



April 24, 2018

News Release

Council focuses on County Resident Needs

Over the course of the last four years, Kneehill County has seen a significant decrease in revenues. This decrease has caused Kneehill County Council to search for budget efficiencies that will help to maintain the quality and level of services that County residents expect. The costs of running the business of Kneehill County have increased each year. The County's staff have worked hard at minimizing the impacts of the increases by reducing operating budgets and Council has resisted increasing property taxes of our residents for many years.

The provinces' downloading of greater responsibilities, reductions to our assessment formula by the province, the rising costs of fuel and equipment, the carbon taxes, plus the rising costs of the County's business operations, have forced Council into some difficult decisions. Most important however, is our declining taxable assessment base. Since 2013 Kneehill County has seen its overall assessment decline by 25% or approximately \$500 million in assessable properties. With our current tax rates this has meant an estimated loss in 2018 of \$5.6 million dollars in industrial tax. Combined with the province's reductions to the assessment formula which resulted in a loss of \$1.8 million dollars, Kneehill County is faced with significant revenue losses for the 2018 budget year.

To minimize the effects on Kneehill County residents, Council has determined their focus should be on Kneehill County residents and the services they require, and Council will be implementing policy changes to reflect this new focus. The first step in the new program focus is to announce the cancellation of the Regional Resource Urban Sustainability Grant given annually to our neighbouring towns and villages. The approximately \$1 million dollars spent through this grant program will be re-incorporated into the Kneehill County budget to reduce the impact of the economic downturn on County residents, through maintaining existing services and by improving services for residents in targeted areas.

Kneehill County Council recognizes that the loss of the Regional Resource Urban Sustainability Grant will have a negative impact on our neighbouring towns and villages. To help reduce the impact, we have committed to renewing funding of \$250,000 total for recreation and other services, provided by our urban neighbours, that are utilized by Kneehill County residents. Also the cancellation of the Regional Resources Urban Sustainability Grant does not impact the

funding provided for other services such as fire protection, emergency management, solid waste and other previously agreed to recreation services.

Kneehill County Council is committed to maintaining and improving the quality of life for County residents and is prepared to make the difficult decisions required to ensure that Kneehill County remains one of the best places to live in Alberta.

For further information and updates, Kneehill County residents are invited to contact the County at 403-443-5541, or visit the Kneehill County website at www.KneehillCounty.com for councillor contacts.

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