

# 2023 PONOKA COUNTY NEWSLETTER

**Hello Friends,**

As we move into spring I want to make a collective sigh that we have progressed through another winter together. On behalf of Council I want to extend well wishes for you to have a prosperous and plentiful spring and summer. I am changing gears on my letter from Council to the ratepayers from our normal update to one speaking of how fortunate Ponoka County is for our team and how we do business. Ponoka County has always been different and different is good. Our role is to provide you with the best level of local governance we can, as Charlie Cutforth is often apt to say, “we are government but, that does not mean we need to act like it”. In this world we live in that is a significant view of local governance. Ponoka County has a culture that is always with the view that we are the representation of who elected us and must recognize how hard people work for the tax dollars we use to provide infrastructure and services in the County.

This culture, we believe, is best represented by the soon to be retiring CAO Charlie Cutforth. We stand on the shoulders of giants and with Charlies leadership have attained great things. Our team is small, our service is high, and everyone *rides for the brand*. This brand, that Charlie has created, is a manifestation of the simple view that we are accountable to the public and ourselves. More importantly, this brand, is a community that wants to respect the past and embrace the future.

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In the event of an emergency, know your blue sign number to provide to 911 dispatch.

*Providing a partial blue sign number [or an incorrect one] can delay emergency response times.*

**KNOW HOW TO HELP YOURSELF**

Charlie has always surrounded himself with a strong team of capable and invested community members that have all had the same vision, that Ponoka County should be the most pragmatic, approachable, compassionate and prudent local government we can be. That is exactly what he has created and who we are.

On behalf of council and the team at Ponoka County I want to thank Charlie Cutforth for his 36 years of dedication to the residents of the community he calls home. His leadership, mentorship, and his love of community has created a culture and approach to governance that will continue. Charlie cannot be replaced but, we can carry on with the Brand he has created. We will continue to ride for Ponoka County and wish Charlie good luck in improving his horrible golf game.

**Reeve Paul McLauchlin**  
*Division 4 Councillor*



## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO TAXPAYERS

Please be aware that the residential tax rate was increased 5% in 2022 as dictated by the Provincial Government (Alberta Municipal Affairs). It was not the intention of County Council to increase any tax rates until this order was received. The County appealed the decision, however in an attempt to appease the oil and gas sector, the Province denied our appeal. It has regulated that the ratio between Residential and Linear and Machinery and Equipment (oil and gas) tax rates cannot be higher than 5 to 1; even though our tax rates are all well below the provincial average. We will continue to lobby our Provincial elected officials to terminate this unfair and unjustified imposition on Ponoka County taxpayers as continued increases are required until the 5 to 1 ratio is attained. To attain this ratio, annual 5% increases will be required for an additional 3 years. We are simply being penalized because we have the lowest residential tax rate in the Province. In the meantime, as long as the regulation is in place, County Council has directed that the additional funds generated be applied to replacement and upgrade of our 185 bridge and culvert structures.



