



CAO REPORT

Department: CAO

1. Key Accomplishments

Reporting Period: October, 2025

October was a significant month marked by organizational change, the municipal election, and a number of high-priority administrative initiatives.

Lakeland HR presented an updated organizational structure to Council. After minor revisions, Council approved the new structure, and Lakeland HR proceeded with the development of updated job descriptions to support implementation. On-site HR support throughout the month provided valuable guidance to managers and staff, contributing to improved morale, strengthened accountability, and enhanced clarity of roles.

Support was provided throughout the election process, including responses to resident concerns following voting day. Recent amendments to the Local Authorities Election Act—particularly those affecting voter registers and proof-of-address requirements—presented new challenges for election workers. Post-election, administration coordinated mandatory Council training under the Municipal Government Act. A comprehensive Smoky Lake County workshop was delivered, followed by a joint legal orientation organized in partnership with the Town of Smoky Lake.

Smoky Lake County also participated in an interview for a regional study conducted by Evergreen Waste Management.

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions

The vacancy in the CAO position continued to create operational pressures, particularly during a month that included major Finance deadlines, election administration, and post-election legislative requirements. These demands placed significant strain on staff capacity across several departments.

To mitigate impacts, the management team has worked closely together to coordinate decision-making, support staff, and maintain service levels. This collaborative approach has included reviewing outdated policies and Bylaws, supporting cross-departmental workload balancing, and ensuring continuity in key operational areas.

3. Progress on Strategic Goals

Work completed in October supported several pillars of the County's Strategic Plan, including:

Good Governance

- Implementing an updated organizational structure to enhance administrative efficiency.

- Delivering legislated Council training to strengthen informed leadership and governance capacity.
- Advancing policy updates to support consistent service levels and organizational accountability.

4. Staffing & Resources

Operational pressures continued due to multiple medical leaves and vacant positions across Public Works and Finance.

Temporary staff filled one grader operator role and one equipment operator role during October, with another temporary operator position currently posted. Recruitment is underway for the Lead Mechanic/Maintenance Coordinator position, closing in November.

These staffing limitations continue to impact operational output; however, departments have adapted by reallocating duties, prioritizing essential services, and maintaining communication regarding resource constraints.

5. Interdepartmental Collaboration

Departments worked collaboratively throughout the month on several initiatives, including:

- Circulating Council Highlights to all staff to strengthen internal communication and transparency.
- Consolidating multiple road-related policies into a single comprehensive service-level policy (Policy 03-15).
- Coordinating support for large projects requiring involvement from multiple departments.

This collaboration has strengthened internal alignment and improved the County's capacity to manage complex and time-sensitive work.

6. Next Steps & Outlook

- Continuing to advance a positive organizational culture, supported by on-site Lakeland HR visits scheduled for November 5 and November 26.
- Hosting the annual staff Christmas celebration on November 28 in Bellis.
- Supporting Lakeland HR in CAO recruitment, updating job descriptions, and drafting employment contracts for new Director-level positions.
- Working with Executive Services and Legislative Services to finalize policy updates for Council consideration.

- Assisting the Highway 28/63 Regional Water Services Commission with its organizational meeting and ensuring continued progress on Commission projects.

Department: Executive & Legislative Services

Reporting Period: October 2025

1. Key Accomplishments

October was a highly active month for Executive and Legislative Services, with significant operational, legislative, and governance-related accomplishments. The department successfully supported the 2025 Municipal Election, providing coordination of supplies, assembly of election worker packages, and assistance during both advance polls and election day. This work also included troubleshooting challenges created by recent amendments to the Local Authorities Election Act and responding to numerous resident inquiries both before and after the election.

Following voting day, the department coordinated the mandatory Council Orientation under the Municipal Government Act. This included a County-specific workshop for newly elected and returning members as well as a jointly delivered legal orientation provided in partnership with the Town of Smoky Lake. Executive and Legislative Services further supported transitioning Council by ensuring all agenda materials and documentation were prepared for a smooth onboarding process.

Throughout the month, the department completed agendas and minutes for Regular Council meetings, Organizational meetings, joint public hearings, Administrators' meetings, and the Agricultural Service Board meeting. Work continued on policy review and modernization, including supporting the CAO with updates to outdated bylaws and assisting in the consolidation of several road policies into the new Service Level Policy (Policy 03-15) in collaboration with Public Works, Planning, and GIS. Executive and Legislative Services also supported intermunicipal activities, including preparation for an annexation meeting with the Village of Waskatenau. Additionally, the department managed increased daily deposits related to the property tax deadline, ensuring accuracy and consistency during a peak workload period.

