



ANNUAL REPORT

#GOBIGLAKES

2017



BIGLAKESCOUNTY.CA

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WELCOME TO BIG LAKES COUNTY

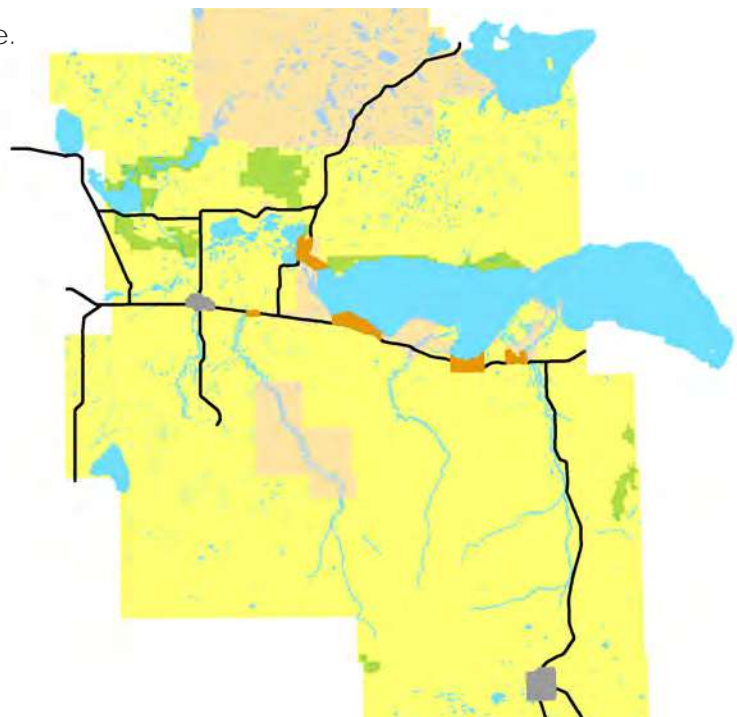
Big Lakes County is a welcoming and thriving community. Situated just a few hours north of Alberta's major cities, our residents enjoy the freedom of the great outdoors. With a service area population of 17,440, Big Lakes expands over 13,942 square kilometers and neighbours the Town of High Prairie, Town of Swan Hills, East Prairie Métis Settlement, Gift Lake Métis Settlement, Peavine Métis Settlement, Driftpile Cree Nation, Kapawe'no First Nation, Pakashan First Nation, Sucker Creek First Nation, and Swan River First Nation.

We are proud of our beautiful lakes, forests, and rolling countryside. We are equally proud of our diverse and talented workforce who have helped to expand opportunities in Big Lakes. We have an abundance of natural resources – agriculture, forestry, and oil and gas that continues to expand and strengthen our economy. We've also just scratched the surface in exploring opportunities in transportation and logistics, tourism, education, construction, health, retail, and information and communications technology (ICT). Possibilities are endless in Big Lakes for those with the vision to help see them grow.

Thank you for calling Big Lakes County home.

Legend

-  Hamlet
-  Town
-  Highway
-  Provincial Parks
-  First Nations Lands and Metis Settlements
-  Big Lakes County



COUNCIL INFORMATION

MESSAGE FROM THE REEVE & COUNCIL

On behalf of Big Lakes County Council, I am proud to present to you the 2017 Annual Report.

This past year has been a busy but positive one for our County! Not only did we celebrate Canada's 150 birthday, but our County won a national marketing award, we raised \$20,000 for three charities at our Annual Charity Golf Tournament, and we welcomed three new councillors. But that was just the tip of the iceberg to the many upgrades and repairs we made to our infrastructure.

As you flip through this report you will find the financial statements and the department highlights, which will provide you with detailed information on what Big Lakes County has achieved and what we are working towards for 2018.

As we reflect on 2017 I am happy to report that our council has continued to build positive relationships with the provincial government and Hon. Danielle Larivee as well as with Mr. Arnold Viersen who represents our region in the federal government as a Member of Parliament. Furthermore, we will continue to work cooperatively with the Town of High Prairie and the Town of Swan Hills in addition to strengthening our regional partnerships with neighbouring First Nations and Métis Settlements.

Big Lakes County strives to improve our services, which helps to expand our business and recreational opportunities. Through continued lobbying efforts made by Council and staff, the County has received several provincial and federal grants totalling more than

\$11 million to repair and upgrade our bridges, culverts, water, and wastewater facilities.

In 2017, council approved of the new Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw and is currently reviewing and updating the Faust, Jousard, and Grouard Area Structure Plans (ASP). In order to create a foundation for the ASP, the County partnered with Invistec Consulting to host workshops in the hamlet's to provide residents with background information on the projects and to discuss the past, present, and future of the hamlets. This project will continue into 2018.

This past year the Economic Development Authority accepted a national marketing award from the Economic Developers Association of Canada. The County competed in a category with municipalities ten times out size. The award was for our sector profiles, which has brought lots of positive attention to our County.

Our council feels confident knowing that we have experienced, professional, customer service driven, and responsible staff who work well together for the common goal of seeing our County progress. We would like to thank the staff for all their hard work and dedication throughout the year. Lastly, to you, our ratepayers, thank you for continuing to provide us with feedback on how we can make the County better. We cannot be more excited for 2018!



Reeve Ken Matthews

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

A municipal election occurred on October 16, 2017. The County welcomed three new councillors - Councillor Fern Welch, Councillor Richard Simard, and Councillor Donald Bissell. On October 24, 2017 the new council were sworn in during the Annual Organizational Meeting.



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DONALD BISSELL
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FERN WELCH
Ward 2: Grouard
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ROBERT NYGAARD
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DON CHARROIS
Ward 8: Banana Belt/HP East
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KEN MATTHEWS
Ward 3: Gilwood North/Triangle
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RICHARD SIMARD
Ward 6: Jousard
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ANN STEWART
Ward 9: Sunset House/Gilwood South
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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

On behalf of Big Lakes County, I am pleased to present to you our 2017 Annual Report.

I want to start off by saying thank you. Your involvement over the past year, whether it's been attending open houses, workshops, or County meetings has helped to continue to shape Big Lakes County into a prosperous place to live, work, and play. I can truly say that our County has such a strong sense of community and it's all because of you, the hard working and dedicated people of Big Lakes County.

Over the past year, our County and partners have continued to build relationships and lobby on behalf of the County to all levels of government. In 2017, this generated huge success in the form of grant funding, which has allowed the County to replace bridges and culverts as well as upgrade our water and wastewater systems.

The County's quarterly newsletters have been well received as we strive to increase our communication and transparency to you, our ratepayers. We welcome your feedback as we share information about the County's programs and activities. As our communications strategy continues to evolve, your input will ensure that we are effective in our approach.

The reduction of revenues and taxation has continued in 2017; therefore, we used our reserves

to balance the loss of income. Council and staff aim to work at closing this gap in our financial shortfall. Furthermore, the County will review and update, as appropriate, its financial policies and procedures. All programs and services continue to be evaluated by our Council, committees, and staff to ensure that they are delivered in the most effective and efficient way.

Our organization has experienced staff transitions over the past year. The management team has viewed these transitions as an opportunity to revisit our organizational chart and maximize the staff resources we have. We did not, however, create any new positions in 2017.

Again, I must express appreciation to both council and staff who continue to provide strong leadership along with a strong and dedicated work ethic. This combination has produced another successful year for Big Lakes County.

As your CAO it is truly an honor to be a part of this wonderful team.

Thank you,

J. Roy Brideau, CLGM
Chief Administrative Officer





ANNUAL EVENTS

SPRING

MARCH

Zabava Celebration
High Prairie

Swancicle Days
Swan Hills

APRIL

Gun & Sportsman Show
High Prairie

Spring Amateur Rodeo
High Prairie

SUMMER

MAY

High Prairie Traditional Pow Wow
High Prairie

JUNE

Indigenous Day
High Prairie

Annual County BBQ
High Prairie

Pioneer Thresherman's Demolition
Derby & Mud Bog Racing
Triangle (Hwy 2/ 2A)

North Country Fair
Driftpile

Swan River Annual Rodeo
Kinuso

East Prairie Métis Settlement Quad
Rally
East Prairie Métis

Driftpile Cree Nation Pow Wow
Driftpile

Children's Fishing Derby
Winagami Lake

Astral Harvest
Driftpile

Alberta Old Timer Motocross
Swan Hills

JULY

Pioneer Thresherman's Canada
Day Celebration
Triangle (Hwy 2/ 2A)

Elks Pro Rodeo
High Prairie

Pioneer Thresherman's Annual
Hoedown Jamboree
Triangle (Hwy 2/ 2A)

AUGUST

Bash'n at the Beach Demolition
Derby
Spruce Point Park

Big Lakes Charity Golf Tournament
High Prairie

FALL/WINTER

SEPTEMBER

Golden Walleye Classic Fishing
Tournament
Shaw's Point Resort

High Prairie Tradeshow
High Prairie

NOVEMBER

High Prairie & District Children's
Resource Council Live Auction
High Prairie

DECEMBER

Christmas Santa Claus Parade
& Light Up
High Prairie & Swan Hills

Festival of Trees
High Prairie & Swan Hills

BOARDS & COMMITTEES

External Boards/Committees

Alberta CARE

Barrhead Social Housing

Big Lakes Library Board

Community Futures Lesser Slave Lake Region

Community Partnership Committee (CHWC)

F.C.S.S. Advisory Committee

Golden Triangle Consortia

Grouard/Peace River Trail Committee

Heart River Housing

High Prairie Chamber of Commerce

High Prairie & District Children's Resource Council

High Prairie & District Recreation Board

High Prairie Library Board

High Prairie Regional Landfill Authority

High Prairie Seed Cleaning Co-op

Lesser Slave Lake Forest Resource Advisory Committee

Lesser Slave Watershed Council

Northern Alberta Elected Leaders

Northern Lakes College (NLC) Community Education Committee

Peace Region Economic Development Alliance

Peace Airshed Zone Association

Peace Library System

Smoky Applied Research & Demonstration Assoc.

Swan Hills Special Waste Liaison Committee

Tolko Forest Resource Advisory Committee

Veterinary Services Incorporated (VSI)

Inter-Municipal Committees

Town of High Prairie

Town of Swan Hills

Internal Boards/Committees

Agricultural Service Board

Assessment Review Board

External Economic Development

Emergency Management Committee

Finance Committee

High Prairie Airport Committee

Inter-Governmental Relations Committee

Municipal Planning Commission

Peavine Métis Settlement Agreement Committee

Subdivision & Development Appeal Board

Weed & Pest Control Appeal Board

HIGH PRAIRIE AIRPORT COMMITTEE

WELCOME

In July 2017, Big Lakes County obtained ownership of the High Prairie Airport, located 3.5km south of the Town of High Prairie. Since taking over management on January 1, 2015, many upgrades have been done to the facility including: terminal renovations, installation of a fueling station, and new siding.

The new pilots lounge is the perfect place to rest from a long trip. Complete with a kitchen, refreshments, and comfy couches; if the weather is too bad to fly, pilots can always wait out the storm in the lounge.

The new 24 hour, self-serve fueling system, which offers AVgas 100LL and Jet A fuels, allows pilots to fuel their planes day or night. The fact that the airport is monitored with cameras and employees are on call 24/7 means pilots feel safe too. The runway is currently 3,933ft long by 75ft wide; with hopes of upgrading and lengthening the runway in 2018.

The High Prairie Airport may be small, but it's busy! In 2017, 181 flights were used for medivac, 26 were for business, 50 for pleasure, and 90 for other purposes.

FLY-IN BRUNCH

Big Lakes County, in conjunction with the Town of High Prairie, host a Fly-In Brunch every fall at the High Prairie Airport. This year, attendees enjoyed a hearty breakfast and received a bag of swag from Big Lakes County and the Town of High Prairie. Pilots learned of the services offered at the High Prairie Airport such as access to the renovated pilots lounge and kitchen, fuel supply, and were provided economic development information for the area.

For more information regarding the High Prairie Airport and the Swan Hills Airport please visit our website at www.biglakescounty.ca.

2017 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Reeve and Council of Big Lakes County

We have audited the consolidated statement of the financial position of Big Lakes County as at December 31, 2017 and the consolidated statements of operations and accumulated surplus, changes in net financial assets, and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Consolidated Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these consolidated financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of consolidated financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these consolidated financial statements based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the consolidated financial statements are free of material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the consolidated financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditors' judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the consolidated financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the consolidated financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, these consolidated financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the consolidated financial position of Big Lakes County as at December 31, 2017 and the results of its consolidated operations, the consolidated changes in its net financial assets, and its consolidated cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

METRIX GROUP LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants

April 25, 2018
Edmonton, Alberta



MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL REPORTING

To the Reeve and Members of Council of Big Lakes County High Prairie, Alberta

The integrity, relevance and comparability of the data in the accompanying consolidated financial statements are the responsibility of management.

The consolidated financial statements are prepared by management, in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. They necessarily include some amounts that are based on the best estimates and judgments of management.

To assist in its responsibility, management maintains accounting, budget and other controls to provide reasonable assurance that transactions are appropriately authorized, that assets are properly accounted for and safeguarded, and that financial records are reliable for preparation of the consolidated financial statements.

Metrix Group LLP, Chartered Professional Accountants, have been appointed by the Big Lakes County Council to express an opinion on the Big Lakes County consolidated financial statements.

