Flames got uncomfortably close to this new cabin before Smoky Lake Fire and Rescue arrived at the scene of a grass and brush fire southeast of Smoky Lake Oct. 6. –Photo provided by Smoky Lake Fire and Rescue.

Three fire departments, heavy equipment fight wind-driven brush fire

A wind-driven grass and brush fire in Smoky Lake County required the response of three fire departments as well as County and private cats to save a new cabin. Complicating the efforts were several additional calls that had to be responded to while fighting the big fire.

All fire departments in Smoky Lake County were busy Oct. 6.

The first call was to Smoky Lake Fire and Rescue at 2:45 for a grass and bush fire southeast of Smoky Lake in the area of RR 161 and Twp 590A. Firefighter Hank Hollowaychuk said, “A timely response by county fire chief Scott Franchuk and apparatus engine #459 resulted in the saving of a new structure.”

Additional fire departments from Vilna and Waskatenau as well as privately owned and county cats, the county water truck and a cat from the Smoky Lake Tree Nursery were dispatched immediately due to the size and scope of the fire and fuel load.

Crews were kept scrambling as additional calls for a downed power line fire, a combine fire and a smoke alarm in Smoky Lake came in from dispatch. The crews were reassigned based on a priority basis. Hollowaychuk said the hot, dry, windy conditions made safety a priority for the firefighters.

Crews remained on scene at the brush fire until after midnight. Franchuk and deputy chief Spencer Kortylok returned over the next couple of days to deal with flare-ups and hot spots.

Environmental Sustainable Resource Development crews were contracted for mop up operations in the rugged terrain.

Report says Redwater has highest spending of Sturgeon area municipalities ... but gas system spending generates a profit

Municipal spending per person varies widely among Sturgeon County and the municipalities within it. According to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation municipal spending report published in June 2020, the amount per resident spent by each local municipality ranges from $2,081 to $3,783.

Among the six local municipalities, Redwater had the highest municipal spending per person at $3,783. The report did not address differences in services or operations, and Redwater has two major services, the other municipalities do not. It operates its own natural gas system and a swimming lake.

“I have to assume we are higher due to our swimming pool and our gas system,” said mayor Mel Smith. “We are taking steps to bring our spending more in line.”

The Canadian Taxpayer Federation figures are only considering the amount of non-capital spending and the pool accounts for about $200,000 in spending (with a net cost about $140,000/year to operate). However, the natural gas system cost is capital spending.

Overall municipal spending per person in the Sturgeon had the highest municipal spending per person at $3,165. As a rural municipality, Sturgeon has an extensive road network to maintain.

Morinville’s municipal spending was reported at $2,491 per person.

Sturgeon County’s municipal spending per person was $3,165. As a rural municipality, Sturgeon has an extensive road network to maintain.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation figures are only considering the amount of non-capital spending and the pool accounts for about $200,000 in spending (with a net cost about $140,000/year to operate). However, the natural gas system cost is capital spending.

Overall municipal spending per person in the small municipalities category (with 81 to 333 persons) Redwater ranked 59, Gibbons 157, Bon Accord 159 and Legal 172.

In the medium municipalities category Sturgeon ranked 32 and Morinville 54 (with #1 the highest and #74 the lowest) Redwater ranked 59, Gibbons 157, Bon Accord 159 and Legal 172.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation is a federally incorporated, not-for-profit citizens’ group dedicated to lower taxes, less waste and accountable government.
Sturgeon County Council heard how effective their COVID-19 financial programs have been during Administration’s update at the regular Council meeting Oct. 13.

Chief Operating Officer Scott MacDougall reminded Council that “to ensure stable cash flow during a time of uncertainty caused by the pandemic Council approved a number of temporary service level reductions and deferral of projects approved in the 2020 budget. Combined approximately $4.2 million in potential savings was identified.”

On March 31 to support residents and businesses negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic Council passed a bylaw extending the 2020 tax payment deadline to the end of August without penalty as well as a bylaw which cancelled penalties for late payment of residential water and wastewater services from March 31 to June 30, 2020.

“3,718 of 11,084 tax accounts (33.5%) took advantage of the property tax penalty deferral” MacDougall said.

“As of Aug. 31, 2020 the County had a tax collection rate of 90.4%,” he added. With payments in September and taking into consideration the Tax Installment Payment Plan payments “the collection rate will be above 95% which is comparable to previous years.”

With regards to the utility accounts, 493 of 2,342 account holders took advantage of the utility payment penalty deferral. “The high subscription of these penalty deferrals and resulting high level of receivables demonstrates that these programs were effective,” MacDougall noted.

“As a result of favourable 2020 tax collection rates the Leadership Team proposes to proceed with some projects approved by Council in the 2020 budget, which will be initiated this fall and completed in 2021.” Coun. Patrick Tighe saw this as an opportunity to “increase the scope on a couple of drainage projects if the weather allows.”

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Join us for Regional Meetings November 17-26, 2020
All meetings will be held in person from 9:00 am – 2:00 p.m. with an online option available.

