



Town of Athabasca

Gateway to the Great New North

October 2025 Town News and Views Volume 20, Issue 3

The Town of Athabasca respectfully acknowledges that we are meeting on Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 territory, home to the First People living on Turtle Island, and we honour all of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples who have lived, traveled, and gathered on these lands for thousands of years. We commit to sharing a path forward of respect, learning, and opportunity.

Municipal Election 2025 Update

Municipal Elections take place in communities throughout Alberta on Oct. 20, 2025. For the Town of Athabasca, nominations closed at noon on Sept. 22 and were [confirmed the afternoon of Sept. 23](#).

Seven candidates initially came forward for Town Council, but with one withdrawal, six candidates remained. As a result, they have been **acclaimed**. *Congratulations to our new Council members who will serve for the next four-year term!*

- Ida Edwards (Incumbent)
- Colleen Powell
- David Neufeld
- Darlene Reimer (Incumbent)
- David Pacholok (Incumbent)
- Edith Yuill (Incumbent)

The **Mayoral Election** will still take place, as two candidates are running for the position of Mayor:

- **Robert Balay (Incumbent)**
- **Robert Woito**

*Make sure your voice is heard—
Come out and vote for your next Mayor!*

For the convenience of town residents, an Advance Poll is scheduled Oct. 9, 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at the Town Office. [Appropriate identification](#) will be required. To make your voting process easier, register in advance by visiting [voterlink.ab.ca/](#).

Regular voting will take place on Election Day, Oct. 20, 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., at the Town Office. [Appropriate identification](#) will be required. Register in advance at [voterlink.ab.ca/](#).

Institutional Polls will take place on Election Day, Oct. 20. Election Staff will visit Pleasant Valley Lodge, Athabasca Extendicare, and Long-Term Care at the Athabasca Healthcare Centre (hospital). Times will be arranged with facility staff. Institutional Polls are for residents of the institutions only, not for the general public.

The swearing in of the new Council and the Council Organizational meeting will take place at 6:00 p.m. on Oct. 28. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

Council member orientation is scheduled for Nov. 3. Councillors serve a four-year term.

For further information about the Town of Athabasca Municipal Election, visit the [Town website](#) or contact Returning Officer Rachel Ramey, 780-675-2063 | rachel@athabasca.ca



Mayor Rob Balay, ridin' high, representing the Town of Athabasca in the 2025 Canada Day Parade, one of many exciting events this past year.

Appreciation for Town Council

Athabasca has benefitted from the leadership of an attentive and active complement of Town Councillors through the 2021-2025 council term and they deserve to be acknowledged and thanked for their efforts and commitment.

Following the results of Nomination Day, Councillors Ida Edwards, David Pacholok, Darlene Reimer and Edith Yuill will be returning by acclamation. Mayor Rob Balay will face one challenger in the Mayoral election. Councillor Sara Graling did not submit a nomination, thus will be leaving council. Councillor Jon LeMessurier, although initially planning to run, resigned in late August due to Municipal Government Act regulations requiring Town Councillors to live in town – Jon has moved his family to the family acreage south of town where he grew up.

The duties of a Councillor can be demanding and their efforts often underrated because much of what they do can happen behind the scenes or in incremental steps. However, looking back over the past four years, members of Town Council have been productive, with many examples of community engagement, agreements with regional and provincial partners, collaborative efforts with groups and organizations, and more, all for the purpose of helping make Athabasca a great community. A few examples include:

- Passing the Land Acknowledgement statement, read at the start of Town meetings and events, and posted on the Town website, Town newsletter and elsewhere.
- A successful lobby effort that included the return of Athabasca University convocation ceremonies to Athabasca, and protections of regional employment indoctrinated into the Investment Management Agreement.

More examples of COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – See Page 2



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Support for Community Projects

Financial assistance is available for individuals, groups, and not-for-profit organizations in Athabasca that partake in events that benefit the community. More details about the [Town of Athabasca Community Grant program](#) can be found on the Town website, and in the [February 2025 edition](#) of the Town newsletter.

