



## 2013 YEAR IN REVIEW and 2014 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

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Beaver County is a rural municipality southeast of Edmonton. It is ideally located along the Province's High-Load Corridor and has a diversified tax base, ranging from acreage development in the west, to mixed farming in the centre and east, and oil and gas development in the east.

Beaver County taxpayers expect County Council to use property tax dollars prudently for the efficient and economical delivery of municipal services, while meeting the changing needs of its citizens. Council takes this responsibility seriously and thoroughly reviews the municipal budget each year to ensure that essential services are properly funded, levels of service meet the needs of County residents, and the County continues to build towards social, economic, and environmental success.

The budget reflects the costs to provide various services to a level established by Council as well as specific priorities that Council identifies on an annual basis. Together with a team of dedicated employees, Beaver County works hard to develop the County as "a place to call home".

This document will explain the varied services offered by the County, highlight Council's accomplishments in 2013, and provide information regarding special projects in 2014.

### **Legislative and Governance**

Beaver County Council's function is to provide good government, provide services that are necessary or desirable, and maintain a safe and viable community.

The 5-member Council does this by determining the level of services provided, setting strategic priorities, passing policies and bylaws, and levying taxes to fund the services it provides.

#### **2013 Key Accomplishments:**

Completed the following strategic priorities:

- √ West End Growth Management Plan
- √ Regional Recreation Master Plan
- √ Shared services formulas review/adjustments
- √ New campground operator at Black Nugget Lake
- √ County Office renovations
- √ Extension to Kinsella water supply system
- √ New road ban system implemented
- √ Revised long-term gravel hauling contract

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What's New in 2014?

New strategic priorities, as follows:

- √ Equity Industrial Park Area Structure Plan (update)
- √ Viking/Beaver Business Park Area Structure Plan
- √ Review emergency (disaster services) plan
- √ Environmental node strategy
- √ Regional vision and work program

The strategic priorities are updated each quarter as projects are completed. Click [here](#) for the most recent strategic priorities chart.

**General Administration**

Administrative staff support Council, other departments, and the public, by providing legislative and corporate services, financial and accounting services, insurance and risk management, health and safety programs, property tax and assessment, communications, and strategic planning. An organizational chart for the County may be viewed by clicking [here](#).

2013 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Passed internal Health and Safety Audit (87%)
- √ Reviewed/adjusted shared services formulas
- √ County Office renovations completed
- √ Commenced installation of additional broadband towers in the west end, north and south of Holden, and near Camp Lake
- √ Provided financial support of over \$68,000 to various community groups

What's New in 2014?

- √ External Health & Safety Audit
- √ Regional vision and work program

**Bylaw Enforcement**

Two Community Peace Officers enforce bylaws regarding animal control, excessive noise, traffic enforcement, unsightly premises, and road bans, and provide other public safety services.

2013 Key Accomplishments:

- √ New road ban system implemented

What's New in 2014?

- √ 2 full-time peace officers
- √ Establish contract kennel service

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## **Protective Services**

Beaver County contributes funding to Beaver Emergency Services Commission to provide fire protection and emergency management services ([www.besc.ca](http://www.besc.ca)). Three County Councillors sit on the Board.

The County is one of five members of Beaver Emergency Medical Services ([www.beaver-ems.com](http://www.beaver-ems.com)) which is contracted by Alberta Health Services to provide ground ambulance services via 9-1-1 dispatch (no taxes required).

### **What's New in 2014?**

- √ Review emergency (disaster services) plan
- √ New shared services formulas. With the change in the formula, the County would have experienced a cost-savings of approximately \$151,500, however due to the financial impact to some of the urban municipalities, the new formula is being phased in over 3 years.

## **Public Works**

A fleet of 10 full-time grader operators maintain and upgrade over 2600 km (1615 miles) of open roads (grading, snowplowing). Roads are graveled on a 3-year rotation (approximately 900 km (560 miles) per year). The County also maintains bridges and culverts.

Dust control is an issue in a rural municipality with few oiled and paved roads, so the County has developed a cost-sharing program for residents to alleviate this issue.

### **2013 Key Accomplishments:**

- √ Revised long-term gravel hauling contract
- √ Upgrade shoulders on 32 km (20 miles) of road
- √ Repaired 16 km (10 miles) of oiled road

### **What's New in 2014:**

- √ New policy to assist seniors and residents who have mobility challenges with snow removal
- √ Reduce gravel on roads by 30% (200 tonnes per mile)
- √ Upgrade shoulders on 32 km (20 miles) of road
- √ Introduce new road stabilization product (aka terracem) to 8 km (5 miles) of road
- √ Construct new grader shed in Viking
- √ Set 5-year road construction priorities list

## **Utilities (Water Supply, Sewage Treatment, and Waste Management)**

The County provides potable water to residents via Highway 14 Regional Water Services Commission ([www.hwy14water.ca](http://www.hwy14water.ca)) and to residents of the Hamlet of Kinsella directly.

