

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AGENDA

Tuesday, October 15, 2024, 8:30 a.m.

1600 2nd Street NE

Three Hills, AB T0M 2A0



<https://www.youtube.com/@kneehillcounty48>

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## Committee of the Whole Minutes

September 17, 2024, 8:30 a.m.  
1600 2nd Street NE  
Three Hills, AB T0M 2A0

Council Present: Faye McGhee, Councillor  
Debbie Penner, Councillor  
Jerry Wittstock, Deputy Reeve  
Carrie Fobes, Councillor  
Laura Lee Machell-Cunningham, Councillor  
Wade Christie, Councillor  
Kenneth King, Reeve

Staff Present: Mike Ziehr, Director of Infrastructure  
Kevin Gannon, Director of Community Services  
Theresa Cochran, Director of Corporate Services  
Barb Hazelton, Manager of Planning and Development  
Marika Von Mirbach, Financial Planning Coordinator  
Cody Dale-McNair, Asset Manager  
Wendy Gerbrandt, Economic Development Manager  
Carolyn Van der Kuil, Legislative Services Coordinator

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### 1. Call to Order

Deputy Reeve Wittstock called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

#### 1.1 Approval of Agenda

Additions to the Agenda:

Under Closed Session

3.1 Personal Privacy (FOIP-Section 17)

**Resolution: CW/107**

**Moved by:** Councillor Christie

That the Committee of the Whole approve the agenda as amended.

#### 1.2 Approval of Minutes

##### 1.2.1 Approval of the June 18, 2024, COW Meeting Minutes

**Resolution: CW/108**

**Moved by:** Reeve King

\_\_\_\_\_ Initials



That the Committee of the Whole approves the adoption of the minutes of the June 18, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting, as presented.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**2. New Business**

**2.1 2025 Capital Equipment Plan Presentation**

The Chair called for a recess at 9:47 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 10:00 a.m. with all previously mentioned members present.

**Resolution: CW/109**

**Moved by:** Reeve King

That the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to approve a draw of \$5,120,000 from the Capital Equipment Reserve to fund CEP purchases for 2025.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Resolution: CW/110**

**Moved by:** Councillor Penner

That the Committee of the Whole recommend to Council to consider contributions of \$3,600,000 to the Capital Equipment Plan Reserve during 2025 operating budget deliberations.

**CARRIED**

**2.2 Bylaw 1905 Draft Municipal Development Plan**

The Chair called for a recess at 11:08 a.m. and called the meeting back to order at 11:17 a.m. with all previously mentioned members present.

The Chair called for a recess at 12:06 p.m. and called the meeting back to order at 1:00 p.m. with all previously mentioned members present.

**Resolution: CW/111**

**Moved by:** Reeve King

That the Committee of the Whole recommend to Administration to bring back the amended draft Municipal Development Plan to Council for further discussion and potential first reading.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

\_\_\_\_\_Initials

2.3 Economic Development Plan

**Resolution: CW/112**

**Moved by:** Councillor McGhee

That the Committee of the Whole defer this agenda item to the October Committee of the Whole meeting.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**3. Closed Session**

**Resolution: CW/113**

**Moved by:** Councillor Cunningham

That this meeting goes into closed session at 3:54 p.m. for the following reason(s):

- Personal Privacy (FOIP- Section 17)

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Resolution: CW/114**

**Moved by:** Councillor Christie

That Council return to open meeting at 4:05 p.m.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

4:06 p.m. - meeting recessed to allow return of public.

4:06 p.m. - meeting resumed

**4. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:06 p.m.

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Jerry Wittstock, Deputy Reeve

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Mike Haugen, CAO

\_\_\_\_\_Initials






Subject: **Economic Development Plan**

Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 15, 2024

Prepared By: Wendy Gerbrandt, Manager, Economic Development

Presented By: Wendy Gerbrandt, Manager, Economic Development

### STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT: (Check all that apply)

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High Quality Infrastructure		Economic Resilience		Quality of Life		Effective Leadership		Level of Service	

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

**Provincial (cite)** - Municipal Government Act

**Council Bylaw/Policy (cite)**- Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw

### BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:

In 2023, Administration received approval from Council to develop an Economic Development Plan aimed to foster sustainable growth and prosperity within the county. Tara Zeller, Economic Development Consultant, was contracted to aid in the development of this 3-Year Economic Development Plan through data analysis and community engagement.

Through this plan, Kneehill County aims to establish a framework that fosters opportunities to build a resilient and diverse economy. In turn, this will enhance the livelihoods of its businesses and residents, making the County an attractive destination for investment and growth.

The Economic Develop Plan aligns with the County's Strategic Plan, 2019 Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and the preliminary outcomes from the 2024 Municipal Development Plan working groups, Land Use Bylaw, and through open dialogue and engagement with stakeholders, businesses, residents and Council in the economic development planning process.

Administration presented the Economic Development Plan to Council at the Committee of the Whole of June 18, 2024 and made recommendations in which to present and bring forward to Council on July 23, 2024. At this meeting, Council motioned that the Economic Development Plan return to the Committee of Whole on September 17, 2024 for further discussion on the Executive Summary, Key Performance Indicators, the Conclusion along with the removal of the renewal energy references in the Opportunities and Threats. On September 17, 2024 Council requested the Economic Development Plan be deferred to Committee of the Whole on October 15 to provide sufficient time for review and discussion.

In addition, Administration made additional enhancements to the verbiage in Goal 1, changing goals and tactics to goals and strategies, and organizing the strategies by year 1, 2 and 3.

The Economic Development Plan, once approved by Council, will guide Administration on the priorities and goals in which to focus. Through the annual budgetary process, operating and project initiatives and budgets are created and submitted to Council for approval.

### DISCUSSION/OPTIONS/BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES/OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Administration presents Council with following recommendations for review and further discussion in which to provide Administration with the direction to update the Economic Development Plan.



The discussion will present a review of the following:

Executive Summary (page 1) – There are three (3) options for Council’s review and discussion.

Revise Goal 1 (Page 1, 49, 50) - Increase awareness and understanding of economic development principles for elected officials, senior staff, businesses and residents to: Increase awareness and understanding of economic development principles amongst internal and external stakeholders

Purpose – Page 4 – refined the verbiage on the Purpose of the document to be more alignment with the intent of the Economic Development Plan.

Opportunities – Pg 47 – Removal of “Seek renewable energy opportunities and innovation within the energy sector. Central Alberta is one of Canada’s sunniest and windiest places, making it the ideal location for renewable energy projects.”

Threats – Pg 47 – Removal of “Opposition from residents on renewable energy projects.”

Revise Goals and Tactics verbiage to Goals and Strategies (pages 50 – 53).

Organized the strategies under each Priority by Year 1, Year 2, Year (pages 50 – 53).

Success Measurement (Page 54) –Success Measurement. Enter into discussion on how success of the Economic Development is determined, what metrics should be explored to measure the plan, where Kneehill County is current situation is with Economic Development activities, what baseline data is available and what statistical information is available to monitor effectiveness. Through this discussion, Administration will have obtained the necessary information to better understand in establishing how it will measure the plans effectiveness.

Conclusion – Page 56 – There four (4) options for Council to review and provide direction to Administration.

Upon the conclusion of the discussion, Council will direct Administration to update the Economic Development Plan with the necessary changes and bring forward to the next Council meeting for approval.

### **FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

Resulting direction from the Economic Development Plan can have varying degrees of financial and staffing impact. Any projects that align with the Master Plan and Strategic Plan will be brought to Council for consideration through the budgetary process.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Economic Development Plan – Rev 4 – August 2024

EDP Discussion – September 17, 2024

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Motion to accept the Economic Development Plan for information and bring forward with the Changes discussed to Council for approval.

### **APPROVAL(S):**

Mike Haugen, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved- ☒





# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

(DRAFT - REV 2)

Prepared By:

**Wendy Gerbrandt, Manager,  
Economic Development &  
Jenna Kester, Economic Development Officer**

In Consultation with:

**Tara Zeller**

[www.KneehillCounty.com](http://www.KneehillCounty.com)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kneehill County initiated a comprehensive 3-year Economic Development Plan aimed at driving sustainable growth and prosperity while prioritizing residents' well-being. The plan, shaped with input from diverse stakeholders and facilitated by Tara Zeller, Economic Development Consultant, outlines actionable strategies aligned with community aspirations.

In the pursuit of economic development, Kneehill County recognizes it will be necessary to identify developable lands (agricultural or otherwise) in which to pursue investment attraction. For successful investment attraction to occur the plan will undergo an investment readiness process and develop a business retention program to identify growth opportunities for businesses and the region.

Kneehill County will build capacity amongst community leaders, Council, businesses and stakeholders in which to partner and while building the County's brand through marketing awareness and campaigns to achieve economic development goals to ensure a resilient, culturally rich, and economically prosperous future for generations to come.

The following key sectors are areas of focus while continuing to identify and pursue additional opportunities:

**Agri-Business:** With favorable conditions for agricultural processing and ag-tech innovation, the county aims to capitalize on Alberta's status as a major agri-food exporter.

**Tourism:** Leveraging proximity to major urban centers and unique attractions, the County targets wellness tourism and film industry investments.

**Energy:** Positioned in the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin, Kneehill County is positioned to identify opportunities through the energy supply chain for development.

**Manufacturing & Logistics:** The county's strategic location provides easy access to transportation routes, making it an attractive destination for manufacturing businesses.

The plan will outline the four (4) strategic priorities and ten (10) goals over the next 3 years to achieve economic resilience and diversity.





# PRIORITIES

01

**Build Leadership Capacity**

02

**Strengthen Existing Businesses**

03

**Enhance Investment Readiness**

04

**Elevate Kneehill County's Brand**

## GOALS

- 1** Increase awareness and understanding of economic development principles for elected officials, senior staff, businesses and residents
- 2** Foster community stakeholder engagement and input to stimulate economic opportunities
- 3** Support and inspire youth entrepreneurs and leaders to establish Kneehill County as a desired community to remain, return and establish
- 4** Design and deliver a business retention and expansion program that initiates engagement between the County and businesses
- 5** Encourage diversification and innovation in industry sectors to stimulate economic growth and job creation
- 6** Achieve an intermediate to advanced investment readiness status to attract investments to drive economic growth
- 7** Develop a targeted investment attraction strategy by engaging the community
- 8** Promote and elevate the quality of life to attract and retain residents, attract visitors, workforce and business investments to the County
- 9** Identify and collaborate with regional partners and stakeholders to promote and amplify the region
- 10** Continuously monitor progress and gather input to update the plan





# Guiding Principles

The County's vision, mission, and values reflect the importance of economic development to the community. These foundational guiding principles were utilized in creating the economic development plan.

## Vision

*At the intersection of history and opportunity, Kneehill County is a forward-looking community that celebrates its rural roots.*

## Mission

*A rural community that embraces its agricultural lifestyle and an economically diverse future.*

## Values

### INNOVATION

*We focus on the future by seeking out new and creative solutions, and support entrepreneurship in our community.*

### INTEGRITY

*We do what we say we will do.*

### RESILIENCE

*We help our community withstand challenges and adapt in the face of adversity.*

### OPENNESS

*We engage stakeholders, respect all opinions, and keep our community informed of the decisions we make.*

### TRADITION

*We uphold and promote the unique agricultural history of Kneehill County.*





# BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE



## Background

Kneehill County initiated an Economic Development plan to foster sustainable growth and prosperity. In 2023, an economic development investment readiness was completed and while many elements are in place, it is necessary to review the recommendations in the economic development reports to prepare for attraction. One of the County's key recommendations was to proceed with an economic Development to provide future direction for economic development.

Economic Development Consultant, Tara Zeller, was retained to support the creation of the plan. The results are a thoughtfully created plan with insights from residents, business owners, local organizations, staff, and Council to ensure a holistic understanding of the County's unique needs and aspirations.

## Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide an actionable 3-year strategic roadmap to guide the County towards sustainable economic growth. To accomplish this, we need long-term planning, collaborative solutions and a commitment to investing in our community.

The Plan outlines actionable strategies and objectives aligned with the community's vision and aspirations. The Plan sets a realistic timeframe for implementation, allowing for measurable progress utilizing S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Action Oriented, Relevant, and Timely) goals and objectives. The Plan is a working document and Economic development will continuously monitor progress and update the Plan as we engage with businesses and as guiding documents are updated and as initiatives are brought forward for consideration.

The Plan aligns with the County's Strategic Plan, 2019 Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaws and all through open engagement with stakeholders, businesses, residents and Council.

Through this plan, Kneehill County aims to build a resilient and diverse economy by enhancing the livelihoods of its businesses and residents to position the County as an attractive destination for investment and growth.

## Planning Process and Methodology

1



### Document Review (2023 - 2024)

A review of existing Kneehill County documents and related websites was completed. These documents contained internal goals and external recommendations and were used as a baseline in determining the overall economic development strategic direction suggested in this plan. Economic Development provided Additional documents and website reviews to this plan to add to Kneehill's overall economic development "story."

2



### Community Engagement (Sept - Nov 2023)

Community engagement is a crucial step to provide guidance and direction and through the engagement process responses were received from 77 businesses in the Business Retention and Expansion survey completed by Deloitte, responses from 658 residents, 7 stakeholder organizations and 3 regional partners, and input from Council and staff members.

3



### Data Analysis (Nov - Dec 2023)

Findings from the community engagement were compared with previous reports and strategies to identify changes, progress, and areas needing improvement. Information was organized and summarized to identify key insights and trends as well as to identify gaps between current findings and past strategies.

4



### Develop Priorities & Action Plan (Jan - Mar 2024)

As priorities were developed and the assessing the feasibility of various initiatives considering considering available resources, regulations, and potential challenges. A detailed action plan outlining specific objectives, tasks, timelines, responsible parties, and performance indicators were drafted to ensure alignment with the broader economic development strategic framework and goals.

5



### Prepare Economic Development Plan (Apr - May 2024)

Information was compiled and organized in collaboration with Economic Development to create strategic directives for the Economic Development Plan. This information was reviewed and revised by Kneehill administration to ensure alignment with municipal priorities before presenting to Council in June 2024.



# Findings

The following economic development documents, websites and organizations were reviewed as part of the overall research process. This process was critical to ensure plan alignment, identify partners and their services and how Kneehill County can support and development partnerships to support economic development initiatives.

## Kneehill County Strategic Plan

Priorities	Goals
<b>Build and maintain infrastructure that meets the ongoing needs of the County's residents and businesses (utilities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainably manage existing infrastructure.</li> <li>• Maintain a high-quality road network.</li> <li>• Ensure the County is prepared for future waste management needs.</li> <li>• Understand current and future rural water/requirements.</li> </ul>
<b>Build a robust and adaptable economy (economic diversification, zoning, support for agriculture)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow economic activity in Kneehill County.</li> <li>• Prioritize hamlets and encourage targeted growth.</li> <li>• Foster an economic environment where local business can grow while maintaining resilience to external market and environmental forces.</li> <li>• Be recognized as a leader in the provision of quality agricultural products.</li> </ul>
<b>Maximize quality of life for people who choose to live in Kneehill County (recreation, County's uniqueness, history, youth and seniors)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and sustain Kneehill County's unique rural lifestyle.</li> <li>• Maintain responsive fire services in Kneehill County.</li> <li>• Continue to be responsive to the needs of youth within the County.</li> <li>• Attract new citizens and retain existing residents.</li> </ul>
<b>Provide effective, respectful and efficient leadership (Council, environmental change, partnerships, finance, bylaws and policies)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Kneehill County remains fiscally sustainable and resilient to external events.</li> <li>• Authentically engage with and communicate to County's residents.</li> <li>• Continue respectful and collaborative relationships with regional partner municipalities and other orders of government.</li> <li>• Be recognized as a provincial leader in good municipal governance.</li> </ul>

### Recommendations to consider:

- Build and maintain infrastructure to meet ongoing needs of County residents & businesses.
- Identify and target lands for future non-residential development.
- Build a robust and adaptable economy.
- Grow economic activity in Kneehill County.
- Foster an economic environment where local business can grow while maintaining resilience to external market and environmental forces.
- Attract new citizens and retain existing residents.
- Maximize Quality of Life for People Who Choose to Live in Kneehill County.
- Promote and sustain Kneehill County's unique rural lifestyle.
- Prioritize hamlets and encourage targeted growth.
- Be recognized as a leader in the provision of quality agricultural products.
- Address wastewater and critical infrastructure.

### **Kneehill County Municipal Development Plan (2019, Draft 2024)**

The purpose of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is to provide guidance and clarity to ensure future growth is sustainable, orderly, appropriate, complementary, efficient and enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Kneehill County.

A new MDP is currently under review and revision. The process began in February 2023 and compiled recommendations from engagements will be brought to Council for consideration in Spring/Summer 2024. The full review involved engagement from five (5) working groups to gather input on Agriculture, Economic Activity and Growth Management, Environment and Recreation, Transportation and Utilities, Residential and Hamlet and Natural Resources and Renewable Energy.

In Spring/Summer 2024 (dates to be determined), compiled recommendations will be brought to Council for consideration. Future dates will be determined where:

- Administration will present a revised Municipal Development Plan document.
- The revised MDP document will be distributed for public comments and feedback.
- A public hearing for the MDP bylaw will be held in Council Chambers.

Initial findings heard in the plan and taken into consideration during the development of the Economic Development Plan:

- Residents wish for development decisions be made on a case-by-case basis.
- Developments to be encouraged on marginally producing lands and protecting high producing land.
- Partner with adjacent municipalities to work regionally on future developments to share servicing.
- Recognizing the importance of home-based businesses that could occur in both residential and agricultural areas.
- Protection on the “right to farm”.
- Opportunities to provide tax incentives, access to roads and servicing.
- Through the Land Use Bylaws, the County shall ensure negative impacts are mitigated through adequate buffers or transitional land between industrial and non-industrial uses.

### Competitive Land Analysis (2020)

Kneehill County partnered with the Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP) to partner in a Competitive Land Analysis to examine Kneehill's industrial land supply while determining what industrial land-related issues and/or opportunities needed to be addressed.

Industrial development is a key contributor to the economic development, employment base, economic sustainability, and prosperity of the municipality as well as the prosperity of the private sector. The report identified the County as having a wide range of environmentally significant lands, environmentally sensitive lands and hazardous lands. The following considerations and recommendations were identified:

- Kneehill County holds very little land for re-sale (begin to engage landowners in discussions around industrial land).
- To attract development there needs to be low risk for investors/businesses:
  - Reduce layers, simplify process and ensure timelines are completed as legislated. Rezoning of subdivisions for industrial lands and establish terms and conditions around industrial lands based on sectors.
  - Develop an inventory of all privately owned industrial lands and buildings in the County and ensure it is accurate, detailed and current.
- The County could become more competitive in terms of attracting and retaining industrial investment if the County's strategies and policies were better aligned with each other.
  - Align plans and policies with Council's desire to attract the desired target industries.
- There are strategies or documents in place to outline economic development direction and priorities or specific targets/sectors for investment attraction.
- There is a need for one single comprehensive map of the entire County - having it both digitally and in hard copy to show where each district (AB – Agriculture Business District, HI – Hamlet Industrial District, HG – Hamlet General District, LI – Light Industrial District, I – Industrial District) is located and how they interact with each other. (see Land Use Bylaw - LUB)
- Review the discretionary uses and permitted uses in LUB to reflect what the County really wants to attract to these specific districts.
- In LUB – define what "reasonable distance" means – clarify for the investor.

Currently, agriculture is the backbone of the local economy. Located at the centre of a high-volume grain and beef production area, the region is ideally situated to grow its footprint in agricultural product processing. Based on the raw materials produced in the region, sophisticated food or plant processing operations, including growing niche categories of specialized food, products, composites, or medicines/supplements have been identified as a strong growth sector.

After reviewing the Central Alberta Economic Partnership Factors Matrix, and consulting with staff at Kneehill County the following three sectors were identified as areas of focus:

1. Ag/Construction/Mining Machinery Manufacturing
2. Commercial, Industrial Machinery Repair
3. Warehousing & Storage



#### Recommendations from this report to consider:

- Review recommendations and update land analysis report.
- Define a new set of recommendations.
- Review development process, update sector profiles and website, update maps, review LUB.

### Investment Readiness Review (January 2021)

An internal Investment Readiness Review was developed with an in-depth analysis on Kneehill County's current situation and considerations with moving forward. The review suggests that "Focusing on investment-friendly plans and policies, aligning plans and strategies, and addressing land and infrastructure concerns will assist in building a solid foundation for future Business Investment & Attraction Success."

- Reduce or replace "discretionary" use with "permitted" in low-risk sectors to improve development timelines.
- Re-zone high potential growth areas to improve development timelines.
- Reconsider the regulations surrounding home occupation business.
- Provide clear timelines and explanations of development process.
- Improve inter-department collaboration.
- Investment readiness training for municipal staff.
- Determine what privately owned lands may be available for future sale or development and build agreements with landowner accordingly.
- Develop a land strategy to address the lack of available lands.
- Amend policies and develop future growth strategies for servicing and infrastructure.
- Improve broadband connectivity.
- Consider regional projects to pool funds for strategies and studies to improve investment attraction opportunities in the region.

#### Recommendations from this report to consider:

- Review and undergo an investment readiness process to establish a current state of readiness and achieve an intermediate to advanced level as outlined by Economic Developers of Alberta Readiness Toolkit 2012 (Economic Developers of Alberta, 2012).
- Develop a land strategy to identify privately owned lands.
- Review LUB, development process.
- Work regionally on growth strategies.
- Develop a list of recommendations and incorporate into the Investment Attraction Strategy.



### Economic Base Analysis and Sector Report (2021)

AMDB Insight completed an Economic Base Analysis and Sector Report that provided great insight into the region's current economic state and sector breakdown. Trends were identified and recommendations were selected based on the following three sectors: Tourism, Energy, and Agriculture.

#### Recommendations resulting from this report:

- Build agri-tourism activities on existing farm operations and create a network of complementary attractions.
  - Increase discussions with regional partners (producers, Community Futures Wild Rose)
  - Promote more tourism training opportunities (via Travel Alberta)
  - Identify what events work provincially and replicate / modify
  - Investigate culinary tourism opportunities (food festivals, farmers markets)
- Build off Drumheller and regional visitor attraction. Develop and promote complimentary products.
  - Partnerships with Drumheller and other regional players
  - Profile opportunities for reinvestment in dated landmarks and new businesses
  - County to invest in campgrounds (many other Counties/MDs are in the business)
  - Promote through new tourism directory
- Further develop primary and secondary oil and gas services.
  - Connect with local producers and find out where they are procuring equipment and services
  - Attract these businesses to establish local operations
  - Engage with local firms to expand operations
  - Attract these businesses to establish local operations.
  - Engage with local firms to expand operations.
- Take advantage of current high concentration of primary inputs and expand into entire agri-food chain.
  - Work with existing producers to understand what they need to expand operations
  - Support existing producers to begin value-added processing.
  - Existing firms are leveraging the local transportation and logistics infrastructure, showcase these assets to complementary producers
  - Invest in business parks
- Leverage logistics networks to export high value, easily transportable agri-food goods.

#### Recommendations from this report to consider:

- Review and update the Economic Base Analysis and Sector Report and reassess the current recommendations for consideration.
- Pursue the current Economic Outlook Series as committed by Council in April 2024.



### Community Futures Wild Rose Regional Workforce Development Report - DRAFT (2024)

Community Futures Wild Rose, partnered with Kneehill County, Wheatland County, Rocky View County, Strathmore, the Province of Alberta and Prospect Employment Agency to participate in a regional labour market assessment. The project began in April 2023 and will conclude in June 2024. The purpose was to identify regional labour challenges and opportunities and to create an action plan.

The report identified employers are experiencing general and skill labour shortages. Addressing structural barriers to labour attraction, such as housing availability and skills mismatches will demand proactive measures. Enhancing education and training through public initiatives, coupled with incentivizing affordable housing development will play a pivotal role in maintaining a stable labour supply. Immigration can help close labour shortages through programs such as rural renewal program or temporary foreign worker programs. Prioritizing skills training and education will address deficiencies in skilled labour.

Supporting employers through learning initiatives to refine recruitment and retention strategies will be important to equip employers to successfully attract and retain qualified job seekers. Stakeholders will need to foster collaboration to bolster the regional labour market and engage with the community to facilitate connections between employers and potential employees, by adopting strategies that integrate policy interventions, educational support and community engagement.

The DRAFT report has produced the following recommendations of which will be determined for action based on a level of timeline priority, linkage to strategic plans and available resources:

#### High Priority

- Participate in the Rural Renewal Stream
- Centralize regional collaboration for the Rural Renewal Stream
- Create a proactive land development environment
- Develop a regional housing strategy
- Investigate affordable housing initiatives
- Optimize labour events
- Regional outreach campaign
- Increase the number of job fairs
- Create a regional employment portal
- Market the regional employment portal

#### Medium Priority

- Improve apprentice and trade availability
- Assist with Basic training
- Create a grant to reduce off-site levies (affordable housing)
- Create property tax incentives (affordable housing)
- Provide HR training programs to small businesses
- Increase direct engagement
- Create promotional videos of apprenticeship and trades job marketed to youth

#### Low Priority

- Launch internship programs, connecting interested businesses with post-secondary institutions
- Sell land for a small fee (affordable housing)
- Promote skilled trades careers and opportunities at high schools
- Create opportunities for high schoolers to shadow apprentices or trade employees
- Create opportunities for local businesses to share experiences related to HR management

#### Recommendations to consider:

- Support a regional action plan with partners to address labour needs where possible and in alignment with the County's priorities and resources.
- Identify housing needs and barriers and work to identify solutions.
- Work with partners to address employer and workforce training, employment opportunity and skill matching needs.
- Support opportunities that assist youth in career development.

### Kneehill County Tourism & Recreation Master Plan (2017, 2020)

The Kneehill County Tourism and Recreation Master Plan was originally developed in 2017 and updated again in 2020. The two primary objectives of the plan are to: 'Increase residents' quality of life through effectively delivering recreation services' and 'establish a tourism economy through the development of tourism sites and programs.'

Recommendations were split into 11 key focus areas, with several recommendations under each area of focus. It is encouraged that the County re-visit this master plan and incorporate the recommendations into the overall Economic Development Strategy. For the sake of this overview, the following two goals are noted:

- Develop tourism and recreation infrastructure (campgrounds, trails, river amenities).
- Develop a tourism marketing strategy – to include short and long-term descriptions of product development and partnership opportunities, and be built on a clear understanding of resident and visitor experiences.

#### Recommendations from this report to consider:

- Consider a review and refresh of the plan be only a Recreation Master Plan and that consideration be made into the development of Tourism Master Plan of which the Horseshoe Canyon could be aligned.

### Horseshoe Canyon Master Plan (2019 & 2024 Draft)

Version one in February 2019 has been revised in 2024. Horseshoe Canyon plays a critical role in greeting and introducing visitors to the County and the Canadian Badlands region. This plan was created to define how the Canyon would be strategically and thoughtfully developed, managed, and marketed over the following 10 years while embracing its conservation significance.

Recommended strategies to consider:

- Ensure operations protect the natural ecology of the Canyon.
- Enhance brand recognition.
- Increase and align signage for information and wayfinding throughout the Canyon.
- Integrate and collaborate with the nature conservancy of Canada and other adjacent landowners.
- Establish a voluntary Friends of Horseshoe of Canyon.
- Implement a visitor pavilion with washrooms and other amenities.
- Continue parking fee collection.
- Continue trail development, enhancement, & maintenance within and around the perimeter.
- Continue to enhance day use, market & event spaces and implement furnishing, fixtures and amenities.
- Continue to actively manage visitors and visitor use of the Canyon through on-site ambassadors.
- Consult and develop an Area Structure Plan for further development.
- Attract target markets to the Canyon.
- Encourage private sector opportunities through investment attraction and other activities that ensure a reasonable return on investment for the County.
- Strengthen the focus on Indigenous relationships and history and development relationships with Indigenous leaders.
- Collaborate with nearby regional tourism locations.
- Allow a diversity of overnight experiences to be implemented and operated by a third party.

#### Recommendations from this report to consider:

- Consider a review and refresh of the plan be only a Recreation Master Plan and that consideration be made into the development of Tourism Master Plan of which the Horseshoe Canyon could be aligned.

### Travel Alberta - Canadian Badlands Tourism Destination Zone Discovery Report (2023)

The area has been identified as a high growth potential region as outlined in the Canadian Badlands Discovery Report 2023. Through this plan, the goal is to grow and diversify the economy, support jobs, preserve cultures, foster innovation, conserve the environment; and improve resident quality of life.

The zone is rich in scenic vistas (Horseshoe Canyon, Orkney Viewpoint, Dry Island Provincial Park), historical discoveries, arts and culture, agriculture and culinary experiences, soft adventure (hiking, biking, river), and Film Tourism. While there are a variety of products, there is a lack of quantity year-round experiences and there is significant opportunity for the development of iconic and signature products such as boutique hotels and unique accommodations to support growth of top-tier products to create an iconic destination.

The zone offers a supply of 1,500 economy-branded rooms and many campgrounds, B&B's and unique accommodations. There is continued demand and opportunity to expand and provide glamping and hotel development in the upscale to upper-upscale categories. Increasing the supply of accommodation will be key to increasing overnights stay, the overall appeal and increased spending in the TDZ.

Albertans have stated that 51% are familiar with the zone and 69% of visitors have a positive impression of the destination and only 38% are likely to visit the zone. Internationally, there is limited inventory of experiences valued by international visitors and the zone is well positioned to attract international markets by creating immersive products, experiences, packages and itinerary options.

#### Recommendations to consider:

- Continue to support and promote programs to attract product development offering high value experiences to businesses.
- Prioritizing glamping options and hotel development in upscale to upper-upscale categories.
- Explore and participate in partnerships with Travel Alberta to implement the destination plan.

### Travel Drumheller - Destination Development Plan (2023)

This plan identifies Drumheller's desire to become a year-round destination to strengthen the dinosaur foundation and to support and enhance community vibrancy including live theater and events, sports tourism, soft adventure, wellness, culinary and beverages that are of significant interest to prospective visitors from Canada, US and around the world.

Kneehill County, particularly the Horseshoe Canyon area has been identified within this region and expands to Rosebud and as far as Dorothy and the southern portion of Starland County.

Building partnerships and working collaboratively in tourism is critical as visitors know no boundaries. Kneehill County resides on the Travel Alberta Steering Committee that supports the executive director and staff to implement the Destination Development Action Plan. The following short-term (2 years) priorities and initiatives have been identified:

#### Destination Leadership

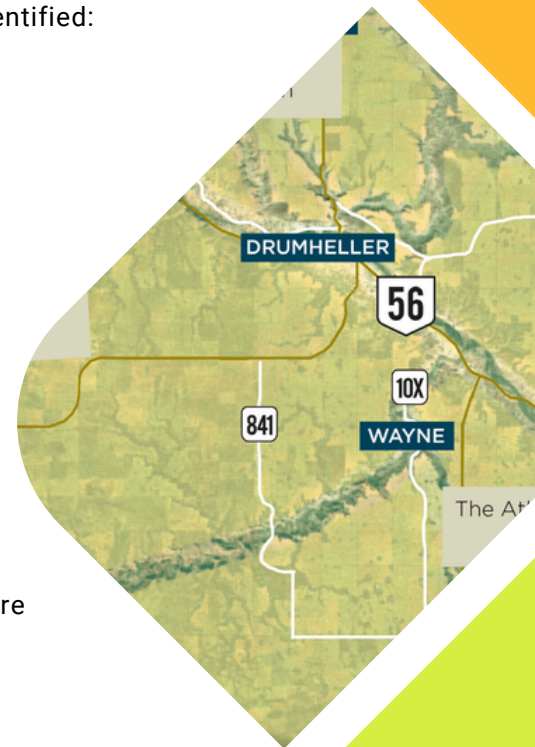
- Committee creation
- Communicate strategy
- Conduct and share industry, market and social tourism research
- Support tourism innovation, entrepreneurship and investment
- Address labour issues
- Strengthen partnerships

#### Destination Development

- Create more multi-day, year-round experiences
- Development of new and existing experiences
- Creative industries and infrastructure
- Identify and support enhancement of tourism/social infrastructure
- Train businesses in product and experience development
- Provide incentives to support training
- Build a marketing collective to increase brand awareness
- Create and implement a marketing strategy to attract target audiences

#### Recommendations to consider:

- Remain on the Travel Drumheller Steering Committee to drive and strengthen Kneehill's position within the region and tourism market.
- Communicate the plan and outcomes to stakeholders.
- Support initiatives that support businesses to develop new and expand existing experiences.
- Support in their initiatives to promote brand awareness of not only the region but Kneehill County.



### Kneehill County “Doing Business” Webpage

Kneehill County’s webpage “Doing Business” [1] has an abundance of relevant information available to businesses consisting of data (Townfolio), land maps (Munisite), grants and funding, business supports, business and community listings, planning permits and process to assist businesses.

Investment attraction documents such as sector profiles, land analysis and maps have been professionally designed and conducted and are a great start to strategically attracting investments and industries. There is an agri-preneur and business spotlight in which businesses can participate. These spotlights were then promoted on various social media channels. There is also a business directory and a supply of resources to support and direct businesses to for support in starting and expanding their business.

Kneehill does not have a designated published investment website for investment attraction purposes.



#### Recommendations and Opportunities to consider:

- Update “Kneehill County Business Guide”, sector profiles [2], business list, events, land analysis and inventories.
- Opportunity to continue business spotlights.
- Continue promoting the items and assets on the website on social channels.
- As the County prepares for investment readiness and expansion it should consider a marketing strategy which includes a competitive analysis, target market identification and creating a value proposition.
- The County should consider a stand alone website for economic development for business retention and investment attraction.
- Review of Townfolio to other providers such as LocalIntel and CityViz for access to current and relevant economic development data.

[1] Kneehill County Doing Business: <https://kneehillcounty.com/2276/DOING-BUSINESS>

[2] Kneehill County Sector Profiles: <https://kneehillcounty.com/2476/Sector-Profiles>



## Research Findings - Local Economic Development Partners

Partners at all levels of government, local community, non-profits and industry are essential for a healthy community, businesses and for long-term sustainability within the municipality.

Partners are essential for all sectors as each has it's own set of challenges and barriers. Mobilizing partners and community champions create a stronger foundation for economic development and long term prosperity.

Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP)	<p>CAEP [3] is a regional economic development organization whereby municipalities pay an annual membership fee to address regional challenges and access to initiatives.</p> <p>Their website provides access to a regional data centre provided by Localintel and populated by Statistics Canada and is provided through membership fees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training, networking</li><li>• International summits, regional data, industry profiles</li><li>• Broadband connectivity</li><li>• Regional Land Database - ongoing</li><li>• Investment Attraction Readiness Program</li><li>• Economic Development Member Training - ongoing</li><li>• NEW - Sector Committees – 2024 Launch</li></ul>
Community Futures Wild Rose (CFWR)	<p>CFWR [4] is a non-profit community economic development organization serving 15 rural municipalities and is governed by elected officials. Kneehill County has an appointed official to the Board of Directors and on various committees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lending</li><li>• Business Coaching and Training</li><li>• Youth Entrepreneur Training</li><li>• Community Business Investment Program</li><li>• Regional Workforce Project</li><li>• Skills in Action, Digital Economy Program,</li><li>• Business Mentorship Program (Spring and Fall 2024 Cohort)</li></ul>
Three Hills & District Chamber of Commerce	<p>The Chamber [5] is regionally positioned to support Three Hills, Trochu, Linden, Acme, Carbon and Kneehill County.</p> <p>A chamber's main purpose is to advocate for business and can do so in a variety of formats. Alberta's provincial chamber is the overarching body in which chambers drive support from to provide services to businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group benefits &amp; insurance, office supply discounts, payroll, legal and HR solutions, payment processing programs</li><li>• Shop Local Programs (Call Kneehill, #lovingmylocalkneehill)</li><li>• Community Events (Small Business Week, Golf Tournament, Christmas Market and more)</li></ul>

### Recommendations and Opportunities to consider:

- Continue to promote/attend CAEP functions to industry, community leaders, staff.
- Access regional data for the Central AB region for investment attraction and retention purposes.
- Participate in the sector committees to amplify Kneehill's presence within the central Alberta region.
- Explore collaboration initiatives to support business retention and investment readiness/attraction.
- Promote access to capital and training programs.
- Incentives through the Community Business Investment Program.
- Promote and encourage youth to become entrepreneurs through the YETI Program.
- Continue to foster and support the regional workforce action plan.
- Shop local programs.
- Small business weeks events.
- Engage in discussions to explore #lovingmylocalkneehill.

[3] Central Alberta Economic Partnership: <https://caepalberta.com/>

[4] Community Futures Wild Rose: <https://wildrose.albertacf.com/>

[5] Three Hills and District Chamber of Commerce: <https://threehillschamber.ca/>

## Research Findings - Social Organizations

Kneehill County has local social partners who work to ensure the social well being of the community remains strong, healthy and vibrant. Our communities and businesses require these supports to ensure a healthy workforce and quality of life for our residents.

Kneehill FCSS and Kneehill Adult Learning Centre have a variety of programs, supports and services to serve a diversity of residents and businesses.

### Kneehill Regional FCSS KRFCSS

KRFCSS [6] is a regional partnership between municipal and provincial governments established to develop, support and fund preventive social programming to enhance the well-being of individuals, families and communities. The program is municipally driven and governed by the Family FCSS Act which emphasizes prevention, volunteerism, and local autonomy.

