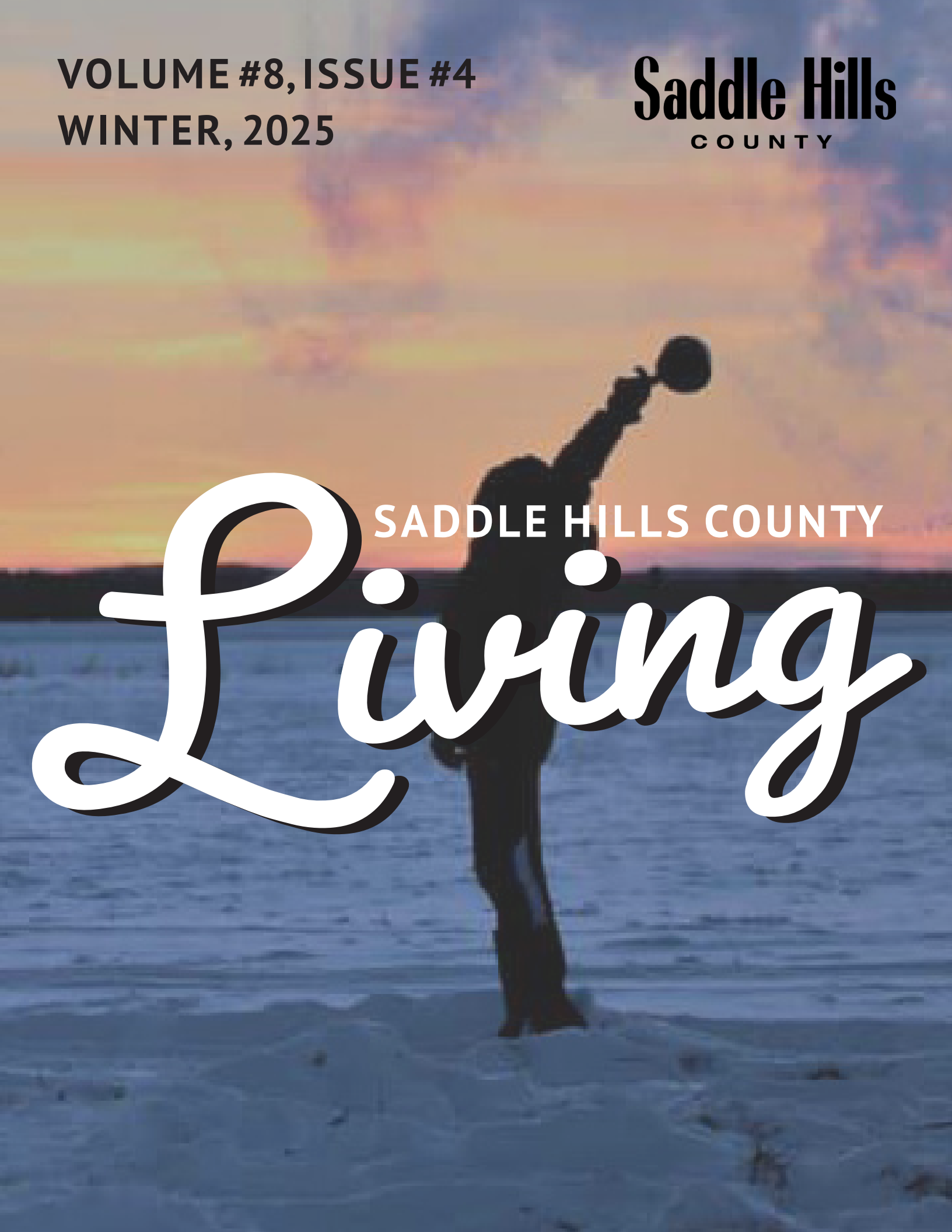


VOLUME #8, ISSUE #4
WINTER, 2025

Saddle Hills
COUNTY



SADDLE HILLS COUNTY

Living

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COVER PHOTO: Lindsay Bueckert
INTERIOR PHOTO: Jenny Enns



2025 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

THE 2025 MUNICIPAL ELECTION WAS HELD ON OCTOBER 20, 2025.

