

MountainViews

Issue 2 – March 2011



Mountain View
COUNTY

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Reeve Paddy Munro, with Tony Martens, Chief Administrative Officer, Mountain View County

Message From The Reeve

On February 16th the 2011 Budget was passed. This followed an intense review of all aspects of Mountain View County's financial picture. As a new Council, the process was interesting and it offered perspective on the challenge of balancing short term realities with long term goals.

Last fall, you handed us a clear mandate for change. You have our commitment to act on it, however it takes time to turn a big ship around. In the interim, we have a rural municipality to operate responsibly and cost effectively. The 2011 Budget addresses both immediate objectives for change; and it lays the foundation for our Strategic Directions Initiative – the long term vision for Mountain View County.

Moreover, it's a financial plan that recognizes our economy is recovering, albeit slowly. So prudence was our watchword as we explored ways to stimulate business activity, maintain the integrity of County infrastructure and provide real value to taxpayers.

That's why you will see:

- 0% property tax increase for residential ratepayers and farmers; and a slight decrease for nonresidential rate payers (for the second year in a row)

- Increased investment for recreational facilities, communications and government relations
- Increases to cash and reserve balances to prepare for the next major road upgrade in 2013
- A \$1.5 Million investment in the Olds-Didsbury Airport (read more about the economic development opportunity in this issue)

As a complete package, we believe the 2011 Budget will ensure Mountain View County sustains a strong financial position. With our new CAO in place, we are now positioned to initiate long term planning in all aspects of our organization. As we identify operational changes that can improve value and service delivery we'll revisit our financial options.

As always, your comments and questions are welcomed. Thank you for the opportunity to be of service.

Paddy Munro, Reeve

403.586.0046 or
paddy.munro@mountainviewcounty.com

No Stranger to Change

24 years with Mountain County has taught newly appointed CAO Tony Martens a thing or two about embracing new direction

Although he was up against stiff competition from 35 highly qualified applicants, the selection of Tony Martens for Mountain View County's top job was unanimous. As explained by Reeve Paddy Munro, "We selected a candidate with three decades of municipal government experience; all of it in rural Alberta and 24 years with Mountain View County in a variety of senior management roles. We have the right person for the job."

And it will be a challenging job as the County embarks on development of Strategic Directions; a plan to create a new vision for Mountain View through a long term lens. Council and Martens have the groundwork already underway with:

- Assessment of the structure and processes of the Planning and Development Services and Operational Services departments
- A review of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP)
- Development of an effective public participation program

- A staff issues action plan
- Establishment of realistic benchmarks for service delivery

"I'm truly honoured to be in a position that allows me to serve Mountain View County ratepayers," says Tony Martens, CAO. "I've seen many changes in our County over the last 24 years; because of each Council's commitment to drive continuous improvement for our ratepayers."

"I look forward to the next few years. We have a bold agenda – but we're motivated to achieve Mountain View County's long term goals. It's very exciting to be on the cusp on positive and progressive change."

Martens, a certified government manager, spent his first decade of public service at Warner County, first as an accountant, then as Assistant Manager. At Mountain View County he has been Assistant Commissioner, Director of Legislative Services, Planning and Development Officer and recently, Interim CAO.

Last year a total of **19,890 kgs of agricultural plastics** was recycled by **100 Mountain View County residents and 4-H Clubs.**

RECYCLE FARM PLASTICS

Mountain View County Agricultural Service Board currently has an incentive program running. The first 100 residents who deliver a minimum of 100 kgs of agricultural waste plastic for recycling will receive \$100.

When: April 4 - October 29
 (Mondays 9:00 am to 2:30 pm,
 Tuesday to Saturday 9:00 am to 4:45 pm)

Where: the Olds Transfer Station

Mountain View Regional Waste Management Commission (MVRWMC) is always accepting bale net wrap, hay tarps, twine, poly film and clean silage plastic at the Olds Transfer Station.

If you are planning to recycle waste plastics, please remember:

- Upon delivery, twine and net wrap must be bagged in clear plastic bags, with no foreign material and tied off.
- Hay tarps, silage tarps, and poly need to be in 3' x 3' bundles; secured and able to handle.
- ALL agricultural waste plastic being recycled MUST be FREE of mud, metal, straw, manure, wood, and any other debris.
- Please keep all net bale wrap bagged separately.

