Building Prosperity in the Athabasca Region

HOME AFFORDABLE family living

WORK SERVICE HUB for Alberta's oil sands

WORKFORCE

talent development education infrastructure

PLAY OUTDOOR

lake and river country recreation destination

Produced by the Athabasca Region Tourism and Economic Development Committee

















Welcome to the Athabasca Region

Canola Field, Athabasca County

Located just ninety minutes north of Edmonton in a mixed landscape of boreal forest, lakes, and farms, the Athabasca region thrives on the strength of its agriculture, forestry, and natural gas sectors. The region is also an affordable residential option for many who commute to the oil sands via Highways 2/55/63.

The Athabasca region is the gateway to Alberta's three oil sand areas - the Athabasca Oil Sands (which extends southwards from Fort McMurray towards Athabasca County), Peace River Oil Sands (Wabasca, northwest), and Cold Lake Oil Sands (east) - functioning as a service hub for the industrial activity taking place in both the Fort McMurray and Wabasca regions. While there are no oil sands projects within the County, there is substantial spin-off activity including increased work camp populations, resource extraction related industries such as fabricators of products destined for oil sands projects, pipeline construction, and highway commercial activity.

Forestry activity is focused on the Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. (Al-Pac) mill and operations in the area northeast of the Town of Athabasca and northwest of Boyle. The Al-Pac Forest Management Area covers a substantial area of Crown land within the County.

Tourism is a feature of the region's economy, driven by the presence of numerous lakes, rivers, and streams - they are all part of the natural beauty the area has to offer.

Industry is attracted to the region by affordable land values, transportation access, and a stable labour force.

There are two urban municipalities (Town of Athabasca and Village of Boyle), eight summer villages, and eleven hamlets (County jurisdiction) located within Athabasca County.



(Town of Athabasca – centre of County) to: St. Albert – 133 km Downtown Edmonton – 152 km Edmonton International Airport – 182 km Fort McMurray (via Hwy 63) – 302 km Grande Prairie (via Hwy 2) – 447 km

Our Region at a Glance

- **↑** Lac La Biche
- ♠ Fort McMurray
- ← Athabasca



Hwy. 63 - Wandering River

BUSINESS DIVERSITY GENERATES A STABLE ECONOMY AND LABOUR FORCE

Forestry

Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. (Al-Pac) - located 30 mins north of Boyle, 35 mins NE of Athabasca operates Canada's newest and North-America's largest, single-line bleached kraft pulp mill. Production: 650,000 air dried metric tonnes of elemental-chlorine free pulp annually. Employees: 400

Agriculture

650 farms (2016). I.1 million acres (2/3 of County land area, 285K acres arable, 800K acres pasture). \$123 million in farm receipts in 2016 (0.7% of provincial total), up 45% since 2011. Leading activity by farm count: beef cattle (30%), oilseed/grain farming (30%), other crop farming (hay, 27%). Leading product outputs: beef, equine, poultry/eggs, wheat, canola, barley, peas, flax, oats, and specialty crops.

Post-Secondary Education

Athabasca University – Canada's leading online university with \$30 million injection to local economy annually.

Portage College - Heavy Equipment Operator and Pipeline Training campus in Boyle.

Northern Lakes College - offers a variety of training at its Athabasca campus.

Oil and Gas

Natural gas infrastructure in the region. Service hub for Peace River Oil Sands (Wabasca) and Athabasca Oil Sands (Fort McMurray).

Tourism

Infrastructure supporting summer cottages (17 recreational lakes in County), fishing, hunting, trails (hiking, wildlife, ATV/snowmobile), and camping.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

One million acres of land producing a wide variety of outputs have potential to be processed locally in a low-cost business environment with less than two-hour access to the Edmonton CMA consumer and distribution network. Water availability potential includes groundwater or water license draw from the Athabasca River for industry and agricultural processing investment interests.

