



Town of

Athabasca

Gateway to the Great New North

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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.

Athabasca Hosts Medical Students

Taking a proactive approach to the challenging process of attracting future health professionals to Athabasca, members in the community, including current health professionals, members of Town Council, and other supporters, hosted six University of Alberta medical students during a four-week program in September.

The U of A [Pre-Clinical Networked Medical Education program](#) (PNME) places select second-year undergraduate medical students in a rural community setting, providing them their first experience of onsite clinical teaching.

Local doctor, Ryan Schaub, is enthusiastic about the benefits of the PNME program, for the students and for the community. “We find that early exposure to clinical practice proves to be excellent for their studies,” he explains. “You spend four years in medical school. That’s four years to decide what you’re going to do for the rest of your life. The earlier students get introduced to rural practice, the higher probability that they’re going to enter a rural profession.”

A couple of the students were from Toronto; one was from Calgary, after having lived in a few other countries prior; one was from Ft. McMurray; a couple were from Edmonton. While here, they were housed at the Athabasca Reformed Church facility. Their stay in Athabasca was organized by the Town and the [Rural Health Professions Action Plan](#) (RhPAP).

In a clinical setting, the students shifted in rotation through various skills, including time in clinic with doctors, shadowing in the emergency room and in acute care, and procedural skills. “They also associated with allied health professionals to get a better appreciation of their contributions to the care team,” notes Ryan. “Physio therapy, respiratory therapy, lab tech, x-ray tech – we can’t do it alone; we need the whole team.”

Ryan wants to see our community flourish, and that includes attracting more health professionals. “There are very limited ways to recruit health professionals. The PNME program is one way for Athabasca to demonstrate its allure to the next generation of physicians.” He offers his sincere thanks to all who supported the program. “The Town and Councillors have done a tremendous job in buying into the program. Also, thank you to my fellow professionals and doctors.”

The program could repeat next year. “If we get positive feedback from students, and if the Town is willing to provide ongoing support like they have, I’d like to see it become an annual program,” says Ryan. “So far, the students have nothing but positive reviews on the community.” (1162.005)

Council Appreciates Community



Members of the Athabasca Fire Department in attendance at the Council Appreciation Dinner on Sept. 14. (Front row L-R) Paramedic Daxxon Edlund, Chelsea Kirby, Abigail Hiebert; (Back row L-R) Capt. Silvio Kohlschmidt, County Fire Chief Travis Shalapay, Capt. Adam Koons, Interim Fire Chief Jason Sturrock, Retired Fire Chief Denis Mathieu, John Burton, Evan Hayes, Josh Gillard, Lt. Cody Shalapay, Robert Harlow.

Many individuals, groups and organizations in our community deserve recognition for helping make the town and the region a great place to live. To acknowledge their contributions, members of Athabasca Town Council hosted an Appreciation Dinner at the Athabasca Multiplex on Sept. 14. Council thanks everyone for their efforts over the past year: *You are appreciated!* (0491.001)

Acknowledgements:

- Athabasca Heritage Society
- Communications Committee
- Assessment Review Board
- Alice B. Donahue Library and Archives
- Athabasca Fire Department
- Athabasca County Reeve & CAO
- Village of Boyle Mayor & CAO
- Town Office Staff
- Public Works Staff
- Brick School Sub Committee
- Regional Municipal Climate Action Committee
- Subdivision and Development Appeal Board
- Athabasca Multiplex Staff
- Rotary Club of Athabasca
- Athabasca Lions Club
- Riverfront Design Review Committee
- Family and Community Support Services
- Athabasca and District Chamber of Commerce
- Regional Health Care Attraction and Retention Committee

Awards Presented

Town Staff Recognition for Long-Term Service:

- Don Barrett – 15 Years
- Deb Singer – 15 Years
- Jennifer Kirkpatrick – 5 Years

Fire Department Dedicated Service Awards:

- Travis Shalapay – 15 Years
- Adam Koons – 5 Years
- Byron Ahlefeld – Firefighter of the Year
- Chelsea Kirby – Most Improved Firefighter of the Year
- John Burton – Recruit of the Year



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Fortis and APEX Franchise Fees

Municipalities across the province have the option to adjust Fortis and APEX Utilities franchise fee rates on an annual basis. The rate can be increased, decreased, or left the same. The rate for both utility companies for Athabasca for 2023 is 16%. The previous rate, for 2022, was 14%.

Estimated franchise fee revenue for both Fortis and APEX in Athabasca is currently higher than the budgeted revenue for the year. Town Council is looking into whether or not the rate should be adjusted for 2024. A decision must be made before November.

Unlike property taxes that apply only to residential and commercial properties, utility franchise fees are applied to all utility users, including churches, schools and hospitals. Franchise fees show up on the utility bill as part of the distribution charge.

Currently, Fortis franchise fees across the province range from 0% to 20%. Examples include: Athabasca 16%; Boyle 20%; Barrhead 14%; Alberta Beach 8%; Claresholm 5%; Morinville 20%; Whitecourt 3.91%

APEX franchise fees across the province range from 0% to 35%. Examples include: Athabasca 16%; Barrhead 18%; Bonnyville 20%; Morinville 19%; Three Hills 9%; Westlock 27% (1774.002)

More information about franchise fees and rates in specific municipalities can be found on the [Alberta Utilities Commission website](#).



Town Council Takes the Tour

(l-r) Councillors Edie Yuill, Ida Edwards, Jonathan LeMessurier, Darlene Reimer, Dave Pacholok and Sara Graling getting some behind the scenes insight into the Athabasca Regional Multiplex from facility manager Tim Wolfenberg. Councillors toured the (3061.003) town on Sept. 12, visiting various locations, including the Multiplex, the Aspen Regional Water Plant, Flips Gym, as well as some improvement areas in town and some areas of concern.

Periodic tours of the town help the councillors become more visually familiar with the facilities and infrastructure that they are responsible for overseeing during their tenure on Town Council.

Town Bylaw Regarding Trailers

Unattached trailers, whether for occupancy or for carrying goods or equipment, are not permitted to park on any roadway unless being loaded or unloaded, and in that case, for a maximum of 48 hours, and only if the trailer is located immediately adjacent to the property it is being loaded from or loaded to, and is parked in the same direction of travel with no slides extended.

Town of Athabasca Christmas Decorating Contest



Heads-up, all you wonderfully creative people who enjoy decorating for the Christmas holidays! The Town of Athabasca Christmas Decorating Contest is coming back for another season! Challenge your neighbours to a friendly competition!

Some of the details about how this year's contest will work are still being ironed out, but there will still be two categories: Residential and Non-Residential, with a prize of a \$100 gift card going to the winner in each category.

Stay tuned! Watch the [Town website](#) and [Town Facebook](#) for more information as it comes available. (4042.002)

Newsletter Reader Contest!

Several random Town **utility bill account numbers** have been embedded into articles in this newsletter. The first reader to find their utility bill number and contact the Town Office wins a prize!

Watch the Town website and Facebook for the winner.

New Fire Pit on Athabasca Riverfront

(left) One of three new fire pits installed on the Riverfront in Athabasca, this one installed by the Town in recognition of the 30th anniversary of Alberta Pacific Forest Industries in the Athabasca region.

The fire pit project was initiated by the Riverfront Design Review Committee, wanting to add another element to the riverfront that will bring community members together all year round.

The next time you're passing by, or planning a picnic or a get-together, check it out!

