



Town of

Athabasca

Gateway to the Great New North

February 2024 Town News and Views Volume 19, Issue 1

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.

Enhance Your Home, Empower Our Community

Is Athabasca's Clean Energy Improvement Program right for you?

In October 2022, the Town of Athabasca launched the **Clean Energy Improvement Program** (CEIP), an exciting step towards a sustainable future for our town and a great home upgrading opportunity for property owners. Apply now to secure your low-cost financing while the program is still open.

With interest rates and energy prices on the rise there has never been a better time to take advantage of this program. Get low, 3.5% interest financing and flexible repayment terms for up to 20 years to pay for sustainable and energy efficient home improvements.

- **Transform Your Home:** Finance up to 100% of your home's energy efficiency or renewable energy projects. Enjoy competitive interest rates and repay conveniently through your property tax bill.
- **Tied to Your Home, Not You:** CEIP financing is tied to your property, not you; if you sell, the new owner can assume repayment (and continue to enjoy the cost and energy saving benefits!)
- **Boost Your Home's Value:** Energy-efficient homes offer increased comfort and potential for higher property value.
- **Designed for Everyone:** With a variety of eligible upgrades and a minimum project cost of \$3,000, up to a maximum of \$50,000, CEIP caters to diverse homeowner needs and preferences.

Visit myceip.ca/Athabasca, fill out a pre-qualification form today!

CEIP represents a unique collaboration between participants, the Town of Athabasca, and local businesses. It is more than just home improvements – it is about supporting our town's economy and enhancing our way of life. Participation in this program enhances the quality of life in our town for ourselves and future generations. Join us in making a practical and positive difference in Athabasca.

Your step-by-step guide to participating in Athabasca's CEIP:

1. Pre-Qualification: Read [CEIP terms and conditions](#), submit a pre-qualification form with property details.
2. Complete an EnerGuide Home Evaluation to choose your upgrades.
3. Select a qualified contractor from the CEIP Qualified Contractor Directory, submit the application with required documents.
4. Sign the Clean Energy Improvement and Project Agreements.
5. Begin installations after receiving authorization.
6. Submit completion forms, Town pays contractors directly.
7. Complete a final EnerGuide Evaluation to see your savings.
8. Repayment made through your property tax bill.

Decorating Contest Winners



Congratulations to the winners of the 2023 Town of Athabasca **Christmas Decorating Contest!** Heidi Shopland and Brad Hindy in the Residential category (photo above), and Pleasant Valley Lodge in the Non-Residential category (photo below). Great effort by the winners, and many thanks to all who participated in the contest and submitted entries!



Town 2024 Budget Presentation

The Town of Athabasca 2024 Capital and Operating Budgets have been passed and the public is invited to an open house Budget Presentation at 7:00 p.m. on Feb. 13, at the Athabasca Regional Multiplex, recreation room.

Budget highlights will be shared, including insight into what decisions were made and reasons why. Questions from the audience will be encouraged. *Come and join us!*

RCMP Safe Exchange Zone

The RCMP officially launched a Safe Exchange Zone in the Eastern Alberta District. A Safe Exchange Zone is a designated area directly outside RCMP detachment buildings where people can meet and conduct safe exchanges or transactions within view of police resources. The location of the Safe Exchange Zone is at the RCMP Detachment, 3402 – 48 Ave., Athabasca.



Connect with
Town of Athabasca
on Facebook

www.athabasca.ca

4705 - 49 Avenue, Athabasca, AB T9S 1B7
Tel: 780-675-2063 – Fax: 780-675-4242
E-mail: town@athabasca.ca

Downtown Revitalization Grant Available for Businesses

The Town of Athabasca has established a *Downtown Revitalization Program* for business owners within the Town's downtown core. Eligible business owners may take advantage of a one-time, 50% matching, reimbursement grant of up to \$5,000.00 per premise when undertaking exterior renovations to their business to increase the curb appeal of their storefronts.

Business owners must be pre-approved before construction begins by filling out an application form, including estimated costs. The program will be on a first come, first serve basis, based on the annual amount set aside for the program in the Town budget. Projects must be completed within one calendar year.

