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TUESDAY 05 MAY 2026 VOL. 2 / ISSUE 52

Rural Alberta Report

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Town of Hanna council hears Nickleback donated t-shirts to municipality

by STU SALKELD / Local Journalist Initiative

It's commonly held that some small-town folks who hit it big in the entertainment world may not necessarily appreciate their grassroots. Not so with a world-renowned rock band from Hanna, which did something quite neighbourly for its hometown.

Town of Hanna council heard at its special council meeting Apr. 29 that major recording artists Nickelback, who hail from Hanna, donated tour T-shirts to the municipality; the municipality only had to cover a few related expenses.

The revelation came during a presentation by Hanna Elks spokesperson Sandra Murphy, herself a former town councillor. Murphy stated during her presentation to council that the Hanna Elks, who have performed 50,000 hours of volunteer work within the community between 1999 and 2025, are hosting the provincial Elks conference this June.

Murphy requested that the Town of Hanna donate 130 Nickelback T-shirts to the Elks to place in swag bags, or gift bags, for conference guests.

Coun. Angie Warwick asked staff if the Town of Hanna actually had Nickelback T-shirts available, and in that quantity.

Director of Business and Communication Laurie Armstrong responded yes to both



Rock band Nickelback made a special donation to the Town of Hanna. Nickelback in 2011 (left to right: Chad Kroeger, Daniel Adair, Mike Kroeger and Ryan Peake). Photo credit: Mika Newton, Troy Harley and Julia Kurbatova at American Music Awards, 2011/JKMusicGroup via Wikipedia

questions and explained the band had donated T-shirts to the town in the past.

"So, on their last tour, they reached out and had some swag left over that they were willing to donate for the cost of shipping," said Armstrong.

She further explained Nickelback's promotion company worked with the Town of Hanna and allowed the municipality to pay to have the community's name printed on the shirts as well.

As councillors discussed the donation, staff clarified that the T-shirts were donated free of charge to the Town of Hanna, with the municipality paying for shipping and customization.

Staff also noted that some shirts have been donated to people from time to time, including when the Town of Hanna receives requests

continue reading NICKLEBACK on page 08

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SIDE-BY-SIDES

County of Stettler ASB hears strychnine program isn't all roses and sunshine

by STU SALKELD / Local Journalist Initiative

The County of Stettler's Ag Service Board (ASB) heard an update about the federal government's limited approval of strychnine to control gophers, and it isn't all roses and sunshine. The report was made at the Apr. 15 ASB meeting.

Readers should note the ASB is comprised of some members of county council and some members at large, and is chaired by Allan Gano.

Manager of Agricultural Operations Rob Klatt presented a report on a recent meeting he attended with Government of Alberta representatives about the federal government's approval of strychnine for gopher control. However, as Klatt pointed out, the new strychnine program is causing some concern. "They're just doing the rollout now," said Klatt to the board. "So far, it looks like the first that we'll be able to actually acquire strychnine is going to be probably the beginning of June."

Klatt pointed out several times in the report that the federal government included a June 15 deadline for first-round strychnine use.

As well, he stated it looks like the government imported 800 cases of strychnine, which, divided between 49 municipalities, equals just over 19,000 bottles. Klatt stated that means the County of Stettler would get 390 bottles to distribute, with one bottle covering about an acre in the first rollout. Klatt stated that in the first go-round, those numbers — 390 bottles of strychnine for all of the County of Stettler — may cause some frustration for producers.



Photo: Unsplash

"So what looked in the beginning to be a bit of a home run, it's very, very limited right now," said Klatt.

Klatt added it appears this was done so producers could hit the first strychnine application deadline in June, which is followed by another in the third week of July.

He added that training will be done over the internet and will be available at the beginning of May. However, once a producer completes the one-hour course, it may take a couple of days for certification to be accepted by the system.

Coun. Justin Stevens predicted the small amount of strychnine may see great demand. "How are we going to ration this?" asked Coun. Stevens. "We know that demand is going to far exceed our inventory."

Klatt's response was that it's difficult to say because the provincial and federal governments haven't provided all program details yet.