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The County also provides sanitary sewage collection and disposal services in the Hamlets of Bruce and Kinsella.

Sanitary waste collection and disposal services are provided throughout the County via Beaver Municipal Solutions ([www.beavermunicipal.com](http://www.beavermunicipal.com)). The County is represented on this Commission by one Councillor.

2013 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Extension to Kinsella water supply system

What's New in 2014?

- √ Extension of regional waterline and construction of water truck fill station in west end
- √ Sewage lagoon clean-out in Bruce
- √ Grant from Beaver Municipal Solutions for grant-in-lieu-of-taxes and good neighbour policy

### **Community Services**

The County supports “people” services by provide grants to external organizations in support of adult learning, preventive family and community support services, and doctor recruitment efforts.

2013 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Financial commitment to doctor recruitment efforts in Tofield and Viking

What's New in 2014?

- √ Additional support to family and community support organizations

### **Planning & Economic Development**

The County’s planning department provides planning and land use policy development and administration services to the public.

The County is proud to market and promote the community and its two industrial parks (154 hectares (380 acres) near Ryley and Viking) to retain business, support tourism, expand the economic base, and improve the quality of life of residents.

2013 Key Accomplishments:

- √ West End Growth Management Plan. For a copy of the Plan, click [here](#).

What's New in 2014?

- √ Equity Industrial Park Area Structure Plan (update)
- √ Viking/Beaver Business Park Area Structure Plan
- √ Complete engineering of Phase III of Equity Industrial Park

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## Agriculture

A joint Councillor/public-at-large Agricultural Service Board determines the level of service provided to residents.

Permanent and seasonal staff provide services to the agricultural community, including weed and pest control, weed and pest inspection, beaver, coyote, and other pest control, vegetation management, education, and conservation planning.

The County supports the Beaver County Seed Cleaning Plant and provides grants to various organizations to promote sustainable agricultural practices

### 2013 Key Accomplishments:

- √ All County road allowances were mown once to control vegetation and 1/3 were mown twice. In addition, 10 kilometres (6 miles) of mulching and 2.5 kilometres (1.5 miles) of brushing were completed.
- √ 554 yardsites were brushed and/or sprayed to improve visibility and safety
- √ 40 kilometres (25 miles) of roadsides were seeded following shoulder pulls
- √ 200 clubroot and 29 grasshopper surveys were completed
- √ Financial support totaling over \$10,000 was provided to various County organizations that promote agriculture within the community
- √ A Farm Beautification Tour and a well-attended Farmer Appreciation Event were held

### What's New in 2014?

- √ Weed control will be provided on a 3-year rotational basis. For the first year, brush spraying will occur in Divisions 1, 2, and 3, blanket weed spraying will occur in Division 4, and brushing/mulching will occur in Division 5. Spot weed spraying will take place throughout the County as required. For a copy of the rotation map, click [here](#).
- √ Roadside mowing will begin in the west end of the County and progress east.
- √ Cooperating with the University of Alberta on an innovative beaver mitigation project in the west end of the County.

## Parks & Recreation, Libraries, and Culture

The County owns Black Nugget Lake and Camp Lake campgrounds and contracts their operation to private companies.

The County is pleased to financially support many hamlet and rural community organizations. For a list of groups that received financial assistance from the County in 2013, click [here](#).

The County recognizes the benefit of regional cooperation and shares operating costs of recreation and library facilities in towns and villages that are used by rural residents. It also financially supports cultural events in the County-owned Beaver Regional Arts Society building in Holden.

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Shared services funding totaled approximately \$305,000.00 in 2013.

2013 Key Accomplishments:

- √ Regional Recreation Master Plan. For a copy of the Plan, click [here](#).
- √ Shared services formula review/adjustment

What's New in 2014?

- √ New campground direction at Black Nugget Lake

**Requisitions**

In addition to municipal taxes, the County is required to levy taxes to pay requisitions to the Alberta School Foundation Fund (education) and the Beaver Foundation (seniors housing). Your property tax bill is a combination of all three taxes.

