



## News from Councillors Barb Castell & Suzanne Oel

Divisions 3 & 4 - M.D. of Foothills No. 31



March 2011

Dear Residents,

This information may help you to understand what happens with your tax dollars at the municipal level, within the M.D. of Foothills:

### **M.D. of Foothills**

The Municipal District of Foothills No. 31 is a rural municipality located adjacent to and immediately south of the City of Calgary. The M.D. covers an area of approximately 3,600 square kilometres in the foothills of southern Alberta. It surrounds the Towns of Okotoks, High River, Turner Valley, and Black Diamond, the Village of Longview, and the Eden Valley Reserve. The M.D. celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2004. The results of the 2006 Census indicate that 19,736 people live in the M.D. of Foothills, plus the growth of the years following. In 2010, records show 14,491 taxable rolls; that is, properties to which property taxes are applied.

### **How are my property taxes calculated?**

Property tax is a key source of revenue for financing municipal operations. Each year during its budgetary process, the council for a municipality approves an amount of revenue required to operate the municipality. The amount of income expected from utility revenues, grants, licence fees, permits, etc. is subtracted and the remainder represents the amount to be raised by property taxes. This amount is divided by the total value of all the assessable property in the municipality to arrive at the overall tax rate. Council may set different tax rates for the four classes – residential, non-residential, farm land, machinery and equipment. The M.D. of Foothills does not levy a business tax.

A portion of your property taxes collected by the MD is for Schools. Education property taxes support an education system that is producing the workforce of tomorrow. All Albertans benefit from a quality education system - whether or not they have children in school. The M.D. of Foothills is required by legislation to collect taxes on behalf of the Provincial Government, which is forwarded to the Alberta School Foundation Fund. Land owners must pay education taxes on property owned in every municipality in the Province. Your share is based on the assessment value of your property and the local education property tax rate. The assessment value of your property multiplied by your local education property tax rate determines the amount of education property tax you must contribute. Education taxes accounted for 45% of the total taxes collected in 2010.

### **What do my property taxes pay for?**

After the education tax has been removed, the remaining 55% of tax dollars levied is used by the M.D. of Foothills to provide a number of services -- directly or jointly with other municipalities -- to the residents of the rural area and the Hamlets of Aldersyde, Blackie, Cayley, De Winton, Hartell, Millarville, Naptha, Priddis and Priddis Greens. These services include general administration, public works department, road construction and maintenance of over 2,000 kms of road (snow removal, grading, gravel, bridge repair, culverts, mowing ditches, equipment – graders and sanders), fire protection, ambulance service, emergency management, planning and development administration, building permits with safety codes officers, assessment department, tax and mapping department, garbage disposal, agricultural services, recreation and parks, family and community support services, cemeteries, protective services - bylaw enforcement, support of seniors' foundations, libraries, community clean up, Stars ambulance, committees and boards to aid in the support of communities, inter-municipal planning and administration of provincial funding, Website with information and articles posted, Western Wheel subscription to every tax payer with the purpose to provide residents with minutes and agendas and upcoming hearings. Water services are provided in the hamlets of Aldersyde, Blackie and Cayley, and waste water services are provided in the hamlets of Blackie and Cayley (paid for by the hamlet residents). M.D. of Foothills staff is responsible for the administration of the Foothills Regional Commission, which operates the Foothills Regional Waste Management Facility and the Frank Lake Effluent Pumping System, with costs recovered by the users.

Best Regards,

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