Original signed by

Roy Brideau
Chief Administrative Officer

Original signed by

Heather Nanninga, CPA, CA
Director of Corporate Services

BIG LAKES COUNTY
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL REPORTING
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2017

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents (Note 2)	\$ 41,875,678	\$ 47,918,227
Receivables (Note 3)	8,992,665	1,847,943
Loan receivable (Note 4)	305,417	410,399
Land held for resale	<u>214,025</u>	<u>214,025</u>
	<u>51,387,785</u>	<u>50,390,594</u>
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 5)	4,454,042	3,867,739
Deposits	132,496	114,730
Deferred revenue (Note 6)	1,657,242	1,963,631
Long-term debt (Note 7)	<u>3,975,068</u>	<u>4,702,421</u>
	<u>10,218,848</u>	<u>10,648,521</u>
NET FINANCIAL ASSETS	<u>41,168,937</u>	<u>39,742,073</u>
NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Tangible capital assets (Note 9)	284,167,892	277,701,911
Inventories for consumption (Note 8)	888,384	1,562,758
Prepaid expenses and other assets	<u>194,431</u>	<u>170,263</u>
	<u>285,250,707</u>	<u>279,434,932</u>
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS (NOTE 10)	<u>\$ 326,419,644</u>	<u>\$ 319,177,005</u>
Contingencies (Note 13)		

ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL

Original signed by

Ken Matthews, Reeve

Original signed by

David Marx, Deputy Reeve

BIG LAKES COUNTY
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS & ACCUMULATED SURPLUS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

	<u>2017</u> (Budget)	<u>2017</u> (Actual)	<u>2016</u> (Actual)
REVENUE			
Net taxation (<i>Schedule 2</i>)	\$ 21,163,445	\$ 21,295,453	\$ 24,485,070
User fees and sales of goods	2,406,280	2,590,753	2,643,569
Government transfers for operating (<i>Schedule 3</i>)	983,124	857,737	859,203
Oil well drilling taxes	100,000	475,154	222,236
Interest and investment income	400,000	416,474	551,784
Penalties and costs on taxes	126,000	295,727	168,312
Rentals	48,165	52,627	53,903
Other	30,300	26,955	24,576
Fines, licenses and permits	13,000	21,356	18,493
	<u>25,270,314</u>	<u>26,032,236</u>	<u>29,027,146</u>
EXPENSES			
Transportation services	15,623,871	13,899,223	13,377,833
Water and wastewater services	3,808,354	3,485,670	4,296,198
Administration services	3,231,085	2,984,791	3,689,841
Intermunicipal cost sharing (<i>Note 16 (a)</i>)	2,559,780	2,168,390	2,971,450
Recreation and culture services	2,454,847	1,948,740	2,096,599
Protective services	1,590,514	1,301,139	1,399,086
Agriculture and development services	1,683,093	1,057,624	1,355,200
Council and other legislative services	626,882	637,565	521,698
Family and Community Support Services	746,229	609,420	608,829
Waste management and disposal services	872,271	605,048	600,725
	<u>33,196,926</u>	<u>28,697,610</u>	<u>30,917,459</u>
ANNUAL DEFICIT BEFORE OTHER REVENUE (EXPENSES)	<u>(7,926,612)</u>	<u>(2,665,374)</u>	<u>(1,890,313)</u>
OTHER REVENUE (EXPENSES)			
Government transfers for capital (<i>Schedule 3</i>)	20,971,538	9,658,674	1,529,652
Restructuring - transfers of tangible capital assets	-	154,904	2,337,735
Gain (loss) on disposal of tangible capital assets	(18,000)	94,435	(243,891)
	<u>20,953,538</u>	<u>9,908,013</u>	<u>3,623,496</u>
ANNUAL SURPLUS	13,026,926	7,242,639	1,733,183
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>319,177,005</u>	<u>319,177,005</u>	<u>317,443,822</u>
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS, END OF YEAR	<u>\$332,203,931</u>	<u>\$326,419,644</u>	<u>\$319,177,005</u>

BIG LAKES COUNTY
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET FINANCIAL ASSETS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

	<u>2017</u> (Budget)	<u>2017</u> (Actual)	<u>2016</u> (Actual)
ANNUAL SURPLUS	\$ <u>13,026,926</u>	\$ <u>7,242,639</u>	\$ <u>1,733,183</u>
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(37,281,715)	(14,344,037)	(3,304,556)
Tangible capital assets - restructuring	-	(154,904)	(2,337,735)
Proceeds on disposal of tangible capital assets	-	393,469	147,867
Amortization of tangible capital assets	7,493,849	7,733,926	7,745,028
(Gain) loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	<u>-</u>	<u>(94,435)</u>	<u>243,891</u>
	<u>(29,787,866)</u>	<u>(6,465,981)</u>	<u>2,494,495</u>
(Acquisition) use of inventories for consumption	-	674,374	736,710
(Acquisition) use of prepaid expenses	<u>-</u>	<u>(24,168)</u>	<u>(24,550)</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>650,206</u>	<u>712,160</u>
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN NET FINANCIAL ASSETS	(16,760,940)	1,426,864	4,939,838
NET FINANCIAL ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>39,742,073</u>	<u>39,742,073</u>	<u>34,802,235</u>
NET FINANCIAL ASSETS, END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 22,981,133</u>	<u>\$ 41,168,937</u>	<u>\$ 39,742,073</u>

BIG LAKES COUNTY
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Annual surplus	\$ 7,242,639	\$ 1,733,183
Non-cash items included in annual surplus		
Loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	(94,435)	243,891
Amortization of tangible capital assets	7,733,926	7,745,028
Restructuring - transfers of tangible capital assets	(154,904)	(2,337,735)
Change in non-cash working capital balances		
Receivables	(7,144,722)	583,251
Prepaid expenses	(24,168)	(24,550)
Inventories for consumption	674,374	736,710
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	586,303	1,408,927
Deposit liabilities	17,766	(100)
Deferred revenue	(306,389)	902,115
Loan receivable	104,982	101,891
	<u>8,635,372</u>	<u>11,092,611</u>
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Long-term debt repayments	<u>(727,353)</u>	<u>(700,854)</u>
CAPITAL ACTIVITIES		
Purchase of tangible capital assets	(14,344,037)	(3,304,556)
Proceeds on disposal of tangible capital assets	<u>393,469</u>	<u>147,867</u>
	<u>(13,950,568)</u>	<u>(3,156,689)</u>
INCREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS DURING YEAR	(6,042,549)	7,235,068
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS, BEGINNING OF YEAR	<u>47,918,227</u>	<u>40,683,159</u>
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS, END OF YEAR	<u>\$ 41,875,678</u>	<u>\$ 47,918,227</u>

BIG LAKES COUNTY
SCHEDULE OF EQUITY IN TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

Schedule 1

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
BALANCE, BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$272,999,490	\$274,793,131
Purchase of tangible capital assets	14,344,037	3,304,556
Cost of tangible capital assets disposed of	(1,013,129)	(1,059,491)
Accumulated amortization of tangible capital assets disposed of	714,095	667,733
Restructuring - transfers of tangible capital assets	154,904	2,337,735
Amortization of tangible capital assets	(7,733,926)	(7,745,028)
Long-term debt repayments	<u>727,353</u>	<u>700,854</u>
BALANCE, END OF YEAR	<u>\$280,192,824</u>	<u>\$272,999,490</u>
Equity in Tangible Capital Assets is Comprised of the Following:		
Tangible capital assets (net book value)	\$284,167,892	\$277,701,911
Capital long-term debt	<u>(3,975,068)</u>	<u>(4,702,421)</u>
	<u>\$280,192,824</u>	<u>\$272,999,490</u>

BIG LAKES COUNTY
SCHEDULE OF NET TAXATION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

Schedule 2

	<u>2017</u> (Budget)	<u>2017</u> (Actual)	<u>2016</u> (Actual)
TAXATION			
Real property taxes	\$ 14,345,859	\$ 14,332,002	\$ 15,647,645
Linear property taxes	11,423,780	11,546,807	14,033,297
Government grants in place of property taxes	982,369	982,319	623,058
Local improvement taxes	<u>-</u>	<u>22,888</u>	<u>212,802</u>
	<u>26,752,008</u>	<u>26,884,016</u>	<u>30,516,802</u>
REQUISITIONS			
Alberta School Foundation Fund	5,303,989	5,303,989	5,736,649
Heart River Housing	<u>284,574</u>	<u>284,574</u>	<u>295,083</u>
	<u>5,588,563</u>	<u>5,588,563</u>	<u>6,031,732</u>
NET MUNICIPAL TAXES	<u>\$ 21,163,445</u>	<u>\$ 21,295,453</u>	<u>\$ 24,485,070</u>

BIG LAKES COUNTY
SCHEDULE OF GOVERNMENT TRANSFERS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

Schedule 3

	<u>2017</u> (Budget)	<u>2017</u> (Actual)	<u>2016</u> (Actual)
TRANSFERS FOR OPERATING			
Provincial government	\$ 798,844	\$ 697,871	\$ 666,019
Local governments	<u>184,280</u>	<u>159,866</u>	<u>193,184</u>
	<u>983,124</u>	<u>857,737</u>	<u>859,203</u>
TRANSFERS FOR CAPITAL			
Provincial government	20,506,552	7,980,346	1,529,652
Federal government	-	1,678,328	-
Local governments	<u>464,986</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>20,971,538</u>	<u>9,658,674</u>	<u>1,529,652</u>
TOTAL GOVERNMENT TRANSFERS	<u>\$ 21,954,662</u>	<u>\$ 10,516,411</u>	<u>\$ 2,388,855</u>

BIG LAKES COUNTY
SCHEDULE OF SEGMENTED INFORMATION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

Schedule 4

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	Administration Services	Transportation Services	Protective Services	Utility Services	Recreation and Culture Services	All Other	Total
REVENUE							
Taxation	\$ 2,636,975	\$ 7,219,471	\$ 925,441	\$ 1,073,511	\$ 1,842,214	\$ 7,597,841	\$ 21,295,453
User fees and sales of goods	20,223	542,025	74,150	1,835,023	332	119,002	2,590,755
Government transfers	64,261	35,068	65,785	-	103,607	589,015	857,736
All other	3,415	38,596	3,081	10,405	2,587	1,230,208	1,288,292
	<u>2,724,874</u>	<u>7,835,160</u>	<u>1,068,457</u>	<u>2,918,939</u>	<u>1,948,740</u>	<u>9,536,066</u>	<u>26,032,236</u>
EXPENSES							
Materials, goods, and contracted and general services	880,580	4,473,491	419,159	1,632,701	478,535	993,328	8,877,794
Salaries, wages, and benefits	1,725,532	2,813,393	385,969	931,362	164,586	1,299,450	7,320,292
Transfers to other governments	-	-	122,866	23,770	1,305,081	2,172,934	3,624,651
Repairs and maintenance	4,389	272,836	65,211	147,392	-	1,640	491,468
Utilities	54,897	50,723	37,189	150,605	-	-	293,414
Interest on long-term debt	-	163,721	-	9,266	-	-	172,987
Insurance	59,476	60,996	38,063	23,843	538	162	183,078
Amortization	259,917	6,064,064	232,684	1,171,781	-	5,480	7,733,926
	<u>2,984,791</u>	<u>13,899,224</u>	<u>1,301,141</u>	<u>4,090,720</u>	<u>1,948,740</u>	<u>4,472,994</u>	<u>28,697,610</u>
NET REVENUE (DEFICIT)	<u>\$ (259,917)</u>	<u>\$ (6,064,064)</u>	<u>\$ (232,684)</u>	<u>\$ (1,171,781)</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 5,063,072</u>	<u>\$ (2,665,374)</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

8.

BIG LAKES COUNTY
SCHEDULE OF SEGMENTED INFORMATION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

Schedule 5

REVENUE							
Taxation	\$ 3,377,228	\$ 6,616,579	\$ 1,018,322	\$ 1,778,607	\$ 1,992,575	\$ 9,701,759	\$ 24,485,070
User fees and sales of goods	17,963	613,194	39,768	1,814,054	857	157,733	2,643,569
Government transfers	9,410	20,211	102,437	159,239	102,401	465,505	859,203
All other	3,244	38,795	4,448	9,259	766	982,792	1,039,304
	<u>3,407,845</u>	<u>7,288,779</u>	<u>1,164,975</u>	<u>3,761,159</u>	<u>2,096,599</u>	<u>11,307,789</u>	<u>29,027,146</u>
EXPENSES							
Materials, goods, and contracted and general services	1,593,727	4,150,871	583,291	2,410,239	374,757	1,294,655	10,407,540
Salaries, wages, and benefits	1,560,969	2,613,998	289,108	930,489	207,276	1,172,371	6,774,211
Transfers to other governments	-	-	115,806	11,896	1,514,030	2,974,450	4,616,182
Repairs and maintenance	139,373	232,549	103,106	242,585	-	11,505	729,118
Utilities	48,393	44,997	35,305	134,204	-	-	262,899
Interest on long-term debt	-	191,716	-	10,830	-	-	202,546
Insurance	65,383	54,648	38,359	20,916	536	93	179,935
Amortization	281,994	6,089,054	234,113	1,135,765	-	4,102	7,745,028
	<u>3,689,839</u>	<u>13,377,833</u>	<u>1,399,088</u>	<u>4,896,924</u>	<u>2,096,599</u>	<u>5,457,176</u>	<u>30,917,459</u>
NET REVENUE (DEFICIT)	\$ (281,994)	\$ (6,089,054)	\$ (234,113)	\$ (1,135,765)	\$ -	\$ 5,850,613	\$ (1,890,313)

The accompanying notes are an integral part of the financial statements.

BIG LAKES COUNTY
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The consolidated financial statements of Big Lakes County (the "County") are the representations of the County's management prepared in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards. Significant aspects of the accounting policies adopted by the County are as follows:

(a) Reporting Entity

These consolidated financial statements include the assets, liabilities, revenue and expenses and changes in net financial assets of the County. This entity is comprised of all the organizations that are owned or controlled by the County and are, therefore, accountable to the Council for the administration of their financial affairs and resources. They include the County Library Board financial statements.

The schedule of taxes levied includes requisitions for education and senior foundations that are not part of the municipal reporting entity.

(b) Basis of Accounting

The County follows the accrual basis of accounting. Revenues are recognized in the year in which they are earned and measurable.

Funds from external parties and earnings thereon restricted by agreement or legislation are accounted for as deferred revenue until used for the purpose specified.

Government transfers are recognized in the financial statements as revenue in the period in which the events giving rise to the transfer occurred, providing the transfers are authorized, any eligibility criteria have been met by the municipality, and reasonable estimates of the amounts can be made.

Expenses are recognized as they are incurred and measurable based upon receipt of goods or services and/or the legal obligation to pay.

(c) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include items that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

(d) Investments

Investments are recorded at amortized cost. When there has been a loss in value that is other than a temporary decline, the respective investment is written down to recognize the loss.

(e) Inventories for Consumption

Inventories of materials and supplies for consumption are recorded at the lower of cost or net realizable value with cost determined using the average cost method.

(f) Land Held for Resale

Land held for resale is recorded at the lower of cost or net realizable value. Cost includes costs for land acquisition and improvements required to prepare the land for servicing. Related development costs incurred to provide infrastructure such as water and wastewater services, roads, sidewalks and street lighting are recorded as tangible capital assets under their respective function. The cost of land is written off against equity in land held for resale as it is sold.

(CONT'D)

BIG LAKES COUNTY
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONT'D)

(g) Loans Receivable

Loans receivable are recorded at cost. Interest revenue is recognized as revenue in the year it is earned.

(h) Tangible Capital Assets

Tangible capital assets are recorded at cost which includes all amounts that are directly attributable to acquisition, construction, development or betterment of the asset. The cost, less residual value, of the tangible capital assets is amortized on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Buildings	20 - 50 years
Engineered structures	
Paved roadways	
Top	20 years
Base	80 years
Gravel roadways	
Top	15 years
Base	30 years
Concrete	25 years
Bridges	12 - 58 years
Wastewater systems	50 & 75 years
Water systems	50 & 75 years
Machinery and equipment	5 - 20 years
Vehicles	5 - 30 years

Tangible capital assets received as contributions are recorded at fair value at the date of receipt and also are recorded as revenue.

Works of art for display are not recorded as tangible capital assets but are disclosed.

(i) Tax Revenue

Property taxes are recognized in the year in which they are levied.

Construction and borrowing costs associated with local improvement projects are recovered through annual special property tax assessments during the period of the related borrowings. These levies are collectible from property owners for work performed by the County.

(j) Requisition Over-levies and Under-levies

Over-levies and under-levies arise from the difference between the actual levy made to cover each requisition and the actual amount requisitioned.

If the actual levy exceeds the requisition, the over-levy is accrued as a liability and property tax revenue is reduced. Where the actual levy is less than the requisition amount, the under-levy is accrued as a receivable and as property tax revenue.

Requisitions tax-rates in the subsequent year are adjusted for any over-levies or under-levies of the prior year.

(CONT'D)

BIG LAKES COUNTY
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONT'D)

(k) Contaminated Sites

Contaminated sites are defined as the result of contamination being introduced in air, soil, water or sediment of a chemical, organic, or radioactive material or live organism that exceeds an environmental standard. A liability for remediation on contaminated sites is recognized, net of any recoveries, when an environmental standard exists, contamination exceeds the environmental standard, the County is directly responsible for or accepts responsibility for the liability, future economic benefits will be given up, and a reasonable estimate of the liability can be made.

