



TOWN OF
RAINBOW LAKE

Newsletter

APRIL 2022

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CAO Message

Update from CAO Dan Fletcher on some of the current Town of Rainbow Lake Projects

We are currently working in partnership with the Dene Tha' First Nation (DTFN) and the Town of High Level on a Joint Emergency Response Plan. This plan has not started yet, we have simply agreed on the intention to build a plan that will consolidate our resources for emergency response for our communities and our shared corridor as well as share training and asset inventories so that we are better able to assist each other when there is a disaster. We are currently waiting on a response from the Federal and Provincial Government level on funding for this initiative to determine if we can move forward.

It was in one of our pre planning meetings for this emergency plan that I discussed with my counterpart with DTFN the struggles that they are having in rebuilding the homes lost in Chateh due to flooding. Their conversations with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) have put them in a position where if they rebuild the homes lost in the flood plain of Chateh, ISC will not fund any future disaster damage to those homes. I had suggested at that time that they build in Rainbow Lake, given our higher ground, extensive infrastructure that would be better utilized for a larger population and the fact that our school is only open now as the school population is being supplemented by children coming in from Chateh. What began as a casual conversation between Administrators is still very much a casual conversation. I spoke with our Town Council about it, and they gave me the go ahead to put together an information presentation for DTFN Chief and Council which happened on March 14th. The information package was based on a development of approximately 80 homes, as that is the tentative number of homes they need to build in Chateh. We provided many options, again simply as information. DTFN Chief and Council are currently putting out a survey to their members to see if there is interest in moving forward with the Town of Rainbow Lake in discussing a potential partnership. Our Council has committed that if there is interest in any of the models, I have discussed with them, that we will conduct our own survey and open house to get feedback from our residents. The big advantage to DTFN is that they can build in an environment that is protected from flooding, with adjacent access to infrastructure that would cost approximately \$150 million to build today. The advantage to the Town of Rainbow Lake is that the revenues generated from this partnership would allow us to fill in the gaps that are becoming more apparent with our revenue and population decline these past 10 years.

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CAO Message Continued below...

This is in addition to the population increase that would see our service-based businesses able to increase in scale the amount of goods and services offered to our residents as well as fill up our other community programs such as Minor Hockey, Health Club, Curling Club and Golf Course that are all struggling to keep memberships up. The only decision made at this point is that we have committed to have a conversation about the potential of a partnership where Dene Tha' would build new homes in Rainbow Lake with a focus on young families that would be able to best utilize Rainbow Lake. While there is great potential on both sides, we have not decided yet if this initiative is going to move beyond this friendly conversation.

The Town has been working for a couple years now on feasibility studies and reviews on the potential for a geothermal industry to be developed in the Rainbow Lake region. The further we dive into this burgeoning industry, the more it becomes apparent that we have an incredible resource advantage in this realm. While we continue to develop industry investment packages to entice larger players to the Rainbow Lake area, we are also going to be initiating a deep dive investigation into replacing our natural gas system for a geothermal district heating model. We have completed the initial feasibility into this and we have more than enough heat to make this a reality. While our early reviews of this system showed it as a cost disadvantage against our preexisting natural gas system, looking into the future and the costs of maintaining the High-Pressure pipeline that brings the gas into Town as well as increasing carbon taxes for residents are pushing us to consider this more closely. If this review comes out favorable, we may be looking at engineering as soon as late 2022.

