Flames erupt on the edge of Bon Accord

by Shayna Giles

On May 10 evening, a property on the North side of Bon Accord caught fire.

Just after 7 p.m., Bon Accord residents traced a growing column of smoke to the old farmhouse on the northernmost outskirts of town. The cause of the fire and extent of the damage is currently unknown. Located north of the intersection of 47 St. and 54 ave, the property contains a wooden garage, a mobile home, an old house, and various sheds.

“We looked out our window and we saw a sheet of smoke,” said Carrie Tully, a nearby resident. “At times, you could hear the fire cracking.”

By 7:30 p.m., two fire trucks arrived at the scene and began to extinguish the blaze. Heavy winds had spread the fire to the dry grass and bushes of the property, obscuring the view from dozens of onlookers who had gathered to watch the fire unfold. By 8:15 p.m., a total of four fire trucks, two ambulances, and a peace officer had arrived at the property. At this time, police asked onlookers to clear the intersection.

“It’s hard for the trucks to come in and out – it’s a small road and people standing in the smoke isn’t wise,” explains Tully. The cause of the fire was not known at press time.

Mayor’s math has businesses paying 22% tax increase

Morinville businesses received their property tax notices with the average increase for the municipal portion over 30%, but town officials are using some interesting math to continue denying reports in The Free Press concerning the huge increase.

The newspaper was the only media to give business a heads-up in the mill rate increase set by council. This year that is going up by $1,440 — an increase of just under 31%.

But Mayor Barry Turner used the town’s facebook page last week to post that the increase of $1,440 is a 22% increase. A 22% increase of $4,705 would have been $1,035 — $405 less than the increased rate businesses are receiving.

Related stories Page A8:
Town documents the 30% hike for commercial property.
Council denials started over a year ago
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The math is very simple. According to town administration in 2018 the average business paid $4,705 for the municipal portion of their property tax. This year that is going up by $1,440 — an increase of just under 31%.

But Mayor Barry Turner used the town’s facebook page last week to post that the increase of $1,440 is a 22% increase. A 22% increase of $4,705 would have been $1,035 — $405 less than the increased rate businesses are receiving.

It is the latest denial involving Morinville’s huge tax increase for commercial property.

The east side of the property is entirely obscured by smoke as firefighters work to extinguish the May 10 blaze on the edge of Bon Accord. —photo by Shayna Giles

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7 year old Trey Langford of U9 Grey Knights soccer team dribbled the ball down the field while members of the Jiffy Lube team such as Aubrey Letouerneau tried to catch up to him during their game on the Shell fields in Morinville on May 9th.

—photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscock

7 year old Trey Langford of U9 Grey Knights soccer team dribbled the ball down the field while members of the Jiffy Lube team such as Aubrey Letouerneau tried to catch up to him during their game on the Shell fields in Morinville on May 9th.

—photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscock

ADVERTISING DEADLINES
Thursday 2 p.m. for Tuesday edition
1000 sq ft - 5 bedroom bi-level with fully developed basement. Many upgrades have been completed: shingles with ice/water membrane, flooring, paint, kitchen, deck, fridge, stove and microwave. With just a short commute to the city and Garrison. $269,900.

Bon Accord!

1745 sq ft one owner 2 storey with 4 bedrooms with 3 ½ bathrooms. Oversized attached garage area w/ RV parking. Located in a quiet cul-de-sac location, steps away from parks and schools! $369,900. Call Guy Pelletier 780.974.5800.

Lovingly Maintained!

1656 sq ft - 3 bedroom, 3 bathroom, 2 storey with oversized 24' x 24' insulated garage. Open concept design and main floor laundry. Located near Notre Dame close to the new school being built. $399,000.

Brand New

Commercial property located in a high traffic area through Kingsway Avenue to 118 Ave - adjacent to St. John’s Ambulance. Professionally paved lot with catch basin and the coveted CB1 Zoning. It is 15,510 sq ft ideal for redevelopment. Call Guy Pelleter 780.974.1440.

Developers & Investors!

This 75.30 acreage boasts of a 1150 sq ft 2+2 bedroom bungalow and a 2nd renovated 1088 sq ft 2 bedroom residence with a separate gas meter. Huge 40' x 64' quonset with 220v, 8 paddock barn, 22' x 28' double garage and numerous other out buildings. $849,000.