AFFORDABILITY

Low business costs/cost of living – the region has average (of 64 municipal districts in Alberta) residential and non-residential taxes, very competitive non-residential land pricing, monthly shelter costs roughly 30% below Edmonton CMA and Alberta costs and 60% below Fort McMurray costs, and median house prices roughly 15% below median Edmonton CMA and Alberta prices while being 40% below Fort McMurray prices.

TAX RATES (2017)

County

6.91 residential 17.25 commercial

Example: Based on \$100,000 assessment Residential Taxes would be \$651.52; Commercial Property taxes would be \$1,717.62

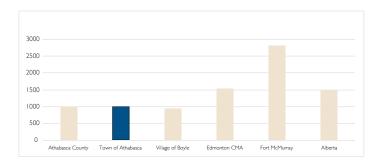
Town of Athabasca

7.94 residential 16.35 commercial

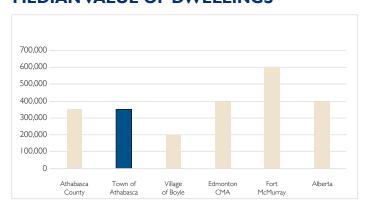
Village of Boyle

9.13 residential 17.81 commercial

MEDIAN MONTHLY SHELTER COSTS - OWNED DWELLINGS



MEDIAN VALUE OF DWELLINGS



TRANSPORTATION LINKAGES

CN rail connection between Edmonton and Fort McMurray in SE portion of County. Highway 2/55/63 connectivity between Edmonton and Fort McMurray.

Athabasca Region Quick Facts

Population – 12463

Residential Structures – 5910

Housing starts (2017) - 51

Construction value (2017) - \$50.2 million

Median Dwelling Value (2016) - \$348,778

Number of Registered Businesses (2016) – 700 (not incl. farm operations)