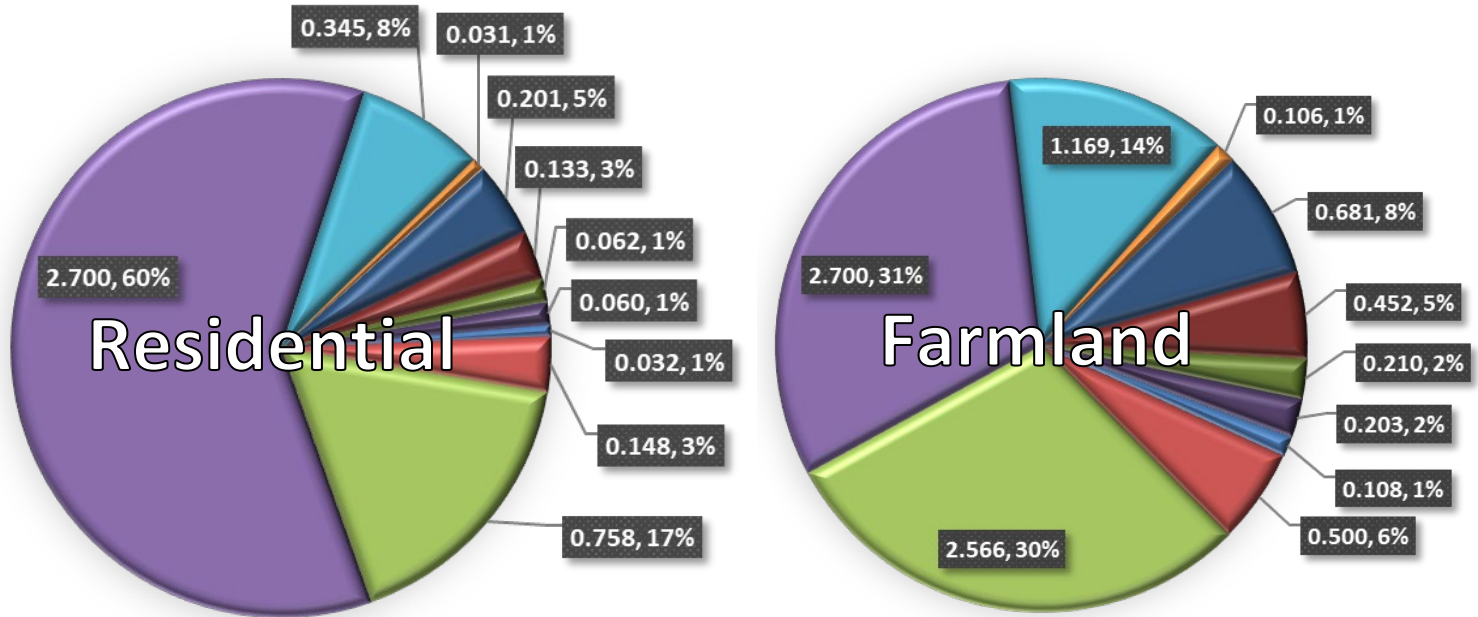
### Audited Financial Statements

2022 Ponoka County Budget vs Actual available to view on our website, upon completion of independent annual audit.

Complete details can be found on our website:

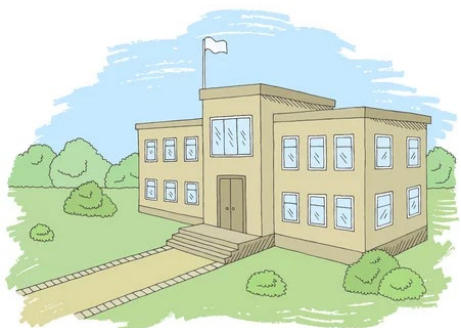
[www.ponokacounty.com/departments/administration&finance](http://www.ponokacounty.com/departments/administration&finance)

# 2022 Mill Rates



Mill Rate Allocation	Residential <i>shown above</i>	Linear & Non-Residential	Farmland <i>shown above</i>	Machinery & Equipment
Legislative	0.032	0.195	0.108	0.195
Public Works	0.758	4.631	2.566	4.631
Administration	0.148	0.902	0.500	0.902
Provincial School Requisition	2.700	3.890	2.700	-----
Capital Surplus	0.345	2.110	1.169	2.110
Industry Write-Offs	0.031	0.190	0.106	0.190
Requisitions	0.201	1.229	0.681	1.229
Waste Management	0.133	0.816	0.452	0.816
Agriculture Service Board	0.062	0.379	0.210	0.379
Fire/Protective Services	0.060	0.368	0.203	0.368
<b>TOTAL(S)</b>	<b>4.470</b>	<b>14.710</b>	<b>8.695</b>	<b>10.820</b>

*Property assessments in Alberta are conducted annually and must be based on the value of the property on July 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous year. For example, a 2023 property assessment will be based on the value of the property on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. This is called the Valuation Date.*



The Provincial School Requisition is collected and remitted to the Province of Alberta as mandated by the Municipal Government Act.