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GEOGRAPHICAL AREA: Edmonton, St. Albert, Sturgeon County, Parkland County, Strathcona County TIMELINES: Expires July 31, 2019. CONDITIONS OR EXCLUSIONS: Upon a successful sale, Buyers Associate Remuneration 3.5/100 1.5/Bal payable by Seller Showcase 21 Listings only (call for details) - The draw will occur once 20 Properties have been sold, closed, and funded

Molly Harris, grade 12 student of Sturgeon Composite High School and Scroll Saw Extraordinaire was a featured Artist for the Landing Trail “Every Child is an Artist” Art Program Fundraiser on May 8th. Harris has been doing this type of art for 5 years and did a live scroll saw art during the event. The rose piece was one of a few finished pieces she had at the show to showcase her talent.

―photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscock
The Town of Gibbons is collecting an extra $30,500 in municipal taxes in order to have funds to put towards an expected increase to the Alberta School Foundation Fund (ASFF) this fall. This ASFF contingency is being collected through an increased residential mill rate. A resident with a home assessed at the average of $302,600 will pay $71 more in municipal taxes this year ($2,099) than last year ($1,938). If the additional funds for ASFF were not being collected, the increase in municipal taxes would have been $45. The overall tax bill, including requisitions, is expected to decrease by $44.

During the May 8 council meeting assistant CAO Debbie Turner said that because the ASFF requisition will not be known until the new provincial government sets its budget in the fall, the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) recommended towns collect the 2018 requisition amount and adjust for changes made later this year during 2020. Turner said “administration is strongly recommending” the town collect additional funds for ASFF so it is able to pay the requisition if it is increased in the fall.

“Is it prudent to have to front that money when we already have a very tight budget?” she asked. “If we have to front that money, we’ll have to come up with it—-from where we don’t know.” She advised that if the ASFF requisition is not increased in the fall, council may direct the funds collected into a reserve because they are being collected as municipal taxes.

Coun. Darren McCann said the ASFF contingency works out to 19.5 cents per day from homeowners and will protect the town financially.

Gibbons is collecting $2.7 million in 2019 municipal taxes, up four percent from $2.6 million in 2018. That will be done with a residential municipal mill rate of 6.7540 which is five percent higher than last year’s mill rate of 6.4041.

The municipal non-residential (commercial, industrial, linear) millrate increased four percent from 11.8660 in 2018 to 12.3406 in 2019. The farmland municipal mill rate also increased four percent, from 13.265 in 2018 to 13.7956 in 2019.

For 2019 the town is using the same $1 million ASFF requisition as last year. The residential mill rate to collect the ASFF requisition is 2.6150, up one percent from 2.5866 last year because residential assessments decreased.

BON ACCORD

4-H BEEF SHOW & SALE

Wednesday, May 29, 2019

Sturgeon Agriplex
25021 Township Rd 554, Cardiff, AB

SHOW: 12:00 PM
SALE: 6:00 PM

In addition to our 4-H Beef Show, there will be a 4-H Donkey Project Cart Demonstration.

Projects on Display:
- 4-H Photography
- 4-H Carcass

33 4-H Steers will be for sale.

CONTACT MAUREEN YOUNG:
780-913-8641
MMLIVESTOCK@XPLORNET.CA

Gibbons homeowners will see a small change in total tax bill
by Grant Cree

A resident of West Country Hearth, a seniors facility near Villeneuve, celebrated her 100th birthday on May 10. Pearl Dzivinski enjoyed meeting with family and friends to mark the significant occasion. “Take each day at a time, and that is it. Before you know it, you’re 100,” she said.

Jane Musey is Pearl’s daughter, and she marvels at her mother’s busy life. “It’s just amazing to see her in good health as she is at her age, I think it’s just fantastic. She’s doing better than I am!” Musey laughed. “She lived on a farm and worked. She’s always worked hard and always has a very positive attitude.”

West Country Hearth Program Coordinator Rhonda Stewart said Pearl has lived at the facility for the past five or six years. “Pearl is one of our most active members, especially for her age,” said Stewart. “She attends to all of the plants around here, she bakes bread weekly, and delivers bread to all the residents here. She is just a phenomenal person and is going steady.”