RESULTS

The official results of the 2025 Municipal Election were confirmed on October 24, 2025, at 12 p.m.

WARD	CANDIDATE	NO. OF VOTES	RESULT
1	GULKA, DWIGHT	45	(NEW)
1	KELLY, KAROLYN	22	(NEW)
1	ROY, DANIEL	81	ELECTED (INCUMBENT)
2	HINGLEY, LANCE	N/A	ACCLAIMED (NEW)
3	ROGERS, BLAINE	50	ELECTED (NEW)
3	WEISS, SARAH	42	(NEW)
4	ARMAGOST, EDWARD	67	ELECTED (INCUMBENT)
4	BRANDSON, MANDY	20	(NEW)
4	CLARKE, CINDY	13	(NEW)
5	BOLCH, RALPH M.	17	(NEW)
5	KLATT, SHIRLEY	80	ELECTED (INCUMBENT)
6	RICHARD, GERALD	N/A	ACCLAIMED (INCUMBENT)
7	MORIN, BANI	52	(NEW)
7	VAN ROOTSELAAR, JENN	59	ELECTED (NEW)



WARD 1 | DANNY ROY, COUNCILLOR

Danny was born and raised in Gordondale on a small, family grain farm. He worked in the oil and gas industry for 25 years, before taking a break to spend time growing his own farm. Danny and his wife, Bev, have enjoyed raising their two children in Saddle Hills County, both of whom have settled, and work, in the Peace Country.



WARD 2 | LANCE HINGLEY, COUNCILLOR

Lance has lived and worked in the Bonanza area his whole life. He started his career straight out of high school, eventually purchasing the family business - UFA locations in Bay Tree, Dawson Creek, and Worsley. Lance and his wife of 50 years, Teresa, have raised their three sons here, and are now proud grandparents to five beautiful grandchildren.



WARD 3 | BLAINE ROGERS, COUNCILLOR

Blaine was born and raised in Saddle Hills County, growing up on the family hobby farm. After 15 years working in the oil patch, he now runs his own grain farm, alongside his wife Jaclyn and three children. He is an active member of the community, serving on the Bonanza Volunteer Fire Department, and volunteering for the local Agricultural Societies.



WARD 4 | ED ARMAGOST, COUNCILLOR

Ed and his family conduct a mixed farm and ranch operation on the same land his parents built their homestead in 1964. Public service is an important part of community life to Ed. He has served as Chief of the Savanna Fire department, the President of the Savanna Ag Society, and as both a member and Chair of the County's Agricultural Service Board.



WARD 5 | SHIRLEY KLATT, COUNCILLOR

Shirley was born and raised in northern Alberta, growing up on a mixed farm north of High Prairie. She moved to the County with her husband in 1997, as part of her career as an Alberta Fish and Wildlife Officer. Now on her second retirement, she enjoys spending her spare time with her family, including her seven grandchildren.



WARD 6 | GERRY RICHARD, REEVE

Gerry was born, raised, and has lived in Saddle Hills County his whole life. He began his career in the oil patch before running his own drilling company for 30 years. Alongside his wife Val, he has raised three sons here and together they run White Mountain Wapiti Ranch; a grain farming operation, Pedigree Seed Grower, and Certified Domestic Elk Farm.



WARD 7 | JENN VANROOTSELAAR, DEPUTY REEVE

Jenn was raised in the Spirit River area, moving away briefly after high school to attend college, in 2003. After moving back to the area in 2010, she has lived in Saddle Hills County ever since, spending the last 20 years working as a court stenographer. Jenn is actively involved in the community and is a long-time volunteer.



2025 Farm Family

WHAT IS THE FARM FAMILY AWARD?

Each year, farm families from Northern Alberta communities are selected as the recipients of the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies (AAAS) Northern Alberta Farm Family Awards. These awards recognize and celebrate the outstanding farm families who form the backbone of Northern Alberta's agricultural communities. The initiative honours families who demonstrate excellence in agriculture production, community leadership, and innovation.

