



*County of Paintearth*  
*No. 18*



# **2014 Annual Report**



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## County Council

**Division 1:** George Glazier (Reeve)

**Division 2:** Brian Bunbury

**Division 3:** Doreen Blumhagen

**Division 4:** Robert (Rocky) Dahmer

**Division 5:** Walter Weber

**Division 6:** Tyrrill Hewitt

**Division 7:** Diane Elliott (Deputy Reeve)

**Chief Administrative Officer** – Tarolyn Peach

### Council meetings

Regular County Council Meetings are scheduled to be held every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month commencing at 9:00 a.m. The adopted Council Meeting Minutes are available on the County's Website or photo copies are available to the public for a nominal fee.

## Message from Reeve George Glazier

2014 proved to be another rewarding and challenging year for the County of Paintearth No. 18 and its ratepayers. The year was blessed with adequate amounts of moisture, and the cattle market continued to be very strong. However, oil prices fell dramatically in the last quarter of 2014. County Council strives to provide programs and services that are expected and requested by ratepayers and neighboring communities. These programs and services are what drive the Count's budgeting process, and therefore set the mill rates.

The County continues to acquire and secure gravel to ensure we can provide safe, well maintained gravel roads. The right of way is graveled in a three year rotation at a rate of approximately 200-300 yards per mile. The challenge faced by the County is the lack of gravel sources within the boundaries. The cost of gravel that the County has secured continues to increase until the point that it is placed on the right of way. These costs include developing (excavating and crushing), hauling, and royalty payments made to the gravel landowners. With gravel acquisition, the County cannot tax for the gravel until it is applied to the right of way. This means the gravel will increase the assets of the organization and decrease the cash flow.

Council approved the MG30 road stabilization program in 2010. The MG30 product has numerous benefits, notably the main benefit to the County is incurred on the heavily travelled roads where gravel is saved. For example, before the MG30 program the Silver Heights road

was graveled every 1-2 years, since adopting the MG30 program a full application of gravel has not been required.

Faced with requests from ratepayers, Council increased the Community Peace Officer time allocation from a 1/3 to 1 full time position in 2014. This position works closely with ratepayers and industry to address the increase of concerns from the development of the wind towers, electrical transmission line, and the oil and gas industry.

Over the last six years, Council has worked in cooperation with the Building Canada Grant to bring water to areas within the County that are in desperate need. This grant requires the municipality to contribute 1/3 of the capital installation cost, with the operating costs to be shared by the users and ratepayers of the County. Council will continue to apply for grants to meet the needs of future rural water program developments.

In 2013, the Province discontinued funding for the repair and maintenance of bridges. Since the County has approximately 110 bridge structures including culverts, we had to re-evaluate the maintenance schedule on low and high traffic structures. In cases where traffic levels were low but the crossing is deemed essential, the County is utilizing a provincially approved pre-manufactured structure called a Jim Bob bridge.

Another challenge encountered in rural Alberta is the recruitment and retention of local physicians. Council works in conjunction with the Towns of Castor and Coronation to alleviate this concern. Council is pleased with the number of physicians that have chosen to begin rural practices within the region.

County Council endeavors to provide current, effective projects to the ratepayers, while continuing to be financially responsible.

## Administration Office

### Office Hours

The County Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday except statutory holidays. The Office is closed daily from 12:00 p.m. to 12:30 p.m.

## Website

For information regarding the County of Paintearth No. 18 please visit our website at [www.countypaintearth.ca](http://www.countypaintearth.ca)