Ken McGillis attended Pearl’s birthday party on behalf of the West Sturgeon Aging in Place Foundation. “I’m here to offer her congratulations,” said McGillis. “It’s quite an achievement to reach 100 and be as active as she is at that age. It’s a testament to her good life.”

Sturgeon County Mayor Alanna Hnatiw presented Pearl with a certificate of congratulations, along with a fleece blanket and a stainless steel tumbler. Mayor Hnatiw remarked that Pearl’s birthday was significant and noted that Sturgeon County celebrated it’s 100th Anniversary last year.

“We’re happy to have a facility like this in Sturgeon County that obviously recognizes the importance of our pioneers and creates a lovely and safe community for them to enjoy their golden years,” said Mayor Hnatiw. “I’m happy that people like Pearl and her husband have contributed to this area for many, many years.”

Surrounded by her loving family and friends, Pearl recalled that she and her husband farmed in the area until 1953, when they moved to Edmonton. She worked in an egg factory, and then later at the Royal Alex. “We moved to Forest Heights and lived there for over 50 years,” said Pearl. “It was a beautiful place, we could look over the river to the city.”

When asked about the secret to her long life, Pearl replied: “Don’t drink if it doesn’t agree with you and don’t smoke if it doesn’t agree with you. And that’s about all.”

Pearl Dzivinski celebrates her 100th birthday

Thank You!

Gibbons School Playground Committee would like to thank the following companies, organizations and people for helping to make a new playground at Gibbons School possible:

Significant Funding Provided by:
- Province of Alberta
- Pembina Pipeline
- North West Redwater Upgrader
- Sturgeon River Agricultural Society
- Town of Gibbons
- Surerus Inc.

Additional Funding and Support Provided by:
- Phoenix Land Services
- Gibbons ATB
- PetroFaxx Energy Services
- Mandery Turf Products
- Fast Fence
- White Rabbit Holdings
- Blue Imp
- Pat Coxen
- Ian and Cindy Jamieson
- Irene Gibbons
- Cindy and Kelly Wietzel
- Gibbons School Students

Special Thanks to the Gibbons School Playground Committee
- Current – Irene Gibbons, Cindy & Kelly Wietzel, Cindy and Ian Jamieson
- Past – Charity Tober

We would like to invite the Public to an Opening Ceremony
May 23rd at 10:00am at Gibbons School to celebrate its completion.

REGISTER FOR SUMMER SCHOOL!

Want to fast track your high school courses, improve your grades, or free up next school year’s timetable? Attend a Registration event at one of our Learning Centres.

REGISTER AT MORINVILLE LEARNING CENTRE OR STURGEON LEARNING CENTRE:
- Thursday, May 2, between 5:00pm and 7:00pm, if you are interested in registering for CALM and/or Phys Ed 10
- Wednesday, May 22, between 5:00pm and 7:00pm, to register for all other courses

CAN’T ATTEND ONE OF OUR REGISTRATION EVENTS?
- Registration is also available June 3 to 11, June 21 and July 2, during regular Learning Centre hours

For more information about Summer School visit www.sturgeonlearning.ca
Emergency Notification in the Region

Whether for work, for school, or for fun, our region sees thousands of people traveling in and through it daily. It’s typically business as usual, however in a region as risk-diverse as ours, there’s always potential for an emergency to occur. In any emergency, community safety is the priority. In the early stages of an emergency, being able to quickly and safely notify the community is a challenge for responders.

Through local mutual aid emergency response association Northeast Region Community Awareness Emergency Response (NRCAER), a radio network has been in place for decades, enabling response authorities to communicate in an emergency. One of the actions they take is to warn motorists of an emergency ahead. This is done through a traffic management plan built with local RCMP and involves sending responders to a location outside of the immediate area to redirect traffic. This takes time, when in most emergencies, seconds count.

Collaborating through NRCAER, local response agencies identified this gap across its boundary and set about solving it. With technology advancements, as well as funding, the members of NRCAER are bringing dynamic road message signs to their approximate 700km2 region, also home to Alberta’s Industrial Heartland.

Signs will be located along known high traffic routes around the region to alert and divert motorists should an emergency occur. Engineering and site prep have already begun, and installation will take place over the coming months. The signs are targeted to be operational in the fall of 2019.