- Programs and events to children, youth and adults/seniors
- Family wellness
- Income tax
- Family and marriage counselling
- Volunteerism

### Kneehill Adult Learning Society (KALS)

KALS [7] is a non-profit organization dedicated to lifelong learning and settlement support and provides access to services to Kneehill County and surrounding communities.

KALS supports in areas of learning, resource connection, job seeking and development, newcomer supports and much more.

- Adult Literacy services
- Digital Learning
- ESL classes and tutoring
- internet and computer access
- Exam supervision (invigilation)
- Resume and cover letter support
- Education/upgrading planning and resources
- Health and Safety workshops
- Newcomer resources



### Recommendations and Opportunities to consider:

- Continue to support and promote the KRFCSS and KALS programming.
- Continue to collaborate and identify opportunities with KRFCSS to support the social well-being of individuals (volunteerism, mental health, etc.)
- Support and promote to businesses and residents the access to the learning supports to create a strong workforce.
- Promote newcomer programs to businesses accessing temporary foreign worker or immigration programs.

[6] Kneehill Regional FCSS: <https://www.krfcss.com/>

[7] Kneehill Adult Learning Society: <https://www.kals3hills.ca/>

## Research and Findings - Government Economic Development Plans and Partners

“Selling Alberta to the World: An Investment and Growth Strategy” complements and builds on Alberta’s Recovery Plan to put the province back on course for long-term financial sustainability after the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and crash in oil prices.

Investment attraction into Alberta is essential to help drive our economy by creating stability, supporting existing jobs and creating new ones, expanding business opportunities, accelerating innovation, and increasing our exports globally.

The investment and growth strategy identifies three core outcomes, each with key initiatives that contribute to meeting those outcomes.

**Outcome 1:** Increase Alberta’s competitive advantage.

**Outcome 2:** Improve Alberta’s investment attraction ecosystem.

**Outcome 3:** Raise Alberta’s reputation as an investment destination.

### Investment Attraction Partners

Invest Alberta Corporation (IAC)	<p>Expedite business operations &amp; foster collaboration to ensure long-term success for businesses. Work directly with global investors &amp; site selectors to start or scale up in Alberta. Break down barriers &amp; offer assistance to investors to achieve success.</p> <p>Have supported investments totaling nearly \$20 billion and creating more than 23,000 jobs.</p> <p>Attract targeted industries: Agriculture, Aviation &amp; Aerospace, Energy &amp; Renewables, Financial Services, Life Sciences, Petrochemicals and Technology &amp; Innovation [8].</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access to Provincial data &amp; resources</li><li>• Facilitate investment calls &amp; investment proposals</li><li>• Attract targeted industries to Alberta</li><li>• Access to business resources including taxes, incentives, visa processing, supports &amp; profiles</li></ul>
Invest Canada (IC)	<p>Connect multinational corporations to opportunities to grow, expand and succeed in Canada. Offer personalized, single-window access to the information, insights and services to make informed business investment and expansion decisions. Access to data and resources pertinent for investment attraction and primarily targets high value foreign direct investments [9].</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• International investment summits</li><li>• Access to data &amp; resources (businesses, governments)</li><li>• High value investments (excluding tourism)</li></ul>



#### Recommendations and Opportunities to consider:

- Collaborate and connect with Invest Alberta to help prepare Kneehill County’s investment readiness and expansion.
- Help identify new stakeholders and connections to promote brand awareness and business development.
- Attend investment calls to seek potential for proposal submissions.
- Collaborate and connect with Invest Canada to identify potential investment opportunities for Kneehill County (when readiness level has been achieved).
- Access the available resources to develop investment attraction materials and increase brand awareness with IAC and IC.

[8] Invest Alberta Corporation: <https://investalberta.ca/>

[9] Invest Canada: <https://www.investcanada.ca/>



# Community Engagement Results

Engaging the local community is essential for effective economic development planning, forming the foundation for the growth of vibrant and sustainable communities. This plan acknowledges and prioritizes the active involvement of the community in its development process. Through a collaborative effort, a diverse range of stakeholders were involved including residents, business owners, local organizations, staff, and Council members.

Input for the economic development plan was gathered through a variety of surveys, reflecting the commitment to understanding the County's unique needs and aspirations. This engagement process provided invaluable insights into the challenges, opportunities, and priorities that shape the community's economic landscape.

A Business Retention and Expansion survey was completed to understand how to best support local businesses. Deloitte was commissioned to complete a **Triage Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E)** report to engage the broader business community, while also allowing for the identification of potential expansion or retention opportunities for follow-up on a business-by-business basis. A total of 77 businesses were reached.

Further engagement followed through a **community-wide economic development survey**, with a total of 658 surveys received and analyzed. Tailored surveys were completed by organizations operating within the County (7 received) as well as by Municipal Council members. Regional organizations including CAEP, Travel Drumheller, and Community Futures Wild Rose were also engaged to share their initiatives to determine potential collaborations.

By harnessing the collective wisdom and expertise of the stakeholders, the foundation was laid for an economic development plan that is truly reflective of the aspirations of Kneehill County.



Full findings reports can be found in the Appendices.

### When it comes to supporting economic development initiatives, what does it mean to:

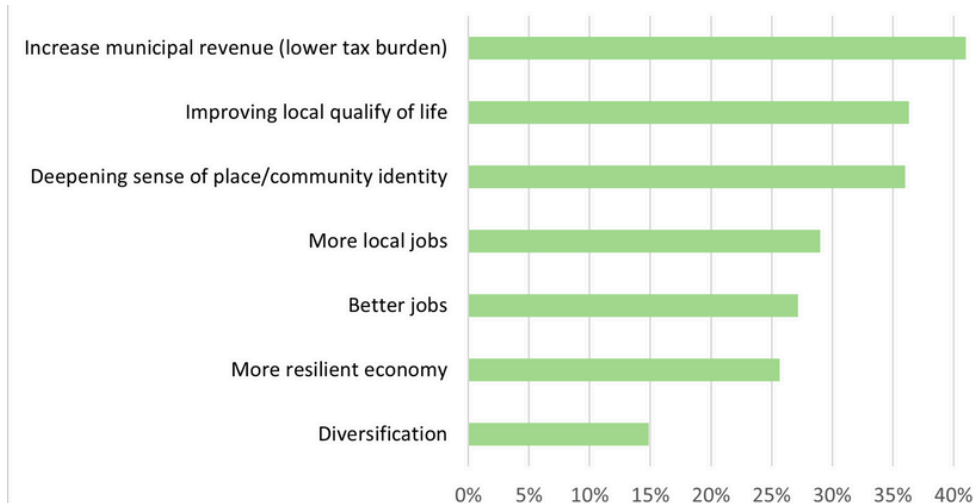
Figure 1: What it means to residents to support economic development

<b>The Community:</b>	Developing Tourism and Recreation Infrastructure
<b>Local Organizations:</b>	Developing Tourism and Recreation Infrastructure Attracting more Visitors
<b>Council:</b>	Improving the overall attractiveness of living and working in Kneehill County
<b>What it means for Residents:</b>	Developing tourism and recreation infrastructure



### Why residents want to see growth in local economic development?

Figure 2: Reasons why residents want to see growth in local economic development

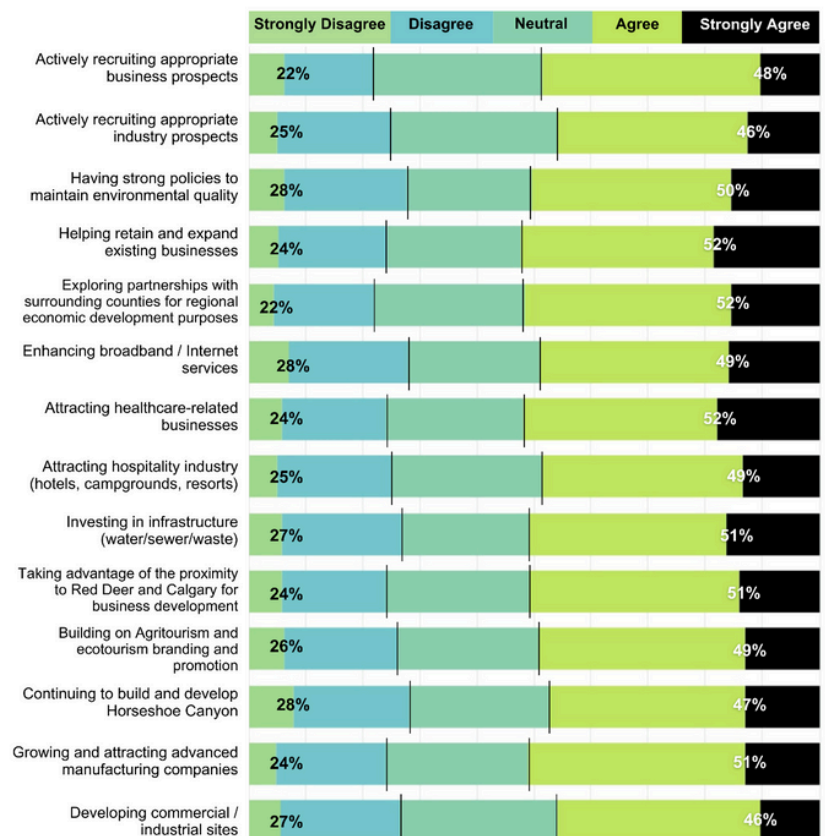


- Majority of residents wanted to see growth to increase municipal revenue to lower the tax burden.

### Economic development priorities

- For the most part, people agree with all the listed priorities.
- Although some people strongly disagree or disagree with them, all priorities have a higher percentage of support

Figure 3: Residents rated economic development priorities



## Community Engagement - What we heard (cont'd)

Council was asked to rate economic development priorities.

Figure 4: Council rates economic development priorities .



Council agreed with all priorities with “developing commercial/industrial site” being the only one to receive a disagree. While there is disagreement, the majority were in agreeance/strong agreed on development

## Community Engagement - What we heard (cont'd)

### Business Retention and Expansion Survey Priorities:

This priority matrix is a list of business factors to focus economic development efforts for Kneehill County. Each priority was calculated using the level of satisfaction and the importance of each item. Factors with lower satisfaction scores and higher importance became the top priorities. Making improvements to the top priorities will have the greatest impact.

Figure 5: Priority Matrix by Performance, importance and rank.

Factor	Performance	Importance	Priority Rank	
Availability of funding programs for business and property improvement	47%	9.4	1	Higher Priority
Availability of post secondary programming that aligns with business needs	51%	7.8	2	
Availability of adequate housing	50%	7.6	3	
Availability of skilled labour	41%	6.4	4	
Cellular phone service	51%	6.6	5	
Availability of unskilled labour	51%	6.6	6	
Ability of internet service to support current and future business needs	64%	7.4	7	
Availability of appropriate work-related training	65%	6.8	8	Lower Priority
Availability of health and medical services	70%	6.4	9	
Affordability of commercial space for rent or lease	72%	6.2	10	
Municipal property taxes	74%	6.6	11	
Availability of property for purchase or lease	74%	5.8	12	
Existing road network	84%	7.0	13	
Development/building permit process	81%	5.8	14	
Zoning	87%	6.0	15	

#### Derived Importance & Priority Matrix



##### Derived Importance

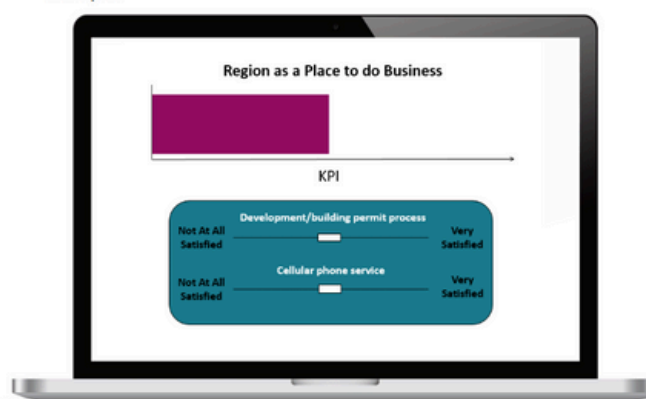
- A statistical calculation of importance
- Far more accurate relative to asking importance
- Calculates the correlation coefficient of business factors with the KPI
- Factors with a high derived importance will have the greatest impact on the KPI



##### Priority Matrix

- A list of business factors to focus efforts
- Each priority is calculated using the level of satisfaction and the importance of each item (Derived Importance)
- Factors with lower satisfaction scores and higher importance become the top priorities
- Making improvements to the top priorities will have the greatest impact on improving the overall KPI

Example:



## Community Engagement - What we heard (cont'd)

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### Summary of Challenges and Concerns

Below is a summary of challenges and concerns from the various community members within the County.

<b>Businesses:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Availability of funding programs for business and property improvement</li><li>• Post secondary programming that aligns with business needs</li><li>• Availability of adequate housing</li><li>• Availability of skilled labour</li></ul>
<b>The Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finding enough land or space for new or growing businesses</li><li>• Communication and cooperation with municipality</li><li>• Availability of employment opportunities</li></ul>
<b>Local Organizations:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication and cooperation with municipality</li><li>• Availability of employment opportunities</li><li>• Availability to hire qualified employees</li></ul>
<b>Council:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Availability to hire qualified employees</li><li>• Current infrastructure</li></ul>



# Kneehill County Statistics

Kneehill County is a rural municipality in south-central Alberta situated between Red Deer County to the north, Mountain View County to the west, Wheatland County to the south, and Starland County to the east. Primary access to the region is provided via the Highway 21 and Highway 27 corridors, CN Rail and the Three Hills Municipal Airport. Calgary, Red Deer, Stettler, Strathmore and Drumheller can all be accessed with an hour's drive of the County.

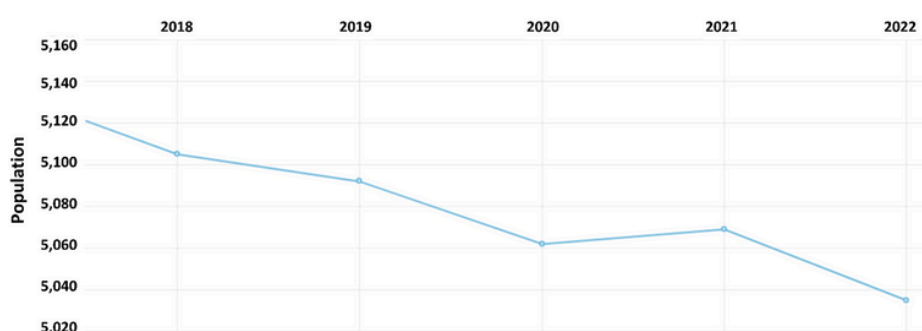
The County has approximately 814,653 acres of land, a population of 5,035 residents and a trade area of over 11,000 people. There are five urban municipalities within its borders, including Acme, Carbon, Linden, Three Hills and Trochu and 4 hamlets (Torrington, Huxley, Swalwell, and Wimborne).[10]

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy with 751 farms and 628,009 acres of cropland[11]. The majority of the land is zoned for agriculture uses, which gives residents the opportunity to enjoy a rural way of life and community. Oil and gas is the other major industry in the region. The eastern border of the County runs along the Red Deer River Valley down to Drumheller in the heart of the Canadian Badlands, making tourism a viable market opportunity.



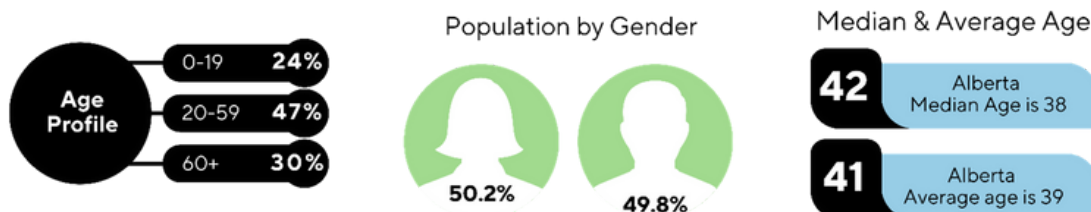
## Population

Figure 6: Kneehill Population over 5 years



In 2022, Kneehill County's population was 5,035. The population of Kneehill County declined -0.67% year-over-year, and decreased -1.99% in the last five years.[12]

Figure 7: Kneehill Demographics



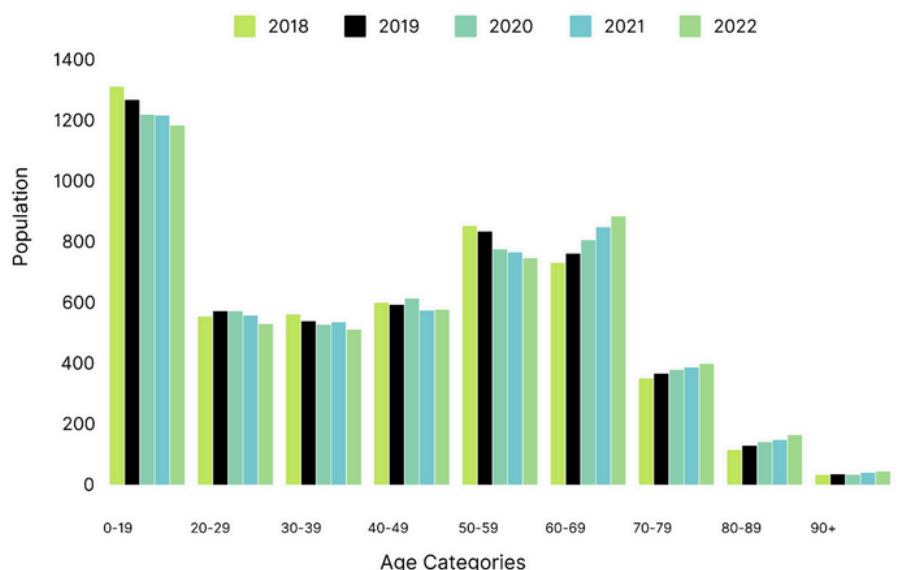
[10] [townfolio.co/ab/kneehill-county/overview](https://townfolio.co/ab/kneehill-county/overview)

[11] [regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county](https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county)

[12] [regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county](https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county)

## Population

Figure 8: Population by Age over 5 years



The graph outlines the changes in population by age group over a five-year period from 2018 to 2022. There is a noticeable decline in the population of younger age groups, especially those under the age of 60.[13]

## Education

Kneehill County had 1,600 people with a post-secondary degree or other qualification in 2021, declining -8.31% from 1,745 in 2016. The less than high school segment had the largest increase over last five years, increasing 5.20% to 810.[14]



[13] [regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county](https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county)

[14] [regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county](https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county)

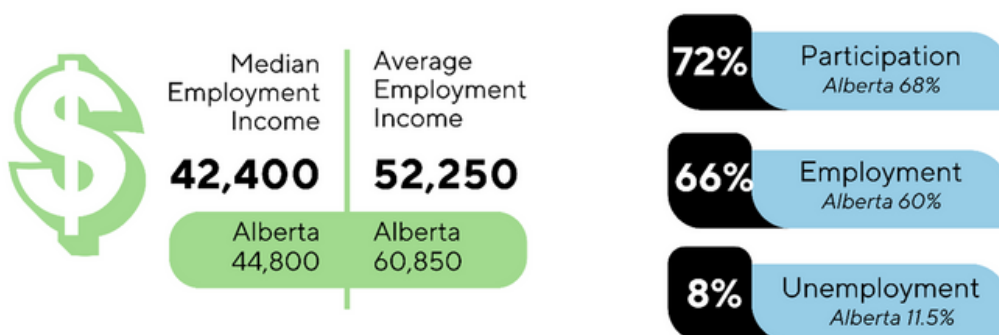


### Labour Force

Kneehill County is below the median and average of employment income in Alberta. Participation, employment and unemployment rates are higher than those throughout Alberta.

Agriculture and Health Care are the top two (2) industries by labour force within the County with it's top two (2) occupations by labour force in Natural Resources and Trades and Transportation.

Figure 9: Labour Force Statistics



The participation rate refers to the total number of people or individuals who are currently employed or searching for a job. Participation Rate indicates the number of people interested in working, and the number of people, indicating the active economic workforce and country's unemployment, respectively.

### Top 5 Industries by Labour Force



### Top 5 Occupations by Labour Force



# Kneehill County Statistics - Number of Businesses

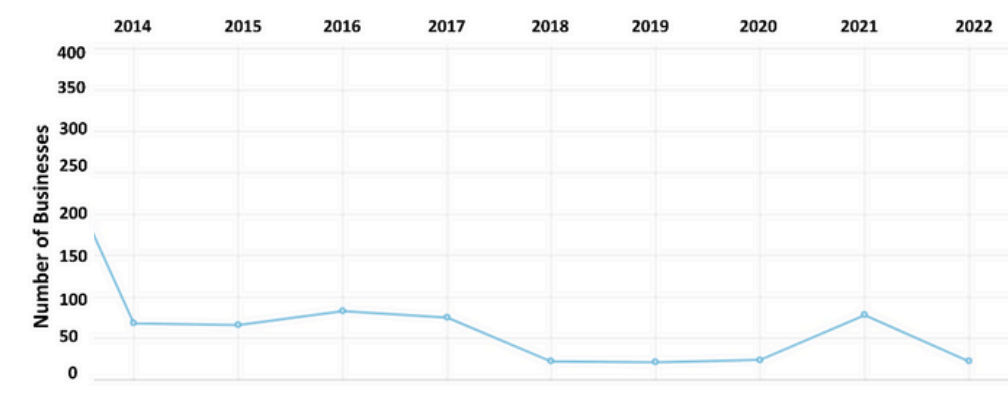
## Number of Businesses

Kneehill County had 22 businesses in 2022 with employees and in 2023 the number grew to 39 with employees. The agriculture, transportation and warehousing and other services remain the top industries with employees within the County.[15]

The following graph shows the number of businesses and industry in Kneehill County from 2014 - 2022 and in 2023 the table below shows an increase in businesses to the County. [16]

Note: Further examination into the number of businesses and industry sectors is required to understand fluctuations.

**Figure 10: Number of Kneehill Businesses over the past 10 years**



**Figure 11: Kneehill County Business Counts by Industry**

	2021	2022	2023	Annual Change
		With employees	With Employees	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting [11]	18	13	19	6
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction [21]	0	3	3	0
Utilities [22]	0	0	0	0
Construction [23]	7	1	1	0
Manufacturing [31-33]	4	1	2	1
Wholesale trade [41]	4	0	0	0
Retail trade [44-45]	7	0	2	2
Transportation and warehousing [48-49]	7	2	4	2
Information and cultural industries [51]	0	0	0	0
Finance and insurance [52]	1	0	0	0
Real estate and rental and leasing [53]	0	0	0	0
Professional, scientific and technical services [54]	4	0	1	1
Management of companies and enterprises [55]	0	0	0	0
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services [56]	0	0	1	1
Educational services [61]	0	0	0	0
Health care and social assistance [62]	7	1	1	0
Arts, entertainment and recreation [71]	2	0	0	0
Accommodation and food services [72]	3	0	1	1
Other services (except public administration) [81]	5	1	3	2
Public administration [91]	1	0	0	0
Unclassified [2] 7	0	0	1	1
<b>Total All Industries</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>17</b>

[15] Statistics Canada. Table 33-10-0808-01 Canadian Business Counts, with employees, census metropolitan areas and census subdivisions, December 2023. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3310080801>

[16] [regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county](https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county)

## Kneehill County Statistics - Municipal Finances

The 2022 non-residential municipal mill rate in Kneehill County was 16.1%, increasing 6.04% from 15.2 in 2021. The non-residential segment had the largest increase over last year, increasing 6.04% to 16.1.[17]

The significant increase in Kneehill County's municipal mill rate over the past five years is likely due to cover offsets in other municipal expenses throughout the past years.

Figure 12: Kneehill Mill Rate over 5 years

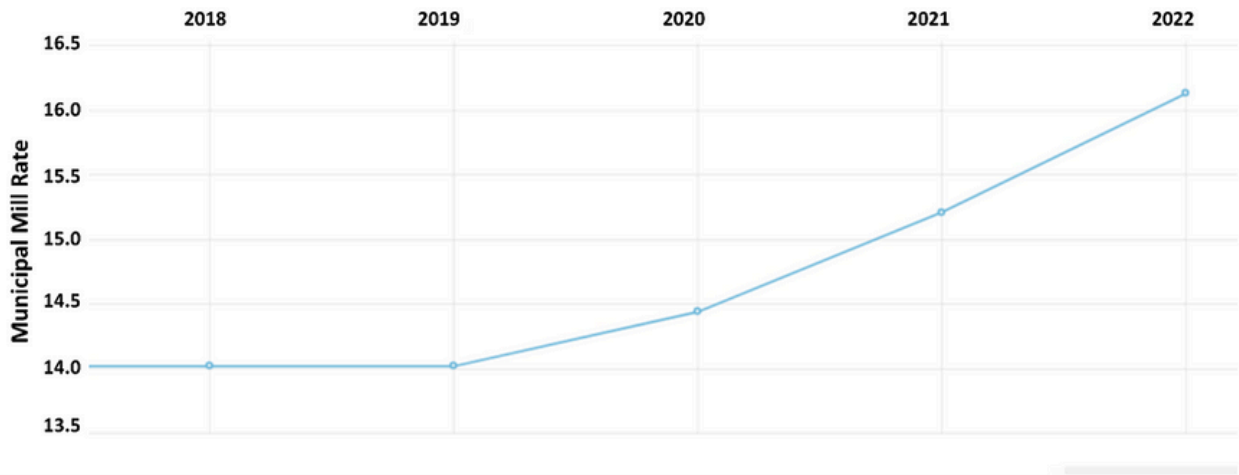


Figure 13: Kneehill Tax Levy over 3-years

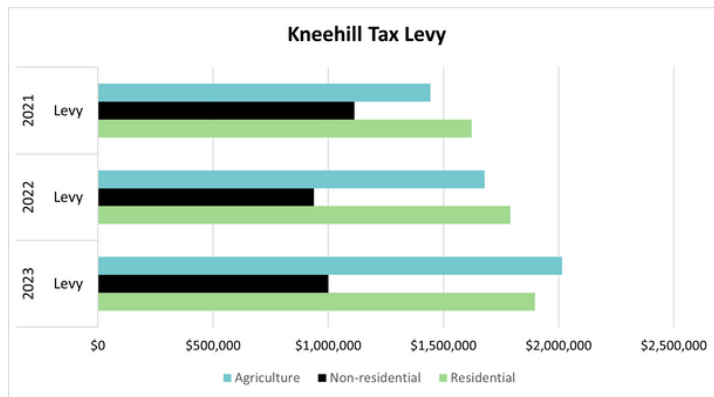
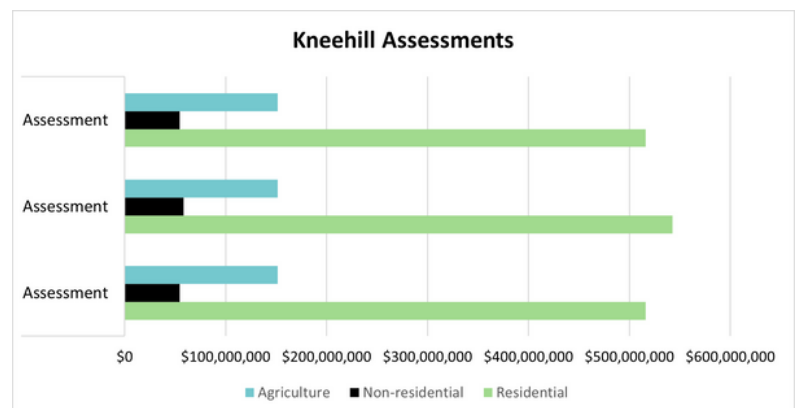


Figure 14: Kneehill Assessments over 3-years



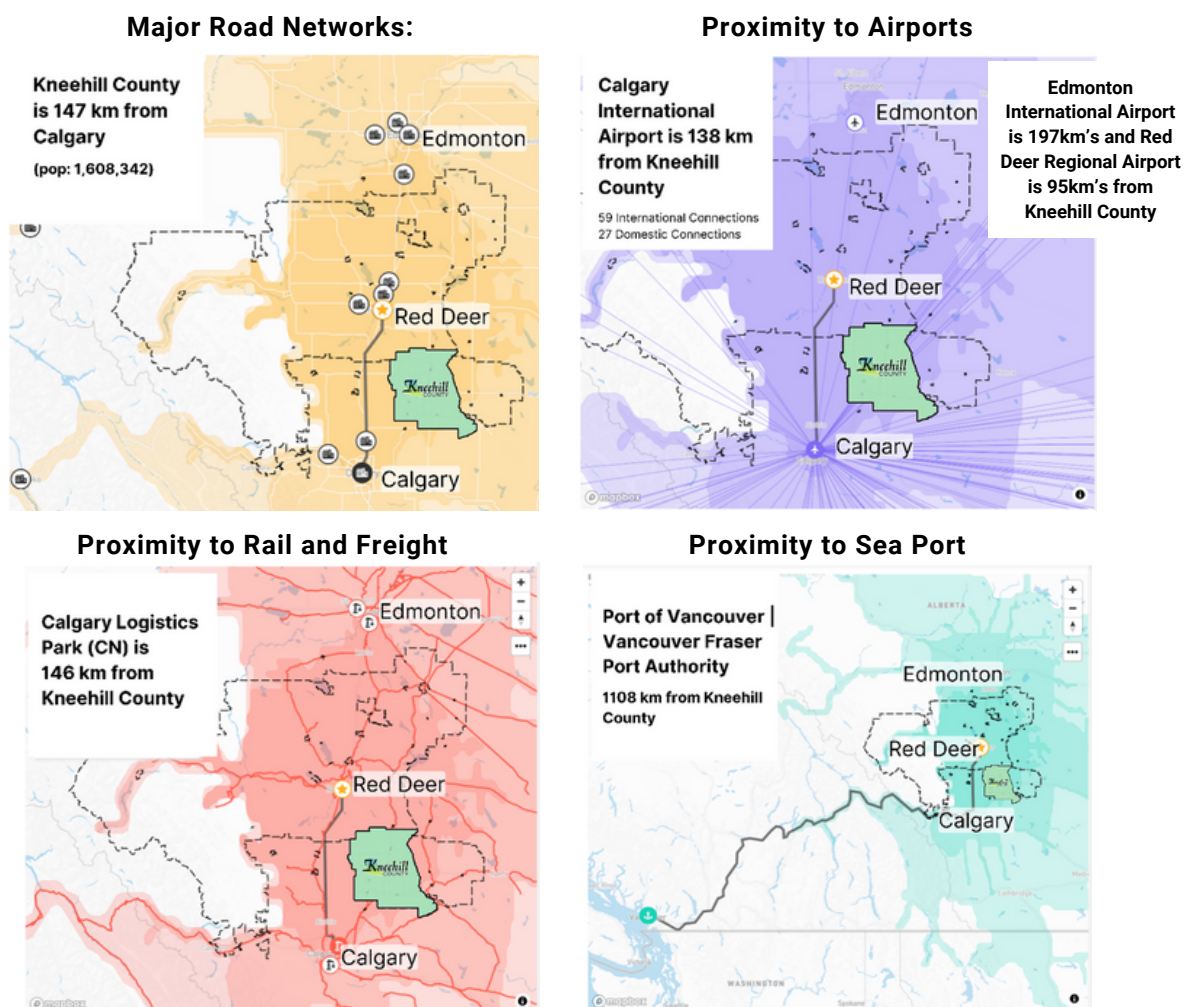
[17] Mill Rate: [regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county](https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county)

### Market Access

Kneehill County has excellent access to international trade markets. The region is adjacent to the CANAMEX corridor allowing companies to reach millions of consumers within a one-day trip. Served by two continental rail lines, goods are easily moved to ports in Vancouver, Prince Rupert, and Halifax. Central Alberta is served by the Red Deer Regional Airport (95km's) and both Calgary and Edmonton International Airports (197km's). Proximity to Calgary's Intermodal facilities provide efficient access to consumer markets worldwide. Time is estimated from Kneehill County's head office (Three Hills) to Calgary Airport – 1 hour 16 mins, 138 kms.[18]

The following maps show Kneehill's proximity to major road networks, airports, rail and freight, seaports, as well as the broadband network.

Figure 15: Market Access Maps

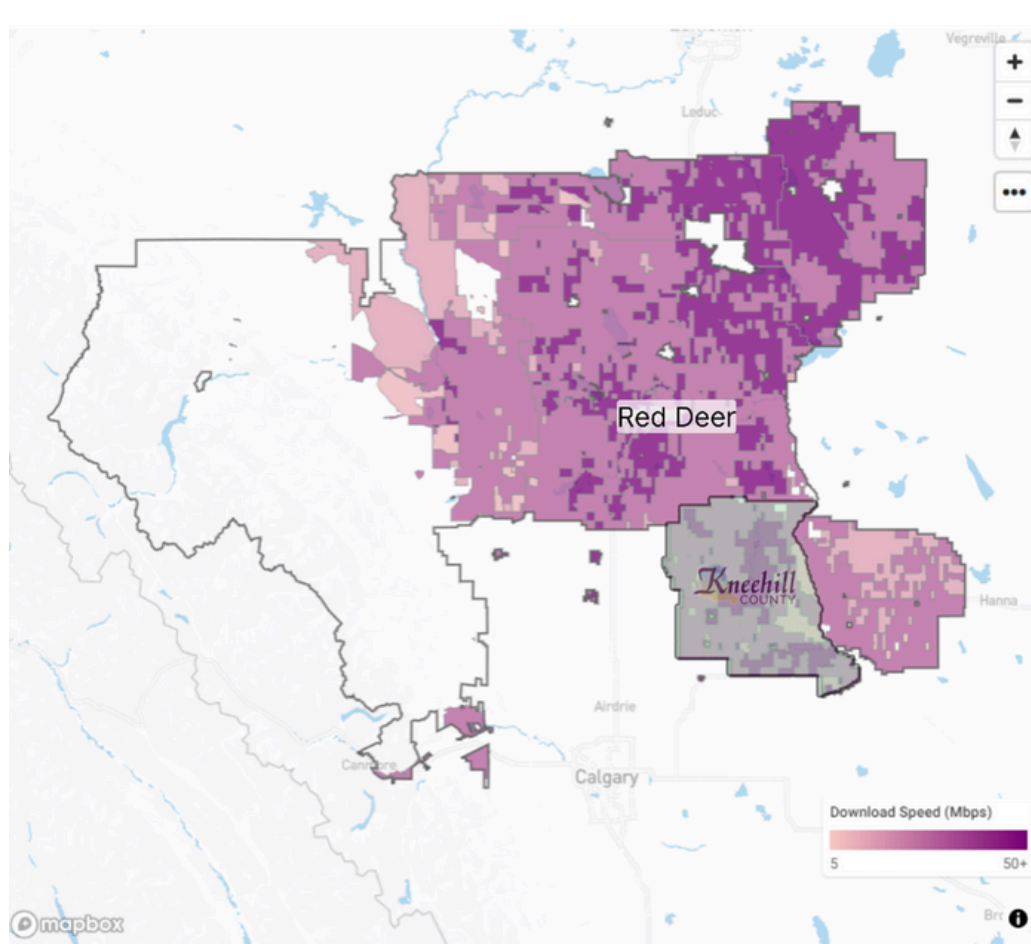


[18] Localintel – OAG Aviation Worldwide Limited, 2022 - 2023, Homeland Infrastructure Foundation – Level Data (HIFLD) - Railroads published in 2023 and Localintel Labs – Seaports, published in 2020

### Broadband Network

Kneehill County's and Central Alberta's broadband access. [20]

Figure 16: Broadband Network



# Economic Trends

Understanding economic trends is essential to navigating current and future municipal challenges. This data provides a comprehensive overview of Alberta's economic landscape, highlighting key indicators and trends that shape our province's economy. By examining these trends, Kneehill County can uncover opportunities for growth, innovation, and strategic investment. From the impacts of technology on economic development to the macroeconomic variables influencing market dynamics, this analysis offers valuable insights for planning and development efforts to ensure the County will thrive well into the future.

Kneehill County's close proximity to Calgary provides an opportunity to capitalize on Calgary's record population growth. Home to over 1.6 million people, Calgary is the 4th largest city in Canada and has experienced the largest population growth among major cities in the country for the last ten years. [21] Record population along with strong commodity prices and consumer spending are expected to position Alberta well in the year ahead. Alberta is expected to navigate 2024 relatively well despite global economic headwinds.

The province's economic outlook is more favorable compared to other regions due to its strategic positioning and resource management.[22] Alberta retains its status as Canada's least indebted province. Its net debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to fall, giving it a financial advantage over other provinces facing higher debt levels.[23] While there are signs of a slowdown due to weakening global demand for key commodities, Alberta's economy is still better positioned compared to other regions that are more severely affected by the global economic downturn.[24] Despite the challenges, Alberta's economic decline is expected to be milder.

The overall Canadian GDP showed a slight decrease, but Alberta's strategic economic measures help mitigate some of these adverse effects.[25]While expecting slowed growth, Alberta is comparatively more resilient than others across Canada with diversification across the energy sector, higher investment trends and the influx of migrants.[26]

Emerging strengths in delivering innovation in oil and gas, electricity, food and agriculture, are improving the competitiveness of Alberta's leading economic sectors and companies while exporting solutions to the world.

