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The Beaver County

Chronicle

A Free Weekly Publication Serving All of Beaver County

Wednesday, April 23, 2025, Volume 18, Issue 16

Ryalta Industries Ltd.

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Approval for mill rate bylaw delayed to April 30 due to councillor concerns

Patricia Harcourt

Beaver County Council failed to pass the total 2025 budget package April 16 when objections were voiced about the mill rate bylaw.

Bylaw #25-1171-2025 Mill Rates did receive first and second readings but Deputy Reeve Gene Hrabec opposed a motion to proceed with third and final reading. This motion to go ahead must be unanimous to pass.

Council will instead deal with this final reading at a council meeting set for Wednesday, April 30, at the Ryley Community Hall. A stand alone third reading will not require a unanimous vote to pass.

The deadline for municipalities to get their budgets approved is midnight on the last day of April.

The meeting on April 30 will start at 7 p.m. and will also include a public hearing on a draft Community Standards Bylaw which Hrabec also opposes (please see separate story.)

On April 16, Council heard a report from Ryan Arndt, General Manager of Corporate Services, which stated: “The total operating budget has not changed; however, due to inflation, impacts of the tariffs, uncollectible taxes from delinquent or bankrupt oil and gas companies, of approximately \$305,000, and other budget adjustments, the budget has increased.”

The overall effect on different classes of property are increases as follows: Residential - 2.11 per cent; Farmland - 2.03 per cent; Non-residential - 1.81%; and, Small business properties - 1.76 per cent.

The county did pass the 2025 operating budget in the amount of \$23,557,140 with a tax levy of \$15,322, 233.

Also, an adjustment to the 2025 capital budget of \$250,000 was also passed which put the total 2025 capital budget at \$11,542,198 with a tax levy requirement of \$1,750,616.

But the mill rate bylaw did not pass as Hrabec opposed the motion to have third reading. He stated he was against a rise in the mill rate causing a “residential hit” to this class of ratepayers. Hrabec said the \$305,000 needed should come out of the county’s reserves instead of raised as taxes.

Stating he “just doesn’t think it’s fair” to raise the mill rate 2 per cent on residential properties, Hrabec also did not think using reserve funds would reduce services in the county.

Councillor Lionel Williams (Division 2) asked administration about residential properties being “hit” with a tax increase due to an “inflationary increase of six per cent” on assessments.

Ryan Arndt, general manager of corporate services, replied: “The residential shares more of a burden,” tax-wise, adding: “Farmland also has inflationary pressures but the county has a cap on that.”

Williams noted that the six per cent increase means an increase for residential and acreages but no increase for farmland.

“I think it has gotten unbalanced towards residential properties,” he said, agreeing with Hrabec that this

appeared unfair.

Chief Administrative Officer Kayleena Spiess said this imbalance is reflected in the smaller number of non-residential, i.e. commercial and industrial, properties, and is the reason the county needs to increase this portion of the tax base to offset the residential tax burden.

“We are not in control of the assessment,” she said. “Inflation is not based on growth,” adding this is the reason economic development in the county “is so important.”

The county has 60 per cent residential and just 40 per cent industrial and commercial as a tax base.

“We’re in the state where we need to switch that ratio,” said Spiess. To that, Williams agreed saying he hears “a lot from that (residential) group of people.”

Williams added it was “tough on people having to pay residential,” when they see that farmland also had a seven per cent increase in assessment “but are not having to pay more.”

Arndt said counties like Strathcona can pass their increases onto the industrial side. “We can’t because we don’t have the industrial base they have.”

Reeve Kevin Smook (Division 1) wondered if the Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) could provide scenarios for the 2026 mill rate, but added it was likely too “late for this budget...You can’t control the assessment but you can control the mill rate.”

On consideration of the mill rate bylaw and Hrabec’s suggestion to take the 2 per cent increase in taxes out of reserves, Williams asked if it were possible for the increase to come out of reserves.

“Yes, we could adjust it,” said Arndt. Council heard that the shortfall was \$305,000 that has to come from either taxes or reserves.