- The Waste Commission reserves the right to charge for any plastic deemed unacceptable. The charges are: \$150/tonne at the transfer site.

If you are bringing in 500 kgs or more at one time contact the Waste Commission one day in advance at 403.556.8120

Please contact the Olds Transfer Station at 403.556.8120 before coming to pick up clear plastic bags, to ensure there are some available. Bags can also be picked up at the Mountain View County office.

LOCAL 4-H CLUBS, RAISE MONEY!

To receive \$100 from the Farm Plastic Recycling Program, each 4-H club must recycle 100 kgs of farm plastic and be one of the first 100 participants to deliver it to the Olds Transfer Station.

Prudent and Progressive

2011 Budget Sustains County's Strong Financial Position

For the second consecutive year, County ratepayers will not be facing a property tax increase. That's good news for farmers and residential taxpayers who can expect tax bills similar to 2010 unless they've made improvements to their properties that could impact assessment value. Even nonresidential taxpayers have reason to smile; their tax bills will drop slightly.

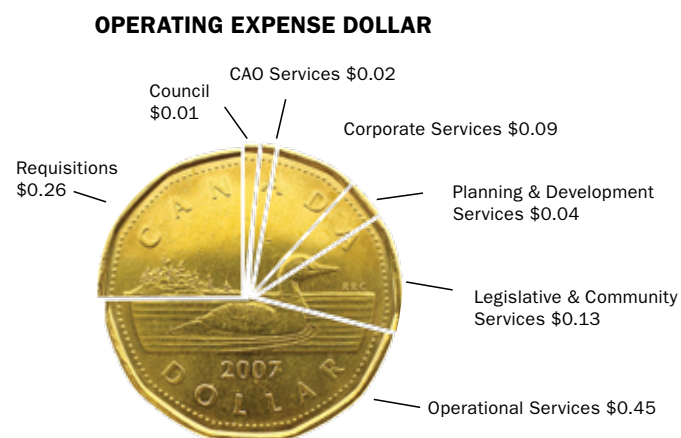
KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Tax Revenues

Overall: There is a 0% increase in residential and farming property taxes; non-residential taxes are expected to decrease slightly

- 2011 County tax revenue is budgeted to increase 5% (\$1.5 Million) from the 2010 budget as the result of new properties added to the assessment base*
- While there is a \$1.5 Million change from 2010, the difference in actual taxes collected is only \$465,000
- Of the \$1.5 Million tax increase, \$1.1 Million is municipal taxes and \$460,000 reflects taxes collected on behalf of the Province for the Education Requisition

*2011 County tax rates will be set in the spring when final assessment values are available and the Province has released its 2011 Education Requisition requirements.



Operating Expense

Overall: With amortization, operational expenses are budgeted to increase 9% or \$3,310,000 in 2011. Without the impact of amortization increases, overall operating expenses are budgeted to decrease \$95,000

- **Council:** 2010 costs included the municipal election. 2011 Council Costs have decreased accordingly
- **Corporate Services:** \$120,000 of the 2011 increase is amortization; \$260,000 is interest paid on long term debt for Senior's Housing loans (there is revenue from Senior's Housing offsetting this expense)
- **Planning and Development:** Increased staffing costs of \$125,000 for a planner and planning intern. This will be partially offset by expected increases in planning revenue
- **Legislative Services:** \$180,000 increase to support recreational facilities and libraries with urban partners; \$140,000 increase for communications and government relations. Increases are partially offset by decreased personnel costs
- **Requisitions**
 - Senior's Housing requisition (\$315,000); a slight decrease from 2010
 - Regional Waste Management requisition (\$155,000); the same as 2010
 - The Alberta Education Requisition is expected to increase by \$460,000 (3%) to \$10.1 Million in 2011. The County simply collects the Education Requisition on behalf of the Province. This does not add revenue to the County

Operational Services Expenses

Overall: Road maintenance; road infrastructure and the amortization of County road network assets reflect 45% of the Operating Budget

- There is a \$3.4 Million increase in amortization costs as a result of a reporting transition in road infrastructure costs (this is a non-cash expense and does not impact taxes)
- \$339,000 decrease in the amount spent on the dust control program
- \$500,000 of road base repair costs has been reclassified from maintenance to capital costs