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[21] [calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/insights/demographics](https://calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/insights/demographics)

[22] [calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/newsroom/2024-economic-outlook-calgary-set-to-navigate](https://calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/newsroom/2024-economic-outlook-calgary-set-to-navigate)

[23] [economics.td.com/provincial-economic-forecast](https://economics.td.com/provincial-economic-forecast)

[24] [thoughtleadership.rbc.com/the-canadian-economic-slowdown-is-not-over](https://thoughtleadership.rbc.com/the-canadian-economic-slowdown-is-not-over)

[25] [thoughtleadership.rbc.com/canadas-economic-engine-is-gearing-down](https://thoughtleadership.rbc.com/canadas-economic-engine-is-gearing-down)

[26] [calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com](https://calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com)



### Agri-Business:

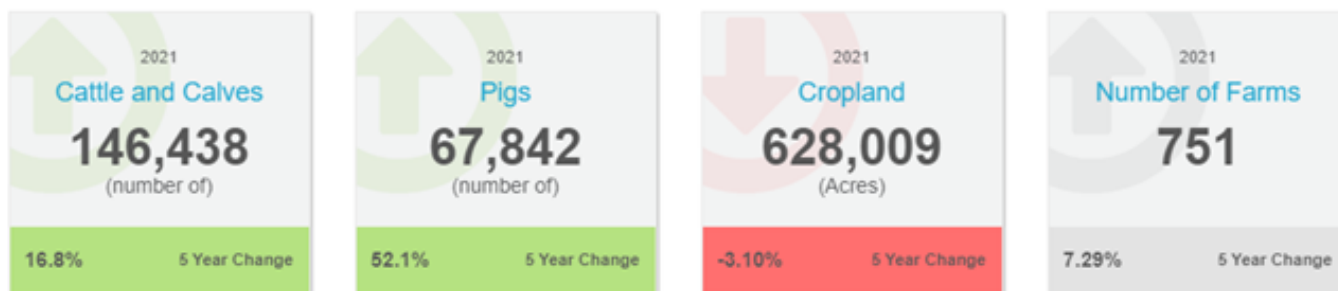
Agribusiness consists of all farming and farming-related commercial activities, across the Agribusiness Value Chain, from sourcing through sale. Alberta's agricultural sector is foundational to the province's economy – contributing \$10.2 billion in GDP in 2022 and employing 69,000 Albertans. The province offers high-quality primary products and is the third largest exporter of agri-food products in Canada.[27] Alberta's agricultural sector is foundational to the province's economy – contributing \$10.2 billion in GDP in 2022 and employing 69,000 Albertans. The province offers high-quality primary products and is the third largest exporter of agri-food products in Canada.[28]

Alberta is a leading center for sustainable farmland practices and food production, catering to the global demand for food manufacturing exports. Its agricultural sector thrives on traditional farming methods and innovations such as biomass utilization, vertical farming, and alternative protein operations. These innovative practices support the agribusiness value chain, contributing to GDP by increasing the efficiency and output of the sector. Alberta offers unmatched access to North American and international markets, through being strategically located on the CANAMEX Corridor and accessible via Canadian Pacific Railways and three international airports. Its expansive agricultural land supports farming and industrial development.[29]

Meat product manufacturing accounts for over half of Alberta's food manufacturing. Grain and oilseed manufacturing is the second largest component of Alberta's food manufacturing sales. Alberta produced 33% of Canadian wheat, 29.9% of Canadian canola and 53.9% of the nation's barley (2022).[30]

Kneehill is located at the centre of a high-volume grain and beef production area. The region is ideally situated to grow its footprint in agricultural product processing. Based on the raw materials produced in the region, sophisticated food or plant processing operations are identified as a strong growth sector (including specialized food, products, composites, or medicines/supplements).[31]

Figure 17: Agricultural Statistics



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[27] [investalberta.ca/agriculture](https://investalberta.ca/agriculture)

[28] [investalberta.ca/agriculture](https://investalberta.ca/agriculture)

[29] [investalberta.ca/agriculture](https://investalberta.ca/agriculture)

[30] [investalberta.ca/agriculture](https://investalberta.ca/agriculture)

[31] [Kneehillcounty.com](https://kneehillcounty.com)

## Economic Trends (cont'd)

The following agriculture statistics are taken from the Alberta Regional Dashboard[32]:

- Kneehill County had 628,009 acres of cropland in 2021, declining -3.10% from 648,129 acres in 2016. The oats segment had the largest increase over last five years, increasing 20.4% to 5,066 acres.
- Kneehill County had 751 farms in 2021, greatly increasing 7.29% from 700 in 2016. Kneehill County's growth rate ranks 15th provincially.
- Kneehill County cattle and calve population was 146,438 in 2021, the 8th highest in the province. The cattle and calve population for Kneehill County increased 16.8% in the last five years.
- Kneehill County had a pig population of 67,842 in 2021, the 8th highest in the province. The number of pigs in Kneehill County greatly increased 52.1% in the last five years.

Figure 18: Kneehill Agriculture Statistics[32]



Acres of Cropland  
**628,009**



Number of Farms  
**751**



Cattle & Calves  
**146,438**



Number of Pigs  
**67,842**



**\$12.4 billion**

Alberta's total exports of primary and processed agricultural and food products in 2020



**40% of Canada's total**

Alberta leads the nation in cattle and calf inventory



**22 facilities**

Alberta has over 22 research and innovation facilities specializing in crops and cereals, poultry, swine and other meats, agronomy, biomaterials and food safety

[32] [regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county](https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county)

## Economic Trends (cont'd)

Ag-tech & Agriculture are a cleantech subsector with significant potential to attract investment, talent and generate startup companies. Setting a net-zero pathway in Alberta aligned with global climate targets could generate almost 170,000 jobs in the cleantech sector and contribute \$61 billion to provincial GDP by 2050.[33]

Kneehill County is well-positioned to attract the ag-tech and agriculture cleantech subsectors. The County's strong agricultural heritage provides a solid foundation for innovation, supported by ample land and high-quality soil ideal for both traditional and modern farming practices. Proximity to research institutions and universities fosters collaboration and R&D opportunities, while the region's strategic location ensures excellent connectivity and access to larger markets. By leveraging these strengths, Kneehill County can effectively attract investment, talent, and startups in the ag-tech and agriculture cleantech sectors, contributing to economic diversification and sustainable development.

Post-secondary institutions around the region are educating the next generation of agricultural leaders. Schools offering specialized training in horticulture, food safety and quality, livestock genetics, crop science and veterinary sciences contribute to a vibrant talent base. These research and training institutions have demonstrated an interest in collaboration and strengthening the training offerings of the region and are home to promising applied research facilities like the Smart Farm at Olds College of Agriculture & Technology.[34] Through a combination of expertise, specialized facilities, product development, applied research, and interim processing, the Food Processing Development Centre (FPDC), located in Leduc, fosters growth and commercialization of food, beverage and ingredient manufacturing companies. Working with industry stakeholders and companies of all sizes, the FPDC helps build Alberta value-added processing capacity and supports industry as it pursues new and existing opportunities.[35] The region's agricultural training institutions also help to create a potential workforce with relevant knowledge and training in agriculture.

Alberta has introduced the Agri-Processing Investment Tax Credit (APITC) which provides a 12% non-refundable tax when corporations invest \$10 million or more in a project to build or expand a value-added agri-processing facility in Alberta. Up to \$175 million in tax credits is available for each project.

This tax credit is making the province a preferred destination for large scale projects, building on the competitive advantages and reasons why agri-processing companies invest in Alberta.[36]

[33] [calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/assets/Reports/Sectors/Energy-Environment/CED-2021\\_Calgary-Energy-Transition-Study-Flatsheet.pdf](https://calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/assets/Reports/Sectors/Energy-Environment/CED-2021_Calgary-Energy-Transition-Study-Flatsheet.pdf)

[34] [CalgaryEconomicDevelopment.com](https://CalgaryEconomicDevelopment.com)

[35] [alberta.ca/services-and-facilities](https://alberta.ca/services-and-facilities)

[36] [alberta.ca/alberta-agri-processing-investment-tax-credit](https://alberta.ca/alberta-agri-processing-investment-tax-credit)



### Tourism:

Kneehill County is home to the Horseshoe Canyon where visitors can witness its unique and rugged landscape of the Badlands. The area has been identified as a high growth potential region as outlined in the Canadian Badlands Discovery Report 2023. Through this plan, the goal is to grow and diversify the economy, support jobs, preserve cultures, foster innovation, conserve the environment, and improve resident quality of life.

Alberta's visitor economy recovered to pre-pandemic levels in 2022 and Travel Alberta has moved beyond recovery and is now on the path to resilience and high growth. The Alberta government is investing in tourism across the province through Travel Alberta's Tourism Investment Program and through the development of the 10 tourism development zones.[37]

Figure 19: 2022 Travel Alberta Tourism Spend



The Canadian Badlands zone, within Kneehill County, is plentiful of scenic vistas, historical discoveries, arts and culture, agriculture and culinary experiences, soft adventure and film tourism opportunities. Kneehill County's Horseshoe Canyon has strong potential to be a prime anchor for the zone and sought by many for its scenic vistas and is home to a strong agricultural sector making farm visits and culinary a prime opportunity for growth. Kneehill County is also host to arts and culture, unique accommodations, strong historical roots and is home to many well-known films, music and documentary productions.

Every year, over 400,000 visitors visit the Canyon and 38% of Albertans have indicated they would be likely to travel to the Badlands and that 26% of them are most likely to go hiking while 24% are most likely to go camping. Fifty-three percent of Alberta's population lives within a 3-hour drive of Kneehill County. Over 69,000 Albertans reside within a one-hour drive and nearly 1.8 million Albertans are within a 2-hour drive.

Given the strong assets in the County and region, Travel Alberta is committed to supporting investments to attract high-value travelers by increasing accommodations, increasing year-round product offerings and package and itinerary development. With the supports of Travel Alberta, surrounding tourism regions, businesses and government, Horseshoe Canyon is well position to become a "signature must-experience gateway to the Canadian Badlands" by 2029 as outlined in the Horseshoe Canyon Master Plan.

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[37] Travel Alberta Badlands Tourism Destination Zone Discovery Report 2023:  
<https://industry.travelalberta.com/research/tourism-development-zone-reports/Canadian-Badlands>



### Tourism (cont'd):

Wellness tourism is on the rise with opportunities to create and promote new experiences within the County. The wellness tourism industry is expecting to reach a global value of \$1.4 trillion by 2027. On average, international wellness travelers spent 41 per cent more than typical international travelers in 2022 [38]. Outdoor adventures (walking and trekking tours), nature and conservation-based travel as well as cultural travel are trending with travelers looking more at shoulder season travel versus peak season.

Alberta has set the stage for some of the most beloved and successful films in history. More than 100 films and television shows have been shot in Alberta. This vibrant and growing made-in-Alberta film industry provides significant opportunities to promote travel and investment in the province. The film industry contributes hundreds of millions annually to Alberta's economy through job creation, tourism, hotel bookings, spending at local restaurants and attractions, vehicle rentals, and more. Kneehill County has an opportunity to explore this sector, with its previous filming of Superman III, Lost in Space and the Heartland series, as examples.

The province supports this industry through the Film and Television Tax Credit (FTTC), which offers a refundable Alberta tax credit (22% or 30%) certificate on eligible Alberta production and labour costs to corporations that produce films, television series and other eligible screen-based productions in the province.[39]

**Kneehill County is home to a  
thriving film production  
destination  
60+ movies, television and music  
video productions**



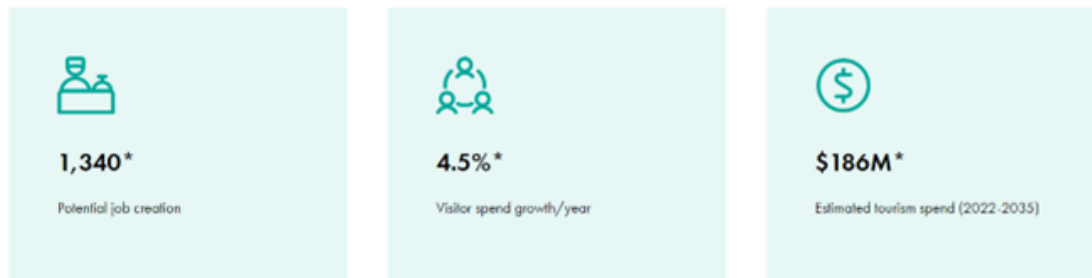
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[38] TravelAlberta.com: <https://industry.travelalberta.com/posts/articles/the-future-is-calm-exploring-the-wellness-tourism-industry>

[39] Government of Alberta Film and Tax Credit: <https://www.alberta.ca/film-television-tax-credit>

### Tourism (cont'd):

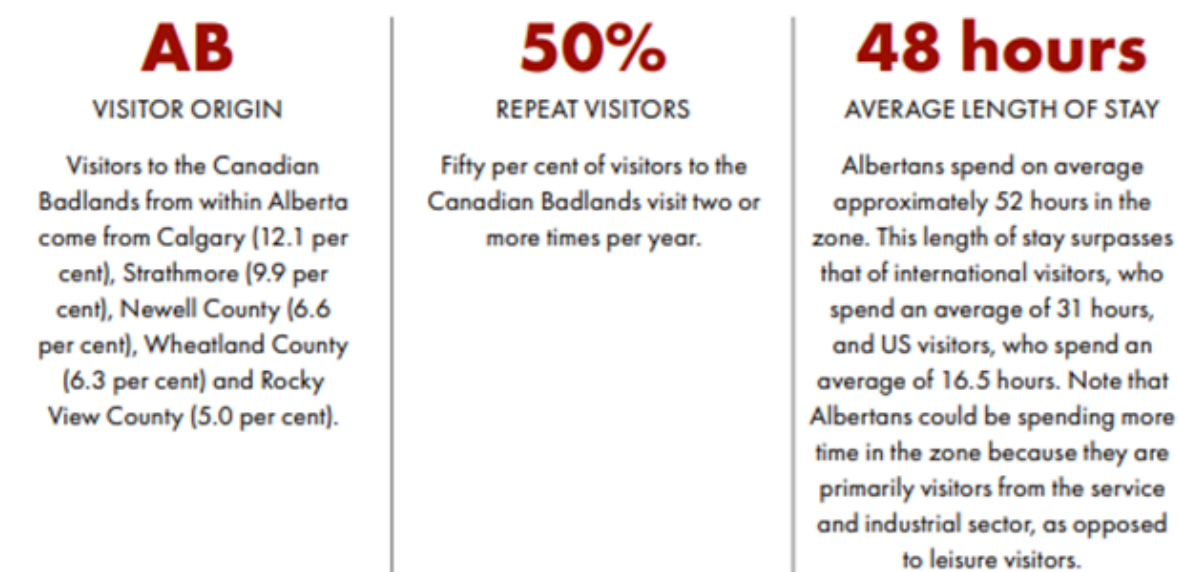
Figure 20: 10-year potential of the Canadian Badlands TDZ [40]



\*These figures represent the additional growth potential for the zone under the TDZ initiative.

Figure 21: 2019 Visitors to the Canadian Badlands TDZ

According to Travel Alberta's anonymized mobile data, in 2019, 98.1 per cent of visitors to the Canadian Badlands TDZ were Canadians, while only 1.6 per cent of visitors hailed from the US. At the provincial level, Albertans made up approximately 88 per cent of the visitors, followed by residents of Saskatchewan at just under five per cent, British Columbia at two per cent and Manitoba and Ontario at 1.4 and 1.3 per cent, respectively. In comparison to other TDZs, this zone sees relatively diverse visitation from across Canada.





### Tourism (cont'd):

Figure 22: Travel Alberta Traveler Profiles[41]

#### **Demand: International Travellers**

While the zone's existing inventory of products and experiences that are valued by international visitors is minimal, the Canadian Badlands are well-positioned to attract — and capitalize on — an increase in tourism from international markets. There is an opportunity to create a host of top "trip anchors" (activities a visitor would centre their trips around) targeting visitors from the US and around the world. Immersive products, experiences, packages and itinerary options would all be valuable additions to this TDZ's suite of assets.

Natural attractions and historical/archeological/world heritage sites are the

Badlands trip anchors with the greatest short-term potential to be developed into immersive or extended experiences.

Natural attractions rank second as trip anchors favoured across all international markets (especially Japan and France). The Canadian Badlands' unique landscape, in which hoodoos and coulees combine with wide open skies and river access, provides visitors with views and experiences like no other in Canada. Currently, only two companies provide guided landscape tours within the zone. An expansion of guided tour offerings could entice visitors who are unaware of the Canadian Badlands' natural wonders.

**Historical, archaeological or world heritage sites are the seventh most popular trip anchors worldwide. The Canadian Badlands is home to three extraordinary sites:**

- The Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology,
- Atlas Coal Mine National Historic Site
- Dinosaur Provincial Park (a UNESCO World Heritage Site)

**These signature assets already drive demand for international visitation to the Badlands.**

(Source: Global Tourism Watch, 2021)

#### **Demand: Alberta's Target Travellers**

Travel Alberta has identified "Curious Adventurers" and "Hotspot Hunters" as the high-value travellers likely to spend more per visit, yield the highest return on investment, and contribute the most to the province's economic growth. Tourism businesses, communities and associations can attract these valuable visitors by tailoring products and experiences to their unique travel styles.



Dinosaur Provincial Park

For Curious Adventurers, travel is about getting a different perspective on the world. Curious Adventurers will be drawn to the paleontological history of the Drumheller Valley and Dinosaur Provincial Park's UNESCO status. Immersive guided programs on geology, history, palaeontology and Indigenous studies would give visitors a more nuanced sense of the Badlands. There is also the opportunity to attract educational and international student travel to this zone.



Hoodoos Trail, Drumheller Valley

For Hotspot Hunters, travel is about achievement and accomplishments. They want to visit the top attractions, participate in unique experiences, and connect with local experts. These travellers are also likely to appreciate unique accommodations. Experiences for Hotspot Hunters should provide travellers with opportunities to earn a sense of accomplishment — for instance, by finding a dinosaur bone. Photography and social media content opportunities will allow for this audience to engage with the landscapes. Products should also support younger families in this group. Development of unique accommodation options would further support attracting these travellers to the zone.

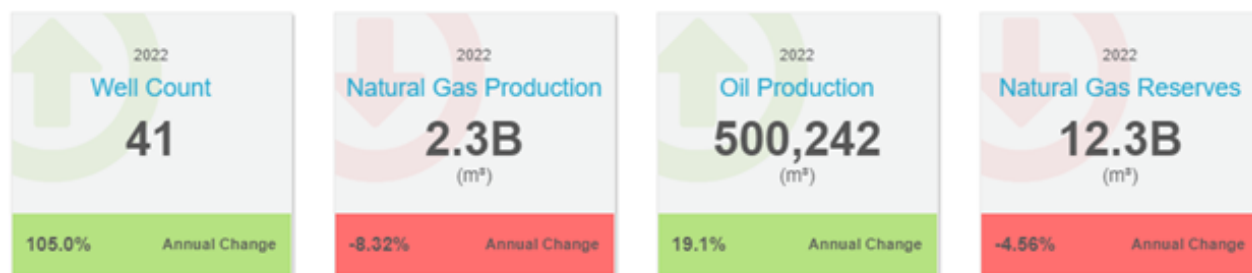


[40] TravelAlberta.com: <https://industry.travelalberta.com/posts/articles/the-future-is-calm-exploring-the-wellness-tourism-industry>

### Energy:

Alberta's energy sector is recovering and is forecasted to grow over the next three years. Alberta is Canada's largest oil and natural gas producer, home to roughly 3/4 of Canada's crude oil and natural gas production and has the 3rd largest crude oil reserves in the world. Oil and natural gas development supports 30% of all economic activity in the province, with over 415,000 jobs, 20,000 businesses, and generates over \$4.8 billion in royalties. Alberta's Natural Gas Vision and Strategy envisions Alberta as a global supplier of clean, responsibly sourced natural gas and related products.

Figure 23: Kneehill Energy Statistics



Kneehill County produced 2.3 billion m³ of natural gas in 2022, the 10th highest in the province. Natural gas production declined -8.32% year-over-year, and decreased -11.3% in the last five years. The County had 12.3 billion m³ of natural gas reserves in 2022, the 10th highest in the province. Natural gas reserves declined -4.56% year-over-year, and decreased -7.88% in the last five years.[41]



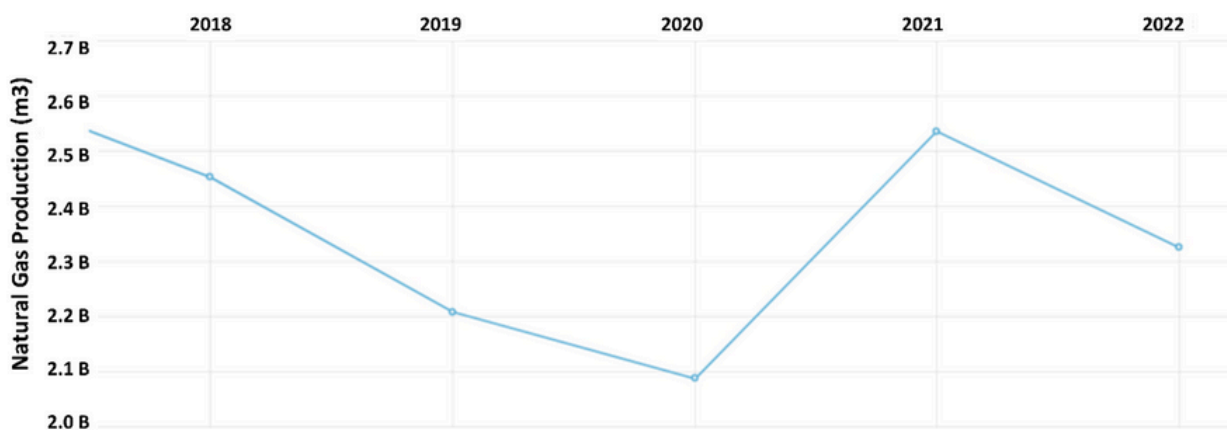
[41] [regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county](https://regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/kneehill-county)

## Economic Trends (cont'd)

### Energy (cont'd):

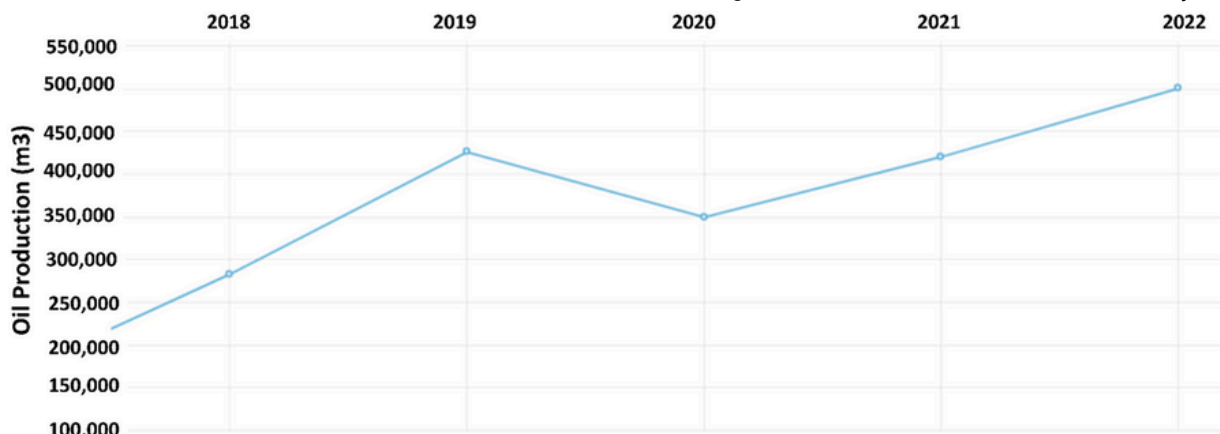
Kneehill County produced 500,242 m<sup>3</sup> of oil in 2022. Oil production increased 19.1% year-over-year, and increased 221.4% in the last five years. Alberta produces approximately three-quarters of Canada's crude oil and natural gas, holding the third largest crude oil reserves in the world. In 2022, the energy sector contributed approximately \$135 billion Canadian to Alberta's GDP.[42]

Figure 24: Kneehill Natural Gas Production over 5-years



There were 41 wells in 2022, which increased 105.0% year-over-year, and increased 64.0% in the last five years.

Figure 25: Kneehill Oil Production over 5-years



The region has an above average concentration of businesses in mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction compared to the provincial average.[43] Kneehill County is strategically located in the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin which contains one of the world's largest reserves of conventional oil and natural gas.[44]

There has been over \$1.5 billion in capital expenditure allocated to approved projects slated for construction between 2019 to 2022 in Alberta.[45] The transition to cleaner energy and innovation within the energy sector, including in Kneehill County, is projected to create up to 170,000 jobs and contribute \$61 billion to Alberta's GDP by 2050.[46] Innovation in the energy industry is a key opportunity for the Province and Kneehill County.

[42] [statista.com/statistics/916986/gdp-of-canada-by-energy-sector-by-province](https://statista.com/statistics/916986/gdp-of-canada-by-energy-sector-by-province)

[43] Kneehill County Base Analysis and Sector Report

[44] Kneehill County Energy Profile

[45] [calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/sectors/energy-environment](https://calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/sectors/energy-environment)

[46] [calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/newsroom/alberta-energy-transition-study-a-61b-opportunity](https://calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/newsroom/alberta-energy-transition-study-a-61b-opportunity)

## 4.3 Economic Trends (cont'd)

### Manufacturing and Logistics:

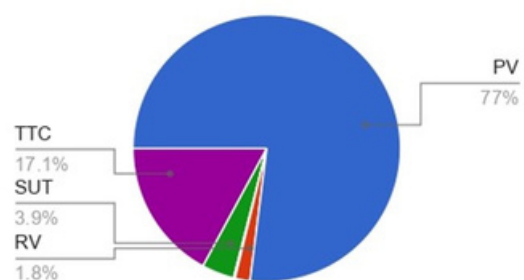
Kneehill County and central Alberta have experienced notable growth in the manufacturing sector (a result of increased employment, higher GDP contributions, substantial investments, and enhanced export activity in the sector). The County's strategic location provides easy access to transportation routes, making it an attractive destination for manufacturing businesses[47]. The manufacturing sector in Alberta contributed \$23.4 billion, accounting for 8% of the province's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2021, with one in twenty workers employed in this sector[48]. Additionally, manufacturing sales in Alberta increased by 1.0% from February 2023 to February 2024, reaching a total value of \$8.8 billion.[49]

This positive trend highlights the overall upward momentum in the manufacturing sector within the region. The sector's expansion is fueled by diverse sub-industries, including machine manufacturing and agri-processing[50]. According to the Kneehill County Economic Base Analysis and Sector Report, machine manufacturing and metal fabrication are significant subsectors driving this growth. In particular, fabricated metal product manufacturing, including forging, stamping, forming, turning, and joining activities, is prominent. With a focus on innovation and technology, local manufacturers are enhancing productivity and product quality, contributing to the region's economic vitality.

As of the latest data, the manufacturing industry accounted for 5.9% of total employment in Alberta in 2020 with 125,800 jobs[51]. Occupations in manufacturing and utilities in Kneehill County accounted for 3.1% of the employed labour force.[51] Current research in manufacturing is dated, therefore the County will need to reexamine this sector in more detail to determine its potential moving forward.

The logistics sector in Kneehill County and central Alberta has potential given the area's robust transportation infrastructure and proximity to major markets[52]. This sector supports other industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, and energy, contributing to overall economic vitality. Highway traffic counts at the intersection of highways 21 and 27 have increased over 10 years the total weighted average annual daily traffic up to 2,990 in 2023 from 2,410 in 2014. 77% were passenger vehicles, 17.1% tractor trailer units, 3.9% single unit trucks, and 1.8% recreation vehicles.[53]

Figure 26: Alberta Highway 21 & 27 Traffic Count  
Vehicle Classifications



[47, 48, 49, 50] Kneehill County Competitive Land Analysis

[51] Alberta Manufacturing Industry Profile 2020 - alberta.ca

[52] [www.kneehill.ca](http://www.kneehill.ca)

[53] [transportation.alberta.ca/mapping](http://transportation.alberta.ca/mapping)



### Manufacturing and Logistics (cont'd):

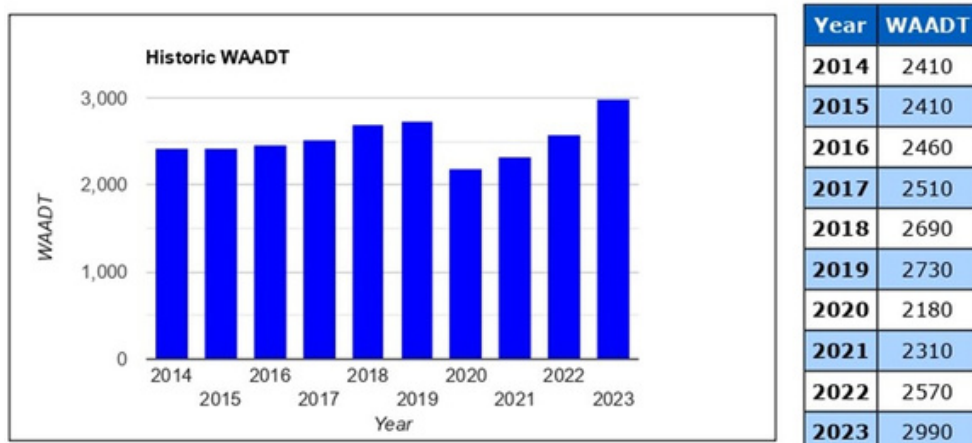
Businesses benefit from efficient access to railways, highways, and airports, facilitating the movement of goods across the province and beyond. Additionally, the County's favorable business environment encourages investment in logistics and distribution facilities, driving job creation and economic growth.[54]

The Kneehill County Economic Base Analysis and Sector Report states that this growth is fueled by the rise of rural logistics, including online shopping and fulfillment centers, catering to the evolving consumer demands. The sector's importance is underscored by its vital role in supporting other industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, and energy.

The truck transportation sector (NAICS 484) contributes approximately \$3.52 billion to the province's GDP, accounting for just over 1.1% of total GDP in Alberta.[55] Total employment in the trucking and logistics sector in Alberta has averaged 95,300 workers over the past decade, accounting for 4.3% of employment in the province. Alberta accounts for 14.3% of employment in trucking and logistics across Canada.[56]

As the manufacturing and logistics sectors continue to evolve, there are emerging opportunities for collaboration and innovation. Kneehill County's Economic Base Analysis highlights the potential for synergies between manufacturing and other key sectors, such as energy and tourism. By leveraging these connections, businesses can capitalize on supply chain efficiencies and market diversification, strengthening the region's competitive advantage.

Figure 27: Historic Weighted Annual Average Daily Traffic [57]



WAADT stands for Weighted Annual Average Daily Traffic. It represents the average daily two-way traffic volume for a section of highway expressed as vehicles per day for the period of January 1 to December 31 (365 or 366 days).

[54] Kneehill County Competitive Land Analysis

[55] Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0402-01 Gross domestic product (GDP) at basic prices, by industry, provinces and territories

[56] Trucking HR Canada, Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom data request, 2022

[57] [transportation.alberta.ca/mapping](https://transportation.alberta.ca/mapping)

### **Manufacturing and Logistics (cont'd):**

To sustain the momentum in manufacturing and logistics, targeted investment and support initiatives are crucial. Fostering an environment conducive to business growth would ensure that Kneehill County remains a dynamic hub for manufacturing and logistics activities.

The Competitive Land Analysis reveals ample opportunities for investment and development in manufacturing and logistics-related activities. Types of industries poised for growth include large-scale food processing, fabrication, warehousing, transportation, and industrial activities. Government incentives, supportive infrastructure, and access to skilled labor further enhance the region's attractiveness for businesses seeking to establish or expand their manufacturing and logistics operations.

The manufacturing sector's focus on innovation and technology enhances productivity and product quality, further contributing to GDP. Sub-industries such as machine manufacturing, metal fabrication, and agri-processing are key drivers of this growth.[58] Ample opportunities for investment and development in manufacturing and logistics-related activities exist. Government incentives, supportive infrastructure, and access to skilled labor enhance the region's attractiveness for businesses, promoting further economic growth.

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[58] [economicdashboard.alberta.ca/topics/gdp/](https://economicdashboard.alberta.ca/topics/gdp/)



## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

A SWOT analysis is a compilation of the results from the document review, community engagement and the statistical analysis. The SWOT is a practice of exploring and interpreting Kneehill County's internal and external environment to better understand the trends and drivers of change and how they will impact Kneehill County. It also provides valuable information that helps in making decisions and creating a meaningful analysis of the potential economic development opportunities available for the County.

### STRENGTHS

- Alberta has the lowest tax rate for businesses in Canada
- Alberta saw an overall increase in total exports in past year, with specific growth in construction, education services, arts, entertainment and recreation sectors
- Strong community agricultural culture and heritage
- County boasts 814,653 acres of land and 628,009 acres of cropland
- Kneehill is located at the centre of a high-volume grain and beef production area
- Proximity to multiple major urban centres (Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, Olds, Drumheller)
- Strategic access to Canamex corridor and major transportation routes (Highway, rail, airport (Calgary Edmonton, Red Deer and local airports in Three Hills and Beiseker)
- Proximity to Calgary's Intermodal facilities and international trade markets
- The region has an above average concentration of businesses in mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction compared to the provincial average
- Oil production increased 19.1% in 2022 and total well counts increased 105% in 2022
- Healthcare top employment
- Strong entrepreneur support system within the region (i.e. Community Futures Wild Rose, CAEP, Kneehill Adult Learning) and strong social support system withing the region (i.e. FCSS)
- Numerous economic development documents and studies previously completed
- Municipal Development Plan update and Horseshoe Canyon Master Plans are currently under revision
- Access to regional post-secondary institutions (Olds, Red Deer Polytechnic, Calgary, Edmonton, Lloydminster)
- Proximity to Leduc Food Processing Development Centre
- 53% of Albertans reside within a 3-hour drive, approximately 1.8 million reside within 2 hours and 69,000 reside within 1-hour drive of Kneehill County
- Horseshoe Canyon is one of the best places to see the unique and rugged landscape of the badlands (over 400,000 visitors stop to enjoy the view)
- Existing website with information pertinent to business retention and expansion
- Reasonably affordable in comparison to larger communities and closer to the city
- Representation on the Central Alberta Economic Partnership and on the Community Futures Wild Rose board of directors.
- Interest by land owners to rezone land.

### WEAKNESSES

- Lack of diversity of businesses given the strong agricultural community leaving the community vulnerable to sudden changes in agriculture
- Inconsistent communication and ability to engage with businesses with no CRM or Business License to assist with business retention, emergency management or disaster recovery. Current infrastructure needs updating to support growth (broadband, utilities)
- Little awareness and education on economic development opportunities and potential
- Communication and cooperation with municipality
- Minimal economic development municipal budget to support policy framework (social, economic, environment, incentives)
- No shovel ready lands and maps to identify green and brownfield developments to develop to allow for business expansion and attraction opportunities.
- Perception of Council not involving community in decision-making
- Diminishing employment opportunities and talent
- Economic development knowledge and awareness throughout the community and leadership
- Declining population, industry workforce and Business counts

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

---

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Explore agricultural processing and ag-tech innovation opportunities
- Build agri-tourism activities on existing farm operations and create a network of complementary attractions
- Take advantage of provincial support to grow tourism in the Canadian Badlands and Travel Drumheller
- Continue engagement with Drumheller and Travel Alberta to develop and promote the County's tourism assets through the destination zones to attract new markets
- Review recommendations from the Horseshoe Canyon Master Plan and adopt plans as directed by Council
- Revisit Kneehill County Tourism & Recreation Master Plan and incorporate the recommendations (including, but not limited to: Develop tourism and recreation infrastructure; and develop a tourism marketing strategy
- Expand current success in the film industry
- Seek renewable energy opportunities and innovation within the energy sector. Central Alberta is one of Canada's sunniest and windiest places, making it the ideal location for renewable energy projects
- Leverage logistics networks to export high value, easily transportable agri-food goods
- Target growth in hamlets
- There is a need for one single comprehensive map of the entire County
- Upgrade and invest municipal infrastructure
- Participate in an investment readiness process to understand the land requirements and infrastructure upgrades necessary to attract and expand desired markets. Complete an update Competitive Land Analysis to reflect new MDP
- Take advantage of CAEP's initiatives
- Access regional data available on the CAEP website for investment attraction and retention
- Participate in CAEP's upcoming sector committees to amplify Kneehill's presence within the central Alberta region
- Take advantage of Community Future Wild Rose programs and initiatives
- Promote access to Community Future's access to capital and training programs
- Utilize Community Future's incentives through the Community Business Investment Program
- Promote and encourage youth to become entrepreneurs through Community Future's YETI program

### THREATS

- Resident's desire to maintain agricultural heritage
- Concern over development having negative impact on agriculture
- Opposition from residents on renewable energy projects
- Minimal lack of funding programs for business and property improvements
- Available housing shortage
- Availability of skilled labour
- Availability of employment opportunities to keep young people
- Lack of broadband/fibre optics internet access
- Proactive and forward-thinking neighbouring municipalities may be more attractive to investors



# 5

## Vision

Summarizing the responses from the community engagement, the vision for Kneehill County's future should involve a balance between economic growth, environmental sustainability, and community well-being.