Top Employers

Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries - 400

Athabasca University - 400

Aspen View Public School Division – 370

Athabasca Healthcare Centre – 175

North Corridor Co-op - 80

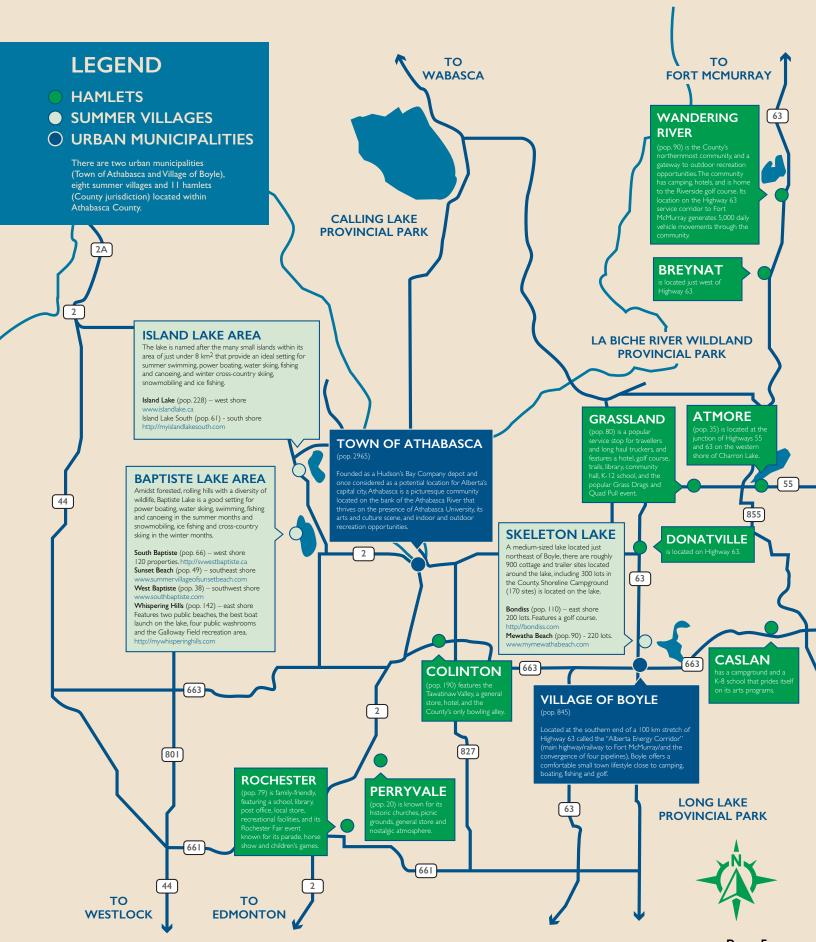
Athabasca County - 68

TriGen Construction - 50

NRI Global - 38

Boyle Healthcare Centre - 25

Town of Athabasca - 16



Page 5

Investment Opportunities

Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. - fibreline

WOOD PRODUCTS MANUFACTURING

Leveraging local workforce talent and northern Alberta's wood fibre resource to develop niche, small scale, high value output ranging from hobby craft to industrial production.

OIL AND GAS SERVICES

Location on the Highway 2/55/63 corridor between Edmonton and Fort McMurray has generated spin-off oil sands activity in the region – from residential to enterprise.

As the oil sands further develop, opportunities include: highway commercial enterprises, oilfield services, freight trucking, management consulting, machinery and equipment repairs, metal fabrication, and logistical/warehousing support enterprises.

New enterprise opportunities are supported by low cost land, and an existing industry support network.

AGRICULTURAL PROCESSING

Residents support the continued growth, intensification, and development of the agricultural sector.

There is also a growing interest in locally grown food and production.

Land use planning opportunities exist to ensure that municipal policies and regulations support a wide variety of type and scale of operations from large commercial farms to community-based gardens in a changing global economy.

RECREATION INDUSTRY

The Athabasca Region is a popular destination for those who love the outdoors. This bodes well for growth and opportunity in the future.

Opportunities exist for independent entrepreneur and recreational property owners looking to develop businesses around this sector.

Wandering River, Alberta

INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL GROWTH NODES

Athabasca Region supports new commercial and industrial development by recognizing the following growth nodes:

- Highway 63 Corridors:

 Boyle Fringe Area
 Wandering River Area
 Grassland Area
 Junction of Highway 55
- Spruce Valley Industrial Area
- Highway 55/Al-Pac Connector Area

Growth within the Town of Athabasca, Village of Boyle, and the hamlets of Colinton, Grassland, Rochester, and Wandering River is welcome and encouraged. These communities have a variety of utility services available for development.

Also supported is the development of resource extraction activities (current - forestry, logging, sand and gravel, and peat moss harvesting) within the Rural Development Policy Area if measures to reduce any potential conflict with surrounding land uses can be implemented. Development proposals are reviewed on a case by case basis.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Athabasca Region provides many choices to meet your quality of life expectations and which provide access to general amenities.

Choices include:

- Single family homes
- Country residential acreages
- Apartments
- Condominiums
- Manufactured home parks
- Farm properties
- Recreation properties

Our region offers housing for all ages including;

- senior care facilities
- assisted living facilities
- low income housing
- · adult living communities

Education & Training Athabasea University Academic and Research Centre

Athabasca University, Academic Research Centre, Athabasca

Talent Development

Athabasca University Canada's Leading Distance Educator

Potential for enterprise to leverage a technology-savvy and research-expansionary Athabasca
University to create spin-off economic and workforce development opportunities. A
\$30-million Academic and Research Centre opened in Athabasca in 2011, doubling the size of the campus, and supporting expanded staff research activity.

Portage College Training for Industry

Portage College's innovative Heavy Equipment Operator and Pipeline Training campus outside of Boyle provides both simulated and practical experience for those looking for work in oil and gas, construction, or road building industries.

Northern Lakes College Corporate, Continuing Education, Admin

Northern Lakes College has a local campus, which offers popular programs in administration, trades, and human services along with continuing education and corporate training courses.