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For more information, please visit: albertabarley.com | albertawheat.com
1.800.365.9111

Redwater’s Ochre Park School grade four student Lily Leblanc smiles as the newspaper tower she made during Maker Space Challenge stands tall. The Oct. 8 challenge was to make the tallest free-standing tower using only two sheets of newspaper and 30 cm. of tape. — photo provided by Ochre Park School
Redwater passes electrical franchise fee

The Town of Redwater will charge a five percent franchise fee for electrical services provided by Fortis during 2021. That will be the second year for the town to collect a franchise fee.

“With the policing cost being partly shifted to the municipalities we thought a five percent franchise fee would be the most fair for our residents,” said mayor Mel Smith. “Schools, churches or government buildings don’t pay taxes, but they all pay power bills. Without the franchise fees, our taxes would have had to go up.”

This year Redwater’s estimated revenue from the franchise fee is $75,600. The estimated franchise fee revenue for 2021 is $99,400. The five percent fee is an average monthly charge of about $3.25. Council first adopted a franchise fee in 2020 and designated the funds to pay for policing costs that had been downloaded by the provincial government and to help repay the debenture for the Pembina Place upgrades.

CAO Larry Davidson said the town will be facing the costs for upgrades for some time as the debenture is for 25 years. As well, he noted that, based on the province’s information, the cost of policing will continue to escalate for municipalities.

Council approved charging the franchise fee during its Oct. 6 meeting.

The maximum electrical franchise fee municipalities can charge is 20 percent. It is only charged on a specific portion of resident’s monthly electrical bill.
The Redwater & District Chamber of Commerce

would like to inform all local businesses that due to Covid-19, we will not be holding our Annual Business Awards Gala this year in October during Small Business week.

**We plan to make it bigger and better for 2021**

We would also like to thank ALL local businesses for going above and beyond in their business practices in this unprecedented year.

We would like to thank our Chamber members for their continued support

AAA - Marino’s Plumbing & Heating
A-1 Alfredo’s Plumbing & Gasfitting
ATB Financial
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Karen Romanchuk
Linda Olsen
Liquor Station & Satelite News
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Redwater Home Hardware
Redwater IGA
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Redwater Physical Therapy Clinic
Redwater Public Library
S.N.K. Catering
Small Town Hound Dog Grooming
Subway
Sue’s Treasure’s
The Hairport
Theo’s Pharmacy
Town of Redwater

*We believe you are ALL "Business of the Year"*
There were seven new cases of COVID-19 reported in Smoky Lake County last week. Of the 55 reported cases, 10 were active and 45 recovered.

In Thorhild County the number of reported cases remained at five, with all of them recovered.

Sturgeon County had seven new reported cases last week while Morinville had five new cases.

According to the Alberta government website, as of Oct. 16 Sturgeon County west and the smaller urban centers within it had 67 reported cases of COVID-19. Seven of them were new cases, bringing the total number of active cases to nine. There were 58 recovered cases.

Sturgeon County east had zero new cases reported. All 14 of the reported cases in Sturgeon east were recovered. The total number of cases in Sturgeon County was 81.

Sturgeon west includes Legal and Bon Accord; east includes Gibbons and Redwater.

Royal Canadian Legion Smoky Lake Branch 227 will hold its Nov. 11 Remembrance Day service outside at the cenotaph this year.

"It’s going to be like it used to be years ago, always outside," said president George Brooks. The exception was Ross Whitelaw, who said, "I haven’t decided whether to run or not." Whitelaw was elected in 2017 and is in his first term on council.

Melody Morton responded to the inquiry, indicating she would provide a reply, but she did not do so before press time.

Daniel Kotylak and Terry Makowichuk did not respond.

Mayor Hank Holowaychuk previously said he would make his decision about running closer to the election.

Smoky Lake Pumpkin Growers representative Deb Billey at the Smoky Lake Fall Market Oct. 3. The Pumpkin Growers had a wide variety of pumpkin themed souvenirs for sale at the market, which was held the first Saturday in October, the traditional date for Smoky Lake’s Great White North giant pumpkin weigh-off. After running for 31 consecutive years, the weigh-off was cancelled this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Glenn van Dijken, MLA
Athabasca-Barhead-Westlock

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c@thabasca-barhead.westlock@assembly.ab.ca

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Remembrance Day service outdoors

A Remembrance Day memorial service will be held by the Royal Canadian Legion Thorhild Branch 234 outside at the Thorhild cenotaph this year. Members of the public may watch from their vehicles or from a distance on the sidewalks, but will not participate in the ceremony.

Legion members will hold a brief service outdoors on Nov. 11 beginning at 10:55 a.m. at the cenotaph in downtown Thorhild at Sunflower Memorial Park, regardless of weather.

“It’s a way to show our respect for the sacrifices made by soldiers, those who didn’t return and those who returned,” said Legion president Brian Barnes. “We want to support the veterans and all they did for Canada.”

Barnes will play the bagpipes, but there will be no singing during the event.

Community businesses and individuals who support the Legion Poppy Fund by purchasing wreaths and poppies are encouraged to do so, but this year they will not have the opportunity to lay the wreaths during the Nov. 11 service. Instead, Legion members will put wreaths out prior to the service and will read out the list of names of everyone who purchased wreaths.