Kneehill County Economic Development Vision Statement:

***Kneehill County is a diverse and thriving community, celebrating economic prosperity while maintaining the County's rural way of life and achieving a balance between economic growth, environmental sustainability, and community well-being.***





# Strategic Priorities

The following **four (4) strategic priorities** and ten (10) goals focus on providing initiatives necessary to prepare Kneehill County for investment. These initiatives are aimed at strengthening the community and economy between 2024 – 2027. Kneehill’s Municipal Development Plan is expected to be completed in Summer 2024 which may potentially impact the County’s Economic Development, therefore these priorities may be revised to align with the new governing documents.

- 0 1 Build Leadership Capacity**
- 0 2 Strengthen Existing Businesses**
- 0 3 Enhance Investment Readiness**
- 0 4 Elevate Kneehill County's Brand**

- 1** Increase awareness and understanding of economic development principles for elected officials, senior staff, businesses and residents
- 2** Foster community stakeholder engagement and input to stimulate economic opportunities
- 3** Support and inspire youth entrepreneurs and leaders to establish Kneehill County as a desired community to remain, return and establish
- 4** Design and deliver a business retention and expansion program that initiates engagement between the County and businesses
- 5** Encourage diversification and innovation in industry sectors to stimulate economic growth and job creation
- 6** Achieve an intermediate to advanced investment readiness status to attract investments to drive economic growth
- 7** Develop a targeted investment attraction strategy by engaging the community
- 8** Promote and elevate the quality of life to attract and retain residents, attract visitors, workforce and business investments to the County
- 9** Identify and collaborate with regional partners and stakeholders to promote and amplify the region
- 10** Continuously monitor progress and gather input to update the plan

# GOALS AND TACTICS

## 01

### Build Leadership Capacity

Inspire, inform and motivate to community leaders by increasing economic development capacity through training for elected officials and senior staff and fostering meaningful engagement through awareness with community stakeholders.

- **GOAL #1:** Increase awareness and understanding of economic development principles for elected officials, senior staff, businesses and residents
- **GOAL #2:** Foster community stakeholder engagement and input to stimulate economic opportunities
- **GOAL #3:** Support and inspire youth entrepreneurs and leaders to establish Kneehill County as a desired community to remain, return and establish

#### Tactics:

1. Economic development training for elected officials and senior staff.
2. Equip officials and staff with the necessary skills to effectively plan, execute, and manage economic development initiatives through rural economic development and training on the social side of economic development for municipal leaders.
3. Engage with youth stakeholders to deliver youth entrepreneurship programs.
4. Create structured avenues for regular dialogue with a diverse range of community stakeholders, including local businesses, educational institutions, non-profits, and residents.
5. Establish working groups and advisory committees that include community representatives to collaborate on economic development projects and initiatives.
6. Implement transparent communication channels to keep stakeholders informed and engaged.

## Strengthen Existing Businesses

Build a strong and resilient local business economy by cultivating an entrepreneurial culture through initiatives aimed at innovative and growth.



**GOAL #4:** Design and deliver a business retention and expansion program that initiates engagement between the County and businesses



**GOAL #5:** Encourage diversification and innovation in industry sectors to stimulate economic growth and job creation

### Tactics:

1. Business visitation programs, including asset mapping exercises to identify businesses, natural asset inventory, programs and supports; develop a Business Support Program.
2. Build relationships with education institutions, government, associations and Chamber of Commerce to connect businesses with programs and supports.
3. Business resiliency and disaster recovery programs.
4. Conduct a Supply chain optimization review.
5. Offer incentives for innovation and development.
6. Collaborate and promote CAEP's Business Support Network.
7. Implement a Shop Local Campaign and collaborate with the Three Hills & District Chamber of Commerce #LovingMyLocalKneehill's initiative.
8. Facilitate access to funding programs to improve the availability of funding for business and property improvement.
9. Gather Workforce Development insights from both employers and employees on the challenges and opportunities related to attracting and retaining workers in the area as well as housing needs.
10. Facilitate a Work Integrated Learning Program to align programming with business needs.
11. Work with educational institutions and industry stakeholders to develop training programs that meet the demands of local businesses.
12. Establish a robust framework for economic disaster recovery, including contingency plans, support systems, and partnerships to mitigate the impact of economic disruptions and facilitate swift recovery.



## Enhance Investment Readiness

Prepare the County for investment attraction through the investment readiness process to prepare for long-term investment attraction and growth.



**GOAL #6:** Achieve an intermediate to advanced investment readiness status to attract investments to drive economic growth



**GOAL #7:** Develop a targeted investment attraction strategy by engaging the community

### Tactics:

1. Update community profile, and sector profiles (statistics, asset inventory of developers, realtors, land available, site selectors, maps, stakeholders, etc.).
2. Conduct a comprehensive analysis of available land for commercial/industrial development.
3. Conduct a complete community SWOT Analysis.
4. Streamline regulatory processes to create a more investor-friendly environment.
5. Identify strategic sectors focusing on attracting investments in high-potential industries (such as advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, and technology).
6. Establish partnerships and collaborate with regional development projects by actively engaging with neighboring communities and organizations to create synergies.
7. Collaborate with industry associations to promote the County as a favorable business location.
8. Develop and implement a detailed Business Investment and Attraction Study to identify key sectors for investment attraction and industry development. Utilize the Business Investment and Attraction study findings to formulate targeted marketing strategies for business attraction.
9. Prioritize infrastructure development to meet the needs of growing industries. Ensure alignment with the new Land Use Bylaw to capture economic development requirements.
10. Prioritize Hamlet revitalization to facilitate targeted growth.
11. Develop a Filming Attraction report to encourage Kneehill County as an ideal place to film movies and series.
12. Create a municipal tax incentive program to attract industries.
13. Develop and implement strong policies to maintain environmental quality.
14. Investigate looking into creating a Certified Site Program.
15. Enhance connectivity and transportation infrastructure.

## Elevate Kneehill County's Brand

Elevate Kneehill County's brand as an attractive place to live, work and play locally, regionally and nationally.



### GOAL #8

Promote and elevate the quality of life to attract and retain residents, attract visitors, workforce and business investments to the County



### GOAL #9

Identify and collaborate with regional partners and stakeholders to promote and amplify the region



### GOAL #10

Continuously monitor progress and gather input to update the plan

#### Tactics:

1. Develop tourism and local business campaigns utilizing #explorekneehill and promote key stakeholders.
2. Promote the business development and permitting process.
3. Communication campaign to connect businesses with regional programs and supports.
4. Feature testimonials and success stories from residents to highlight the quality of life.
5. Foster a sense of community through effective communication through an integrated engagement and communication strategy for residents.
6. Showcase local amenities and community events through various promotional materials.
7. Develop branding materials that emphasize the benefits of rural living.
8. Update Business Guide currently available on website.
9. Enhance the "Doing Business" section on the Kneehill County Website.



# Success Measurement

To ensure the effectiveness of this strategy and to track progress, a robust evaluation framework is necessary and will include a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures, regular monitoring, and stakeholder feedback mechanisms. By doing so, Kneehill County can make informed adjustments to our strategies and ensure initiatives are driving sustainable growth and prosperity.

## Indicators

### Build Leadership Capacity

- **Training Participation Rates:** Number of elected officials and senior staff completing economic development training programs.
- **Stakeholder Engagement Sessions:** Frequency and attendance of stakeholder engagement meetings and workshops.

### Strengthen Existing Businesses

- **Business Retention Rate:** Percentage of businesses retained annually (only do this if we you proceed with a business license program).
- **Expansion Projects:** Number and scale of business expansion projects initiated or completed (development permits approved, projects supported/funded).
- **Business Satisfaction Surveys:** Feedback from local businesses regarding support services and business climate (business visitation program).
- **Job Creation:** Number of new jobs created as a result of expansion initiatives (employment rates).

### Enhance Investment Readiness

- **Investment Readiness Level:** Achieve an intermediate to advanced score.
- **Investment attraction strategy Completed:** Creation of a strategy and implementation plan to attract investment.

### Elevate Kneehill County's Brand

- **Website and Social Media Analytics:** Increase in website traffic, social media engagement, and inquiries from potential investors and tourists.
- **Resident Satisfaction:** Survey results measuring resident satisfaction with economic development efforts and quality of life.
- **Population Growth:** Net population growth rate, indicating attractiveness as a place to live and work.

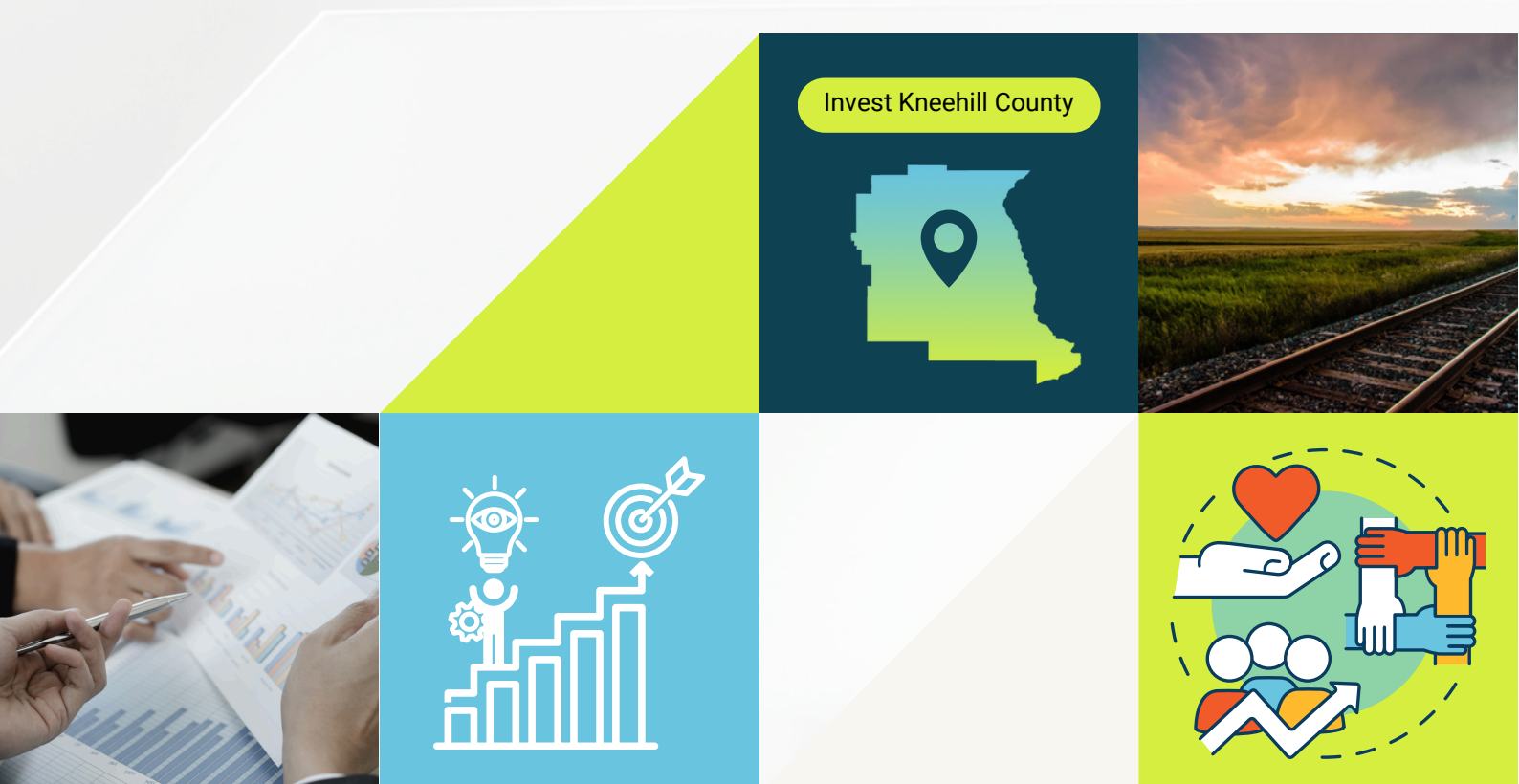
# Success Measurement (Cont'd)

## Monitoring and Reporting

- **Annual Reviews:** Comprehensive annual assessments to evaluate overall performance and impact of the economic development plan.
- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Regular feedback sessions with community stakeholders, including businesses, residents, and partner organizations, to gather insights and suggestions.
- **Adjustments and Adaptation:** Using data from monitoring and feedback, make necessary adjustments to strategies and initiatives to better align with goals and emerging opportunities.

## Success Milestones

- Year 1:** Establish baseline metrics, launch training programs, initiate key investment attraction campaigns, and begin brand awareness efforts, updated municipal and intermunicipal plans, update website.
- Year 2:** Achieve measurable improvements in business retention, begin investment readiness process, updated land use bylaws, uptake and increase in access to supports for businesses, access to workforce training.
- Year 3:** Available land, updated development processes.





# CONCLUSION

Kneehill County's 3-year Economic Development Plan represents a holistic approach to fostering sustainable growth and prosperity in the region. Through collaboration with stakeholders and insights from the local community, the Plan has been meticulously crafted to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities, aiming to enhance the well-being of residents and create a vibrant local economy.

The County's unique position in south-central Alberta, surrounded by key transportation routes and neighboring municipalities, presents an advantageous landscape for economic development. With a strong focus on agriculture and the oil and gas industry, Kneehill County stands poised to leverage its natural resources and strategic location for continued growth. Additionally, the region's potential in tourism, particularly in showcasing attractions like Horseshoe Canyon, adds another dimension to its economic prospects.

Respecting the County's agricultural heritage is a crucial strategic imperative, not only for economic stability but also for fostering the County's quality of life. As Kneehill County moves forward, prioritizing capacity building, business retention and expansion, attracting investments, and enhancing branding and marketing efforts will be pivotal in realizing its economic development objectives. By aligning these priorities with the community's vision, Kneehill County aims to build a resilient and diverse economy that enriches the lives of its residents and attracts investment and growth.

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- C. Organizations Survey Findings



**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN -  
NOTES FOR DISCUSSION**

REVISION 2 - AS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL - JULY 23, 2024

Prepared By:  
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# DOCUMENT PURPOSE

The following document highlights the areas that were recommended for changes and potential considerations for Council to review.

The pages and sections donated with a green arrow have been outlined below and followed with a revision for Council to review, discuss and accept as presented or provide additional consideration for Administration.

There are options of the Executive Summary and Conclusion for Council to review and consider. The remainder of the proposed changes have been presented with singular revisions for review and discussion.

The plan as presented on July 23, 2024 has been attached for Council's reference.



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY DISCUSSION

Council indicated they wish to see a statement on

- Kneehill County is open for business Recognize the need to develop previously designated agriculture lands
- Interested in exploring a diversity of sectors in which to attract than traditionally sought Wish to not mention renewable energy Positive and forward thinking statements
- How the County, it's residents and businesses will be "better" and the benefits received

## **Other items to consider:**

- Would the Reeve and Council wish to provide a Message from the Reeve and/or Council in the beginning of the document

Kneehill County initiated a comprehensive 3-year Economic Development Plan aimed at driving sustainable growth and prosperity while prioritizing residents' well-being. The plan, shaped with input from diverse stakeholders and facilitated by Tara Zeller, Economic Development Consultant, outlines actionable strategies aligned with community aspirations.

In the pursuit of economic development, Kneehill County recognizes it will be necessary to identify developable lands (agricultural or otherwise) in which to pursue investment attraction. For successful investment attraction to occur the plan will undergo an investment readiness process and develop a business retention program to identify growth opportunities for businesses and the region.

Kneehill County will build capacity amongst community leaders, Council, businesses and stakeholders in which to partner and while building the County's brand through marketing awareness and campaigns to achieve economic development goals to ensure a resilient, culturally rich, and economically prosperous future for generations to come.

The following key sectors are areas of focus while continuing to identify and pursue additional opportunities:

**Agri-Business:** With favorable conditions for agricultural processing and ag-tech innovation, the county aims to capitalize on Alberta's status as a major agri-food exporter.

**Tourism:** Leveraging proximity to major urban centers and unique attractions, the County targets wellness tourism and film industry investments.

**Energy:** Positioned in the Western Canadian Sedimentary Basin, Kneehill County is positioned to identify opportunities through the energy supply chain for development.

**Manufacturing & Logistics:** The county's strategic location provides easy access to transportation routes, making it an attractive destination for manufacturing businesses.

The plan will outline the four (4) strategic priorities and ten (10) goals over the next 3 years to achieve economic resilience and diversity.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kneehill County has embarked on a comprehensive 3-year Economic Development Plan aimed at diversifying the County's economy and expanding its tax base. This strategic initiative is designed to harness the County's existing strengths while positioning it to capitalize on emerging opportunities in both traditional and innovative industries. The message is clear: Kneehill County is ready and poised for business.

To attract and expand investments successfully, Kneehill County is focused on identifying agricultural, hamlet and areas within major transportation corridors suitable for development. As part of this effort, the County will undergo an investment readiness process to ensure it remains competitive in the marketplace and attractive to potential investors. This proactive approach sets the foundation for robust and sustainable economic growth.

Equally important to this plan is the County's commitment to supporting existing businesses. Through a targeted retention program, Kneehill County aims to nurture local enterprise growth, improve workforce development, and engage youth in the local economy. The program will offer workshops, engagement initiatives, and resources to empower the business community.

In its pursuit of economic development, Kneehill County will also focus on building capacity by fostering continuous learning and engagement opportunities for stakeholders. A key priority will be enhancing the County's brand awareness, ensuring that residents, businesses, community organizations, and government entities recognize the County as a thriving hub for economic activity.

With its business environment prepared and receptive, the priorities and goals outlined in this plan provide Kneehill County with a clear pathway for future community growth, innovation, and boundless opportunities.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kneehill County's 3-year Economic Development Plan represents a forward-thinking approach to securing sustainable growth and long-term prosperity for the region. Developed through collaboration with stakeholders and grounded in community insights, this Plan is designed not only to address immediate challenges but also to unlock new opportunities, ensuring Kneehill County's future is vibrant and resilient.

Strategically located in south-central Alberta, Kneehill County's proximity to key transportation routes and neighboring municipalities positions it as an ideal location for diverse economic growth. By actively seeking to attract new industries beyond traditional sectors, Kneehill County is embracing innovation and diversification. This strategic focus will create a wealth of new opportunities for businesses and residents alike, fostering an environment where entrepreneurship can thrive and new ventures can take root.

As Kneehill County looks ahead, its commitment to building capacity, supporting business retention and expansion, attracting investment, and enhancing its branding and marketing efforts will be essential in driving success.

For residents, this means access to new job opportunities, improved services, and a stronger local economy. For businesses, it means a supportive environment ripe with potential for growth and collaboration. By aligning these priorities with the community's shared vision, Kneehill County is prepared to shape a prosperous future where both residents and businesses can flourish and succeed.

Kneehill County is embarking on a transformative journey with the launch of its 3-year Economic Development Plan. The primary objective is to strengthen and diversify the County's economy, while broadening its tax base to ensure long-term fiscal sustainability. Through strategic initiatives and a commitment to progress, Kneehill County is positioning itself as a proactive and business-forward community, eager to unlock new opportunities.

A critical component of this plan is the identification of identifying potential development in and surrounding existing towns, villages and hamlets, transportation corridors and agricultural lands ripe for development. By preparing these areas for investment, the County aims to attract businesses in both established industries and innovative sectors. To facilitate this, Kneehill County will undergo a comprehensive investment readiness process, ensuring that it is well-prepared to compete for new investments and foster economic growth.

Recognizing the importance of nurturing its current businesses, the County will also implement a robust business retention strategy. This program will focus on providing the support needed to help local enterprises grow, strengthen the workforce, and engage with the community's youth. Through targeted workshops, networking opportunities, and resource development, Kneehill County seeks to foster an environment where businesses can thrive.

In addition to these initiatives, Kneehill County will continue to invest in community capacity-building. Continuous engagement, education, and collaboration with residents, businesses, community organizations, and governmental entities will be key to the County's future success. Enhancing the County's brand and raising awareness of the benefits of living and doing business in Kneehill County will also be central to this strategy.

This plan not only sets the stage for future economic success but also reinforces Kneehill County's commitment to being an attractive, forward-thinking, and growth-oriented community. By fostering a climate of opportunity, Kneehill County is ensuring that its economy, businesses, and community are positioned for long-term prosperity.

Kneehill County has initiated an ambitious 3-year Economic Development Plan with the primary goal of diversifying the County's economy and expanding its tax base. This comprehensive plan capitalizes on the County's strengths while laying the groundwork for new opportunities in both traditional sectors and emerging industries. Kneehill County stands prepared to welcome and cultivate business growth.

Central to this initiative is the County's focus on identifying potential development in and surround towns, villages and hamlets, transportation corridors and agricultural lands for development. By undergoing a rigorous investment readiness process, Kneehill County will enhance its competitiveness and position itself as an attractive destination for investors, fostering a resilient and dynamic local economy.

In tandem with attracting new investments, Kneehill County is equally dedicated to strengthening its existing business community. A key component of the plan includes a business retention program that will provide essential support to local businesses, aid in workforce development, and create engagement opportunities for youth. The County will deliver a range of resources, workshops, and initiatives aimed at sustaining and expanding local enterprises.

Furthermore, Kneehill County is committed to building community capacity through ongoing learning and engagement opportunities. By amplifying the County's brand and promoting awareness among residents, businesses, community organizations, and government entities, Kneehill County will solidify its reputation as a vibrant and economically active region.

Through its commitment to creating a business-ready environment, Kneehill County's development plan outlines a strategic vision for future growth, innovation, and boundless potential.



# PRIORITIES

01

Build Leadership Capacity

02

Strengthen Existing Businesses

03

Enhance Investment Readiness

04

Elevate Kneehill County's Brand

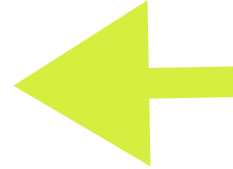
## GOALS

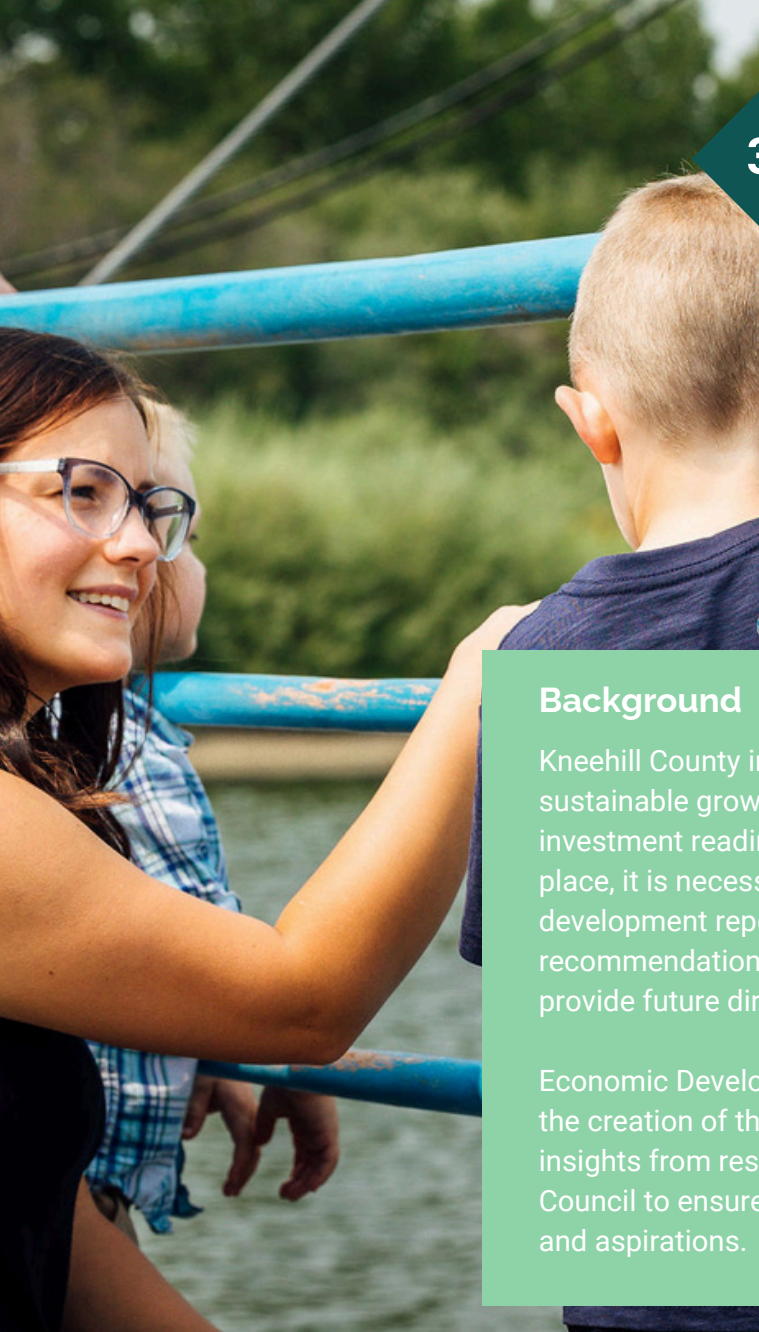
**1**

Increase awareness and understanding of economic development principles for elected officials, senior staff, businesses and residents

Change all #1 Goals on all pages throughout the document with the following revision:

Increase awareness and understanding of economic development principles amongst internal and external stakeholders





# BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE



## Background

Kneehill County initiated an Economic Development plan to foster sustainable growth and prosperity. In 2023, an economic development investment readiness was completed and while many elements are in place, it is necessary to review the recommendations in the economic development reports to prepare for attraction. One of the County's key recommendations was to proceed with an economic Development to provide future direction for economic development.

Economic Development Consultant, Tara Zeller, was retained to support the creation of the plan. The results are a thoughtfully created plan with insights from residents, business owners, local organizations, staff, and Council to ensure a holistic understanding of the County's unique needs and aspirations.

## Existing

## Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide an actionable 3-year strategic roadmap to guide the County towards sustainable economic growth. To accomplish this, we need long-term planning, collaborative solutions and a commitment to investing in our community.

The Plan outlines actionable strategies and objectives aligned with the community's vision and aspirations. The Plan sets a realistic timeframe for implementation, allowing for measurable progress utilizing S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Action Oriented, Relevant, and Timely) goals and objectives. The Plan is a working document and Economic development will continuously monitor progress and update the Plan as we engage with businesses and as guiding documents are updated and as initiatives are brought forward for consideration.

The Plan aligns with the County's Strategic Plan, 2019 Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaws and all through open engagement with stakeholders, businesses, residents and Council.

Through this plan, Kneehill County aims to build a resilient and diverse economy by enhancing the livelihoods of its businesses and residents to position the County as an attractive destination for investment and growth.





# BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE



## Background

Kneehill County initiated an Economic Development plan to foster sustainable growth and prosperity. In 2023, an economic development investment readiness was completed and while many elements are in place, it is necessary to review the recommendations in the economic development reports to prepare for attraction. One of the County's key recommendations was to proceed with an economic Development to provide future direction for economic development.

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## Option 1

## Purpose

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The Plan outlines actionable strategies and objectives aligned with the community's vision and aspirations. The Plan is a working document for Administration to continuously monitor progress and will update the Plan as we engage with businesses, as guiding documents are updated and as initiatives are brought forward for consideration.

The Plan aligns with the County's Strategic Plan, 2019 Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaws and all through open engagement with stakeholders, businesses, residents and Council.

Through this plan, Kneehill County aims to build a resilient and diverse economy by enhancing the livelihoods of its businesses and residents to position the County as an attractive destination for investment and growth.

### Removed the following bullets from Opportunities and Threats

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Seek renewable energy opportunities and innovation within the energy sector. Central Alberta is one of Canada's sunniest and windiest places, making it the ideal location for renewable energy projects

#### THREATS

- Opposition from residents on renewable energy projects

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Explore agricultural processing and ag-tech innovation opportunities
- Build agri-tourism activities on existing farm operations and create a network of complementary attractions
- Take advantage of provincial support to grow tourism in the Canadian Badlands and Travel Drumheller
- Continue engagement with Drumheller and Travel Alberta to develop and promote the County's tourism assets through the destination zones to attract new markets
- Review recommendations from the Horseshoe Canyon Master Plan and adopt plans as directed by Council
- Revisit Kneehill County Tourism & Recreation Master Plan and incorporate the recommendations (including, but not limited to: Develop tourism and recreation infrastructure; and develop a tourism marketing strategy
- Expand current success in the film industry
- Seek renewable energy opportunities and innovation within the energy sector. Central Alberta is one of Canada's sunniest and windiest places, making it the ideal location for renewable energy projects
- Leverage logistics networks to export high value, easily transportable agri-food goods
- Target growth in hamlets
- There is a need for one single comprehensive map of the entire County
- Upgrade and invest municipal infrastructure
- Participate in an investment readiness process to understand the land requirements and infrastructure upgrades necessary to attract and expand desired markets. Complete an update Competitive Land Analysis to reflect new MDP
- Take advantage of CAEP's initiatives
- Access regional data available on the CAEP website for investment attraction and retention
- Participate in CAEP's upcoming sector committees to amplify Kneehill's presence within the central Alberta region
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- Promote access to Community Future's access to capital and training programs
- Utilize Community Future's incentives through the Community Business Investment Program
- Promote and encourage youth to become entrepreneurs through Community Future's YETI program

### THREATS

- Resident's desire to maintain agricultural heritage
- Concern over development having negative impact on agriculture
- Opposition from residents on renewable energy projects
- Minimal lack of funding programs for business and property improvements
- Available housing shortage
- Availability of skilled labour
- Availability of employment opportunities to keep young people
- Lack of broadband/fibre optics internet access
- Proactive and forward-thinking neighbouring municipalities may be more attractive to investors

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Explore agricultural processing and ag-tech innovation opportunities
- Build agri-tourism activities on existing farm operations and create a network of complementary attractions
- Take advantage of provincial support to grow tourism in the Canadian Badlands and Travel Drumheller
- Continue engagement with Drumheller and Travel Alberta to develop and promote the County's tourism assets through the destination zones to attract new markets
- Review recommendations from the Horseshoe Canyon Master Plan and adopt plans as directed by Council
- Revisit Kneehill County Tourism & Recreation Master Plan and incorporate the recommendations (including, but not limited to: Develop tourism and recreation infrastructure; and develop a tourism marketing strategy
- Expand current success in the film industry
- Leverage logistics networks to export high value, easily transportable agri-food goods
- Target growth in hamlets
- There is a need for one single comprehensive map of the entire County
- Upgrade and invest municipal infrastructure
- Participate in an investment readiness process to understand the land requirements and infrastructure upgrades necessary to attract and expand desired markets. Complete an update Competitive Land Analysis to reflect new MDP
- Take advantage of CAEP's initiatives
- Access regional data available on the CAEP website for investment attraction and retention
- Participate in CAEP's upcoming sector committees to amplify Kneehill's presence within the central Alberta region
- Take advantage of Community Future Wild Rose programs and initiatives
- Promote access to Community Future's access to capital and training programs
- Utilize Community Future's incentives through the Community Business Investment Program
- Promote and encourage youth to become entrepreneurs through Community Future's YETI program

### THREATS

- Resident's desire to maintain agricultural heritage
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## GOALS AND TACTICS

- **Revise Goals and Tactics to Goals and Strategies**
- **Organized the strategies under each Priority by Year 1, Year 2, Year.**

**Note these are proposed timeframes for these initiatives and are confirmed through the budgetary process, commitment of funds, and departmental capacity to ensure strategies can be achieved within the proposed time frame.**

## 01

**Build Leadership Capacity**

Inspire, inform and motivate to community leaders by increasing economic development capacity through training for elected officials and senior staff and fostering meaningful engagement through awareness with community stakeholders.

- **GOAL #1:** Increase awareness and understanding of economic development principles for elected officials, senior staff, businesses and residents
- **GOAL #2:** Foster community stakeholder engagement and input to stimulate economic opportunities
- **GOAL #3:** Support and inspire youth entrepreneurs and leaders to establish Kneehill County as a desired community to remain, return and establish

**Tactics:**

1. Economic development training for elected officials and senior staff.
2. Equip officials and staff with the necessary skills to effectively plan, execute, and manage economic development initiatives through rural economic development and training on the social side of economic development for municipal leaders.
3. Engage with youth stakeholders to deliver youth entrepreneurship programs.
4. Create structured avenues for regular dialogue with a diverse range of community stakeholders, including local businesses, educational institutions, non-profits, and residents.
5. Establish working groups and advisory committees that include community representatives to collaborate on economic development projects and initiatives.
6. Implement transparent communication channels to keep stakeholders informed and engaged.



## 6

# GOALS AND STRATEGIES

## 01

## Build Leadership Capacity

Inspire, inform and motivate to community leaders by increasing economic development capacity through training for internal and external stakeholders and fostering meaningful engagement through awareness with community stakeholders.

- **GOAL #1:** Increase awareness and understanding of economic development principles for internal and external stakeholders
- **GOAL #2:** Foster community stakeholder engagement and input to stimulate economic opportunities
- **GOAL #3:** Support and inspire youth entrepreneurs and leaders to establish Kneehill County as a desired community to remain, return and establish

### Strategies:

#### Year One:

1. Economic development training for internal and external stakeholders.
2. Equip officials and staff with the necessary skills to effectively plan, execute, and manage economic development initiatives through rural economic development and training.
3. Engage with youth stakeholders to deliver and support youth entrepreneurship programs.

#### Year Two:

1. On-going economic development training for internal and external stakeholders.
2. Create structured avenues for regular dialogue with a diverse range of community stakeholders, including local businesses, educational institutions, non-profits, and residents.
3. Establish working groups and advisory committees that include community representatives to collaborate on economic development projects and initiatives.
4. Engage with youth stakeholders to deliver and support youth entrepreneurship programs.

#### Year Three:

1. On-going economic development training for internal and external stakeholders.
2. On-going engagement to stimulate economic opportunities through workshops, training and speakers.
3. Engage with youth stakeholders to deliver and support youth entrepreneurship programs.

## 02

**Strengthen Existing Businesses**

Build a strong and resilient local business economy by cultivating an entrepreneurial culture through initiatives aimed at innovative and growth.



**GOAL #4:** Design and deliver a business retention and expansion program that initiates engagement between the County and businesses



**GOAL #5:** Encourage diversification and innovation in industry sectors to stimulate economic growth and job creation

**Tactics:**

1. Business visitation programs, including asset mapping exercises to identify businesses, natural asset inventory, programs and supports; develop a Business Support Program.
2. Build relationships with education institutions, government, associations and Chamber of Commerce to connect businesses with programs and supports.
3. Business resiliency and disaster recovery programs.
4. Conduct a Supply chain optimization review.
5. Offer incentives for innovation and development.
6. Collaborate and promote CAEP's Business Support Network.
7. Implement a Shop Local Campaign and collaborate with the Three Hills & District Chamber of Commerce #LovingMyLocalKneehill's initiative.
8. Facilitate access to funding programs to improve the availability of funding for business and property improvement.
9. Gather Workforce Development insights from both employers and employees on the challenges and opportunities related to attracting and retaining workers in the area as well as housing needs.
10. Facilitate a Work Integrated Learning Program to align programming with business needs.
11. Work with educational institutions and industry stakeholders to develop training programs that meet the demands of local businesses.
12. Establish a robust framework for economic disaster recovery, including contingency plans, support systems, and partnerships to mitigate the impact of economic disruptions and facilitate swift recovery.

## 02

## Strengthen Existing Businesses

Build a strong and resilient local business economy by cultivating an entrepreneurial culture through initiatives aimed at innovative and growth.



**GOAL #4:** Design and deliver a business retention and expansion program that initiates engagement between the County and businesses



**GOAL #5:** Encourage diversification and innovation in industry sectors to stimulate economic growth and job creation

### Strategies:

#### Year One:

1. Conduct a business visitation while developing asset inventories, natural land asset inventory, programs and supports to develop business support program.
2. Build relationships with education institutions, government, associations and Chamber of Commerce to connect businesses with programs and supports.
3. Promote Business resiliency and disaster recovery programs.
4. Collaborate and promote CAEP's Business Support Network.
5. Facilitate access to funding programs to improve the availability of funding for business and property improvement.
6. Gather Workforce Development insights from both employers and employees on the challenges and opportunities related to attracting and retaining workers in the area as well as housing needs.
7. Collaborate with educational institutions and industry stakeholders to develop training programs that meet the demands of local businesses.

#### Year Two:

1. Conduct a Supply chain optimization and gap analysis review.
2. Implement a Shop Local Campaign and through collaboration with local organizations
3. Facilitate a Work Integrated Learning Program to align programming with business needs.

#### Year Three:

4. Explore incentives for innovation and development.
5. Establish a robust framework for economic disaster recovery, including contingency plans, support systems, and partnerships to mitigate the impact of economic disruptions and facilitate swift recovery.

## 03

## Enhance Investment Readiness

Prepare the County for investment attraction through the investment readiness process to prepare for long-term investment attraction and growth.



**GOAL #6:** Achieve an intermediate to advanced investment readiness status to attract investments to drive economic growth



**GOAL #7:** Develop a targeted investment attraction strategy by engaging the community

### Tactics:

1. Update community profile, and sector profiles (statistics, asset inventory of developers, realtors, land available, site selectors, maps, stakeholders, etc.).
2. Conduct a comprehensive analysis of available land for commercial/industrial development.
3. Conduct a complete community SWOT Analysis.
4. Streamline regulatory processes to create a more investor-friendly environment.
5. Identify strategic sectors focusing on attracting investments in high-potential industries (such as advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, and technology).
6. Establish partnerships and collaborate with regional development projects by actively engaging with neighboring communities and organizations to create synergies.
7. Collaborate with industry associations to promote the County as a favorable business location.
8. Develop and implement a detailed Business Investment and Attraction Study to identify key sectors for investment attraction and industry development. Utilize the Business Investment and Attraction study findings to formulate targeted marketing strategies for business attraction.
9. Prioritize infrastructure development to meet the needs of growing industries. Ensure alignment with the new Land Use Bylaw to capture economic development requirements.
10. Prioritize Hamlet revitalization to facilitate targeted growth.
11. Develop a Filming Attraction report to encourage Kneehill County as an ideal place to film movies and series.
12. Create a municipal tax incentive program to attract industries.
13. Develop and implement strong policies to maintain environmental quality.
14. Investigate looking into creating a Certified Site Program.
15. Enhance connectivity and transportation infrastructure.

