

# NEWS *letter*



M.D. of Bighorn

Issue 32, March 2012

## Property Assessment Notices

The annual Assessment Notices will be mailed in March and the Tax Notices will be sent in May. If you do not receive your notices by the end of March and May respectfully, please contact the office and we would be happy to send you another copy.

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### Items to Be Aware of:

1. The deadline to file an appeal of your Assessment is 60 days after the Assessment Notices are mailed. Forms for filing an appeal will be available on our website, can be picked up at our offices, or mailed to you upon request.
2. The 60 day appeal period begins on the date the notices are originally mailed. An advertisement that assessment notices have been sent is placed in three local newspapers, which constitutes mailing, whether the owner actually receives the notice or not. We make every effort to ensure notices are sent to all property owners to the addresses we have on file for them, but sometimes addresses are incorrect or there may be mailing delays that occur once the notices leave our office. Any such delays do not impact the appeal deadline.
3. The fees for appealing 2012 assessments are \$50.00 for each residential/farmland appeal and \$650 for each commercial/industrial assessment appeal; the same as those set for 2011. If your appeal is successful, these fees will to be refunded to you.
4. The MD encourages you to contact the Assessor to discuss any concerns you have with your assessment before filing a formal complaint. The assessor's contact information can be obtained by calling our office or found on the Assessment Notice.
5. Property Taxes must be paid by June 29, 2012 to avoid the application of a 9% penalty on July 1, unless you are on our monthly tax payment plan. To join, please contact the office and ask to speak to Shaina, our tax and utility clerk.



### Bighorn Approves Memorial Bench Program.

For more details, go to our website and click on Community Services or call our office for more details.

# Council Briefs

*Council activity from the November and December 2011 and January 2012 Council meetings:*

A considerable number of delegations were received over the past three months: Sgt Brad Freer of the Canmore RCMP detachment was present at Council to speak on local RCMP activity and policing within the valley; John Hartenberger, of Hargroup Management Consultants Inc. spoke on the recently completed M.D. Community Services survey; Pam Ison Reilander, Resource and Development Manager for the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (more commonly known as STARS air ambulance), presented an overview of that organization's objectives and operations; Robin Bushulak and Deborah Grady, representing the Exshaw Community Association, came to Council to discuss the plans for the South Exshaw Trail Project; Matt Peron and Jennifer Enwright, auditors from the M.D.'s auditing firm BDO Dunwoody, gave a pre-audit presentation to familiarize Council with the audit process; and lastly Grade 4, 5 and 6 students from the Exshaw School Leadership Group, along with Principal Mrs. Hanson and teacher Ms. Pauls, came to Council to report on their success in raising funds for their Christmas Stocking Project and to invite Council to the school's December 22<sup>nd</sup> Christmas Concert.

While there were no bylaws before Council over the three month period, there were a couple of bylaw-related matters dealt with: the Tree Tops Pet Resort development permit was given conditional approval for a three year period (the Tree Tops Pet Resort is under a Direct Control Bylaw, and therefore Council is the development approving authority); and amendments were made to the utility rates under Fee Schedule Bylaw 01/11, effective in the new year.

Prior to the adoption of the 2012 operating and capital budgets (see the separate article elsewhere in this newsletter), a proposal was made to transfer an over-funding in the Vehicle and Equipment Reserve to the Roads Reserve, with the proposed effect of eliminating the use of the Tax Rate Stabilization Fund for 2012 budget purposes. At the

current time, the Vehicle and Equipment Reserve had exceeded the maximum level set under Council's policy; however, Council has indicated that it will be reviewing all reserve accounts, minimum/maximum levels, and the reserves policy later this year, and did not proceed with the proposed over-funding transfer.

A number of planning issues were before Council: Council approved the November 2011 Terms of Reference for the preparation of a new Exshaw Area Redevelopment Plan, with the Municipal Planning Commission to be the project Steering Committee; Council appointed Kevin Hebb to the Municipal Planning commission for the remainder of the 2011-2012 Organizational year; the draft MD of Bighorn Quality Management Plan (with respect to administering the Safety Codes/Building Inspection program) was formally adopted; and Council responded to Mountain View's referral request on their draft Municipal Development Plan (MDP) with "no comments or objections".