To learn about existing and planned emergency notification methods in the region, an “easy as 1:23” animated video has been developed. Project progress updates will be provided using traditional and social media.

Emergencies Don’t Wait. Be Emergency Ready!

May 5 – 11, 2019 marks Emergency Preparedness Week in Canada. Key to being emergency ready is being informed. Residents are advised to download the Alberta Emergency Alert on their mobile devices and visit their municipality’s website for information on available alerting programs.

The NRCAER UPDATEline 1-866-653-9959 is a toll-free 24-hour information line that carries recorded information about public safety and NRCAER industry member activity residents may see, hear, smell or otherwise notice. The line has been in place since 2003.

Visit www.getprepared.ca for resources on personal and family emergency preparedness.

For more information on NRCAER, visit www.nrcaer.com. To learn about Life in the Heartland, visit lifetheheartland.com, follow us on Twitter and Facebook, or email info@lifetheheartland.com.
Grade 4 artist, Allison Silvius of Landing Trail School proudly showed off 5 pieces of her work for her school’s Arts Program fundraiser “Every Child is an Artist” on May 8th including the Rainbow Fish to her right. Silvius says Art is her favourite subject and she loves to draw cats, birds and nature drawings such as trees and flowers. The fundraiser event was held at the school from 4-7pm and featured art displays, silent auction of collaborative art by each class in the school, raffles and games, a live painting, a featured artist and much more. –photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscock

April Power (Left) and Jessica Hewitt sell Girl Guide cookies in front of the Gibbons arena May 4. Ten Gibbons club members are raising funds for a trip to Costa Rica next year. “They’ve been working really hard,” said club leader Julie Power. The local members will meet up with a similar club in Costa Rica, see how they operate and volunteer at animal shelters.

HOURS:
Monday - Friday
9 - 8
Saturdays, Sundays & Holidays
9 - 6

Wellness Workshops
Do something for YOU, try something new and connect with others. Join us for the first of four workshops for 2019; light treats are on us.
They are free of charge, but spots are limited.
Please R.S.V.P. at https://programs.sturgeoncounty.ca/
Course No. 4304W519

Blanket Exercise
A blanket exercise is a participatory history lesson that helps us understand, respect and become part of the reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous people.
The activity begins with blankets arranged on the floor to represent Canada before the arrival of Europeans. Participants representing Indigenous peoples move around on the blankets as if they are using and occupying the land. At the end of the exercise, only a few people remain on the blankets, covering only a fraction of their original area.
More information about the exercise can be found at www.kairosblanketexercise.org

When: Wednesday, May 29
6:30-9:30 p.m.
Where: Cardiff Hall, 55320 RGE RD 251
Register by: May 23
Facilitator: Raymond Soetaert
Email: programs@sturgeoncounty.ca

First call 911.

Huge Selection of Succulents
WE DO:
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Cathedral Bells (cobeia vine)
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Peppers
Herbs

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12” Tumbler Tomato Baskets

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Monday - Friday
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Saturdays, Sundays & Holidays
9 - 6

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Authorized Publisher:

First call 911.
Gibbons council is well on its way to passing a $2.09 million local improvement tax bylaw which does not specify what part of town the bylaw will be applied to. The bylaw states the local improvement tax will be assessed against Project 39.

When questioned, mayor Dan Deck referred questions to CAO Farrell O’Malley, who said this is an innovative and unique project in which the frontage tax will be paid by future residents of an area which is not yet developed. Further information was not made public at this time.

The bylaw states the local improvements are estimated to cost $2.09 million. They will be paid by property owners over 15 to 30 years.

Local improvement tax levy bylaws may be petitioned against by the property owners in the affected area. O’Malley said that at this time the land has a single owner. Council passed second reading of Local Improvement Tax Bylaw #ALT 1/19 without discussion during its May 11 meeting.

First reading was given April 10. At that meeting council held a closed session to discuss a tax repayment plan, development and a letter from a property owner. After the closed session discussion, council passed coun. Norm Sandahl’s motion to add Bylaw ALT 1/19 to the agenda and then gave it first reading.

