

M.D. of Bonnyville Media Release March 9, 2010

M.D. facing huge road deficit

Budget shortfall results in road cutbacks

The Municipal District of Bonnyville is facing a huge road deficit says Reeve Ed Rondeau.

“During some recent Town Hall Meetings residents have emphasized that roads are a priority for M.D. residents. While ratepayers in wards with heavy industry traffic have voiced the most concerns, residents in the agriculture and subdivision areas have roads to be built, maintained or improved.”

“The M.D. has 2,600 km of roads, but budget restraints dictate that it can adequately improve about 45 to 50 km a year – less than 2 per cent of its total roads annually,” Rondeau said. “It will take the M.D. 50 years to meet the current road maintenance demands – but in reality the concerns are never ending. Roads that we are rebuilding are beaten down by large industry vehicles, resulting in the same roads needing extra maintenance, and in some cases, more construction within a few years.”

This year the M.D. is facing a budget shortfall of \$3.5 million with the loss of \$2.4 million in MSI grants and a potential \$2 million cost for the Regional Community Development Agreement. Over the years the M.D. has also lost \$3 million, after turning over the PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) from 4 Wing to the City of Cold Lake and \$14 million in tax revenue to Lac La Biche County from the Air Weapons Range after the provincial government negotiated a split in the region. These losses are reflected annually to the budget.

“It’s no wonder we can’t keep up with our road construction and maintenance when we are continually giving money to neighbouring municipalities,” Rondeau stated. The M.D. Council would like to see a minimum annual goal of 20 km of oiling/paving, 10 km of road construction, as well as gravelling. Rondeau acknowledges that the M.D. has a good relationship with many oil companies who contribute funds to road maintenance, but the bulk of the costs fall to the municipality.

“We are concerned about our roads and how fast they are being destroyed. M.D. Council has some hard decisions to make this month as we juggle our budget numbers,” Rondeau stated.

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