Council received the Community Services Board's recommendations on 2012 grants: a total of \$20,232 was approved to go to a number of community organizations, with another \$13,000 in operational funding for the Bighorn Library at Exshaw, \$4,464 to the two Victim Services organizations (Bow Valley and Cochrane & Area), and a "loan" of \$2,900 to the Harvie Heights Community Association, for an emergency replacement of the Community Hall furnace. The loan was later rescinded, at the Community Association's request, as they had accessed other funds to complete the furnace replacement.

Council also approved a two year "pledge" to provide funding to STARS, at \$3,000 per year, and a grant of \$800 to the Bow Valley SPCA.

*Cont'd on Next Page...*

*Council Briefs Cont'd...*

Following the presentation from the Exshaw Community Association representatives, regarding the South Exshaw Trail Project, Council approved, in principle, the Association's proposed use of M.D. land in South Exshaw for the development of a formal trail system, and further endorsed the Association's application to the Thrive on Wellness program for funding to support the development of this trail system.

Also with respect to trails, Council supported, in principal, the initiative to seek funding for the extension of the Rocky Mountain Legacy Trail on the south side of the TransCanada Highway, between the Banff Park gates and the Town of Canmore, on the condition that the distribution of actual costs has yet to be established, between the parties participating in the project (Towns of Banff and Canmore, and the M.D.). Finally, the decommissioning of the Coyote Creek Trail System was agreed to, given its low usage: while all structures and signage will be removed, the affected lands are still public land (municipal reserve) and are available for public recreational use.

Following a Public Hearing, on the proposed annexation of lands from Rocky View County, Council adopted the Annexation Principles that had been negotiated between the County and the M.D. There had not been any submissions made at, nor provided to, the Public Hearing, held earlier, regarding the proposed annexation. Council also authorized Administration to negotiate and finalize an annexation agreement with Rocky View for the  $\pm$  70 acres of land in Sections 7 and 18, Township 25, Range 5, west of Highway 68 and south of the Trans-Canada Highway: the land is required for the completion of Township Road 252 into the West Jumpingpound community.

Council authorized the disposal of three older surplus M.D. vehicles, two of which had been in use at the two rural area fire halls (Ghost River and Jamieson Road), while the third had been a back-up solid waste collection truck. The vehicles were taken to auction in December.

Administration was directed to meet with representatives from the Bow Valley Waste Management Commission, to discuss a possible location for an east regional waste transfer station site, within Dead Man's Flats. The Commission has been considering the development of a solid waste transfer station, to service the eastern sector of the lands within the Commission's jurisdiction: there is a similar station serving the western sector already developed in the Town of Banff.

The M.D. formally submitted its response to the Land Use Secretariat, on the Regional Advisory Council's "Advice to the Government of Alberta for the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan". Council had received reviews and comments from the Agricultural Services & Environmental Advisory Board, the Planning & Development department, and the C.A.O., on the Regional Advisory Council's "Advice" document: the three reviews were consolidated into one document, and sent on to the Land Use Secretariat. (The M.D.'s response can be viewed on the M.D.'s web-site).

Two Councillors recommended accessing their respective ward's Community Enhancement Funds reserve, for funds to complete projects within their wards: Council authorized the expenditure of up to \$10,000 from the Ward 1 Community Enhancement funds, for the connection of the Exshaw Community Association (ECA) Building to the Municipal Water system and the installation of a hot water system, while also authorizing the expenditure of up to \$1,000 from the Ward 2 Community Enhancement funds, for purchase of a camera and related signage to be used at the Lac Des Arcs solid waste bins' site, to record violations of the M.D.'s Solid Waste Management Bylaw. The Community Enhancement Funds reserve account is funded from the hosting fees paid to the M.D. by the Bow Valley Waste Management Commission.