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions

The vacancy in the CAO position created significant operational pressure, coinciding with peak workloads across Finance, Public Works, Election Administration, and Emergency Management. To ensure continuity, Executive and Legislative Services redistributed priorities and adjusted scheduling to maintain essential governance functions. Strong collaboration with all departments helped maintain consistency in the production of Requests for Decision, policy development, agenda preparation, and election compliance.

3. Progress on Strategic Goals

Executive and Legislative Services contributed directly to multiple pillars of the County's Strategic Plan. Under Good Governance, the department delivered a comprehensive Council orientation to strengthen decision-making capacity, advanced key policy updates, and supported consistent governance processes across the organization. Under Operational Excellence, the department strengthened internal communication through coordination of updates, notices, and election-related messaging, improving clarity and responsiveness across departments.

4. Staffing & Resources

There were no staffing changes within Executive and Legislative Services during this reporting period. However, workload demands increased significantly due to the municipal election, legislative requirements, and the ongoing CAO vacancy.

5. Interdepartmental Collaboration

Executive and Legislative Services worked closely with every County department and continued to play a central coordinating role across the organization. The department supported Finance with budget preparation, reception, and increased deposit activity. Collaboration with Public Works focused on service-level documentation, policy consolidation, and ratepayer communication. The department assisted GIS with election mapping and polling station notices.

Support was provided to Planning and Development on annexation matters, joint council meeting planning, and road encroachment files. The Agricultural Service Board received administrative support through agenda preparation, minute taking, and RFD development. The CAO Office continued to rely on Executive and Legislative Services for governance support, policy review, and project tracking throughout the CAO vacancy. Executive and Legislative Services also participated in cross-departmental discussions on the County's road policy alongside Public Works, GIS, Planning, and the Interim CAO.

6. Next Steps & Outlook

Key priorities for the next reporting period include:

- Continued coordination of 2026 Budget Meetings, internal and Council-level.
- Preparation of upcoming Council agendas, including several major RFDs.
- Continued refinement of policies and administrative procedures across departments.
- Support for the Highway 28/63 Regional Water Services Commission meeting.
- Supporting department managers in workload prioritization through year-end reporting, audits, and operational planning.

Professional development focus areas:

Professional development continued in both Legislative Services and Executive Services throughout this reporting period. Within Legislative Services, work is underway to complete the midterm for the Information Access course, along with the start of the Coaching and Mentoring course, both offered through the NACLAA program at the University of Alberta.

Within Executive Services, finishing up the final assignments for the Local Government course and Municipal Law course through the NACLAA program at the University of Alberta. Winter coursework will include Information Access and Protection of Privacy Foundations, Local Government Finance, and Public Administration, also delivered through the University of Alberta's NACLAA program.

Department: Finance

1. Key Accomplishments

Reporting Period: October, 2025

Significant progress was made in October toward year-end reporting and budget preparation. A comprehensive Finance Orientation was delivered to Council, providing an overview of financial processes, annual cycles, legislative requirements, and strategic financial priorities. In addition, the full working draft of the 2026 Budget was compiled into a single document to support upcoming internal and Council budget deliberations in November.

Property tax collection and receipting remained the central operational focus for the month. Despite high volumes, payments were processed efficiently, taxpayer inquiries were supported promptly, and financial records were kept fully up to date as the October 31 deadline approached.

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions

Developing a realistic and sustainable 2026 Budget continues to be a significant challenge.

For several years, the County minimized tax increases to offset declining oil and gas assessment revenue. As a result, overall revenue growth has not kept pace with inflation or the escalating costs of delivering municipal services. This has contributed to increased equipment age, higher CVIP requirements, rising maintenance costs, and pressure on capital replacement cycles.

Substantial inflation in the heavy equipment market has further intensified these financial pressures, making it increasingly difficult to balance the budget without relying on unrealistic increases in projected tax revenue.

Throughout October, departmental needs were thoroughly reviewed and validated to ensure that the draft 2026 Budget presented in November reflects accurate cost projections, service levels, and operational realities.

3. Progress on Strategic Goals

The Finance Department contributed directly to the County's Strategic Plan through:

Good Governance

- Advancing the development of a transparent, responsible, and sustainable 2026 Budget.
- Strengthening financial reporting to support informed decision-making, fiscal accountability, and long-term planning.

4. Staffing & Resources

A family emergency impacted staffing levels during a critical operational period. Despite this, Finance staff collaborated effectively to maintain service continuity and ensure all tax payments and financial transactions were processed accurately and without delay. Staff demonstrated strong teamwork and adaptability, ensuring residents continued to receive high-quality service throughout October.

5. Interdepartmental Collaboration

Multiple departments provided support during October, including assistance with deposits and timely submission of financial information. Finance collaborated with all operational areas to gather data for budget refinement, respond to financial inquiries, and ensure accurate and up-to-date financial records. These cross-departmental efforts contributed to a more accurate and comprehensive 2026 Budget.