During discussion, it was noted strychnine audits would be conducted and new staff have been hired for this purpose. Klatt predicted municipalities will be administering much of this strychnine program, however.

Councillors mused that the program's late start may mean fewer producers are interested in it.

Board member Lance Neilson acknowledged the late start. "But man, not being able to start until June, that's late," said Neilson.

Klatt noted it seems the county will receive strychnine by the beginning of June, and it must be applied by June 15, which is a tight timetable. "I don't know from a producer perspective, I don't know that it's really worth the risk to even want to put it down this year," said Klatt.

The board spent much time discussing how the County of Stettler would fairly distribute the small amount of strychnine and how empty strychnine bottles would be handled. Klatt stated several questions were forwarded by municipalities to the provincial government about the strychnine program, but no answers have been received yet.

The County of Stettler ASB passed two resolutions. The first was to prepare a communication plan for the public, including everything the municipality knows about the strychnine program, and also to send a letter to the provincial government voicing concern about the volume of strychnine available.

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Hanna Community Centre
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Hanna town council wants more information about criminal background checks

by STU SALKELD/ Local Journalist Initiative

The Town of Hanna council wants more information about how criminal background checks can be used in municipal elections. The discussion was held at the Apr. 14 regular meeting of council.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Matthew Norburn reported back to council on a proposed municipal election bylaw change that would require a background check for potential council candidates.

Norburn pointed out that a criminal record check only examines criminal convictions, while a police information check is broader and includes charges that may not necessarily have resulted in a conviction.

Norburn presented councillors with a draft revision of Hanna's election bylaw that would require a background check, but he noted councillors would have to clarify which type of background check was required. The CAO added that he used the City of Calgary's bylaw as the basis for the proposed changes.

Coun. Angie Warwick stated several times during the discussion that she felt election disqualifications are already handled by provincial election law and wanted to know why Hanna needed this change to its election bylaw. Warwick noted that background check information would be collected by and accessible to town staff, and she was also unclear what effect background check information would have.

Mayor Danny Povaschuk stated the intent was to give the town's returning officer the tools needed to ensure candidates meet eligibility requirements to run for council.

Coun. Brenda Karg, who originally suggested this change, stated a background check is considered a "best practice," is common in the private sector, and can act as a deterrent. Karg added that, for example, during the job interview process, an employer can ask an applicant to disclose the nature of their criminal record check.

As councillors discussed the issue, it was noted that some Town of Hanna staff are required to have certain background checks while some staff, such as senior management, are not.

It was also clarified that a background check related to municipal elections may only look for convictions that impact politics; for example, corruption, embezzlement, or money laundering. Norburn clarified that, if in effect, the proposed change would allow the returning officer to confirm a candidate is eligible to run for town council.

Coun. Paul Hunter stated he'd like to see exactly what the provincial Elections Act says about this subject. "I want to make sure that we are making a proper... bylaw with it as well," said Hunter.

Coun. Erica Rorabeck noted that media coverage in the community suggests the public supports this change. "I'd like to say that there was a news article written about the discussion of this subject," said Rorabeck. "It was beyond supported by the people in the community. I've actually had people come up to me and say, 'I think it's excellent you guys are looking into this.'"

Previous Rural Alberta Report coverage of this issue can be read online [here](#).



The Town of Hanna council wants more information about how criminal background checks can be used in municipal elections. The discussion was held at the Apr. 14 regular meeting of council. Screenshot

Councillors discussed whether Hanna's proposed bylaw changes should specifically list the criminal convictions that may disqualify a candidate in a local municipal election.

Mayor Povaschuk stated he felt the proposed change had value for the community. "I think it's a great idea, myself," said the mayor, adding that the Town of Hanna didn't introduce this idea—other municipalities have already passed bylaws requiring candidate background checks.

Both Coun. Warwick and Coun. Fred Crowle voiced hesitancy about voting on the first reading of this proposed bylaw, owing to a lack of information.

To that end, councillors unanimously passed a resolution to table the proposed bylaw and instructed staff to get legal advice on this issue.