The Agricultural Services and Environmental Advisory Board Strategic Plan for 2011 – 2012 and 2013 was accepted as information by Council.

Council approved a letter to the Director of Approvals, Alberta Environment and Water, *Cont'd on next page*

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*Council Briefs Cont'd...*(supporting Graymont Western's request for authorization to install pollution control equipment dust collectors and bin vents on the crushing plant, hydrate loading silo, zero grind silo and two lime loading silos), at their Exshaw plant.

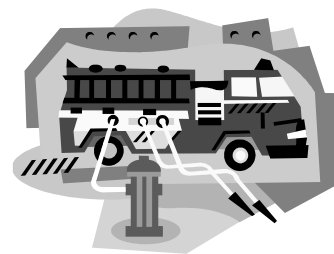
Council directed Administration to proceed with a risk assessment of the Exshaw municipal water system, after approving a terms of reference.

Council had requested a full risk assessment of the system be completed, in order to ensure preparedness, if anything catastrophic should occur to the system.

*(Please note that unadopted Council minutes, in their entirety, are usually posted on the M.D. web-site within a week of the Council meeting being held. Go to [www.mdbighorn.ca/](http://www.mdbighorn.ca/) , and click on "Minutes" under Virtual Bighorn on the right hand side of the page.*

## Fire Insurance – Exshaw

When the MD of Bighorn took over operation of the new Exshaw municipal water system in May 2011, the hamlet had an operating fire hydrant system for the first time since the early 1900s. With this new hydrant system, some people were able to obtain reductions in their fire insurance premiums right away. Others seemed not so lucky as their insurance companies waited to have the new system officially approved. If you fell into the second group, you may want to inform your insurance agency that the Fire Underwriters Survey has now recognized the Exshaw municipal water system for fire insurance grading purposes. The new grades have been published on the Fire Insurance Grading Index. Notice, though, that this may not mean you will receive a reduction in your insurance premium, as the setting of insurance premiums is a private matter between individuals and their insurance companies. Insurance rates are beyond the control of the MD.



## 2012 Budgets Approved

Council approval was given to the 2012 M.D. budgets, at the December 2011 regular meeting. Council's decisions anticipate that the municipal property tax requisition will increase by a maximum of just under 5%, and that a withdrawal of \$100,000 from the Taxation Rate Stabilization reserve fund will also be needed. In the desire to maintain current service levels, Council felt it was necessary to provide for the increase in taxes, but noted that new assessment and potential assessment adjustments may lessen the overall impact on ratepayers.

The total M.D. operating budget's net funding requirement is \$6,855,823. Non-tax sources of revenue total \$3,173,105, leaving \$3,682,718 to be funded through taxes and draws from the Tax Rate Stabilization Fund. In order to hold the tax increase in 2012 to not more than 5%, before any changes in assessment totals are known, Council needed to access \$100,000 from the Tax Rate Stabilization Fund.

The 2012 proposed operating budget includes \$293,500 in non-capital projects, capital acquisitions of \$742,000, debt repayment of \$776,524, and transfers to reserves of \$975,222 (of which \$272,772 comes from local improvement levies, \$130,000 from interest earned on investments, \$540,000 from taxes, and \$32,450 from user fees). It also includes grants of \$1,074,242 and reserve draws of \$943,024.

The \$742,000 proposed capital budget includes only pure Tangible Capital Asset (TCA) items, a change from previous years. Funding for the proposed items is \$25,000 from taxes, \$32,000 from grants, \$36,000 carried forward from 2011 taxes collected for items not completed in 2011, and \$649,000 from reserves.

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## 2012 Capital Items and Projects

-The major capital project for 2012 is a joint project to be undertaken with Mountain View County: the overlay paving of Burnt Timber Road, a 28 kilometre project estimated to cost \$5.4 million. The two municipalities are applying for provincial Resource Road Grant funding, to cover 50% of the project costs; Shell Canada has agreed to assist in the project by providing \$1.25 million (Shell has the Burnt Timber Gas Plant at the western end of Burnt Timber Road, and relies upon the road as their main transportation corridor for trucks hauling product out of the plant), leaving approximately \$900,000 to come from Mountain View County and \$550,000 from the M.D. of Bighorn.