(l) Use of Estimates

The preparation of the consolidated financial statements in conformity with Canadian public sector accounting standards requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the consolidated financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the period. Where measurement uncertainty exists, the consolidated financial statements have been prepared within reasonable limits of materiality. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

The County has used estimates to determine an allowance for doubtful accounts, accrued liabilities and the useful lives of tangible capital assets.

2. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Guaranteed Investment Certificates	\$ 30,089,047	\$ 15,506,134
Operating bank accounts	6,754,873	18,047,364
Savings accounts	5,029,144	14,362,215
Cash on hand	<u>2,614</u>	<u>2,514</u>
	<u>\$ 41,875,678</u>	<u>\$ 47,918,227</u>

Guaranteed Investment Certificates, bear interest at rates ranging from 1.35% to 1.70% per annum and mature at dates between September 2018 - September 2021.

Included in cash and cash equivalents are restricted amounts aggregating \$1,657,242 (2016 - \$1,963,631) to be used for specific capital and other projects, as detailed in Note 6.

3. RECEIVABLES

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Trade and other	\$ 7,121,970	\$ 1,008,673
Taxes and grants in place of taxes	1,750,263	1,325,721
Goods and Services Tax	212,855	190,790
Utilities	<u>133,409</u>	<u>180,026</u>
	9,218,497	2,705,210
Less: Allowance for doubtful accounts	<u>(225,832)</u>	<u>(857,267)</u>
	<u>\$ 8,992,665</u>	<u>\$ 1,847,943</u>

BIG LAKES COUNTY
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

4. LOAN RECEIVABLE

The County passed Bylaw 04-2010 on March 10, 2010 authorizing Council to lend \$1,000,000 to Heart River Housing for the purposes of lodge and renovation projects at the Pleasantview Lodge in the Town of High Prairie and the Red Willow Lodge in the Town of Valleyview. The loan is unsecured, bears interest at 0.50% above the Royal Bank five year term Guaranteed Investment Certificate rate which is currently 3.00%, and is payable in quarterly blended amounts of \$29,030, due August 15, 2020.

5. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND ACCRUED LIABILITIES

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Trade and other accounts payable	\$ 3,989,096	\$ 3,459,166
Earned vacation liability	454,757	393,096
Accrued interest on long-term debt	<u>10,189</u>	<u>15,477</u>
	<u>\$ 4,454,042</u>	<u>\$ 3,867,739</u>

6. DEFERRED REVENUE

Deferred revenue is comprised of the following amounts, which have been received from third parties for a specified purpose. Additions are comprised of both contributions and interest earned during the year. These amounts are recognized as revenue in the period in which the related costs are incurred.

	<u>2016</u>	<u>Additions</u>	<u>Revenue Recognized</u>	<u>2017</u>
Municipal Sustainability Initiative	\$ 1,578,791	\$ 2,050,466	\$ (2,507,206)	\$ 1,122,051
Federal Gas Tax Fund	363,143	208,838	(180,775)	391,206
Alberta Community Partnership	-	180,850	(88,300)	92,550
Community and Regional Economic Support	-	59,190	(28,226)	30,964
Other	<u>21,697</u>	<u>20,471</u>	<u>(21,697)</u>	<u>20,471</u>
	<u>\$ 1,963,631</u>	<u>\$ 2,519,815</u>	<u>\$ (2,826,204)</u>	<u>\$ 1,657,242</u>

BIG LAKES COUNTY
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

7. LONG-TERM DEBT

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Alberta Capital Financing Authority debentures	\$ <u>3,975,068</u>	\$ <u>4,702,421</u>

Debenture debt is issued on the credit and security of the County at large, bears interest at rates ranging from 3.344% to 6.000% per annum and matures in years 2019 through 2027.

The County's cash payments for interest in 2017 were \$178,275 (2016 - \$204,775).

Principal and interest payments are due as follows:

	<u>Principal</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Total</u>
2018	\$ 754,871	\$ 150,757	\$ 905,628
2019	783,446	122,182	905,628
2020	451,197	95,509	546,706
2021	469,809	76,896	546,705
2022	489,196	57,509	546,705
Thereafter	<u>1,026,549</u>	<u>56,148</u>	<u>1,082,697</u>
	\$ <u>3,975,068</u>	\$ <u>559,001</u>	\$ <u>4,534,069</u>

8. INVENTORIES FOR CONSUMPTION

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Gravel	\$ <u>652,989</u>	\$ 1,351,692
Material and supplies	<u>235,395</u>	<u>211,066</u>
	\$ <u>888,384</u>	\$ <u>1,562,758</u>

BIG LAKES COUNTY
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

9. TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS

	<u>2017</u> Net Book Value	<u>2016</u> Net Book Value
Engineered structures		
Roadways and bridges	\$ 206,365,176	\$ 210,400,493
Water systems	20,128,592	19,818,404
Wastewater systems	17,750,584	17,883,296
Drainage systems	4,109,033	4,274,031
Airport	<u>550,489</u>	<u>590,675</u>
	248,903,874	252,966,899
Construction in progress	11,661,301	2,203,610
Buildings	10,229,933	10,446,172
Machinery and equipment	5,409,118	4,009,881
Land	4,589,534	4,569,735
Vehicles	2,035,167	2,082,985
Land improvements	<u>1,338,965</u>	<u>1,422,629</u>
	<u>\$ 284,167,892</u>	<u>\$ 277,701,911</u>

	Cost Beginning of Year	Additions	Disposals	Transfers	Cost End of Year
Engineering structures					
Roadways and bridges	\$ 300,219,996	\$ 777,386	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 300,997,382
Water systems	30,261,154	804,033	-	-	31,065,187
Wastewater systems	23,061,083	389,742	-	-	23,450,825
Drainage systems	7,319,078	-	-	-	7,319,078
Airport	<u>4,355,755</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,355,755</u>
	365,217,066	1,971,161	-	-	367,188,227
Machinery and equipment	8,425,452	2,557,116	(882,151)	-	10,100,417
Vehicles	4,790,153	352,069	(130,978)	-	5,011,244
Buildings	15,333,049	141,105	-	-	15,474,154
Land	4,569,735	19,799	-	-	4,589,534
Land improvements	2,253,572	-	-	-	2,253,572
Construction in progress	<u>2,203,610</u>	<u>9,457,691</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>11,661,301</u>
	<u>\$ 402,792,637</u>	<u>\$ 14,498,941</u>	<u>\$ (1,013,129)</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 416,278,449</u>

	Accumulated Amortization Beginning of Year	Current Amortization	Disposals	Transfers	Accumulated Amortization End of Year
Engineered structures					
Roadways and bridges	\$ 89,819,503	\$ 4,812,703	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 94,632,206
Water systems	10,442,750	490,616	-	3,229	10,936,595
Wastewater systems	5,177,787	525,683	-	(3,229)	5,700,241
Drainage systems	3,045,047	164,998	-	-	3,210,045
Airport	<u>3,765,080</u>	<u>40,186</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,805,266</u>
	112,250,167	6,034,186	-	-	118,284,353
Machinery and equipment	4,415,571	858,845	(583,117)	-	4,691,299
Vehicles	2,707,168	399,887	(130,978)	-	2,976,077
Buildings	4,886,877	357,344	-	-	5,244,221
Land improvements	<u>830,943</u>	<u>83,664</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>914,607</u>
	<u>\$ 125,090,726</u>	<u>\$ 7,733,926</u>	<u>\$ (714,095)</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 132,110,557</u>

BIG LAKES COUNTY
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

10. ACCUMULATED SURPLUS

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Unrestricted surplus	\$ 12,308,116	\$ 8,133,379
Restricted surplus		
Operating reserves (Note 11)	8,553,430	9,504,282
Capital reserves (Note 11)	25,365,274	28,539,854
Equity in tangible capital assets (Schedule 1)	<u>280,192,824</u>	<u>272,999,490</u>
	<u>\$326,419,644</u>	<u>\$319,177,005</u>

11. RESTRICTED SURPLUS

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Operating Reserves		
Working capital	\$ 6,043,854	\$ 6,093,854
Resurfacing	960,786	960,786
Community facilities	384,142	395,236
Contingency	293,913	243,913
Medical equipment	258,500	208,500
Winter maintenance control	104,387	104,387
Community Enhancement Fund	100,000	100,000
Culture	99,479	99,479
Enhanced policing	82,000	82,000
Recreation	79,650	79,285
Family and Community Support Services	79,919	72,042
Water offsite levies	39,400	39,400
Sewer offsite levies	25,400	25,400
Planning and development	2,000	-
Infrastructure Sustainability Fund	-	1,000,000
	<u>\$ 8,553,430</u>	<u>\$ 9,504,282</u>
Capital Reserves		
Water	\$ 7,590,093	\$ 9,708,002
Transportation	4,815,403	7,753,209
Sewer	4,022,283	3,216,378
Equipment replacement	2,667,247	2,224,359
Gravel source and pit reclamation	1,932,334	1,712,334
Fire equipment	1,454,141	1,291,641
Fire facility	1,265,437	1,181,367
Building	602,199	602,199
Computer equipment	267,381	93,079
Recreation and cultural	255,710	255,710
Waste transfer stations	239,684	239,684
ASB equipment	96,519	77,432
Big Meadow Water Co-op	78,917	78,917
High Prairie airport reserve	72,383	100,000
Other	<u>5,543</u>	<u>5,543</u>
	<u>\$ 25,365,274</u>	<u>\$ 28,539,854</u>

BIG LAKES COUNTY
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

12. CREDIT FACILITY

The County has access to a revolving line of credit with a limit of \$6,000,000, bearing interest at prime rate. At December 31, 2017, the balance owing was \$NIL (2016 - \$NIL).

13. CONTINGENCIES

In June 1994, the County entered into an agreement with Alberta Transportation to take over the responsibilities related to the transportation function of the former Improvement District. Under this agreement, the County has assumed a contingent liability estimated at \$324,953, related to gravel pits and stock pile reclamation. This contingency has not been accrued in these financial statements; however, should the liability be realized, the County has established a reserve to fund these costs.

14. SALARY AND BENEFITS DISCLOSURE

Disclosure of salaries and benefits for elected municipal officials, the chief administrative officer and designated officers as required by Alberta Regulation 313/2000 is as follows:

	Benefits and Salary	Total Allowances	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Councillors:				
Ward 1 - Marx	\$ 34,650	\$ 12,000	\$ 46,650	\$ 31,750
Ward 2 - Welch	4,750	1,800	6,550	-
Ward 2 - Sutherland	19,550	9,000	28,550	26,000
Ward 3 - Matthews(Reeve)	45,900	15,600	61,500	48,350
Ward 4 - Killeen	27,400	10,800	38,200	25,650
Ward 5 - Nygaard	31,225	10,800	42,025	31,550
Ward 6 - Simard	2,750	1,800	4,550	-
Ward 6 - Podollan	19,550	9,000	28,550	20,774
Ward 7 - Bissell	5,000	1,800	6,800	-
Ward 7 - Matula	20,400	9,000	29,400	28,500
Ward 8 - Charrois	22,050	10,800	32,850	29,800
Ward 9 - Stewart	38,300	10,800	49,100	35,550
	<u>\$ 271,525</u>	<u>\$ 103,200</u>	<u>\$ 374,725</u>	<u>\$ 277,924</u>
Designated officers (8) (2016 - 4)	<u>\$ 783,569</u>	<u>\$ 5,451</u>	<u>\$ 789,020</u>	<u>\$ 391,936</u>
Chief Administrative Officer	<u>\$ 193,020</u>	<u>\$ 3,478</u>	<u>\$ 196,498</u>	<u>\$ 181,370</u>

Salary includes regular base pay, bonuses, lump sum payments, honoraria and any other direct cash remuneration.

Benefits and allowances include the employer's share of all employee benefits and contributions or payments made on behalf of employees including pension, retiring allowance, health care, dental coverage, vision coverage, group life insurance, accidental disability and dismemberment insurance, long and short-term disability plans, and professional membership and tuition.

BIG LAKES COUNTY
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

15. LOCAL AUTHORITIES PENSION PLAN

Employees of the County participate in the Local Authorities Pension Plan (LAPP), which is one of the plans covered by the *Public Sector Pension Plans Act*. The LAPP is financed by employer and employee contributions and investment earnings of the LAPP Fund.

Contributions for current service are recorded as expenses in the year in which they become due.

The County is required to make current service contributions to the LAPP of 11.39% of pensionable earnings up to the year's maximum pensionable earnings under the Canada Pension Plan and 15.84% on pensionable earnings above this amount. Employees of the County are required to make current service contributions of 10.39% of pensionable earnings up to the year's maximum pensionable earnings and 14.84% on pensionable earnings above this amount.

Total current service contributions by the County to the LAPP in 2017 were \$573,971 (2016 - \$531,136). Total current service contributions by the employees of the County to the LAPP in 2017 were \$528,604 (2016 - \$488,794).

At December 31, 2016 the Plan disclosed an actuarial deficit of \$637.4 million (2015 - \$923.4 million).

16. CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

(a) Town of Swan Hills Viability Agreement

Under the terms of this agreement the County is required to provide conditional and unconditional grants to the Town of Swan Hills for 20 years with extensions as mutually agreed upon ending on December 31, 2034. The agreement will be open for review on the fifth and every proceeding five year anniversary or as mutually agreed by the parties.

In the years 2017 to 2034, the County agrees to pay the Town of Swan Hills \$950,000 annually for projects to be determined by the Town of Swan Hills. Additionally, starting in 2017, the County agrees to pay an annual capital grant to the Town of Swan Hills based on the following formula: the County's the total linear assessment for that year shall be compared with the 2016 total linear assessment for the County, and the percentage increase or decrease, as the case may be, shall be the percentage increase or decrease of this capital grant with the base amount of \$1,000,000 for that year.

(b) Town of High Prairie Cost-Sharing Agreement

Under the terms of this agreement the County is committed to pay 50% of the net operating costs of the High Prairie Municipal Library Board, High Prairie and District Fire Department, High Prairie and District Recreation Board, 90% of the High Prairie and District Municipal Airport, 20% of the reclamation costs and annual monitoring costs of the High Prairie Landfill Site, and 50% of the annual recycling contract and toxic waste roundup. This agreement is to be for five years ending December 31, 2019.

Furthermore, the County has committed financial support to the Town of High Prairie annually for capital projects that are mutually beneficial based on the following formula: the County's the total linear assessment for that year shall be compared with the 2016 total linear assessment for the County, and the percentage increase or decrease, as the case may be, shall be the percentage increase or decrease of this capital grant with the base amount of \$1,000,000 for that year.

BIG LAKES COUNTY
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

17. DEBT LIMITS

Section 276(2) of the *Municipal Government Act* requires that debt and debt limits, as defined by Alberta Regulation 255/00, for the County be disclosed as follows:

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Total debt limit	\$ 39,048,354	\$ 43,540,719
Total debt (Note 7)	<u>(3,975,068)</u>	<u>(4,702,421)</u>
Amount of debt limit unused	<u>\$ 35,073,286</u>	<u>\$ 38,838,298</u>
Service on debt limit	\$ 6,508,059	\$ 7,256,787
Service on debt (Note 7)	<u>(905,628)</u>	<u>(905,628)</u>
Amount of service on debt limit unused	<u>\$ 5,602,431</u>	<u>\$ 6,351,159</u>

The debt limit is calculated at 1.5 times revenue of the County (as defined in Alberta Regulation 255/00) and the service on debt limit is calculated at 0.25 times such revenue. Incurring debt beyond these limits requires approval by the Minister of Municipal Affairs. These thresholds are guidelines used by Alberta Municipal Affairs to identify municipalities, which could be at financial risk if further debt is acquired. The calculation taken alone does not represent the financial stability of the County. Rather, the financial statements must be interpreted as a whole.

18. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The County's financial instruments consist of cash and cash equivalents, receivables, loan receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities, and long-term debt. It is management's opinion that the County is not exposed to significant interest or currency risk arising from these financial instruments.

The County is subject to credit risk with respect to receivables and loan receivable. Credit risk arises from the possibility that the County's customers may experience financial difficulty and be unable to fulfill their obligations. The large number and diversity of customers minimizes the County's credit risk.

Unless otherwise noted, the fair values of these financial instruments approximates their carrying values.

19. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Accounts payable includes \$23,027 due to (2016 - \$29,659 due to) the High Prairie and District Regional Solid Waste Management Authority.

Other revenue includes management fees of \$10,000 (2016 - \$10,000) from the High Prairie and District Regional Solid Waste Management Authority.

These transactions are recorded at their exchange amounts as agreed to by the related parties.

BIG LAKES COUNTY
NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2017

20. FUNDS HELD IN TRUST

As trust assets are not owned by the County, the trusts have been excluded from the financial statements. A summary of trust funds held by the County is as follows:

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>
Tax sale surplus	\$ <u>34,369</u>	\$ <u>34,023</u>

21. SEGMENTED INFORMATION

The County provides a wide range of services to its citizens. For each reported segment, revenues and expenses represent both amounts that are directly attributable to the segment and amounts that are allocated on a reasonable basis. The accounting policies used in these segments are consistent with those followed in the preparation of the financial statements as disclosed in Note 1. For additional information see the Schedule of Segment Disclosure (Schedule 4).

22. APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

These financial statements were approved by Council.



CORPORATE SERVICES

The financial statement discussion and analysis provides information regarding the use of financial resources entrusted to Big Lakes County to provide municipal services and infrastructure.



YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, WE HAVE ANSWERS

Here are just a few answers to some of the questions we get asked throughout the year.

How does the province collect the education property tax?

Every year the province calculates, based on assessment value, the amount each municipality must contribute towards the public education system.

Municipalities collect the education property tax from ratepayers and then forward it to the province for deposit into the Alberta School Foundation Fund (ASFF).

Does everyone pay the education property tax?

All property owners pay the education property tax (with some exceptions, such as non-profit organization and seniors' lodge facilities). People who rent or lease property may also contribute indirectly through their monthly rent or lease payments. As the education system benefits all Albertans, people without children in school also pay the education property tax.

Every Albertan benefits from a quality Education system. The education property tax supports an education system that is producing the workforce of tomorrow.

Do seniors have to pay the education property tax?

The education tax is a tax on property assessment; therefore, seniors who own property must pay the education property tax. The Government of Alberta has implemented the Senior Property Tax Deferral Program to assist seniors.

Where does the education property tax go?

The money collected from the education property tax goes to fund Albertans' priorities in education. The education property tax is pooled into the ASFF and then distributed among Alberta's public and separate school boards on an equal per-student basis.

All separate school boards in the province have opted-out of the ASFF, which means they requisition and collect property tax money from the municipalities directly. Any difference between what an opted-out board collects and what they are entitled to receive is adjusted for so there is no financial gain to a school jurisdiction that opts out of the ASFF.

* Alberta School Foundation Fund. Government, Alberta. "Education Property Tax — Facts and Information 2017." Municipal Affairs: Education Property Tax — Facts and Information 2017.

TAXATION, ASSESSMENT & MILL RATE

For 2017, Big Lakes County held the municipal tax rate steady at 4.25 “mills” for residential and farmland property, or an effective tax rate of 0.00425% per \$100,000 of assessed value.

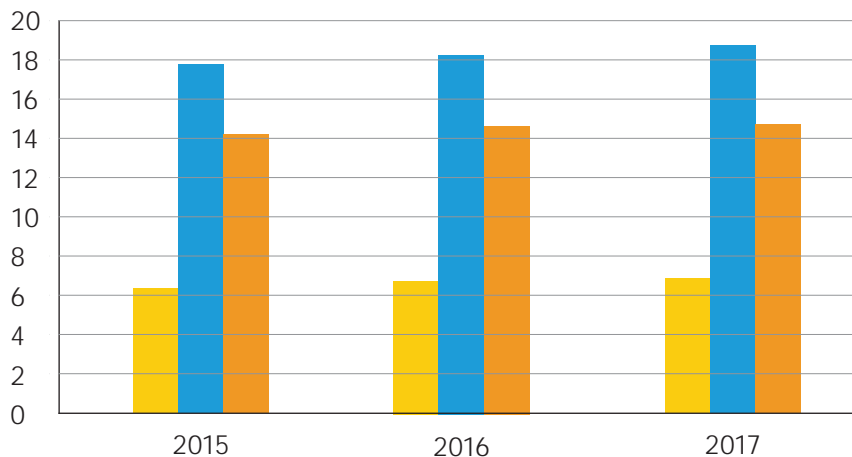
This means that if a residential property was assessed at a value of \$100,000, the municipal taxes payable would have been \$425. Non-residential and machinery & equipment municipal tax rates were held steady at 14.50 mills.

2017 TAX RATES

	Municipal	School	Senior	Total
Residential & Farmland	4.25	2.3959	0.1661	6.8120
Non-residential	14.5	4.4656	0.1661	19.1317
Machinery & Equipment	14.5	N/A	0.1661	14.6661

MILL RATE

	2015	2016	2017
■ Residential & Farmland	6.3229	6.7674	6.8120
■ Non-residential	17.6408	18.2084	19.1317
■ Machinery & Equipment	14.1295	14.6364	14.6661



Where do my taxes go?

The total property taxes collected annually are portioned out to the Alberta School Foundation Fund (ASFF), local seniors' housing foundations, and finally to general municipal revenue.

The portions of property tax that are directed to ASFF and seniors organizations are requisitioned by these organizations - Big Lakes County is informed how much is needed, and we are required to collect funds on these organizations' behalf. Big Lakes County cannot control these rates; only the municipal tax rate.

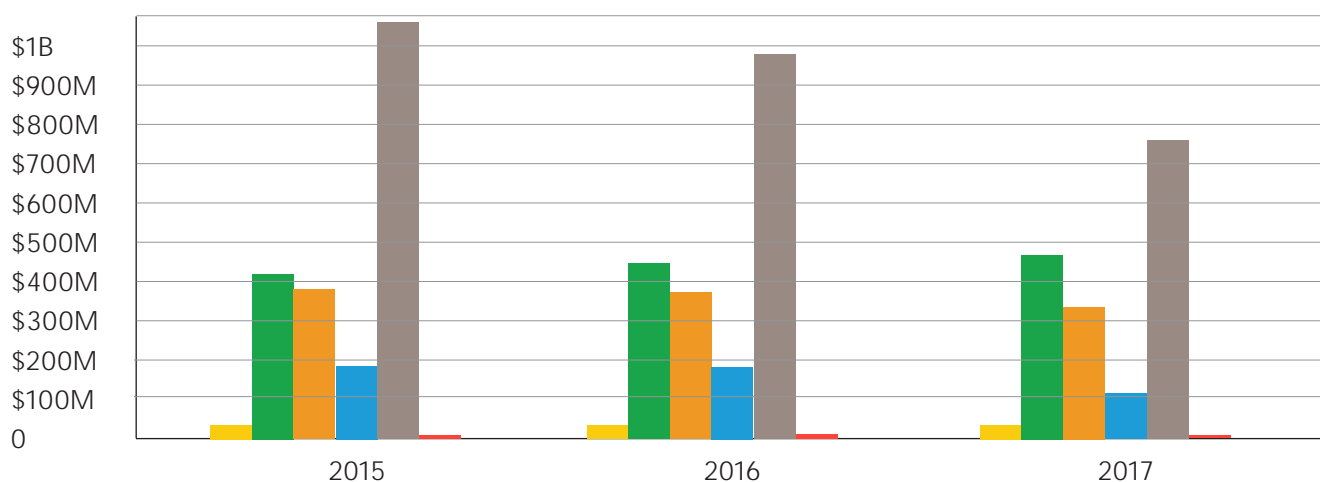
Why did my taxes change from last year?

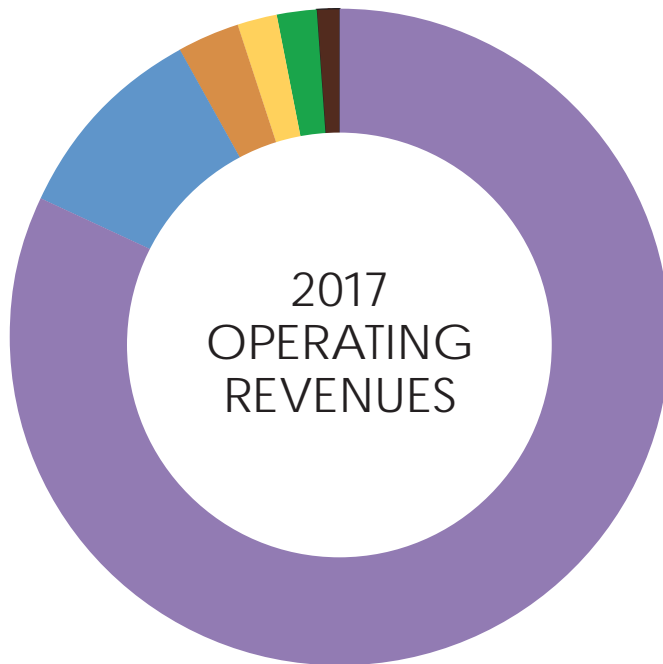
Taxes payable can change based on a number of different factors. For 2017, municipal tax rates didn't change, but amounts for ASFF and seniors' organizations did. In addition, taxes are calculated as a rate multiplied by the assessed value of a property. If your property's assessed value changed, the taxes payable followed suit.

PROPERTY VALES - TRENDS

Property values within the county experienced a marked decline in 2017 – particularly linear property, which is largely represented by oil and gas infrastructure.

	2015	2016	2017
■ Farmland Property	\$ 35,678,430	\$ 35,615,610	\$ 35,636,830
■ Residential Property	420,656,660	447,061,490	471,905,700
■ Machinery & Equipment	380,868,730	374,070,230	340,141,610
■ Non-residential	184,537,960	186,652,330	117,649,180
■ Linear — Regular Property	1,060,251,970	979,573,050	777,148,810
■ Linear — Power Generation	8,893,390	11,011,910	10,698,060
Total	\$2,090,887,140	\$2,033,984,620	\$1,813,180,190





- Property taxes 82%
- User fees & sales of goods 10%
- Government transfers for operating. 3%
- Interest & investment income 2%
- Oil well drilling taxes 2%
- Other 1%

The majority of the County's revenues are raised by property taxes, while the majority of property taxes are from linear properties. The decline in assessed property values in 2017 affected the County's overall operating revenue and caused revenues to decrease 10% from 2016 to 2017, and 13% from 2016 to 2017.



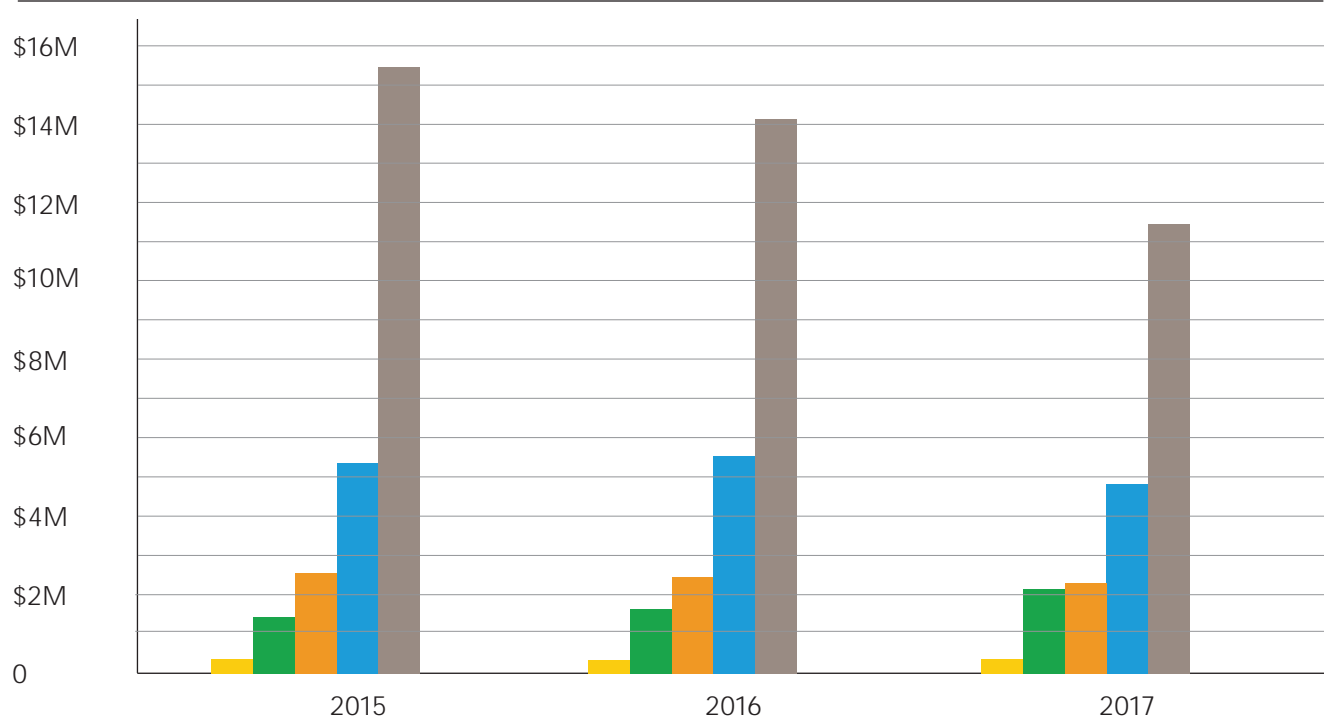
- Transportation 48%
- Water & wastewater 12%
- Administration 10%
- Inter-municipal cost sharing 8%
- Recreation & culture 7%
- Protective services. 5%
- Agriculture & development 4%
- FCSS 2%
- Waste management 2%
- Council & other legislative services 2%

Of all the services that the County provides for residents and ratepayers, transportation services are a substantial cost. Transportation costs include both summer and winter road maintenance, gravelling, bridge inspections, maintenance, as well as brushing and ditching.

2017 TAX REVENUE TRENDS - BY SOURCE*

Property values overall decreased in 2017, which caused a significant decrease in taxation revenue. In particular, taxation revenue from linear properties experienced a marked decline from 2016.