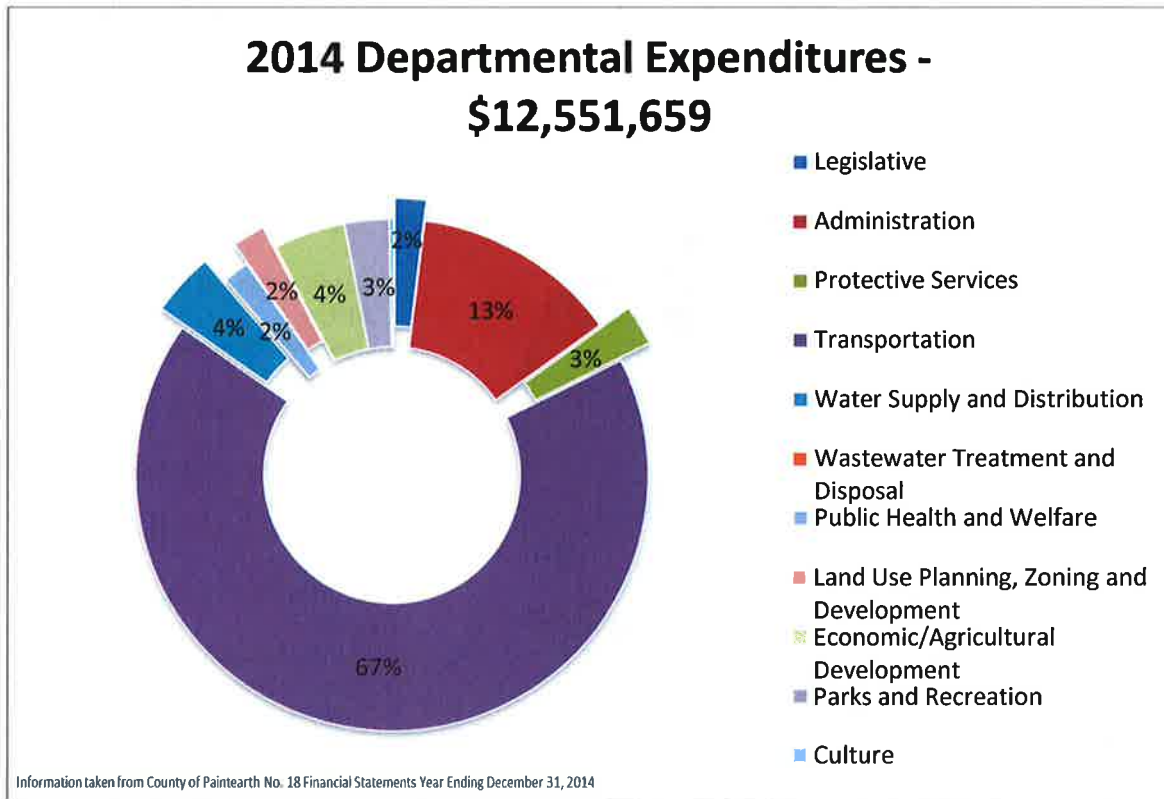
## Department of Corporate Services

The Corporate Services department is responsible for the overall management of the financial affairs of the County. This includes assessment, property taxes, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, capital projects financing and tracking, utilities and other general administrative functions.

The department is responsible for accounting and financial reporting services with our annual audited financial statements as well as other interim reporting.

The 2014 Financial Statement is available to the public and can be obtained on the County's website ([www.countypaintearth.ca](http://www.countypaintearth.ca)) or by contacting the Administration office at 403-882-3211.

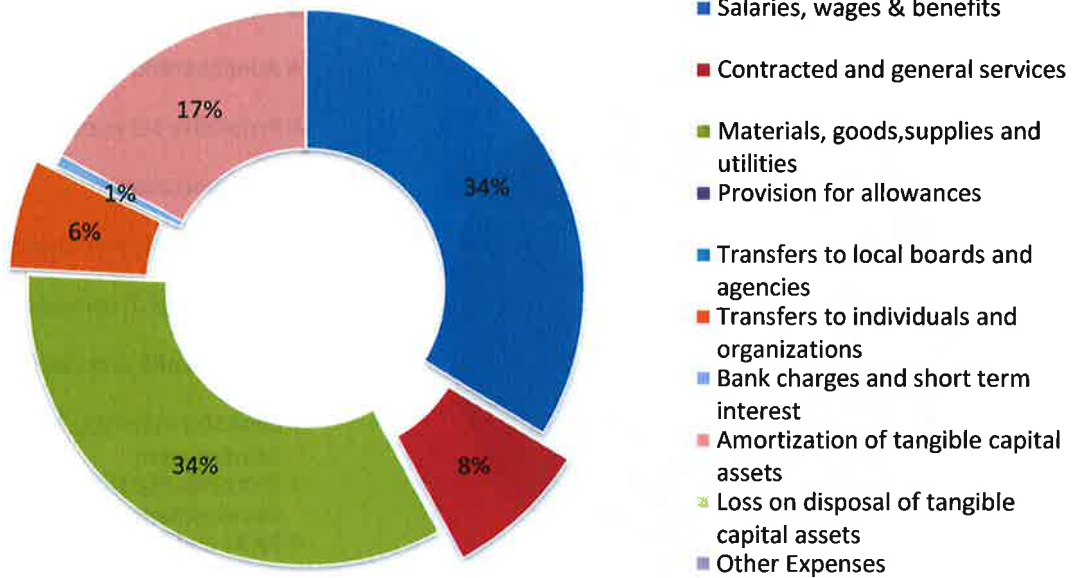
**2014 Financial Synopsis**



<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>2014 Budget</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
Legislative	306,440	254,883	257,960
Administrative	1,912,105	1,635,623	1,633,001
Protective Services	364,753	318,917	296,945
Transportation	9,555,971	8,425,752	8,476,315
Water	557,200	502,363	479,898
Wastewater	72	72	72
Public Health	214,572	206,758	196,761
Planning & Devt	252,390	258,251	302,559
Econ/Agri Devt	631,350	564,149	505,751
Parks & Recreation	351,591	354,325	340,326
Culture	38,030	30,512	30,950
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>14,184,473</b>	<b>12,551,659</b>	<b>12,520,538</b>