-Still dealing with roads, the M.D. has allocated \$30,000 towards a roads study, with the Streets and Roads Committee to draft up the terms of reference for Council approval, on engaging a consultant to review the M.D.'s roads; \$25,000 has been earmarked for the second phase of a three year project to replace aging guard-rails on Jamieson Road; and \$12,000 has been budgeted to allow for three additional traffic calming devices (commonly known as speed bumps) in Exshaw.

-With the completion of the Exshaw Water System, Council has budgeted \$40,000 towards a full Off-Sites Levies review, for the various serviced hamlets' utilities (water and waste-water). The review will result in the establishing of levies to be assessed on subdivision/development which connects to the Dead Man's Flats waste-water system, the Exshaw water and waste-water systems, and the Harvie Heights waste-water system. The costs of this review will be borne by the respective reserve accounts, which are funded from utility fees.

-\$15,000 has been set aside to purchase a used truck for a replacement Exshaw fire department bush buggy. Council permission was given late last year, to dispose of the older bush buggy, which was primarily used to fight grass fire, and replace it with a newer, but used, truck. Funding will come from the vehicle reserves account.

-Given the pressing need for storage space for vehicles, machinery/equipment and other hardware, \$80,000 has been allocated for a cover-structure addition to the M.D. Operations' shop in Exshaw. Funds that were allocated in 2011 were not expended, as the original intent was to go with a fabric-covered addition; however, given the strong winds around Exshaw, and other companies' experiences with fabric-covered structures in the area, it was decided to go with a hard-surface structure instead.

-Funds have been budgeted for a number of other studies and reviews in 2012 as well: \$31,000 for a heritage resources management plan, \$15,000 for further work in the Sustainable Economic Development/Tourism Strategy area; \$30,000 for an infiltration study of the Exshaw waste-water system; \$50,000 for an engineering review of lands in East Exshaw (that are prone to flooding); \$15,000 for updating the Community Services Master Plan; and \$25,000 towards a M.D. employee salary/compensation study.

-A pump track (bicycle course) will be constructed at the Windridge playground in Exshaw, at a cost of \$30,000, with the funds coming from reserve accounts.

Upon receipt of assessment figures and requisitions from the other requisitioning bodies (Bow Valley Regional Housing, for seniors housing, and the Provincial Government, for education tax), usually in late April/early May, M.D. Council will determine the 2012 taxation rates, and tax notices will be sent out around mid-May. As always, M.D. Council can only be responsible for the municipal portion of the property tax bill: the municipality does not have control over the requisitions established by the Provincial Government and the Bow Valley Regional Housing authority.

If you have any questions, please contact the Director of Finance at 403-673-3611 or Calgary direct 403-233-7678.

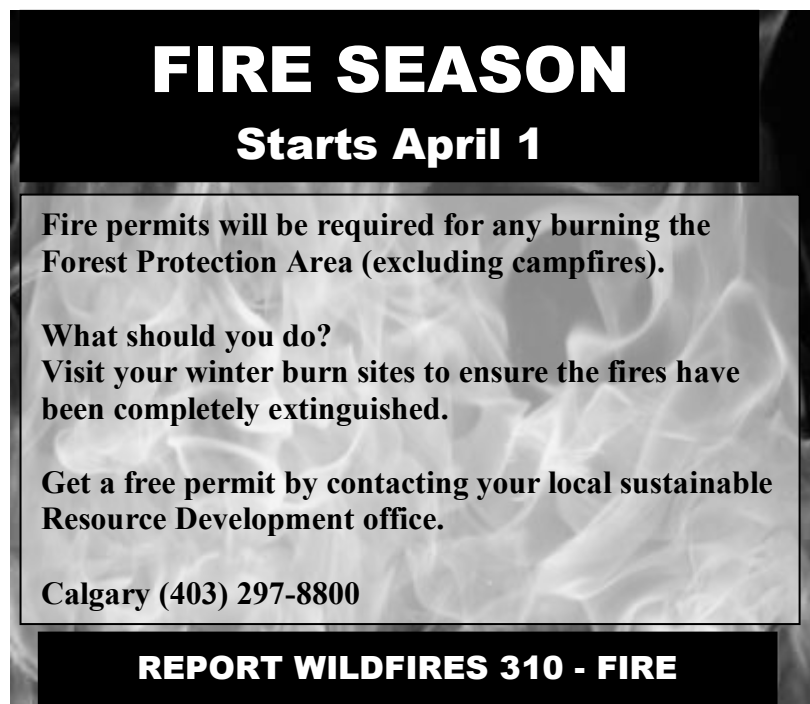
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## The Burning Question