	2015	2016	2017
■ Farmland	\$ 150,925	\$ 151,141	\$ 151,477
■ Residential	1,789,204	1,893,852	2,002,192
■ Non-residential	2,668,260	2,649,955	2,542,760
■ Machinery & Equipment	5,517,896	5,583,914	4,918,988
■ Linear Properties	15,666,860	14,033,582	11,582,505
Total	\$25,793,145	\$24,312,444	\$21,197,922

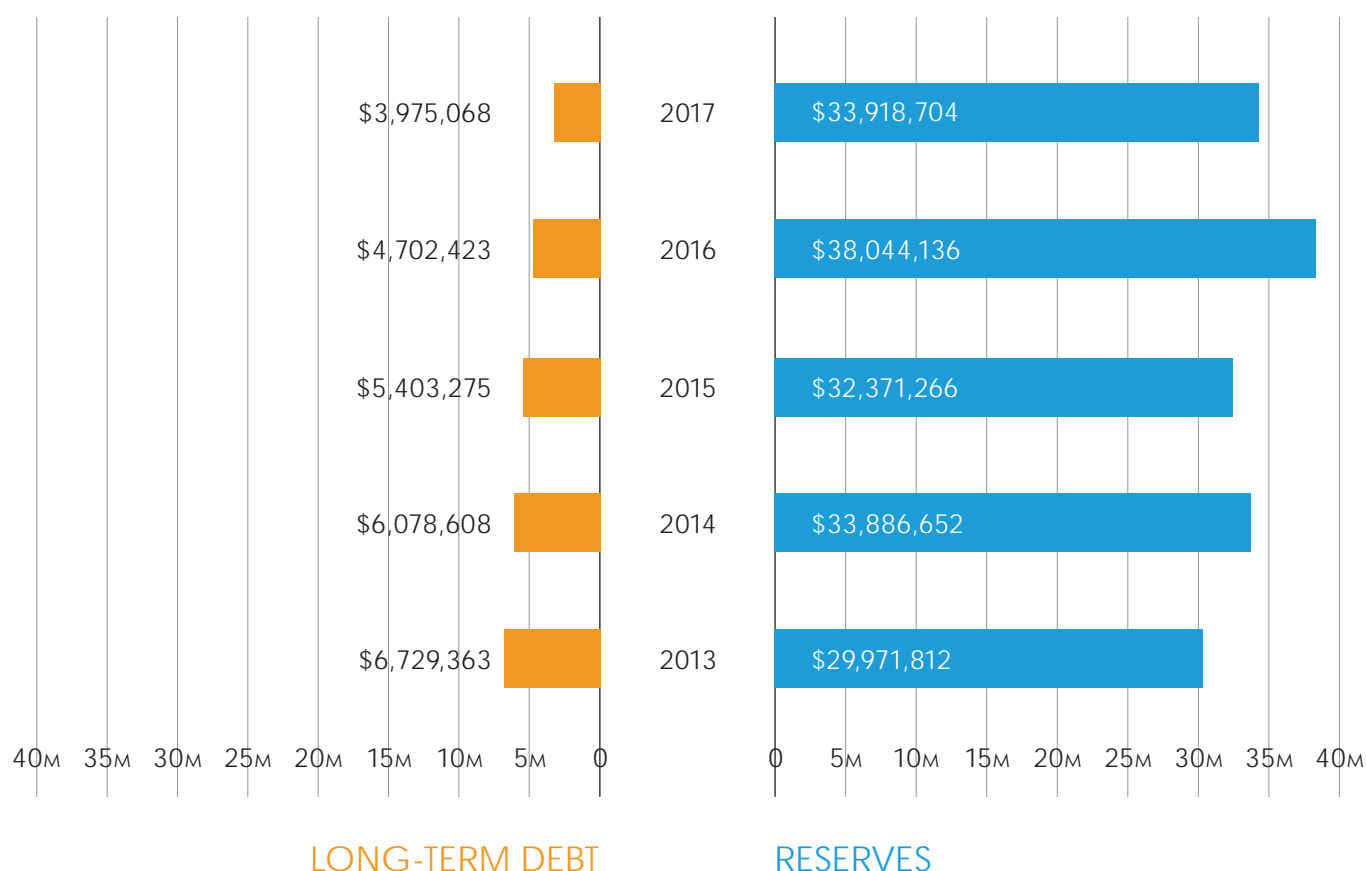


* Tax revenues include grants received in place of taxes, but exclude requisitions for seniors and schools

LONG TERM DEBT & RESERVES

While revenue in 2017 decreased 10% from 2016, the financial impact was mitigated by the fact that expenses also decreased by 7%. However, even with lower expenses, the County's regular operations generated a deficit of \$2.7 million. These funds were drawn from reserves.

Despite drawing from reserves for regular operations in 2017, the County still has healthy reserve balances, particularly when compared to debt; Big Lakes County is currently using only 10% of its available debt limit.



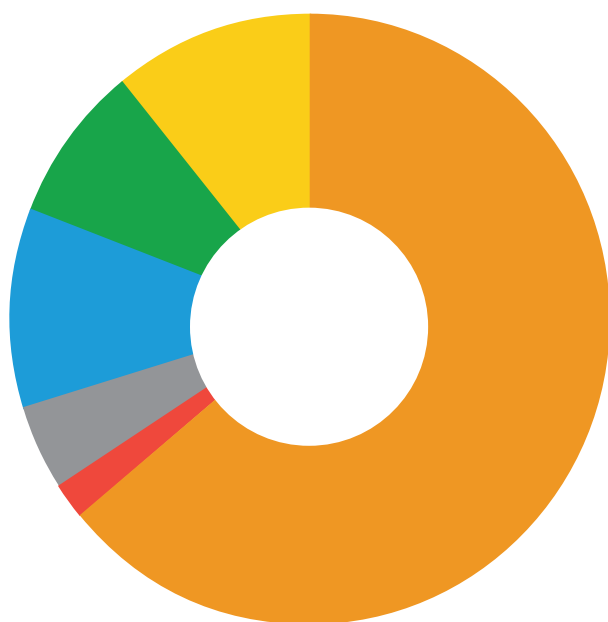
What's a deficit? A deficit occurs when a municipality's expenses are greater than its revenues – it cannot bring in enough income to cover its costs. When a deficit occurs, the shortfall must be funded by either drawing funds from reserves (savings, or surplus funds from good years), or taking on debt.

How does debt work for a municipality? Most municipalities in Alberta borrow from the Alberta Capital Finance Authority (ACFA) when they don't have sufficient funds, particularly for larger infrastructure projects like new roads and bridges. The *Municipal Government Act* regulates the amount of debt that municipalities are allowed to take on, as it is important that municipalities have the capacity to repay debt when it is due.

GRANTS

Big Lakes County would like to thank the dedicated volunteers that contribute countless hours for cultural, health & wellness, and heritage based activities throughout the region. Your work in our County allows for our communities to thrive.

Big Lakes County supports local organizations through grant funding and both board development and funding acquisition advice. In 2017, Council budgeted a total of **\$1,358,455** toward:



- Operating Recreation & Culture | \$870,262
- Operating Seniors Transportation | \$26,500
- Operating Museum Grants | \$60,000
- Operating Community Hall | \$145,000
- Events & Sponsorships | \$109,600
- Capital Projects | \$147,093

EVENTS & SPONSORSHIP IN 2017

A glimpse at funding under the 2017 Events & Sponsorship:

- › The Cultural Swan Hills 50th Anniversary celebration
- › Alberta 55+ Seniors Games
- › High Prairie Interagency PowWow & Aboriginal Day

Did you know?

The Roadside Clean-up Sponsorship totaled \$3,168 for community groups.

2017 GRANT FUNDING ANNOUNCED FOR BIG LAKES COUNTY:

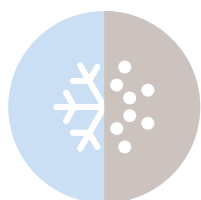
- › Canada Water/Wastewater Fund \$6,245,736
- › Alberta Water/Wastewater Fund \$4,634,418
- › Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP) Local Road Bridge \$2,096,597
- › Celebrate Canada & Tree Canada \$6,700
- › Community & Regional Economic Support (CARES) \$59,190
- › Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) Operating & Capital Allocations \$2,877,247
- › Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) \$153,287
- › Agricultural Service Board (ASB) \$208,359

Please contact the Grants Officer if you would like assistance or if you have any questions about the Capital, Operating, and Events and Sponsorship Grant streams.

PUBLIC WORKS

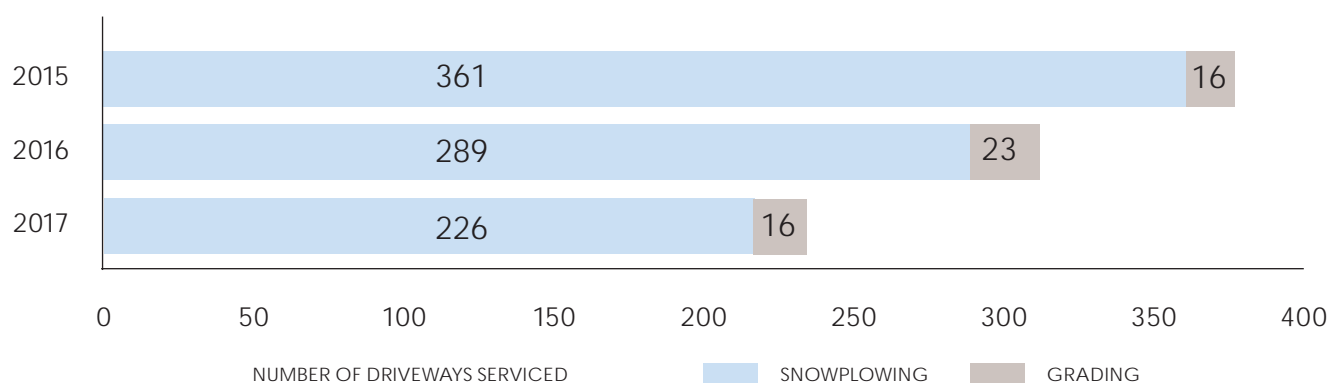
Big Lakes County provides a variety of operational services year around. The following information is intended to provide a glimpse into the daily operations of our municipal services.





PRIVATE DRIVEWAY SNOWPLOWING & GRADING AGREEMENTS

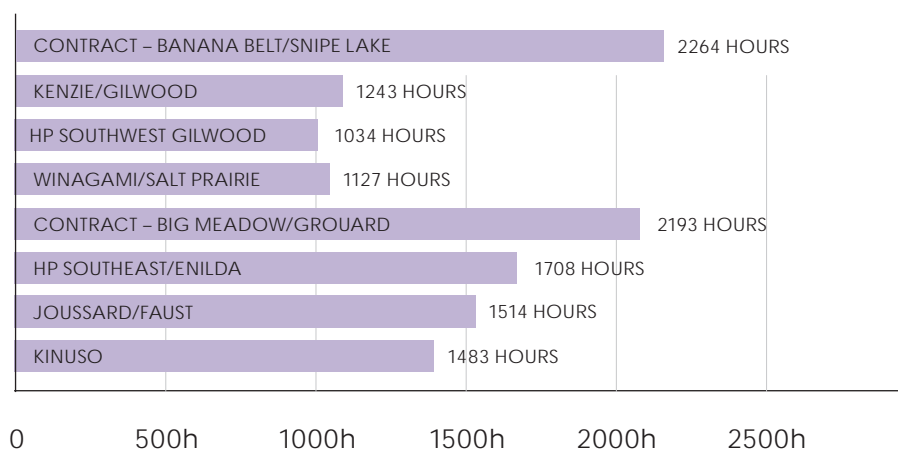
Private driveway snowplowing and private driveway grading is provided to residents who have entered into an agreement for these services. In 2017 grading and snowplowing services were provided on a cost recovery basis for a minimum charge \$68.00 plus GST.



GRADER BEAT HOURS

The County has eight grader beats including two contract graders. Their hours of operation are indicated on the graph below.

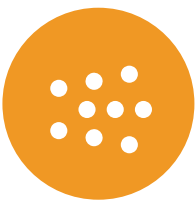
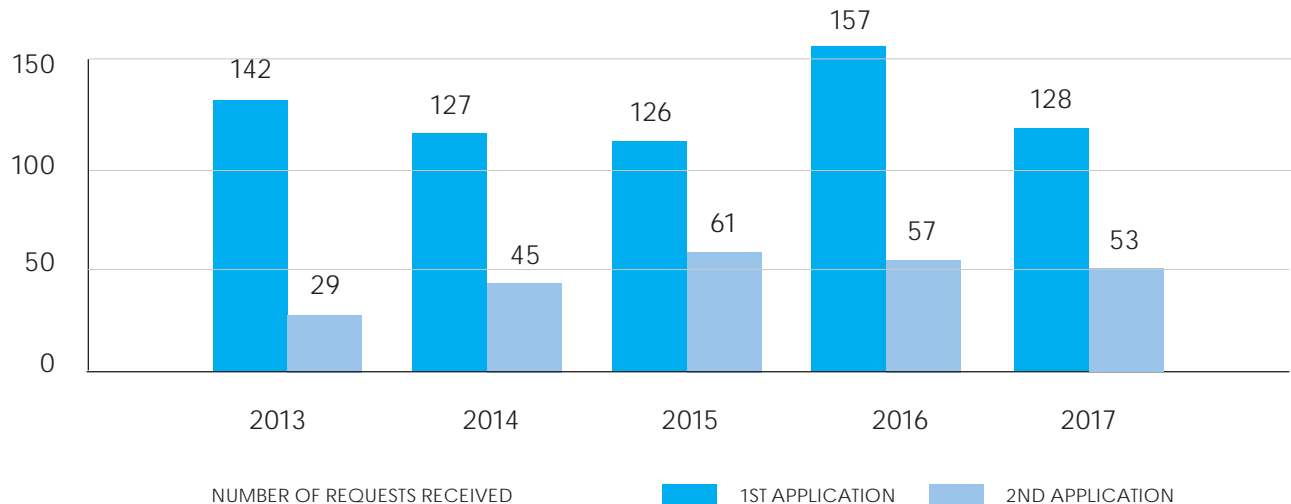
The variances in unit hours are due to weather, number of dust controlled areas, and kilometer of roadway in each area.





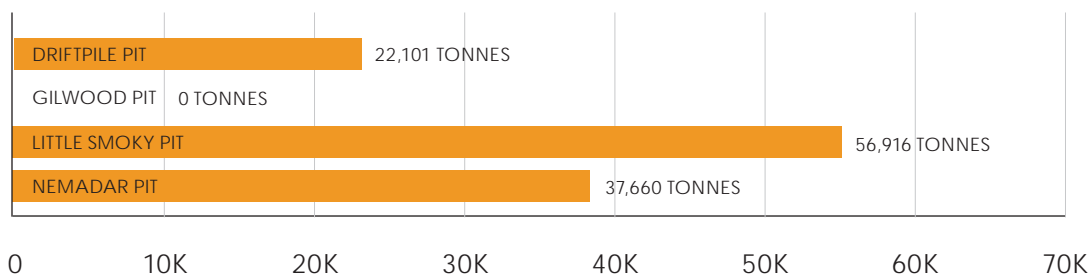
DUST CONTROL APPLICATIONS

The County applies calcium chloride dust control at its own cost along gravel roads within the Hamlets as per the Dust Control Policy. Rural residents within the County may also apply to have 150m of dust control applied in front of their residence. This service is provided twice a year at a subsidized cost of \$225.00 for the first application and \$112.50 for the second application of the year. The graph indicates the number of applications received from rural residents in the last five years. In 2017 the County applied 26.94 km of dust control for rural residents.