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Lacombe County council hear 2025 audit results get passing grade

by STU SALKELD / Local Journalist Initiative

Lacombe County council heard a presentation from the municipality's official auditor that the 2025 financial report received a passing grade. The presentation was made at the Apr. 23 regular meeting.

Metrix Group LLP's Jeff Alliston, CPA, CA, presented councillors with the consolidated financial statements for the year ended Dec. 31, 2025. Alliston noted this is the first year Metrix has worked with Lacombe County.

He stated that an official audit confirms whether the financial statements accurately depict the municipality's financial situation. He also pointed out that the auditor works closely with municipal staff, who are responsible for providing all of the information the auditor examines. Alliston also noted that audit work is conducted under generally accepted Canadian accounting standards.

He observed that the audit showed Lacombe County's finances are healthy and no significant areas of concern were found. Alliston stated, however, that there were a few notes to point out. The auditor specifically mentioned during his verbal presentation unpaid oil and gas industry taxes owed to Lacombe County.

He stated that the financial situation as of Dec. 31, 2025, was comparable to that of Lacombe County one year prior.

Further, the auditor stated that Lacombe County has no debt and that its net financial position is positive. In fact, Lacombe County



Lacombe County council heard a presentation from the municipality's official auditor that the 2025 financial report received a passing grade. The presentation was made at the Apr. 23 regular meeting. Submitted

is in a surplus situation.

Alliston stated that the audit went smoothly. "We are required under Canadian Auditing Standards to report significant difficulties encountered during the audit," stated the auditor's written report. "There are no matters that arose during the course of the audit causing significant difficulties."

Some of the smaller notes Alliston mentioned regarding the 2025 financial statements included how Lacombe County was classifying investments with a maturity threshold of one year or less, the way Lacombe County was initially recording the amortization of bond premiums and discounts, and clarification over gravel inventories.

"During the audit, we noted that the County had not previously performed formal survey measurements of gravel stockpiles to support the quantities recorded in gravel inventory," stated the auditor's report. "Historically, inventory balances were based on internal estimates and tracking rather than independent survey data."

"In the current year, the County obtained third-party survey measurements of gravel pits and stockpiles. As a result of this process, management identified differences between the previously recorded inventory quantities and the surveyed amounts. An adjustment of \$207,251 was recorded in the current year to correct the opening gravel inventory balance. Refer to the Uncorrected Misstatements section for details in the audit findings report (pg. 12).

"We recommend that the County continue to obtain yearly survey measurements of gravel pits to support the quantities recorded in inventory. Establishing a consistent process for updating inventory quantities based on survey data will help improve the accuracy of inventory balances and reduce the risk of misstatement."

It was noted during the meeting that councillors would have a chance to move into closed session directly with the auditor, without staff present. Councillors passed a resolution to enter closed session.

After a few moments, councillors returned to the open meeting. Council approved the 2025 audited financial statements, as amended, to include the 2025 surplus allocation to reserves.

Town of Bashaw receives motor vehicle collision money from Camrose County

by STU SALKELD / Local Journalist Initiative

The Town of Bashaw council chose a reserve account for motor vehicle collision (MVC) funds sent to them by Camrose County. The decision, along with many others, was made at the Apr. 15 regular meeting of council.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Theresa Fuller presented councillors with a request for decision (RFD) regarding \$45,198.49 sent to the town from neighbouring Camrose County, which was the proceeds from historical MVCs handled by the local fire department. "Historically, the Town of Bashaw and Camrose County had a Memorandum of Understanding

(MOU) regarding the funds received from MVCs," stated Fuller's report to council.

"Fifty per cent of the funds were placed in an equipment fund stewarded by Camrose County.

"Last year, the agreement was terminated and the funds were provided to the town in a payment of \$45,198.49."

The CAO stated that the Town of Bashaw usually placed these funds in an equipment replacement reserve, and staff recommended the same be done with these funds.

During discussion at the meeting, the CAO noted that during the town's recent 2025 audit, the auditor wanted to know where these funds were going.

Councillors unanimously passed a resolution to move \$45,198.49 from historic MVC calls into the restricted capital (emergency services) fund for the Town of Bashaw.

