



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Brazeau County 2018 Interim Budget invests in the community**

BRAZEAU COUNTY — On December 19, Brazeau County Council passed an interim budget for 2018, re-affirming Council's commitment to road and infrastructure improvements while keeping tax rates and fees unchanged.

The interim operating budget is \$47 million, with an additional \$34.9 million going towards capital projects. Within the capital budget, 95% has been dedicated to core infrastructure, such as water and sewer lines, lagoon projects, and roads. \$23.7 million is dedicated to road infrastructure, or 68% of the capital budget. The full list of approved capital projects will be made available on the County website at [www.brazeau.ab.ca](http://www.brazeau.ab.ca) following the Jan. 16, 2018 Council meeting.

At budget meetings November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup>, and December 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> Brazeau County Councillors and Administration went over the operational needs and capital requests for 2018. With the current economic climate, especially in our community where the oil and gas sector that employs so many of our residents is experiencing economic challenges, both Council and Administration approached the budget looking to minimize the impact to our citizens and businesses.

Council passed an interim budget in order to proceed on approved operational and capital projects in the period between now and when the County receives final property assessment information from the Province and Accurate Assessment Group in the new year.

"Through the downturn in the economy and the decrease of tax revenue, Brazeau County continues to maintain the same level of service without impacting residents with a tax increase or additional fees," says Director of Corporate Services/Acting CAO Brenda Christie.

All departments found efficiencies and presented operating budgets reduced from 2017 levels. Administration presented Council with a budget that had an overall decrease in operations expenses of 3% compared to 2017. This is the third year in a row operating expenses have been

decreased. In addition, Council invested \$20 million from restricted and unrestricted surplus accounts – the municipality’s savings accounts – to fund both operating and capital requirements.

“As a Council team, we’re happy we were able to approve an aggressive but balanced budget to stimulate the economy and create jobs,” says Reeve Bart Guyon. “It is based on no increase in the municipal tax rate, and an extension of the planning and development fee amnesty we introduced last year. We have invested heavily in road and infrastructure projects, spread geographically to enhance the entire County.”

The final 2018 Budget and Tax Rates will be determined next April once Brazeau County has received the requisitions from the School and Seniors Foundations and the final assessment information.