QUANTITY OF GRAVEL PLACED ON COUNTY ROADS

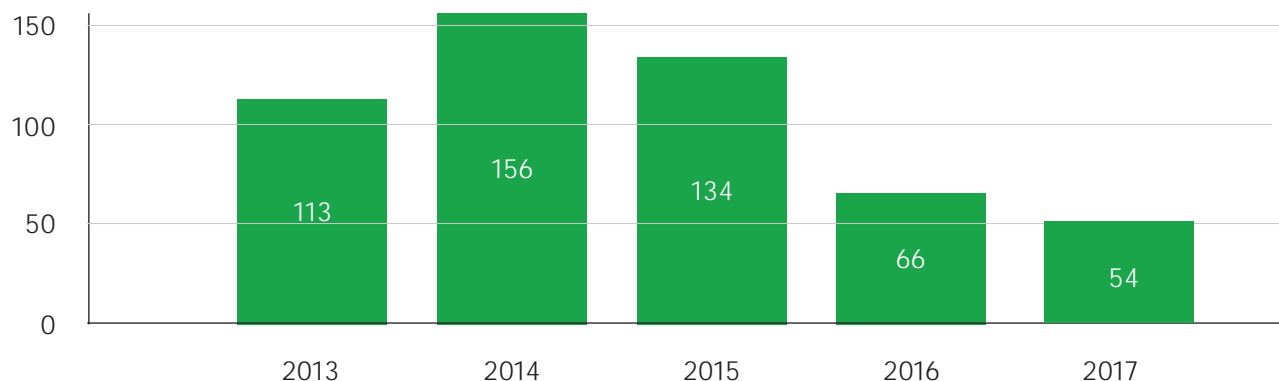
The County is continually working on securing aggregate resources for future road maintenance. The graph below shows the tonnes of gravel placed on County roads in 2017 and the gravel pit that the gravel was hauled from.





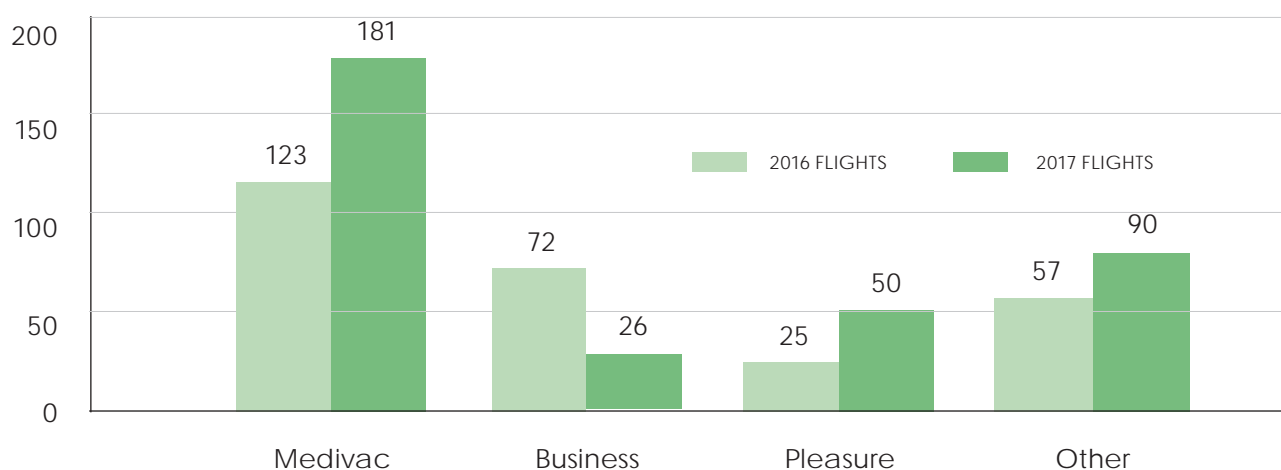
NUMBER OF FLIGHTS RECORDED AT THE SWAN HILLS AERODROME

The Swan Hills Aerodrome, located approximately 4km south of the Town of Swan Hills, is under the management and control of Big Lakes County. This Aerodrome is a Self-Register Aerodrome as this is an unmanned facility. Pilots are asked to record their flight details on the Airport Register.



NUMBER AND TYPE OF FLIGHTS RECORDED AT THE HIGH PRAIRIE AERODROME

In 2017 Big Lakes County took over ownership of the High Prairie Aerodrome located 2km south of the Town of High Prairie. This Aerodrome is also a Self-Register Aerodrome.

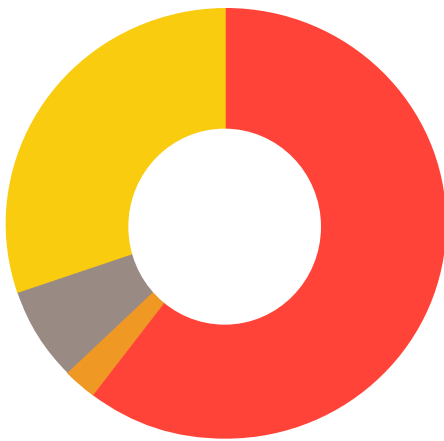


WASTE MANAGEMENT

Public Works also administers Waste Management, which includes a Regional Landfill and seven Waste Transfer Stations with one full time landfill manager to accept your waste and recycling.

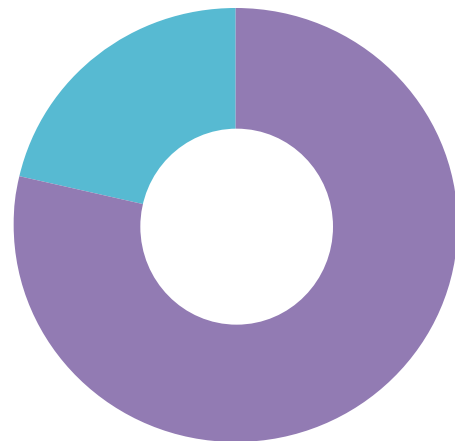
2017 TOTAL WASTE TONNAGE RECEIVED BY THE LANDFILL FROM EACH MEMBER

■ Big Lakes County - 60% ■ Gift Lake - 7%
■ Town of High Prairie - 30% ■ East Prairie - 3%



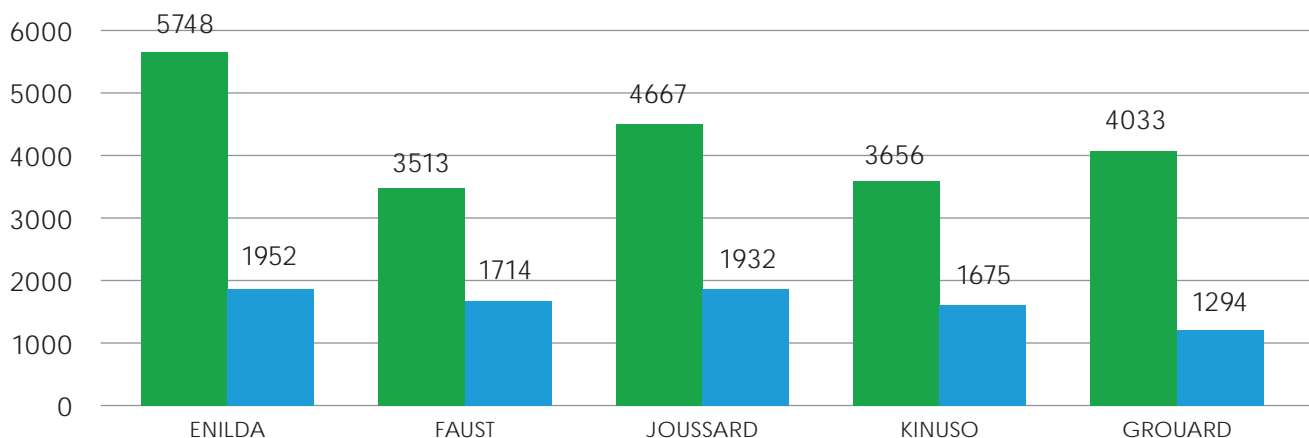
2017 REGIONAL LANDFILL TONNAGE DIVERTED TO RECYCLING

■ Total tonnage diverted to recycling - 79%
■ Total tonnage remaining in landfill - 21%



2016 TOTAL RECYCLING (KG)

■ Paper ■ Tin/Plastic



UTILITIES

The Utilities department administers water and wastewater services to five hamlets, seven rural areas, three water co-ops, and two reserves.

The department has nine full time staff consisting of the: Director of Utilities, Utilities Foreman, Utilities Coordinator, and six full time Utilities Operators.

The following are 2017 infrastructure projects that are in various stages of completion: Kinuso Pumphouse, Jousard East Expansion, Jousard Water Treatment Plant, Triangle Area Water Expansion, Prairie Echo Water Expansion, and Grouard and Enilda Treated Water Reservoir Expansion.

2017 REVIEW

- › 13 curb valve repairs
- › 3 water mainline repairs
- › 2 sewer line repairs
- › force mains flushed in Enilda and Faust
- › 105 meter installations/replacements
- › 13 Jousard Peace River Ave. & Key Cove installation from cc/ main line
- › 14kms of sewer mains flushed
- › 9 lift stations cleaned
- › 500+ water samples taken from 11 systems
- › 110 fire hydrants flushed and inspected twice



AGRICULTURAL SERVICES

Big Lakes County Agricultural Services aims to improve and support the economic viability and vibrancy of the agricultural industry within our municipality. This is done through the implementation of Agricultural Service Board programs and priorities, participation in provincial agricultural surveys, support of sustainable agriculture education and collaboration through extension organizations, and meeting municipal responsibilities of the following provincial acts: *Weed Control Act*, *Agricultural Pest Act*, and *Soil Conservation Act*.

Big Lakes County conducts provincially reported agricultural pest surveys annually for Fusarium, Clubroot, Virulent Blackleg and Grasshopper. The Provincial Survey for Fusarium was suspended by the province in the 2017 season. All other surveys were completed in 2017. 319 canola fields were checked for Clubroot after the positive identification of the pest on August 24, 2017 by the Canola Council of Canada. 20 positive findings resulted.

Under the *Weed Act*, 239 infestations reports were generated and all land was inspected for noxious and prohibited noxious weeds. An infestation of Orange Hawkweed was found along Highway 33 and promptly controlled by Alberta Transportation. We look forward to a continued team approach to weed control with our other stakeholders within the municipality. Over 2000 km or 77% of municipal ditches were

vegetatively controlled in 2017, making for a very productive season.

The Agricultural Service Board in Big Lakes County consists of a mixture of County Councillors and agricultural producers within the County. In 2017, the Agricultural Service Board Members were as follows:

- › Mr. Doug Meneice; Chairperson
- › Mr. Duane Nichols; Vice Chairperson
- › Mr. Gary Basarb
- › Mr. Grant Gaschnitz
- › Mr. Lorne Pratt
- › Mr. Ron Matula
- › Mr. George Blackhurts
- › Reeve Ken Matthews
- › Deputy Reeve David Marx
- › Councillor Ann Stewart
- › Councillor Donal Bissell
- › Councillor Ken Killeen

Big Lakes County's Agricultural Service Board is focused on providing quality services and assistance to our ratepayers. Agricultural Services administered the following programs in 2017: vegetative control, Spray Exemption Program, pest management, Agricultural Equipment Rental Program, *Weed Control Act*, Veterinary Services Incorporated Program, and wolf hunting incentive.



MESSAGE FROM THE AGRICULTURAL SERVICE BOARD CHAIRMAN

Greetings from the Agricultural Service Board (ASB)!

Another year has gone by and proved to be very interesting. The Provincial ASB Conference in January was filled with a number of great speakers covering a variety of topics from greenhouses to weather. One thing that really caught my attention was the amount of young people getting involved with various counties across Alberta. Spring rolled around and Mother Nature lifted us up and then let us down. But still the farming industry was able to get the crops in!

In July, the Provincial ASB Summer Tour was held in Olds. Our Board had the opportunity to see how farm families have diversified to involve their kids. Our future is Agriculture.

Late summer and fall turned out to be a challenge, weather and disease wise. I would like to think through all the turmoil and I'm sure, sleepless nights by both producers and Agricultural Field Staff that we are back on track for a great 2018.

As I look back on the year, I have to thank the Big Lakes County council and the Agricultural Service Board for the countless hours put in to make agriculture a priority. We still live in one of the best counties in Alberta, with so much untapped potential.

Cheers to 2018!

Doug Meneice
Agricultural Service Board Chairman

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Planning & Development is a diverse department here at Big Lakes County. It combines many different sectors and professions to improve our communities and to help build a better future. Together we strive to make a difference in our communities today and tomorrow.



HIGHLIGHTS

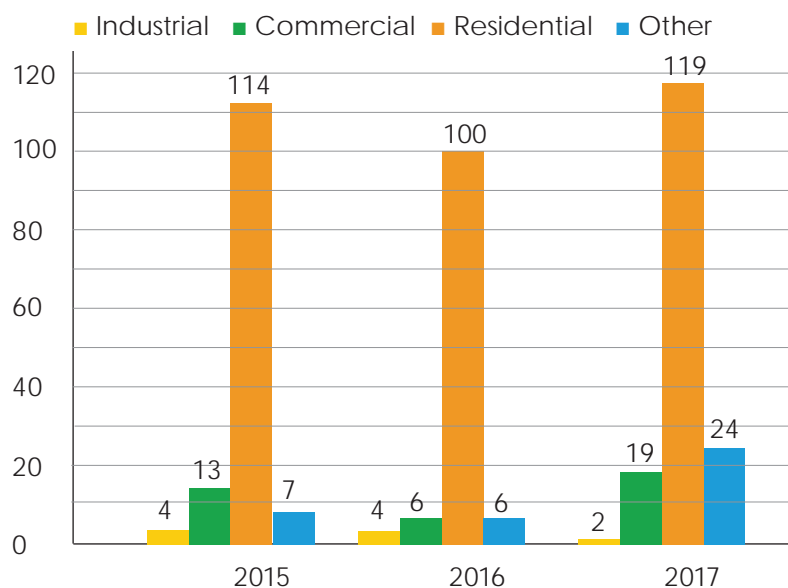
In 2017, the Planning and Development department became quite diverse and underwent significant staffing changes. The department now consists of the following staff - Director of Planning & Development, Development Officer, the Pest and Animal Control Officer / Safety Coordinator, and Bylaw Enforcement Officer. We also gained a half-time Administrative Support position (transferred from another department) and the Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) Program, which is made up of the FCSS Manager, 5 FCSS Outreach Workers, and contracted Home Support and Youth Program workers.

The Planning and Development component administers the County's statutory planning documents - the Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw, and Area Structure Plans by providing recommendations to the Subdivision & Development Authority (Municipal Planning Commission) and Council on applications such as development permits, subdivision approvals, and Land Use Bylaw amendments.

When you are seeking subdivision or development approval, our department must ensure that you have a suitable building site, we well as adequate water, and mechanisms to dispose of waste. The Municipal Government Act (MGA) provides direction on many aspects of planning and development and all of our policies, bylaws and procedures must comply with the legislation within the MGA.

Our 2017 development permit statistics show that residential development in the County was higher than the previous three years. Commercial growth was considerably higher than it was in 2016 and industrial development in 2017 continued to be reflective of Alberta's sluggish economy.