## 2014 Expenditures by Object - \$12,551,659

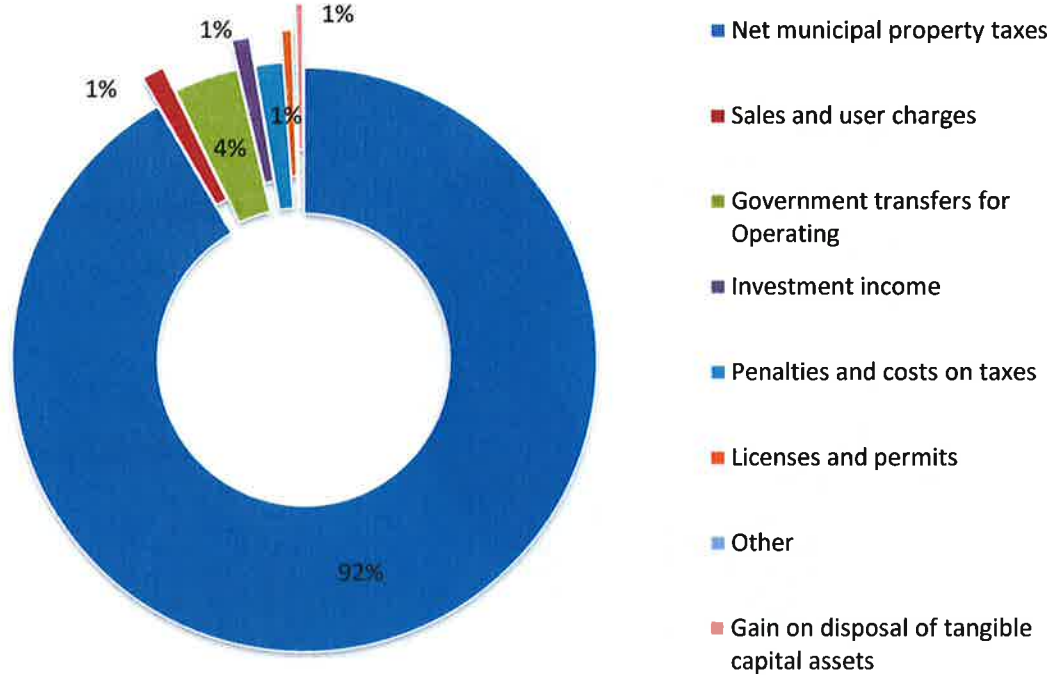


Information taken from County of Paintearth No. 18 Financial Statements Year Ending December 31, 2014

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>2014 Budget</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
Salaries, wages & benefits	4,892,746	4,231,272	4,143,353
Contracted & general services	1,667,867	1,042,571	1,149,614
Materials, goods, supplies & utilities	4,516,400	4,229,424	3,985,604
Provision for allowances	7,000	3,677	5,887
Transfers to local boards & agencies	0	12,585	10,899
Transfers to individuals & organizations	862,698	796,898	758,875
Bank charges & int.	130,000	90,874	105,498
Amortization	2,037,512	2,136,588	2,246,045
Loss on disposal of TCA	68,250	7,770	34,666
Other expenses	2,000	0	80,097
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>14,184,473</b>	<b>12,551,659</b>	<b>12,520,538</b>



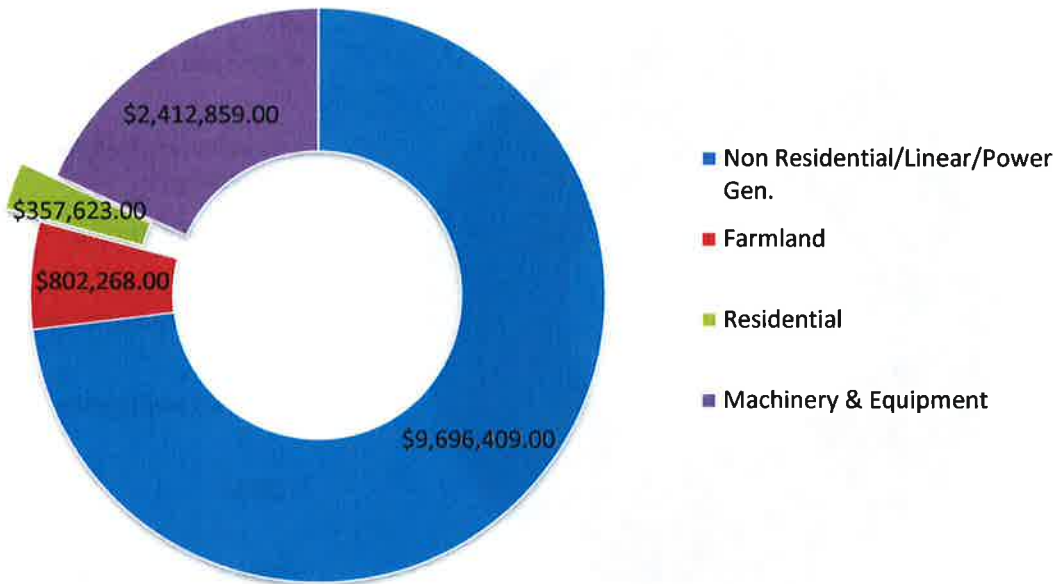
## 2014 Revenues - \$14,461,706



Information taken from County of Paintearth No. 18 Financial Statements Year Ending December 31, 2014