Legion members plan to have the service transmitted on FM radio which can be picked up on vehicle radios within a couple blocks of the cenotaph. Members of the community are welcome to watch the event from inside their cars (parking will be on the streets) and to listen to the service on their vehicle FM radios. Anyone who chooses to leave their vehicle to watch from the sidewalk is to wear a mask or maintain two-meter distancing.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Thorhild Legion’s usual indoor ceremony and meal at the Thorhild Community Hall will not take place. Currently serving military members, cadets, and RCMV members will not be part of the ceremony. Student art, poems and essays for the Remembrance Day Literature Poster Contest will not be displayed.

This is the first time the Thorhild Legion will hold the Remembrance Day service at the cenotaph in Sunflower Memorial Park because members began holding the indoor service in the hall while the cenotaph was still located in Devonian Park. It was moved in 2009.

Hotel - Watermelon

Patch owners pay final tribute to patrons

Letter to the editor,

It’s been a crazy ride! Seventeen and a half years is a large part of a person’s life, and that’s how long we ran the Egremont Hotel /Watermelon Patch. Now is a large part of a person’s life, and that’s how long

Graham and Colleen Waterman

with you, and hope we brought some-

nights, pool tournaments, poker-runs and meals

jolly spirit to lift us. You, our regulars, gave many an

threatened to drag us down in came a smiling face, a

more energetic folk. However, we couldn’t possibly

supporters. Every business needs its patrons, of

But the Egremont Hotel /Watermelon Patch was still located in Devonian Park. It was moved to Sunflower Memorial Park because members began holding the indoor service in the hall while the cenotaph was still located in Devonian Park. It was moved in 2009.

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BUNGALOW - 3 bedrm, near hardwood flooring, garage, fenced yard, nice clean home, no dogs, $1500/mo plus utilities. Call 780-940-2744 for details.

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Economic, reliable - no shrinkage from carrier non-delivery; no duplication of copies in your coverage. Large chains had their experts evaluate our system and recommend us - local small business owners love their clients and their market also choose us.

They get shrinkage from carrier non-delivery; no delivery to your door. Large chains had their experts evaluate our system and recommend us - local small business owners love their clients and their market also choose us.

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REAL ESTATE

RENTALS

GIBSONS BUNGALOW - 3 bedrm, near hardwood flooring, garage, fenced yard, nice clean home, no dogs, $1500/mo plus utilities. Call 780-940-2744 for details.

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Amazon, Kmart, Best Buy, Walmart; large national chains and hundreds more. All Ages & Medical Conditions Qualified. Have a crime under 18 instantly receive more money. Call The Benefits Program 1- (800) 211-3500 or Send a Text Message to Your Name and Mailing Address to 453-980-3605 for your free-benefit package.

HIP/KNEE REPLACEMENT, Other medical conditions causing walking or standing difficulty? The Disability Tax Credit allows for $3,000 yearly tax credit and $2,000 in non-refundable of this advantage. Offer now, quickest receipt in National: Expert help: 1-844-453-5372

FREELANCE PRESS, REVIEW – During the current COVID-19 situation office hours are being minimized and phone access will be irregular, depending upon staff hours. Email and fax will be the best communication tools. During normal business hours The Free Press office in Morinville has a receptionist in the front office who can pick up extra copies and the Review has a newsletter outside from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the front office. Redwater: Production and distribution of the weekly newspapers will continue on a weekly schedule. Ads, order forms, news, photos can be submitted to morinville@shaw.ca. The warehouse will continue to receive flyer shipments as per normal.

RENTALS

GIBSONS BUNGALOW - 3 bedrm, 2.5 bath home. Centre or Rec room, fireplace, fully finished basement, all appliances and window coverings. $1900. NO garage. Call 780-940-4991 for availability.

GIBSONS BUNGALOW - 3 bedrm, near hardwood flooring, garage, fenced yard, nice clean home, no dogs, $1500/mo plus utilities. Call 780-940-2744 for details.

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BUILDING MATERIALS

Until the end of October,

Save 10% on ALL Sizes of IN STOCK Roxul Insulation

Save over 60% on IN STOCK Monroe 30” Bi-Fold Doors. Regular $89.99, Sale $29.99

Save up to 40% on IN STOCK 30” & 32” Monroe Interior Knockdown Doors.
30” Regular 124.99, Sale $69.99
32” Regular $129.99, Sale $89.99

While Supplies Last. Applies to IN STOCK only. No Rain Cheques

September 15th 2020 was Fuel Good Day.

A cheque for $660.77 was presented to Belinda, Judy, Irene, Donna, Alga and Judie with the Boyle Healthcare Auxiliary from Deb, Megan and Lori with North Corridor Co-op.

5 cents from every litre of fuel and $1 from every coffee sold through the Boyle Gas Bar on September 15th was donated to the Boyle Healthcare Auxiliary.

Across western Canada over $566,000 was raised for 185 local organizations through 2020 Fuel Good Day.