**continue reading COLLISION
MONEY on page 08**

Agriculture

Rail, port shutdowns carry massive cost for farmers

by KCJ MEDIA GROUP

A new economic analysis is putting a dollar figure on a problem Prairie farmers have known for years: when grain stops moving, the losses mount quickly.

The report, commissioned by the Agriculture Transport Coalition, found that a single week of rail and port disruptions during peak export season can cost Canada's grain sector as much as \$540 million. Much of that money is never recovered, as missed sales and broken contracts often cannot simply be made up later.

For an industry that depends heavily on reliable transportation, the stakes are enormous. More than 70 per cent of Canada's grain

production is exported, and the vast majority of those shipments move by rail before reaching port. Even the threat of a work stoppage can trigger losses, as buyers look elsewhere and exporters adjust their plans.

Farmers often bear the brunt of those disruptions. Delays can weaken basis levels, reduce cash flow and leave producers holding grain longer than planned. Exporters and grain handlers also face higher costs, but those expenses frequently work their way back down the supply chain.

The findings arrive as the industry continues to push Ottawa for reforms to Canada's labour relations framework. Grain groups argue that

repeated transportation shutdowns damage Canada's reputation as a dependable supplier in highly competitive global markets. Once customers shift to other countries, winning them back can take years.

Recent global events have only added to the pressure. Conflict in the Middle East has already driven up fuel, fertilizer and shipping costs, tightening margins for producers across Western Canada. Supply chain disruptions, whether caused by labour disputes, geopolitical tensions or natural disasters, have become an increasingly costly reality.

For Canadian agriculture, efficient transportation is not just a convenience. It is essential



Photo: Rural Alberta Report / C. Bowman

infrastructure. When rail cars sit idle or ports shut down, the consequences ripple far beyond the terminal gates and straight onto the farm.

Court extends Monette restructuring deadline

by KCJ MEDIA GROUP

Monette Farms has secured additional time to continue restructuring under court protection, with an Alberta Court of King's Bench judge extending the company's stay of proceedings until June 19. The extension gives one of North America's largest privately held farming operations more breathing room as it navigates mounting financial pressures and prepares for the 2026 growing season.

The court also approved access to an additional \$50 million in debtor-in-possession financing, on top of the \$40 million already authorized when Monette first sought protection under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act in April. The funding is expected to cover spring seeding, crop inputs, lender interest and restructuring costs as the company works to stabilize its operations.

Monette Farms entered creditor protection on April 21, citing cash flow challenges and debt approaching \$900 million. The company operates across Western Canada and the United States, with holdings spanning grain, cattle, produce, seed and wine businesses. Rapid expansion during years of low interest rates left the operation heavily leveraged and increasingly vulnerable when economic conditions turned.

Court documents show Monette's troubles accelerated in 2024, when drought severely reduced crop yields in southwestern Saskatchewan, one of its core production areas. Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization fell sharply as weaker grain production collided with tighter margins and rising borrowing costs.

The company's size also created unexpected challenges with crop insurance. Because Saskatchewan's



Photo: Rural Alberta Report / C. Bowman

insurance system assesses large operations as a single producer, stronger yields in other regions offset Monette's drought losses in the southwest. That reduced potential compensation at a time when localized crop failures had already taken a substantial toll.

In addition to weather and insurance issues, Monette's expansion into lower-margin businesses such as produce and cattle further strained profitability. Managing a far-flung network of farms and

related enterprises across multiple jurisdictions added complexity just as margins tightened and interest costs surged.

As part of the restructuring process, the court also approved the sale of Monette's Hafford, Sask., property for about \$28.7 million. Additional asset sales are expected as the company works to reduce debt and preserve its core farming operations. A further court hearing is scheduled for June.

Parkland RCMP arrest and charge suspects in kidnapping

media release ALBERTA RCMP

Paul First Nation, Alta. – On April 14, 2026, Parkland RCMP received a report that on the evening of April 13, 2026, two individuals were kidnapped, extorted, robbed and assaulted.

The victims were restrained and held against their will at a residence on Paul First Nation, where they were beaten, threatened, and robbed by three suspects. Two of the suspects were armed with firearms, which were discharged during the incident.