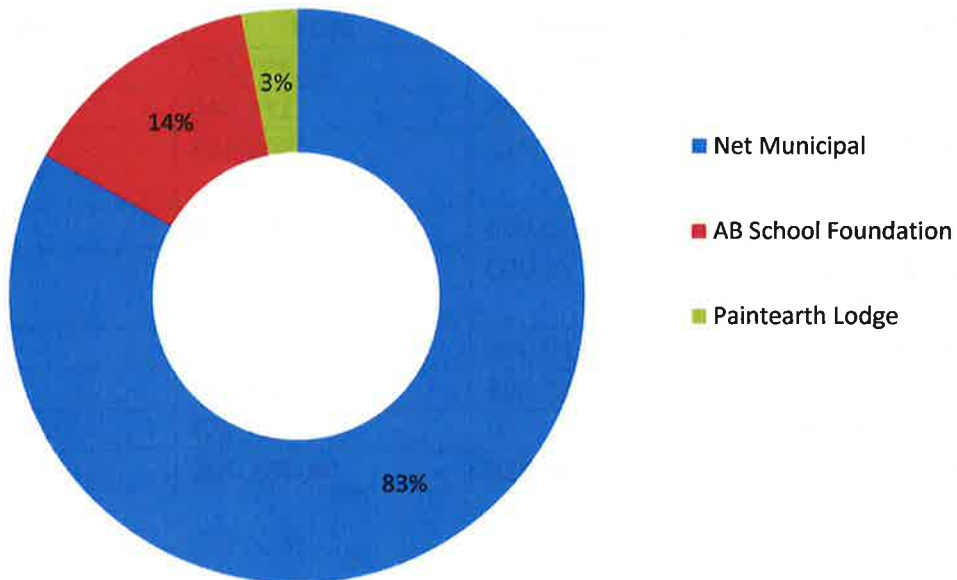
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>2014 Budget</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
Net municipal taxes	13,269,965	13,253,637	10,400,224
Sales & user charges	98,545	176,046	585,867
Govt transfers for operating	747,772	508,645	858,015
Investment income	150,000	139,720	148,574
Penalties & costs on taxes	70,000	218,644	154,654
Licenses & permits	119,000	83,203	124,119
Other	10,636	22,649	54,616
Gain on sale of TCA	0	59,159	5,675
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>14,465,918</b>	<b>14,461,706</b>	<b>12,331,744</b>

## 2014 Property Tax Revenue - \$13,269,159



Information taken from County of Paintearth No. 18 Bylaw No. 633-14

## 2014 Allocation of Property Taxes



Information taken from County of Paintearth No. 18 Financial Statements Year Ending December 31, 2014

# Department of Environmental Services

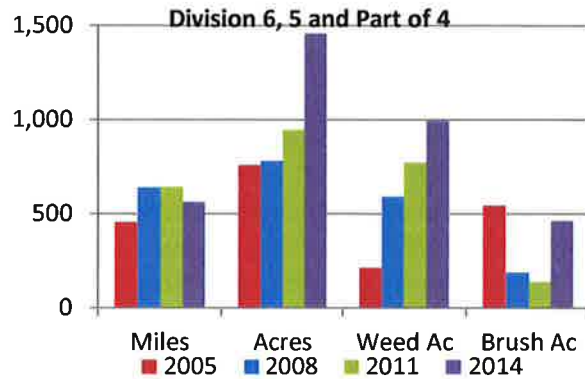
## Industrial Vegetation Management

### Roadside Spraying

Roadside spraying is done in a three year rotation with the majority being spot sprayed. Division 6 was blanket sprayed with spot spraying of Division 5 and part of 4. Brush that was mechanically removed with the mulcher in 2012/13 was targeted as well.

The major weed of concern in those areas was Canada Thistle with some White Cockle. About 62% of those areas were sprayed for weed control and the remaining for brush.

Across the entire County 690 miles were spot sprayed for a total of 1540 acres. About 70% of the spraying done was for weed control. Total program cost was \$115,000 or \$55/acre. Trials were conducted using a new herbicide for White Cockle and Toadflax control that saw good results and will be expanded on in 2015.



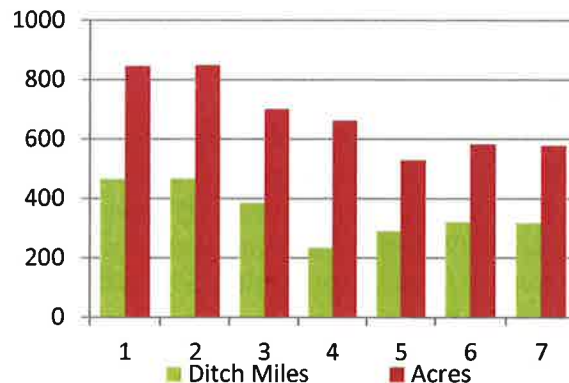
### Private Land Spraying

The County does custom spraying on private land for control of small patches of persistent perennial noxious or restricted weeds. The ASB is equipped with an ATV sprayer and a larger boomless sprayer that is mounted in a vehicle. This service is offered at a very minimal cost as noted below under the "SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE TO COUNTY RESIDENTS".

