

THE MD CONNECTION

MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF TABER

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REEVE'S REFLECTIONS

MERRILL HARRIS, REEVE

On behalf of Council, I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas holiday with family and friends and your New Year is off to a prosperous start.

Each new year brings with it new opportunities and challenges, and we are certainly living in challenging times. We have seen a significant price increase on everyday-essential items such as lettuce, eggs, milk, bread and gasoline as the average cost of living has skyrocketed this past year.

Health and mental health are growing concerns, and there are many who are looking for help in these areas. There are places to go and many agencies available in times of crisis to help ease the everyday stresses of life. Food banks are located in the Towns of Vauxhall and Taber and Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) are in each community of our Municipality. FCSS services range from counselling for individuals and families, to parenting skills, teenage peer support, and services for seniors. If you are in need of

confidential help, call FCSS at 403-795-3328. The 211 Alberta helpline and online database provides counselling and support services from highly-trained specialists. Please know that while your Municipality does not offer these types of services, we are aware of the strain people are under and hope if you are struggling, you will seek help from qualified professionals who are always available.

In December of 2022, Municipal Council approved the 2023 operating budget and three-year operating budget plan, along with the 2023 capital budget and five-year capital budget plan. The 2023 budget consists of all sources of revenue for the Municipality. This includes property tax revenue (\$16,656,000), land lease rental revenue (\$1,660,000), oil and gas lease revenue (oil and gas sites located in the MD), campground fees, municipal services revenue (\$2,303,000) and capital transfers from Provincial and Federal Governments. Capital revenues include the Municipal Sustainability

REEVE'S REFLECTIONS

Continued

Initiative (\$1,466,387 Provincial Government) and the Canada Community Building Fund (\$429,849 Federal Government). The total operating budget for 2023 is \$22,211,362. Expenses include salaries, wages, benefits, and cost of services provided: gravel crushing and hauling, road grading, construction and repair, general administration, information technology services, bylaw enforcement services, regional fire services, RCMP, roadside mowing, weed control, recreation and parks. Your tax dollars are used in the above-mentioned areas to provide reliable and consistent quality-of-life-centered services.

All Alberta Municipalities are obligated to prepare a five-year capital budget plan. Here, the MD of Taber has developed a ten-year capital plan to provide a longer-term perspective for replacement of capital equipment (road graders, roadside mowers, gravel crushing and hauling equipment), office technology (computers, servers etc.), Hamlet needs such as road maintenance, repairs and upgrades.

Here is a brief break down of the 2023 capital budget. As I have reported in other newsletters, we have many projects on the go. The Horsefly Regional Emergency Spillway project, budgeted at \$47.7 Million, is finally underway. Phase 1 construction started last December and is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2024, with Phases 2 and 3 to begin in 2024. This project is made possible in part by the Government of Canada under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (\$8,878,049) and the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (\$9,880,000), also in part by the Government of Alberta under the Alberta Community Resilience Program (\$20,388,300), and many regional partners including the Counties of Lethbridge, 40 Mile, Cypress and Warner, the Towns of Bow Island, Taber, Coaldale, and the Village of Barnwell.

Enchant will see a new 36 lot residential development. Money from municipal reserves will be used against the budgeted cost of \$1.6 Million and fully credited once all lots sell. The north side of Grassy Lake will also see a new 46 lot residential development for phase one of the new residential subdivision. Again, money from municipal reserves will be used against the budgeted cost of \$3.4 Million, and credited back from all lot sales. Lot prices will be determined when final construction costs are known.

To keep all buildings owned and operated by the MD in good condition is an ongoing cost. This year we are completing a \$100,000 budgeted upgrade to the Hays Fire Hall, and a \$38,000 budgeted repair to our Operations and Maintenance Building on Highway 3.

As usual, equipment purchases for Public Works are the highest capital expenditures for the MD of Taber. The Municipality has a fleet of 12 road graders: 11 for maintenance and 1 for construction. The price of a new construction-sized grader is just short of \$1 Million, and a maintenance-sized grader is about \$750,000. We operate a gravel crusher and a new loader is required for our gravel program. A 30-year-old loader will be replaced and a new one is budgeted for around \$450,000. We run a fleet of 6 highway tractors and belly dump trailers. A new truck and trailer unit will replace an aging, worn-out unit at an estimated cost of \$365,000.