Families will receive a letter honouring their community contribution, as well as recognition on Saddle Hills County's website and social media channels. The winning family will also be invited to a banquet held in their honour, the location of which is still to be determined.

CONGRATULATIONS TO SADDLE HILLS COUNTY'S 2025 FARM FAMILY - BURNT RIVER RANCH - COLE, BRITNEY, STELLA, AND BEAU JACOB!

This year's Saddle Hills County Farm Family is Burnt River Ranch, owned by the Jacobs family, in Woking, AB.

"Homesteading is our passion"

Cole and Britney started Burnt River Ranch in 2018, building their home and burgeoning business literally from scratch. As young entrepreneurs and hard workers, they used their grit and determination as motivation as they battled for many hours to make the farm what it is today. Alongside their two small children, they now raise high-quality pigs, chickens, ducks, cows, and horses.

Their farm follows the traditional farming practices handed down through the generations, while also implementing new ideas and technologies. The mission is to provide the local community with ethically-raised products, including free-range eggs and grass-fed pork and poultry. The family also breeds UKC registered Sarplaninac dogs, hardy Haflinger and Haflinger cross horses, and dairy cattle. Strong proponents of education, their social media accounts and Youtube channel, are a veritable hub of information for producers, from personal insights to industry advocacy, and much more.

While their chosen way of life brings many challenges and long hours, they love the home that they've built and are deeply invested in the community around them. From volunteering on the board of the Woking Multiplex (Britney) to working as a volunteer firefighter (Cole), participating in cleaning efforts at the Hilltop Lake Campground with the Westmark Farmers League, and volunteering with the local 4-H society, they stay true to their strong work ethic and community pride.



Congratulations to this deserving family! We can't wait to see what the future holds for them, and all of the other amazing farm families in Saddle Hills County.



Congratulations to the Cotillion Butte Recreation Association on the Grand Opening of the new Cotillion Hall! Over 200 people turned out for the opening, on September 13, 2025, to celebrate this community milestone.

The new hall is a replacement of the original, built by community members on donated land in 1965, and took approximately two years to complete. Building committee lead, and local resident, Darryl Bates, saw the project through to completion, organizing and participating in construction efforts. To commemorate his work on the project, he was presented with tokens of appreciation, including a bench inscribed, “In heartfelt appreciation of your outstanding service, dedication, and commitment during the construction of the new Cotillion Hall.”



2024-25 Reeve, Kristen Smith, and UFA representatives, including director Henry Vos and delegate Larry Holthe, were also present to participate in the ribbon cutting. Both the County and the UFA’s Rural

INSIDE THE NEW HALL



“We believe in the power of rural communities where neighbours support one another, where communities use facilities like this hall as the hub of celebrations and connection. This project reflects the spirit of Cotillion and surrounding area - resilient and deeply rooted in community. The UFA Foundation is proud to have played a small part in helping bring this vision to life. May the Cotillion Hall service generations to come as a place where memories are made.” - Henry Vos, UFA Director

Event photographs provided courtesy of the Central Peace Signal.



Canadian Farmland Values Rise in First Half of 2025

Farm Credit Canada's (FCC) mid-year farmland values review shows that cultivated farmland values rose by an average of 6% in the first half of 2025. This is a modest acceleration compared to 2024, where the first half of the year saw a 5.5% increase. In the 12 months, from July 2024 to June 2025, a 10.5% increase was reported, up from the prior year at 9.3%.



Advance Payments Program (APP) Interest-Free Limit Increased

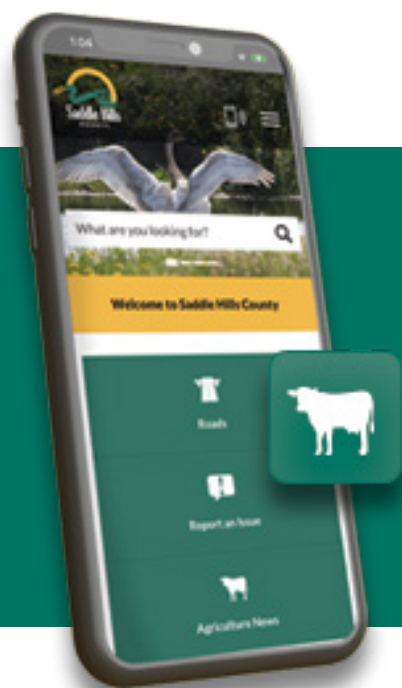
As of September 2025, the Advance Payments Program (APP) interest-free limit has been increased to \$500,000 for canola advances, for the 2025 and 2026 program years. This is the portion of the advances on which the Government of Canada pays the interest on behalf of producers and will allow canola producers access to additional cash flow and interest savings to help cover costs until they sell their products.