“How much have we grown reserves in the last year,” asked Hrabec, to which Arndt replied that the reserves “aren’t cash” but are all earmarked for projects.

At that point, the CAO added that the county would have to drop a project from capital or operating budgets, likely in public works, to offset taking money out to cover the shortfall.

At that, Reeve Smook reminded council that “the strategic priorities were set earlier in the year,” and “we’re not reliving the budget.”

He then called for motions, with council passing first and second reading for the taxation bylaw. Then a motion to proceed with third reading failed so council agreed to deal with this at an April 30 meeting.

Following this decision, council proceeded to pass the fourth recommendation regarding the budget.

This motion by Hrabec scheduled budget meetings as needed for August 25-28 and September 10. These meetings were to replace budget meetings for the interim 2026 budget usually held in December.

CAO Spiess explained that a new council elected this October during municipal elections may find dealing with the 2026 interim budget difficult coming o soon after entering office. She said that the current council could deal with this in August and September prior to

the election and pave the way for the new council to approve later in the year. Spiess added that next year’s county budget will be similar to the one in 2025.

Zoo 2 U event in Holden



Zoo 2 U was at the Holden Community Hall on Tuesday, April 15, to an audience of about 45 people and wowed those in attendance with their exotic animals and the opportunity to touch and hold some of them. Viking Beaver FCSS and the Holden Municipal Library were in partnership to bring the travelling zoo to Holden. Pictured here, Holden resident Colton Fowler holds a large amphibian.

ANNETTE CHRYSTIAN PHOTO

Notice of Public Meeting

Residents of Viking

Nutrien Ag Solutions will be holding an information session regarding the anhydrous ammonia site located at Twp Rd 49408, Rge Rd 171 or SE 35-49-17-W4

Friday, April 25, 2025

3:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Nutrien Ag Solutions, 5012 49 Ave.

RYLEY, AB

Topics of discussion will include:

- Nature and properties of ammonia
- Type of incident that might occur
- Contact information in the event of an emergency
- Emergency measures such as evacuation process or shelter in place

If you have any questions or concerns please attend this information meeting

VIKING, HOLDEN & BEAVER COUNTY Volunteer Appreciation Events!

National Volunteer Week 2025 - April 27th to May 3rd, 2025

As we celebrate National Volunteer Week 2025, we invite you to join us in recognizing their amazing work. This year's theme, **'Volunteers Make Waves,'** highlights the powerful, impactful, and essential role that individual and collective volunteers play in creating lasting change.

Viking Community Luncheon
Tuesday, April 29th, 2025, Noon-1:30 p.m.
(doors open at 11:30)
Viking Seniors Centre (5024 53 Ave., Viking)
***FREE of Charge!**

Holden Community Luncheon
Saturday, May 3rd, Noon-1:30 p.m.
(doors open at 11:30)
Holden Community Hall (4919 49 Ave., Holden)
***FREE of Charge!**

We look forward to seeing you there!
Please contact Viking/Beaver FCSS at 780.336.4024 for more information.

Brought to you in partnership by:





IMPORTANT DATES

April 30

- 7 PM - Special Council Meeting at Ryley Community Centre, for:
 - Public Hearing - Community Standards Bylaw
 - Mill Rate Bylaw - 3rd Reading

May 7

- 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM - Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting

May 21

- 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM - Regular Council Meeting

WHATS HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Book Club
Location: Ross Creek Community Hall, 531041 Rge Rd 191
Rural book club that meets the first Tuesday of each month. Meetings run from 7PM - 8PM, all ages welcome!
Tofield AA - Thursdays, 8 - 9 PM
Basement of Bardo Lutheran Church, 4737 57 Ave, Tofield.
Viking AA - Wednesdays, 8 PM, Zoom option also available.
Golden Valley Lutheran Church, 5327 56 Ave, Viking.
<https://area78aa.org/meetings/147-3>
Holden Steak Night - Friday April 25th from 5-7:30 PM at the Holden Complex. Steak - \$30 or Steak and Shrimp - \$35. (Children's meals available) Call or Text Lucy for more information at 780-781-6014
Submit your event/s, meetings and/or gatherings to the events calendar on the website! Just head to the website, under the Explore menu click on County Region Events Calendar. We have partnered with Go East to share local events on our website!

DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

The following Development Applications have been APPROVED (except where otherwise noted) by the Development Authority under the provisions of Land Use Bylaw No. 98-801, subject to the right of appeal to the relevant appeal body - Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (SDAB) or Land and Property Rights Tribunal (LPRT).

APPEAL DEADLINE	APRIL 30, 2025
Appeal Body	SDAB
Application No.	020020-24-D0009
Applicant	Heather Wheeliker
Landowner	Same
Location	Lot 21, Block 2 Plan 190 TR in NE 35-51-20-W4
Development	Discretionary Use – 288 ft2 Cabin (Temporary Accommodation)

Any person wishing to appeal an application may do so by serving written notice on the prescribed form (stating reasons for the appeal) to the relevant appeal body. For information on how to appeal can be found on our website under **Services > Planning & Development > Appealing Planning Decisions**

Further information regarding the above decisions may be obtained from the County Office, Ryley, Alberta.





Look who's coming back to town ...



Claystone Waste is pleased to once again take part in the **Snow Goose Festival**, celebrating the return of our feathered friends as they migrate through the Beaver County region.

Visit our booth at the Tradeshow at the Tofield Curling Rink on April 26 and 27, and learn more about Claystone and how we support the community!



claystonewaste.com

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Community Standards Bylaw Hearing
Beaver County will be holding a public hearing to give residents an opportunity to provide input on the proposed Community Standards Bylaw. The purpose of this Bylaw is to set standards for community safety, residential property maintenance and use, protect public spaces, prevent disputes between neighbours by providing guidance on issues that affect relationships between neighbours, establish fines for contraventions of the Bylaw, and enable enforcement of contraventions of the Bylaw.

The proposed bylaw can be viewed below or obtained at the Beaver County Office (5120 – 50 Street, Ryley) or on the County's website under the News section at www.beaver.ab.ca.

Details of the public hearing are as follows:

- Date:** Wednesday, April 30, 2025
- Time:** 7:00 p.m.
- Location:** Ryley Community Centre, 5102-49 St, Ryley
- Contact:** Meagan Walsh - 780-663-3730 ext. 1023 or mwalsh@beaver.ab.ca
- To Speak or submit written comments:** please register/submit to Kady McKinney (kmckinney@beaver.ab.ca) no later than 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 22, 2025. *Written submissions will not be accepted during the public hearing.*

If you submit written comments regarding the proposed bylaw, the information you provide may be made public subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.



RYLEY PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EVENT!

COUNCIL ANSWERS YOUR BURNING QUESTIONS!

WHAT IS GOING ON WITH THE TRAIN WHISTLE CESSATION?

DO BYLAWS LIKE COMMUNITY STANDARDS MATTER?

ARE CHICKENS ALLOWED IN THE VILLAGE?

RYLEY COUNCIL WILL DISCUSS ALL THIS AND MORE!

May 13, 2025 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM
Ryley Community Hall

* Food and beverages to be provided*
We look forward to your feedback and the opportunity to connect with residents

If you would like to submit a question in advance, please email admin@ryley.ca



Wildfire

Not in Our Back Yard!

BE PREPARED!

WILDFIRE is a risk in our community. Share in the solution and take responsibility to make your home part of a fire smart community.

Join Beaver Emergency Services Commission
at
Spilstead Hall
for a
FireSmart Information Day for Families
May 3rd
10am – 2pm

Free Hamburgers & Hot Dogs
Face Painting, Bounce House
& More

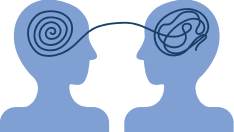




NEED HELP? FREE. CONFIDENTIAL. LIVE ANSWER 24/7

Albertans can access community services via phone, text or chat anytime 24/7. Connect with 211 to find information about services such as disability supports, employment, health supports, housing and volunteering. These services are free, confidential, and available in over 170 languages over the phone.