6. Next Steps & Outlook

Key priorities for November include:

- Applying November tax penalties during the first week of the month.
- Hosting JMD from November 17–20 for the internal audit.
- Continuing internal and Council budget meetings with the goal of presenting a balanced 2026 Budget by month-end.
- Preparing and submitting STIP grant applications for bridge projects by the November 30, 2025 deadline.

Department: Health & Safety

Reporting Period: October 2025

1. Key Accomplishments

During the month of October, several key accomplishments were achieved within the Health and Safety Department. The Health and Safety Coordinator successfully finalized and submitted the Qualifying Audit ahead of the October 7 deadline, resulting in the attainment of Auditor Certification through the Alberta Municipal Health and Safety Association (AMHSA). This milestone enhances the County's internal auditing capabilities and supports future compliance efforts.

In the area of Emergency Management, the Coordinator attended two significant conferences—Bordering on Disaster and the Disaster Forum—where they engaged in legislative updates and professional development seminars. Additionally, the Coordinator maintained their Alberta Emergency Alerter Status by completing the required monthly practice alert.

Operationally, a large safety supplies order was placed and distributed across multiple departments, including Natural Gas, Agriculture, Public Works, Environmental Services, Fire, and Peace Officers. This initiative ensured that all facilities and units were equipped with first aid supplies that meet current Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation. Additionally, all items outlined in the May–October 2025 COR Action Plan were completed. These included emergency response drills at all manned facilities, formal inspections of County-owned worksites and facilities, updates to first aid and safety supplies for both facilities and fleet, and the delivery of targeted training for managers and supervisors. Training offerings included a Communication and Conflict Resolution course facilitated by Lakeland HR, and an internally delivered session by Executive Services focused on legislation and Request for Decision (RFD) writing.

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions

The most significant operational challenge this month was balancing the demands of the Qualifying Audit revision with ongoing departmental responsibilities. Through effective teamwork and time management, all deadlines were met, and departmental goals were successfully achieved.

3. Progress on Strategic Goals

Progress was also made toward strategic goals, particularly in strengthening the County's emergency services. Attendance at the conferences facilitated the development of valuable relationships with neighbouring municipalities and provided insights into current advancements

in emergency management. These learnings will support the County's continued alignment with best practices and provincial standards.

4. Staffing & Resources

There were no staffing changes within the department during this reporting period. However, the Health and Safety Coordinator's newly acquired Auditor Certification now enables them to conduct internal COR audits and offer auditing services to other municipalities, enhancing both departmental capacity and regional collaboration efforts.

5. Interdepartmental Collaboration

Interdepartmental collaboration remains a cornerstone of the department's success. The Joint Health and Safety Committee continues to serve as a vital forum for representatives across the organization to share concerns and identify solutions to safety-related issues. Collaboration was also essential in coordinating the safety supplies order, ensuring that the needs of all departments were met and that supplies were delivered to the appropriate facilities and units.

6. Next Steps & Outlook

For the next reporting period, the Health and Safety Coordinator's primary focus will be the completion of the 2025 COR Internal Maintenance Audit by its December 1, 2025, deadline. This will involve a comprehensive review of health and safety documentation from the past year, interviews with a representative sample of employees, and site observations at a selection of permanently manned County-owned locations. This audit will be conducted in conjunction with the Health and Safety Coordinator's regular duties.

Department: Planning and Development Department **Reporting Period:** October, 2025

1. Key Accomplishments

During this reporting period, the Planning and Development Department was able to process and issue a total of 4 Development Permits and close a total of 2 subdivision file, bringing the total number of Development Permits issued for 2025 to **43** and the total number of subdivision files closed to **5**. The Planning and Development Department worked in concert with the Village of Waskatenau to process an application to amend the Intermunicipal Development Plan between the County and the Village, including holding a joint Public Hearing on the proposed amending bylaw will be held on October 14th. Ultimately the amending bylaw was defeated but the Planning and Development Manager continues to discuss the proposed development with the applicant.

The Planning and Development Manager has been assisting the Chief Administrative Officer and Executive Services regarding the proposed annexation by the Village of Waskatenau. A meeting was held to discuss the next steps on November 6, 2025.

The Planning and Development Manager has continued to work with O2 Planning and Design on the development of the Municipal Land Use Suitability Tool (MLUST) which will provide useful data that will help inform land use decision-making and potential investment and economic development opportunities within the County. The MLUST is expected to be finished and ready for use by the end of 2025.

The Planning and Development Department provided assistance to other departments on various land issues including issues related to grazing leases and surface materials leases. The Planning and Development Department was also involved in developing a solution to address a road encroachment issue and will be working with the affected landowner to rectify the issue.

The Planning and Development Department worked in conjunction with the Smoky Lake County Regional Heritage Board to develop Statements of Significance for two heritage buildings (the Wynnyk House and the Pakan (St. Elias) Church) and has recommended that Council designate them as Municipal Historic Resources.

