rural residents.



Dale Gour (left), owner of Tri-Line Contracting Services and Saddle Hills County Manager of Environmental Services Darren Lubeck (right) seen just south of Bonanza September 21, 2018 during the initial process of fusing main supply line for the Bonanza – Bay Tree main supply line.

“I look at it as not only maintaining the rural lifestyle we have but opening up opportunities for future growth so that rural communities



As much as possible, Tri-line Contracting has been working with farmers to allow them to get crops off prior to any of the work Tri-line has to do.



Saddle Hills County Manager of Environmental Services Darren Lubeck inspects one of the trenchers being used to dig a path and lay the pipeline as it moves across the land from Bonanza to Bay Tree.

like Saddle Hills County can retain their vibrant and meaningful culture and remain sustainable well into the future,” says Lubeck. Gour echoes Lubeck’s comments and adds, “I’m finding that, as we work with local farmers and residents to get this mainline installed, the people of Saddle Hills County are a great bunch of people to work with.”

Tri-Line has been working along the pipeline route between Bonanza and Bay Tree since the beginning of September after the project was awarded to the company by Council. Using a non-intrusive cut and cover method, the Tri-Line team is able to cause the least amount of disturbance to the land as possible and move quickly, when conditions allow, to return the land to the state it was in before they dug.

\$1.75 Million Project

The contract, worth \$1.75 million, involves sinking the main water supply line for the Bonanza to Bay Tree Rural Potable Water Project (Phase 1) which will allow for residents along the line to tap into it, once it is complete, and have potable water pumped directly into their homes or water cisterns.

The process involves cutting, trimming and fusing lengths of pipe in specially-designed pieces of equipment which produce a finished product which can then be buried into the ground.



Lengths of pipe are cut, trimmed and fused together using specially designed equipment.

Saddle Hills County offers residents a Water Cistern Subsidy which covers 75% of the cost associated with the purchase and installation of water cisterns and related expenses for a maximum subsidy of \$5,000 per residence.

Saddle Hills County Council approved the Bonanza-Bay Tree Rural Potable Water Project (Phase 1) in February. An open house was held March 27, 2018 to communicate potable water plans to Bonanza / Bay Tree area residents and to provide an opportunity for the public to submit rural water servicing agreements.



After the pipeline has been buried into the ground, Tri-line Contracting returns the land to as close to the way they found it as possible.

The contract was then tendered and 11 bids were received ranging from \$1.7 million to \$3.8 million.

Working Hand-in-Hand with Farmers

After the individual pieces of pipe are fused together to make a continuous length of pipe, the finished product is then buried into the ground with the use of special trenchers which dig a path wide enough to fit the pipeline, put pipeline into the ground and leave the soil which has been dug out of the ground beside the trench so that it can be re-filled and levelled afterwards.

The whole process is quick and clean and leaves many residents unfamiliar with the process quite surprised according to Gour.

“We really work hard to ensure there is as little disturbance as physically possible and that farmland is returned, as quickly as possible, to a state which will allow farmers to proceed with cultivating and making use of their land,” says Gour.

Preventing Invasive Pest and Weed Infestation

A critical part of the project has been protection of farmland from invasive pests and weeds which can easily be transferred from one part of the province to another by means of machinery and equipment.

Saddle Hills County Agricultural Coordinator Dessa Nicholson performed a thorough inspection of Tri-line’s equipment and found no potential for infestation due to the fact the company’s equipment was well-cleaned and free of any materials which could cause problems for local farmers.

“One of our main objectives through this whole process has been to leave the land, which we need to disturb in to order to lay the pipeline, in as close to the way we found it as possible,” says Gour. “We’ve had great relationships with local farmers,” he says.

Future Opportunities

Possible future expansion of the rural potable water system is under consideration. For more information and to view maps of the areas under consideration simply visit www.saddlehills.ab.ca.

Please contact the County office (780-864-3760) to obtain a copy of the Rural Water Servicing Policy & Agreement. There is no financial contribution required at the time of sign up.

Weed & Pest Control – Year In Review

2018 has been quite the year! Weed and Agricultural Pest Management is an ongoing and important part of maintaining sustainable agriculture in Saddle Hills County. It is important that ratepayers, staff and users of the land work together to manage weeds and pests in the County.