ASB sprayed 15 sites for Toadflax, Absinthe Wormwood, and Scentless Chamomile with some handpicking as well.

### Roadside Mowing

Our goal is to complete a minimum of one 15 foot pass on all roads. 1,242 miles were completed with 1009 mi of gravel, 26 mi of pavement, and 167 mi of backroads for a total area of 4,753 ac. We start in June in order to complete the work as environmental and mechanical conditions can play a role. Realize that areas mowed in the beginning of the year will have regrowth that may require a second cut and if time allows we will do so.



The mowers have been equipped with GPS that allow us to mark different objects such as culverts and rocks. ASB staff pick the rocks that have been previously marked in May. Please avoid piling rocks or any other objects in the ditch, as they are sometimes not visible. We would

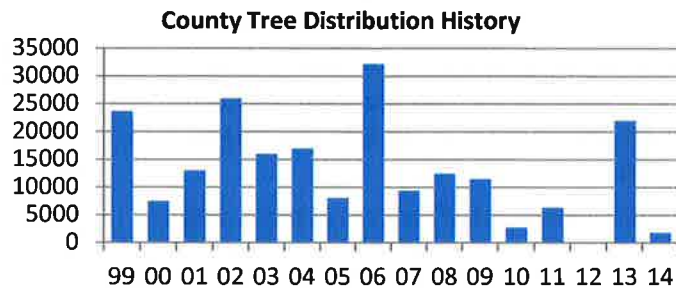
also ask that any gates that you would like to leave open please have leaning up against the fence.

Total program cost for mowing was \$94,835 or \$20.67/ac. The rotary mowers are the preferred method as it allows for mowing of smaller brush, increased visibility, less grass on road surface, and less risk of creating fires.

## **Conservation**

### Tree Program

2014 was the first year of the County operating its own tree program in cooperation with a private tree nursery. Prior to and since the elimination of the PFRA Shelterbelt Program tree orders and farming practices have reduced the number of trees planted.



The County has always held this program in high priority and landowners who order 200 trees or more can request assistance in the planting of the trees at no charge. 1,870 trees were ordered with the County assisting in the planting of 1,620.

Any resident or business can order trees. There are no longer any restrictions on who can apply. Those who order trees are responsible for the cost as set by the nursery. The ASB will continue to offer a tree program in cooperation with other private industry if feasible. To help in weed control and moisture retention plastic mulch is available for sale to producers with a minimum purchase of a roll (1500'). An applicator is available to lay the mulch down.

### Environmental Program Funding

In 2014 the ASB received funds to conduct Environmental Programs in which part was used for the Tree Program as well as identifying invasive plant populations in riparian sensitive areas and seeding a buffer strip along a water tributary.

## **Pest Control**

### 2% Liquid Strychnine

The County has been involved in the sale of 2% liquid strychnine ever since the province has been able to receive the emergency registration. Although the delivery has changed over the years the registration has restricted the sale of the liquid strychnine to ASB's. The Board is well aware of the Richardson's ground squirrel problems and as long as product is available and mandatory to be sold through the ASB it will be made available. 47 producers received strychnine in 2014.

### Coyote Predation Management

The County recognizes that predation of livestock by coyotes can be a serious problem, which are declared a nuisance pest under the Agricultural Pests Act. Livestock producers can request assistance in the control of coyotes where predation is confirmed. Six predation complaints were investigated with 3 livestock producers receiving toxicants.

Surveys

This year the County contracted Battle River Research Group to conduct Clubroot and Fusarium Headblight Surveys. Five fields per division are surveyed for each and no disease was found in those fields. ASB staff conducts a grasshopper survey every year and in 2014 numbers were still found to be at low levels.

Beaver Dam Removal

The Board recognizes that beaver dams need to be removed or breached periodically to protect, maintain or construct infrastructure or to avoid the flooding of private and public land. The Ag Fieldman is a licensed blaster and is available for the removal of beaver dams. Prior to the start of the blasting, the landholder must sign a Beaver Dam Blasting Agreement.

**2014 ASB EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES AVAILABLE**

**Rental Equipment Available**

300 gal. Sprayer for Insect Control	\$50.00 Ref. Deposit
Back Pack Sprayer	\$50.00 Ref. Deposit
Hand Broadcast Seeder	\$50.00 Ref. Deposit
Cattle Scale	\$40.00/half day or \$75.00/ full day
Hay Probes	no charge
Gallagher Tag Reader	\$250.00 Ref. Deposit

**Pest Control Products Available**

Magpie Traps	\$50.00 Ref. Deposit
Skunk Traps	\$50.00 Ref. Deposit
Crop Protection Blue Books	\$11.43 + G.S.T.
Coyote Control Materials	no charge
Beaver Dam Removal	\$100 for 1 <sup>st</sup> dam & \$50 for each additional

**Vegetation Management**

1. Private Land Spraying - \$50.00 calling fee plus the cost of the chemical per L applied at cost plus G.S.T, where applicable, will be charged. One follow-up treatment will be included in the initial call out fee if needed. Subsequent call outs will be charged at the discretion of the applicator.
2. Industry Spraying - \$125.00 per hour and chemical cost plus 10%.
3. Weed Picking - \$20.00 per hour for residents and \$50 per hour for industry.