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions

The Planning and Development Department did not experience any operational challenges during this reporting period. The recent reorganization of departments will require the Planning and Development Manager to familiarize himself with the bylaws/policies/operations of the Fire Services, Community Peace Officer and Communications Officer roles in order to transition into the Director of Planning and Community Services role. The Planning and Development Manager

expects a steep learning curve but is confident in his ability to become acquainted with these roles.

3. Progress on Strategic Goals

The Planning and Development Department has assisted Council in meeting its Strategic Priorities in the following ways:

- Reviewing existing rules regarding recreational vehicles on agricultural lands (Priority #2 – Proactivity in Development).
- Continuing development of the Municipal Land Use Suitability Tool (MLUST) to provide data that will help inform land use decisions and identify potential opportunities for economic development and investment Priority #2 – Proactivity in Development).
- Facilitation of discussion with the Intermunicipal Planning Committee re: IDP amendment (Priority #2 – Proactivity in Development)
- Supporting the GIS Operator with the implementation of the County's new Service Request system.

4. Staffing & Resources

During this reporting period, the County underwent a departmental reorganization that will see the Planning and Development Manager transition into the new role of Director of Planning and Community Services. This position will oversee not only the planning and development functions of the municipality but will also provide oversight of the County's protective services (fire and peace officer), GIS and communications functions. The newly created department is properly staffed for the current workload.

5. Interdepartmental Collaboration

The Planning and Development Department has worked in collaboration with other Departments in the following ways:

- Worked with Executive Services, the Public Works Department, the GIS Operator and the Finance Department/CAO to devise a plan to consolidate the County's Road policies into a single policy in order to ensure service level expectations are being met and to assist with the budgeting process.
- Worked with Executive Services, the GIS Operator and the Road Foreman to resolve a grazing lease issue near the County's Legacy Pit.
- Worked with Executive Services to prepare information/solutions related to a delegation to Council regarding a road encroachment onto private land.
- Worked with the Natural Gas Department to prepare information related to the Village of Waskatenau's proposed terms of annexation.

- Worked with Executive Services and the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare meeting agenda items for a Joint Council meeting with the Village of Waskatenau regarding the proposed annexation.
- Worked with the Public Works Department to ensure that an inspection was conducted on the roads at Bonnie Lake Resorts Phase 3 & 4 prior to the County's issuance of a Development Final Acceptance Certificate.

6. Next Steps & Outlook

The Department's primary focus during the next reporting period will be to review existing bylaws/policies/processes within the newly created Planning and Community Services Department to identify where inefficiencies and barriers exist and to develop a plan to address these issues. The Department will also be working on the proposed annexation by the Village of Waskatenau as well as next steps relating to proposed development within the lands that are the subject of the proposed annexation. The Department will also be working to finalize the Municipal Land Use Suitability tool and to develop a Siltation and Erosion Control Plan for the Mons Lake Erosion Control Project, and the Pakan and Desjarlais Crossing boat launches prior to commencement of work.

The Department will also continue its day-to-day tasks processing Development Permit, subdivision, business license, road closure and Compliance Certificate applications, and responding to public inquiries/complaints.

Department: GIS Reporting Period: October 2025

1. Key Accomplishments

Software administration tasks completed this month included updates within Request Management - escalation notifications of all requests were changed from our past CAO to our new Interim CAO and within the submission of a new Service Request the Location Required was changed to Not Required for all service requests. Additional sign codes and descriptions were added in GIS, configuration changes on graders and tractors were completed in our Titan software and boundary overlays were created. New users and roles were added in multiple software.

The GIS technician completed the following data analysis: road categories and surface per grader beat, daily activity reports for grader maintenance, owner information along Twp 584 and RR 170, grader speeds while performing road maintenance and location audits within specific grader beats, and a query was performed for Community Halls.

Maps created for the month were electoral districts with voting polling stations boundaries and polling station locations. A 2026 gravel map was created for one grader beat.

Data validation and quality assurance was performed on new address sign installations, road categories, and road surface.

WebMap updates for this month included the following: voting polling station boundaries, 2025-2026 Snow Clearing Flags, official election results, grader beat thematic update, and landfill hours were updated.

AMDSP updates were completed for the region, assistance was provided to the Town of Smoky Lake, the general service hour report was reviewed and distributed to the Region. New projects were launched.

Training and support were provided throughout the organization to ensure efficient operations. The GIS technician prepared and presented an overview of the GIS department for the newly and re-elected council workshop and orientation.

Several meetings were held with Titan this month reviewing reports and subscription plans. Meetings were also held with Catalis planning and reviewing projects for the county and region for the remaining year. I virtually attended AMDSP's General Annual Meeting and sat in on a seminar presented by Achieve – Rethink Performance Feedback.