Weeds and pests can have negative impacts by:

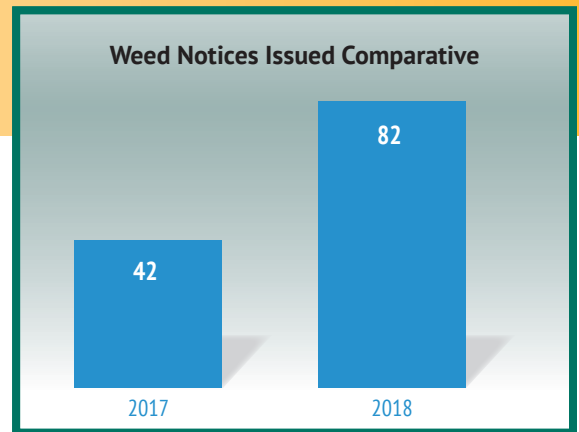
- Changing habitat available for native plants species, which in turn threatens species of insect, plant, fish and animal that depend on native plants
- Decreasing property values for residents and agricultural producers
- Harming, reducing production from agriculture

- Increasing land management expenses for Counties, businesses and property owners

In 2018, various inspections for Clubroot, Fusarium, Blackleg and Grasshoppers were conducted. We are happy to report that no Clubroot has been found in Saddle Hills County to date! Over 80 weed notices were issued, accompanied by numerous positive conversations discussing weed management solutions.

On County property over 500 ha of roadside were sprayed, all roads were mowed and various troublesome locations also sprayed. The County introduced Policy AG 23 – Fenceline Spraying Agreement which aims to help control weeds between County rights-of-way and adjacent titled land.

Agricultural Coordinator Dessa Nicholson says, “Thank you to our cooperative ratepayers who have worked with us over the past year. County Agricultural staff look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.”

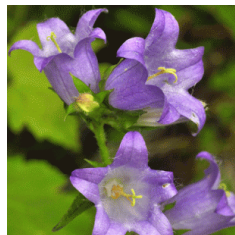


Saddle Hills County's

Most Wanted Weeds – 2018



Orange Hawkweed



Scentless Chamomile



Yellow Toadflax



Canada Thistle



Creeping Bell Flower

Council Highlights July – September, 2018

Some highlights from Council meetings in July, August and September

County Proud Photo Contest

Administration was asked to organize and advertise children's and adult photography "County Proud" contests with a range of categories (nature, events, agriculture,...) with entries to be displayed at a County Christmas Open House and winning entries to be used in County promotional materials.

Antique Grader Donation

The County accepted the antique grader donation from Marvin Peterson and will place it at a location at the County Complex with funds from the County Complex Beautification Budget. The natural state of the grader will be maintained.

Spruce Trees at County Complex

The County purchased 50 spruce trees for delivery in late August and have been planted at the County Complex.

Budget review dates set

That the 2019 budget review dates were scheduled as follows at the County Complex:

- November 5, 2018 Special Council Meeting (Budget) – Grant Program
- November 14, 2018 Special Council Meeting (Budget) – Operating
- November 29, 2018 Special Council Meeting (Budget) – Capital

Elk predation research

Administration was asked to research and identify elk predation problems in Saddle Hills County with the objective of presenting suggestions to the appropriate Ministries.

Council will advise the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry and Minister of Environment and Parks that the actual elk population in Wildlife Management Unit 358 and 359 is greater than the current estimates.

It will also be recommended that a general antlered/antlerless elk season from September to December to reduce the actual elk population to mitigate the damage to crops due to elk in Saddle Hills County.

TELUS Cost Sharing Agreement

TELUS General Manager Brian Bettis gave Council a regional update at its regular meeting on August 28, 2018. Bettis spoke about TELUS's ongoing commitment to rural service delivery and infrastructure protection and presented Council with options for future co-location and tower construction in Saddle Hills County.

As per Council's direction, the County entered into a cost sharing contract with TELUS for co-locating on the Fourth Creek and Ksituan towers in 2018 with the County's cost being \$1,800,000.

Administration was also authorized to negotiate an agreement with TELUS for cost-sharing the 2018/2019 construction of one mobility tower to improve mobility services in the Henderson area; and cost-sharing the 2019/2020 construction of one mobility tower to improve mobility services conceivably in the NE Site area; and bring the proposal back to Council for approval.

G5 Economic Development Advisory Committee

Council made a motion to bring the topic of a new Intermunicipal Economic Development Advisory Committee to the next Central Peace (G5) meeting scheduled for November.