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY BY THE NUMBERS

40,000 students (7,800 full-load equivalents) from every province, and 87 countries

850 courses

55 undergraduate/graduate programs

\$130 million annual operating budget

\$30 million injection to Athabasca economy annually

1,000 faculty and staff employed in campuses in Athabasca, St. Albert, Edmonton, Calgary

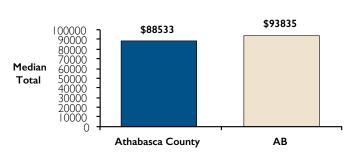


POPULATION AGE STRUCTURE

40 ■ Athabasca County 35 □АВ 30 25 % of 20 15 10 5 0 0-19 20-44 45-64 65+ Age

Src: Census Canada, 2016

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

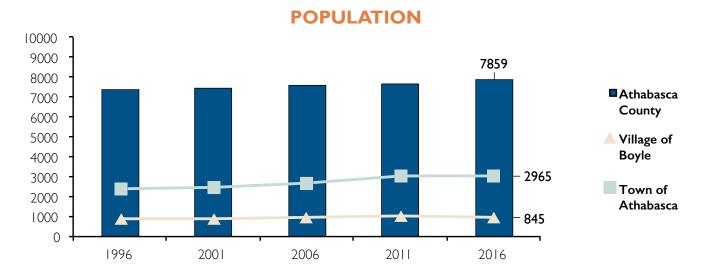


Src: Census Canada, 2016

EMPLOYMENT BASE

By Industry: Agriculture, forestry (manufacturing), oil and gas, education.

By Occupation: Trades/transport/equipment operators, sales & service, management, business/finance/administration.



Growth rate (2011-2016): 2.7% (Alberta: 11.6%)

UTILITIES

Electricity/Natural Gas are deregulated in Alberta. Electricity and gas rates are variable on a monthly basis, or can be fixed on longer term contracts.

The Alberta Government provides a website to assist consumers with choosing an appropriate provider for their residence of business. To learn more - www.ucahelps.gov.ab.ca.

Municipal

Water and sewer are provided in Colinton, Wandering River, and Grassland. Sewer (only) is provided in Rochester. Rural areas not serviced by utilities rely on well water/septic systems.

- Colinton: \$50.55 per month plus \$3.27/m³ over 15 m³ /month. Sewer 33% of water.
- Grassland & Wandering River: \$70.65/
 month plus \$4.71/m³ over 15m³ per month.
 Grassland sewer charge: 33% of water.
 Wandering River sewer charge: 34% of water
- Rochester: Residential \$18/month flat rate.
 Commercial \$36/month flat rate.
- Rural Subdivisions: \$70.65/month plus \$4.71/m³ over 15m³ per month.

Truck Filling Stations at Hamlets:

\$4.71/m³ (resident)

Lagoon Tipping Fee (commercial):

\$650/yr (flat fee)

Electricity

Electricity (regulated provider) for the area is provided by EPCOR (www.epcor.ca). As of July, 2018, the small business rate was \$6.8 c kWh.

Natural Gas

Alta Gas - (regulated provider) for the area (www.altagas.ca). As of July, 2018, the small business rate was \$3.223/GJ.

Pembina Natural Gas - www.pembina.com

COMMUNICATION

Internet:

Tridon Communications (TELUS) – cell and wireless Internet services

www.tridon.com

Semalta Communications (Bell) – cell services www.bell.ca

MCSNet – residential and commercial wireless Internet

www.mcsnet.ca

Xplornet – residential and commercial satellite Internet

www.xplornet.com

TV:

Shaw - <u>www.shawdirect.ca</u> or Bell - www.bell.ca

Newspaper (weekly):

Athabasca Advocate

www.athabascaadvocate.com

Radio:

BOOM 94.1

www.boom941.com

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Athabasca County, the Village of Boyle and the Town of Athabasca provide by-law enforcement and fire protection services through volunteer fire departments.

Call 911 in an emergency. Call Answer Service will identify your physical location and connect you to Fire, Ambulance, or Police Services.

RCMP detachments are located in Athabasca and Boyle.



Dash 8 landing at the Athabasca Regional Airport

CONNECTIVITY

Road

- Highway 2 Canamex Corridor linking north / south corridors from northern Alberta to Mexico.
- Highway 2/55/63 linking Edmonton to Fort McMurray with highway to Fort McMurray from Grassland now twinned.