FCC Young Farmer Summit - December 11, 2025

Join Farm Credit Canada (FCC) for an exciting, free, full-day event for young farmers, aimed at enhancing your farm management skills. This year's summit will take place on December 11, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the Red Deer Resort and Casino. Each program event features keynote speaker Dr. Tom Deans and covers practical topics, such as economics, mental health awareness, business management, succession planning, and much more.

#agnews



STAY UP TO DATE

ON AG NEWS FROM SADDLE HILLS COUNTY



Agriculture is at the heart of our community. Keep informed of all the latest Agriculture News in Saddle Hills County or get more information on any of the stories below by visiting the dedicated Agriculture News stream on our website at saddlehills.ab.ca/agnews or by scanning the QR code. You can also follow the hashtag **#SaddleHillsAg** on Instagram for all the latest agriculture updates.

SUCCESSION PLANNING WORKSHOP

NOVEMBER 26, 2025 | 11 A.M. - 3 P.M.
FOURTH CREEK COMMUNITY HALL



PRESENTED BY:
KMSC Law, MNP
& Farm Credit Canada (FCC)

REGISTER ONLINE:
saddlehills.ab.ca/Succession-Planning2025
lunch will be provided

Saddle Hills
COUNTY



KMSC
LAW LLP

MNP



Christmas
at the County

December 04, 2025

Saddle Hills County Admin. Building
Doors Open: 4 p.m. | Firework Display: 6:30 p.m.

Games | Meet Santa | Prizes

Christmas Hampers

Each year during the Christmas season, Saddle Hills County accepts donations of food or cash to support local families in need.

This years most-needed food items include:

- Boxed Mashed Potatoes
- Gravy Mix
- Cranberry Sauce
- Dream Whip
- Pie Filling
- Pie Crusts
- Boxed Stuffing
- Biscuit Mix
- Canned Vegetables

Frozen turkeys and hams are also needed, but will be accepted closer to the deadline, on **December 12, 2025**, due to storage limitations.

Donations of food or cash will be accepted starting November 12, 2025, at the County Office during regular business hours.

For more information or to make a donation, please call (780) 864-3760.

If you reside in Saddle Hills County, you can request a hamper for yourself or nominate another family or individual using the Christmas Hamper Application. Applications are available online, at saddlehills.ab.ca/2025-Christmas-Hampers, at the County Office, or at local general stores.

Nominations and donations of food or money will be accepted until **December 12, 2025**, at 4:30 pm. Recipients will be contacted to arrange delivery on December 18-19, 2025.

This program is made possible through the generosity of many donors, thank you for your continued support!

NEW

SATURDAY HOURS

THE BLUEBERRY, BONANZA, AND WOKING TRANSFER STATIONS WILL BEGIN OPERATING 9 A.M. - 5 P.M., ON SATURDAYS, AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2025.

The stations will continue to operate at the same hours on all other days, and the hours at the Gundy Transfer Station will remain the same.

TRANSFER STATIONS

Our Transfer Stations offer opportunities for residents, businesses, and industry to dispose of a variety of solid waste and recyclables for free.

Bonanza, Blueberry, and Woking Transfer Stations all accept Oil Recycling.
Gundy Transfer Station does **not** accept Oil Recycling.