Capital Program

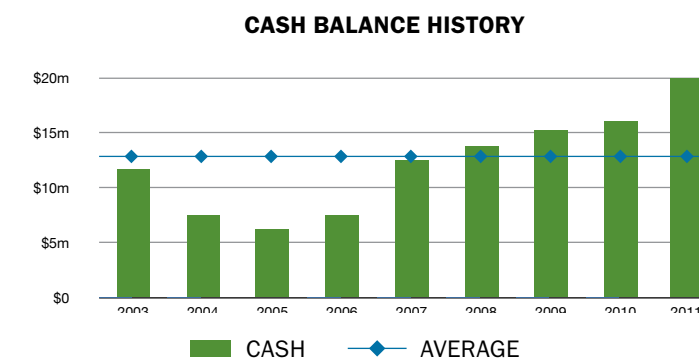
Overall: In 2011, the Capital Program is \$12.4 Million as compared to \$18.6 Million in 2010; 84% of the County's Capital Program budget is road related

- \$1.7 Million for bridge replacements including the Big Prairie Bridge
- \$1.5 Million to address surface and subsurface issues on chip sealed roads
- Final year of a three year program focused on resurfacing chip sealed roads
- Next major road upgrade in 2013; with rebuild of Acme Road planned at a cost of \$6.1 Million
- \$1.5 Million to be invested in the Olds-Didsbury Airport for development of lots. Sale of lots expected to offset the majority of costs
- **Amortization:** There is a \$3.4 Million increase in amortization costs as a result of a reporting transition in road infrastructure costs

Cash Balances

Overall: Cash balances are expected to increase by \$4.1 million in 2011; \$2.4 Million of the increase is because of deferred grant funds which are expected to accumulate over the next two budget years to fund the Acme Road Upgrade (\$6.1 Million)

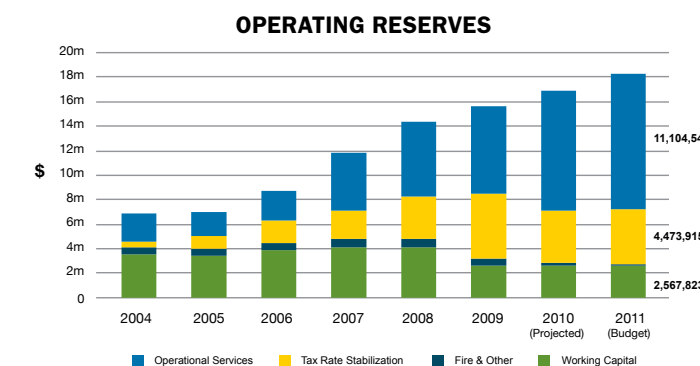
- This brings the County's cash balance to \$19.9 Million.



Reserves

Overall: 2011 operating reserves are expected to increase by 8% (\$1.4 million) related in large part to the Road Network Reserve

- Capital reserves are budgeted to increase slightly
- Increases in the heavy equipment reserve and the addition of the Asphalt Roads Reserve will be offset considerably by expenditures on the Olds-Didsbury Airport



Capital Funding

Overall: Implementation of tangible capital asset reporting now provides detailed information regarding the County's assets. Like other rural municipalities, Mountain View County is challenged to sustain infrastructure with property taxes as its primary revenue source. Without capital grants the County has a \$1.2 million operating deficit. To partially close this gap, the 2011 budget adds:

- \$600,000 in reserves to support renewal of road infrastructure
- \$250,000 for renewal of County facilities

Grants

Overall: Provincial and Federal governments have increased grant funding to Mountain View (and other municipalities) in the last five years

- Increase expenditures on road infrastructure
- Fund capital replacements (marking the beginning of grant funds accumulation to fund the rebuilding of the Acme Road)
- Provincially the County receives funding under the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI). In 2011, MSI funding is expected to be close to \$4 Million (same as 2010 and lower than originally forecast)
- The Federal Gas Tax program is expected to continue with County eligibility at \$700,000 for 2011

Full Executive Summary can be viewed at www.mountainviewcounty.com/budgetstatements

0% tax increase

THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

New Investment Opportunities at the Olds-Didsbury Airport

Tucked in the heart of central Alberta; one half hour north of the Calgary International Airport on the QEII Highway and three minutes west on Bergen Road, there's a unique investment opportunity ready for take-off.