Air

- Edmonton International Airport
 120 minutes south.
- Regional airport: Athabasca Regional Airport (CWYM) for light aircraft. I.5 km east of Athabasca on Hwy 55. 4000 x 100 foot asphalt runway. Pilot lounge. 24/7 selfserve Avgas system. Aircraft Radio Control Aerodrome Lighting (ARCAL) and Runway End Identifier Lights System (REILS) are safety features, particularly for STARS Air Ambulance and many provincial bodies who use the airport on a regular basis. Lease lots available. www.athabascacounty.com/airport

Rail

Canadian National Railway – southeast portion of County lies on line between Edmonton and Fort McMurray.

Bus

Red Arrow Service connecting Edmonton and Fort McMurray with stops in Athabasca, Boyle, Grassland, and Wandering River. The Red Arrow network connects to Calgary and Lethbridge.

Courier

Full courier services.

Internet

High speed Internet commonly available.

MEDICAL

Health care is provided at the Athabasca
Healthcare Centre and the Boyle Healthcare
Centre. There are three medical clinics in the
County: Athabasca Family Health Centre (Town
of Athabasca), Athabasca Medical Centre (Town
of Athabasca), and Silver Birch Medical Centre
(Boyle). A range of health-related professional
services is available in the County.

Aspen Diagnostic Imaging, Athabasca - 780-675-1168, www.aspenimaging.ca



Edwin Parr Composite High School, Athabasca

EDUCATION

Primary

The Aspen View School Division (www.aspenview.
org) covers education in Athabasca, Rochester, Boyle, and Grassland. The Northern Lights School Division (www.nlsd.ab.ca) serves Caslan and Wandering River. Both divisions offer dual credit and apprenticeship opportunities, international experience programs, and French Immersion.

- Boyle School (Boyle, K-12) www.boyle.aspenview.org
- Caslan School (Caslan, K-8) www.caslanschool.ca
- Edwin Parr Composite School (Athabasca, 7-12)
 http://epc.aspenview.org
- Grassland School (Grassland, K-12) http://grass.aspenview.org
- Landing Trail Intermediate School (Athabasca, K-6)
 http://ltis.aspenview.org
- Rochester School (Rochester, K-9) http://rochester.aspenview.org
- Wandering River School (Wandering River, K-6)
 http://wanderingriverschool.ca
- Whispering Hills Primary School (Whispering Hills, K-3)
 http://whps.aspenview.org

Post-Secondary

- Athabasca University

 www.athabascau.ca

 Serves 40,000 students online in 55 undergraduate/graduate programs.
- Northern Lakes College www.northernlakescollege.ca Innovative training/distance learning. Location - Town of Athabasca.
- Portage College
 <u>www.portagecollege.ca</u>

 Heavy equipment and pipeline training centre
 (Boyle) is a first of its kind in Canada.



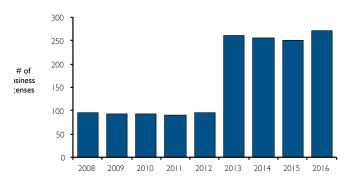
Portage College - Heavy Equipment Operator

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

University diploma, certificate, or degree Trade or non-university certificate / diploma High school certificate No high school certificate 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45

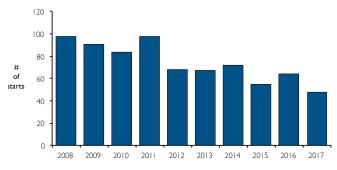
Src: Census Canada, 2016

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



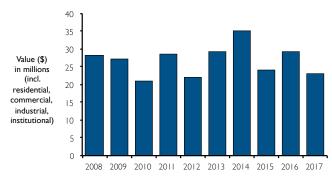
Src: https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca

RESIDENTIAL HOUSING STARTS



Src:Town of Athabasca

CONSTRUCTION VALUES



Src:Town of Athabasca

RECREATION & AMENITIES

ATHABASCA RIVERFRONT PARK – spray park, skateboard park, playground, fitness equipment, boat launch, picnic area, walking trail, outdoor stage