The Playground Posse Kids: Foxten Roberts, Riley St. Onge, Katie Reiter, Kaleb Fedorak, Dexter St Onge, and two more missing from the photo (Luxley Roberts and Jack Reiter) held a lemonade stand on May 11th in support of The Stollery Children’s Hospital. The children had a goal of raising $1000 by selling lemonade and popcorn and raised over $1200. Their parents were busy making as the kids were busy selling... it was a perfect sunny day! --photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscock
Morinville businesses received their property tax notices with the average municipal increase over 30%, but town officials are warning property owners about any tax denials in reports in The Free Press concerning the huge increase. The newspaper was the only media to give business a heads-up that the 30% increase was coming as a result of an average increase in assessment of 15% and the 15.5% mill rate increase council passed.

After town denials that businesses were facing the possibility of having to approve it – and going back over a year – the town now has come up with a figure of a 22% tax increase. The actual $1,433.73 increase (which would amount as produced by the 30% hike in the $4,705 average municipal tax bill in 2019 and there’s no explanation as to why the political math is 8% rather than actual math.

In a Facebook posting of Frequently Asked Questions about taxation just last week, Mayor Harry Tulk outlined the following:

“"The non-resident increase is very gradual and in my opinion long overdue" – Councillor Rebecca Balanko

The town of Morinville included the above table in the documentation for its taxation. The $1,433.73 per year, $119.48 increase in 2019 – and less time having to explain false info.”

She offered no clarification on the comment when asked later.

Dafoe bemoaned having to address the issue, stating, “I wish people would consider whether the information is true, whether it is accurate.” She offered no clarification on the comment when asked later.

But with 2020 vision, a prudent business approach to tax increases — just how much the increase coming next year. This year if the town plans to widen the gap between the business rate and which is double for these properties and is not something that Council can control. The impact of the tax rate increase average $725 to $1,000 of assessment, $1,410 for industrial properties, with the new mill rate increase amounting to an average of $715 for commercial properties, $775 for non-residential properties. This is due to changes in the assessment of these properties and is not something that Council can control. The impact of the tax rate increase average $725 to $1,000 of assessment, $1,410 for industrial properties, with the new mill rate increase amounting to an average of $715 for commercial properties, $775 for non-residential properties.

On a social media stream discussing business property taxes from the town as in-and-out organizations and collected through the property tax bylaw on business. (Education and Homeowners.) The $674,800 assessment increased an average of $1,442, which is not 30%.

Both councillor Stephen Dafoe and Mayor Harry Tulk confirmed the increased mill rate is not 30%.

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The tax increase is NOT 30% as the 30% tax hike facing businesses in Morinville, which had documentation showing businesses would have an overall tax bill for these proper- ty increases in 2020. Whatever the residential tax rate is increased in 2020, the business rate will be the same. The same was true for the last council when they approved the mill rate hike to result in an average 30% increase in 2020.

After passing first reading of the taxation bylaw on April 9, the town plans to widen the gap between the business rate and which is double for these properties and is not something that Council can control. The impact of the tax rate increase average $725 to $1,000 of assessment, $1,410 for industrial properties, with the new mill rate increase amounting to an average of $715 for commercial properties, $775 for non-residential properties. This is due to changes in the assessment of these properties and is not something that Council can control. The impact of the tax rate increase average $725 to $1,000 of assessment, $1,410 for industrial properties, with the new mill rate increase amounting to an average of $715 for commercial properties, $775 for non-residential properties.

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Adrian Meade performed a stunt with dance mates Riley Goebel, Charlotte Coninx and Brooklyn Munstermann during their Acro routine to ‘I’ll be There’. The group from The Heart of Dance studio in Calahoo had their year end recital at the Morinville Community Cultural Centre on May 4th. --photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscock

### Notice

This week in Morinville photo enforcement will be conducted in the following areas:

- Cardiff Rd
- Grandin Dr
- Morinville Dr
- Sunnydale Road
- East Boundary Rd
- 94 St
- 104 St
- 107 St
- 100 Ave
- 101 Ave
- All School zones
- All Playground zones
- All other areas where speeding is a concern

Please slow down!

Your unwanted computers, TVs and old paint aren’t doing any good hanging around, but they will if you recycle them.