Over the past two years alone, sixteen recipients have benefitted from the grant, in turn, adding value to the community through their various events. A sampling of recipients includes:

2024 Recipients

- Ukrainian Orthodox Church | Pysanka & Paska Workshop | \$300
- Athabasca District Chamber of Commerce | Communities in Bloom Judges Tour | \$300
- Parallel 54 Adventures | Kapâwinihk Wilderness Triathlon | \$500
- Friends of the Athabasca Public Library & Archives Society | Taste of Athabasca | \$500

2025 Recipients

- Edwin Parr Comp. School Tourism Sector | Europe Trip | \$500
- Second Chance Animal Rescue Society | Pucks for Paws Charity Hockey Tournament | \$500
- Athabasca & District Minor Hockey Association | U15 Tier 3 Provincials | \$500
- One Red Nose and Ten Happy Toes | Community Easter Egg Hunt | \$250

Grant Fund Limited

The Community Grant fund is limited and funds are awarded on a first come basis to eligible applicants until the fund has been depleted for the year. Check the Town website for complete [details and the application form](#).

More Community Engagement

APPRECIATION FOR TOWN COUNCIL, from Page 1

- Efforts of the Regional Health Care Attraction & Retention Committee: a transition house, and recruitment of two new doctors and one nurse practitioner.
- Annual Council Appreciation Dinner recognizing community volunteers, groups and organizations, with special recognition for Town staff and the Athabasca Fire Department.
- Community Standards Bylaw
- Residential and non-residential tax incentives
- Implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Program: a one-time, 50% matching, reimbursement grant of up to \$5,000.00 per premise (for the storefront).
- Municipal agreement between the five municipalities along the Athabasca Landing Trail – the Trail will be 150 years old in 2026! (Town of Athabasca, Athabasca County, Westlock County, Sturgeon County and Town of Gibbons)
- The Town's support of various riverfront projects, the newest one being the Rotary Riverfront Shade Pavilion project. Also, the designation of the [Athabasca Riverfront as an Historic Place](#); a result of the application submitted by the Athabasca Heritage Society.

News and Notes

TOWN STAFF AWARDS: Congratulations to Graeme Douglas, Public Works Superintendent, for Five Years of service with the Town! And **Congratulations to Town CAO Rachel Ramey** for reaching the **20-year mark!** What an amazing milestone! Rachel began working with the Town in 2005 as the Municipal Information Services Officer. In 2013, she took on the role of Development Officer, and in 2017, the role of Assistant CAO. In 2020, she was appointed to the role of Town CAO.

SOLD – GRAND UNION HOTEL SITE: In July 2024, after standing as a community landmark for more than a century, the historic Grand Union Hotel caught fire and was reduced to rubble in a matter of hours. Recently, new owners assumed responsibility for the property and are expected to complete the site remediation process.

TOWN COUNCIL RETREAT: Members of Town Council typically meet for a Council Retreat in October or November each year to discuss the Town's strategic and operational plans for the upcoming year. This year's retreat will include a review of the Town Budget, Strategic Plan, and other significant items that require particular focus and consideration.

GEOSPACIAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS): This online resource has proven to be a very [useful visual tool](#) that is being used regularly by Town staff. Photo-mapping is done by air, then municipalities can access customizable geographic details for property insights, asset reporting, tax information, and more.

For example, the Town has all of their water and wastewater lines in the system, and uses it for asset management and property development purposes, as well. Lot line measurements are definitely a useful tool; however, since the mapping is done by air, the line locations may not be completely accurate.

While staff of a municipality can log in to the site and access more features than are available to the general public, members of the public can still access the Town of Athabasca GIS as a guest to get some insight into how the mapping system works. Once on the Town of Athabasca page, you can zoom in, scroll around and click sections for more info about a specific property. Visit the [Town Interactive Map](#) page for access and directions on how to use this interesting resource.

OFF-SEASON PARKING BYLAW: [Town Land Use Bylaw 010-2025](#), Section 8.15, states, in part, that, in a Residential District, a Recreational Vehicle shall not be kept in any part of a front yard, or a side yard adjacent to a road, between Nov. 1 and March 31. Please review the bylaw, available on the Town website, for complete guidelines regarding RV parking.

Christmas Decorating Contest



Decorate your home, yard, or business and enter to win a prize!

The deadline to enter is December 8th. Prizes include:

- \$100 Gift Card for **Best Residential**
- \$100 Gift Card for **Best Non-Residential**

Nominate yourself or a neighbour! Submit an entry form and photos of the nominated display to the Town Office, or by email to: town@athabasca.ca

Winners to be announced at the Dec. 16 Town Council Meeting.