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions.

Cable installations in GPS'd assets have been put on hold due to operational challenges in the Public works department. The GIS technician managed a heavy workload, while resolving software issues to ensure efficient operations for management and staff.

3. Progress on Strategic Goals

Good Governance & Transparency: Provided GIS support for Council, management and staff ensuring efficient operations, reinforcing accessible and reliable information sharing.

4. Staffing & Resources

No staffing challenges were reported.

5. Interdepartmental Collaboration

The GIS technician met with the Natural Gas Manager and provided query results of Community Halls within the county to assist the manager and council with decision-making.

The GIS technician along with the executive services team, Interim CAO, Planning Manager, PW Manager, administration and grader operators collaborated to review the newly consolidated road policy and make necessary revisions.

In collaboration with the region, discussion of remaining GSH for 2025 were noted and projects were decided for the remaining year.

The GIS Technician worked the Environmental and Parks Manager and his staff scheduling the installation of new address sign installations and data entry into our GIS.

Collaboration was as well executed with PW's staff and Industry Liaison Manager on several different occasions regarding condition assessments of roads, sign inquiries, difficulty saving images, assisting Cat operator with overlays of the new legacy pit boundaries for GPS devices, supplied data for a project on twp. 854 and provided assistance in request management.

The GIS technician worked with IT for onboarding/offboarding new/past council and create emails for existing pw staff.

A website update was completed for the Maps page In collaboration with Communications GIS WebMap- County and Regional was changed to be open by default.

In preparation of the 2025 Election the GIS technician provided assistance to executive services and the returning officer in preparing electoral map of the 2025 Election Voting Polling Station boundaries and Stations and provided Notices for all polling stations.

The GIS technician engaged with Council, administration and managers at the municipal orientation workshop held on October 23.

6. Next Steps & Outlook

- Develop an internal knowledge base document for QAlert.
- Complete updates of fillable forms within QAlert.
- Finish up Address Maps.
- Finish 2026 gravel maps for PW.
- Preparing RFD's - GIS and Asset Management Policy
- Schedule additional GIS training and webinars to strengthen capacity.
- Add new layer "Roads condition assessments" in webmap.
- Add additional condition assessment questions to all other assets in Asset Management for future review with appropriate departments.
- Continue working with Catalis on API connection for county and regional.
- Follow up in google maps – maps/data update
- Follow up with Emergency Services and our PSAP – readiness for NG-911 and collaborate with AMDSP.

Department: Communications **Reporting Period:** October 2025

1. Key Accomplishments

Public participation was encouraged by sharing information on proposed development permits, the invitation to lease tender, and the joint public hearing for the Intermunicipal Development Plan.

Community engagement highlights included promoting the Clean Farms collection program, issuing Canada Post mail disruption notices, sharing Council meeting highlights, publishing the October edition of The Grapevine, and helping promote the Working Well Workshop series.

Public notices and advertising focused on financial and operational updates, including reminders about the property tax deadline, the Tax Installment Payment Plan, and the upcoming 2025 Property Tax Sale. Additional advertising featured the Livestock Tax Deferral Program, winter hours of operation for transfer stations, the updated County fire rating, and the Heritage Board meeting.

Election-related communications were a key focus this month. A broad outreach campaign included polling station posters across multiple media platforms, creation of the “Who Are the Candidates” and “Where to Vote” webpages and sharing both the unofficial and official election results with the public through multiple platforms.

Recruitment advertising included postings for the Chief Administrative Officer and Lead Mechanic positions. The department also coordinated advertising for the Producer-at-Large opportunity.

The Communications Officer also successfully completed the Developing Crisis Communications Plans course, which is the second of three classes needed for the Crisis Communication micro-certificate.

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions

As with last month, the challenge remained as the urgent election advertising that needed to be completed in a required timeframe by the *Local Authorities Election Act*. Another challenge was ensuring that all advertisements were not only produced quickly but also communicated clear and accurate information about the multiple polling stations. Time management and priority setting was essential to ensure everything was advertised on time.

3. Progress on Strategic Goals

- **Good Governance & Community Engagement**
Election-related communications supported transparency and strengthened public trust through a range of initiatives. Each advertising initiative reinforced the County’s commitment to openness and citizen participation in the democratic process. Public

engagement advertising of Public Hearings and land tenders support the strategic vision of creating a strong, well-informed community.

- Cultural Diversity & Education
Publishing the Grapevine, Council Meeting Highlights and maintaining active social media channels promoted inclusivity, knowledge-sharing, transparency and community connectedness.

4. Staffing & Resources

Completed the Developing Crisis Communications Plans course in October and is registered to take the Crisis Communication Spokesperson course in March of 2026 which will be the final course in the Crisis Communication program.