**Tree Planting**

Tree planter and staff are provided free of charge for tree orders over 200. Shipping charges for the trees shall be paid for by the ASB. Plastic mulch will be available for sale to producers with a minimum purchase of a roll (1500').

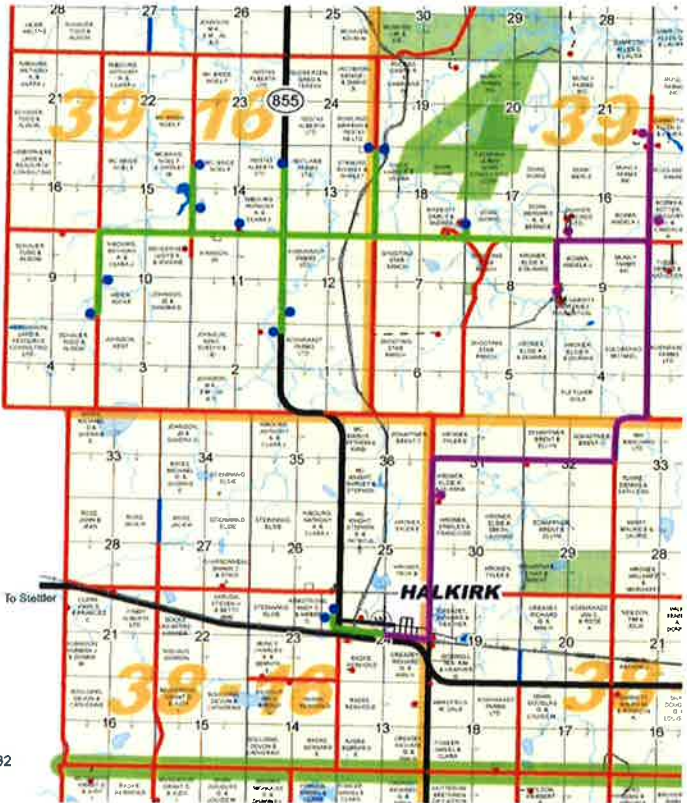
**Pesticide Container Sites**

Castor Waste Transfer Site	SW 03-38-14 W4
Coronation Waste Management	SW 36-36-11 W4

# Rural Water Distribution

In 2014 Council reduced the connection fees from \$15,000 to \$7,500. Another approximately 9.5 miles of additional line was constructed on the Halkirk North line that added another 13 additional users. Total project cost was \$1.71 million with \$1.67 million in grant funding.

Currently we are asking all residents to participate in a brief survey that will determine how future expansion of the distribution system will be built. Please ensure that you complete the survey online or paper copy and return to the office. The survey results will help determine priority and how the distribution system should be built. Future development will also be dependent on size of possible construction projects and grant funding.

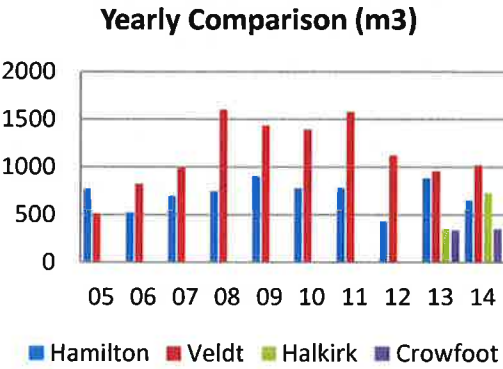


The County is invested in three reservoirs strategically placed in Halkirk, Crowfoot Crossing, and west of Coronation that will be used in the rural water distribution.

### Truck Fill Facilities

The County operates two types of truck fills. The Halkirk and Crowfoot Reservoirs have drinking water that is open to everyone and the Hamilton (NE-32-35-10) and Veldt (NW-12-38-15) are wells that are for agricultural, firefighting, and County use only.

All are coin box operated and accept loonies and toonies. Water rates for reservoirs are \$5/m3; Hamilton and Veldt are \$1.75/m3. The Village of Halkirk receives the proceeds from the Halkirk Reservoir. The graph shows the annual use of each. In comparison the average 4 person family household uses 87,600 gallons (400 cubic meters) per year.



The water wells are also used in a groundwater monitoring program. The static water level in both facilities has not changed. The wells are also shock chlorinated in the spring.



## Burma Park

There are 21 campsites located at the park with baseball facilities. 20 of the sites have power provided to them with a shower facility. Firewood is provided at no cost. Camping rates are \$25 for power and \$20 for no power.