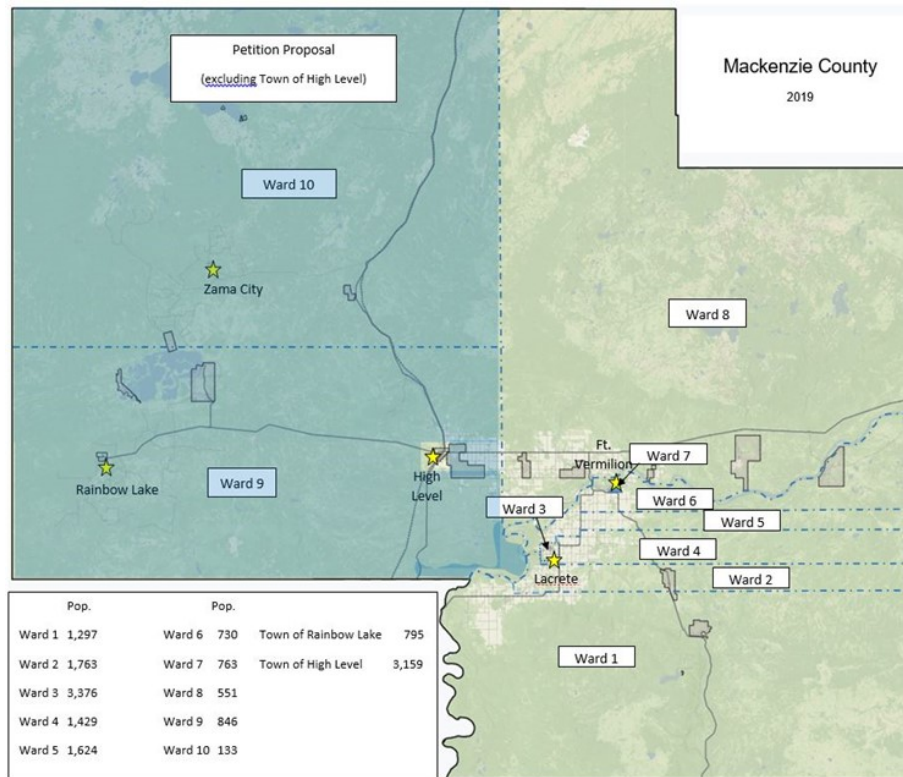
We have also not forgotten about our Cable and Internet system. Even with the rehabilitation project that was completed 5 years ago, our system is out of date. Our current Cable TV system is reaching an end of days point, where the provisioning we purchase, for the system we provide, will no longer be supported, or provided for purchase. This means that we must either change how we provide Cable TV (for a big cost) or move towards stronger internet to support streaming options. This fact coupled with the increasing usage of internet for streaming over traditional TV has moved us into a decision point. We have an application into the Universal Broadband Fund to increase our residents access to high-speed internet, if we are successful then the decision becomes easy. If we are not successful, our Town Council will be faced with a difficult decision on how to spend the money and which services to provide.

The final update I wanted to provide is with regards to the Mackenzie Restructuring Project. This project began in response to the community led petition in 2019 submitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs to form a new Municipality comprised of Rainbow Lake, Zama and the High Level Rural areas. As the petition was submitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs the project was undertaken by Alberta Municipal Affairs with the assistance of the CAO for Mackenzie County and myself. Council received the draft report for review that contained the following conclusions:

Conclusions

- 1) The Eastside municipality would not be financially viable without a combination of:
 - a. a significant residential and non-residential tax increase;
 - b. a significant reduction in costs and service levels; and
 - c. ongoing funding from the Westside municipality.
- 2) Restructuring will create a have/have not relationship between the two municipalities resulting in inequitable treatment of the majority of the population situated within Eastside.
- 3) The current economic volatility in the region threatens the stability of a municipal viability that would be heavily reliant on revenue sharing.

- 4) Due to the long-standing issues and conflict contributing to the current request, it may be appropriate for Municipal Affairs to lead the Eastside ward boundary review, if the restructuring were to proceed.



After reviewing the report in its entirety, Council for the Town of Rainbow Lake felt that continuing this review for multiple more years, fighting over how much revenue sharing would be allocated to the East as per the report, followed by creating a new County with only a share of the area revenues left in their control, would create a situation where we are now having to compete with other areas for funds instead of maintaining our focus on Rainbow Lake. While we are willing to put in the work if requested, Rainbow Lake Town Council feels that there is not enough to be gained from a new County if a significant portion of the area revenues will still be sent to the East. The Minister of Municipal Affairs asked for a response to the report from Mackenzie County and the Town of Rainbow Lake. Mackenzie County has yet to provide their response but you may find our Town Council's response below:

Thank you, Mr. Minister, for taking the time to hear our position on this matter and for your Ministries work these past years in putting together the information that brings us here today. Here in Rainbow Lake, we have a mostly new Council with three new Councilors of our total five having come on board last October. We discussed this question in great detail prior to drafting this response and feel that Rainbow Lake would be best served remaining the Town of Rainbow Lake.

While a more fair proportion of the area revenues being made available to Rainbow Lake is desperately needed, the Town has fought for years for representation by taxation, where those employees of the Cenovus plant on our doorstep, generating the disproportionate level of linear taxation revenues, are all residents of and receive all services from the Town of Rainbow Lake. These residents and businesses paying for the revenue gap do not receive the benefit of what they pay in. Better services provided to these employees/residents would make for a more stable area workforce, reduce northern living, HR recruitment and housing costs for Cenovus helping their bottom line, making the area economy more stable to the benefit of the Town, County and Province as a whole

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That being said, we still feel that a County model, with multiple competing priority sectors, would not serve the best interests of Rainbow Lake residents. From the expense breakdown provided in your Ministries report, we can quite clearly see that when compared to High Level Rural and Zama, we operate more efficiently with less money, providing far more services. We are certainly open to and would cooperate with any further consultation required by the Minister's office on this matter, as it is a decision that really should be made by all of our residents, but our Council is unanimous, that when pressed to choose, we would choose the Status Quo governance option.