Parkland RCMP General Investigation Section (GIS) took carriage of the investigation and executed a search warrant at the scene, seizing several pieces of evidence. Arrest warrants were

obtained for three individuals: a 20-year-old female, 27-year-old male, and a 33-year-old male who were all believed to be armed and dangerous.

On April 19, 2026, the female suspect was located in Edmonton and arrested by Edmonton Police Service. The female has been remanded into custody.

On April 22, 2026, the 33-year-old male suspect was located by members of the RCMP Community Response Team and Central Alberta District Crime Reduction Unit in south Edmonton. Parkland RCMP GIS, Drugs and Crime Reduction Unit Teams deployed to the area and with the assistance of RCMP Air Services and the Edmonton Police Service Tactical Team.

The suspect was arrested safely without further incident, remanded in custody and evidence was located at two separate residences including drugs, a firearm and ammunition.

On April 23, 2026, Parkland RCMP members arrested the remaining male suspect at a Spruce Grove restaurant after receiving a complaint that a male patron was refusing to pay for his meal and drinks. He was also remanded in custody.

As investigation continues, RCMP are not releasing the suspects' names at this time. The suspects are facing several serious charges including kidnapping, extortion, robbery with a firearm, assault causing bodily harm and other weapons offences.

Red Deer RCMP recovered stolen vehicle and arrested repeat offenders

media release ALBERTA RCMP

Red Deer RCMP Crime Reduction Team (CRT) initiated an investigation into the whereabouts of a known repeat offender with multiple outstanding warrants.

On Apr. 7, 2026, at 7:53 p.m., Red Deer RCMP received a report of a stolen e-bike from the Bower area of Red Deer. Two male suspects were seen on video surveillance, loading the bike into the back of a white pickup truck. Police identified one male suspect in the video, and a short time later witnessed the identified male riding the bike in the Highland Green area of Red Deer. The male evaded police and was not arrested at this time.

Further investigation led Red Deer RCMP CRT to the area of Oriole Park in Red Deer. The white pick-up truck was located with the bike in the back. The driver of the truck was identified as the second suspect in the bike theft. 32-year-old Anthony Deck, a resident of Red Deer, was arrested after attempting to flee on foot from police.

Police confirmed the truck had previously been reported stolen out of Airdrie, Alta. The bike and truck were recovered by police.

Deck was charged with the following:

- Possession of property over \$5000
- Theft over \$5000
- Possession of property under \$5000
- Possession of weapon for dangerous purpose

- Drive without insurance- TSA
- Drive motor vehicle while suspended
- Possession of a controlled substance

Following a Judicial Interim Release (JIR) Hearing, Deck was remanded into custody to appear in the Alberta Court of Justice in Red Deer on Apr. 10, 2026.

On Apr. 10, 2026, the investigation continued when Red Deer RCMP CRT observed a vehicle driving recklessly through the City of Red Deer. The driver of the vehicle was identified as the initial suspect in the stolen bike investigation. Police sought arrest warrants and continued proactive attempts to locate the suspect.

On Apr. 15, 2026, with the assistance of Red Deer RCMP General Investigation Section (GIS), Red Deer RCMP Police Dog Services (PDS), and Alberta RCMP Air Services, Red Deer RCMP CRT located and arrested 40-year-old Christopher McMurray, a resident of Red Deer.

McMurray was charged with the following:

- Possession of property over \$5000;
- Theft over \$5000;
- Possession of property under \$5000;
- Possession of weapon for dangerous purpose;
- Drive without insurance- Traffic Safety Act;
- Operate a conveyance while prohibited (x2);
- Operate a conveyance dangerous to the public.



On Apr. 7, 2026, at 7:53 p.m., Red Deer RCMP received a report of a stolen e-bike from the Bower area of Red Deer. Photo: Submitted

Following a JIR Hearing, McMurray was remanded into custody to appear in the Alberta Court of Justice in Red Deer on Apr. 29, 2026.

The Red Deer RCMP Crime Reduction Team is dedicated to reducing crime by targeting prolific offenders and auto theft offenders.