Agricultural Services will see a couple of new equipment purchases, such as a roadside mower, a bale processor (for fall roadside grass seeding) and a trade-in on a new skid steer. Regional Fire Services will receive a new primary fire engine unit at Station 4 (Taber). The existing Station 4 unit will move to the Barnwell Station. The fire truck now located in Barnwell will be kept and used for training and act as a spare when other regional units undergo their semi-annual CVIP inspections. The new fire engine unit was ordered in 2021 and is expected to be delivered this year.

Other projects scheduled this year include our annual oiled road rehabilitation program applied to various roads throughout the MD, the Vauxhall Airport Apron paving, and some targeted infrastructure studies. We have submitted grant applications for replacing two bridge structures crossing the BRID main canal in the Vauxhall / Enchant area. Upon application approval, shared costs will be 75% Provincial and 25% Municipal.

Hopefully this has given you a quick glimpse of our municipal operations and the associated costs. If you have any questions, call your Councillor or myself.

On behalf of Council, we hope you have endured the cold weather as we look towards spring with the high hopes for another year of bounteous harvests.

CAMPING SEASON IS ALMOST HERE!

Whether you are a first time camper or a seasoned veteran, it's time to start making plans for the 2023 camping season at the Taber Municipal Park.

Here are a handful of ways to prepare for an enjoyable camping experience.

- › **Find a spot and make reservations now:** Our campground tends to get booked rather quickly once the camping season begins, so it's always a good idea to plan your trip well in advance. To book your stay at the Taber Municipal Park visit campspot.com
- › **Take the time to pack right:** Research the weather and make a detailed list. Some basic items to include are: first aid kits, flash lights or lanterns with extra batteries, bottled water, and bug spray.
- › **Plan meals and activities ahead of time:** Planning your meals and activities in advance will help you better maximize your time spent enjoying the great outdoors.
- › **Review our park terms of service:** To have a safe and enjoyable camping experience, be prepared and know what's expected of you when you visit. Learn more at mdtaber.ab.ca/p/parks



PLAN YOUR
CAMPING
GET-TOGETHERS
NOW

VISIT US ONLINE AT
MDTABER.AB.CA

DID YOU KNOW?

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM 2023

1

That the Agricultural Services annual weed control program is scheduled to begin this spring?

Please watch out for spray crews and give them space and time to work starting:

- › April 17th in hamlets
- › May 1st along roadsides

For more information call **403-223-8735** or visit: mdtaber.ab.ca/p/weed-control

2

That you can apply for a hay cutting permit on Municipal right-of-way?

If you are interested in hay cutting and baling on the Municipal right-of-way, you can apply for a permit. Permits are issued on a first-come, first-served basis and expire at the end of each year. For more information or to apply for a permit, visit us at 171027 HWY 3, or contact Agricultural Services at **403-223-3142**.

3

That ALL orders for the 2023 dust suppression program must be paid in full at the time the order form(s) are submitted?

Please indicate your preference for spring or fall application (or both), along with detailed instructions by submitting one or both order forms found at: mdtaber.ab.ca/dust-suppression

4

That ALL bulk water accounts are now prepay only?

You will be able to add funds to your bulk water account the same way you pay your monthly water invoices. Learn more at: mdtaber.ab.ca/bulk-water

› Range Rd 18-1 & Township Rd 15-2

Located near Enchant, this project was awarded to White Fox Group and construction is currently on hold until spring 2023. This project involves the complete reconstruction of 6.5 km of roadway.

› Enchant Subdivision Expansion

This project was awarded to East Butte Contracting, and construction is currently on hold until spring 2023. With this, Enchant will see an additional 35 residential lots for sale.

› Grassy Lake Landfill Reclamation

A 100 meter setback waiver application has been granted by the Alberta Environment and Parks. This waiver would allow the MD of Taber to leave the existing inert landfill material in place and build our subdivision safely around the landfill location outside the recommended waiver distance.

› Grassy Lake North Subdivision

Phase 1 of the Grassy Lake North Subdivision is currently in the design stages. This project will see an additional 40+ residential lots available for purchase in the near future.

› 2023 Shoulder Pull Program

Road review and assessments are currently taking place. Following the reviews, a plan for the 2023 season will be implemented.

› Bridge Replacements

An application for funding has been submitted. If approved it will see three bridge replacements within the MD of Taber. Following approval, design work will begin and then tendering for construction.

2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

APR 27 | 7:00 PM

HAYS CIVIC CENTRE
COMMUNITY HALL

A TOWN HALL EVENT

DEC 31, 2022 AUDITED
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2023 INFRASTRUCTURE
PROJECTS

AND MORE!

mdtaber.ab.ca/p/2023-AGM

HONOURING OUR VOLUNTEERS

When seconds count, volunteers of the Municipal District of Taber Regional Fire Services (MDTRFS) are ready to assist.

