

2024–2025 Municipal Intern Update

On September 26, 2023, Council directed Administration to apply to the Government of Alberta's Municipal Internship Program, a long-standing initiative that has been run by Alberta Municipal Affairs for over 20 years. The 2024–2025 cohort marked the first time Kneehill County participated as a host municipality. The application was successful, and on May 20, 2024, the County welcomed me as its first municipal administrative intern for an 18-month term.

As the intern, I'm honoured to share some of my experiences and reflections with you today. From the outset, my goal was to learn, ask meaningful questions, and gain hands-on experience in municipal operations and I'm grateful to say that I've been given multiple opportunities to do just that. I would especially like to recognize my direct supervisor, CAO Haugen, whose own experience as a former intern has made him an insightful mentor throughout this journey.

When I began this role in May of last year, I did not expect that within the first few weeks, I'd be out in the fields checking traps for Bertha armyworms or shadowing the roads team to learn how culverts are installed. However, that's when I realized this is local government and that it's not confined to just office walls. It's in every part of the County, every season, every day.

To ensure a meaningful and well-rounded experience, my internship has been structured around three-to-four-week rotations across departments. Each rotation begins with a plan developed alongside the department supervisor, allowing me to dive into real work aligned with operational priorities. Some of the key projects I've worked on include formalizing the ASB sponsorship program process for Parks and Agriculture, creating Kneehill County's CAP levy bylaw, and conducting analysis on the Water and Wastewater subsidies provided by the County. Beyond office-based work, I also had the chance to join operations teams in the field, helping with tasks like bridge cleaning and water connection installations. These hands-on experiences gave me valuable frontline insight that complemented the administrative and policy work I was involved in.

One key takeaway from this internship has been the significance of collaboration within and beyond the organization. No project is carried out in isolation, it requires the input and effort of multiple departments to move from idea to implementation. Equally important is intermunicipal collaboration, which I witnessed firsthand during my time with KRFCSS, my site visit to the Town of Three Hills, and my rotation with the Kneehill County Peace Officers. It is clear that while some services are delivered by the County, regional collaboration enhances the value we provide to all ratepayers.

Another observation is the relationship between Council and Administration. This is a partnership built on mutual respect and a shared purpose of serving the residents of Kneehill County. In several cases, I had the opportunity to present my work directly to Council, just as I am today. These presentations have supported Council in making informed decisions on their initiatives. Delivering on Council's direction involves coordination and dedication across departments. Through this program, I've had the chance to see both frontline service like ratepayer interactions at the front desk and internal operations that keep the County running.

smoothly. This comprehensive view has deepened my understanding of what it takes to maintain a resilient, responsive, and financially sustainable municipality.

In closing, I want to sincerely thank Council for approving the County's participation in this program, which made this opportunity possible for me. I'm grateful to have been welcomed into an environment so rich in learning, support, and collaboration.

Thank you to CAO Haugen, the Senior Leadership Team, and every staff member who took the time to mentor me, share their expertise, and help shape the start of my journey into municipal administration.