## 03

## Enhance Investment Readiness

Prepare the County for investment attraction through the investment readiness process to prepare for long-term investment attraction and growth.



**GOAL #6:** Achieve an intermediate to advanced investment readiness status to attract investments to drive economic growth



**GOAL #7:** Develop a targeted investment attraction strategy by engaging the community

### Strategies

#### Year One:

1. Update community profile, and sector profiles (statistics, asset inventory of developers, realtors, land available, site selectors, maps, stakeholders, etc.).
2. Conduct a comprehensive analysis of available land for commercial/industrial development.
3. Identify strategic sectors focusing on attracting investments in high-potential industries (such as such as advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, and technology).
4. Develop and implement strong policies to maintain environmental stewardship.
5. Prioritize infrastructure development to meet the needs of growing industries. Ensure alignment with the new Land Use Bylaw to capture economic development requirements.
6. Develop a Filming Attraction report to encourage Kneehill County as an ideal place to film movies and series.

#### Year Two:

1. Establish partnerships and collaborate with regional development projects by actively engaging with neighboring communities and organizations to create synergies.
2. Streamline regulatory processes to create a more investor-friendly environment.
3. Collaborate with industry associations to promote the County as a favorable business location.
4. Investigate a Certified Site Program.

#### Year Three:

1. Develop and implement a detailed Business Investment and Attraction Study to identify key sectors for investment attraction and industry development. Utilize the Business Investment and Attraction study findings to formulate targeted marketing strategies for business attraction.
2. Prioritize Hamlet revitalization to facilitate targeted growth.
3. Create a municipal tax incentive program to attract industries.
4. Conduct a complete community SWOT Analysis.
5. Enhance connectivity and transportation infrastructure.

## 04

## Elevate Kneehill County's Brand

Elevate Kneehill County's brand as an attractive place to live, work and play locally, regionally and nationally.

- **GOAL #8** Promote and elevate the quality of life to attract and retain residents, attract visitors, workforce and business investments to the County
- **GOAL #9** Identify and collaborate with regional partners and stakeholders to promote and amplify the region
- **GOAL #10** Continuously monitor progress and gather input to update the plan

### Tactics:

1. Develop tourism and local business campaigns utilizing #explorekneehill and promote key stakeholders.
2. Promote the business development and permitting process.
3. Communication campaign to connect businesses with regional programs and supports.
4. Feature testimonials and success stories from residents to highlight the quality of life.
5. Foster a sense of community through effective communication through an integrated engagement and communication strategy for residents.
6. Showcase local amenities and community events through various promotional materials.
7. Develop branding materials that emphasize the benefits of rural living.
8. Update Business Guide currently available on website.
9. Enhance the "Doing Business" section on the Kneehill County Website.



## 04

## Elevate Kneehill County's Brand

Elevate Kneehill County's brand as an attractive place to live, work and play locally, regionally and nationally.



### GOAL #8

Promote and elevate the quality of life to attract and retain residents, attract visitors, workforce and business investments to the County



### GOAL #9

Identify and collaborate with regional partners and stakeholders to promote and amplify the region



### GOAL #10

Continuously monitor progress and gather input to update the plan



## Strategies:

### Year One

1. Develop and execute a marketing plan with focus on:
  - a. Creating an economic development website for investment attraction and retention.
  - b. Existing businesses to promote the business development and permitting process.
  - c. Residents and businesses to emphasize the benefits of rural living.
  - d. Businesses and the connection with regional programs and supports.
  - e. Residents and Visitors to showcase local amenities and community events through various promotional materials.
  - f. Enhance the "Doing Business" section on the Kneehill County Website (ie. updating the Business Guide, etc.)
  - g. Implement transparent communication channels to keep stakeholders informed and engaged.
2. Establish partnerships with local and regional organizations and programs to amplify the County's position.

### Year Two

1. Develop and execute a marketing plan targeted to:
  - a. Develop tourism and local business campaigns utilizing #explorekneehill and promote key stakeholders.
  - b. Feature testimonials and success stories from residents to highlight the quality of life.
  - c. Foster a sense of community through effective communication through an integrated engagement and communication strategy for residents.

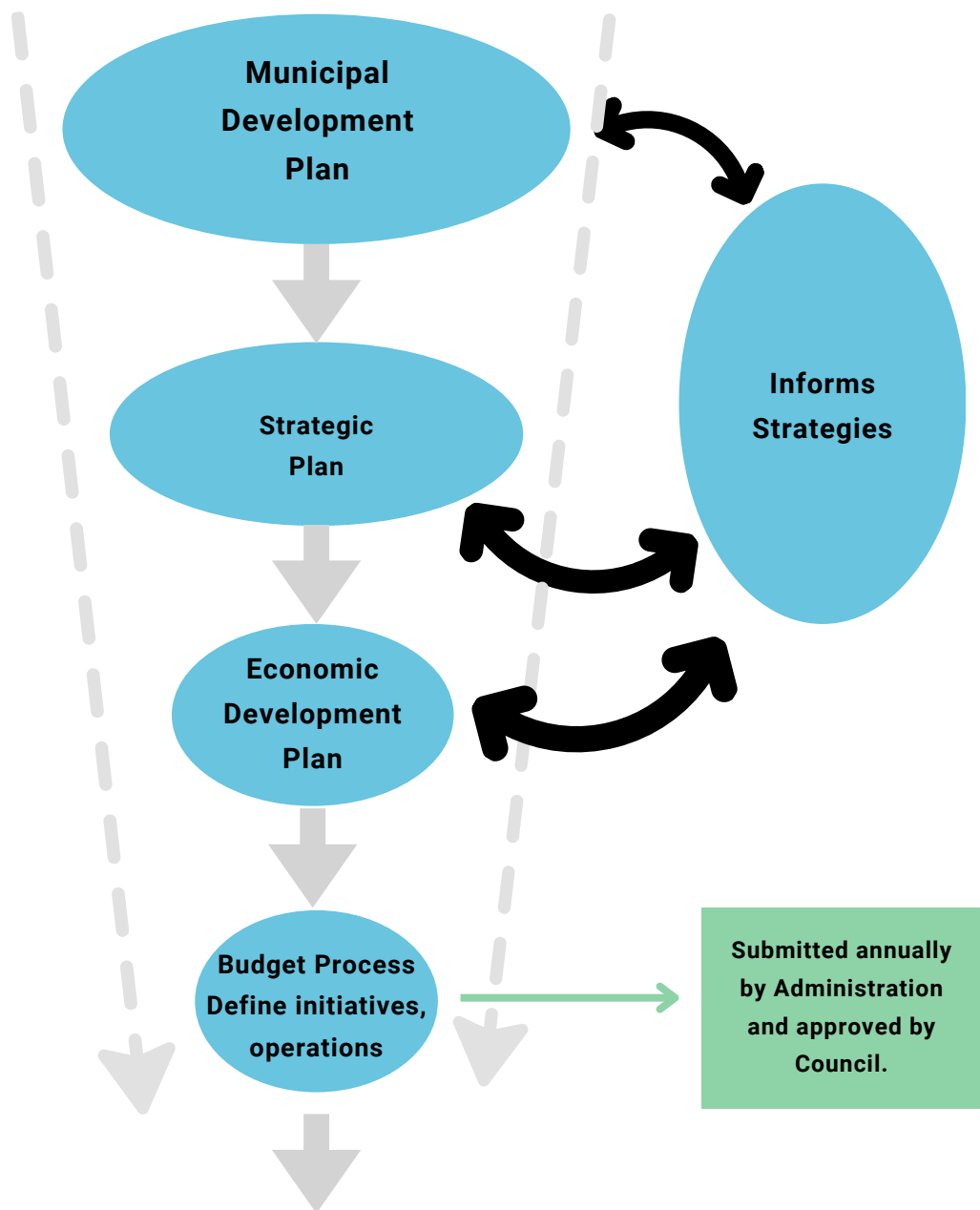
### Year Three

1. Develop a marketing plan targeted to:
  - a. Attract new Investment
  - b. On-going business retention activities
  - c. Drive visitation

# SUCCESS MEASUREMENT DISCUSSION

The following flow chart outlines Kneehill County's current process in which Administration follows in creating initiatives. Each initiative is approved through the budget process, where the budgeted amount, scope, rationale and potential grant sources may be leveraged. This process does not request outcomes to be submitted and is done through the project planning phase.

The current Strategic Plan does not have outcomes or measurement in which for Administration to strive for.



Specific Outcomes are defined through the project planning process and approved through the Senior Management Team. These outcomes are aligned to the plan and the partnerships established in the product whether these be through collaboration or funders supporting the initiative.



# SUCCESS MEASUREMENT DISCUSSION

Provided examples of success indicators for consideration by Council:

1. Review the initial indicators presented.
2. Should Council wish to consider other options, Council may wish to consider the following questions:
  - a. What does Council wish to consider success for this plan?
  - b. Consider the current situation of where Council is currently at in their Economic Development activities, current and past successes through retention, investment attraction in which to base outcomes.
    - i. For example, upon review of other municipalities, municipalities who have undertaken investment attraction and retention initiatives for several years have stronger baseline information in which to gather success from and will create more defined targets. Whereas communities relatively new to economic development, will create broader targets in their plans as initiatives are developed in the budget process will provide more specific outcomes until momentum is achieved and engagement in increased with economic development initiatives.
  - c. Is there baseline data in which can be used?
  - d. What statistical information will assist in monitoring effectiveness?
    - i. Quality of Life
    - ii. Business Retention Surveys
    - iii. Demographic Information (# businesses, # residents, # employees, etc.)
    - iv. Development Permits
    - v. Tracking of Investment Requests
    - vi. Citizen Satisfaction Surveys

To ensure the effectiveness of this strategy and to track progress, a robust evaluation framework is necessary and will include a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures, regular monitoring, and stakeholder feedback mechanisms. By doing so, Kneehill County can make informed adjustments to our strategies and ensure initiatives are driving sustainable growth and prosperity.

## Indicators

### Build Leadership Capacity

- **Training Participation Rates:** Number of elected officials and senior staff completing economic development training programs.
- **Stakeholder Engagement Sessions:** Frequency and attendance of stakeholder engagement meetings and workshops.

### Strengthen Existing Businesses

- **Business Retention Rate:** Percentage of businesses retained annually (only do this if we proceed with a business license program).
- **Expansion Projects:** Number and scale of business expansion projects initiated or completed (development permits approved, projects supported/funded).
- **Business Satisfaction Surveys:** Feedback from local businesses regarding support services and business climate (business visitation program).
- **Job Creation:** Number of new jobs created as a result of expansion initiatives (employment rates).

### Enhance Investment Readiness

- **Investment Readiness Level:** Achieve an intermediate to advanced score.
- **Investment attraction strategy Completed:** Creation of a strategy and implementation plan to attract investment.

### Elevate Kneehill County's Brand

- **Website and Social Media Analytics:** Increase in website traffic, social media engagement, and inquiries from potential investors and tourists.
- **Resident Satisfaction:** Survey results measuring resident satisfaction with economic development efforts and quality of life.
- **Population Growth:** Net population growth rate, indicating attractiveness as a place to live and work.

# Success Measurement (Cont'd)

## Monitoring and Reporting

- **Annual Reviews:** Comprehensive annual assessments to evaluate overall performance and impact of the economic development plan.
- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Regular feedback sessions with community stakeholders, including businesses, residents, and partner organizations, to gather insights and suggestions.
- **Adjustments and Adaptation:** Using data from monitoring and feedback, make necessary adjustments to strategies and initiatives to better align with goals and emerging opportunities.

## Success Milestones

- Year 1:** Establish baseline metrics, launch training programs, initiate key investment attraction campaigns, and begin brand awareness efforts, updated municipal and intermunicipal plans, update website.
- Year 2:** Achieve measurable improvements in business retention, begin investment readiness process, updated land use bylaws, uptake and increase in access to supports for businesses, access to workforce training.
- Year 3:** Available land, updated development processes.

Invest Kneehill County



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## Indicators

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# Success Measurement (Continued)

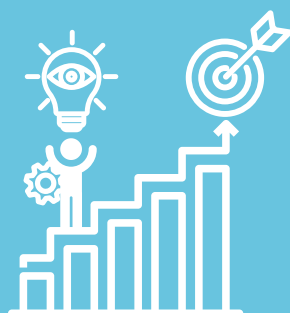
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Invest Kneehill County





# CONCLUSION - DISCUSSION

Council indicated they wish to see a conclusion that provides a statement on

- Kneehill County is open for business
- Recognize the need to develop previously designated agriculture lands
- Interested in exploring a diversity of sectors in which to attract than traditionally sought
- Wish to not mention renewable energy
- Positive and forward thinking statements
- How the County, it's residents and businesses will be "better" and the benefits received

Change the heading "Conclusion" to Preparing Today for Kneehill County's Future



Kneehill County's 3-year Economic Development Plan represents a holistic approach to fostering sustainable growth and prosperity in the region. Through collaboration with stakeholders and insights from the local community, the Plan has been meticulously crafted to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities, aiming to enhance the well-being of residents and create a vibrant local economy.

The County's unique position in south-central Alberta, surrounded by key transportation routes and neighboring municipalities, presents an advantageous landscape for economic development. With a strong focus on agriculture and the oil and gas industry, Kneehill County stands poised to leverage its natural resources and strategic location for continued growth. Additionally, the region's potential in tourism, particularly in showcasing attractions like Horseshoe Canyon, adds another dimension to its economic prospects.

Respecting the County's agricultural heritage is a crucial strategic imperative, not only for economic stability but also for fostering the County's quality of life. As Kneehill County moves forward, prioritizing capacity building, business retention and expansion, attracting investments, and enhancing branding and marketing efforts will be pivotal in realizing its economic development objectives. By aligning these priorities with the community's vision, Kneehill County aims to build a resilient and diverse economy that enriches the lives of its residents and attracts investment and growth.



# PREPARING TODAY FOR KNEEHILL COUNTY'S FUTURE



Kneehill County's 3-year Economic Development Plan is a proactive and future-focused initiative aimed at preparing for long-term sustainable economic growth and prosperity by preparing for investment attraction and supporting existing businesses.

Kneehill County has developed a plan that will identify and prepare lands for investment attraction, identify new and emerging industries, support existing businesses with a retention program, building capacity throughout our community leaders and positioning Kneehill County to compete globally.

With its advantageous location in south-central Alberta, Kneehill County is well-positioned to attract a broad range of new industries. This shift toward diversification will enhance Kneehill County's local economy and create exciting prospects for both businesses and residents. The County's commitment to exploring new economic frontiers will result in expanded job opportunities, increased investment, and a thriving business climate.

Residents can expect improved economic stability while businesses will benefit from a supportive and dynamic environment ripe for innovation and success. By aligning its actions with the community's aspirations, Kneehill County is shaping a future where everyone shares in the rewards of economic progress and growth.



# PREPARING TODAY FOR KNEEHILL COUNTY'S FUTURE

Kneehill County's 3-year Economic Development Plan is a forward-thinking initiative designed to foster sustainable economic growth and long-term prosperity by attracting new investments and supporting existing businesses.

The Plan lays out a strategic approach that includes preparing land for future investments, identifying new and emerging industries, and implementing a robust business retention program. By building capacity among community leaders and positioning Kneehill County to compete on a global scale, the County is setting the stage for a prosperous future.

Strategically located in south-central Alberta, Kneehill County is well-suited to attract a diverse array of industries. This shift toward economic diversification will strengthen the local economy, opening up exciting opportunities for businesses and residents alike. The County's focus on exploring innovative industries will lead to increased job creation, higher levels of investment, and a vibrant business environment.

Residents will benefit from greater economic stability, while businesses can look forward to a supportive, dynamic environment that fosters growth and innovation. By aligning its actions with the aspirations of the community, Kneehill County is paving the way for a future where economic progress and shared prosperity are within reach for all.



# PREPARING TODAY FOR KNEEHILL COUNTY'S FUTURE

Kneehill County has initiated an ambitious 3-year Economic Development Plan with the primary goal of diversifying the County's economy and expanding its tax base. This comprehensive plan capitalizes on the County's strengths while laying the groundwork for new opportunities in both traditional sectors and emerging industries. Kneehill County stands prepared to welcome and cultivate business growth.

Central to this initiative is the County's focus on identifying agricultural lands ripe for development. By undergoing a rigorous investment readiness process, Kneehill County will enhance its competitiveness and position itself as an attractive destination for investors, fostering a resilient and dynamic local economy.

In tandem with attracting new investments, Kneehill County is equally dedicated to strengthening its existing business community. A key component of the plan includes a business retention program that will provide essential support to local businesses, aid in workforce development, and create engagement opportunities for youth. The County will deliver a range of resources, workshops, and initiatives aimed at sustaining and expanding local enterprises.

Furthermore, Kneehill County is committed to building community capacity through ongoing learning and engagement opportunities. By amplifying the County's brand and promoting awareness among residents, businesses, community organizations, and government entities, Kneehill County will solidify its reputation as a vibrant and economically active region.

Through its commitment to creating a business-ready environment, Kneehill County's development plan outlines a strategic vision for future growth, innovation, and boundless potential.



# PREPARING TODAY FOR KNEEHILL COUNTY'S FUTURE

Kneehill County's 3-year Economic Development Plan is a bold, future-oriented initiative focused on achieving long-term sustainable growth and prosperity by driving investment attraction and bolstering existing businesses.

The Plan charts a clear course for identifying and preparing prime land for development, targeting emerging industries, and strengthening local businesses through dedicated retention programs. By empowering community leaders and positioning Kneehill County to compete on a global scale, the County is paving the way for continued success in a rapidly evolving economic landscape.

Thanks to its strategic location in south-central Alberta, Kneehill County is ideally positioned to diversify its economy and attract a wide range of new industries. This commitment to broadening the economic base will not only enhance the region's resilience but also unlock exciting new opportunities for businesses and residents. By pursuing innovative sectors, Kneehill County aims to foster a dynamic business climate, attract increased investment, and generate significant job creation, with measurable goals set over the Plan's 3-year period.

Throughout the implementation of the Plan, Kneehill County remains committed to ongoing community engagement, ensuring that residents and businesses play an active role in shaping the County's future. Furthermore, the Plan emphasizes sustainability and innovation, seeking to future-proof the local economy while maintaining responsible stewardship of natural resources.

Collaborating with neighboring municipalities and regional organizations will further strengthen the County's competitive edge, reinforcing its ability to attract investment and achieve shared growth. As these efforts unfold, residents can expect greater economic stability, while businesses will thrive in an environment that encourages innovation and expansion. With the community's aspirations at the forefront, Kneehill County is driving toward a future where economic opportunity, environmental sustainability, and shared prosperity are realized for all.



Subject: **Kneehill Adult Learning**

Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 15, 2024

Prepared By: Carolyn Van der Kuil, Legislative Services Manager

Presented By: Carolyn Van der Kuil, Legislative Services Manager

## STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT: (Check all that apply)

	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
High Quality Infrastructure		Economic Resilience		Quality of Life		Effective Leadership		Level of Service	

## ATTACHMENTS:

Kneehill Adult Learning Delegation Request Form

Kneehill Adult Learning has requested a meeting with Council to present their Community Grant application. During Round One, it was suggested they present directly to Council due to questions regarding their organizational structure and application.

All Community Grant Applications will be presented to Council at the October 22<sup>nd</sup> , Regular Council Meeting. No decision on the grant application needs to be made at today's Committee of the Whole meeting.

## APPROVAL(S):

Mike Haugen, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved- ☒





## Delegation Request Form

Please submit completed form to  
[carolyn.vanderkuil@kneehillcounty.com](mailto:carolyn.vanderkuil@kneehillcounty.com)

### MEETING DETAILS

**Regular Council Meeting**    **Date & Time:** October 15, 2024 @ 11:00 a.m.

### GUIDELINES

- Presentations are not to exceed 15 minutes, including questions, unless permitted by Council.
- The Delegation Request Form and related documents will become part of the public record and will be released/published in the agenda and minutes and will be made available to the public in a variety of methods.
- Persons interested in requesting a presentation to Kneehill County Council must supply all pertinent information including handouts, PowerPoint Presentations no later than 4:00 p.m. on the Wednesday prior to the scheduled Tuesday meeting. If your material is not published in the agenda, bring ten (10) copies with you to the meeting. Note: distributed documents will become part of the public record.
- The County's Council meetings are video recorded and live-streamed on the County's website.

Please submit completed form to [carolyn.vanderkuil@kneehillcounty.com](mailto:carolyn.vanderkuil@kneehillcounty.com)

### PRESENTER DETAILS

Name: (Person Making presentation)

Emma Dabrowski

Company or Group Represented:

Kneehill Adult Learning & Newcomer Services

Contact Number:

403-443-5556

Email:

admin@kals3hills.ca

Mailing Address:

Box 639, Three Hills, AB T0M 2A0

***Please Note:***

*Regular Council Meetings are held the second and fourth Tuesday of every month unless otherwise posted. Please see Kneehill County Website or contact Administration for more information.*

This personal information is being collected under the authority of Section (c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used in scheduling you as a delegation before Council. If you have any questions about the collection of this information, please contact the FOIP Coordinator at 403-443-5541.



## Delegation Request Form

Please submit completed form to  
carolyn.vanderkuil@kneehillcounty.com

### PRESENTATION TOPIC

Will the presentation require PowerPoint facilities? Yes ☒ No ☐

The topic of the discussion is (be specific, provide details, and attach additional information, if required so that all necessary details may be considered.):

Presenting our funding request to council.

- introduction/summary of our organization
- overview of the project
- Q&A

### PURPOSE OF PRESENTATION

☐ Information Only ☐ Request Action/Support ☒ Request Funds ☐ Other

Desired Resolution (What is the decision you are asking to make?)

Approval for funding request.

- Have you included all attachments?
- Does your summary contain all pertinent information?
- Have you provided enough information to enable Council to make an informed decision?
- Have you reviewed your presentation to ensure that it will fit within the specified timelines?

This personal information is being collected under the authority of Section (c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used in scheduling you as a delegation before Council. If you have any questions about the collection of this information, please contact the FOIP Coordinator at 403-443-5541.





Community Grants to Non-Profit Organizations  
**Application Form**  
POLICY #15-3

**ORGANIZATION INFORMATION**

Date: October 1, 2024

Organization Legal Name: Kneehill Adult Learning Society

**ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION**

Please provide a brief explanation of your organization, it could include your mission statement, activities you perform, or any relevant information.

Kneehill Adult Learning Society is a non-profit organization and has been serving the C

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

Please provide a brief (one sentence) description of the project for which grant funding is requested on the line below. (i.e. upgrade furnace in hall)

Minor renovations/upgrades to learning and office space

- ☒ Please attach a detailed description of the project for which Community Grant funding is requested and include:
- An indication of how this project will benefit our community.
  - If you are including volunteer labour or any other donation "in-kind", please include detailed information about this in your description. (i.e. how many volunteers and expected volunteer hours etc.)
  - location of the project

409 / 411 Main Street, Three Hills Alberta

- ☒ If this project involves land and/or facilities, a Certificate of Title must be included with application.

- ☒ Yes ☐ No Will this project be completed within the current year?  
☒ Yes ☐ No Would you like to present to Council? (This is not mandatory)  
☒ Yes ☒ No If you do not receive this grant, will the project take place?

The personal information on this form is being collected for the purpose of determining eligibility of an applicant to receive a grant. This information is collected under the authority of Section 33 (c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and may become public information once it is submitted to Council during a Council meeting. Questions regarding the collection of this information can be directed to the FOIP Coordinator at 403-443-5541.





Community Grants to Non-Profit Organizations  
**Application Form**  
POLICY #15-3

**PROJECT FUNDING**

Project Funding Details – Please identify all sources of funding for this project


			Total Amount
Kneehill County Contribution- Please fill in the funding request for this application (Minimum \$250)			\$ 2750
<b>Additional revenues to complete the project:</b> Organizations must contribute an amount equal to or exceeding Kneehill County's Contribution.			
	Confirmed Amount	Pending Amount	
Organization's cash contribution to the project	1715		\$ 1715
Other grants applied for			\$
Volunteer Labour*	1035		\$ 1035
Donated In-Kind (including equipment and material)*	0		\$ 0
Other Funding Sources			\$
<b>Total Project Funding (This amount must equal the Total Project Cost)</b>			<b>\$ 5500</b>


\* Rates are: \$20/hr for unskilled labour, \$35/hr for skilled labour and \$70/hr for equipment including operator  
Proof for budgeted in-kind contributions and volunteer labour will be requested on the Accountability form.

**APPLICANT AGREEMENT**

I DECLARE THAT: (application must be signed by two members of the Society's Executive Committee.)

- I am a duly authorized representative having legal and/or financial signing authority for the above organization.
- The information contained in this application and supporting documents is true and accurate and endorsed by the above organization.
- An accounting of spending, showing compliance with conditions of the grant shall be provided at completion of the project, no later than one year from the date the grant was approved.
- Any grant awarded shall be used solely for the purposes stated within Community Grants to Non-Profit Organizations Policy #15-3.

Signature:   
Name Printed: Emma Dabrowski  
Date: October 1, 2024

Signature:   
Name Printed: Dennis Punter  
Date: Oct 1 / 2024

The personal information on this form is being collected for the purpose of determining eligibility of an applicant to receive a grant. This information is collected under the authority of Section 33 (c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and may become public information once it is submitted to Council during a Council meeting. Questions regarding the collection of this information can be directed to the FOIP Coordinator at 403-443-5541.



October 1, 2024

## **Application for Kneehill County Community Grants to Non-Profits**

### **Background and value to Kneehill County:**

Kneehill Adult Learning & Newcomer Services has been serving Kneehill County for more than 50 years. We provide accessible programming, resources, and services for adults to discover skills which are theirs for a lifetime. Through our programming, motivated learners gain skills needed for local community engagement, leading to greater independence, and empowering them to make personal and professional contributions towards a strong and thriving rural community.

We began as a lifelong learning program offering continuing education and general interest classes throughout Kneehill County. In 1995, we incorporated as a provincial nonprofit. We are the Community Adult Learning Program for Kneehill County. In 2022, with a provincial grant, we began offering newcomer settlement and integration services to newcomers to Canada and local employers of Temporary Foreign Workers.

We had over 1,100 registrations for our programs and services in 2023 alone, benefiting the people of Kneehill County through:

- ESL classes and tutoring
- Literacy, numeracy, digital tutoring, and Cree, French and Spanish classes
- Services for newcomers to Canada
- Welcoming Community Initiatives and activities
- Support for parents with children who have Learning Disabilities
- Learning for adults with diverse abilities
- Safety certification courses, such as First Aid and Food Safe
- Access to technology (free wifi, public computer use, faxing)
- Help completing, printing, and submitting forms and applications
- Referrals to other local organizations and resources
- Post-secondary information and exam invigilation
- Employment services, including the Kneehill County employment Facebook page

We provide a safe place for other valuable organizations to meet with their local clients.



## Project Information:

Over the past few years, we've gradually outgrown our main office and classroom spaces as the need for newcomer services and foundational learning opportunities has increased. We have a convenient primary location on Main Street in Three Hills and did not want to move from here. At the beginning of the year (January 2024), we decided to rent the building next door and expand our space. This expansion significantly increased our available programming area and provides office space for other valuable community non-profits to meet with their clients.

We used a federal grant to complete the necessary construction to facilitate accessibility for people with physical barriers. This grant paid for accessible technology for our foundational digital skills program. We did a lot of the deep cleaning and minor upgrades ourselves, with help from volunteers.

Our goal is to expand the safe and welcoming environment we have in the original office, focusing on a comfortable atmosphere in which to learn, versatility of the space for community and program use, and enough room to assure confidentiality for staff, volunteers, and clients. Each project we embark on also seeks to overcome barriers to needed services and programs for vulnerable community members.

To achieve this, our project proposal to the Kneehill County Community Grants program includes the following items:

- Kitchen area modifications: adding new cabinets, doors to existing cabinets, and fridge to increase useable space
- Laundry area addition: repurposing unused nook into a small laundry area for office use and for clients who do not have laundry facilities at home
- Children's play area: creating a pop-up area which can be tucked away when not in use, to better accommodate parents who bring young children to classes or for services

All activities under this project will be completed within one year of receipt of funds.



# KNEEHILL ADULT LEARNING & NEWCOMER SERVICES



## Budget Details:

Material costs were estimated from current costs as per Home Hardware, Costco, and Ikea.

Volunteer hours were estimated with input from licensed builders. The skilled labour hours will be completed by licensed builders and contractors, as well as volunteers with professional experience. This includes the assembly and installation of kitchen cabinets as well as preparing the space for, and installation of, washer/dryer. Our organization functions with the help of dozens of volunteers. In 2023, we recorded over 1000 volunteer hours. Our last major renovation was in 2015 when we first moved into our current location, 409 Main Street. This work was completed with 1630 volunteer hours.

Activities:	Materials			Labour			Project TOTAL	Cash contrib.	Total Match	
	QTY	cost	Total	20 unskil	35 skill	Total				
<b>Kitchen</b>										
Upper cabinets	1	75	75				675		600	
	2	300	600	9	12	600	600			
Pantry cupboard	1	300	300				300			
Lower cabinet doors	2	45	90				90			
Fridge	1	1100	1100	1	1	55	1155	650	705	
<b>Laundry</b>										
Washer/Dryer	1	1700	1700	3	8	340	2040	800	1140	
<b>Children's Area</b>										
Fence	2	200	400	1		20	420	200	220	Grant
Children's utility cart	1	200	200	1		20	220	65	85	Request
Totals			4465			1035	5500	1715	2750	2750

Total Project Cost: 5500

Total Matching: 2750

Total Grant Request: 2750



**Summation:**

Funding from Kneehill County for this project ensures that we will not have to complete the project in small increments over a long period of time. Operating with constant upgrades and construction would be disruptive to our programming and services. and far from ideal.

Some items in our project proposal might not happen at all, such as the laundry area addition. This really would be a shame as local low-income housing does not have laundry and there are no public laundry facilities in Three Hills. We serve a number of clients who are barred from receiving services and participating in the community because they have no clean clothing to wear. It is our desire to increase opportunities for rural community members by meeting needs and closing gaps in amenities and services for local vulnerable people. This is one avenue.

We humbly request that Kneehill County join us in our mission to provide accessible, foundational programming, resources, and services for adults, empowering them to make personal and professional contributions towards keeping Kneehill County a strong and thriving community.

Thank you for considering providing the matching funds for our project! We look forward to completing the included activities in an efficient and timely manner.

Sincerely,

Emma Dabrowski

Executive Director, Kneehill Adult Learning & Newcomer Services  
[admin@kals3hills.ca](mailto:admin@kals3hills.ca) | 403-443-5556





KNEEHILL ADULT LEARNING  
& NEWCOMER SERVICES



# Community Adult Learning Programs & Newcomer Services

Serving Adults in Kneehill County



# Who we are



**50** Years  
of Learning

A provincially funded not-for-profit organization dedicated to

- lifelong learning
- newcomer settlement and integration



# Kneehills Adult Learning & Newcomer Services



Province of Alberta



Foundational  
Learning



Newcomer  
Supports



Funded through grants





# Kneehills Adult Learning & Newcomer Services



Project grants



CIP



Projects    Operating

Telus  
Community

Kneehill County grant  
(Dec 2020- for suicide awareness  
community workshop)

Enabling  
Accessibility

Blue  
Cross  
Wellness

FCSS  
Food Security

Prairie Community  
Services for TFWs

Town of Three Hills  
municipal grants for  
community groups

Canada  
Summer  
Job

Funded through grants



# Mission Statement



Kneehill Adult Learning and Newcomer Services exists to provide accessible programming, resources, and services for adults to discover skills which are theirs for a lifetime. Through our programming, motivated learners gain skills needed for local community engagement, leading to greater independence, and empowering them to make personal and professional contributions towards a strong and thriving rural community.





# Values & Guiding Principles

- Lifelong Learning
- Community
- Empowerment
- Partnerships
- Respect
- Diversity and Inclusion



# Adult Learning



We offer one on one tutoring for help developing these foundational skills:

- Digital skills
- Math
- Literacy
- English language learning
- Soft skills



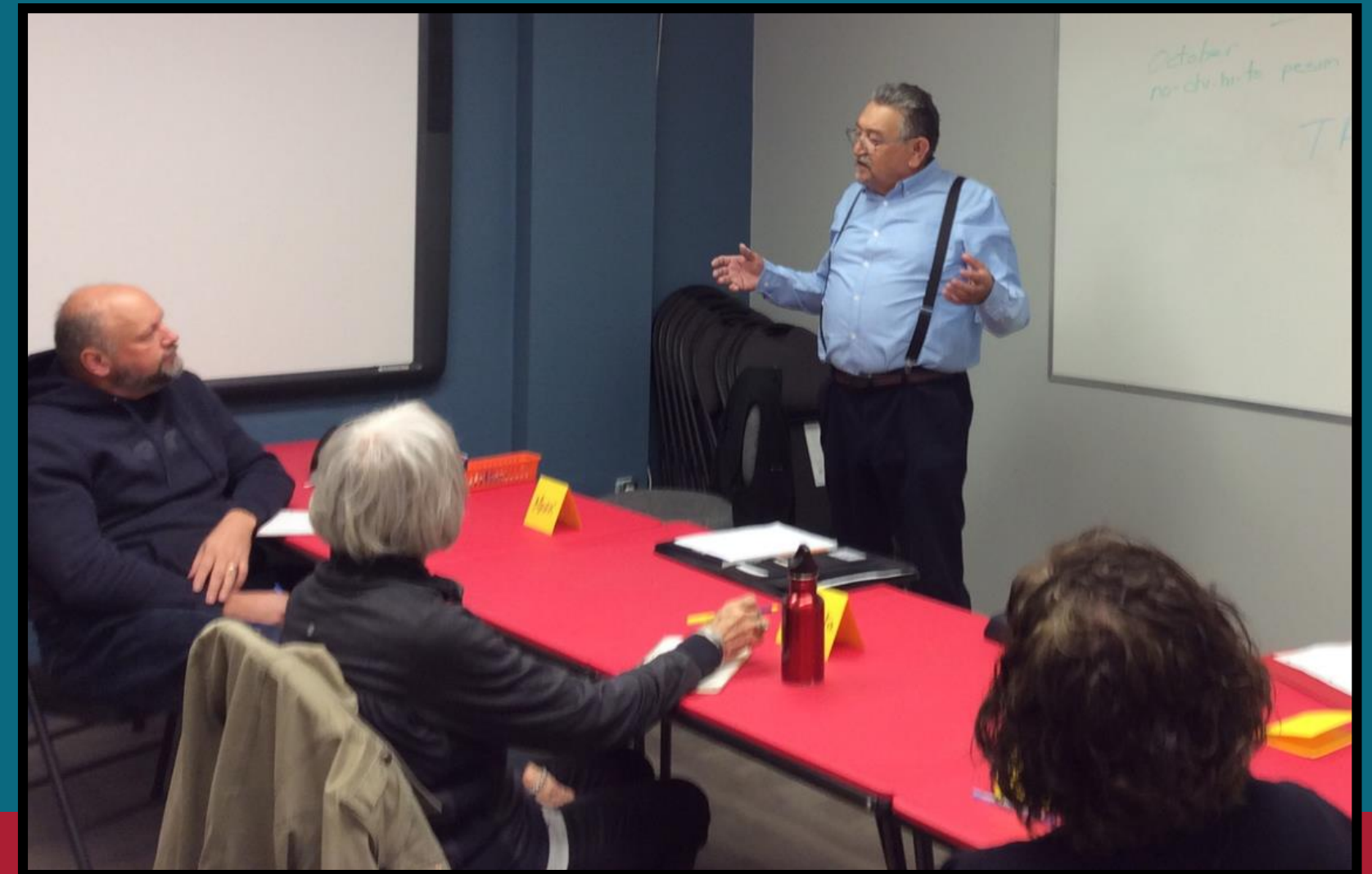


# Community Learning



We promote learning through:

- Language classes like Spanish, French and Cree
- Book Clubs
- Workshops
- Information sessions
- Safety certifications





# Diverse Learning



We provide opportunities for adults with diverse abilities.





# Community Building



## Lunch With Friends

- mentorship and administrative support
- volunteer training

## Office and meeting space for other agencies

- MH Enterprises (employment services)
- Fisher Farm (supports for adults with disabilities)
- True North (domestic violence crisis organization)
- John Howard Society, Community Legal Clinic
- local volunteer boards





# Employment Services

We offer employment search support

- On the Rural Renewal committees for Trochu, Acme, and Linden
- Manage the community job board
- Access to online work skills training
- Resume and cover letter help through an on-site employment agency



# Settlement Services

## Direct services

- Help with access to government programs and services
- Community orientation and access to local services
- Access to translation and interpretation services
- Workshops on topics related to the settlement journey





# Settlement Services

## Indirect services

Newcomer-related support and resources for

- local stakeholders, employers, or community members
- labour market integration of newcomers
- raise community awareness



# Our Demographic



- long time residents
  - young adults to seniors
- newcomers to Canada, Alberta, Kneehill County
  - economic migrants
  - refugees and evacuees
- anyone wanting to improve their foundational skills!