5. Interdepartmental Collaboration

The Communications Department works with all County departments to share timely service updates and information with the public. In October, Communications collaborated closely with Legislative Services and the Returning Officer to support election communications, worked with Lakeland HR to promote employment opportunities, and partnered with the Environmental Operations Manager on messaging for winter transfer station hours. The department also supported the Planning and Development Manager with several public participation notices. In addition, Communications met with the Finance Manager to review the proposed 2026 Communications operational budget.

A joint meeting was also held with departments reporting to the Director of Planning and Community Services to discuss needs and priorities under the new organizational structure.

6. Next Steps & Outlook

Looking ahead, the Communications Department will:

- Continue day-to-day responsibilities, including social media engagement, website updates, and promotion of County programs and services.
- Collaborate with the Director of Planning and Community Services to advance department priorities.
- Review and update Communications policies and bylaws to ensure clarity and effectiveness.

Department: Fire Protective Services **Reporting Period:** October 1-31, 2025

1. Key Accomplishments

The Fire Protective Services Department continues to work on implementing the Regional Fire Service Plan, providing assistance to the Village of Vilna and the Town of Smoky Lake CAOs on related inquiries and clarifications. The Fire Protective Services Bylaw was reviewed with Legislative Services and the CAO, and presented to Council on October 9, where first and second readings were passed. The bylaw will return to a future Council meeting for final approval following the incorporation of Council's recommended amendments.

In October, eight invoices were submitted to Alberta Transportation. The department is currently managing seven active insurance claims in coordination with insurance companies, adjusters, and fire investigators. First Aid, CPR, and AED training were held October 18–19, and flag training was completed on October 14. Pump testing and ladder inspections were conducted on all five fire engines to ensure compliance with OH&S, NFPA, and Fire Underwriters Insurance requirements.

Two wildfire incidents were addressed during October. The first, located north of Bellis and reported on September 30, was determined to be on unoccupied Crown land. Alberta Wildfire assumed responsibility, actioning the fire on October 1 and declaring it extinguished on October 18. The second, near Garner Lake, was reported on October 9. County crews, assisted by the County dozer, contained the fire by October 13. Due to other emergency responses and limited resources, the fire was monitored until Alberta Wildfire could provide support. The Alberta Wildfire crew previously assigned to the Bellis fire was redeployed to Garner Lake and requested County assistance with water supply. The fire was actioned on October 20 and declared extinguished on October 25.

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions

The two wildfire incidents presented significant operational challenges. Crews responding to the fire north of Bellis were initially unable to locate the fire and requested aerial support from Alberta Wildfire. Alberta Wildfire transported one member of the Smoky Lake County Fire Protective Services by helicopter to survey the area and identify access points, which were only reachable by air. Alberta Wildfire deployed firefighters for the initial attack operations by helicopter while contracted equipment constructed a 2.5 km access trail to the fire and completed a fire guard.

Access to the Garner Lake fire was also limited. Crews cut a trail to the fire and guided the County dozer to construct a fire guard as this was the operator's first time cutting a fire guard. Fire crews worked to contain the wildfire over the long weekend; however, due to work

commitments and other emergency calls, limited personnel were available to be assigned to this incident. The fire was monitored until Alberta Wildfire crews could be reassigned. Due to limited water sources, Alberta Wildfire requested water support from Smoky Lake County Fire Protective Services. The Vilna Fire apparatus was used to shuttle water, as both the County water tanker and water truck were out of service at the time.

Smoky Lake County Fire Protective Services continues to collaborate with the Public Works Manager and mechanic to maintain apparatus readiness. Wajax was contracted to resolve transmission issues on Engine 459 after multiple attempts at the County Shop. Wajax successfully repaired the issue. Rescue 429 continues to experience electrical and fuel system problems with its built-in generator, which remains out of service and awaiting repair. Smoky Lake Fire is being requested for mutual aid to provide scene lighting and power tools when required at incidents.

Vilna Rapid Attack 419 was towed to the shop on October 22 due to major transmission and engine issues. Budget considerations will be discussed once the apparatus is worked on to determine the extent of the damage. Vilna Engine 451 experienced overheating issues while responding to a call; crews allowed the apparatus to cool and returned it safely to the hall. The County mechanic added antifreeze due to low levels, where antifreeze was not added after replacement of a damaged line from a previous service call. The Waskatenau Engine 403 CVIP had expired; the County Shop completed the inspection and installed new scene lighting.

3. Progress on Strategic Goals

The region continues to strengthen its fire protective services, with three of the four municipalities having adopted the Smoky Lake County Regional Fire Rescue Services Bylaw. Smoky Lake County Administration will continue to provide support and guidance to facilitate adoption of the bylaw by the remaining municipality.