**2014 Property Taxes**

In summary, the 2014 municipal budget expenditures total \$20,553,671, offset by funding sources of \$8,414,890 (user fees, reserves, and grants), leaving a tax levy requirement of \$12,138,781. Compared to 2013, this represents a 9.6% increase in spending, however with an increase in funding sources and a 2.8% increase in the overall assessment base, the municipal mill rate increase was limited to 4%.

The school mill rate decreased 6.6% for residential property and 3.6% for non-residential property. The Beaver Foundation mill rate decreased 5.6% for all properties. These decreases in mill rates will help to offset the impact of the municipal mill rate increase.

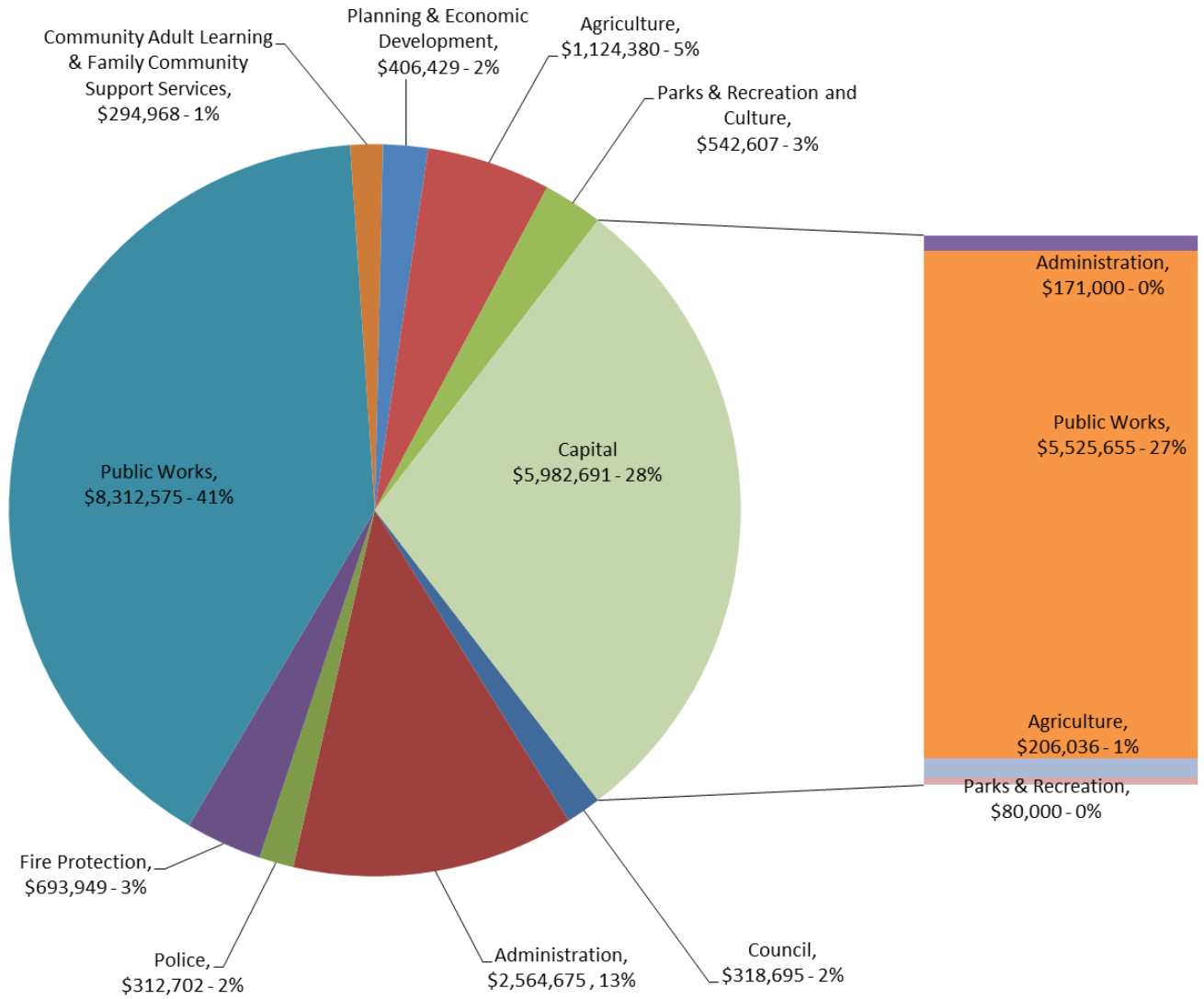
The change in your property taxes from 2013 to 2014 will depend on any change in your property assessment. For detailed information regarding the County's assessment base, click [here](#). If you have questions regarding your individual property assessment once you receive your property assessment notice, contact one of the County's assessors at 780-663-3730.