If you have any information regarding crime within Red Deer, please contact the Red Deer RCMP at 403-406-2200.

Lacombe County approves the 2026 tax rates

MEDIA RELEASE

Lacombe County council has approved the 2026 tax rate bylaw, setting municipal tax rates for the upcoming year and enabling the issuance of 2026 property tax notices. These changes reflect council's continued focus on balancing affordability for residents with the need to fund essential services and infrastructure.

For 2026, Lacombe County has: reduced the residential municipal tax rate by 3.35 per cent to offset ongoing market rate increases, increased the farmland municipal tax rate by five per cent after many years of minimal tax increases, maintained the municipal non-residential and machinery and equipment tax rates at 2025 levels.

"The 2026 tax rate bylaw reflects council's commitment to responsible budgeting and thoughtful adjustments," said Lacombe County Reeve John Ireland. "While we were able to reduce the county's residential tax rate, many residents will still notice an increase on their overall tax bill due to significant increases in provincial requisitions."

Understanding the 2026 tax rates, property taxes collected by Lacombe County include several components. In addition to the county's municipal levy, the county collects taxes on behalf of: the Alberta School Foundation Fund, the Provincial RCMP Policing Levy, the Lacombe Foundation, which supports seniors' and affordable housing.

Although Lacombe County reduced its residential municipal tax rate for 2026, overall residential property taxes are increasing, primarily due to factors outside the county's control.

The Alberta School Foundation Fund requisition increased significantly in 2026, resulting in an increase of approximately \$173 for a typical residential property.

The Provincial RCMP Policing Levy increased as part of a provincially announced multi-year funding adjustment. For a typical residential property, the

police levy increased from \$59 to \$83, a \$24 increase. Combined, these increases offset reductions in the county and Lacombe Foundation tax rates.

continue reading 2026 TAX RATES on page 08

CLASSIFIEDS

Greidanus Honeybee Farm – Stettler Alberta

Bee Farm Worker:

Greidanus Honey Bee Farm is seeking an individual to fill a vacancy, starting June 1, 2026 till Oct 31, 2028, as a Bee Farm Worker. This is a fulltime permanent position. Hours of work will vary season to season. An aggregate average of 40 hours per week with additional hours during busy seasons can be expected. Guaranteed Sundays are a day off. During Summer, expect to work 6 days per week. Compensation is \$20 - \$25 per hour plus vacation pay (4% of gross). Compensation for statutory holidays in alignment with provincial labour regulations. The compensation will be commensurate with skill and experience. A bonus, contingent on the farm entity performance, may be added to the compensation package, post harvest, annually.

Accommodation is available, with conditions, if required. A two year contract of employment will be required to be signed.

The eligible candidate must possess a High School Diploma or equivalent education. The eligible candidate must have a minimum of 2 years experience working as an apiary worker in a commercial western Canadian beekeeping operation; being able to diagnose, assess and treat diseases in honeybee colonies. Springwork: care for and manage hives for pollination and honey production purposes. Summer work: Harvest honey from the hives (both field harvest and extracting); prepare hives for wintering in the fall. Maintaining work records in an electronic format, for the purposes of communicating with other team members, will be required. This is a physically demanding job and the successful candidate must be in an adequate physical condition to perform the required duties.

Additionally, the successful candidate will have skill and experience welding, minor electrical repairs (swapping out electrical motors and replacing switches), construction, vehicle repair and maintenance, and fencing (I have cows). The successful candidate will be required to assist in looking after a small herd of beef cattle and experience in beef cow husbandry is an asset. The successful candidate will know how to drive a tractor, operate a skid steer, forklift and have a valid class 5 drivers license with a clean abstract.

A cover letter is requested along with a Resume/Curriculum Vitae. Applications can be made via Email: rongreidanus@gmail.com

Mail: Box 1581, Stettler Alberta T0C 2L0

or

dropped off in person at Greidanus Honeybee Farm in Stettler 3900 44 street.

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NICKLEBACK continued from page 01

for swag. It was noted town staff handle those requests.

Coun. Warwick responded that she was unaware of that information.

Mayor Danny Povaschuk stated that he saw no reason why the Elks Club's request could not be accommodated.