Development Applications



Development Application by Construction Value

	2015	2016	2017
Industrial	2,515,000	220,000	90,000
Commercial	1,190,250	673,410	435,770
Residential**	11,683,500	14,245,365	16,015,550
Other*	171,000	490,000	5,038,950
Total	15,559,750	15,628,775	21,580,270

*Other – Public use/institutional facilities, shops, signs, wind turbines, hangar, propane storage (not for sale), family campground,

• 2015 industrial & commercial spikes due to HP Forest Products dry kiln equipment, aircraft fuelling station; 2017 other spike due to Kinuso water reservoir & pump station/truck fill and shop at HP Airport

Residential Development by Number of Permit Applications

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Single Family Dwellings*	33	34	48	51
Manufactured Homes	9	13	15	14
Cabins**	11	12	5	11
Garages	18	19	12	10
Other (Decks, Sheds)	22	36	24	33
Total	93	114	104	119

* Includes additions

** Cabin is a dwelling used as a temporary residence with a maximum square footage of 600 sq. ft

Subdivisions by Number of Applications

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Urban (Hamlet)	2	2	3	1
Rural	22	6	12	17
Rural Multi-Lot	0	0	5	0
Communal Rec.	1	1	2	1
Total	25	9	22	19

Completed Subdivisions by Number of Lots

	2014	2015	2016	2017
Urban (Hamlet)	1	8	2	2
Rural	17	12	4	8
Rural Multi-lot	0	9	3	3
Communal Rec	22	0	0	2
Total	40	29	9	15

Overall, subdivision applications dipped slightly in 2017. Rural multi-lot subdivision application numbers dropped from 5 to 0 in 2017; however, rural subdivisions of less than 3 lots increased from 12 applications to 17. Urban (hamlet) subdivisions decreased to the lowest number of applications in 7 years.

To ensure public safety, our department administers a contract agency, Superior Safety Codes, which is responsible for reviewing and processing building, electrical, gas, plumbing and private sewage disposal permit applications, permit issuance and inspections of work completed. This agency also provides code advice and consultations, conducts investigations in conjunction with various local and provincial regulatory agencies and investigates safety codes related complaints.

Big Lakes County contracts the Town of High Prairie's Community Peace Officers to enforce specified provincial statutes and municipal bylaws. The Peace Officers provide weekly patrols for a total of 20 hours per month and provide bylaw enforcement services to the communities within the County.

The County also has an agreement with the RCMP to provide 2 full time RCMP members who are responsible for drug enforcement, investigation of serious crimes related to drugs, and crime reduction through the Enhanced Policing Program. This program is cost shared between The Town of High Prairie and the County.

For the summer of 2017, a student was hired to work on the ongoing updates to the County's Emergency Management Plan. The student also completed a new draft Community Emergency Response Plan.

BYLAW ENFORCEMENT

The Bylaw Enforcement Officer is employed by Big Lakes County to enforce the County's bylaws that have been set forth by the local governing body of Big Lakes County.

Where citizen activities or property conditions don't meet acceptable municipal standards, the Bylaw Enforcement Officer provides education, warnings, inspections, and applies penalties if need be. Bylaw Enforcement works with ratepayers in all areas of the County to ensure that basic community standards are maintained to a reasonable level.

The Bylaw Enforcement Officer is responsible for enforcing bylaws to deal with common complaints such as:

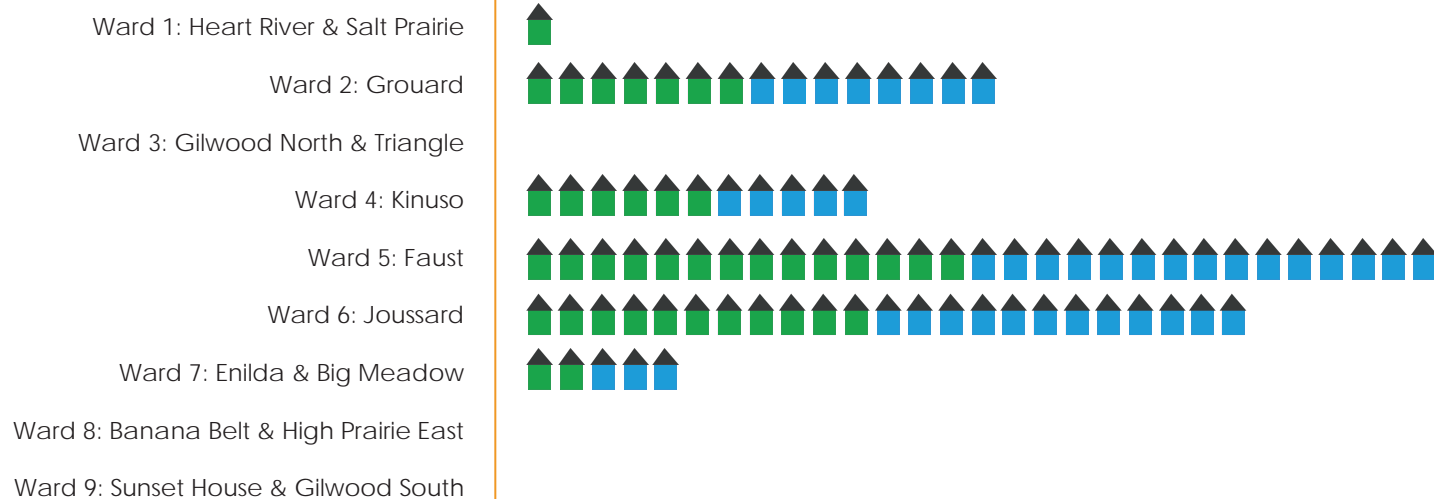
1. Unsightly Properties which can include uncut

long grass, garbage storage, the presence of wrecked or dismantled vehicles, including vehicles that are inoperable and not registered or insured on the ratepayer's properties. BYLAW NO.14-2010

2. Recreational vehicle parking where one RV can be stored on the ratepayer's property, for any additional RV's a permit is required. LAND USE BYLAW SECTION 6.34

3. Development permits are required for all new development. This includes new accessory buildings/structures such as a shed (larger than 107.6 square feet in size), sea can or deck. Farm buildings, such as barns and granaries, and most agricultural operations are exempt from requiring a development permit. LAND USE BYLAW SECTIONS 3.1, 3.2, AND 6.1

NUMBER OF UNSIGHTLY PROPERTIES & WARNINGS GIVEN

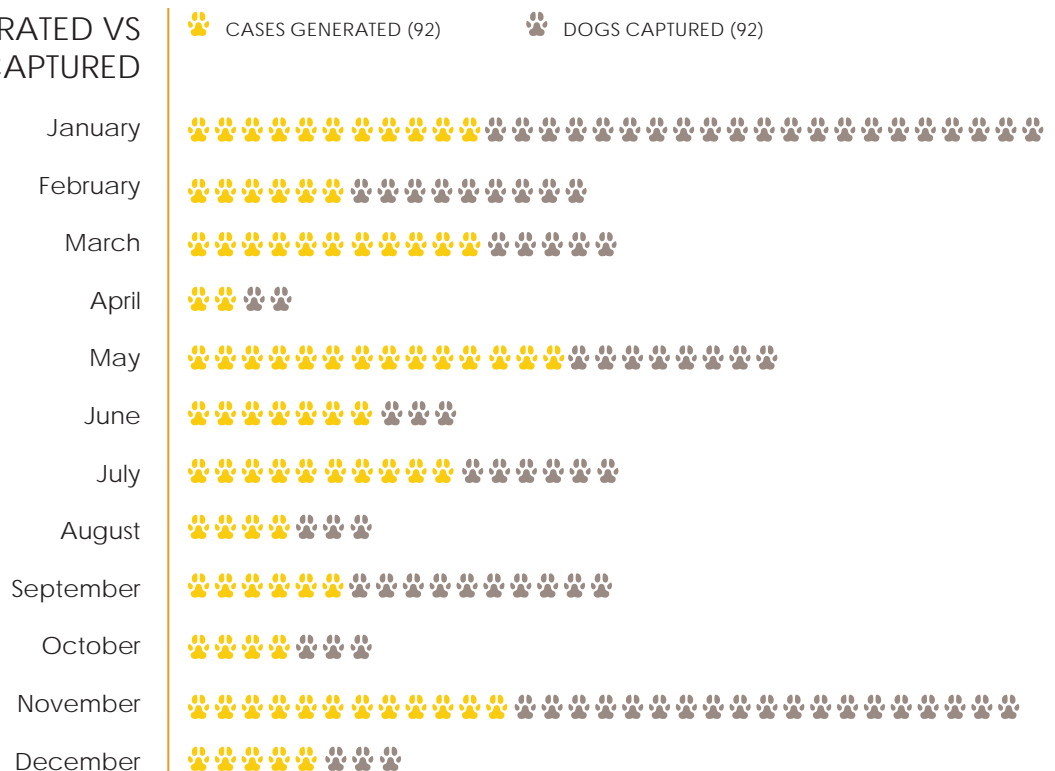


ANIMAL CARE & CONTROL

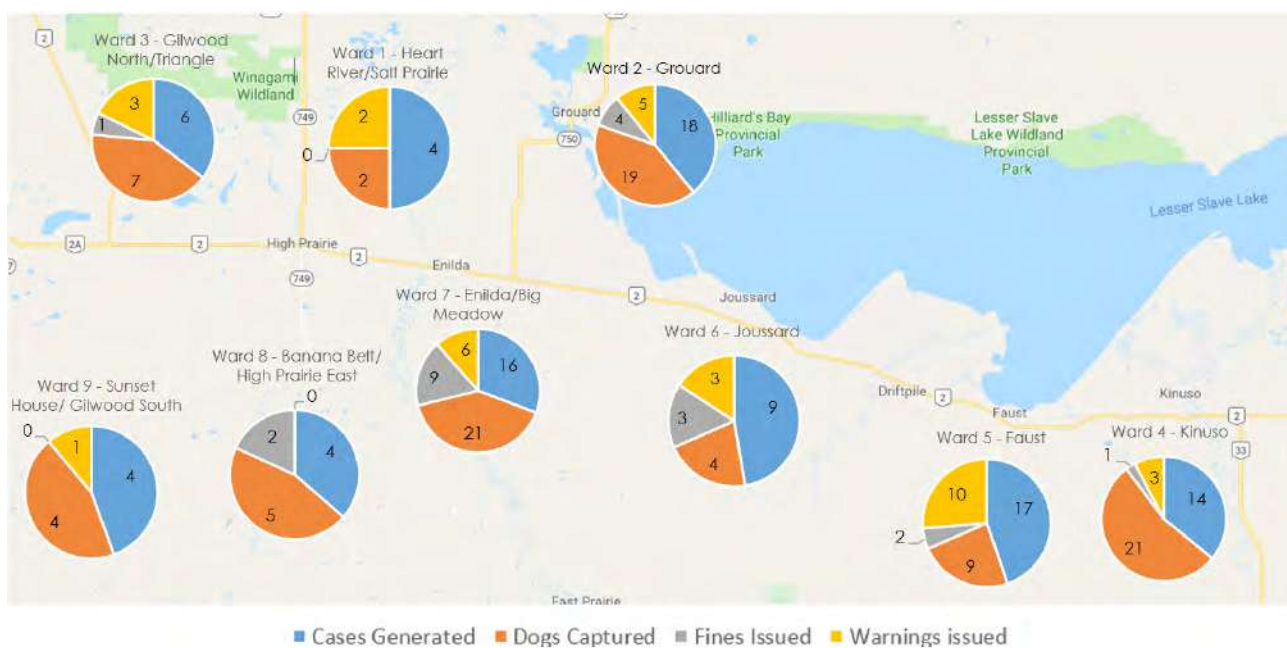
Big Lakes County Animal Care & Control serves the community through the capture of stray, feral & abandoned dogs and addressing public complaints of nuisance or unsafe dogs. Stray, feral and abandoned dogs make up the majority of animal control complaints. Catching stray dogs can be a challenging task, requiring dedication and patience. Our staff employs different approaches and techniques required for each individual dog and situation. Once captured, the dogs spend three days in the Town of High Prairie's Pound to allow time for the

owners to claim them. The kennels are cleaned daily, the dogs have an abundance of food and water, have a bed to sleep on, and are provided with medical care when required. Following the three-day holding period, unclaimed animals are brought to In The Woods Animal Rescue to be cared for, spayed/neutered, given vaccines, and adopted out to approved homes. This rescue greatly assists the County Animal Care & Control program and we are very thankful to have the Rescue accept so many animals from our area.

NUMBER OF CASES GENERATED VS NUMBER OF DOGS CAPTURED



2017 ANIMAL CONTROL SUMMARY MAP



What makes a happy, healthy dog?

- › access to unlimited water
- › adequate amount and quality of Food
- › shelter
- › exercise
- › enrichment (play, chew toys, training)

Benefits of spaying or neutering:

- › decreases aggressive behaviors
- › decreases marking behavior
- › eliminates the drive to reproduce
- › reduces the number of stray/unwanted animals
- › reduces the risk of cancer in organs associated with reproduction
- › reduces roaming behaviors

FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

2017 DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Big Lakes FCSS is a partnership between the Province of Alberta, Big Lakes County, and the Town of High Prairie. Provincially, FCSS is mandated to provide preventative social services under the Alberta FCSS legislation

In 2017 the FCSS offices in Big Lakes County provided assistance to residents over 5,000 times. This assistance was provided through their six offices and five outreach staff. Outreach staff helped residents with government paper-work, referrals to other agencies, preparing income tax returns, and many other matters. This assistance is confidential and free.

By providing services to low-income residents under the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, Big Lakes FCSS has helped ensure that over \$2 million per year comes into the community. This includes federal income supplements, working income tax benefits, income tax refunds and child tax benefits. Through this program, FCSS also helps seniors to determine if they are getting everything they are entitled to.

This year, with the continued generous donations and support from residents, Christmas hampers were provided to families in need within the County. FCSS also provides successful youth programs as well as home support services to residents in need, which often allows people to remain in their own homes and communities for longer.

Big Lakes FCSS provided events to honour volunteers in all the communities on behalf of the Province of Alberta, Big Lakes County and the Town of High Prairie. This department also provided free Family Day events in each community as all FCSS's in Alberta do. Big Lakes FCSS once again held events to honour our seniors during "Seniors Week" as declared by the Province of Alberta.

FCSS is your designated Emergency Social Services in the event of a disaster or local emergency. Staff continually update their provincial training, maintain emergency kits, stay prepared and promote preparedness among residents.



BACK L - R: LARETTA CASAVANT (FCSS), ROBIN MARKO (JOUSSARD VOLUNTEER), CHRIS CUNNINGHAM (PUBLIC WORKS) & GEORGE BAKER (PUBLIC WORKS)
 BOTTOM L - R: NANCY MARQUARDT (FCSS), TORI DUMARESQUE (FCSS), PATSY CAMPION (FCSS) & LORRIE ANN ANDERSON (FORMER FCSS WORKER)

BIG LAKES FCSS RURAL TRANSPORTATION PILOT PROGRAM!

NEW IN 2017!

The FCSS Rural Transportation Pilot Program was approved and implemented in 2017. A grant was received from the Medically At Risk Driver (MARD) program through the University of Alberta to help set up this pilot project. The program will be restarted later in 2018.