ATHABASCA REGIONAL MULTIPLEX –

arena, curling rink, fieldhouse (indoor), baseball diamonds, soccer pitches, playground (outdoor), fitness centre and new indoor pool scheduled (2019) incl. lazy river and waterslide

BOYLE SPRAY PARK - an outdoor spray park operated during the summer months

FISHING - 19 fishing lakes, Boyle Trout Pond and Athabasca River

BOATING – boat launches available on most lakes in region

ATHABASCA LANDING POOL – indoor pool, hot tub, sauna

LIBRARIES – Athabasca, Boyle, Grassland, Rochester, Wandering River

TRAILS – Athabasca Landing Trail (non-motorized, 32 km, www.athabascalandingtrail.com), Muskeg Creek Trails (17 km, walking, biking, x-country skiing), Peace River Trails (60 km, ATV/ snowmobile friendly, www.albertatrailnet.com), Poacher's Landing (Grassland, ATV friendly)

FARMERS' MARKETS – Athabasca and Boyle

THE ARTS – music, theatre and dance is alive and well in the County: Heartwood Folk Club, Northern Lights Spiritus Singers, Performing Arts Presenters of Athabasca, Whispering Hills Country Music Association, Athabasca Ukrainian Folk Dance Club, Big River Arts Society, Boyle Twilight Twirlers Square Dancers

GOLF – 5 courses (Athabasca Golf & Country Club, Skeleton Lake Golf & Country Club, Riverbank Golf (Wandering River), Northern Ridge Golf Club (Boyle).



COUNTY CAMPGROUNDS – 9 - Forfar Park (Long Lake, 72 unserviced sites), Hope Lake (60 unserviced sites), Island Lake (11 unserviced sites), Ghost Lake (5 unserviced sites), Baptiste Lake (12 unserviced sites), Narrow Lake (10 unserviced sites), Jackfish Lake (35 unserviced sites), Long Lake (4 unit group camp), North Buck Lake Narrows (6 unserviced sites)

PROVINCIAL PARKS/RECREATION AREAS – 5 – Long Lake, Poacher's Landing, North Buck Lake, Lawrence Lake, Calling Lake

OTHER OVERNIGHT CAMPING – Blueberry Hill RV Park, Chump Lake Campsite, Rock Island Lake Campground, Shoreline Camping & Fishing Resort, Smallwoods Campsite, Katherine's Camping Corner

ATHABASCA OPEN CAMP - meals, RV sites and accommodations, for work crews year round. Located 11 miles east of Athabasca on Hwy. 55 and Range Road 203.Tel - 780-499-3670

ATHABASCA RIVER RUNNERS – club that maintains 300 km of groomed snowmobile trails www.athabascariverrunners.ca

OUTDOOR ICE SURFACES – Colinton, Rochester, Island Lake South, Grassland, Wandering River, Richmond Park, Athabasca

DOWNHILL SKIIING/SNOWBOARDING – Tawatinaw Valley (south of Rochester), Long Lake (south of Boyle)

For more information - http://www.visitathabasca.ca/about-the-region/visitors-guide/

LODGING

Hotel/Motel

TOWN OF ATHABASCA – 6 hotels/motels (Athabasca Hillside Motel, Athabasca Lodge Motel, Super 8, Days Inn, Grand Union Hotel, New Western Athabasca Inn)

BOYLE – 3 hotels/motels (Boyle Hotel, Boyle Motor Lodge, Twilight Country Motel)

COLINTON – 2 hotels/motels (Colinton Corner Motel, Colinton Hotel)

GRASSLAND – 2 hotels/motels (Ramada, Grassland Hotel)

WANDERING RIVER – 2 hotels/motels (Mad Trapper Inn & Hotel, Wandering River Motel)

Cabins

TOWN OF ATHABASCA – Cabins by the River ISLAND LAKE – Little Lodge on the Lake JACKFISH LAKE – Petty's Homecraft