Originally built in 1982 by the provincial government, the Olds-Didsbury Airport was transferred to Mountain View County in 2005. It is one of two airports owned by the County. The other is the Sundre Airport which is the premier aerial recreational facility in west central Alberta with future plans to offer residential lots adjacent to aviation recreational facilities.

According to Mountain View County Reeve Paddy Munro, pilot and aircraft owner, the Sundre Residential Airpark will be a piece of heaven on earth. "This gem of an aviation facility is located in a quiet yet spectacular wooded setting close to the beautiful Rocky Mountain Eastern Slopes. Imagine having unlimited access to a personal playground that includes golfing, camping, fishing or river rafting. Truly, the sky is the limit."

The Olds-Didsbury Airport is designed primarily as a high-end air supported business park to service south central



Photos by Cory Sywenky

Alberta. Given its location relative to the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline; and thriving agriculture, tourism and manufacturing sectors, there is a wide range of opportunity for charter/business flights, small cargo, crop spraying, surveying and just in time delivery for the oil patch.

In support of this vision, a formal Area Structure Plan (ASP) was adopted by the County in 2006 to provide a framework for orderly development of the airport site. As a bylaw under the Municipal Government Act, the ASP stipulates parameters for subdivision, infrastructure and long term development. Early 2011, the County approved a \$1.5 Million infrastructure initiative for the Olds-Didsbury Airport—good news for current and potential airport landowners who want to be assured of a progressive platform for their investment.

And, a business investment it is. Unique in Canada where most airport ground is leased, property sales at the Olds-Didsbury Airport are on a fee simple basis. That means, buyers enjoy complete ownership (excluding mineral rights) of their property and can use their equity to secure financing for hangar construction.

Says Doug Erdman Economic Development Officer, Mountain View County, "The fee simple concept reflects the entrepreneurial culture of our County. It holds us accountable to our investors to ensure the airport achieves its vision as articulated in the ASP. This is a commitment that aligns with the County's long term growth strategy and it's one that's been vetted through public consultation as part of the ASP process."

Lots at the Olds-Didsbury Airport are available for sale. (See Learn More on page 7 for details)

Riparian Funding

Plants in riparian areas improve water quality by trapping sediment, reducing erosion and storing nutrients and contaminants. Protecting a riparian area increases biodiversity of plants and animals, and reduces the introduction of disturbance and invasive plant species. Moreover livestock will increase their weight gain with access to clean water.

Mountain View County has funding available for riparian area fencing, off-site watering systems and creek crossings.

Mountain View County Voluntary projects include:

- Permanent riparian fencing
- Off-site watering systems
- Creek crossings

Watch the Mountain View Gazette, Mountain Views and the County website for funding availability.

Criteria for which potential projects are graded upon:

- Risk Area
- Degree of protection
- Potential Impact

FUNDING APPLICATION PROCESS

The County's Sustainable Agricultural Specialist will visit each applicant's property to conduct a pre-project environmental health assessment and take pictures of the project area. All projects will be rated by the Agriculture Specialists based on the significance of environmental impact. A presentation of all the project applications will be assembled and then reviewed by the Agricultural Service Board after which the ASB will determine funding allocation. Applicants will be contacted and a contract will be established between Mountain View County and the landowner.

For more information contact Amber Hines Sustainable Agriculture Specialist at 403-335-3311 ext 163.

Wide Open Skies

A half hour north of the Calgary International Airport and south of Red Deer, the skies are wide open to recreational and small commercial pilots. Airspace at the Sundre and Olds-Didsbury airparks is non-controlled, (flight plans not required). Both facilities complement the Calgary Airport Authority's primary focus on large scale commercial aviation and are therefore ideal for:

- Teaching
- Recreational flyers
- Charter and small business flights (Olds-Didsbury)

The Olds-Didsbury Flying Club, an active and long running organization has two aircraft for use by members.