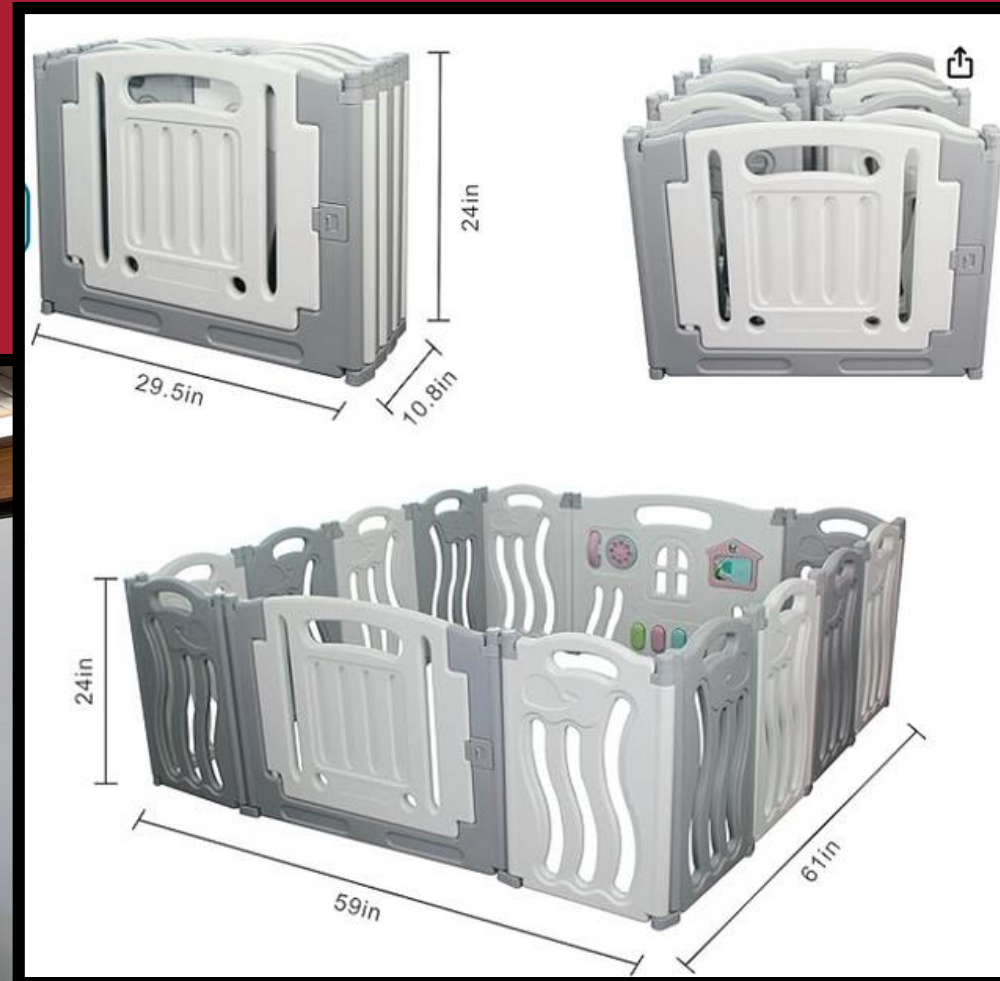
# Overcoming Barriers



- house calls for seniors
- learning opportunities throughout the county
- low or no cost registration
- free coffee/tea/water and snacks
- children welcome with parents
- printing, faxing, scanning, public computer and wifi
- quiet, confidential place to meet with other social-serving agencies



# Our proposed project

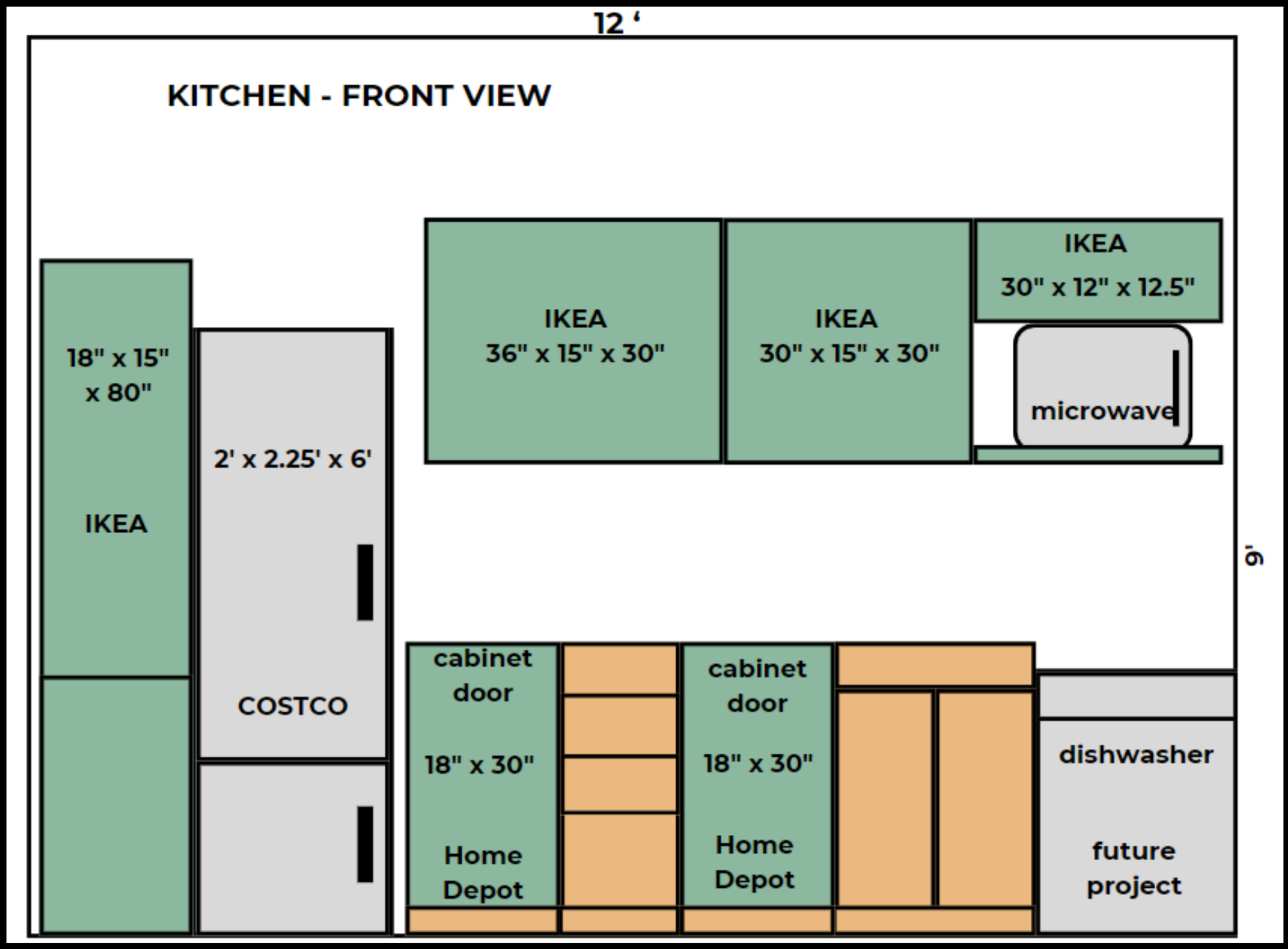


## Children's play area





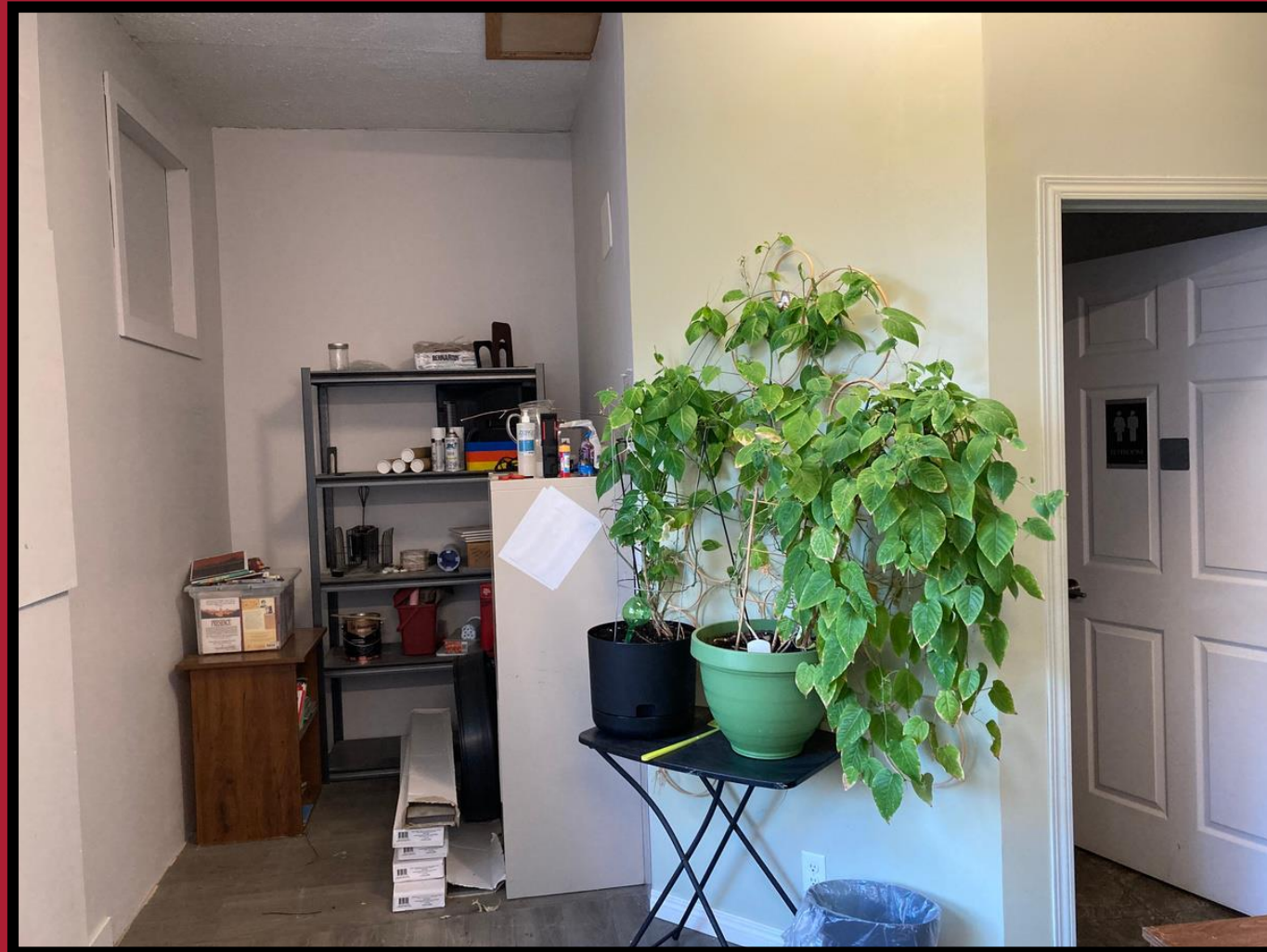
# Our proposed project



## Kitchen modifications



# Our proposed project



Laundry area



KNEEHILL ADULT LEARNING  
& NEWCOMER SERVICES



*Thank You!*



KNEEHILL ADULT LEARNING  
& NEWCOMER SERVICES



## Office Address



409 Main Street, Three Hills,  
Alberta T0M 2A0



403-443-5566



admin@kals3hills.ca  
kneehilllearn@gmail.com








<https://www.kals3hills.ca/>



Subject: Year in Review Template  
Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 15, 2024  
Prepared By: Mike Haugen, CAO  
Presented By: Mike Haugen, CAO

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT: (Check all that apply)**

	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
High Quality Infrastructure		Economic Resilience		Quality of Life		Effective Leadership		Level of Service	

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION:**

Provincial (cite)- NA

Council Bylaw/Policy (cite)- NA

**BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:**

Development of an annual report was established as a 2024 objective. Administration has developed a template for that report using 2023 data and wishes to obtain Council's feedback regarding the overall format of the report.

**DISCUSSION/OPTIONS/BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES/OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

An example report has been created utilizing 2023 information. Administration is seeking to obtain Council's feedback about the general document and overall information content. This feedback will be utilized to develop a 2024 Year in Review document.

Administration anticipates that a report of this type will be produced each year in conjunction with approval of the Audited Financial Statements.

**FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

Production of this report would be incorporated into annual workplans.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

2023 Year in Review Example

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Committee of the Whole provide the following feedback to Administration:

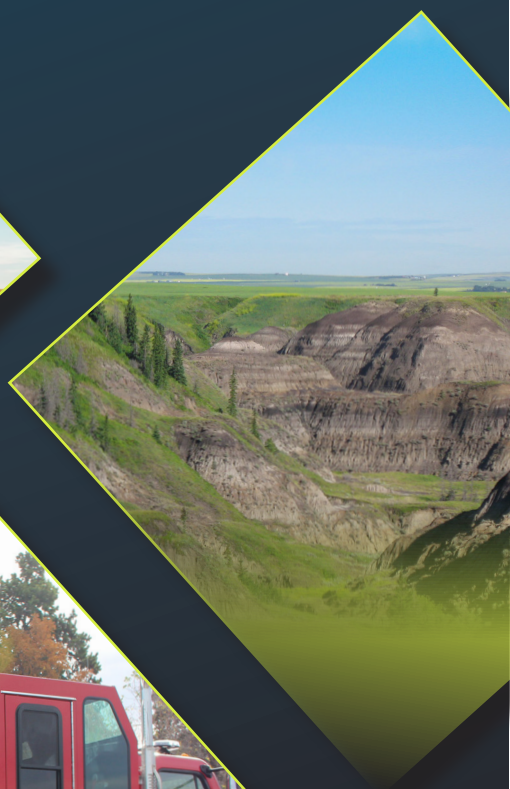
**APPROVAL(S):**

Mike Haugen, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved- ☒



## *Highlights*



## Message from the Reeve

On behalf of Council, I am pleased to present our annual report to our residents and stakeholders. This year has been marked by hard work, dedication, and a relentless pursuit of excellence by our employees, who have continually sought improvements and efficiencies to save money and enhance our services.

Throughout the year, our staff has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to serving our community. They have worked tirelessly to ensure that our operations run smoothly and effectively, consistently seeking innovative solutions to enhance the quality of life for all our residents.

Some highlights from this year include:

**Infrastructure Projects:** We have successfully completed several key infrastructure projects, ensuring our roads, bridges, and public facilities are in top condition. Our proactive approach to maintenance and renewal has paid off, providing safe and reliable infrastructure for our community.

**Service Enhancements:** Our team has introduced new services and improved existing ones, focusing on meeting the evolving needs of our residents. From enhanced recycling programs to expanded community grant opportunities, we are committed to delivering high-quality services.

**Community Engagement:** We have strengthened our engagement with the community through various initiatives and events. By fostering open communication and collaboration, we have built stronger relationships with our residents and stakeholders.

**Financial Management:** Thanks to our staff's diligent efforts in seeking efficiencies and cost-saving measures, we have been able to manage our resources effectively. This prudent financial management has allowed us to invest in key projects and build reserves for the future.

Despite the challenges we faced, including economic uncertainties and external pressures, our employees have risen to the occasion, ensuring that we continue to deliver excellent services to our community. Their hard work and dedication have been instrumental in our success.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to building a prosperous and sustainable future for our community. We will continue to work hard, seek improvements, and enhance our services, ensuring that our residents benefit from a high quality of life.

Thank you for your continued support.

-Reeve Ken King







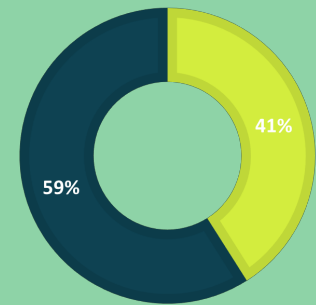
Median Household  
Income  
**\$91,000**



**Population**  
**4,992**

### WORKER CLASSES

■ Self Employed ■ Employees



### 2023 Development Stats

Building Permits Issued: 43  
Building Permits  
Construction Value:  
**\$15,455,857**  
Development Permits  
Issued: 69  
Development Permit Value:  
**\$19,655,935**

### Land Parcels

Farmland: 5,737  
Non-residential: 431  
Improved Residential: 1,857

Median  
Age **42**

### 2023 Key Infrastructure Investments:

\$2.8 million for  
scheduled Capital Equipment  
replacements necessary to  
maintain roads, water systems,  
protective services, and parks.

\$2.4 million for road  
network projects including the  
replacement and maintenance  
of bridges, and rural road  
reconstructions.

\$620,000 for  
maintenance and upgrades to  
various County owned facilities  
and park sites.

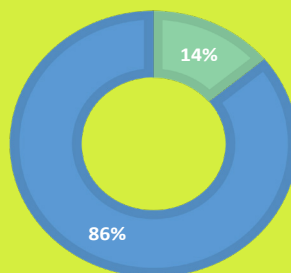
\$364,100 in one-time  
projects to support operations,  
including progression in asset  
management, and asset  
condition assessments.



**200+**  
**Businesses**

### TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS

■ Rented ■ Owned

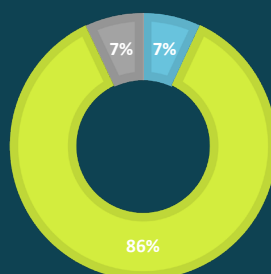


### Top Industries Based on Employment:

1. Agriculture
2. Health Care & Social Assistance
3. Construction
4. Retail Trade
5. Transportation
6. Oil & Gas Extraction

### PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT

■ Residential ■ Non-Residential ■ Farmland





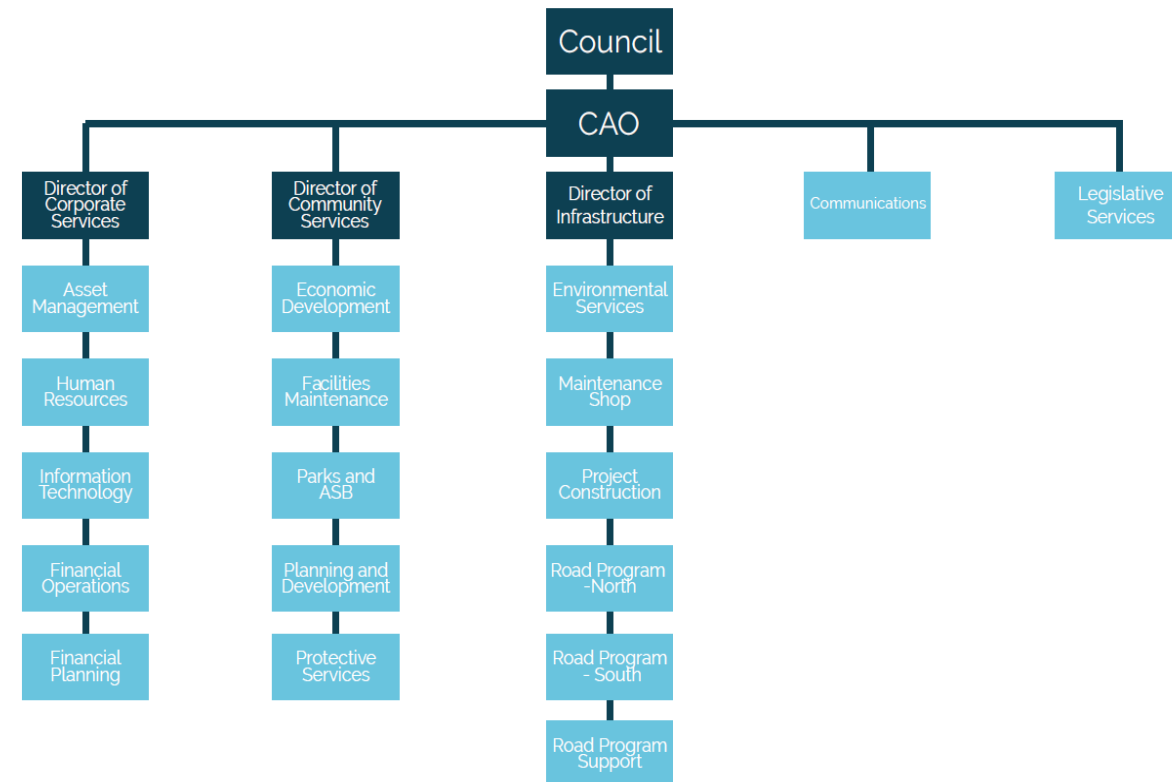


# Departmental Summaries

**Significant Achievements  
Operating Budget**

*Photo Credit: Badlands Photography*

# Organizational Chart and Staffing Summary



	2022	2023	2024	Change
CAO and Resource Support	4	4	4	-
Infrastructure	40	42.5	44.5	2
Community Services	18	18.5	18.5	-
Corporate Services	14	15	15	-
<b>Total Permanent Staff</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>2</b>
Seasonal Staff	23	22	19	-3

Specific numbers of employees under each major segment of the organization are listed in the table above.

From 2022 to 2023 the total employees budgeted to be employed by the County increased by four, as a result of the addition of an Asset Manager under Corporate Services, and a role to be shared between Transportation and Agricultural Services. The remaining two is recognition of positions that were vacant within Infrastructure in 2022 and have since been occupied.

In 2024 the total employees budgeted to be employed by the County increased by two, as a result of the addition of two positions within the Transportation Department. Seasonal staff were reduced by three within the Transportation Department, partially due to historical trending in the availability of seasonal hires, and partially in recognition of the addition of new full time positions.

# Operating Budget by Department

This table reflects the Operating Budget segmented by departments, Detailed Departmental Budgets are found further on in this report.

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Council	-	-	-
Corporate Items	(26,459,500)	(27,618,649)	(1,159,149)
Office of CAO	-	-	-
Corporate Services	(200,000)	-	200,000
Transportation	(313,500)	(455,000)	(141,500)
Environmental	(1,567,885)	(1,787,547)	(219,662)
Facilities	-	(22,000)	(22,000)
Economic Development	(10,000)	-	10,000
Enforcement	(39,000)	(39,000)	-
Fire	(85,757)	(61,670)	24,087
Disaster	-	-	-
Planning	(118,700)	(104,100)	14,600
ASB	(185,402)	(294,747)	(109,345)
Parks	(101,900)	(106,900)	(5,000)
Cemetery	(7,800)	(7,800)	-
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>(29,089,444)</b>	<b>(30,497,413)</b>	<b>(1,407,969)</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Council	1,152,702	1,185,031	32,329
Corporate Items	6,465,679	5,980,890	(484,789)
Office of CAO	741,545	773,136	31,591
Corporate Services	2,541,044	2,403,688	(137,356)
Transportation	9,307,570	10,653,213	1,345,643
Environmental	3,214,733	3,288,141	73,408
Facilities	396,874	441,819	44,945
Economic Development	245,423	235,765	(9,658)
Enforcement	1,257,449	1,261,815	4,366
Fire	1,473,534	1,499,587	26,053
Disaster	31,824	40,228	8,404
Planning	572,378	618,885	46,507
ASB	848,801	1,232,928	384,127
Parks	770,297	813,492	43,195
Cemetery	69,591	68,795	(796)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>29,089,444</b>	<b>30,497,413</b>	<b>1,407,969</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>



# Council



## Council

# Operating Budget

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	191,100	196,300	5,200
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	7,200	7,200	-
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	388,842	402,359	13,517
Transfer to Other Governments	288,060	289,122	1,062
Transfer to Individuals & Organizations	262,400	274,950	12,550
Contributions to Reserves	15,100	15,100	-
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,152,702</b>	<b>1,185,031</b>	<b>32,329</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>1,152,702</b>	<b>1,185,031</b>	<b>32,329</b>

The Council segment of the budget provides for the direct costs of operating Council and a variety of committees, as well as specific Council programs. Council is responsible for setting direction, establishing organizational priorities, approving policies, and allocating resources through the annual budget approval process.

### Expenses

**Contract and General Supplies** this item includes costs relating to Council training and development, memberships, IT related software licensing costs, as well as professional contracts which supports Council. The increase relates to training and development.

**Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities** includes office materials and other items required to support Council.

**Salaries, Wages, and Benefits** includes core Council salaries, per diems, benefits, and all government contributions related to Council.

**Transfer to Other Governments** this item represents recreation payments to urban municipalities. The increase relates to contracted payment amounts.

**Transfer to Individuals & Organizations** includes Council programming which supports rural community halls, youth sponsorships, community grants to non-profits, scholarship awards, and other various Council programs. The increase in this item relates to community grant programs.

**Contributions to Reserves** represents a contribution to the IT Reserve to fund IT equipment related to Councillors and Council Chambers.

## 2023 Significant Achievements & Contributions

Awarded \$51,988.00 in Community Grant Funding in 2023.

Provided the Torrington Arena \$30,000 in grant funding plus \$12,500 to rent a zamboni for 2023-2024

Provided \$8,800 in grants through the new Recreation and Community Arts and Culture Program

Provided \$288,060.40 in recreation funding to 5 urban municipalities within Kneehill County.

Provided \$3400 in grants through the Youth Sponsorship Program.

Provided \$5000 to the Three Hills Health Initiative Fundraiser

Provided the Kneehill Museum \$25,000 in funds for their museum expansion.

Provided \$10,000 to the Huxley Hall Association for the Community Centre's roof

Provided \$100,000 to the Acme Alumni Association for their new gym project.

Awarded \$27,451 to 9 rural halls in Kneehill County.

Awarded two \$2000 scholarships through Kneehill County's annual Scholarship Program.

Approved use of the ToolCat, Water Truck and operators to fill barricades for the 2023 Cruise Weekend.

Continued Elected Officials Education Program training: Privacy Dos and Don'ts, Planning, Regional Partnership and Collaboration, Council's Role in Service Delivery, Municipal Corporate Planning and Finance, and Asset Management.

Met with Minister of Municipal Affairs, Rebecca Shultz, Transportation Minister Devin Dreeshen, and K Division RCMP while attending two Rural Municipalities of Alberta Conferences.

Successfully lobbied the provincial government to replace BF 06893 on Hwy 587, construction completed in 2023.

Held 21 Council meetings and passed 453 resolutions, reviewed 10 policies, created 4 new policies, rescinded 3 policies, ratified 21 Bylaws, and held 9 Committee of the Whole Meetings in 2023.

Held ratepayer meetings for transportation and environmental services projects: Gorr Road Overlay, Huxley wastewater assessments, and Three Hills East Water meetings to engage residents and obtain valuable feedback on these specific projects.



# **Office of the CAO, Legislative Services, & Communications**

# Office of the CAO, Legislative Services, and Communications

**The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)** is Council's principal advisor on matters of policy and is responsible to Council for the efficient administration of all County services and programs. The three Division Heads (Directors) are responsible to the CAO for the efficient and effective operation of their respective departments.

The CAO provides leadership and direction and is responsible for the co-ordination of information with all departments while ensuring that the policies and direction of Council are effectively implemented. In addition to three Division Directors, the functions and resources of Legislative Services and Communications report directly to the CAO.

**Legislative Services's** main function is to support the CAO in the administration of legislated responsibilities as set out in the various provincial statutes. This includes, but is not limited to, working with and assisting the CAO in the preparing and posting of agendas, preparing and posting minutes and bylaws, and maintaining a record of Council and Committee proceedings. Overseeing and administering the municipal election process every four years is also a responsibility of this unit.

Legislative Services portrays a positive corporate image by providing internal and external clients with an efficient, accurate and pleasant service in a manner which sets the County apart in making every enquirer feel welcome and fulfilled. This is achieved by providing Council secretariat functions for Council and the organization, maintaining the corporate records management system, and providing administrative and technical support to the CAO and Council.

**Communications** is a key function of the County, involving elected officials and employees at all levels. To support this priority, the Communications Department strives to provide the County residents and stakeholders with clear, honest, transparent information and seeks opportunities to ensure County residents are consulted with on important decisions. Communications also works to promote and inform residents and stakeholders of the County's current projects, procedures, services, and successes. The department utilizes a variety of mediums to provide clear, consistent messaging, including website, social media, newspaper, and video.

## MISSION STATEMENT

To assist Council in ensuring policies adopted and decisions made by Council are the most effective in moving the County forward in a sustainable and financially prudent manner.

In addition, the CAO shall provide Council information, legislative advice and guidance while ensuring quality service is provided to Council, staff, and the ratepayers.





# Office of the CAO, Legislative Services, & Communications

## 2023 Significant Achievements

Published four ratepayer newsletters, including digital versions online.

Hosted two ratepayer evenings with attendance of 178 total (70 in Swalwell, 108 in Wimborne).

Implemented business reply mail for surveys etc.

Implemented Notify Me, a free notification service for water customers through the County's website.

Reformatted Council Highlights document to make it more engaging for residents to read.

Implemented AI programs to help improve communications.

Completed a 22-week "Weed of the Week" noxious weed information campaign, in conjunction with Ag Services.

Assisted Kneehill County departments with communications plans, campaigns, initiatives and engagements.

Continued weekly "County Corner" full page ad in the Three Hills Capital (50 weeks).

Conducted a review of the Grant Program to align it more effectively with the strategic priorities set up in County's Strategic Plan.

Created digital workflow processes within the County (Accounts Payable Digitization Project update, database update, contact listing, credit card reconciliation, etc.).

Coordinated the Record Management for the County.

Conducted a preliminary review to gauge changes to divisional boundaries 4 & 6 that Council intends to pursue in 2024.

Coordinated the County's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Program.

Provided recording secretary support to the external committees of the Kneehill Regional Partnership Committee and the Kneehill Medical Services Retention & Recruitment Task force.

Hosted engagement sessions for Division 5 and Divisions 4 & 6.

Organized Council orientation and training process

Implemented a meeting software program that automates the entire meeting life-cycle for administration and Council.

Organized meeting with Minister of Municipal Affairs and Transportation Minister at the Spring Rural Municipalities Conference in March.

## Office of the CAO, Legislative Services, & Communications

# Operating Budget

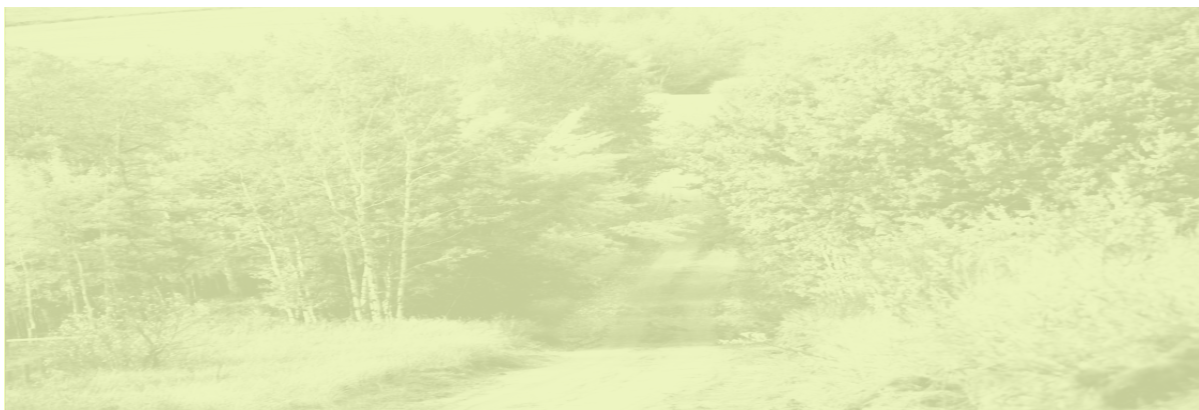
	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	107,025	112,435	5,410
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	20,100	31,500	11,400
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	614,420	629,201	14,781
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>741,545</b>	<b>773,136</b>	<b>31,591</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>741,545</b>	<b>773,136</b>	<b>31,591</b>

### Expenses

**Contract & General Services** includes costs related to advertising and public relations, and training and development. The increase relates to several small adjustments to public relations and programs for staff operated by the CAO's office.

**Materials, Good, Supplies, & Utilities** includes advertising printing and stationary costs, and other office materials required to support the department. The increase in this item relates to printing and stationary costs within Communications.

**Salaries, Wages, & Benefits** includes costs for staff which contribute to this department, including core salaries, government contributions, and benefits. The increase includes allocations for eligible merit increases and to maintain salaries at market levels as set by Council; as well as costs related to benefits and government contributions.





# Corporate Services

# Corporate Services: Information Technology

The Information Technology Unit is responsible for all aspects of the County's information technology infrastructure. This unit supports the numerous business applications that enables the technical functions required to meet operational needs and is responsible for ensuring a secure and reliable network that connects IT Infrastructure at numerous sites throughout the County. The IT Infrastructure managed by this unit provides users with access to essential software tools that streamline processes and services, integrated databases that house and protect extensive data collections across the corporation; communication devices that facilitate effective communication; and websites that extend electronic information access and online services to staff and citizens.

The unit, through its Geographic Information Services (GIS), also supports that management of County infrastructure and assets through the visualization of data. This function supports the organization through improving operational analysis that informs day-to-day decisions and long-term planning and is utilized primarily by operational units such as Roads, and Water & Wastewater, as well as supports other units including Planning & Development and Property Taxation.

2023 Significant Achievements
Cross-train for minor IT issues so they can be handled by support staff.
Enhance Customer Service Delivery Model.
Increase staff training on Corporate Systems (i.e. GP and Teams).
Adopt the utilization of Cloud Desktops for all units.
Further increase live streaming of Council-related meetings.
Support the implementation and functionality of eScribe Council Meeting management
Increased network security with deployment of new network hardware.
Increase security with the deployment of password management software.



# Corporate Services: Human Resources

The County's Human Resources Unit is responsible for the provision of human resources, payroll, and health and safety functions for all full-time, part-time, and contract staffing within the corporation. Development and support of broad human resource initiatives and ensuring compliance with various employment laws and regulations also fall under the purview of this unit. The Human Resources Unit fosters a positive, productive, safe, and respectful work environment for all employees and provides resources and tools that support staff development and job satisfaction.

## 2023 Significant Achievements

Health & Safety Audit complete with a passing score of 92%.

Hosted second "All Staff Day".

Completion of 2023 Market Evaluation. (External)

Payroll Process Review completed and implementation initiated.

Commenced the development of a Strategic Corporate Learning & Development Strategy.

Identification and awarding of HRIS system.

Enhancement to Staff Performance Evaluations.

Increased Youth Engagement through attendance at 3 career fairs.

Commenced development of Job Matrix and Job Description updating, continuing into 2024.

Formal approval of HR related Administrative Directives.



# Corporate Services:

## Financial Services

The Financial Services Unit is responsible for all financial aspects of the County's operations and ensuring compliance with auditing, accounting and legislative standards, including maintaining and implementing strong internal controls, facilitating the development of annual operating and capital budgets and regular financial reporting on both budgets and projects, and planning and managing the annual financial audit function. The team facilitates accounts receivables and payables functions; ensures long-term financial planning is undertaken in all service areas to maximize service delivery; safeguards the assets of the organization and manages risk; ensures the County's investment portfolio is managed in a manner that maximizes return on investments; purchasing and procurement practices are managed effectively; manages the County's insurance portfolio; oversees all matters related to the billing and monitoring of property taxes and utilities; and exercises the proper management of County funds.

### 2023 Significant Achievements

Received the GFOA "Distinguished Budget Presentation Award" for the 3rd year.

Completion of a favourable Financial Audit for the 2022 year.

Initiated the assessment of Asset Retirement Obligations (ARO) in alignment with Public Sector Accounting Standard (for the 2023 year).

Presentation of 2024 Budget, for Council consideration, prior to 2023 year end.

Development of Budget Book by internal resources.

Financial Policies updated (Acceptable Methods of Payment, etc.).

Increased digitization of internal forms and processes that support operational efficiency.

Presentation of a Preliminary Reserve Strategy that supports long-term financial sustainability and greater transparency.

Implementation of Tax Arrears Payment Plan to support residential ratepayers who have fallen into arrears with their property tax payments.

Adaptations to Tax Penalty Structure that supports increase tax collection rates for residential property owners and reduced administrative time allocation.

Advanced the establishment of a Procurement Policy.

Restructuring of Finance Team to more effectively support operational needs.

# Corporate Services Budget

This budget represents the budget for the three functions under Corporate Services.

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Transfer from Reserves	(200,000)	-	200,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>(200,000)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>200,000</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	639,440	696,540	57,100
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	191,425	178,801	(12,624)
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	1,475,289	1,493,176	17,887
Purchases from Other Governments	1,500	1,500	-
Contributions to Reserves	33,390	33,671	281
Non TCA Operating Projects	200,000	-	(200,000)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,541,044</b>	<b>2,403,688</b>	<b>(137,356)</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>2,341,044</b>	<b>2,403,688</b>	<b>62,644</b>

## Revenues

**Transfer from Reserves** represents funding for one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.

## Expenses

**Contract & General Services** includes costs related to training and development including corporate safety training, annual financial audit fees, and other contracted services which support corporate services functions. The increase relates to IT service contracts, and annual audit fees.

**Materials, Goods, Supplies, and Utilities** includes tools, equipment, and supplies which support all corporate services functions. The decrease primarily relates to decreased printing and stationary costs.

**Salaries, Wages, and Benefits** includes costs for staff which contribute to this department, including core salaries, government contributions, and benefits.