Rim Rocks Research

Administration was asked to research what is required to develop the Rim Rocks Formations site south of Bay Tree and the waterfall area for accessibility. The results of the research were to be brought back to Council for consideration during its 2019 budget deliberations.

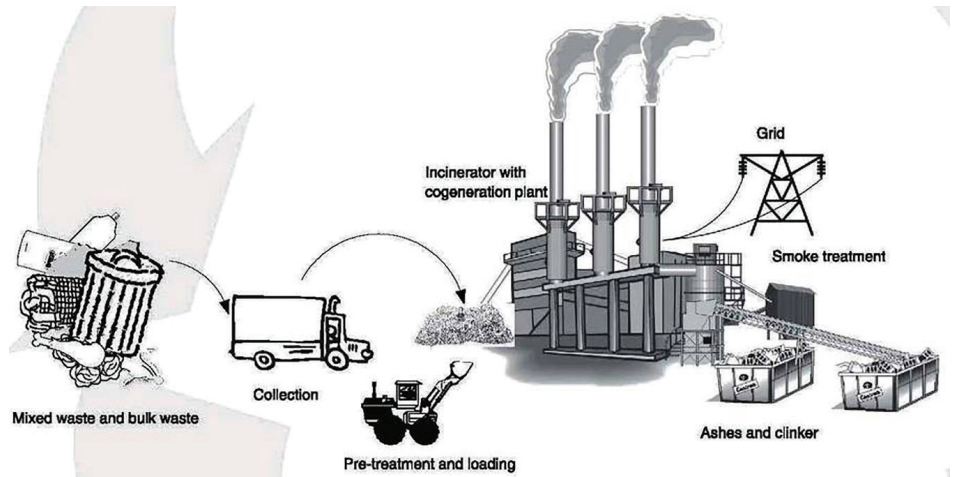


Seniors' Housing Proposal

As per Council direction, meetings have been requested with the Minister of Alberta Health and Minister of Housing & Seniors to discuss the new proposed seniors' housing/supportive living facility.

Council to Investigate Energy Cogeneration

At its July 24 meeting, Council directed Administration to outline the Terms of Reference for the new Energy Cogeneration Research Committee. The purpose of the Committee is to research the possibility of a cogeneration plant for waste management that converts waste to energy.



Fourth Creek Hall Update

Lyla Yanishewski, Carrie Yanishewski, Donna Nelson and Liana Lowther from the Fourth Creek Community Association gave Council an update on the progress of the Fourth Creek Hall at its September 25 meeting.



Among the items of good news shared with Council were the fact that the association increased its membership in the last year and has experienced a significant increase in usage of their existing hall from 61 days (Jan – Sept, 2017) to 109 days (Jan – Sept, 2018).

The Association says they have received more than \$75,000 in in-kind donations for everything from general contracting to equipment, construction, landscaping and more.

Council released the 2019 grant funds allocated for the project to be used in 2018 and decided that any further funding requests be considered under a separate application during 2019 budget deliberations.



Alberta Goat Association

Mallory Kaiser of the Alberta Goat Association (AGA) spoke to Council at its regular meeting on September 11, 2018, about the growing role of goat producers in Alberta's agricultural economy. Kaiser told Council there are 50 members of the AGA from across Alberta. The AGA works closely with Alberta Agriculture and Food and the Diversified Livestock Fund of Alberta to further the goat industry.

The AGA's 2018 Conference was held October 26 to 28 at Clarkson Hall in Evergreen Park in Grande Prairie. Council voted to provide \$4,000 to the AGA as a sponsor for the conference. Kaiser and her husband Shaun operate a goat farm in Fourth Creek.

County Receives Alberta Recycling Award

Councillor Lawrence Andruchiw (left) and Manager of Environmental Services **Darren Lubeck** were on hand to receive Alberta Recycling's 2018 Collection Site Award of Excellence for transfer stations sites serving a population of under 5,000 in Fort McMurray on September 6, 2018 during the Alberta CARE Recycling Conference.

Alberta Recycling annually recognizes three registered municipal collection sites that display excellence in the management of their electronics, paint and tire collection sites, meeting all program requirements and at the same time making recycling convenient and safe for their residents. The other two winners are recognized in the medium and large categories.



New Savanna Fire Hall Nears Completion

The new Savanna Fire Hall is expected to be completed in mid-November. Interior framing was completed in October along with a number of other essential parts of the project including, the concrete slabs, windows and doors and other interior aspects of the building. The contractor was scheduled to complete the project by this fall.