Airport Amenities

The Olds-Didsbury Airport is poised for a \$1.5 Million investment this year. Currently, the facility features:

- 3664 feet of paved runway
- 1933 feet of turf runway
- GPS
- 24 hour lighting
- Fuel pumps
- Aircraft mechanic and maintenance services
- Shallows in place to eventually provide commercial water and sewer service

Learn More

We welcome inquiries from pilots, investors and potential business partners. We invite you to visit www.mountainviewcounty.com where you can access:

- The Mountain View County Airport ASP
- A backgrounder on the Olds-Didsbury Airport
- Photos and schematics of the County's aviation facilities

To discuss opportunities for investment or to purchase property please contact:

Doug Erdman, Economic Development Officer
at doug.erdman@mountainviewcounty.com or
call 403.335.3311 Ext.181

WATCH THOSE WEEDS!

The Alberta Government has a piece of legislation called the *Weed Control Act*. In place since 1907, it was updated in June 2010. Many of the plants on the list are ornamentals commonly found in flower beds. Due to their invasive nature and the lack of native pests for control, they've grown well beyond their original purpose and have become a problem.

In the new Act "Restricted" weeds have been renamed as "Prohibited Noxious". The old restricted weed list contained only seven weed species, but the new *Alberta Weed Control Regulation* identifies 46 Prohibited Noxious Weeds. It is every County landowner's responsibility to **control** Noxious weeds and **destroy** Prohibited Noxious weeds.

The new *Provincial Weed Control Act* permits local authorities to reclassify certain plants as necessary. Mountain View County has elevated Scentless Chamomile to Prohibited Noxious and Wild Caraway to Noxious.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

When selecting any new plants for your garden always look at the Latin naming convention to be sure you are not buying a weed listed on the *Weed Control Regulation*. If you suspect you may have one of the plants listed in the *Weed Control Regulation*, or if you find Prohibited Noxious or Noxious weeds for sale, please contact your Assistant Agricultural Fieldman at 403-335-3311 ext. 184.



HIMALAYAN BALSAM



PALE YELLOW IRIS

PROHIBITED NOXIOUS

COMMON NAME	LATIN NAME
Himalayan Balsam/Poor Man's Orchid	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i> Royle
Flowering Rush	<i>Butomus umbellatus</i> L.
Pale Yellow Iris	<i>Iris pseudacorus</i> L.
Big Head Knapweed	<i>Centurea macrophala</i> Puschk. Ex Wild.
Salt Cedar	<i>Tamarix ramoissima</i> Ledeb.
Common St. John's wort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>
Autumn Olive	<i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i> Thumb.
Common Barberry	<i>Berberis vulgaris</i> L.
Common Buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus cathartica</i> L.

NOXIOUS

COMMON NAME	LATIN NAME
Baby's Breath	<i>Gypsophila paniculata</i> L.
Creeping Bellflower	<i>Campanula rapunculoide</i> L.
Yellow Clematis	<i>Clematis tangutica</i> (Maxim.) Korsh.
Oxeye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> Lam.
Dame's Rocket	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i> L.
Common Tansy	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i> L.
Yellow Toadflax / Dalmation Toadflax	<i>Linaria vulgaris</i> Mill. / <i>Linaria vulgaris</i> Mill.
Leafy Spurge	<i>Euphorbia esula</i> L.

All ornamental plants have the potential to be invasive, even though they may not be listed on the *Weed Control Regulation*. It is good practice to prevent them from establishing in the wild, displacing native vegetation.

YOUR COUNTY COUNCILLORS:

Division 1

Kevin Good
Phone: 587-580-8304
kevin.good@mountainviewcounty.com

Division 2

Patricia McKean
Phone: 587-580-8305
patricia.mckean@mountainviewcounty.com

Division 3

Duncan Milne
Phone: 403-556-5611
duncan.milne@mountainviewcounty.com

Division 4

Bruce Beattie
Phone: 403-559-7106
bruce.beattie@mountainviewcounty.com

Division 5

Robert Orr
Phone: 403-559-8244
robert.orr@mountainviewcounty.com

Division 6

Paddy Munro
Phone: 403-586-0046
paddy.munro@mountainviewcounty.com

Division 7

Al Kemmere
Phone: 403-507-3345
al.kemmere@mountainviewcounty.com