**Purchases from Other Governments** represents land title fees.

**Contributions to Reserves** represents a contribution to the IT Reserve to fund IT equipment purchases.

**Non-TCA Operating Projects** represents one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.



# Infrastructure



# Transportation

The Transportation Department strives to provide the best possible level of municipal services for all County road users by ensuring County infrastructure (roads, bridges, culverts etc.) are in sufficient condition and meet municipal and provincial regulations.

The Transportation Department includes the road maintenance program, project construction, and the maintenance shop, and is responsible for various services that include:

## Graveling of Roads

To ensure a safe and reliable road network, the County typically gravels a roadway every two to seven years. The re-graveling program targets approximately 400 miles per year, at the rate of 400 tonnes/mile (depending on road width).

## Grading of Roads

The County has 10 grader divisions; each division covers approximately 111 - 124 miles of roadway. Gravel roads within each division are bladed to a minimum of six rotations per year. Policy #13-2, Transportation Grader/Gravel Services, outlines a list of priorities for summer and winter maintenance. The graders are also utilized in the application of dust control on County roads as well as performing lane grading and snow clearing for ratepayers who have requested and entered into a Private Snowplowing and Grading Agreement.

## Dust Control

To improve the quality of life in the County, dust abatement agents such as Calcium Chloride and Spec Crude are available to be applied on rural roads for citizens who have applied for this service. The rates for dust abatement are set on an annual basis by Council and can be found in the County's Master Rates Bylaw.

## Bridges

The Transportation Department is responsible for the management of all 214 bridges and bridge-sized culverts located on County controlled roads. This responsibility includes analyzing each structure's needs and arranging for corrective actions to occur at appropriate times.

## Culvert and Ditch Maintenance

The purpose of culvert and ditch cleaning is to maintain the flow of water and to protect the integrity of the road sub-grade. Culverts will be assessed and replaced depending on the condition. The Transportation Department also uses the bridge replacement plan and Alberta Transportation's Bridge Inspection and Maintenance (BIM) System as a tool to identify when culvert structures need to be replaced.

## Brushing

Removal of trees and brush from roadside ditches is vital for the safety of the traveling public. Many problems include reduced sight distance at intersections, reduced visibility of traffic signs and wildlife, snow drifting, reduced drainage, and dust clouds created by traffic caused by trees or brush growing into the road allowance.

## Signage

All road signs are placed according to Canadian Traffic Control Device Standards. They include potential hazards so drivers can take appropriate action to stay safe.

## Industry

Throughout the year, various requests from industry are directed to the Transportation Department. Transportation ensures appropriate agreements and permits are in place (crossing agreements, crossing applications, approach applications, encroachment permits, industry/commercial dust control applications, land agreements, temporary water agreements).

The County also has a Road Inspector that assesses the road conditions where industry activity is taking place. The Road Inspector makes sure industry has the appropriate agreements in place and the agreement standards have been met. The County utilizes Roadata, a contracted service which issues permits, road use agreements, and overweight movement approvals on County roadways.

# Transportation

## 2023 Significant Achievements

Asphalt overlay of RR 25-1 (Gorr Road) from Highway 583 to Highway 27 which included widening of the top surface to 9.0 metres.

Seal coating on RR 24-0 (PBI Road) and RR 23-4 (Airport Road).

Major bridge sized culvert replacement near Swalwell.

Specialized grader training taken by three County operators.

Completed annual crushing of 85,234 cubic metres of gravel aggregate.

Completed BF 6948, SE-1-30-25-W4, construction.

Completed major maintenance on one major and two standard bridges. BF 895, SW-6-24-26-W4; BF 2170, SW-29-33-26-W4; and BF 1876, NW-10-30-25-W4.

Completed Gorr Road overlay project.

Piloted new dust control product in 2 locations in the County.

Developed brushing and gravelling maps on GIS system to better understand the County's level of service in these areas.



# Transportation

## Operating Budget

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Other Revenue	(50,000)	(75,000)	(25,000)
Sale of Goods & Services	(147,500)	(184,000)	(36,500)
Rental Income	(31,000)	(31,000)	-
Transfer from Reserves	(85,000)	(165,000)	(80,000)
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>(313,500)</b>	<b>(455,000)</b>	<b>(141,500)</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	587,103	660,220	73,117
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	2,130,000	2,606,726	476,726
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	4,065,828	4,290,210	224,382
Contributions to Reserves	1,739,639	2,216,057	476,418
Non TCA Operating Projects	85,000	165,000	80,000
Gravel (Inventory) Projects	700,000	715,000	15,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>9,307,570</b>	<b>10,653,213</b>	<b>1,345,643</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>8,994,070</b>	<b>10,198,213</b>	<b>1,204,143</b>



# Transportation

## Operating Budget

### Revenues

**Other Revenue** represents water access agreements related to oil and gas activities. The increase is in line with 2023 actuals for this revenue source.

**Sales of Goods & Services** includes dust control fees, oilfield inspections, approaches and crossing fees, and snowplowing revenues.

**Rental Income** represents income related to land rentals.

**Transfer from Reserves** this line represents funding for one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.

### Expenses

**Contract & General Services** includes costs related to engineering, freight, training and development, equipment rental, contracted major maintenance and repairs, insurance, and IT related costs for the department. The increase relates to increased costs to IT costs for new staff, as well as contracted services, freight, and engineering..

**Materials, Goods, Supplies, and Utilities** includes supplies for the road network including shop supplies, parts for equipment repairs, fuel, grader blades, road maintenance materials, dust control materials, culverts, signs, and utilities. The increase relates to inflationary costs in all areas of this department.

**Salaries, Wages, & Benefits** includes all costs for staff which contribute to this department, including core salaries, government contributions and benefits. The increase includes allocations for eligible merit increases and to maintain salaries at market levels as set by Council, including two new full-time positions, and costs related to benefits and government contributions.

**Contributions to Reserves** represents contributions to the IT, Capital Equipment Plan, and Gravel Reserves. The variance relates to contributions for capital equipment which reflects substantial price increases in equipment due to the current economic environment, and increased contributions to fund future gravel purchases.

**Non-TCA Operating Projects** represents one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.

**Gravel (Inventory) Projects** represents the annual gravel crushing costs to provide gravel for the road network. The variance relates to increased contract costs for this service.



# Environmental Services

The Environmental Services Department consists of water, wastewater, and solid waste. The department employs 6 full-time and 4 part-time employees; a Manager, a Water and Wastewater Foreman, 3 Utility Operators, 1 Landfill Operator, and 4 Transfer Site Attendants. The Environmental Services Department is contracted to the Aqua 7 Regional Water Commission to operate and maintain a pump house, reservoir, and 90km transmission line, which distributes water to several surrounding communities.

A big aspect of the operation of the Environmental Services Department is interaction with the citizens of the County, whether that be connecting to a new water service, responding to water or wastewater concerns, or a welcoming smile and a helpful hand at the transfer sites.

The Environmental Services Department oversees approximately 900km of water mains, 13km of wastewater mains, 4 wastewater lagoons, 13 water systems, 9 pump houses, 4 transfer sites, and 1 class III residential landfill. Operations of the department are directed by the Code of Practices as required under the Alberta Environment and Parks Registrations.

Utility Operators ensure that the delivery of potable water meets all guidelines enforced by the Province of Alberta as well as the Canadian guidelines. This includes regular water testing, weekly bacteriological samples, trihalomethane testing, repairing waterline breaks, maintaining equipment essential to water delivery, and protecting infrastructure by responding to Alberta First Call. Operator certification in water treatment, water distribution, wastewater collection, and water treatment are a requirement of this position, achieved through written examination and maintained by earning CEUs (continuing educational units) by attending and completing industry-related courses, seminars, or conferences.

Transfer Site Attendants ensure that solid waste is disposed of in a safe and efficient manner and promote the use of all recycling options available at each site. The attendants are required to screen material to deem it acceptable for disposal at the particular site and inform users of other options for disposal if required. The Class III Landfill is operated under a Code of Practice issued by the Province of Alberta and must adhere to the guidelines and regulations within the document resulting in the attendants having to monitor what is disposed of,



# Environmental Services

## 2023 Significant Achievements

Three Hills East water system assessment findings and public engagement.
Huxley Wastewater Assessment Study and community engagement on the project being undertaken.
Co-ordinated the completion of a Flushing Program Study on behalf of Aqua 7 Regional Water Commission.
Engaged in the completion of a Fluoride Reduction Study for the Hamlet of Wimborne.
Water main flushing in the Hamlets of Huxley, Swalwell, and Torrington.
Sewer main flushing in the Hamlets of Wimborne, Torrington, and Swalwell completed as part of the annual maintenance.
Water reservoirs in the Hamlets of Huxley and Wimborne cleaned and inspected.



## Environmental Services

# Operating Budget

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Other Revenue	(10,000)	(10,000)	-
Sale of Goods & Services	(1,137,400)	(1,354,124)	(216,724)
Sales to Other Governments	(72,000)	(72,000)	-
Penalties & Fines	(5,000)	(5,000)	-
Special Taxes & Frontage	(281,485)	(235,323)	46,162
Transfer from Reserves	(62,000)	(111,100)	(49,100)
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>(1,567,885)</b>	<b>(1,787,547)</b>	<b>(219,662)</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	274,266	322,585	48,319
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	1,117,461	1,170,969	53,508
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	1,061,714	1,036,346	(25,368)
Purchases from Other Governments	268,820	265,542	(3,278)
Contributions to Reserves	430,472	381,599	(48,873)
Non TCA Operating Projects	62,000	111,100	49,100
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>3,214,733</b>	<b>3,288,141</b>	<b>73,408</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>1,646,848</b>	<b>1,500,594</b>	<b>(146,254)</b>



# Environmental Services

## Operating Budget

### Revenues

**Other Revenue** relates to miscellaneous revenue for the department.

**Sales of Goods & Services** primarily represents revenues from water lines and bulk water stations. It also includes smaller amounts for waste collection, and scrap metal sales. The increase relates to water sale revenues based on historical trending and rate increases.

**Sale to Other Governments** includes management fees paid by Aqua 7.

**Penalties and Fines** represents penalties and fines related to utility billing

**Special Taxes and Frontage** represents a special tax levy related to taxable parcels of land with water connections. The expiry of one levy has resulted in a decrease in this revenue.

**Transfer from Reserves** represents funding for one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.

### Expenses

**Contract & General Services** includes insurance, costs related to training and development, IT software costs, recycling programming, transfer site operations, and contracted garbage collections. The increase relates to contracted engineering services, water modeling software fees, and training and development for new staff.

**Materials, Goods, Supplies, and Utilities** includes the cost of water purchased for resale, fuel, utilities at water distribution sites, and parts related to the upkeep of the department. The increase primarily relates to water for resale for which there are associated increased revenues. Supply costs have also increased.

**Salaries, Wages, & Benefits** includes all costs for staff which contribute to this department, including core salaries, government contributions and benefits. The decrease includes adjustments for staff at new grid levels, allocations for eligible merit increases and to maintain salaries at market levels as set by Council: as well as costs related to benefits and government contributions.

**Purchases from Other Governments** includes the payments related to the collection of solid waste as well as the operation of water lines. The decrease relates to commission requisitions.

**Contributions to Reserves** represents contributions to the IT and Capital Equipment Plan Reserves, as well as contributions related to special tax levies related to properties with water connections. The decrease in this item is related to the expiry of water frontage agreements. This is offset by contributions for capital equipment which reflect price increases due to the current economic environment.

**Non-TCA Operating Projects** represents one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.



A grayscale photograph of a child standing on a playground structure, viewed from behind. The child is wearing a dark jacket and light shorts. The structure has vertical bars and a perforated base. In the background, there are trees and a parking lot with a white van. The text 'Community Services' is overlaid in a large, bold, dark blue font.

# Community Services

*Photo Credit: Badlands Photography*

# Facilities

The Kneehill County Facilities Department maintains buildings related to our operations. With 33 facilities and 45 serviced structures, we assure compliance with regulatory authorities in the serviceability of our facilities to ensure that operations can effectively deliver services. The Facilities department operates mainly on a breakdown/maintenance model and responds to the needs and concerns of staff and tenants as they arise. We also utilize a maintenance management program to focus resources on selective, preventative maintenance items, keeping costly reactionary maintenance to a minimum.

Facilities utilizes the expertise of contractors to ensure the delivery of maintenance requirements and renovations are managed efficiently and in a fiscally responsible manner. Other responsibilities include building and structural inspections, facility safety inspections, facility certification and permitting, energy audits, maintaining fuel depots, facility snow removal, configuring and installing office equipment, RGMA ice plant operation, utility demand logging, and invoicing. Above all, fostering a welcoming, safe, and practical environment for staff and tenants in all Kneehill County Facilities.

2023 Significant Achievements
PSD Maintenance Manager Implementation.
Facilities service delivery review.
FCSS HVAC Project.
Zero facility down-time.
Tenant satisfaction levels remain high.
Implemented communication and management tool, utilizing Teams, Laserfiche, PSD & eScribe.

## Facilities

# Operating Budget

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Transfer from Reserves	-	(22,000)	(22,000)
<b>Total Revenues</b>	-	(22,000)	(22,000)
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	146,700	152,400	5,700
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	10,000	15,000	5,000
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	226,879	238,073	11,194
Contributions to Reserves	13,295	14,346	1,051
Non TCA Operating Projects	-	22,000	22,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	396,874	441,819	44,945
<b>Net</b>	396,874	419,819	22,945

### Revenues

**Transfer from Reserves** represents funding for one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.

### Expenses

**Contract & General Supplies** includes security alarm monitoring costs, and maintenance supply costs related to buildings. The increase relates to repairs and maintenance.

**Materials, Good, Supplies, & Utilities** includes small consumables used by the department. The increase relates to small tools and equipment.

**Salaries, Wages, & Benefits** includes all costs for staff which contribute to this department, including core salaries, government contributions, and benefits. This increase includes allocations for eligible merit increases and to maintain salaries at market levels as set by Council; as well as costs related to benefits and government contributions.

**Contributions to Reserves** represents contributions to the Capital Equipment Plan Reserve. The increase relates to contributions for capital equipment which reflects substantial price increases due to the current economic environment.

**Non-TCA Operating Projects** represents one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.

# Economic Development

The main goal of the Economic Development Department is to improve the economic wellbeing of the County in alignment with Council's Strategic Plan. The County's Economic Development Officer (EDO) reports to the Director of Community Services and is responsible for facilitating, promoting, and ensuring community and economic development initiatives are in place to enhance growth and sustainability within the community.

Further, the EDO works as a liaison between businesses, government, and support organizations to build connections, navigate processes, share funding programs, and disseminate information. Utilizing Council's existing planning documents as a road map, the EDO is tasked with creating a business climate for the County that is both profitable and sustainable while ensuring that Council's vision and priorities are respected and preserved.

2023 Significant Achievements
Held the Growing Kneehill Country Market and Long Table event.
Conducted a Business Retention & Expansion Survey.
Partnering with Community Futures on a regional workforce labour project.
Partnering with Travel Alberta and Travel Drumheller on a Provincial Destination Plan.
Working on a new Economic Development Plan.





## Economic Development

# Operating Budget

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Transfer from Reserves	(10,000)	-	10,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	(10,000)	-	10,000
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	89,490	108,200	18,710
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	145,933	127,565	(18,368)
Non TCA Operating Projects	10,000	-	(10,000)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	245,423	235,765	(9,658)
<b>Net</b>	235,423	235,765	342

### Revenues

**Transfer from Reserves** represents funding for one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.

### Expenses

**Contract & General Services** represents training and development, advertising, Explore Kneehill, and a budget for externally contracted services.

**Salaries, Wages, & Benefits** includes all costs for staff which contribute to this department, including core salaries, government contributions, and benefits. The decrease includes adjustments for staff at new grid levels, allocations for eligible merit increases and to maintain salaries at market levels as set by Council; as well as costs related to benefits and government contributions.

**Non-TCA Operating Projects** represents one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.

# Protective Services

The Protective Services Department is composed of Enforcement Services, Fire Services, and Emergency Management Services. The purpose of the Protective Services Department is to promote standards, build community capacity, and protect the safety and welfare of the County's residents within the community to improve the quality of life. This occurs because of the dedication of the County staff members, collaboration with the region's municipalities (Acme, Carbon, Linden, Three Hills, and Trochu), and with other agencies such as RCMP, schools, and FCSS. The Protective Services Department serves through innovation and partnerships.

2023 Significant Achievements
Ordered the joint purchase Engine for the Three Hills Fire Hall, including spec collaboration meetings with the Three Hills Fire Department.
Held the Regional Kneehill Emergency Management Advisory Meeting, as well as five Agency Meetings throughout the region.
Completed the Radio/Fire Communications Project.
Completed the Kneehill Regional Partnership Project: Fire Level of Service Policies throughout the region, including the acceptance of our own policy. Met with Fire representatives on a collaboration path forward.
Continued collaboration with schools to offer school resource programs, including bike rodeos.
Speed map project completed in collaboration with GIS Coordinator and Transportation Department, aligning with the Traffic Safety Bylaw.
Maintained contracts with area urbans for bylaw enforcement services.
Deployment of two staff members, who are part of the Central Regional All Hazards Incident Management Team, to the Buck Creek Wildfires in Brazeau County.
Over 63,000 km of rural patrols conducted, with 1.5 officers.

# Protective Services : Enforcement

## Operating Budget

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Sale of Goods & Services	(2,000)	(2,000)	-
Sales to Other Governments	(26,000)	(26,000)	-
Penalties & Fines	(11,000)	(11,000)	-
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>(39,000)</b>	<b>(39,000)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	89,781	87,337	(2,444)
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	39,250	41,000	1,750
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	598,740	595,450	(3,290)
Purchases from Other Governments	479,178	479,178	-
Contributions to Reserves	50,500	58,850	8,350
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,257,449</b>	<b>1,261,815</b>	<b>4,366</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>1,218,449</b>	<b>1,222,815</b>	<b>4,366</b>

### Revenues

**Sale of Goods & Services** represents revenues received on programs which are paid for by the County and reimbursed by other groups.

**Sales to Other Governments** relates to on-call revenues for enforcement services.

**Penalties & Fines** relates to enforcement penalties and fines.

### Expenses

**Contract & General Services** contains costs related to insurance, maintenance of enforcement vehicles, training and development, the animal services contract, and IT software costs. The decrease is in line with historical actuals for IT service contracts.

**Materials, Goods, Supplies, and Utilities** contains costs related to insurance, maintenance of enforcement vehicles, training and development, the animal services contract, and IT software costs. The increase relates to general goods and supplies.

**Salaries, Wages, & Benefits** include all costs for staff which contributed to this department, including core salaries, government contributions and benefits. The decrease includes adjustments for staff at new grid levels, allocations for eligible merit increases and to maintain salaries at market levels as set by Council; as well as costs related to benefits and government contributions.

**Purchases from Other Governments** represents the payment to the province for policing costs.

**Contributions to Reserves** represents contributions to the IT and Capital Equipment Plan Reserves. The increase relates to contributions for capital equipment which reflects substantial price increases due to the current economic environment.

## Protective Services : Fire

# Operating Budget

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Licenses & Permits	(100)	(100)	-
Sale of Goods & Services	(7,500)	(7,500)	-
Sales to Other Governments	(33,753)	(34,370)	(617)
Rental Income	(19,404)	(19,700)	(296)
Transfer from Reserves	(25,000)	-	25,000
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>(85,757)</b>	<b>(61,670)</b>	<b>24,087</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	232,450	248,117	15,667
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	40,900	44,509	3,609
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	325,842	333,527	7,685
Transfer to Other Governments	254,204	263,033	8,829
Transfer to Individuals & Organizations	20,000	25,000	5,000
Contributions to Reserves	575,138	585,401	10,263
Non TCA Operating Projects	25,000	-	(25,000)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,473,534</b>	<b>1,499,587</b>	<b>26,053</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>1,387,777</b>	<b>1,437,917</b>	<b>50,140</b>





# Protective Services : Fire

## Operating Budget

### Revenues

**Licenses & Permits** includes permit fees.

**Sale of Goods & Services** includes inspection fee and call revenues.

**Sales to Other Governments** represents reimbursements by neighbouring municipalities for services as per existing agreements. The increase relates to dispatch fee reimbursements.

**Rental Income** includes rental for equipment on County owned towers and rental of the Trochu Fire Hall. The increase relates to existing contracts.

**Transfer to Reserves** represents funding for one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.

### Expenses

**Contract & General Services** contains costs related to insurance, dispatch services, training and development, contracted repairs and maintenance, and reimbursable expenses which have a corresponding revenue. The increase relates to professional contracts, insurance, and contracted repairs and maintenance.

**Materials, Goods, Supplies, and Utilities** includes goods and supplies, fuel, and equipment maintenance costs.

**Salaries, Wages, & Benefits** include all costs for staff which contributed to this department, including core salaries, government contributions and benefits. The increase includes allocations for eligible merit increases and to maintain salaries at market levels as set by Council; as well as costs related to benefits and government contributions.

**Transfer to Other Governments** represents payments as per existing contracts. The increase relates to existing contract agreements.

**Transfer to Individuals and Organizations** represents the County's portion of repair and maintenance fees which are paid to other parties as per existing agreements. The increase is in line with historical actuals.

**Contributions to Reserves** represents contributions to the IT and Capital Equipment Plan Reserves. The increase relates to contributions for capital equipment which reflects price increases due to the current economic environment.

**Non-TCA Operating Projects** represents one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.

## Protective Services : Disaster

# Operating Budget

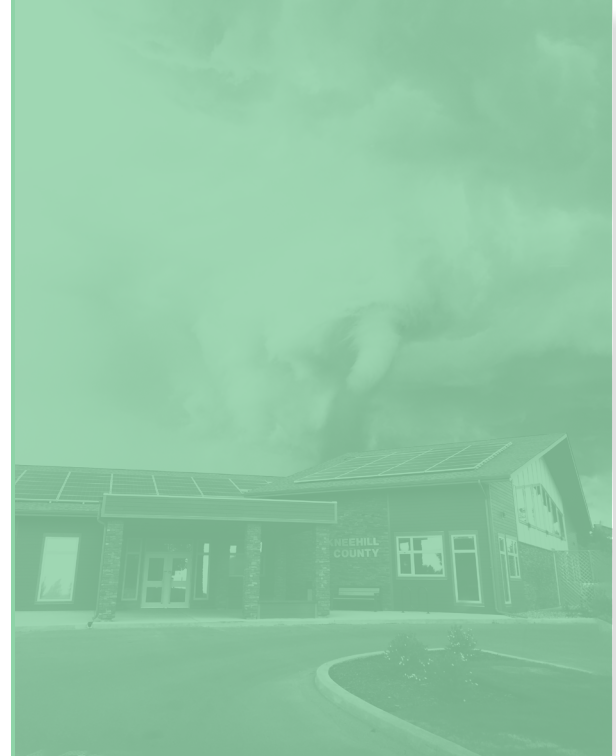
	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	10,400	13,000	2,600
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	5,000	10,000	5,000
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	16,424	17,228	804
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>31,824</b>	<b>40,228</b>	<b>8,404</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>31,824</b>	<b>40,228</b>	<b>8,404</b>

### Expenses

**Contract & General Services** relates to training and development. The increase relates to professional contracts.

**Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities** includes equipment repair costs as well as general goods and supplies for the department. The increase relates to planned functional training exercises.

**Salaries, Wages, & Benefits** includes costs for staff which contribute to this department, including core salaries, government contributions, and benefits. The increase includes allocations for eligible merit increases and to maintain salaries at market levels as set by Council: as well as costs related to benefits and government contributions.



# Planning & Development

The Planning & Development Department strives to work with landowners and developers to create a positive and clear process when handling development or safety code permits. In going through this process, the Planning & Development Department seeks to balance rural land uses, natural environment, and economic prosperity using innovative and sound planning concepts and expertise. This helps to ensure that the County provides a safe and vibrant community for families.

The Planning & Development Department develops bylaws and policies for Council's approval on land use and development; evaluates land use applications, development permits, subdivision applications, and any other planning applications submitted by residents/developers. This enables the department to make recommendations that align with County plans and bylaws.

## Safety Code Services

The County has been accredited since 2000 to issue safety code permits in order to meet the legislated requirements (building, electrical, plumbing & gas, private sewage, etc.). The Planning & Development Department works with a third-party contractor who is responsible to ensure all inspections are completed and any deficiencies are addressed. This helps protect the safety of the County's residents and workers.

## 2023 Significant Achievements

Municipal Development Plan Review.

Created six working groups for the MDP review and two large public consultations.

Land Use Bylaw 1808 amendment specific to the renewable energy sections of the bylaw (Bylaw 188g is the amending bylaw).

Continued to monitor trends to support other amendments to the Land Use Bylaw when reviewed.

Stakeholder Education (ratepayer newsletter, Council RFDs, public engagements, working groups, etc.).

Planning to review the Trochu Inter-municipal Development Plan.

Participated in court activities for Saddle Up Estates and Badlands Motorsports Resort.

Completed service level review.

Hosted an information session for Renewable Energy and created accompanying fact sheets.

Participated in the AUC process for Three Hills Solar.

## Planning & Development

# Operating Budget

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Licenses & Permits	(99,000)	(89,000)	10,000
Sale of Goods & Services	(19,700)	(15,100)	4,600
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>(118,700)</b>	<b>(104,100)</b>	<b>14,600</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	72,410	98,892	26,482
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	2,000	7,000	5,000
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	495,143	510,168	15,025
Contributions to Reserves	2,825	2,825	-
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>572,378</b>	<b>618,885</b>	<b>46,507</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>453,678</b>	<b>514,785</b>	<b>61,107</b>

### Revenues

**Licenses & Permits** includes development and safety code permits. The decrease relates to safety code permits.

**Sales of Goods & Services** contains revenues related to map sales, compliance certificates, subdivision and rezoning fees, and appeal fees.

### Expenses

**Contract & General Services** includes safety code fees, IT software costs, and training and development. The increase relates to safety codes inspection services, as well as funding for additional community engagement.

**Materials, Goods, Supplies, and Utilities** includes printing and stationary costs for the department. The increase relates to supply costs.

**Salaries, Wages, & Benefits** include all costs for staff which contributed to this department, including core salaries, government contributions and benefits. The increase includes allocations for eligible merit increases and to maintain salaries at market levels as set by Council; as well as costs related to benefits and government contributions.

**Contributions to Reserves** represents contributions to the IT Reserve.



# Agricultural Services, Parks, & Cemeteries

## Agricultural Services

The Ag Services Department works in conjunction with the Ag Service Board, which operates under the authority of the Agricultural Service Board Act and as such has powers delegated to it by the provincial government for enforcement of the following Act: The Weed Control Act, the Soil Conservation Act, the Agricultural Pests Act, the Animal Health Act, and all other agriculture-related legislation. In carrying out the legislated requirements of these acts, and to assist agricultural producers in the County, several programs have been created over the years to help address agricultural trends or issues of the day.

## Parks

The Parks Department maintains and beautifies public green spaces, playgrounds, and campgrounds, and ensures that these spaces are maintained in a way that provides opportunities for connections with nature and the environment, active and passive leisure, social connections, and enjoyment that enhances the quality of life of the County's residents and visitors to the area.

## Cemeteries

The County Cemeteries Department maintains and beautifies all County owned and operated cemeteries as well as provides maintenance for four privately operated locations, ensuring these sites are safe for staff and visitors and that they meet all requirements as set through the Cemeteries Act.



## Agricultural Services, Parks, & Cemeteries

### 2023 Significant Achievements

Delivery of 2023 Growing Kneehill County Market & Long Table Dinner.

Sprayed 898km, which represents 1/3 of the County's maintained road network (excludes dirt trails/roads), as part of the annual Roadside Weed Control Program.

Completed Bertha Armyworm, Clubroot, Grasshopper, Fusarium, and Blackleg Surveys.

Mowed 2470 ditch miles as part of the Roadside Mowing Program.

Completed 2 rounds of urban weed inspections for 9 municipalities (Three Hills, Trochu, Carbon, Acme, Linden, Torrington, Wimborne, Huxley, and Swalwell).

Completed 3rd season of Horseshoe Canyon Paid Parking Pilot Project.

Installed shade structure frames at Horseshoe Canyon.

Repaired rock landscaping on center boulevard at administration building parking lot.

Collaborated with Alberta Public Lands to implement chemical and mechanical control of Common Tansy at Dry Island Buffalo Jump.

Mapped 392 invasive plant locations in various stages of control.

Completed 11 Ag Connection email newsletters by year's end.

Completed mowing maintenance of all cemeteries on schedule. (13 County owned and 4 contracted.)

Completed inspection for all 5 County playgrounds on schedule. (Keiver's Lake, Swalwell, Huxley, Torrington, and Wimborne.)

Marked 29 cemetery plots for burials or memorial placements.

Assisted with 6 Water Well Decommissioning Projects.

Participated in 17 extension events with 563 total attendees from 15 events (two events to be completed by year's end).

Implemented, hired, and trained a new role, Ag & Transportation Operator.

Installed new campground signs at Torrington, Braconnier, and Swalwell Campgrounds.

Built a new fence at Horseshoe Canyon to reduce off-trail use related erosion.

# Agricultural Services

## Operating Budget

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Operating Grants	(172,902)	(216,247)	(43,345)
Sale of Goods & Services	(12,500)	(12,500)	-
Transfer from Reserves	-	(66,000)	(66,000)
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>(185,402)</b>	<b>(294,747)</b>	<b>(109,345)</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	281,335	462,045	180,710
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	159,100	258,100	99,000
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	332,541	366,211	33,670
Transfer to Individuals & Organizations	6,500	6,500	-
Contributions to Reserves	69,325	74,072	4,747
Non TCA Operating Projects	-	66,000	66,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>848,801</b>	<b>1,232,928</b>	<b>384,127</b>
<b>Net</b>	<b>663,399</b>	<b>938,181</b>	<b>274,782</b>

### Revenues

**Operating Grants** represents provincial grant funding. The increase relates to new agreements with the province which provide for additional grant funding.

**Sales of Goods & Services** includes revenues related to weed inspection fees and custom spraying fees.

**Transfer from Reserves** represents funding for one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.

### Expenses

**Contract & General Services** contains ASB board member fees, training and development, advertising, insurance, IT software costs, land care programming, and the public land mowing contract. The increase relates to training and development and increased service levels related to weed control.

**Materials, Goods, Supplies, and Utilities** relates to weed control chemicals, fuel, and other supplies for the department. The increase relates to chemical costs related to increased weed control service levels.

**Salaries, Wages, & Benefits** includes all costs for staff which contributed to this department, including core salaries, government contributions and benefits. The increase includes allocations for eligible merit increases and to maintain salaries at market levels as set by Council, including additional seasonal support; as well as costs related to benefits and government contributions.

**Transfer to Individuals & Organizations** contains County support for local programs.

**Contributions to Reserves** represents contributions to the IT and Capital Equipment Plan Reserves. The increase relates to contributions for capital equipment which reflects substantial price increase .

**Non-TCA Operating Projects** represents one-time initiatives and varies year-to-year depending on Council approved projects.

## Parks

# Operating Budget

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Sale of Goods & Services	(101,900)	(106,900)	(5,000)
<b>Total Revenues</b>	(101,900)	(106,900)	(5,000)
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	157,472	175,526	18,054
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	96,800	105,695	8,895
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	431,365	421,332	(10,033)
Contributions to Reserves	84,660	110,939	26,279
<b>Total Expenses</b>	770,297	813,492	43,195
<b>Net</b>	668,397	706,592	38,195

### Revenues

**Sales of Goods & Services** includes revenues related to campgrounds, and Horseshoe Canyon park fees. The increase relates to campground revenues.

### Expenses

**Contract & General Services** contains training and development, insurance, campground maintenance fees, and IT software costs. The increase relates to insurance and grounds maintenance costs.

**Materials, Goods, Supplies, and Utilities** includes fuel, utilities at park sites, and general supplies for parks sites. The increase relates to general supplies and utilities.

**Salaries, Wages, & Benefits** includes all costs for staff which contributed to this department, including core salaries, government contributions and benefits. The decrease includes adjustments for existing seasonal support, allocations for eligible merit increases, and allocations to maintain salaries at market levels as set by Council; as well as costs related to benefits and government contributions.

**Contributions to Reserves** represents contributions to the IT and Capital Equipment Plan Reserves. The increase relates to contributions for capital equipment which reflects substantial price increase.

## Cemeteries

# Operating Budget

	2023 Budget	2024 Budget	Variance
<b>Revenues</b>			
Sale of Goods & Services	(7,800)	(7,800)	-
<b>Total Revenues</b>	(7,800)	(7,800)	-
<b>Expenses</b>			
Contract & General Services	7,000	7,000	-
Materials, Goods, Supplies, & Utilities	2,500	2,500	-
Salaries, Wages & Benefits	60,091	55,295	(4,796)
Transfer to Individuals & Organizations	-	4,000	4,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	69,591	68,795	(796)
<b>Net</b>	61,791	60,995	(796)

### Revenues

**Sales of Goods & Services** represents the sale of plots within County owned cemeteries.

### Expenses

**Contract & General Services** relates to contracted grounds maintenance, and IT software costs.

**Materials, Goods, Supplies, and Utilities** includes general supplies for the department.

**Salaries, Wages, & Benefits** includes all costs for staff which contributed to this department, including core salaries, government contributions and benefits. The decrease includes adjustments for existing seasonal support, allocations for eligible merit increases, and allocations to maintain salaries at market levels as set by Council; as well as costs related to benefits and government contributions.

**Transfer to Individuals and Organizations** represents a community grant for cemetery maintenance which is a new program for 2024.



A grayscale photograph of a river with a large bridge in the background and rocky banks in the foreground. The bridge is a truss bridge with a large, triangular truss structure. The river is filled with rocks and debris, and the banks are covered in grass and shrubs. The text "Operating Projects" is overlaid in the center of the image.

# Operating Projects

# Operating Projects Overview

There are several one-time Operating Projects included in the 2024 Budget, all of which are summarized in the table below with additional information on the following page.

Lead Department	Project Name	2024 Project Costs	Future Project Costs	2024 Operating Budget Impact
Aq Services, Parks & Cemeteries	Growing Kneehill Event	66,000		
Environmental Services	Hamlet Infrastructure Master Plan - Torrington	105,600		
Environmental Services	Concrete Crushing (Kneehill County Solid Waste Site)	55,000		
Environmental Services	WaterCAD Implementation Costs	5,500	5,500	11,569
Facilities	PSD Maintenance Manager Enhancements	22,000	44,000	
Transportation	Pavement Condition Assessment Report	110,000		
<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>364,100</b>	<b>49,500</b>	<b>11,569</b>



# 2024 Operating Projects

## **Growing Kneehill \$66,000**

The annual Growing Kneehill Event in its existing model includes the Long Table Dinner and Country Market. This event is ongoing through the scope and format change as per Council's direction. The overall intended purpose is celebration and promotion of the Ag industry in Kneehill County.

## **Hamlet Infrastructure Master Plan - Torrington \$105,600**

This project builds upon the Hamlet study that was completed in 2016, and would include an in-depth analysis of road surface conditions, sidewalk assessments, and drainage issues in Torrington to ensure any proposed repairs have been taken into account.

## **Concrete Crushing \$55,000**

Concrete has accumulated at the Kneehill County Solid Waste Site over the years from both residents and County departments. A contractor would be hired to crush this concrete, at which point the new 2" gravel would be stockpiled on site for various uses.

## **WaterCAD Implementation Costs \$5,500**

This software will allow for quick analysis, design, and optimization of our water distribution systems from fire flow and water quality analysis, to energy cost management and pump modeling.

## **PSD Maintenance Manager Enhancements \$22,000**

This initiative was started in 2023 and is a multi-year project, the continuation of which will allow for data collection and system enhancements of the work order system. This information will aid in data retention and entry of our many facility assets.

## **Pavement Condition Assessment \$110,000**

This study will provide Kneehill County with information regarding the current condition of County maintained ACP and chip sealed roads. The study will provide analysis on road structures, surface conditions, rutting measurements, oil content, and strength and potentially provide overlay design options.





# Capital Budget

# 2024 Capital Projects

## 2023 Projects with 2024 Budget Requirements

Project Name	Type	2024 Cost	Future Capital Costs	Funding Source
Rural Road Construction	Maintenance of Existing Asset	\$22,000	\$3,740,000	Roads Reserve
BF 13477 (SW 18-33-23-W4)	Maintenance of Existing Asset	\$550,000	-	Road Reserve
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$572,000</b>	<b>\$3,740,000</b>	

### Rural Road Construction \$22,000

Based on the Rural Road Study update in 2023, this would consist of the reconstruction of approximately 4 miles of gravel roads, including engineering, surveying, and landowner negotiations.

### Bridge File 13477 (SW 18-33-23-W4) \$550,000

Replacement of the existing twin bridge culverts; current structural rating is 22.2% with severe floor perforations.