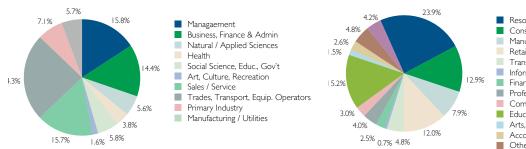
B&B

EAST OF TOWN OF ATHABASCA – Kostyk Kozy Korner



ATHABASCA COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

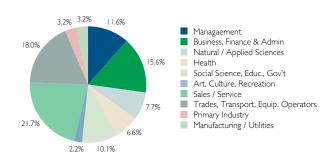
ATHABASCA COUNTY EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

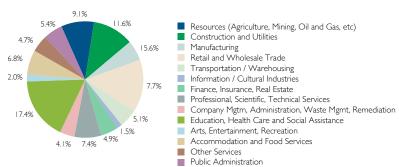




ALBERTA EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

ALBERTA EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY





Src: Census Canada,

2016

The Government of Alberta produces a wage survey

http://occinfo.alis.alberta.ca/occinfopreview/info/browse-wages.html

This database is searchable by region; Athabasca County is located in the Athabasca-Grande Prairie region.



Finance

ATB (Athabasca, Boyle, Grassland) – www.atb.com

CIBC (Athabasca, Boyle) – www.cibc.com
Servus Credit Union (Athabasca) –
www.servus.ca

Scotiabank (Athabasca) – www.scotiabank.com

Real Estate

Residential and Commercial real estate listings – www.realtor.ca. Search by each of the community names in Athabasca County.

Local offices: Royal LePage County Realty (www.royallepage.ca/athabasca), Remax Results Athabasca/Boyle (http://joannelson.remax.ca; www.keithermadsen.remax.ca), 3% Realty Progress (www.3percentrealtyprogress/ca), Kennedy Real Estate (https://lakecountry-buysell.com).

Provincial

Alberta Economic Development Regional Development Branch 4th Floor, Commerce Place 10155 - 102 Street, Edmonton, T5J 4L6 Contact: Audrey Alberecht-Lee

Tel: 780.427.6075

Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training, and Labour www.work.alberta.ca

Alberta Small Business Resources www.smallbusiness.alberta.ca

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry www.agric.gov.ab.ca

Albertacanada.com (investment and statistical information) - <u>www.albertacanada.com</u>

OTHER RESOURCES

Community Futures Tawatinaw Region 10611 - 100 Avenue, Westlock, T7P 2J4 Tel: 780.349.2903, <u>www.albertacf.com</u>

Athabasca District Chamber of Commerce www.athabascachamber.org

Athabasca and Area Business & Rental Directory <u>www.athomeinathabasca.ca</u>

BizPal (permits and licenses) – <u>www.bizpal.ca</u>

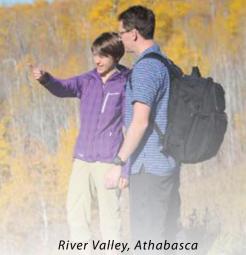
Business Link (provincial business information service) - www.businesslink.ca

Business Development Bank of Canada www.bdc.ca

Aboriginal Business and Entrepreneurship Development

www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1375201178602/





Interested in seeing how our region will fit in with your personal or business future?

Athabasca County

3602 – 48th Avenue, Athabasca, T9S 1M8
Tel: 780.675.2273
e: info@athabascacounty.com
www.athabascacounty.com

Town of Athabasca

4705 - 49 Avenue, Athabasca, T9S 1B7
Tel: 780.675.2063
e: town@athabasca.ca
www.athabasca.ca

Village of Boyle

4800 - 3rd St. S, Box 9, Boyle, T0A 0M0 Tel: 780.689.3643 www.boylealberta.com

Contact Us Today!













Building Our Tomorrow

Municipal collaboration has catalyzed and transformed the Athabasca Region into a place where diverse businesses, industry, institutions, people and communities have prospered and succeeded.

Contact Athabasca County 780.675.2273 ted@athabascacounty.com to further discuss opportunities