The one-time reimbursement grant will be paid once the project is completed and receipts are submitted to the Town. Receipts must be received by Dec. 31 of the year the work is complete. Applicants are responsible for paying their contractors.

Applicants must be deemed current on any amounts owing to the Town of Athabasca. Homebased businesses, non-profit organizations and tax-exempt properties are not eligible.

Applications and more info, including a map outlining eligible areas in the downtown core, are available from the Town Office.

Climate Vulnerability Report Completed for Athabasca

Taking a proactive approach to climate change concerns, the Town of Athabasca engaged Associated Engineering and All One Sky Foundation to develop an understanding of climate vulnerabilities and risks to Town-owned infrastructure and assets. The Town conducted this work with funding from the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC) Climate Resilience Capacity Building Program.

A series of risk identification and assessment workshops were conducted with the Town using the Public Infrastructure Engineering Vulnerability Committee (PIEVC) High Level Screening Guide (HLSG) Process.

The assessment was conducted on the following Town of Athabasca assets and areas:

- Water
- Wastewater
- Stormwater
- Solid Waste
- Facilities
- Roads
- Parks
- Fleet

The purpose of this assessment was to conduct a climate-based risk analysis for the Town's infrastructure and to summarize the highest-priority climate risks. In addition, the assessment also identified facilities that would benefit from additional assessment efforts. To access a full copy of this insightful and comprehensive report please go to <https://athabasca.ca/p/climate-change-risk-and-vulnerability-assessment-adaptation-planning-report->.

Did You Know ...

Back issues of the *Town of Athabasca Newsletter* are available on the Town website, along with many other helpful and informative resources. *Visit the website today!*

Five Blooms for Athabasca in Provincial CiB Competition

The Town of Athabasca acknowledges the Athabasca Communities in Bloom (CiB) committee – a sub-committee of the Athabasca District Chamber of Commerce – and all in the community who supported and contributed to a variety of CiB efforts through 2023. Thank you for your dedication towards the beautification of our great community!

It is exciting and encouraging to hear that, due to your efforts, Athabasca received top honours with a “5 Blooms” designation in the 2023 provincial CiB competition – the winner in the 2,001 – 6,000 population category. Congratulations for a job well done!

CiB participants enhance their communities in relation to six criteria: Community Appearance, Environmental Action, Heritage Conservation, Tree Management, Landscape, and Plant & Floral Displays. Participants are recognized with a Bloom Rating through the program's evaluation process. Athabasca received an overall rating of 83% to earn the 5 Blooms rating and be declared the provincial winner.

Community involvement is so fundamental to the program that it is evaluated in each of the above criteria. Athabasca received an honourable mention recognizing volunteers, individuals and groups who contributed to community projects on the Athabasca Riverfront. Additionally, CiB recognizes efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change which is reflected in several criteria including: Environmental Action; Preservation of Natural Heritage; Tree Management; and Landscape.

A statement accompanying the official CiB evaluation forms highlights the value and significance of the program: “Within the context of climate change and environmental concerns, communities involved in the Communities in Bloom program can be proud of their efforts, which provide real and meaningful environmental solutions and benefit all of society.”

The official evaluation report includes a variety of recommendations for further community enhancement in each of the evaluated categories.

Residential Water Rates Increase for Town Residents

Athabasca Town Council passed a Utility Amendment Bylaw (012-2023) to increase the current water rates in town. This is due to the rate increase the Town is seeing from the Aspen Regional Water Services Commission.

Residential water rates have increased from a minimum charge of \$25.60 per billing (every two months), to \$26.88 per billing (5m3). Additionally, as outlined in Section 6.2 of the bylaw, a charge shall be levied on all metered water in excess of minimum usages as follows:

- 18 m3 or less: \$5.3760/m3 (up from \$5.1201/m3)
- 18.1 – 45 m3: \$5.5335/m3 (up from \$5.2697/m3)
- Over 45 m3: \$6.0921/m3 (up from \$5.8021/m3)

These increases went into effect Dec. 1, 2023, and will be reflected on the Utility Bills sent out in February, 2024.