Boat Launch Study Presented

The consultant's report identifying possible sites for a boat launch along the Peace River in Saddle Hills County was scheduled to be presented to Council at their regular meeting on November 13. The report includes preliminary engineering and estimated costs to proceed with the project.

Campground Report Presented

Saddle Hills County has been researching the feasibility of upgrading and/or expanding the campgrounds at both Hilltop Lake and Cotillion. Two surveys were conducted in August and contributed to the Campground Expansion Studies which were presented to Council at their October 23 meeting.

Emergency Preparedness

Concerned about grass or forest fires where you live?

Protecting your home from wildfire starts with simple actions. Whether you are doing regular yard maintenance or making large scale changes during renovations or landscaping, you can make choices that will help protect your home from wildfire.

While properly preparing your home and community can reduce the risk of damage caused by wildfires, ensure that you have proper insurance on your home and property.

Know your hazard...take the assessment

Knowing the factors that can pose a threat to your home, yard and beyond can empower you to make choices that will reduce the risk.

Take action... Some of the measures cost very little and can help reduce the vulnerability of your home to wildfire, others require planning and long-term commitment. Learn how to make FireSmart actions that can protect your home, yard, vegetation and fuels, farm or acreage at www.firesmartcanada.ca.

Emergency Preparedness Guide



Your emergency preparedness guide



Build A Kit

In an Emergency You Will Need 3 Days of Some Basic Supplies:



- Supply of Water (4L per person per day)
- Non Perishable Food for All Family Members and Pets
- Emergency Contact Numbers
- Flash Light, Battery Powered Radio and Extra Batteries
- An Extra Set of Car Keys, Credit Cards and Cash
- A Change of Clothes for Each Family Member
- Extra Eyeglasses or Contact Lenses
- Important Family Documents
- Prescriptions or Special Medications
- Alternative Chargers for Electronic Communication Devices
- Insurance Documents
- First Aid Kit
- Sanitation Supplies



IS YOUR FAMILY PREPARED?

How Is Saddle Hills County Dealing With Cannabis Legalization?

When cannabis was officially legalized on October 19, 2018, Alberta municipalities were required to ensure their bylaws and policies aligned with the Alberta Government's Cannabis Framework and Legislation.

Saddle Hills County has addressed the legalization of cannabis

through its Land Use Bylaw (LUB). Changes to the LUB are being considered by Council and an update is expected later this year. Those changes will address land use zoning and approvals for cannabis production, distribution and retail sales of cannabis in Saddle Hills County.

Anyone seeking further details should ask the Planning and Information Systems Department at the County office at 780-864-3760. Saddle Hills County will follow provincial regulations and guidelines with respect to cannabis use in the County.

County Business Survey Q & A with Paul Pike

Economic Development

Coordinator Paul Pike has been visiting local businesses throughout Saddle Hills County and completing copies of a Business Survey designed to help local business. We caught up with Paul in October and asked him about the survey. This is what we found out.

1) When did you start doing the business survey?

September of 2018

2) What is the purpose of the survey?

To introduce myself to businesses operating in the County, learn about these businesses, and identify opportunities whereby the County could provide a business skills workshop to help them.

3) How many local businesses have you seen so far?

28

4) Are there any initial findings? (If so; what are they)

Oilfield Service

The oilfield service sector needs ways to attract a younger workforce into the oil/gas industry. One obstacle is a lack of local housing opportunities for employees coming to the area to either rent or own. Another is finding qualified employees who have training and experience operating heavy duty equipment. A third obstacle that is common throughout the industry is the nature of contracts with oil/gas companies, which makes hiring and maintaining staff a constantly moving target.

Service/Retail

The service/retail sector contains many self-employed entrepreneurs who have mentioned bookkeeping and keeping up with back-office paperwork as a weak point and there appears to be a need to learn skills to become more efficient at managing those business responsibilities. For some businesses, finding qualified candidates represented a challenge while other businesses described stable employee retention.



Paul Pike is the new Economic Development Coordinator for Saddle Hills County.

Contractors

Contractors (non-oilfield service) serving residential and commercial building appear to face challenges with keeping up with projects. Hiring employees with construction skills and/or becoming more effective in attracting career-oriented individuals committed to the construction trades was identified as a limiting factor. Similar experience with managing bookkeeping and back-office paperwork responsibilities was also mentioned similar to the service/retail sector businesses.