Senior citizens who are having trouble paying their property taxes may benefit from the Seniors Property Tax Deferral program. This program allows eligible senior homeowners to defer all or part of their annual property tax through a low-interest home equity loan with the Government of Alberta. For more information, go to [www.health.alberta.ca/seniors.html](http://www.health.alberta.ca/seniors.html).

Each municipality sets its mill rates based on its individual budget, circumstances, and levels of service. For a comparison of Beaver County's mill rates to that of its rural neighbours, click [here](#).

**Where Does My Tax Dollar Go?**

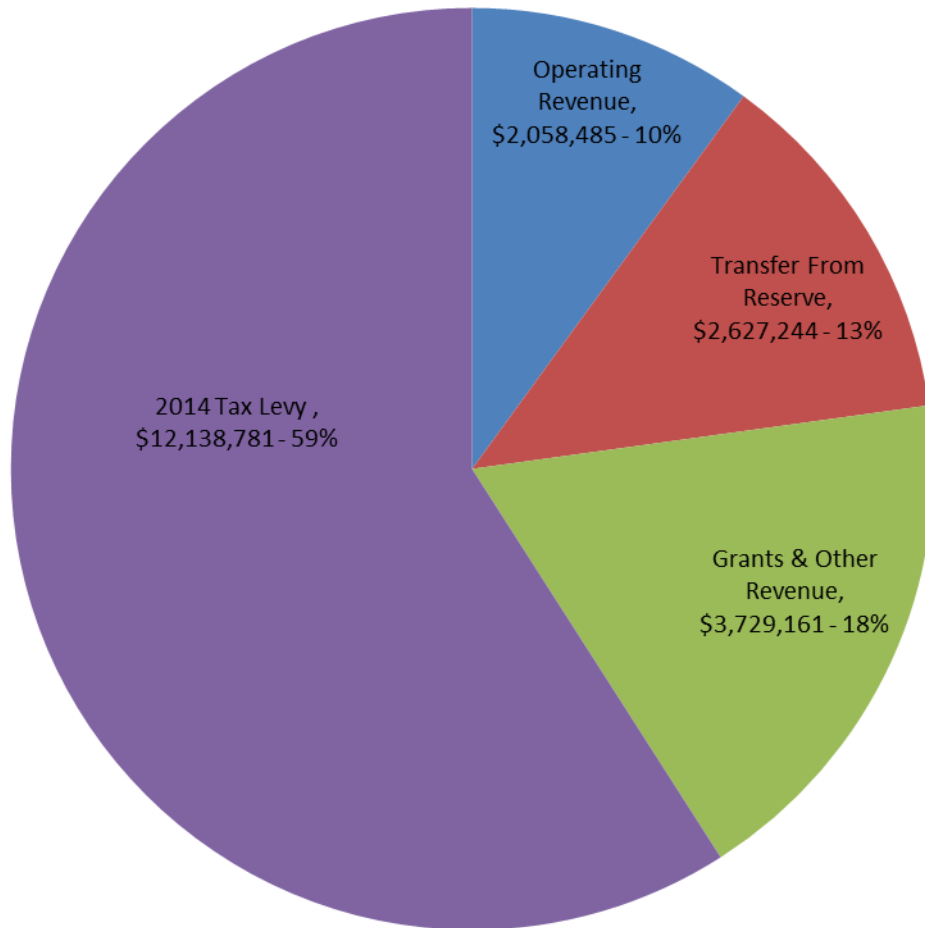
**Budget 2014 - Expenses \$20,553,671**



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**How Is the 2014 Budget Funded?**

**Budget 2014 - Revenue \$20,553,671**





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### **The County's Financial Position**

Annually, the County's financial systems are audited by an independent accounting firm. This firm, Yaremchuk & Annicchiarico, has issued its opinion that the County's 2013 "financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Beaver County as at December 31, 2013, the results of its operations, change in its net financial assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards".

The County is in a good financial position, as evidenced by the following:

- ❖ The value of its financial assets exceeds the value of its liabilities.
- ❖ It spends "within its means" and ended the year with a very modest surplus of \$139,407.
- ❖ Property taxes are collected at a rate of 97% (average).
- ❖ It has no long-term debt other than a debenture that it took to finance Beaver Foundation's debt on the Tofield and Viking seniors housing facilities. This debenture is recoverable by all the municipalities in the region via the annual requisition and will be fully paid in 2035.
- ❖ It has a modest reserve with which to fund strategic priorities or emergency expenses.

A complete copy of the 2013 financial statements may be viewed by clicking [here](#).