## Mill Rate

*one-thousandth of a dollar*

The mill rate is the amount of tax payable per dollar of the assessed value of a property. Property tax in dollar terms is calculated by multiplying the assessed property value and the mill rate and dividing by 1,000.

*Example of a simple mill rate calculation based on a \$380,000 assessed value of a residential property with a yearly mill rate set at 4.170:*

$$380,000 \times 4.170 = 1,584,600$$

$$1,584,600 / 1,000 = \$1584.60$$

# Renewable Energy in Alberta



## Farmers Advocate Office (FAO)

310-3276 toll free

780-427-2389 direct

[www.farmersadvocate.gov.ab.ca](http://www.farmersadvocate.gov.ab.ca)

The FAO works to ensure the rights and interests of rural Albertans are recognized, understood, and protected.

As a landowner in Ponoka County you may be approached by a renewable energy developer. Negotiating for a wind or solar lease is different than negotiating with the oil and gas industry. In the renewable industry there are no standard options and what is proposed by companies can differ greatly. Keeping in mind a contract is usually designed with the developers needs in mind and the landowner should take the time to fully understand the proposed agreement, ask questions and seek legal counsel prior to entering any agreement. *It is recommended by the Farmers Advocate Office (FAO) that landowners negotiate with the developer to have costs for legal review covered by the developer.*

Getting qualified legal advice is imperative to protect yourself [*The FAO cannot provide a specific recommendation, however, to find a suitable lawyer with experience in the industry you can contact the Law Society of Alberta (LSA) @ [www.lawsociety.ab.ca](http://www.lawsociety.ab.ca) or call 1.800.661.9003/403.229.4700*]. LSA will provide the names of three lawyers with relevant experience and the first 30 minutes of consultation with each lawyer is free. Alternately, you may research lawyers that have represented landowners on recent decisions from the AUC (*Alberta Utilities Commission*) and view approvals and other related documentation at [www.auc.ab.ca](http://www.auc.ab.ca)

How does the developer plan to reclaim the site at the end of its life, does any of this activity have long term affects/sterilization of land? Who is responsible for removal of obsolete equipment, supporting infrastructure and site reclamation upon end of lease or alternately if the developer sells or goes bankrupt? How does this proposal potentially affect my quality of life, my neighbors, and my community? What will the noise, visual and wildlife impacts be? Will there be further underground infrastructure required to tie into the power grid, will that require approvals from neighboring landowners? Will road-traffic in the area be impacted? Has the developer made provisions for soil preservation in and around the site? Will the side-affects of this type of long-term land use sterilize my land for future agriculture practice? Who is responsible for maintenance (weed control and fire prevention/mowing around/under renewable energy infrastructure? How will this affect my municipal taxes? How to know what to expect for compensation from the developer? *Prior to entering into an agreement with a renewable energy developer verify that the development is a permitted use under your zoning/land classification. Also, request details on how your municipal land taxation will be affected.*

## Protection of quality farm & grazing land in Ponoka County for agricultural use is a priority.

Before entering an agreement get informed, ask questions, protect yourself. Contact your county councilor or administration if you'd like to discuss further.

For more details on what to consider if you are approached by a developer view the Farmers Advocate Office pdf document by scanning the QR Code below, or use this web address:

[https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex16246/\\$FILE/negotiating-renewable-energy-leases-v2-jun-17.pdf](https://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/agdex16246/$FILE/negotiating-renewable-energy-leases-v2-jun-17.pdf)



**WE DO NOT  
INHERIT THE  
LAND FROM  
OUR  
ANCESTORS,  
WE  
BORROW IT  
FROM OUR  
CHILDREN.**

## DO I NEED A PERMIT?

We are here to help you! A variety of permits are in place to protect your investment, public safety as well as County infrastructure. Also, to be noted many insurance companies require construction projects to be properly permitted to be eligible for coverage.