NEW HOURS (NOV. 1)

BLUEBERRY TRANSFER STATION

Wednesday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

BONANZA TRANSFER STATION

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

WOKING TRANSFER STATION

Tuesday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

GUNDY TRANSFER STATION

Saturday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. PST (B.C. Time)

For more information on our Transfer Stations, including accepted items and recyclable materials, please visit saddlehills.ab.ca/Transfer-Stations



Programs for Seniors

ALBERTA SENIORS PROPERTY TAX DEFERRAL PROGRAM

Offered by the province of Alberta, the Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program allows eligible senior homeowners to voluntarily defer all or part of their municipal property taxes with a low-interest home equity loan.

For more information, visit alberta.ca/Seniors-Property-Tax-Deferral-Program

SELF-DIRECTED HOME SUPPORT PROGRAM

Saddle Hills County's Self-Directed Home Support program allows seniors (65+) and individuals with a disability to receive reimbursement for help with certain household tasks, such as grocery shopping, gardening, cleaning, laundry, and other light housekeeping.

For more information, visit saddlehills.ab.ca/Home-Support

CHRISTMAS HAMPER PROGRAM

While not specifically for seniors, Saddle Hills County's annual Christmas Hamper program allows residents to nominate themselves or another individual to receive a Christmas Hamper, including food and hygiene items.

For more information, visit saddlehills.ab.ca/Christmas-Hampers

County News



NWP FAIRVIEW CAMPUS CLOSURE

Northwestern Polytechnic (NWP) has announced that they are closing their Fairview campus at the end of the academic year.

In a press release issued on October 29, 2025, the school stated that the Board of Governors had made the difficult decision to close the facility, after an extensive review showed that the campus was no longer financially sustainable.

Student patterns show that the demand for programs in northwest Alberta is primarily focused on Grande Prairie or outside the region. Research shows that the majority of students attending programs in Fairview come from areas closer to Grande Prairie, where the main campus is located.

Alongside this and low enrollment numbers, there is more than \$100 million in deferred maintenance required in Fairview, meaning long-term sustainability is a major challenge.

The Fairview campus will continue operations for the remainder of the 2025-26 school year, including apprenticeship programs scheduled to run from January to July 2026. Select programs will move to the Grande Prairie campus for Fall 2026, with current students receiving additional program-specific information in the coming weeks.

While the Fairview campus in its current capacity will be closing, NWP is committed to helping

bring together stakeholders and facilitating conversations that explore options for the re-purposing of campus land and buildings.

KSITUAN NON-POTABLE WATER FILL

The Non-Potable Water Fill Station at the Ksituan Water Treatment Plant, is now closed for the 2025 season, reopening May 2026.

RESIDENTIAL SECURITY SYSTEMS

At the October 28, 2025 meeting, Council directed Administration to bring back Policy AD70 - Residential Security System Grant Program for review and to consider revising the policy to include high-speed internet connectivity equipment.

At the November 10, 2025 Council Meeting, Council reviewed the policy and voted to approve the amendments to Policy AD70, expanding the grant guidelines to include a \$500 setup cost for high-speed internet. The grant will be retroactive to January 1, 2024, for County residents.

VIRTUAL FOOD BANK

Pastor Wes Brown and Sharon Richard, with the Central Peace Ministerial Association, were present at the November 10, 2025 Council Meeting to request funds for the Virtual Food Bank. The food bank assists individuals and families through a regulated gift card program. Council voted to provide \$10,000 in funding to the program.



PARA CUP

Saddle Hills County will be sponsoring the Para Cup, being held from November 30 – December 6, 2025, at the Oviniv Events Centre in Dawson Creek, with 10 world-class games featuring Canada, China, Czechia, and the USA. This is the last international competition before the 2026 Paralympics in Italy.

Tickets are on sale now, at www.lakeviewtix.com

PROGRAM & ACTIVITY GRANTS

At the October 14, 2025 Council Meeting, Administration presented the third round of Program and Activity Grant applications for Council's consideration. A total of six applications were received, for a total of \$10,300. After reviewing the submissions, Council approved \$7,300 in grants to the following organizations: Central Peace Garden Park Society (\$500), the Gordondale Community Playgroup (\$800), the Rycroft Community Library (\$500), Woking Communities in Bloom (\$1,500), and the Woking Multiplex Association (\$4,000).