We also feel that there are different models that could be employed to serve both the Town of Rainbow Lake and Mackenzie County's needs. One such example would be in the research and investments being made in the Geothermal Energy industry in the Rainbow Lake Area. These initiatives are being spearheaded by Rainbow Lake and some of the models we have discussed with Industry have economic potential in the billions for Alberta. The stumbling block that we come across is that we are investing very limited Rainbow Lake Residents dollars in these initiatives without any potential for a return on that investment, as the assessment and revenue generated would go directly to Mackenzie County. If we were able to negotiate, even a 50% sharing on new developments it would allow the Town to adjust our risk models in approaching these economic development opportunities to consider some return.

There is no doubt that a County the size of Mackenzie County is going to have areas that feel underserved, I would even go so far as to say the petition communities are right to be angry. But the Town of Rainbow Lake feels that combining the current "have not" communities into one singular County would result in a great deal more in fighting, as each priority sector believes they are entitled to the largest share, and the residents of Rainbow Lake could suffer as a result.

Once the Minister has received a response from Mackenzie County, he will make his decision on next steps and communicate that decision back to the communities that began and submitted the petition.

I hope you found this update helpful discussing some of our current operating projects. We have several others on the go such as:

- VSU Office Renovation
- Devonian Park Dog Park
- Financial Software Replacement
- Water Treatment Plan Rehabilitation
- Fire Department continuing WUI equipment acquisition
- Airport External QA and 2022 Live Emergency Exercise
- Municipal Accountability Program Review

If you have any questions about any of our projects or anything else you are curious about please reach out to the Town Office and we will be happy to help.

Thanks,

Dan Fletcher
CAO

Town of Rainbow Lake

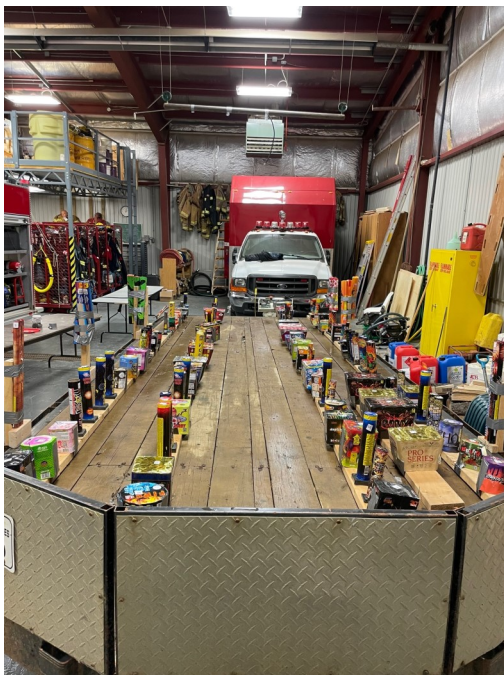


APRIL 2022

Winter Carnival

On Saturday March 5, 2022, the Town hosted it's annual Winter Carnival. The day started out with a delicious free pancake breakfast on behalf of Town Council and Administration, followed by many activities in the carnival room, arena activities that were hosted by Minor Hockey, an outdoor scavenger hunt, and ended with a firework show and bonfire!!! Thank you to all the volunteers that took time out of their day to help put on this fun event. The day was full of many laughs, smiles and memories were definitely made.







Volunteer Appreciation Night May 4th, 2022

*Please take the time to NOMINATE an outstanding
volunteer in our community for
the 2021/22 Volunteer of the Year award.*

*Nomination Forms are available at the
Recreation Office & Town Office*

VOLUNTEERING IS EMPATHY IN ACTION

Volunteers Bring Heart to Canada's Communities

Any questions please contact the Recreation Dept.

at 780-956-3778

or email

recreation@rainbowlake.ca

*Hosted by the Town of Rainbow Lake and Town
Council*

Thanks to all the volunteers that make our community what
it is, without you a lot would go undone!

THANK YOU!!

Sump Pump Reminder

Just a friendly reminder to all residences that have a sump pump to make sure you test if you haven't already done so. Spring break up is almost upon us and we already starting to see some water flow due to the increase in snow melting with the temperature increase.

How to test your sump pump:

1. Slowly pour a 5 gallon bucket of water into the tank
2. Watch for the float valve to make sure that it rises with the water to trigger the pump
3. If the water flows back into the tank, you may need to check for issues and the check valve may need to be replaces

We hope this reminder



Ditches

With the recent arrival of spring-like temperatures, unsafe ice and slippery conditions are starting to form. The onset of spring will bring rain and melting snow, which will cause the breakup of ice along waterways and the increase of water in the ditches around town. We are advising everyone to please ensure that they stay clear of all ditches until the snow has melted and the water levels have decreased. Please keep your pets and children out of the ditches as well. While the snow may seem strong and sturdy on top, it is weakening on the bottom due to the warmer temperatures and we don't want to see anyone fall through. Also please avoid driving any recreational vehicle through the ditches within town limits at all times.