Bring your old computers, TVs and paint to:

**Gibbons Public Works Yard**

5127 - 41 Street

Visit [www.albertarecycling.ca](http://www.albertarecycling.ca) or call 1.888.999.8762 for more information on electronics and paint recycling in your area.
The Gibbons Legion Ladies Auxiliary Branch #226 celebrated its 70th anniversary May 4. Gibbons mayor Dan Deck brought greetings on behalf of his wife, Jennifer, and the town. “Thanks for all you’ve done,” he said. “You are an important part of all your communities.”

Royal Canadian Legion Gibbons Branch #226 president Darren Longstaff extended congratulations from the branch members and said his organization looks forward to working closely with the Ladies Auxiliary for another 70 years. Alberta-North West Territories district commander Jackie Hyska presented the Gibbons Auxiliary with its third consecutive Most New Members award for the 2017-2018 service year.

From 15 members in 1949 the Gibbons Ladies Auxiliary has grown to 29 members today. New members are welcomed by previous ones, many of whom have served for multiple decades.

Recognition, past officer service bars and long service pins were given out. Nine members with less than five years of service were recognized. One membership recognition for a half century of service was given.

“We would like to acknowledge our 50 year member who received her 50 year medal last year, Ada McLean,” said president Cherie Koenig.

Margaret Koenig is in her 42nd year with the Gibbons auxiliary and she is now the Alberta-North West Territories Ladies Auxiliary Command president. Recognition for 40 years went to Tracy Boisjoli, Agnes Michaud, Bev Wreggitt and Katie Mabbutt. Kathy McEllan, Colleen Terlecki, Heather Weeks and Shirley Loblick were recognized for 35 years of service.

The Gibbons Legion Ladies Auxiliary Branch #226 president Cherie Koenig holds up the 2017-2018 Most New Members award the Gibbons branch received during its 70th anniversary celebration May 4. This was the third consecutive year Gibbons earned this award. The Gibbons Auxiliary now boasts 29 members.
Members of the Gibbons Legion Branch #226 Ladies Auxiliary gathered for a photo after receiving their Past Officer medals at the Auxiliary’s 70th anniversary May 4. Linda Fresmonti received her past president medal and pin, Chenie Koenig her Past Officer secretary and vice president bars, Marilyn Pattison her secretary bar, and Altie Dupuis, Heather Williams, Liz Maki, Karen Cote, Ada McLean and Kathy Germaine received executive bars. Story page A10.
Town monitoring traffic problems

If a car comes racing down 100 Ave to 107 Street and nearly hits you or your vehicle, do not be concerned — the town of Morinville has a bureaucracy in place to monitor the situation.

If you wake to roaring vehicles at 6 a.m. on 107 Street and 100 Ave — do not be concerned the town’s bureaucracy is also on top of that situation as it balances other priorities and areas within Morinville.

On May 7 a resident voiced concern through a submission to The Free Press about multiple traffic related issues in the 100 Ave and 107 Street area. The issues involve safety concerns for traffic and pedestrians as well as quality of life for citizens living in that area, but the town of Morinville has made no specific commitment to address any of the concerns, just offering policy statements or generalities.

When asked by the media whether the town would be taking action to address the specific issues, Mayor Barry Turner responded with a series of non-committal statements.

Will the town consider increased enforcement action with its Peace Officers regarding speeding on the streets and lanes, illegal left turns, or vehicle modifications for noise?

“Morinville is committed to traffic safety and a high quality of life for all of its residents. Enforcement Services continues to patrol areas of concern while balancing all priorities and concerns from all residents within our community,” states the Mayor.

Will the town consider the placement of speed display signage in that area (the west entrance to downtown) similar to ongoing signage at the east entrance to Morinville on 100 Ave?

“Driver feedback speed display signs are one of many tools Morinville employs to address concerns. Enforcement Services is currently reviewing how they show speed signs balancing the resources on hand with the number of concerns faced across all neighborhoods in Morinville. The highest priority areas will see the use of traffic calming methods first based on the expected outcomes and resources available,” Turner responded.

Will the town review the patrol schedule of its Peace Officers to address enforcement concerns in the peak period for problems experienced in the 100 Ave - 107 Street area?