Burma Park was awarded with a \$10,000 grant from the Community Enhancement Fund. The grant was used in the purchase of half the cost of a youth playground set. Although the playground was not able to be installed in 2014 it was completed prior to the 2015 camping season.

Projects that were completed included:

- Back flushing of the well.
- Limited WIFI was installed that provides campers with internet access near the caretakers building.
- Arborist was brought in to prune the trees in approximately half the park.

There were almost 1,000 visitors to the park and 48% of those were from the County.

## Department of Planning and Development

Through the development permit process, the County of Paintearth safeguards and ensures its ratepayers a safe and effective building and planning process for all developments, buildings, subdivisions. All required information and forms for such can be found on the website, or call the Development Officer for inquiries. A comparison of 2014 with the previous year is found below.

Development Permits	2013	Value \$\$	2014	Value \$\$
Residential Homes (incl mobile)	14	3,589,000	4	602,000
Residential – accessory, additions	10	522,000	9	368,000
Agricultural uses	4	254,000	4	800,000
Industrial/Commercial	9	7,898,000	12	14,189,400
Recreational	2	81,200	0	
Totals	39	12,334,200	29	16,019,400

Development Permit fees, applications and related forms can all be found on the County's website. The County held an SDAB appeal for the Coronation Landfill and subsequently updated the Land Use Bylaw (LUB). This LUB update aids in the proper development of areas and safeguards rural lands.

Subdivisions – There were three subdivision applications in the County during 2014 with all of them being completed prior to Dec 31. These subdivisions included two acreage creations or farm site separations and the third was industrial parcels near Halkirk. Due to the area size requirement of open discharge septic systems, most acreages are now required to be a minimum of 10 acres, therefore the County updated the Land Use Bylaw to reflect this. Most



subdivisions take approx. 3-4 months to complete; therefore, it is recommended to have an initial discussion with the Development Officer prior to the process, in order to aid and avoid any obstacles.

Palliser Regional Municipal Services (PRMS) is the agency responsible for all planning and subdivision review within the County. PRMS also handles all safety codes permits and applications for building, electrical, gas, and plumbing and private sewage disposal. As of February 2014 all new residential constructions need to have New Home Warranty in order to receive a Building Permit. This program continues to hamper our local contractors and as such the County objected but to no avail. For more information or to receive a package detailing the safety code requirements of your project please contact the Development Officer at the office.

The County's Municipal Planning Commission (MPC) presides over all discretionary or sensitive development permits and subdivision requests. In 2014 the MPC was comprised of Councillors Tyrill Hewitt (Chair), Doreen Blumhagen, Walter Weber, and Reeve George Glazier.

### Industry

In 2014 there were seven new oil and gas projects requiring new approach constructions, and 18 projects accessing via existing approaches - which is a large reduction from the previous year. There were eight pipeline crossings of our road network, the majority of them bored underneath, which were also down by almost half from the previous year. 2014 showed a number of project cancellations from Husky, Crescent Point, and Apache, as well as a greatly reduced number of resource exploration projects. 2014 saw 92 project notifications received, down 33% from the previous year's almost 150. Coupled with the fact that some of those notifications were abandonments or reclamations, illustrates a continued slowing of pace in the petroleum industry.

The County's largest industrial development for 2014 came from a new development west of Halkirk courtesy of Canadian Humalite International. This company set up a processing and drying/crushing plant to process Humalite, an organic fertilizer reclaimed from the peaty overburden from coal mine lands. The County is glad to have another diversified industry creating further employment in the Halkirk area.

## Disaster Services

The County continues to update its emergency preparedness, and additional staff training is continuous for those who may need to help coordinate responses in the Emergency Operations Center. In our County, the threat of wildfires in the dry grassy season is the largest threat and we encourage all residents to be ever vigilant in the use of fires, when so allowed. Check the website regularly for fire ban information!

Emergency Preparedness Week is one week in May, however residents are asked to consider being prepared all year long. Information on emergency planning and preparedness and how to stock a 72 hour emergency kit is on the County website as well as in the administration office. Living in a rural area has both advantages and disadvantages however a recent seminar hosted by AEMA found the rural population well suited to outlast most natural or weather disasters!

The County's Public Safety Services Committee consists of Councillors Brian Bunbury, Rocky Dahmer, Reeve George Glazier, CAO Tarolyn Peach and Director of Emergency Management Todd Pawsey.

## Community Peace Officer

The Community Peace Officer role in the County is one of liaison and education. It includes; liaison with the oil companies, ATCO and landowners, enforcement of Bylaws and County Policies. The position also includes the designation as Fire Guardian. Its mandate is to issue fire permits and ensure safe practices when burning debris. The final component is education with the local council and schools in use of roads, fire permits, etc.

Mr. Colm Fitz-Gerald is the Community Peace Officer for the County of Paintearth. He can be reached at the County Office (403-882-3211).

