



You're adjusting - We're adjusting.

OUR RESPONSE

On March 16 we made the difficult decision to shut down public access to our facilities in an effort to protect our citizens, staff members and safeguard resources intended for emergency response in this region due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

OUR ADJUSTMENTS

We are committed to flattening the curve and supporting our health care workers and our province in a massive combined effort to physical distance and avoid the spread of COVID-19.

Stettler Regional Emergency Management Agency Emergency Operations Centre activated on March 16 and is supporting our region through a HOTLINE, seven days per week from 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM for anyone with questions or concerns: 403-742-7300.

Our communities, our businesses, our family, our friends and our neighbors have all been affected by this pandemic, and the devastating and wide-reaching effect it is having on our economy. Our oil and gas and shallow gas well industry was already strained. In 2019 the County of Stettler wrote off \$4,280,169 in uncollectable taxes due to the decline in oil and gas. Our annual budget for our municipality in 2015 was \$34,822,641. Five years later, our annual budget is \$26,414,824 mainly due to losses in revenue from the oil and gas industry. We have adjusted our operations and absorbed this 25% loss in revenue over the last five years. Now we are preparing for a further estimated \$3,800,000 loss in 2020, due to an anticipated further decline in oil and gas revenue, as we further prepare for the trickle down effect of reduced assessments appearing in 2021. Predictions indicate Alberta's oil and gas markets will suffer the effects of a battered oil economy for some time, and we are adjusting our budgets now to prepare.

HOW WE'RE PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

All planned capital purchases have been put on hold. We have frozen hiring, including 20 seasonal, casual and part-time staff. We are revisiting our 2020 budget.

Our original budget proposed a 1.6% tax increase. We are researching cutbacks to be able to propose a zero per cent increase. The Province pulled back a planned increase to the education requisition and will hold it to 2019 levels, but will continue to collect a new Modified Policing Service requisition, of \$145,000 in 2020.

PROPOSED SAVINGS-CHANGES IN SERVICES

- Seasonal staff (frozen hiring)
- Dust Control (County supplied)

- Oiling
- Crushing (on hold)
- Contract Gravel Haul (on hold)
- Road construction, upgrades and improvements (on hold)
- Brushing
- Highway Clean Up program
- Culverts (reduced budget)
 - We maintain a bridge reserve fund for emergency situations
- Training, seminars, conferences (cancelled or postponed)
- Beaver Control/Predator (considering partial-pay or user-pay)
- Roadside Spraying (reduced)
- Considering funding cuts to external programs

The province has issued a ministerial order due to COVID-19, in which the appeal period for development permits and subdivisions has been extended to October 1, 2020. If this order remains in place, development permits and subdivision approvals would not be possible prior to October 1.

We have \$8 million in projects prepared, shovel ready, should government stimulus money become available, which would support contractors and our local economy. The County of Stettler would be responsible to provide some funding (90-10 funding means 90% Provincial or Federal Government and 10% Municipal), to capitalize on government stimulus moneys.

We have reserved funds to ensure this is possible. We will avoid depleting Utilities reserves so we are prepared for any 90-10 funding opportunities, to extend clean potable water lines to those in need.

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU. WE ARE OPEN.

County operations continue and we are here to help by phone, email or Facebook messenger. Please call 403-742-4441, reach out on Facebook, or email info@stettlercounty.ca if you have any questions or concerns with tax payments, utility payments or other requisitions, or for permits or service from the County of Stettler. We're in this together.

COUNCIL for the COUNTY OF STETTLER No. 6

Reeve Larry Clarke and Councillors Ernie Gendre, Dave Grover, Cheri Neitz, James Nibourg, Wayne Nixon and Les Stulberg