Annual spring yard maintenance will undoubtedly be getting underway, in the next few months: M.D. staff are often asked about burning debris and other materials. Here is some helpful information:

- MD residents are only permitted to burn clean wood, no yard waste, construction/demolition waste, garbage or scrap. This includes anything treated, tires, shingles, etc.
- From November 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> residents within the hamlets (and Kananaskis settlement) require a burning permit which they can get at the MD office at #2 Heart Mountain Drive. Burning permits are not required in the rural area, during the November-March period.
- April 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>, all burning within the M.D. of Bighorn requires a permit. Please contact the Sustainable Resource Development office in Calgary at 403-297-8800 to make arrangements. Due to an increased danger of fires growing out of control, a Forestry Officer will come out and inspect the pile to be burned.
- Fines and costs have been levied in the past, for those caught burning without a permit or burning in contravention of conditions outlined on the permit.
- What can hamlet residents do with their accumulated yard waste during spring cleanup? Bighorn offers two annual clean-ups in all our hamlets. Check the Bighorn website, this newsletter or call our office for dates.
- The above conditions for permits do not apply to warming/cooking fires in fireplaces, fire pits and acceptable appliances. This type of burning is allowed year-round (except during a fire ban) without a permit.
- Please avoid the burning of green wood or any other natural material that may cause excessive smoke and create a nuisance for neighbours.

For more detailed information on burning go to our Notice Board at [www.mdbighorn.ca](http://www.mdbighorn.ca)



**FIRE SEASON**  
**Starts April 1**

**Fire permits will be required for any burning the Forest Protection Area (excluding campfires).**

**What should you do?**  
**Visit your winter burn sites to ensure the fires have been completely extinguished.**

**Get a free permit by contacting your local sustainable Resource Development office.**

**Calgary (403) 297-8800**

**REPORT WILDFIRES 310 - FIRE**

### M.D. of Bighorn Website

*Your source of the most of up to date information*

[www.mdbighorn.ca](http://www.mdbighorn.ca)

If you are looking for the latest news, event/meeting schedules, board/committee minutes, municipal documents, or even the rules for spring/fall cleanup, the M.D. of Bighorn website is the place to look. We are continuing to add new features and information. If you have suggestions of information that we should include, please contact our office or email [bighorn@mdbighorn.ca](mailto:bighorn@mdbighorn.ca) and reference 'Website Idea'