- Dial 2-1-1
- Text INFO to 211
- Visit ab.211.ca and click “Live Chat”



GET YOUR GARDEN AND YARD SPRING-READY!

The ground is thawing and green things are itching to grow! Whether you’re an avid gardener or just want your yard looking tidy, here are a few spring prep tips to get you started:

- **Rake and Remove Debris** - Clear out leaves, branches, and any leftover winter clutter to help your lawn breathe.
- **Aerate your Lawn** - This improves water absorption and root growth — especially after compacted winter soil.
- **Prune Early** - Trim dead or damaged branches from shrubs and trees before new growth appears.
- **Plan your Plantings** - Now’s the time to start seedlings indoors or prep your garden beds for vegetables and flowers.
- **Watch for Frost Dates** - Don’t jump the gun! Alberta’s last frost often sneaks into May — be sure to check local predictions.

Support local and check out nearby greenhouses or farmers’ markets for starter plants, seeds, and expert advice!

SPRING CLEANING SEASON IS HERE!

As the snow melts away and sunlight starts pouring in, it's the perfect time to freshen up your space — whether it's your home, garage, or even your office desk.

Here are a few quick tips to make your spring cleaning a breeze:

- Start small. Pick one room or area to tackle at a time — no need to do it all at once!
- Donate or toss. If you haven’t used it in the last year, consider donating or recycling it.
- Use what you have. White vinegar, baking soda, and lemon can clean just about anything — no need to overbuy cleaning products.
- Think digital. Take a moment to clean up your email inbox or desktop files for a fresh digital start, too!

YOUR VOICE MATTERS: VOTE IN THE UPCOMING FEDERAL ELECTION

The Federal Election is coming up on Monday, April 28, 2025. Now is the time to make sure you're ready to cast your ballot and have a say in Canada's future!

To check your registration, find your voting station, and learn about your local candidates, scan the QR code below or visit www.elections.ca.

This federal election is an opportunity to influence the direction of our country. Make a plan to vote and encourage your family, friends, and neighbours to do the same.

Every vote counts!



COUNTY MAPS

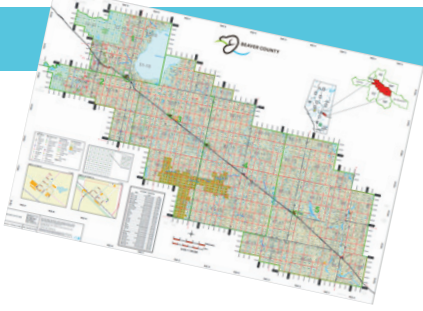
Beaver County maps get updated twice a year: in March & September.

You can view the map online by scanning the QR code or visit our website and find it under “View County Maps.”

Maps are available for sale by pick-up or by mail: (prices include GST)

- Folded or Rolled (printed): \$15
- Laminated: \$20
- Postage: Additional \$5

Note: Only folded maps can be mailed. Rolled or laminated must be picked up in-person.



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

National Volunteer week is celebrated from April 27 - May 3, 2025. This years theme is: *Volunteers Make Waves*. It highlights the power, impact and importance of individual and collective volunteer efforts across Canada. Like a wave, volunteering is movement building. Volunteer Week is a time to celebrate the dedication and contributions of volunteers who make a difference in our communities. Recognizing their efforts shows appreciation and raises awareness about the power of contribution. Volunteering inspires others to get involved and fosters a culture of generosity and connection.





Mailing list

Get news, meeting highlights, the road construction schedule, the Chronicle, and more - direct to your inbox!

Website

Information on County programs and services can be found on our website, along with the latest news.

Social media

Find us on Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn.



‘Very important’ Community Standards Bylaw to get public hearing

Deputy Reeve views draft bylaw as likely ‘contentious’

Patricia Harcourt

Beaver County Council is considering the passing of a Community Standards Bylaw while one member of council opposes the initiative.