The 2025 Program and Activity Grant budget was \$100,000, with a total of \$65,400 allocated during the three intakes. Council opted to use the remaining balance to provide funding of \$7,000 each to the Parent Councils of the Bonanza, Savanna, and Rycroft Schools, as well as to the Spirit River Regional Academy and Ste. Marie Catholic School. The funds are intended to be used to enhance school experiences.

ELECTION OF REEVE

At the October 28, 2025, Organizational Meeting, Councillor Gerry Richard was elected as the new Reeve for Saddle Hills County, with Councillor Jenn vanRootselaar elected as Deputy Reeve, for the 2025-26 term.



**MENTAL HEALTH
SUPPORT**
Scan to connect with
crisis support and resources.



2025 has seen an incredible amount of progress on the Central Peace Regional Water Project, including awarding the largest tender in County history, awarding Contract 1 to the lowest bidder, Greenfield Construction Ltd., for a total of \$40,328,054.94, plus GST. The contract will see the River Intake and Raw Water Transfer Station portion of the Central Peace Water Supply System completed, putting the region one step closer to realizing their potable water goals.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project is a joint effort by the G5 group of municipalities, consisting of Birch Hill County, the MD of Spirit River, Saddle Hills County, the Town of Spirit River, and the Village of Rycroft, to provide a reliable source of potable water for the region.

Under the scope of work for the current project, MPE Engineering Ltd. is providing engineering services for the first two phases of overall project, with Saddle Hills County as the managing partner.

Phase 1 & 2 of the project is currently split into three contracts:

Contract 1: New Raw Water Intake on the Peace River and a Raw Water Pumping Stations. This part of the project is currently underway.

Contract 2: Drill through the Peace River Valley and install a steel pipeline. This was awarded to contractors, Option Excavating, and is now considered complete.

Contract 3: Raw Water Pipeline to the Town of Spirit River and the Village of Rycroft.

MPE Engineering was contracted to complete the design of the Central Peace Water Treatment Plant, with 90% funded by an Alberta Water for Life Grant. Saddle Hills County purchased two quarters of land for the project, with the Central Peace Regional Water Treatment Plant currently being designed on one of them.

Greenfield Construction commenced work in July 2025, beginning with the construction of an access road down the hill to the raw water transfer station location. Bulk excavation of the project site continued through the month of September, with an access roadway down to the river's edge for the temporary trestle bridge construction now complete. Excavation of the 28m deep wet well was completed at the end of October 2025. Construction of the trestle bridge began in mid-October 2025, with a completion date set for November 2025. Installation of the temporary cofferdam isolation system for the river intake structure shall proceed following completion of the trestle bridge. Construction completion of the Contract 1 facility remains scheduled for late 2027.

The original project budget for Phases 1 & 2 was \$40 million, with \$16 million provided by the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, \$20 million provided by the Alberta Water for Life Grant Program, and \$4 million provided by Saddle Hills County. The new project budget, as of May 2025, is now estimated at \$105,864,986.54.

In June 2024, an additional \$22,700,000 was received through the Water for Life Grant Program, giving the project a funding total of \$25,222,000, with a 10% municipal contribution. The G5 municipalities are responsible for 10-15% of total project costs.

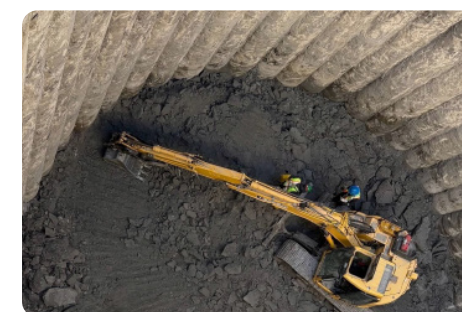
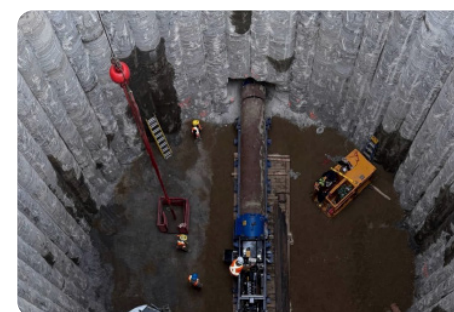
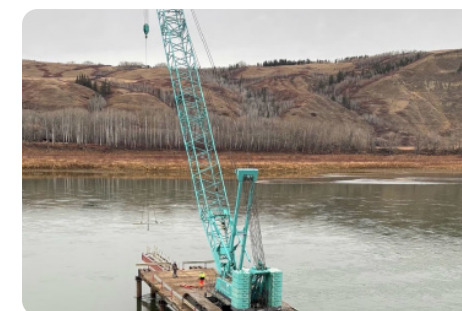
Phases 3 and 4 of the project are split into three contracts:

Contract 4: Raw Water Storage and Supply.

Contract 5: Construction of a Regional Water Treatment Plant.

Contract 6: Water Treatment Plant Tie-ins to the Town of Spirit River, Village of Rycroft, and Hamlet of Woking.

In May 2025, an additional \$12,787,395.54 was received through the most recent Water for Life Grant program submission to be put towards Contract 4.



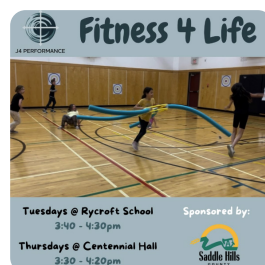
Our Community

Upcoming Events



YOUNG AGRARIANS BUSINESS BOOTCAMP - OCT. 1 - DEC. 10

Join the Young Agrarians Business Bootcamp for New Farmers and gain practical insights into writing your own farm business plan. This 11-week online course will cover everything from writing a mission statement to creating a financial plan and defining a marketing strategy. The course runs from October 1 to December 10, 2025. Live sessions will be held on Wednesday evenings, from 6-8 p.m. MST.



FITNESS FOR LIFE - TUES. & THURS.

Fitness 4 Life is a free, games-based physical activity program that helps kids to improve self-confidence and body image, teaches them how to work together as a team, and expands their movement vocabulary to help develop athleticism. Sessions will take place on Tuesdays, at the Rycroft School, from 3:40 - 4:30 p.m., and Thursdays, at Centennial Hall, from 3:30 - 4:20 p.m.



PCBFA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - NOV. 29

Join the Peace Country Beef and Forage Association (PCBFA) for their Annual General Meeting, to be held on November 29, 2025, at the Dunvegan Inn & Suites, Fairview. This is your chance to connect with fellow producers, hear important updates, and be part of PCBFA's vision for the year ahead. For more information, please contact info@pcbfa.ca



BLUEBERRY MTN. YEAR-END DINNER & DANCE - DEC. 6

The Blueberry Mountain Goodwill Society's Year-End Dinner & Dance will be held on Saturday, December 6, 2025, at the Blueberry Mountain Hall. Cocktails begin at 5 p.m., followed by supper at 6 p.m. Enjoy a delicious meal catered by the Alberts, lively music, and festive fun, plus a chance to meet Santa! For tickets, contact Kassondra Hickman at (780) 827-8403 or Danielle Konstapel at (780) 864-9370.



PARA CUP GOLD - DEC. 6

Saddle Hills County is partnering with the City of Dawson Creek on the 2025 Para Cup, coming to the Ovintiv Events Centre, from November 30 - December 6, 2025! The County will be game day sponsor for the Gold game on December 6, 2025. The full schedule has been released and tickets are on sale now, at www.lakeviewtix.com

A large poster for the Para Cup Gold. The background is red with a large white maple leaf. Inside the leaf is a black silhouette of a hockey player. Below the leaf, it says "PARA CUP" in large white letters, and "CANADA" in smaller white letters. Below that, it says "COUPE DE PARAHOCKEY" in large white letters. At the bottom, it says "TICKETS ON SALE NOW!" in large red letters. Below that, it says "NOV. 30 - DEC. 6, 2025 OVINTIV EVENTS CENTRE DAWSON CREEK, BC" in white letters. At the bottom, there is a logo for "LAKEVIEWTIX.com" and a QR code. The top of the poster features images of hockey players and a trophy.