## Spring/Fall Clean-up 2012

### Rules for the Spring/Fall Clean-up:

1. Only brush will be picked up.
2. **MATERIAL THAT IS IN BAGS WILL NOT BE PICKED UP. PLEASE USE COMPOST FACILITIES FOR LEAVES AND GRASS.**
3. Other Materials will not be picked up and remain the responsibility of the resident to take to the appropriate recycling, or landfill site. Household garbage goes in the normal waste stream to Calgary.
4. No materials can be placed on road sides after midnight on Sunday before pick-up date.
5. There is a limit of one load per household. A truck load is considered to be 8'×7'×4'.
6. Material for pick-up should be no longer than 8 feet in length and neatly stacked alongside the roadway in a manner, which does not impair traffic or become a safety concern. Branches and bushes stacked with all the trunks parallel will be easier to pick-up with our Skid Steer.  
**ANY BRUSH LONGER THAN 8 FEET WILL NOT BE PICKED UP.**
7. There is no charge for this service.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>CLEANUP WEEKEND</u>	<u>PICK-UP DATES</u>
Benchlands (including Ghost Country Residential Subdivision)	May 19 & 20, 2012 September 15 & 16, 2012	May 22, 2012 September 17, 2012
Harvie Heights	May 26 & May 27, 2012 September 1 & 2, 2012	May 28, 2012 September 4, 2012
Lac Des Arcs	June 2 & 3, 2012 September 8 & 9, 2012	June 4, 2012 September 10, 2012
Exshaw	June 9 & 10, 2012 September 22 & 23, 2012	June 11, 2012 September 24, 2012
Dead Man's Flats/ Kananaskis Settlement	June 16 & 17, 2012 September 29 & 30, 2012	June 18, 2012 October 1, 2012

## **FRANCIS COOKE REGIONAL LANDFILL HOURS**

### HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday through Saturday

8:00am to 4:00pm

For more information call 673-2708.

# Vehicle Anti-Idling Regulations in the M.D. of Bighorn

Like several other Alberta municipalities, the M.D. of Bighorn does have some restrictions on idling vehicles: the restrictions are part of the M.D.'s Streets & Roads Bylaw 03/08.

## Parking Provisions in Streets and Road Bylaw

### Now in Effect in Exshaw

During the construction of the Exshaw municipal water system project, M.D. Council noted that use of the streets in Exshaw would likely be heavily disrupted, given the construction activity, and therefore wanted to ensure that traffic problems in the hamlet would be minimized as much as possible. In consideration of this situation, Council enacted a moratorium on the parking provisions of the M.D.'s Streets and Roads Bylaw in Exshaw: municipal bylaw enforcement services were directed that the parking provisions of the bylaw should be relaxed during the water system construction, and that tickets not be issued to those vehicles that might be contravening the bylaw's parking guidelines.

With the on-street construction activities now over, and streets in Exshaw returned to a fully useable state, Council has now lifted the moratorium, and drivers of vehicles in Exshaw are expected to follow the applicable bylaws, with respect to parking and all other matters.

A copy of the Streets and Roads Bylaw is available on the M.D. website, or can be viewed at the M.D. office.

During the period of May 15<sup>th</sup> – October 15<sup>th</sup> in every year, no operator of a Commercial Vehicle shall stop or park or leave his Vehicle at a standstill with the engine running or idling for longer than five (5) minutes, anywhere within a Hamlet in the M.D.

The provisions do not apply to the following vehicles, while being used in work that requires the vehicle to be stopped/parked and idling:

- Emergency Vehicles;
- Public Utility Vehicles, including utilities such as telephone systems, electrical systems, natural gas systems, and cable-vision systems.
- Municipal and other government public works Vehicles;
- Towing service Vehicles;
- Refrigeration-unit Vehicles, that while in use, comply with the stopping and parking requirements of the Streets & Roads Bylaw.

Commercial Vehicles are defined as a truck, trailer or semi-trailer, including motor vehicles from which sales are made of goods, wares, merchandise or commodity; and by means of which delivery is made of goods, wares, merchandise or commodity to a purchaser or consignee thereof. Of course, the M.D. encourages all motorists to shut their vehicles off, to prevent unnecessary idling at all times.

Bylaw 03/08 was passed in November of 2009: the full bylaw can be viewed on the M.D.'s website.

## How to Contact Us

### Reeve

Dene Cooper..... 673-3968

### Deputy Reeve

Erik Butters ..... 932-2649

### Councillors

Carolyn Montgomery ..... 678-5556

Paul Ryan ..... 609-7465

Reid Thomas ..... 932-4902

### Bighorn Office – Exshaw

Local..... 673-3611

Calgary Direct..... 233-7678

Fax ..... (403) 673-3895

Email ..... [bighorn@mdbighorn.ca](mailto:bighorn@mdbighorn.ca)

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