Coun. Warwick added that she knew the Elks Club was very active in the community, but she was quite impressed by its charitable efforts.

Three of Nickelback's four members, Chad Kroeger, Mike Kroeger and Ryan Peake, all hail from Hanna, while fourth member Daniel Adair is from British Columbia.

The band, described by music journalists as hard rock, alternative rock and pop rock, has been a staple of Canadian FM radio since its breakthrough in 2002. Nickelback is estimated to have sold 50 million albums worldwide and was named Billboard magazine's most successful rock band of the 2000s.

2026 TAX RATES continued from page 07

Overall, the combined residential tax rate increased by 4.79 per cent, from 5.2926 to 5.5460. When assessment growth is also considered, the typical residential property in Lacombe County may see an average tax increase of approximately \$209 in 2026.

Municipal Budget and Levy

The total 2026 Lacombe County municipal tax levy is \$39.6 million, an increase of approximately 2.51 per cent from 2025. This increase reflects approved budget adjustments and updated financial estimates since the 2026 budget was approved last fall.

Council-approved changes contributing to the final tax rate include: adjustments to operating costs and contributions from the Tax Rate Stabilization Reserve, the addition of a new grader division in Lacombe County, the removal of the budgeted one-time contribution to the Water and Wastewater Reserve

COLLISION MONEY continued from page 04

RCMP update

Councillors heard the quarterly update from Cpl. Grant Glasier regarding the Bashaw RCMP detachment. He noted the detachment is coping with a number of sick leaves but is getting relief through an RCMP program that brings extra police officers to the community. "There is no cost to the Bashaw RCMP, towns, or counties," stated Glasier's report.

Glasier briefed councillors on a voluntary citizen program called Capture, where residents volunteer their security footage to police in order to help reduce crime.

Glasier noted in his report that crimes against persons in the Bashaw detachment area were down 16 per cent, but property crime was up 104 per cent.

Councillors accepted the report as information.

Public Works report

Public Works Foreman Lindy Black noted that Public Works staff were recently busy with street sign replacement, arena ice removal,

culverts, frozen drains, training, repairs at the community hall, and road repairs. Industry tax changes?

Councillors read a letter from Minister of Municipal Affairs Dan Williams describing changes to assessments that he stated would be effective in the 2027 tax year.

Williams' letter noted that regulated property assessment models covering wells, pipelines, telecommunications systems, electric power systems, machinery and equipment, and railways had not been updated since 2005. A recent review led to policy changes, two of which he noted were setting more consistent rules by clarifying when construction is considered finished for assessment purposes, ensuring actual construction costs are included with tightly defined exclusions, creating a provincial benchmark to fairly adjust labour-related construction costs in remote areas, and introducing penalties for owners who do not provide required assessment information on time.

Councillors accepted the letter as information.

due to lower-than-anticipated industrial assessment growth.

Municipal tax dollars support a wide range of county services, including road maintenance, fire services, parks and recreation facilities, agricultural services, planning and development, and public safety initiatives.

Payment and Support Programs

Property tax notices will be mailed in early May, with taxes due no later than Aug. 31, 2026. Senior homeowners who may need assistance are encouraged to explore the Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program, which allows eligible seniors to defer all or part of their property taxes through a low-interest home equity loan administered by the [Government of Alberta](#)

A Forward-Looking Approach

Lacombe County's approach to the 2026 tax rates reflects a thoughtful balance between supporting a

growing community, responding to changing market conditions, and ensuring continued delivery of essential public services.

Through careful financial planning and targeted adjustments, the county remains focused on fiscal responsibility while creating a stable environment for residents and businesses.

"Council continues to take a measured and strategic approach to taxation," said County Manager Tim Timmons. "By carefully managing costs and adjusting municipal tax rates where appropriate, we are stewarding taxpayer dollars responsibly while maintaining the services and infrastructure our community relies on today and into the future."

Residents and businesses play a vital role in sustaining the services that contribute to Lacombe County's strong quality of life. With strategic resource allocation and long-term planning, the county is well-positioned to support community well-being, economic resilience, and future growth.