Whether you are building your dream home, having landscaping bricks delivered for a project, operating a home based business, setting off fireworks for a celebration, burning trees and yard waste after a good spring clean-up, hauling grain to the elevator, bringing in silage in for your cattle, hauling manure out, or adding new construction of any kind to your acreage/farm; please check if a permit is required.

Our website is a good place to start, and you can access all permit forms there. *On the go?* No problem, permits are also available on the Ponoka County App. As always you are also welcomed to stop into the office or give us a call. If you are not sure, ask! *Fire Permits & Road Permits are no charge.*

[Development Permit](#) | [Fire Permit](#) | [Road Permit](#) | [Business Permit](#)



*All construction is governed by the Alberta Building Code. In Ponoka County Superior Safety Codes carries out inspections and ensures new construction is meeting code. Currently dog or cat licenses are not required, we encourage responsible pet ownership.*

## SNOW REMOVAL

It's hard to think about snow as we head into warmer weather! However, we want to take the opportunity to remind residents that pushing snow across a roadway can be dangerous specifically if ridges are left and can make you liable in the event of an accident.

Snow clearing equipment typically creates crossway ridges on roadways, which freeze and can lead to unsafe driving conditions. Ditch drainage can be impeded in the spring thaw if portions of a ditch are filled with additional snow from an adjacent property during winter months. Ponoka County reminds residents to please refrain from plowing across any road.



**Snow removal from  
your property belongs  
on your own land/yard  
site.**

# Public Works

Roadways are an integral part of Ponoka County. This requires an investment of time and money for upkeep, maintenance, and new construction. Prior to each construction season commencing upcoming project scope(s) have undergone hours of planning and preparation.

Planning and cost analysis is initiated by monitoring usage and condition statistics. It is then brought forward for further discussion and consideration by Council specifically in relation to budget deliberations. Having an overall long-term plan is essential for success. Often it can be a lengthy process to obtain necessary approvals prior to breaking ground. Provincial environmental assessments, landowner agreements, as well as surveying and engineering are part of the pre-construction scope prior to 'shovels in the ground'.

The County runs an annual gravel program (crushing/hauling/grading) an upgrading crew for construction, dust control services, chip-sealing and bridge maintenance. To expedite projects in our short construction season County employees and qualified subcontractors are utilized to complete projects in a timely fashion.

Project highlights and summaries are available within our council minutes and can be accessed at any time [www.ponokacounty.com](http://www.ponokacounty.com) home page, link is on the top right.



Range Road 261 [between Twp Road 442 & 444]  
Construction Start-Up



Range Road 261 [between Twp Road 442 & 444]  
Construction Completion

## CHIP SEAL. *What is it?*

Chip Sealing is a thin film of heated asphalt liquid sprayed on the road surface, followed by the placement of small aggregate 'chips'. The chips are then compacted to orient them for maximum adherence to the asphalt. After curing for 2-3 weeks the excess stone is swept away from the surface.

Chip seal is a more cost-effective choice than paving and is successful in subdivision and high-density rural areas that have less road use than a major highway and lighter weight traffic (nonagricultural or oilfield). Chip seal can be applied over existing gravel surfaces and should maintain for 10-15 years under proper usage. Ponoka County bans chip seal at 50% year-round to protect the integrity of the chip-seal.

If you live or work in a chip sealed area, ensure you are following the rules of the road to protect your neighborhood roadways. View more detail about road use and road bans on the county website.