“Morinville is always open to considering different approaches to find efficiencies and better assist its Peace Officers. Operations are always challenged by competing interests and priorities with other resident or known concerns. Priorities are balanced based on manpower, resourcing and the severity of incidents,” stated the Mayor.

Will the town ask the RCMP to review the time of day monitoring is done in the stated area by the photo enforcement contractor?

“The Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) program is run within strict guidelines set out by Morinville and the Province of Alberta. All enforcement in Morinville comply with these guidelines and expectations. Priorities are set out based on serving the highest priorities and balancing all areas in Morinville. Vulnerable road users, high speed or high violating areas and areas where residents have noted concerns are all monitored with ATE. Operations are continually monitored and areas with higher priorities receive attention while attempting to balance other priorities and areas within Morinville,” stated Turner.

While the answers give no idea as to whether the 100 Ave - 107 Street concerns are being taken seriously, the response does confirm residents that they are unable to get serious engagement from the town. The response from the town is in contrast to that received by the resident from the RCMP. The detachment commanding officer called the resident directly and explained that with the large detachment in the area, patrolling the 100 Ave — 107 Street would not be a priority. While the answer was not what the resident wanted to hear, the straight talk was appreciated.

Barry Turner responded with a series of non-committal statements.

“Barry Turner responded with a series of non-committal statements. Just offering policy statements or generalities.

“Just offering policy statements or generalities. No specific commitment to address any of the concerns, just offering policy statements or generalities.”

Will the town be considering increased enforcement action with its Peace Officers regarding speeding on the streets and lanes, illegal left turns, or vehicle modifications for noise?

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Krause outlines campaign against Alberta oil

Guests at the Redwater Mayor’s Breakfast recently got a look at some of the details of how foundations in the United States fund campaigns to land lock Alberta, and Canadian, oil and gas.

Researcher Vivian Krause, the keynote speaker at the April 26 breakfast event in Redwater, showed copies of tax returns detailing donations of millions of dollars per year from foundations such as Rockefeller Brothers and other foundations which stated they were established to landlock the tar sands market for Alberta oil sands products. This began around 2003. She has been investigating it for the past 10 years. “The Rockefeller’s fund all good things,” said Krause. “But this is not acceptable.”

Krause showed how funding supported activities such as protests against proposed pipelines.

In addition to blocking pipelines, the American foundations poured millions into preventing construction of an oil tanker port on Canada’s west coast.

Krause presented quotations from documents prepared by those organizations which stated they were established to landlock the tar sands so crude oil could not reach international markets where it could fetch a high price.

She also produced written statements by officials of some American organizations in which they claimed to have helped defeat prime minister Stephen Harper’s federal Conservative government because it was working to break Canada’s energy sector free.

Krause received a standing ovation when she concluded with, “Finally, with premier Kenney, Canada’s energy sector free.”

During the past few months Krause’s research and articles have been printed on various social media platforms and by news outlets such as the CBC and the Financial Post.

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CAREERS
Sturgeon Refinery still positive as it resolves commissioning challenges

The Sturgeon Refinery has redesigned reactor burners being built, and repair of stress cracking in portions of its stainless steel piping and welds is underway. Full commercial operation is targeted by the end of 2019, assuming any new unexpected challenges are overcome without causing added delays.

“We’re going to get there,” said North West Refining president Ian MacGregor. “There isn’t anybody in the place who doesn’t believe that.”

As the first new greenfield refinery in Canada since the 1980s, the refinery takes advantage of the exponential growth in technology over the past several decades. It is the first refinery designed from the outset to capture its carbon emissions, which will result in one of the lowest carbon intensive fuels from Alberta’s bitumen.

Most of the refinery’s 10 operational units have been working and producing low sulphur diesel from synthetic crude oil for western Canadian and export markets for over a year.

North West Redwater (NWR) Partnership External Relations manager Vanessa Goodman said these units have been highly reliable and operating safely. Both the facility and operations team have proven their ability to run these units successfully.

Unplanned down time has been minimal while production rates using synthetic crude oil feedstock instead of bitumen exceed expectations.

MacGregor said that 80 percent of the refinery is running really well, with 98.1 percent of it on line.

“That’s a testament to the quality of the people who work here,” he said.