Crime Stoppers

Crime Stoppers is a community crime prevention organization that rewards anonymous tipsters while supporting law enforcement partners to solve and stop crime. If you have information about a crime or have witnessed suspicious behavior, you can report the information anonymously by calling 1-800-222-8477. By providing information to Crime Stoppers, you are allowing the information to be shared with law enforcement agencies to further protect the community and letting your concern be heard.

Some examples of what can be reported to crime stoppers are:

- Benefit fraud under \$5,000
- If you're a victim of crime
- Information on missing person
- Drug/dealer related information
- Scam emails or phone calls
- Any category of crime that includes break and enters, damage to property, damage to vehicle, lost property, theft from vehicle under \$5,000.00



For more information as to what can be reported to crime stoppers or how to report a tip please visit <https://www.canadiancrimestoppers.org>

Bear Aware

As bears are starting to wake up for spring, we would like to remind everyone to be 'Bear Aware' in and around Town. If you see a bear please do not engage with it and give it space. They are just waking up and will be on the hunt for food. Please make sure you are securing your garbage and that no food is left out for the wildlife. Ensure that barbecues and fire pits are regularly cleaned and bird feeders are put away.

If you do see a bear in town you can either call the Town Office at 780-956-3934 to report it or you can call Fish and Wildlife at 780-926-2238 (High Level Branch).

For more information on bear awareness please visit www.bearsmart.alberta.ca



Town Clean-Up

The town clean up will be happening in May this year. We are just waiting to confirm a date that will best suit everyone. Once a date has been decided on, more information will be posted on our Facebook page and Rainbow Lake Community Board. Keep your eyes open and we hope to see everyone out :)





Mackenzie Family Resource Network



2022 Community Challenge

Let's create a story for 2022!

Your photos and stories will be used to create mini books that can be viewed in each community!

Open to all ages and residents of High Level, La Crete, Rainbow Lake and Fort Vermilion.

Chapter 3: April Earth Day



Show or tell us what you are doing to help the Earth! Do you recycle? Do you use reusable cups? Do you plant a garden? Are there plants in your house? Do you pick up garbage in your community in the Spring? Whatever your family does to love the Earth, let us know to win a Family Gift Package!

What to do?

1. Complete the activity.
2. Send a picture, write a text, email or message

Text: (Val) 780-841-2558
 Email: info@thevillagefrn.ca
 Message: @thevillagefrn
 Before April 30th

3. You will be entered to win a prize basket, draw date May 1st



Did you know Earth Day is April 22nd?



A Spoke of the Mackenzie Family Resource Network

Message from AHS

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is a critical component of Alberta's healthcare system. EMS provides emergency response to 911 calls for patients across the province, as well as handling transfers for patients needing medical care between hospitals and medical facilities.

EMS is currently undertaking the creation of a long-term Provincial Service Plan for EMS. This EMS Service Plan will reflect how EMS integrates into Alberta's health system, and it will provide the vision and direction for EMS in Alberta for the next five years, as well as set out a clear roadmap on how to get there. This plan is to be completed by September 30, 2022.

To do this, we need to hear from those who depend on our care – Albertans. Our first step is to assess the current state of EMS, and we are doing this by launching our engagement website and a survey. We're asking for your involvement, and for you to share this information with your citizens and constituents:

First, please visit <https://together4health.albertahealthservices.ca/ems-service-planning> and sign up to subscribe to our project updates so you can take part in current and future EMS engagement opportunities.

Then, watch our 30 minute introductory video on the Together4Health site about the EMS Provincial Service Planning process. This video is optional, however it provides valuable background about EMS.

Finally, take our "Current State Survey" on the website which should only take about 5-10 minutes. Let us know what you think is working within EMS, and what isn't, so we can build on strengths and plan for improvements.

The current state survey will close April 8, 2022.

AHS EMS and Alberta Health is looking forward to connecting with patients and families, frontline EMS and AHS staff, elected officials, Indigenous communities, contracted service partners, medical first responders, and other parts of the healthcare system now and over the coming months.



Town Office Closed

The Town Office will be closed on April 15, 2022 for Good Friday and April 18, 2022 for Easter Monday. The Office will reopen on Tuesday April 19, 2022 normal business hours.

We hope everyone has a great long weekend and Happy Easter!!



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Box 149, 65 Imperial Drive
Rainbow Lake, AB
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Recreation Complex
Rec Plex
1 Atco Road

Enforcement Services
65 Imperial Drive

Town Shop (Public Works)
58 Imperial Drive

Fire Hall
58 Imperial Drive