Our volunteer firefighters are community-minded leaders who are committed to public service, and exemplify pride, professionalism, teamwork and respect. As true heroes they protect us from threat of fire, emergency medical incidents, hazardous materials incidents, motor vehicle collisions, and much more.

"I am extremely proud of our firefighters and their accomplishments," says Chief Nathan Coté.

"As a vibrant Regional Fire Service that proudly serves a diverse population, our members give selflessly to those in

need, and receive nominal consideration for their response and training efforts. The success of our regional fire services is due mainly to our extraordinary volunteer recruitment program, which utilizes good communications, recruitment, selection, hiring, training and retention practices. The ongoing dedication from our volunteers and support from their employers, ensures the best service possible for all residents."

During National Volunteer Week (April 16 – 22), the Municipal District of Taber and the Municipal District of Taber Regional Fire Services would like to recognize and applaud our regional fire service volunteers and their employers for their continued support and dedication to keeping our communities safe.

For those interested in participating with the MDTRFS, please visit: mdtaber.ab.ca/p/firefighter-recruitment

SUMMER WATER SAVING TIPS

During summer months, water usage can account for as much as 50 percent or more of your monthly utility bill. As summer approaches, learning how to conserve water during the hottest months not only can save you money, but will increase your understanding of the value of water.

Here are some easy ways to conserve water this summer.

- 💧 Water only when necessary. More plants die from overwatering than under watering. Signs of overwatering include:
 - Leaves turn lighter shades of green and yellow
 - Young shoots wilt
 - Sometimes algae or fungi grow
- 💧 Apply water only as fast as soil can absorb it.
- 💧 Avoid watering areas that are hard to water (i.e. slopes and isolated areas).
- 💧 Collect water using rain barrels.
- 💧 Direct gutters and downspouts to water trees and shrubs.
- 💧 Check your sprinkler system often for leaks and make sure you are watering your yard – not the house, sidewalk or street.
- 💧 Try to avoid watering during windy days. Water evaporates and disperses quickly when the wind blows.
- 💧 Check your hoses and outdoor taps for leaks and dripping water.
- 💧 The best time to water your lawn is in the early morning. Morning temperatures allow leaves to dry off during the day.
- 💧 Lawns only need approximately 1 inch of water per week. A Frisbee is a great way to measure the amount of water your lawn is receiving.



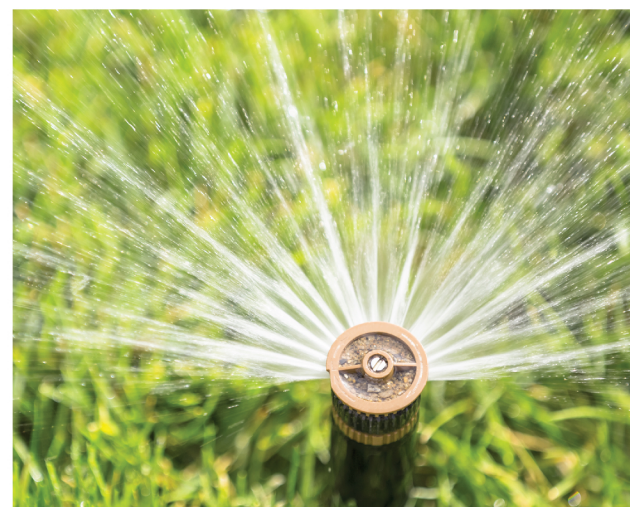
THANK YOU

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

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



VOLUNTEER
FIREFIGHTERS



DOG TAG PROGRAM

Responsible dog owners not only look after their pet's health and wellness, but they also make sure their pet is a positive addition to the community.

Licensing your dog with the MD of Taber dog tag program improves the chances of getting your dog back if it becomes lost.

Dogs are considered at large when they are not under the care and control of their owner. We encourage dogs over three months of age living in the MD of Taber to be licensed through our voluntary dog tag program. Licensing your dog and keeping your contact information up to date helps us reunite you with your dog if it becomes lost and found by someone else. When you license your dog, you will get a unique tag for your dog's collar. There is currently no fee to license a dog in the MD of Taber and licences do not expire. Lost dogs are taken to the Taber Lost Paws Society.

MD of Taber residents who have lost their dog, or have found one, can call **403-223-4784** to speak to Regional Enforcement Services.