FCSS MISSION STATEMENT

- To improve the quality of life for our community by assisting people to address their own needs and help themselves.
- To help people help themselves to live a happier and healthier life.
- To educate the community and make people aware of choices and options, thereby giving individuals power over their own lives.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community Services facilitates the development of community initiatives, which aim to foster a positive image, stewardship, and sustainable growth.

Community Services serves our county residents through a combination of services that includes Economic Development and Fire Services.





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Year two of the Economic Development Authority (EDA) was filled with hard work and a number of successes that put Big Lakes County (BLC) on the map as a community where economic development is professional, coordinated, visionary, and results-oriented. If year one of the EDA was about laying the foundation for economic development, then year two was about getting smarter, growing networks and support, and attracting positive attention.

We'd like to thank the BLC Council, staff, and business leaders for their support in 2017. We'd also like to thank the towns, hamlets, and Indigenous communities in Big Lakes County for their collaboration. Year three (2018) of the EDA involves even more collaboration that will benefit the greater region as we work together and more closely with our neighbours and with industry, specifically through phase II of our Community and Regional Economic Support (CARES) Initiative on specific projects in tourism, energy, agriculture, broadband and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and small business supports that will boost the quality of life and business conditions in our communities.

In 2017, the EDA set out to focus on FIVE things:

1. Setting the stage for economic growth and diversification through sector tours and profiles, local business support, and continued information gathering (phase I of our CARES project);
2. A specific business case for rural broadband in Big Lakes County;
3. Economic development related communications and marketing to raise our profile;
4. Government and corporate relations and network building to drive business;
5. Strategy and operations/admin to sustain the EDA and develop a vision through to 2020.

Economic development is, "the combined efforts that seek to improve the economic wellbeing and quality of life for a region, community, or country. These efforts include facilitating the attraction of business operations, assisting with the expansion or retention of current business operations, or supporting the start-up of new businesses."

How did we get smarter, grow our network and support, and attract positive attention in 2017?

Becoming a smarter community means using technology, information, and communications to solve problems and improve services and quality of life.

1. On the technology side, we have developed an Intermunicipal Broadband Discovery Project. We anticipated the results from the Northern Alberta Economic Development (NADC) mapping project released in June 2017 and got together with other municipalities to create this project with funding from the Alberta Community Partnerships grant. The funding allowed us to contract proper technical expertise to lead the project so that the EDA could focus on other aspects of economic development.

Did you know?

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has set new broadband Internet target speeds of 50 Mbps download/10 Mbps upload. Current average speeds in many parts of Big Lakes County area are only 1 Mbps download/1 Mbps upload.

We are happy to say that the project puts Big Lakes County and its partners at the forefront of rural broadband infrastructure in Alberta.

Thanks to all who are working on this and to Steve Eppley for leading the project! There's still more work to be done, but we are on our way towards a pilot project that would help address our lack of connectivity.

2. The other side to getting smarter is information and communications, which our CARES project phase I addresses. The problem that our CARES project solves is improving information and communications so that stakeholders – government, investors, small business, etc. - can make better decisions about their investments in Big Lakes County. We created a brain trust of inside and outside experts who became ambassadors for the County and for the sectors in which they are experts.

We ran this brain trust through a simple formula:



STEP 1...

We did quantitative and qualitative research to better understand 10 different sectors. We contracted a research analyst to work with us on the numbers. Then we brought together our experts with local SMEs and did a tour or mobile workshop in each sector.

STEP 2...

We objectively prioritized opportunities and developed strategies for each sector. This helped us to focus our limited resources on those things that we all agreed were most important from an economic development standpoint.

STEP 3...

We engaged local SMEs to better understand one challenge that we could help them with and provided them with marketing materials from the tours.

The results have been fantastic. We are more focused and are working together because economic development is a “team sport.” We understand the challenges and opportunities in our own backyard better and we are communicating these well, allowing us to win a national award for our work. We are smarter and better connected than ever before because:

- › We are making fact-based decisions.
- › We have retained top provincial experts and become a leader in rural broadband.
- › We raised our provincial and national profile, and generated some positive buzz at home, too. We know how great Big Lakes is. Let’s tell the world and encourage others to do the same.
- › We have a clear strategy, support, and funding for the EDA through to 2020.

EDA AWARDED CARES FUNDING IN FEBRUARY & WINS ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION OF CANADA AWARD IN SEPTEMBER FOR THE PROJECTS

Big Lakes County won a \$59,900 matching grant from CARES to develop its sector tours and profiles and provide small business supports as part of its Diversification and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) Supports Initiative. Just a few months later, the County took home a national marketing award for those sector profiles. We competed against communities more than 30 times our size such as Canada’s innovation hub, Kitchner-Waterloo. Not bad for a small, but mighty community in Northern Alberta!

2017 EDA SUCCESSES IN NUMBERS:

- › \$260,000 in grants and partnership dollars obtained for economic development projects
- › 1000s of social media likes/shares (esp. of the promo video, the national award, the Ryan Jespersen of 630 Ched visit, etc.)
- › 28 public and private sector influencers convinced to visit (on their own dime) who are now ambassadors of the area, bringing us new opportunities
- › 15 positive EDA related news stories (local, provincial, and national)
- › 12 strengthened relationships with local businesses
- › 10 fold expansion of our ally & expert network
- › 10 vetted large-scale opportunities
- › 10 internal sector profiles completed
- › 7 research requests fulfilled for local businesses
- › 5 research requests fulfilled for Council
- › 4 external sector profiles completed
- › 4 sector strategy sessions with experts from government and industry
- › 4 sector tours with experts from government & industry
- › 2 public speaking engagements
- › 2 expert provincial broadband leads contracted
- › 1 inter-municipal broadband project funded and business case for pilot project developed
- › 1 CARES grant received, another CARES application submitted (obtained in 2018)
- › 1 vision 2020 for economic development created
- › 1 process for prioritizing economic development efforts
- › 1 unified branding approach for marketing tools & resources (#GoBigLakes)
- › 1 communications coordinator engaged
- › 1 national marketing award for economic development

KARI SKELTON + RYAN JESPERSEN

First time visitors and guests, Kari Skelton, blogger, Ryan Jespersen, 630Ched and Oilers Entertainment Group, and their son, Wyatt, and dog, Moses, could not get enough of Big Lakes. Below, they describe their experience on Lesser Slave Lake at Shaw's Point Resort and in Jousard as part of our tourism sector analysis and goal to raise the profile of the County. You can hear more about that trip by listening to Ryan's show the Monday after their trip and by reading Kari's blog post. Thank you to Shaw's Point, Churning Waters Charters, and the many others who made the visit a success.

part, aside from the stunning views, the one-of-a-kind camping, the extraordinary fishing, and the AH-mazing curly fries, was the people. Our fellow Albertans who call this part of our province "home." You can tell they cherish it and they're thrilled to show it off to those (like us) who've never had a chance to experience it. It's their little gem, and now we like to think it's ours too." Kari Skelton



KARI, CHRIS & WYATT

"We'd heard great things about [Northern Alberta], its beauty, and the amazing fishing, so when the crew at Big Lakes County invited us up for the weekend we couldn't resist. The best



SECTOR TOURS - ENERGY + TOURISM

We brought together local and outside expertise to assess challenges and opportunities and come up with action items so that we can make progress. Sometimes, the action is small and sees short-term results; sometimes it's big and will take a longer time to produce results.

For instance, after our energy tour, we took action to improve our communications with longstanding oil and gas companies that have stayed in business despite the downturn and with new companies that have just bought assets in the county. After our tourism sector tour, Alberta Culture and Tourism was so impressed with our efforts, that they invited us to host a workshop for entrepreneurs and apply to do a Visitor Friendly Assessment of the broader region that will produce a series of recommendations for communities in the area to consider. We also launched a Façade Improvement Award with the High Prairie and Area Chamber of Commerce to encourage businesses to improve their curb appeal.

"Thank you again for inviting me to the session on Friday. I am very excited to see Big Lakes County taking an active, progressive role in the tourism of this area - tourism is a huge, unexplored and often over looked market in our County." Darlene Adams, Executive Director, HP & District Museum and Visitor Information Centre

"This has been a wonderful welcome to the county and excellent conversation. Thank you for having us." Frank Muller, COO, Razor Energy



Razor Energy of Calgary has recently purchased assets in Big Lakes County. Our Energy Tour was their first visit to High Prairie. Here, they meet with two employees of Alberta Energy who are responsible for approving all projects in Alberta's Oil Sands. It was also their first visit to Big Lakes. They were impressed with the welcome and level of conversation.



Tourism Tour participants in front of a vintage sign at Kinuso Museum. The group was impressed with the tourism assets in Big Lakes County.

For more information about economic development, please contact any one of the following EDA members: Reeve Ken Matthews, Councillor Robert Nygaard, Councillor Don Charrois, Deputy CAO Jordan Panasiuk, or Executive Director Lisa Baroldi. The EDA is a Big Lakes County committee that facilitates economic development opportunities and seeks to improve conditions for business, investment, and quality of life.

FIRE SERVICES

Big Lakes County has 83 volunteer firefighters who are stationed at the Enilda, Grouard, Jousard, Faust, and Kinuso Fire Districts. These volunteer firefighters are dedicated to keeping you safe by providing efficient, effective, and responsive fire and emergency services.

It's been one year since we launched our Green Light Program. This program allows our firefighters to activate a green light on their personal vehicle in order to safely get to either the fire hall or the scene of an emergency. County firefighters reported that only minor issues arose while responding to the fire hall for an emergency call out. Therefore, we see this as a positive in that we were able to effectively communicate this program to you, our residents.

The Boat Program based at the Faust Fire District continued into 2017. We are seeing great success with this program as more firefighters are being trained to operate this watercraft that is used for water rescues. Looking into 2018, this program will continue to grow in capability and accessibility by both our internal and external partners and

agencies.

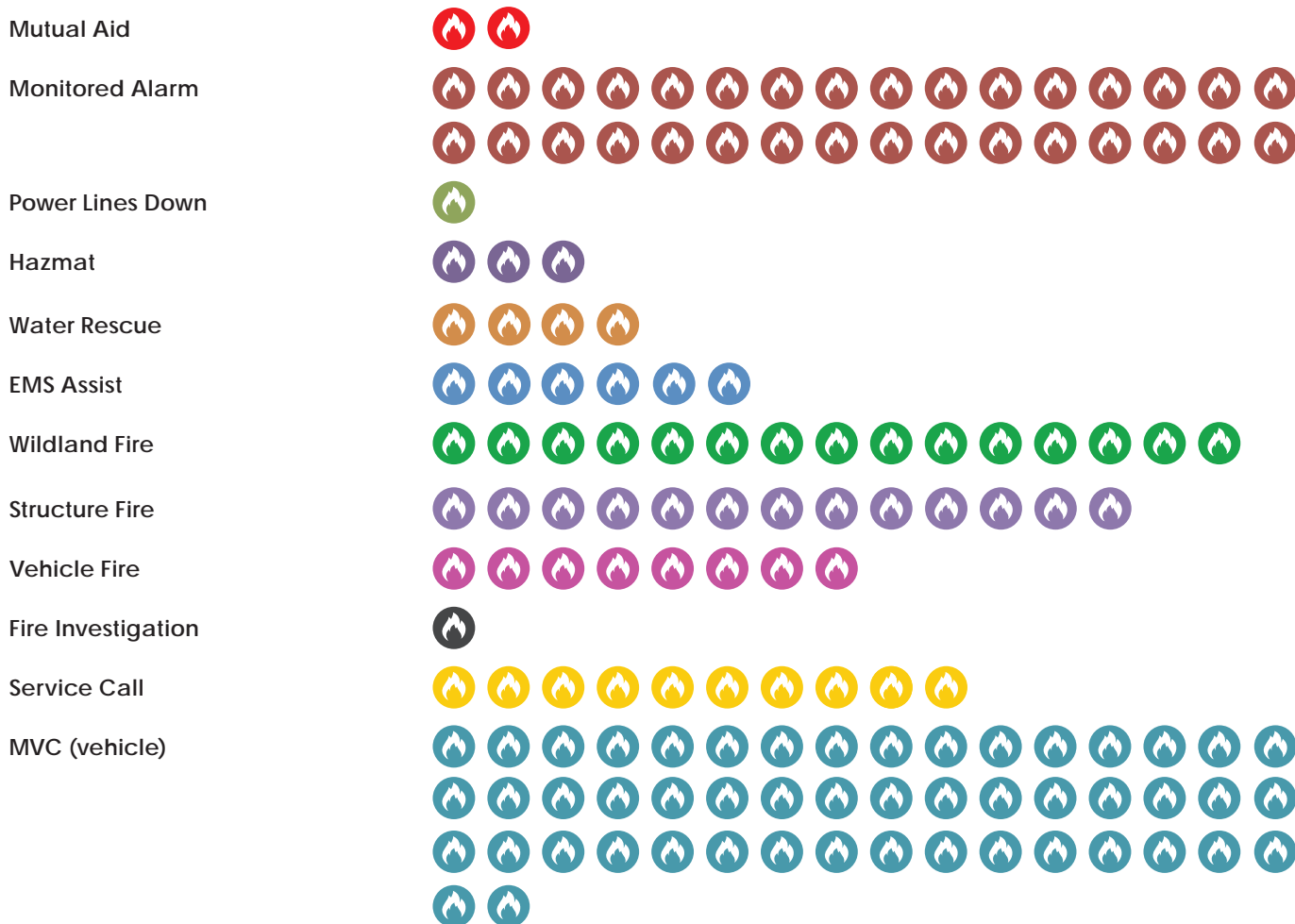
Initial discussions regarding the Alberta First Responder Radio Communications System (AFRRACS) began this year. We are excited to announce that a partnership is being developed with the Town of High Prairie for the development, purchase, and implementation of this program for 2018. AFRRACS will allow our firefighters and agencies to have a clear and effective form of radio communication at the initial, on-going, and end-phase of any emergency situation.

In 2017, with the support of council, we began researching for a new County fire truck. We are happy to announce that the County's new fire truck will be ready in the Spring of 2018. Furthermore, the Enilda Fire District will see a new Wildland-Urban Interface Engine, which will replace the current 1998 GMC Fire Engine. Also the Jousard Fire District will replace the Rescue Unit with a reliable Wildfire Engine. This unit will be used effectively on wildland incidents while also serving as a Light Rescue Unit on motor vehicle collisions.



2017 EMERGENCY RESPONSE CALLS

As you can see, it has been a busy year! In 2017, five County Fire Districts and two contracted municipal fire departments responded to 145 emergency calls. The chart below provides a breakdown of emergency response calls attended:



OUR MISSION & VISION

BIG LAKES COUNTY MISSION STATEMENT

Big Lakes County will endeavor to enhance our overall community by encouraging responsible development that supports our resource based industries, our agriculture base and the overall education of our people. This means investing in core services like infrastructure, communities, and other municipal services. Through Council policy and resolutions, we will promote responsible development, environmental security, positive Inter-Municipal relations safety and work with the private, public and governmental partners.

VISION

Building a Sustainable Municipality

BUILDING

- › Through Council's leadership, building, and diversifying Big Lakes County economy and strengthening Big Lakes County's role as a leader of rural municipalities.

SUSTAINABLE

- › Striving for sustainability in Big Lakes County by setting the stage for continued innovation, education, diversification, and good government.

MUNICIPALITY

- › Maintaining the rural landscape in Big Lakes County by protecting agricultural resources and significant natural environments for future generations.



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