**The Ponoka County Mobile App is here!**  
Connect with your Community.



**Features**

- Receive instant updates to your phone
- One-touch calling to all departments
- Instant directions to county facilities
- Submit permits and forms using the app



Developed by **SMBAPPS**.CA

Also available online at: [ponoka.countyapps.ca](http://ponoka.countyapps.ca)

GET IT ON Google Play Available on the App Store

# Stay out of the doghouse...

Being a good neighbor does not happen by accident. Keeping pets, such as dogs and cats on your own property *[more so an issue in hamlet and acreage areas]* is your responsibility.

Ponoka County does not require pet licensing; however, we do encourage responsible pet ownership.



# THANK YOU!

Ponoka County West District Fire extends a big thank-you to Keyera for their generous donation of 6 – MSA ALTAIR 4XR electrogas monitors to use in emergency situations.



## PONOKA COUNTY REGIONAL FIRE SERVICES

In 2022 our East and West District Fire Services logged 12,571 hours of service. These hours encompass a variety of call types & training:

- Structure Fires
- Grass/Rubbish Fires
- Vehicle Accidents
- Public Service  
*(RCMP & Ambulance assistance)*
- Alarm Calls (no fire)
- Training and Practise

### East District – 391 Calls

54% Town | 24% AB Transportation | 22% County

### West District – 166 Calls

41% Town | 10% AB Transportation | 2% SV Parkland Beach | 45% County | 2% Mutual Aid

**THANK-YOU TO ALL OUR FIREFIGHTERS.**



### FIRE PERMIT SEASON

is March 1-October 31



**Do you have a Fire Permit?**

Obtain your permit **[free]** on our app or website before lighting a fire or discharging fireworks.

# Ponoka County Council



Back L to R: Paul McLaughlin, Mark Matejka  
Front L to R: Doug Weir, Nancy Hartford, Bryce Liddle

Division 1 – **Bryce Liddle** | 403.963.2476  
BryceLiddle@ponokacounty.com

Division 2 – **Mark Matejka** | 403.783.9857  
MarkMatejka@ponokacounty.com [Deputy Reeve]

Division 3 – **Doug Weir** | 403.783.0394  
DougWeir@ponokacounty.com

Division 4 – **Paul McLaughlin** | 780.995.7339  
PaulMcLaughlin@ponokacounty.com [Reeve]

Division 5 – **Nancy Hartford** | 403.783.9895  
NancyHartford@ponokacounty.com

## County Waste Disposal Locations



### Bluffton Landfill

NE 6-44-2-W5  
1 mile north of Bluffton on RR 30

**Open: Wednesday & Saturday 9am-5pm**

### Rimbey Waste Transfer Station

Ph: 403.843.2950  
NE 28-42-2-W5  
6200-40<sup>th</sup> Street

**Open: Tuesday & Saturday 9am-5pm**

### Ponoka Waste Transfer Station

Ph: 403.783.8796  
NE 36-42-26-W4  
From Hwy 2A drive ½ mile west on 39<sup>th</sup> Ave

**Open: Wednesday & Saturday 9am-6pm**

### Mecca Glen Waste Transfer Station

SW 29-42-23-W4  
From Hwy #53 turn south onto RR 235

**Open: Tuesday & Saturday 9am-6pm**



## Richardson Ground Squirrel (Gopher) Control Products

Richardson ground squirrels cause damage to crops and pasture through burrowing and eating of desirable vegetation. The registration for strychnine was again cancelled in 2020 and has left producers with only a few registered options for control.

Chlorophacinone (Rozol, Ground Force) is an anticoagulant bait that can be used downhole or in bait stations. It does require multiple feedings to consume a lethal dose. These products are usually sold as a ready-to-apply bait through farm supply stores such as UFA or CO-OP.

RoCon is a liquid concentrate mixed with water and pumped through an aeration nozzle. This produces a foam that is pumped into the rodent burrow until filled, causing the ground squirrel to asphyxiate. You can find more information about RoCon @ [www.roconrodentcontrol.ca](http://www.roconrodentcontrol.ca) currently RoCon is available at [www.advantagevm.ca](http://www.advantagevm.ca)