Deputy Reeve Gene Hrabec (Division 3) voted against first reading of the bylaw, which passed with the support of his fellow councillors. First reading paves the way for a public hearing to take place the evening of Wednesday, April 30 at the Ryley Community Hall.

Hrabec said he feared “tragic consequences” if the bill were passed in its present form.

The bylaw with its changes was presented to council March 26 by Deborah Juch, general manager of community and protective services.

The draft of the new Community Standards Bylaw is a combination of several existing bylaws on various facets of what constitutes community guidelines.

The draft bylaw “incorporates the current Nuisance and Unsightly Premises Bylaw and the Noise Control bylaw regulations, and adds additional community standards,” Juke stated.

“The (proposed) bylaw incorporates input received during public engagement activities in 2024, the Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) direction in two prior reviews and recommendations from legal counsel,” she added.

Highlights include leaving out gunfire sounds in the definition of “noise,” she said.

The new bylaw would allow noise permits that may be issued by a designated officer, and there would be a “robust definition” of what constitute nuisance and unsightly premises.

The proposed bylaw also calls for outdoor lighting to be shielded.

Plus, “building, yard and fence standards have been

set for residential and hamlet purposes.”

In hamlets, grass cannot exceed a height of 15 cm, or six inches, and vegetation in yards such as grass, plants, and shrubs must be controlled.

Enforcement in the new bylaw would include violation tickets with penalties, orders, civil action and direct action by the county with costs billed to the landowner.

A definition of weeds has been added which follows the definition in the Weed Control Act.

Hrabec did not feel the public engagement sessions held in Bruce and Spilstead Hall last year were enough to gauge public opinion on a variety of topics.

He felt “there were people left out of that,” asking as an example: “How many farmers participated?”

Chief Administrative Officer Kayleen Spiess said that “agricultural people did attend the sessions.” She also stated that the public sessions weren’t the only ways to gather information for the community standards bylaw.

She said the bylaw was created by looking into different scenarios.

“I think we did a really good job,” Spiess said, adding: “We did things properly...You can’t force people to attend.”

Margaret Jones, general manager of legislative services, told council that of 150 residents, 22.5 per cent came from the hamlets and 43.7 per cent came from the rural areas.

Hrabec also mentioned the issues of graffiti and weeds in the proposed bylaw, and the newly revised definition of noise.

The first reading of the bylaw was passed from a motion by Division 2 Councillor Lionel Williams. The county had decided to hold a non-statutory (not obligatory) public hearing to give the public a chance to speak on the changes made in the bylaw.

But Hrabec spoke in opposition to the motion stating

the county is so long and narrow geographically that there should have been more public engagement sessions made available in different parts of the county. He cited the issue of dogs as an example, saying: “This (bylaw) will maybe pit neighbour against neighbour.”

Hrabec said he opposed the bylaw for that reason, citing an undefined “west end dispute” as an example of how things can end tragically.

But Williams said he “welcomes a reasonable set of guidelines,” which were “much better than was done before.”

He said the issues of lighting and dogs stands out, and to wait to see if the problem cited will be settled. He called the bylaw “a big move for the county.”

Reeve Kevin Smook (Division 1) said the bylaw in use now “doesn’t have any teeth.”

He added: “We will hold a non-statutory public hearing where people can have their say.”

A motion by Williams for first reading was passed with Hrabec opposed.

CAO Spiess called this “a very important bylaw,” and suggested two or three hearing dates be set for public feedback.

But Smook said one public hearing would suffice.

Hrabec suggested holding the hearing in the late afternoon or evening, especially for people in the west end who have complained they can’t make meetings during the day because of their jobs.

Because the April 16 regular meeting of council was to decide on the 2025 budget, it was recommended to hold either a special meeting or another regular council meeting in the evening.

Council agreed to hold a regular meeting at the Ryley Community Hall on Wednesday, April 30, at 7 p.m. where a public hearing on the new bylaw would take place. Later in the April 17 meting,

This meeting will allow for the public to get further information on the proposed Community Standards bylaw and/or to speak for or against the bylaw at the public hearing.