# 2024 Capital Projects

## Replacement of Existing Assets

Project Name	Type	2024 Cost	Future Capital Costs	Funding Source
Light Duty Pickup	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$82,965	-	CEP Reserve
Light Duty Pickup	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$82,965	-	CEP Reserve
Sub-compact Utility Tractor	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$38,500	-	CEP Reserve
Front Mount Mower, AWD	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$59,797	-	CEP Reserve
Informational Sign Replacement	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$9,900	-	Parks Reserve
Playground Replacement	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$33,000	\$132,000	Community Fundraising/ Parks Reserve
Zero-turn Mower	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$57,698		CEP Reserve
IT Capital Plan Purchases	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$63,800		IT Reserve
Council Room Video Wall	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$44,000		IT Reserve
Acme Tender Replacement	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$715,000	\$10,000	CEP Reserve
Calcium Applicator/Water Truck	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$330,000	-	CEP Reserve
End Dump Gravel Trailer	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$110,200		CEP Reserve
Heavy Duty 1-ton Pickup	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$135,750	-	CEP Reserve
Heavy Duty 3/4-ton Pickup	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$82,965		CEP Reserve
Heavy Duty 3/4-ton Pickup	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$82,965		CEP Reserve
Heavy Duty 3/4-ton Pickup	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$82,965		CEP Reserve
Heavy Duty Pickup	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$82,965		CEP Reserve
Pup Trailer Gravel Dump Trailer	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$87,500	-	CEP Reserve
Rough Terrain Fork Lift	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$197,800		CEP Reserve
Tracked Dozer D5	Replacement of Existing Asst	\$640,137		CEP Reserve
BF 70576 (SW 25-32-25-W4)	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$847,000	\$55,000	Road Reserve
BF 70988 (NW 15-28-24-W4)	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$66,000	\$440,000	Road Reserve
BF 72256 (SW 1-32-25-W4)	Replacement of Existing Asset	\$715,000	\$55,000	Road Reserve
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$4,648,872</b>	<b>\$692,000</b>	

# 2024 Capital Projects

## **Light Duty Pickup (U0417) \$82,965**

This is a scheduled replacement of a 1/2 ton pickup per CEP life cycle policies.

## **Light Duty Pickup (U0517) \$82,965**

This is a scheduled replacement of a 1/2 ton pickup per CEP life cycle policies.

## **Sub-compact Utility Tractor \$38,500**

This is a scheduled replacement of the sub-compact tractor with loader per CEP life cycle policies.

## **AWD Front Mount Mower \$59,797**

This is a scheduled replacement of an all-wheel drive front mount mower as per CEP life cycle policies.

## **Informational Sign Replacement \$9,900**

The current signage at Horseshoe Canyon is outdated; the replacement would include a HSC trail map and local destination information.

## **Playground Replacement \$33,000**

The Torrington Playground is nearing the end of its lifespan and will need to be replaced with equipment in line with safety and inclusive considerations.

## **Zero-turn Mower \$57,698**

This is a scheduled replacement of a zero-turn mower with 48" deck as per CEP life cycle policies.

## **IT Capital Plan Purchases \$63,800**

There are 7 laptops slated for replacement in 2024 according to the County's IT Capital Plan. This item also includes replacement of the wide format map printer and the computer in Council Chambers.

## **Council Room Video Wall \$44,000**

The video wall in Council Chambers is due for replacement in 2024, and the existing infrastructure is no longer manufactured in its current form. The 9 individual screens will be replaced with 1 single screen for enhanced viewing.

## **Acme Tender Replacement \$715,000**

Purchase of replacement Acme Tender as per the ICF Fire Sub Agreement with the Village of Acme. The Tender is 100% owned by Kneehill County, and is on the Capital Equipment Plan for replacement in 2025. Following administration discussions the entire amount is being budgeted in 2024, not just the deposit.

## **Calcium Applicator/Water Truck \$330,000**

This is an early replacement of a triaxle water/calcium trailer. The current unit is degrading quicker than originally estimated due to corrosive nature of calcium brine. This unit would be used for the dust control program as well as a water hauling/applicator truck for County projects.

## **End Dump Gravel Trailer \$110,200**

This is a scheduled replacement of a triaxle end dump gravel trailer as per CEP life cycle policies.

## **Heavy Duty 1-ton Pickup with dump box \$135,750**

This is a scheduled replacement of a 1-ton pickup with plow mount and dump box per CEP life cycle policies. Current fleet rebates also allow for better discounts on 3/4 ton to 5-ton trucks from manufacturers.

## **Heavy Duty 3/4-ton Pickup (G0115) \$82,965**

This is a scheduled replacement of a 1/2-ton pickup as per CEP life cycle policies. The switch to a 3/4-ton from a 1/2-ton is a safety/cargo capacity consideration, as well as utilizing fleet discounts from manufacturers.

## **Heavy Duty 3/4-ton Pickup (M0317) \$82,965**

This is a scheduled replacement of a 1/2-ton pickup as per CEP life cycle policies. The switch to a 3/4-ton from a 1/2-ton is a safety/cargo capacity consideration, as well as utilizing fleet discounts from manufacturers.

## **Heavy Duty 3/4-ton Pickup (M0717) \$82,965**

This is a scheduled replacement of a 1/2-ton pickup as per CEP life cycle policies. The switch to a 3/4-ton from a 1/2-ton is a safety/cargo capacity consideration, as well as utilizing fleet discounts from manufacturers.

## **Heavy Duty Pickup (O0214) \$82,965**

This is a scheduled replacement of a 1/2-ton pickup as per CEP life cycle policies. The switch to a 3/4-ton from a 1/2-ton is a safety/cargo capacity consideration, as well as utilizing fleet discounts from manufacturers.

## **Pup Trailer Gravel Dump Trailer \$87,500**

This is a scheduled replacement of a tandem pup gravel dump trailer as per CEP life cycle policies. The new unit will increase cargo capacity to improve productivity.

# Capital Projects

## **Rough Terrain Forklift \$197,800**

This is a scheduled replacement of a telehandler/ forklift as per CEP life cycle policies. The switch from the existing telehandler to a rough terrain forklift will bring back the level of service from prior to purchasing the telehandler. The new forklift will also help to increase productivity and improve safety.

## **Tracker Dozer \$640,137**

This is an unscheduled replacement ahead of CEP policies. The switch from a D7 to a D5 dozer will fit more within the planned usage of the unit and will make hauling safer and more in-line with the limits of County equipment.

## **Bridge File 70576 (SW 25-32-25-W4) \$847,000**

Bridge currently has a low structural rating of 44.4%. The engineering and construction of a culvert liner and boring an overflow pipe will allow for replacement of the bridge file without affecting the road top and will maintain high quality infrastructure.

## **Bridge File 70988 (NW 15-28-24-W4) \$66,000**

Bridge File currently has structural rating of 22.2% and will need an engineered design plan for replacement.

## **Bridge File 72256 (SW 1-32-25-W4) \$715,000**

A culvert line needs to be engineered and constructed in order to replace the bridge file without affecting the road top.



# 2024 Capital Projects

## Maintenance of Existing Assets

Project Name	Type	2024 Cost	Future Capital Costs	Funding Source
Major Bridge Maintenance	Maintenance of Existing Asset	\$220,000	-	Roads Reserve
Administration & FCSS Parking Lot Design, Assessment, & Repair	Maintenance of Existing Asset	\$22,000	\$330,000	Buildings Reserve
Administration Protective Services Office Renovation	Maintenance of Existing Asset	\$49,500	-	Buildings Reserve
Public Works Renovations	Maintenance of Existing Asset	\$82,500	-	Buildings Reserve & CCBF Grant
Three Hills Transfer Station Improvements	Maintenance of Existing Asset	\$44,000	-	CCBF Grant
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$418,000</b>	<b>\$330,000</b>	

### Major Bridge Maintenance \$220,000

This project will provide assessment and repairs to multiple bridge structures in order to increase life expectancy, adding upwards of 10 years to the lifespan of our infrastructure.

### Administration & FCSS Parking Lot Design, Assessment, & Repair \$22,000

Both the FCSS and Administration buildings require drainage and traffic flow assessments, as well as engineering to verify code compliance.

### Administration Protective Services Office Renovation \$49,500

Due to the confidential nature of the Peace Officer's work, the cubicles will be changed to an office, and insulated for sound.

### Public Works Renovation \$82,500

Several replacements are required due to obsolete technology and safety concerns, including eavestrough corrosion and removal of the shop elevator.

### Three Hills Transfer Station Improvements \$44,000

The swing gate requires replacement due to damage related to impact & collisions. The Ag Recycling drop off will no longer be utilized for chemical jugs so this area will be converted to a covered structure and used for other potential recycling options.

# 2024 Capital Projects

## New Assets

Project Name	Type	2024 Cost	Future Capital Costs	Funding Source
Event/Market Space Development	New Asset	\$38,500	-	Parks Reserve
Horseshoe Canyon Shade Structure	New Asset	\$13,900	-	Parks Reserve
Horseshoe Canyon Interpretive Center/Washroom	New Asset	\$110,000	\$3,080,000	Revenue Stabilization Reserve
Swalwell Site Fencing	New Asset	\$44,000	-	Water Reserve
Fencing of Wimborne & Linden Towers	New Asset	\$44,000	-	Buildings Capital Replacement
Burn Structure Addition	New Asset	\$55,000	-	CCBF Grant
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$305,400</b>	<b>\$3,740,000</b>	

### Event/Market Space Development \$38,500

This project would include leveling the area for an outdoor market space and installing electrical service.

### Horseshoe Canyon Shade Structure \$13,900

This is a continuation of shade structure installation at Horseshoe Canyon.

### Horseshoe Canyon Interpretive Center/Washroom \$110,000

Includes developing a strategy for Horseshoe Canyon Facility implementation including concept design and funding feasibility study.

### Swalwell Site Fencing \$44,000

Install fencing and gates around the Swalwell Pumphouse/Reservoir to increase security. These updates are in line with regulations from Alberta Environment.

### Fencing of Wimborne & Linden Towers \$44,000

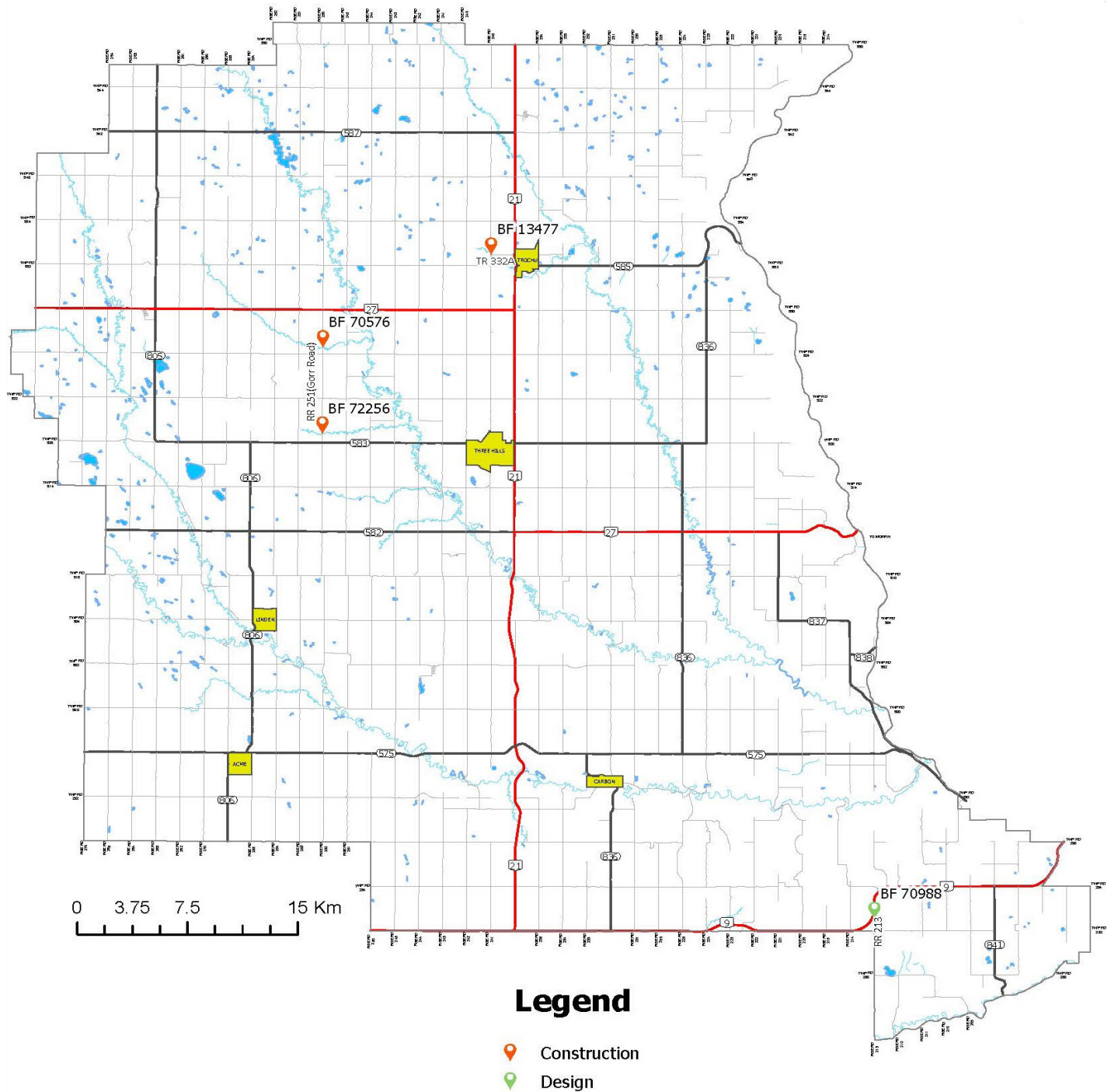
Install fencing around the Wimborne and Linden Towers to decrease the opportunities for crime. The towers are no longer used for fire services but do serve as Transportation repeaters.

### Burn Structure Addition \$55,000

Purchase and install a second-floor extension at the Burn Structure in Trochu to allow for an essential skill to be taught and completed at our firefighter training centre.



# Capital Projects



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Project Name : KC\_0105








Subject: **Youth Scholarship – Idea Discussion**

Meeting Date: Sunday, October 15, 2023

Prepared By: Mike Haugen, CAO

Presented By: Mike Haugen, CAO

### STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT: (Check all that apply)

	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
High Quality Infrastructure		Economic Resilience		Quality of Life		Effective Leadership		Level of Service	

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

Provincial (cite)- NA

Council Bylaw/Policy (cite)- NA

### BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:

Each year, Kneehill County gives out two scholarships to recent high school graduates. As part of the application process, applicants are required to submit an essay responding to a question posed by the County.

This item has been placed on the Committee of the Whole agenda to allow for discussion about the ideas raised by applicants in the 2024 process.

The 2024 question was: *“What are the challenges and opportunities for youth participation in County decisions and public engagements? What barriers do young people face, and how can these obstacles be addressed to enhance their involvement?”*

### DISCUSSION/OPTIONS/BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES/OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

The essay submissions have been compiled into one document for reference by Council.

When reviewing the responses, Administration notes the applicants have put forward the ideas or themes listed below.

- Youth are often excluded from decision-making
- Youth engagement should be part of a broader diversity
- Integration into the school curriculum would be a positive
- Getting parental involvement would increase the interest level of youth
- Youth panels and organization
- Youth involvement with other communities
- Practical hands-on events
- Build relationships with and inside the schools
- Youth engagement will be better if it helps develop skills that youth can utilize in the future
- Youth engagement is impacted by lack of experience, peer pressure, frustration of not being heard, stigmas about youth opinions
- Active listening is required
- Lack of awareness and interest
- Sparking interest is key
- Awareness of impact of local government is not high. It is not seen as “interesting” or “fun”



- Awareness of opportunities can be an issue
- Needs to be “easy” in terms of work and logistics
- Information needs to be provided
- Make greater use of social media

Administration notes that lack of awareness of opportunities, the County and its impact was a common theme, as was the societal disregard of youth voices.

### **FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

TBD

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Compiled Essay Responses

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council explore the following initiatives:

### **APPROVAL(S):**

Mike Haugen, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved- ☒



Kneehill County

May 16, 2024

Scholarship Essay

I believe that youth tend to be undermined within society when it comes to decision-making. Though it is a scientifically known fact that the brains of human beings do not fully develop until the age of twenty-five, according to the University of Rochester Medical Centre. Youth are capable of forming their own thoughts, opinions, and desires and with that, it is essential to remember that the younger generations are the future so to allow the future influential citizens to partake in decision-making while still making an impact on society itself would be beneficial to any sort of contribution.

Why would it be important for youth to contribute to their community and how impactful or beneficial would it be to allow such a thing? Well, to that I answer positive as well as proactive youth development. Youth tend to grow a sense of confidence and responsibility while aiding those around them and this will create a sufficient impact on those individuals who are able to take any skills obtained and in turn, apply them to their daily lives or assist them within their own community. Obstacles are often faced as youth find their way to individuality, and these obstacles are (but not limited to) a lack of experience, peer pressure, stress, and the inability to be heard. While allowing the youth to not only advocate for themselves but also consider the needs and wants of others, and earn a sense of commitment. All of these characteristics are what is essential for an individual to become a functional contributor to society and to not only obtain personal growth but also personal values or goals.

To promote a healthy and welcoming environment for our youth of today would be to seek and listen most importantly. Youth often feel misrepresented, not heard, or just ignored. Establishing or practicing *active* listening would benefit both the youth and the adults in achieving a balanced domain. To also attain more younger people within our community would make it appealing to that group of individuals and this can be reached by directly asking the youth group what would appeal to them directly, rather than assuming or guessing what it may be that would draw them in. Another way to engage the youth would be to involve a diverse range of people- this can include individuals of different ages, races, skill sets, and different interests/ hobbies.



The stigma that the youth of our society cannot or do not contribute to society has been engraved within our culture and we, as a community, must set a goal that shall overcome that stigma. In Kneehill County I have seen a multitude of different ages with such a wide range of skills that would benefit our rural community, and provide a sustainable work ethic while doing so. To promote a healthy and balanced environment when it comes to propositions being projected by adults and youth, I would continue to advocate for the thoughts, opinions, and ideas of the youth and to not only take them into consideration but also put their suggestions into action thus allowing the youth of our community to be heard, gain or grow a sense of responsibility, all while providing the opportunity to allow the youth to assert themselves in this flourishing community.

Work Cited:

Fetterman, Anne. 2024 University of Rochester Medical Center Rochester, NY. *Understanding the Teen Brain*.

Health Encyclopedia.

<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?ContentTypeID=1&ContentID=3051>

### A Discussion on Youth Involvement in Local Government

Encouraging youth to participate in local or county government is hard, but extremely important. Along with the practical and emotional barriers young people face when trying to involve themselves in government, a lack of awareness and interest prevents further involvement. By making direct decisions that combat the significant barriers that youth face when it comes to public engagement, such as apathy, a lack of awareness, and practical and emotional obstacles, local governments can work toward a united future where young people are invested and involved in community and regional government.

Perhaps the largest struggle that county decision-makers face when trying to encourage youth involvement is a simple lack of interest. Those determined to involve themselves in civil and political matters will doubtlessly find a way despite many hurdles, but a lack of physical barriers make no difference to those who have no interest in participating. Therefore, before more practical barriers must be addressed, one must first spark interest. Many young people are busy, especially in high school, and do not want to occupy their free time with things they don't think affect them or things that are not "fun". One way to combat this is to foster awareness regarding the role that county and local governments fill; share information as to the decisions that directly affect young people, and speak about upcoming issues and events. This will emphasize the power governing bodies have and show that local governments tackle difficult and important questions. Provide specific examples of opportunities for participation. Another way to encourage youths to want to participate is through school programs and opportunities. Not only can high school billboards and presentations spread awareness of opportunities, but if governing bodies were able to integrate themselves into school curriculum, even in an optional capacity, youth interest and participation would increase. For example, if by attending a particular number of community or governing meetings, a student could earn extra credit in a particular course, such as Social Studies or CALM. Schools could also require a half-day field trip to county events where presentations could be made to explain to youths the importance of local government and community participation. These ideas will require a lot of work, but if local governments wants to see significant increases in youth interest, substantial changes are required. Youths are also shaped in large part by their parents, and by increasing general interest and involvement from older adults, youth participation will also grow. Through dynamic changes and insightful initiatives, regional governments can tackle the largest barrier prohibiting youth involvement, apathy.

The second largest barrier that prevents greater youth involvement is a lack of awareness. Many young people are simply unaware of the opportunities available to them. Not only can they be ignorant of the general opportunities provided to the public, but they can also feel that the offered opportunities are not intended for them. Thankfully, this can be remedied easily through physical and digital announcements detailing specific open meetings and community gatherings as well as clearly stating the topics of discussion and the inclusive invitation. In order to attract young people, the information needs to be practical and specific, so no further research is required. Pamphlets could be placed in local spaces, such as at grocery stores, community centers, and schools. Online posts both to county and community websites and social media accounts can spread the word, especially in this digital age. There are a

multitude of ways to spread awareness about opportunities for young people, and this barrier is easily overcome with thoughtful and organized efforts.

In addition to these barriers, regional governments need to address the practical obstacles that young people face. Often much of the infrastructure surrounding administrative processes is inaccessible for youths whose time is limited and often highly regulated. To promote accessibility, meetings should occur outside of regular school hours and be in central locations so driving time is minimized. The public should have easy access to previous meeting minutes. Online polls and discussion forums can also provide a low effort way to voice one's thoughts and opinions. By implementing changes to lower the barriers that young people face, interested young adults will be enabled to participate in local government.

Finally, governing bodies need to address the emotional and psychological barriers. Many young people do not feel their input is valued outside of student specific roles, such as student president. The limited power these positions often hold can discourage students from participation. Often youth believe they are not heard or respected when reaching into more adult-majority organizations. They might also feel inexperienced and naive when voicing their opinions to those long involved in government. However, young people can offer new perspectives and enthusiasm. Having youth involvement in government not only assures experienced leaders in the future, but it also allows the government to make well informed decisions that affect the lives of all their residents. Governing organizations need to encourage these voices and avoid discouraging those who are less experienced. Practically, this means that young voices should be taken seriously at community meetings and that mistakes should be viewed as learning and teaching opportunities rather than used to put down the inexperienced. Although sociological and emotional barriers can be difficult to contend with, taking practical steps guarantees that everyone feels valued, and ensures that local governments can empower youths.

By facing these struggles head-on young people can be inspired, informed, enabled, and empowered to participate in local government, thus impacting the decisions that affect them and preparing them for future leadership roles in their communities. When it comes to engagement in local governance, the youth of today face many barriers, but through thoughtful and decisive action, these barriers can be overcome.

## Kneehill County Scholarship 2024

In an ever-changing society, youth are increasingly affected by various government policies. For example, Alberta's recent mandate to restrict cellular device usage in classrooms starting Fall 2024. Although this policy may not seem significant to many students, it ultimately affects them, highlighting the irony that youth are impacted by rules in which they have limited to no say. Globally, the voting age for having a political voice is typically 18 years old or the age of majority. While this rule ensures that political decisions are made by informed adults, it's crucial to recognize that policies affecting youth demand their active involvement. In fact, as seen in Alberta with these new cell phone policies, children younger than 18 may have the most important voice worth listening to. So, how can a local government involve youth in important decisions that may greatly impact them?

The issue begins with three simple points: youth have a lack of awareness and interest, limited information, and face structural barriers. But what does this really mean? When analyzing these points collectively, the problem arises that children are simply not provided with the necessary information involved in decision-making, and their voices are left behind. It is seen time and time again that youth are excluded from decision-making processes, as evidenced by the voting age requirement in Alberta. Consequently, the government tries to implement policies they believe are in the best interest of youth with little feedback from the youth themselves. Furthermore, many youths can be intimidated by the decision-making process. With wordy, formal



documents, youth may overlook new policies as they do not understand how they may affect them. This ties back to the idea of limited access to information. Although all the information about a given policy may be available, it is not easily accessible or understandable to the younger generation, so they choose not to get involved. Overall, there are several key barriers that youth face regarding decisions and public engagement; however, there are many opportunities the county can take advantage of to prevent this from happening.

It goes without saying that a huge technological advancement right now is social media. With platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter dominating the online space, many younger people spend extensive amounts of time engaging with content on these platforms. Kneehill County could start by engaging youth where they are actively spending a lot of time. From simple 20-second videos to various Instagram posts, the county could target the younger generation by educating them on new ideas that will affect them and how they can get involved. Building off a new online following, the county could use these platforms to market various information workshops where youth can interact with individuals making the decisions. A space like this could promote growth among younger people, allowing them to ask questions and get involved in the decision-making process in real time. By using social media, the county will be able to involve youth much more than before by simply engaging them in new ideas, whether at home or at real-life events.

Getting youth involved at the base level is crucial in providing them access to the world of local government, but the county can go even further by keeping teens involved in the future. By implementing programs such as youth organizations, youth can

participate in the decision-making process firsthand. Many schools have similar programs, such as student councils, which allow students to be leaders and organize events. Individuals with these interests may also find a liking for a county youth council that allows them to get involved in their local government. Whether this involves helping to organize county events or forming a panel of youth to provide input on various topics, an organization like this can be the perfect place for the younger generation to start and potentially join county boards in the future.

Although there are barriers that teens face when it comes to being involved in local government, there are ultimately actions that can be taken to encourage their involvement. By utilizing social media to promote Kneehill County's regular operations and creating junior councils to offer direct involvement in decision-making processes, these initiatives are crucial in fostering a sense of civic responsibility among younger generations. By implementing these strategies, Kneehill County will not only enhance youth participation today but also inspire future leaders who are informed and invested in shaping their community's future.

## 2024 Kneehill County Scholarship Award

"What are the challenges and opportunities for youth participation in County decisions and public engagements. What barriers do young people face, and how can these obstacles be addressed to enhance their involvement"

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a third generation Kneehill County resident. I was born and raised on a farm just west of Three Hills. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to write about Kneehill County; and valuing the opinions of the youth and giving the chance to receive a scholarship. One of the biggest challenges with opportunities of youth participating would be lack of knowledge about the county and the role that they play. **With better education the county can create more opportunities for collaboration and a better sense of community within kneehill county.**

Growing up I didn't know much about the county, I was never heavily involved in 4H due to my commitment to sports and other activities. I have participated in highway clean up over the years but that would be the extent of my involvement. One of the biggest barriers would be the lack of education of how youth can be involved and how their voices can be heard. Something that could work really well would be to have some representatives come to schools and help students form around the county learn and understand more about the county we live in. Having youth ambassadors involved in both the schools and the county would make a huge difference in the knowledge of students. One of the barriers that I have seen is the lack of presence the county has in the schools. Before this essay I did not know that my voice as a youth born and raised in kneehill county mattered. I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to have my voice heard.

Another barrier would be the pull for youth to join urban communities. Which is seen more and more as youth move out of rural settings for more education and work; oftentimes leading them to not return. One of the things that will draw our youth to return to rural settings to live, work, and

raise their families would be to create a very strong sense of community. To support this argument would be my personal experience this year. This year was particularly challenging for me as we did not have the numbers to have a Sr high girls basketball team at Prairie Christian Academy. I have been involved with sports all my life and have never faced the reality that I would not be able to play until this year. It made me extremely proud to be a part of this community when we had people reach out to us from all over the county ensuring us that we would find a place to play. We had people who are involved in the Three Hills school, Acme school and the Trochu school reach out and offer us help and support. The Trochu school so graciously stepped up and opened their gym, team, time and coaching to us. This act of kindness made a huge impact on me personally through the kindness shown to me and the fact that I am a part of a greater community, which is kneehill county.

It took me to my grade 12 year and not having a basketball team for me to see the importance of the greater community we have here. The team that was once my rivals quickly became my beloved teammates and some of my best friends. This speaks volumes to the wonderful community we have and how being involved makes a massive difference. This community in Kneehill County is where I want to return to as an adult, to live, to work, and to raise my family.

It would be so valuable if Kneehill County could create events, or opportunities for the youth to get involved with other towns and build these same types of connections. If we can foster these relationships within the greater Kneehill county, it will help develop a stronger sense of community and will be a strong draw for our youth to return and live in Kneehill County.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to write this essay, I appreciate that you value my input. I have loved growing up in Kneehill County, and I hope to one day give my kids the same opportunity as well.

*Kneehill County - 2024 Scholarship Application Essay*

*Q: “What are the challenges and opportunities for youth participation in County decisions and public engagements? What barriers do young people face, and how can these obstacles be addressed to enhance their involvement?”*

Both youth leadership and civic activism doubtlessly produce positive youth development, though, modern democracies have received lower voter participation from young people. Young people report little patience for decision-making processes, processes that seem to ignore them. Voters are concerned with pressing social problems they experience firsthand. Research shows that traditional political and civic decision-making, to youth, is barren. Meanwhile, there is a preference for local community involvement that is hands-on. That which is practical, whether it be tutoring or school involvement, regional organizations, or other forms of volunteerism, there lies the potential for desire in civic engagement, an engagement that reaches many levels, from youth development to community service to youth leadership development, civic activism, and the opportunity for full decision making. There are tactics to make youth involvement genuine and meaningful, to better their society, and to set them up for their future.

Too often organizations go through the motions without engaging with youth genuinely, with meaningful outcomes. Tokenism does more harm than good. Empowerment does not follow an agenda or formulate their involvement for their mean, rather it is a dire willingness to give youth a voice in decisions that affect them.

The least engaged sector of youth is reported to exist in more challenged, older, lower-income, distressed communities. These communities do not receive opportunities for youth involvement in the community as a whole aside from connections within their families. Whether or not it is a factor of discussion, the results of access to groups that participate in pressing and relevant issues are evidence of the importance of leadership opportunities that allow them to develop practical skills in decision-making and managing change.

In terms of decision-making, it is not completely alien in the local arena. In Waupaca, Wisconsin, young people serve as voting members of the local city council that makes laws and allocates resources. The Initiative brought about a new skateboard park for the town, volunteer opportunities with community organizations for 6th graders, and a youth-led grant-making committee offering funding for local organizations' projects.

To get youth involved, they need a form of human motivation, certain people, adults, who provide personal support and assistance at many levels. Young people initially need at least one enthusiastic adult in the neighborhood, a community organization, a youth development agency, or local government. Someone with consistent time and the ability to make community decisions.



When youth gets involved with decision-making initiatives, it is often presented as an offer up for negotiation. Negotiations stall when either side locks itself into defending a position, instead of describing its interests to each other. Rather than identifying a position and defending it to the exclusion of others' interests, the goal is to find areas of agreement and common interests.

Getting a young person to find a reason to get involved is sometimes difficult. Though, once one peer has an initiative it is all the difference. Young people can figure out how to get others involved. As one young man at the 2004 Learning Exchange said, "Other youth are the best recruiters. We know how to talk to each other. We know what's important to them. We'll be honest and be ourselves." Opening all doors. Some adults researched in Vermont struggled to find youth willing to share what they needed from the community. Finally, they found an out-of-school 16-year-old who wanted to talk. He was able to persuade other teens to join discussions. Soon, they were hearing from youth on release from juvenile detention as well as honour students.

Getting the attention of the youth and recruiting them for community improvement is scrambled and brings challenges. This initial effort is not all the battle. However, keeping young people engaged can be far more difficult. Both youth and adults have busy lives with polarizing directions. Most young people want to explore many career directions and options for their future. Nothing is for certain but instead moving quickly. Retaining young participants requires a strong plan with specific strategies and tools, as well as the ability to be flexible.

For a member of the youth to be and continue to be involved they need to get something out of it that will meet their personal goals and needs, such as opportunities to meet people, having fun, better job opportunities, or learning new skills. They are motivated by their values or beliefs, such as a sense of social justice or responsibility to others. A friend or mentor is what often keeps one invested. It is the counselor's responsibility to make sure people don't feel like they wasted their time. Participation is cherished, and keeping in touch lets people know their time was and is valued.

It is a major investment to incorporate youth involvement in a meaningful way, that is because people of all ages are incredibly dynamic. The relationship between sectors of age and experience and challenges is meant to be bridged because we are not just outdoing ourselves for the here and now, we are creating a people that is well equipped to take on their future and programmed with the desire to see an honourable system and good change.

*"There is a huge gap between the daily world of youngsters and grownups; if we do not bridge this gap, making policy for them is useless and without results."*

—Thijs Malmberg - Ordina,  
The Netherlands

*What are the challenges and opportunities for youth participation in county decisions and public engagements? What barriers do young people face, and how can these obstacles be addressed to enhance their enforcement?*

### **Youth Participation and how Decisions Made Affect Us**

A common problem we see today is little to no involvement of the leaders of tomorrow in our communities. This is because many young people feel unprepared about going to these meetings and contributing to these decisions because they feel as if they won't be taken seriously or they don't know about how the decisions made now are going to affect them later. As a rural student myself I have seen how decisions made by the County have affected us positively and why we need a youth voice to contribute.

Contrary to what many people may think, young people are not aware of the opportunities in their area even with their high usage of social media. Many youth don't participate because they don't know due to the platforms it's being posted on. To get more information to students we need to use the media they are on. Many kids today have volunteered for countless hours for community activities because they saw the post on instagram. Another way to provide youth with the information regarding participation in communities is to have the schools they go to announce it. In my personal experience I know lots of people who hear about a chance to volunteer on the announcements before class and often go, myself included. Since many youth also cannot drive they will also need time to plan ahead to get to any activity so the more notice they are given, the higher the chance they will sign up for it.

A positive decision made by Kneehill County which affected youth was the water lines brought out to the rural properties one of which I live on. For a small fraction of the price it would have been for farmers to install their own water lines by themselves; our Country sponsored the project making it affordable. Hauling water is a task many of us were faced with. You would have to watch how much water was used and when we had no power we couldn't use our water. Being able to have practically unlimited use has changed many young people's lives positively and lessened their chore load.

Feeling unprepared for a job, or even a meeting is stressful. Lots of jobs or even volunteering gigs require previous knowledge and more often than not youth don't have the previous skills or experience yet because they've never done something like that before. We need to be able to make young people feel okay knowing that they don't know everything yet. When there are meetings or decisions we want youth to participate in we have to know that maybe they aren't going to be the most prepared, but every

time after that they will improve. Having people help them along the way coaching them and giving them support is what's needed.

This generation is going to be the leaders of tomorrow which means our input is important to the people who are governing us today because of how it will affect us later. Another challenge in youth participation in County decisions is young people not realizing that all decisions made are going to affect them. Just this year on May 14, Kneehill County voted against the proposal of a waste management facility here in our County to preserve our land. And keep it farmable for as long as possible. This directly affects youth as they will be the ones inheriting the land in the future but many of us don't think ahead. To make young people understand the importance of participating and voicing their concerns on opinions we need to show them that it does affect them. Just last year in November Kneehill County helped dig up dinosaur bones in Horseshoe Canyon and were successful in their work with the museum. Many students are passionate about science and history and plan to pursue careers in paleontology. If they knew that it is encouraged to go to the canyon to find bones they may be able to help excavate some of it and would have directly supported something they are passionate about.

Some barriers faced by young people can be financial, a lack of support or a lack of resources they have available to them. Without support from family and friends we cannot be involved in our communities. Especially when we are young we may need someone to drive us to our volunteering or our sports games. We need someone to support us so we can gain confidence in what we are doing and will put ourselves out there more after we feel confident in what we are doing. Which would lead us to be able to support others. Having a lack of resources also creates a barrier due to the inability to complete tasks that could be asked of us. Something that could help with this would be mentors. People who are willing to take a young person on and support them. Making sure that they are taught all the things they need to know about something before they make a decision. A mentor could also help them understand why all County decisions affect them and why a youth voice is important to take into consideration.

Having a youth voice is important because it would ensure that policies being made are also keeping in mind the youth and their needs. An issue with this though is that young people feel as if they won't be taken seriously for important decisions due to the fact that they are inexperienced. We need to let them know that that's what is being looked for. We need to ensure that youth know that their inexperience is okay as long as they are willing to learn for next time. It's also important that we have youth that are actively involved in our communities saying their concerns for decisions because they are the ones who are out there and see what's going on.

As a Kneehill County resident, I am proud that our County fights to keep our land clean and safe for future generations and looks for opportunities to bring new infrastructure such as clean accessible water to our community. Coming from a multi-generational farming family and hoping to reside in rural Alberta once I graduate University, it is extremely important that we have leaders that continue to make strong positive decisions regarding our land. My University goal is to become a geologist and do my part in ensuring safe usage and preservation of our land for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration,

## Kneehill County Scholarship Essay

When the question of the challenges and opportunities young people within our community face when encountered with participation in County decisions, many thoughts come to mind. First and foremost, I think most of the young individuals coming out of high school have a general lack of knowledge on County matters. This is because most young people are unaware of the everyday workings of the County, its members, and their duties. Of course in school we learn about municipal government, but there is no present day knowledge about our County's decisions being brought forward in the classroom. Thinking about this it truly disheartens me, if I'm the future generation shouldn't I be aware of the direction my County members are taking me. I can see a few possible solutions to get our youth more involved. That being, a possible student liaison between the school and County, someone who can give the County information directly to us youth. Another possible solution to this problem would be an option class that would teach our young individuals about the current County members and their goals. I believe there would be tremendous interest in this topic as there are many students that have rural backgrounds and the County decisions directly affect them and their families future. If this class option was implemented it would destroy another barrier we face as adolescents. To most of us politics can be intimidating, this can lead to very few of us willing to step forward and present any kind of ideas. With this new knowledge base that the class option and student liaison bring forth, it will provide confidence for the youth to feel recognized in the County's eyes. I also think it would be truly helpful if you would be willing to come out and engage with the students within our schools. I do realize this will be a challenge, as being a council member isn't your only job and your time is limited. I do believe though this would create a friendly environment between the youth and your council members. Being able to foster a more personal connection would help our youth be more comfortable and want to become more involved. Unfortunately right now most of us probably have little knowledge on who each of you are and your role in the County. If you could foster a relationship with the schools, I am confident that we would have a lot of questions for you and hopefully vice versa. My last and final thought to help fix this separation would be to have the County expand their social media presence. With the growing technology very few of us read the paper or use facebook, but we are out there and interested in learning more.