



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Brazeau County Council Approves 2017 Final Budget**

Drayton Valley, Alberta, April 12, 2017 — At its April 4 regular meeting, Brazeau County Council passed the final budget for 2017, re-affirming Council's commitment to community health and wellness along with infrastructure improvements while maintaining the 30% reduction in residential taxes from 2015, and implementing a 30% tax rebate for some commercial property classes.

The final operating budget is \$48.3 million, with \$20.7 million going towards capital projects. Of that \$20.7 million capital budget, 40% has been dedicated to road infrastructure.

Council also adopted a motion to provide a 30% rebate in the form of a credit for the following assessment classes: 202 – Commercial sites and improvement; 203 – Industrial sites and improvements; 252 – Vacant Commercial; 253 – Vacant Industrial.

Please note, payment of taxes must be received by the due date of June 30th to qualify for a rebate in full; those properties enrolled in the monthly payment plan will receive a rebate on a prorated basis. This rebate follows a rebate of 40% in 2016 for the same property classes.

At budget meetings November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Brazeau County Councillors and Administration went over the operational needs and capital requests for 2017. 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.

All departments found efficiencies and presented operating budgets reduced from 2016 levels. Overall, Administration presented Council with a budget that had an overall increase in operations expenses of .002% from 2016, following a 1.6% reduction in 2015. In addition, Council withdrew a total of \$11.7 million (\$4.7 million for operations and \$7 million for capital) from

restricted and unrestricted surplus accounts – the municipality’s savings accounts – to account for potential loss in revenue. There is currently a total of \$47.3 million in restricted and unrestricted reserves, including approximately \$6 million transferred forward from 2016.

In 2017, Brazeau County will be investing 80% of the capital budget in core infrastructure, including lagoons and water sewer line replacement and upgrades to ensure the health and safety of residents. The full list of approved capital projects is available on the County website at [www.brazeau.ab.ca](http://www.brazeau.ab.ca) after May 1<sup>st</sup>.

“We’re proud to maintain service levels despite a 15% reduction in linear assessment and an 8.37% reduction in assessment overall, which led to a reduction of \$3.1 million in tax revenue due to the economic downturn,” says Reeve Bart Guyon. “We’ve delivered a balanced budget with no service reductions. This was achieved by finding efficiencies, financial responsibility, and maximizing funding from senior governments. We are also sensitive to the effects of the downturn on our businesses, which is why we’ve provided a significant tax rebate for the second year in a row.”

Council will consider the 2017 Tax Rate Bylaw at its April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Council meeting. The final budget assumes no increases to tax rates.