We encourage all dog owners to be responsible and support the voluntary dog licensing program to ensure that your pets are not found at large.

Scan or visit to learn more
mdtaber.ab.ca/p/dogs-at-large



DUST SUPPRESSION PROGRAM 2023

PLEASE NOTE: Beginning this Spring, all 2023 dust suppression orders must be paid in full at the time the order form(s) are submitted. Please indicate your preference for spring or fall application (or both), along with detailed instructions by submitting one or both order forms.

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 – a blend of calcium chloride and magnesium hydroxide solution. This product not only suppresses dust but also helps to bind the aggregate to the roadway to create a hardened road surface.



We also use this product as a stabilizing agent at certain intersections, roadways and on hills to help prevent washboard roads and loss of gravel. Some frequently asked questions are:

In the past, oil was used in front of my house to control dust. Is this still an option?

The municipality no longer uses oil as a suppressant since roads treated with oil are difficult to maintain and can become a hazard due to pot-holing. Applied MG 30 Dust Suppressant is a product better maintained through grading intervals when required.

When is dust suppressant applied?

Depending on the weather, dust suppression application is done mid-to-late May and mid-to-late August.

Applications are done in large, volume-controlled batches and prioritized by the order in which application forms are received.

How much does it cost?

The municipality charges **\$1.35 per linear foot**, per application. The minimum length of roadway treatment is 400 feet. Individuals requesting dust control must mark out the length of application with appropriate indicators (lathe with coloured ribbon is preferred) in order to ensure the product is applied as desired. ***If a discrepancy exists between the length of application marked, and the length indicated on the order form, the product will be applied according to the amount requested on the form.***

How do I apply?

Order forms can be found online at:
mdtaber.ab.ca/p/dust-suppression

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

Order forms **MUST** be fully completed **AND** submitted with payment before the deadlines indicated for one of the following:

- Spring application only
– Order deadline May 15th
- Fall application only
– Order deadline August 15th
- Or both spring and fall applications



ANIMAL PARTS & CARCASSES

How to responsibly discard your animal parts and animal carcasses.

The Municipal District of Taber has seen a significant increase in the improper disposal of animal parts and carcasses found on privately and publicly owned properties. From farm livestock to at-home wild game meat processing, improper disposal of animal parts and carcasses can threaten the health and safety of humans and wildlife.

Several environmental concerns include the prevention of disease transmission, such as Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), the protection of air and water quality, the prevention of unwanted scavengers, and for keeping positive neighbour relations, who would otherwise deal with foul nuisances and unsightly premises.

Often municipal staff are unnecessarily burdened with the unpleasant job of properly discarding animal parts and carcasses safely. Improper disposal of animal parts and carcasses on private or public property (including ditches and municipal right-of-ways) can lead to fines for offenders.

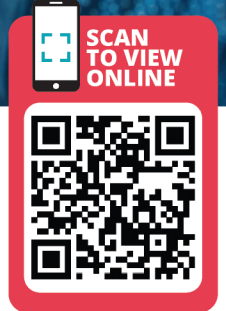
For safe disposal, please deliver all animal parts and carcasses to the Town of Taber Waste Transfer Station and Landfill located 1/2 a kilometre west on Highway 864, where discarded animal carcasses will be buried and disposed of properly. For more information, contact the Town of Taber Landfill at 403-223-5569.



Looking for a new career?

We are always looking to hire. See what's available by visiting:

mdtaber.ab.ca/p/employment

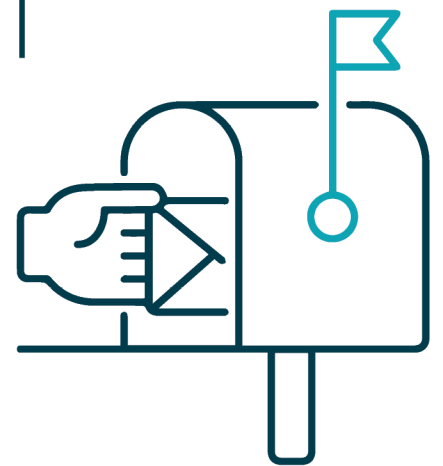


ASSESSMENT NOTICES

Notices are on the way.

Please review your 2023 property assessment for accuracy. If you have not received yours, please contact us at 403-223-3541.

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



mdtaber.ab.ca/p/assessments

PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

Division 7 (Vauxhall area) should expect to see Benchmark Assessment Consultants performing routine inspections from March until the end of summer for the 2023 taxation year.