RESIDENTS OF **SADDLE HILLS COUNTY**

NEVER MISS AN UPDATE

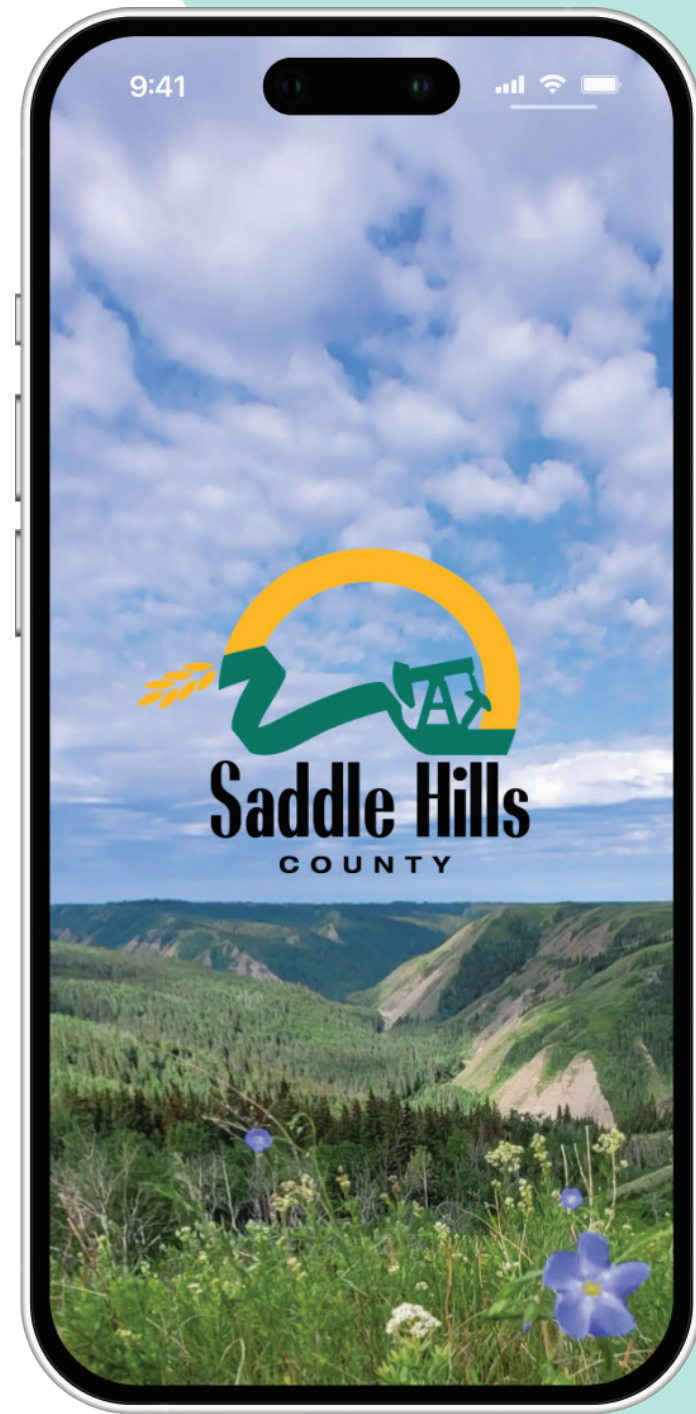
GET THE APP

The app uses state-of-the-art technology to notify residents of breaking news, documents, videos, and events, instantly delivered via push notifications.



HOW TO GET THE APP

- 1 DOWNLOAD**
Scan the QR code above or visit the App Store or Google Play Store and Search 'Saddle Hills County'
- 2 REGISTER**
Fill out your info and check your email to verify your account.
- 3 LOGIN**
Get the latest news, events, jobs, & more right at your fingertips!



- **NEWS**
- **EVENTS**
- **SURVEYS**
- **JOB OPENINGS**

Download the free app today



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Phone: (780) 864-3760 | Fax: (780) 864-3904 | Toll Free: 1 (888) 864-3760

Monday to Friday 8:15 AM to 4:30 PM



www.saddlehills.ab.ca



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