Following the hearing, consideration will be given for second and third readings of the bill.

At the April 16 council meeting, Hrabec also opposed the passing of the county’s 2025 budget by voting against the motion to hold third and final reading at the same time as the first two readings were passed. This means that third reading of the budget, which must be passed by the end of April, will also take place at the April 30 meeting at the community hall.

Claystone preparing for large item pick up

Kelsey Witham

Now that spring has officially sprung, Claystone Waste’s bi-annual large item pick up dates have been scheduled. The program serves to provide the residents of Beaver County with the opportunity to dispose of any large items they purge during their spring cleaning, such as furniture or appliances that do not fit in the regular community waste bins.

“Large item pick up is a free service that Claystone Waste offers to its five shareholder municipalities which are Viking, Tofield, Holden, Ryley, and Beaver County for the hamlet of Bruce,” Claystone Waste Communication and Public Relations Advisor Jackie Sargent said.

“The only cost for residents would be for the purchase of a Freon removal sticker, \$25, for any refrigerated items, including fridges, freezers, air conditioners, water coolers, etc. Freon stickers for Bruce and Holden are available from the Beaver County Office in Ryley. Freon stickers for Tofield, Viking, and Ryley are available at their respective municipal offices,” she said.

The Claystone Waste team will make their way around to all five communities throughout the month of May. The large item pick up will begin in Bruce on Friday, May 2, to Thursday, May 8, then the bins will be in Tofield from Friday, May 9, to Thursday, May 15. Holden’s dates are Friday, May 16, to Thursday, May 22, and Ryley’s dates are Friday, May 23, to Thursday, May 29, although Claystone notes that dates are subject to change pending equipment availability. The Town of Viking is the one municipality that will receive curbside pick up, scheduled for Thursday, May 29.

If a resident needs assistance getting their large item to one of the community bins, they can fill out an online form to schedule a time that Claystone will haul their item from their curb to the bin.

“Your large items must be on the curb as Claystone

staff will not be able to enter private property. The pick up of the large item will likely take place outside of the scheduled community bin pickup dates based on staff availability,” the website says.

Items that are acceptable to put into the bins include furniture, appliances, mattresses, tires, and barbecues minus the propane tanks.

Claystone discourages putting yard waste and waste from large renovation projects into the community bins, as they can take up a lot of room or weigh down the bin.

“The large item pick up program is for household items that are too large for the regular community waste bins. Tree branches take up a lot of space in the bins and often stick out, making it difficult to close the lid and create a hazard for our equipment. Tree stumps and logs can make the bin too heavy for our equipment to pick up. It is better to bring large yard waste items to the landfill for proper disposal,” Claystone’s large item pick up flyer says.

“If you are undertaking a large construction or renovation project, or even a landscaping job, you can rent a bin from Claystone for this type of waste. This will keep bins free for the large household items,” the flyer says.

Sargent said Claystone collected 21 bins from the large item collection from fall 2024.

“Many of the residents participated in the Fall 2024 Large Item collection. Although we offer large item pick up twice a year, residents don’t have to wait to dispose of large items but can bring them to the Beaver Regional Landfill (Ryley Transfer Station) free of charge. Claystone has five transfer stations in the region that residents of the member municipalities can access for free. Transfer station locations and accepted items are on our website, claystonewaste.com/transfer-stations,” Sargent said.

Notice of Public Meeting Residents of Ryley

Nutrien Ag Solutions will be holding an information session regarding the anhydrous ammonia site located at Twp Rd 49408, Rge Rd 171 or SE 35-49-17-W4

Friday, April 25, 2025
3:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Nutrien Ag Solutions, 5012 49 Ave.
RYLEY, AB

Topics of discussion will include:

- Nature and properties of ammonia
- Type of incident that might occur
- Contact information in the event of an emergency
- Emergency measures such as evacuation process or shelter in place

If you have any questions or concerns please attend this information meeting