5) What can businesses expect when you call/visit them?

Businesses can expect a short, friendly visit, an eight-question survey that is completed through a discussion with them, and an opportunity to communicate to Council about their experience running their business in today's environment.

Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs)

As a result of the 2016 changes to the Alberta Municipal Government Act (MGA), municipalities that share a common boundary must create an ICF with each other. Those municipalities are required to have collaboration frameworks that specify what and how services are funded and delivered by April 1, 2020.

The ICFs are intended to provide for integrated and strategic planning, delivery and funding of intermunicipal services. In addition, the frameworks are designed to allocate scarce resources efficiently in the provision of local services and to ensure that municipalities

contribute funding to services that benefit their residents

Each ICF must address the following services:

- transportation
- water and wastewater
- solid waste
- emergency services
- recreation, and
- any other services that benefit residents in more than one of the municipalities that are parties to the framework

For each service, the ICF must:

- list the services currently provided by each municipality
- list the services being shared on an intermunicipal basis by the municipalities

- list the services provided by third parties
- identify how each of these services would be best delivered
- outline how intermunicipal services will be delivered and funded

Saddle Hills County is working with the County of Grande Prairie, Birch Hills County, the MD of Fairview, Clear Hills County and the MD of Spirit River No. 133 in establishing Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs) and Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs) as required.

Intermunicipal (G5) Initiatives

Among the initiatives recently taken on by the G5 group of Central Peace municipalities, the most visible is perhaps the Central Peace Health Center in Spirit River. The Center provides a state-of-the-art facility for local general practitioners, dentists and other health professionals and was paid for by all five member municipalities (Saddle Hills County, Town of Spirit River, MD of Spirit River No. 133, Village of Rycroft, Birch Hills County).

Saddle Hills County and its neighbours have also invested in mutual aid, inter-municipal cost-sharing, protective services and emergency management agreements and Saddle Hills County has provided supportive grants to each of the Town of

Spirit River and the Village of Rycroft. In addition the County has occasionally shared resources with other members of the G5.



The Central Peace Health Center (bottom right) was a joint project of the five member municipalities including: Saddle Hills County, MD of Spirit River #133, the Town of Spirit River, the Village of Rycroft and Birch Hills County.

On November 3, 2016 the Reeves, Mayors and CAOs signed a document referred to as the 'G5 Principles and Protocols,' an event which marked an important milestone for the G5. The municipalities have been

working together for several years on matters of regional needs and intermunicipal cooperation.

More recently, the group of municipalities has been working on improving supportive living services in the region including meetings with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Housing and Seniors.

Joint grant applications have been submitted under the Alberta 'Water for Life' and the Federal 'Investing in Canada Infrastructure' programs for Phases 1 and 2 of the Peace Regional Water Project. The project encompasses: a water intake from the Peace River, a raw water line to Spirit River and a line to Rycroft. The project is pending grant approval.

Public Engagement and Initiatives

The County engaged in a number of public activities and initiatives as we moved from summer to fall.

Volunteer Appreciation BBQ Highlights

The County's annual Volunteer Appreciation BBQ was well-attended despite some rain and everybody seemed to enjoy themselves.



Garden Contest Winners

The winners of the County's first ever 'Visit Our Own Back Yard' gardening contest were announced in September. The winners were:

- 1st Place – Andrea Steffen
- 2nd Place – Heather Porrill
- 3rd Place – Tracie Christenson
- Most Popular with the Public – Vera Friesen

All winners received gift certificates to the County's greenhouses as a Thank You for participating in the contest, for helping to beautify the County and helping to encourage local tourism.



Leaders of Tomorrow

This year's 'Leaders of Tomorrow' event saw local students participate in a 'Mock Council Meeting' and tour the County Complex as they learned about local government.



Rim Rock Initiative

Members of staff visited the Rim Rocks formation south of Bay Tree to explore the possibility of promoting the unique geological features.



You're Invited

Christmas Open House

December 6
4:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Celebrate Christmas with Saddle Hills County Council and Staff

You are invited to join with Saddle Hills County Council and staff to our first Christmas Open House.

Meet Councillors and staff, tour the County Complex and enjoy some caroling, snacks and refreshments.

A chance to meet, socialize and get to know your Councillors and County staff. We look forward to seeing you.

Stay In Touch

For more information on County projects and programs or in order to report an issue of concern please stay in touch through any of the following means:

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