4. Staffing & Resources

Fire Protective Services continues to experience challenges related to resource availability for emergency response. In October, mutual aid was requested on eight occasions due to limited personnel and equipment resources. In three of these instances, the initially dispatched fire department had no members available to respond.

- Incident Responses:
 - Smoky Lake Fire: 3 collisions, 1 structure fire, 4 medical calls, 2 fire alarms and crews spent 5 days at the Garner Lake Fire.
 - Vilna Fire: 4 collisions, 1 structure fire, 1 grass fire, 2 medical calls, 2 fire alarms and crews spent 9 days at the Garner Lake Fire

In-house training remains a priority for the department. During October, five members completed First Aid, CPR, and AED certification, while nine members completed CPR and AED recertification. Sixteen members successfully completed Flag Person training, and one member received certification in NPFA 1002 Advanced Pump Operations and NFPA 1041 Level I Fire Instructor training.

5. Interdepartmental Collaboration

The Fire Protective Services Department continues to collaborate with multiple County departments. Public Works assisted fire crews by cutting the fire guard at the Garner Lake fire and supporting mechanical repairs to keep apparatus in service and ready for response. The Fire Chief relies on the Legislative Services Department for guidance and advice when updating and amending bylaws presented to Council. Additionally, the Fire Chief worked with the Communications Department to ensure accurate information and timely updates were released regarding the two wildfire incidents.

6. Next Steps & Outlook

The Fire Protective Services Department will continue to work with the Public Works Manager and mechanics to schedule fire apparatus for necessary repairs. With NFPA 1001 Level 1 training now complete, the 2025 Fire Services Training Grant will be finalized and submitted to the province. Additionally, STARS Landing Zone and Hazardous Materials Awareness training courses are being scheduled for completion before year-end.

Department: Community Peace Officer



Reporting Period: October 2025

1. Key Accomplishments

Operational File Work

During this reporting period, enforcement and regulatory activities continued across the County.

Key file activity included:

- Completion of 2 CVSA files
- 1 commercial vehicle placed out of service
- 3 unsightly premises complaints investigated
- 5 dog control files, including one dog transported to the Lakeland Humane Society due to lack of local shelter capacity
- 3 fail-to-stop vehicle incidents

Traffic Safety Enforcement

Traffic enforcement remained a major focus, with proactive patrols resulting in:

- 32 warnings issued for Traffic Safety Act offences
- 22 Provincial Offence Notices issued

- Two extreme speeding cases (163 km/h and 162 km/h — both mandatory court)
- Enforcement for failing to slow to 60 km/h past an emergency vehicle, resulting in a \$746 fine
- Enforcement of an unsafe passing incident that nearly caused a head-on collision
- A commercial vehicle offence, where a gravel truck failed to stop at a stop sign entering Highway 28
- A complex traffic stop where the driver and passenger attempted to switch seats while the vehicle was still in motion, resulting in multiple charges, including:
 - Operating without a licence
 - Speeding
 - Switching seats in a moving vehicle

Community Engagement

- Attended the Smoky Lake County Pumpkin Festival
- Completed four foot patrols during the event
- Conducted multiple rural and highway safety patrols to enhance public visibility and deterrence

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions

- Dog Control Limitations
Continued challenges with lack of local shelter capacity resulted in the transport of one dog to the Lakeland Humane Society.
- Connectivity Issues
Installation of Starlink significantly improved communication, reporting capability, and operational efficiency.
- Equipment and Technology
The in-car camera system was fully repaired and reprogrammed, restoring proper timestamping and officer identification.
- Administrative Efficiency
The MRF reporting system was finalized, allowing automatic generation of disclosure packages and reducing administrative workload.

3. Progress on Strategic Goals

- Strengthened rural safety through increased proactive patrols and crime-prevention visibility.
- Improved road safety through targeted enforcement of dangerous and high-risk behaviours such as extreme speeding, unsafe passing, and failing to slow for emergency vehicles.

- Enhanced regulatory oversight through commercial vehicle enforcement and unsightly premises compliance.
- Improved operational efficiency with the successful implementation of the MRF system.
- Strengthened community relations through event presence and public engagement.

4. Staffing & Resources

- Operations continue under a single-officer model.
- IT Services provided essential support for Starlink installation, camera system repair, and software configuration.
- New branded shoulder patches were completed with graphic design assistance.

5. Interdepartmental Collaboration

- Worked closely with IT Services on connectivity and equipment upgrades.
- Coordinated with Public Works and event organizers to support Pumpkin Festival safety planning and traffic management.
- Maintained liaison with the RCMP for collision files and fail-to-stop investigations.
- Collaborated with Alberta Sheriffs on CVSA enforcement.
- Coordinated with the Lakeland Humane Society for animal transport due to limited local shelter resources.