Despite that success, there are two separate problems that need fixing. The refinery is not able to refine bitumen feedstock, for which it is designed, because the Gasifier is still not operating. The Gasifier is a critical unit that provides environmental benefits by reducing the carbon footprint of fuels produced from bitumen. This unit processes the heaviest bottoms of the bitumen barrel and converts those bottoms into valuable hydrogen, which is needed for the refining process. The Gasifier also produces pure CO2, which gets captured and used for enhanced oil recovery.

Those steps result in the refinery producing one of the lowest carbon intensive diesel fuels in the world.

Early in the commissioning phase of the Gasifier, it operated for a brief period to produce hydrogen and pure CO2. Multiple issues arose shortly after, delaying full commissioning and startup of this unit.

They included shorter than expected lifespan of the reactor burners, which are part of the high temperature process that breaks down bitumen, and stress cracking in portions of the stainless steel piping and welds.

MacGregor said the Gasifier technology dates back to 1990, although there are only a few refineries in the world that use it. When operating well, the reactor burners last about three months. MacGregor said that regular replacement of them will keep local people working.

Two months is expected, but the technology’s history indicates the burners will fail in three to four months.

Right now, the redesign of the burners is completed, and they are being locally manufactured. They operate at very high temperatures, but the face plate has to be below 639 degrees Celsius.

“We were above that, so they had to be redesigned,” said MacGregor. “That too, including the mathematical modelling, was done here.”

“Alberta has some of the best experts in that type of mathematical modelling in the world,” MacGregor noted.

Not related to the Gasifier issues is some stress cracking in portions of the refinery’s stainless steel piping and welds. A team of staff and contractors from an experienced local construction company have been assembled. Several hundred people are working diligently to complete the repair work on the pipes safely. The refinery will not be fully operational until both issues are resolved and refinery feedstock switches from synthetic crude oil to bitumen.

“All of this makes me sad because it’s probably going to take ‘til the end of the year,” MacGregor said.

Goodman said that knowing the Sturgeon Refinery is intended to maximize the value of Alberta’s energy resources by processing low value bitumen feedstock, the team will persevere until this milestone is reached.

Refining is part of Alberta’s history, though the landscape of energy production is shifting.

Sections of pipe are removed as repairs are underway to fix stress cracks at Sturgeon Refinery.

--photo credit: Sterling Crane

North West Redwater (NWR) Partnership is a partnership between North West Refining and Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. (CNRL). Its feedstock bitumen will be 25 percent owned by CNRL and 75 percent owned by the Alberta government.

The new reactor burners will be installed inside this portion of the Gasifier to complete their final testing for bitumen processing at the Sturgeon Refinery.

--photo credit: Sterling Crane

NWR is a partnership between North West Refining and Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. (CNRL). The remaining $6.6 billion spent within Alberta.

The future outlook for processing bitumen to diesel remains positive. Pipeline constraints for exporting bitumen combined with sustained demand for refined product in western Canada support additional refining capacity in the province. The Sturgeon Refinery was built to enhance the future of Alberta’s refining landscape, and continues to press forward to achieve this goal.

MacGregor said the 40,000 barrels per day of diesel the refinery produces from crude oil helps Alberta avoid the fuel supply and pricing problems occurring in British Columbia. Asked about what Alberta taxpayer funds are going into the refinery, he said he is not able to talk about most financial information.

Speaking generally, he said both the provincial government and Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. pay a processing toll to the refinery. Because the refinery is only 80 percent operational, he likened that to a person beginning mortgage payments on a new home when only 80 percent of it can be lived in.

The Sturgeon Refinery is a $9.5 billion project, with $7.6 billion of that used for construction. One billion of the construction expenses were spent outside the province with the remaining $6.6 billion spent within Alberta.

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Chief Superintendent Shahin Mehdizadeh, District Commander for Central Alberta District, announced that Staff Sergeant Chris Palfy is the new RCMP Detachment Commander for Morinville.

Staff Sergeant Palfy has been serving as the Acting Detachment Commander for Morinville. His 21-year policing career has taken place entirely in Alberta, and he has a background in general duty, drug, organized crime, and national security investigations. Palfy is familiar with the policing demands of the region, having been a resident of the area since 2006.

Staff Sergeant Palfy will focus on crime reduction, and continued efforts to promote and develop strong ties between the RCMP and the community at large.

Palfy formally appointed detachment commander