### Road Bans

The County places bans on the roads throughout the year to protect them from damage, such as deep ruts and potholes, that overweight vehicles can cause. Traffic sign(s) are posted when a road is banned, indicating the percentage of axle weights that are permitted to travel on the road. All our paved roads are banned year round at 50% or 75% ban.

All Secondary Highways located in the County are under Provincial jurisdiction. For information on roads under Provincial jurisdiction, visit, [www.transportation.alberta.ca](http://www.transportation.alberta.ca), or call toll free 1-877-236-6445.

### Overweight & Overdimensional Permit Approval Services

To improve the availability of service to Industry, to better track the movement of these heavy loads and to improve the ability to recover cost for any damages that may occur, the County of Paintearth has partnered with Roadata Services Ltd. (RDS) to provide approval services for the movement of heavy loads on County roadways.

RDS will provide all approval services as per the guidelines established by the County. This service will be available 24 hours per day at (888) 830-7623 (toll free).

**Allowable Weights:** When movement is not restricted due to road bans, adverse weather or individual roadway limitations, the County follows Alberta "Allowable Permit Weight"

guidelines. Please remember that any municipality has the authorization to limit weights below provincially defined weight.

## Department of Public Works

### Gravel Program

The County gravelled approximately 314 miles of roads in 2014. The County applies approximately 75,000 yards of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch gravel per year to the roads. The summer road gravelling is completed with four county owned trucks. We use three super-b belly dumps and one tandem truck with a tridem pup. For 4 months in 2014 the County also contracted one local truck with belly dumps to help with our road gravelling program.

The County stockpiles approximately 35,000 yards of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch and 10,000 yards of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch gravel from our gravel pits to various stockpile sites using our own gravel trucks. Every two or three years we have a contract haul from our pit at the Hand Hills. This gravel is then stockpiled south of Castor and Halkirk. The past year, the County has purchased approximately 40,000 tonnes of 420 modified  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch gravel from outside sources, for the NW corner of the County.

The County crushed 60,000 tone of gravel this year with its jaw crusher. Every second or third year we put a crushing tender out to crush our material to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch road gravel.

Our gravel inventory consists of 498,000 tone of  $\frac{3}{4}$  road gravel and 1,640,000 tone of gravel in reserves. The County has about a 30 year supply of gravel with the current gravel inventory and materials in reserves.

### Road Network

The County is divided into 10 grader divisions with each grader operator maintaining approximately 100 miles of gravel roads and approximately 25 miles of back roads. The County's grader fleet consists of 3 Caterpillar 160H motor graders, 2 Caterpillar 14H motor graders, 2 Caterpillar 14M motor graders, 3 Caterpillar 160M motor graders, and 4 Caterpillar 160M 2 motor graders. The County buys new graders on a 5 year buyback program and sells the used graders on the open market at the end of 5 years. This enables the County to have sustainable and reliable equipment on our roads.

The road system is comprised of:

Regularly Maintained Roads	1,095 miles
Non-Regularly Maintained Road	254 miles
Undeveloped Roads	470 miles
Paved Roads	<u>28 miles</u>
Total:	1,844 miles

One plow truck does the winter sanding & plowing.

### Road Approaches/Culverts

The Public Works Department built 24 new approaches of which 15 required culverts. The Public Works Department replaced 16 culverts across rural roads.

In 2014 the Public Works for the first time contracted the lining of 4 culverts and bored 2 other roadways with large fills.

### Road Signage

The Public Works Department is responsible for looking after approximately 1,036 different signs throughout the County. In 2014, 46 signs were installed or replaced and 62 new sign posts were installed. If you notice a sign missing or knocked down, please contact the County Office immediately.

### Bridge Program

The County has 110 bridges and bridge size culverts. We are responsible for all maintenance on our structures. Major repairs are contracted out. We have staff trained in minor bridge maintenance on all the bridges size structures. Maintenance on these bridges is scheduled throughout the winter or rain days. The County contracts all the bridge inspections out to WSP Engineering.

In 2013 the Provincial Government cut all funding for bridge repairs and maintenance. In 2014 we installed our first single lane temporary 70 ton bridge structure. We placed this structure over top of the existing bridge.

### Fence Line Brushing

The Public Works Department brushed approximately 26 miles of fence line and ditch bottoms.

### Back Sloping

The Public Works Department back sloped 23.5 miles of ditches and fence lines. This service is considered on a request and priority basis. Requests are to be submitted on a hold harmless application and landowners must remove their fence. There is no charge for this service.

### Mulching

The Public Works Department mulched approximately 60 miles of road ditches.

### Road Stabilization

The Public Works Department applied MG30 on 37.5 miles of gravel roads using approximately 1,249,700 liters at a cost of \$0.21 per liter. The total cost for product was \$351,450.00. The County will be using this product for farm and other road stabilization projects in the future. The biggest advantage to using this product is that it is none corrosive.

### Safety Program

The County of Paintearth is committed to a strong safety and loss program that protects its staff, its property and the public from accidents. In 2014, the County passed the internal safety audit with a score of 93%. The safety program is ongoing and will always be a big part of the County's daily operations.