6. Next Steps & Outlook

Key priorities for the next reporting period include:

- Continue winter road-safety enforcement, including high-visibility patrols in rural and high-collision areas.
- Maintain proactive rural crime-prevention patrols.
- Continue work on unsightly premises, dog control matters, and other municipal enforcement files.
- Fully integrate the MRF reporting system into daily workflow to streamline administration.
- Finalize deployment of new uniform patches and prepare upcoming reports for Council.

Department: Environmental Operations **Reporting Period: October 1 to October 31, 2025**

1. Key Accomplishments to be completed: What are you working on?

During this reporting period, routine maintenance, station checks, and documentation were completed for all water, wastewater, and regional waterline facilities. Seasonal preparations continued across all sites, including winterizing fire hydrants, servicing heaters and furnaces, and implementing freeze-prevention measures. A directional waterline flush was completed for the Warspite distribution system, and several valves were disassembled and cleaned as part of proactive maintenance.

In Waste Management, a three-year contract was executed with Smoky Lake Waste and Recycling for hauling and disposal services. Recycling activities progressed with the removal of used oil, oil containers, electronics, and batteries. Metal recycling contractors removed materials from the Smoky Lake, Spedden, and Vilna sites, and the department is currently awaiting pickup of recycled tires. As of November 1, winter operating hours are in effect.

The Parks and Recreation section supported another successful Pumpkin Fair and completed storage preparations for summer lawn-care equipment. All lake-related equipment, including buoys and floating docks, was cleaned and stored for winter. Park inspections were completed, sand areas were rototilled, and the Iron Horse Trail was inspected, groomed, and had its gates locked open for the winter season.

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions

Environmental Operations continued to experience issues with unwanted items being dumped at waste bin sites, including tires, furniture, appliances, and mattresses. Staff have needed to manually clean up these items and arrange appropriate disposal. Break-ins occurred at the Smoky Lake and Spedden landfills; RCMP reports have been filed for both locations.

Significant beaver activity was observed at Hanmore Lake, where trees along the shoreline and in campsites have been damaged or removed. Fish and Game has been notified and will follow up with the registered trapline holder for remediation.

3. Staffing & Resources:

The department is currently operating with full staffing levels. However, staff will be required to take accumulated annual leave in the coming months to manage banked vacation time.

4. Interdepartmental Collaboration

Environmental Operations collaborated with several County departments throughout October:

- Public Works provided a Cat and operator to push up landfill sites, burn pits, and metal piles.
- Agricultural Services supplied a tractor and operator to groom the Iron Horse Trail.
- Health & Safety supported fire drills at Landfills and Transfer Stations, and assisted with updating Emergency Response Procedures.
- Natural Gas Department coordinated use of cold storage space, requiring relocation of several items to accommodate storage of PE gas rolls.

5. Next Steps & Outlook

Primary objectives for the upcoming reporting period include:

- Continuing removal of fallen and unsafe trees at County campsites. More than 80 dead or hazardous trees have been marked for removal across the East and West sites.
- Preparing Annual Water, Wastewater, and Waste Reports for submission to Alberta Environment and Protected Areas.
- Supporting Operators in completing required Water and Wastewater continuing education courses to obtain Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for certification renewal.

Department: Natural Gas **Reporting Period:** October 1-31, 2025

1. Key Accomplishments

Staff began construction on the service line installation and upgrade at the Healing Waters Center. The pipe is plowed in. Waiting on the directional drilling contractors to install the pipeline under the highway and 2 County roads.

Lowered a pipeline to code depth that was exposed over time as the landowner removed manure from their corrals. This pipeline will be rerouted in the spring to a safer location through their property.

Completed 78 line locates and 2 emergency locates.

Responded to 3 service calls (gas odor complaints).

SCADA system at Tap 7 is fully functional after the vandalism and theft that occurred. Steps are being taken to mitigate the amount that can be stolen, if it occurs again at our RMO's.

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions

Two underground gas leaks were identified, each caused by rodent activity (beavers, gophers, and moles), which can damage polyethylene pipelines and lead to failures. Continuous monitoring of the system's gas balancing (gas purchased vs. gas sold) remains critical, as does public reporting.

The \$100 leak-reporting reward program continues to serve as an effective incentive for residents to report suspected natural gas leaks, supporting early detection and mitigation.

3. Progress on Strategic Goals

Emergency Services & Safety: Completed numerous line locates, service calls, and emergency odor responses, directly supporting the County's priority to maintain safe and reliable natural gas service.

Proactivity in Development: Advanced planning for the Healing Waters Center service line installation demonstrates proactive infrastructure support, aligning with Council's vision of fostering growth and community development.

Good Governance: Billing improvements, including the integration of communication on the new Request Management software, contributed to enhanced transparency and resident engagement.

4. Staffing & Resources

Staff holidays were accommodated without major disruption to operations.

5. Interdepartmental Collaboration

- Coordinated monthly water meter readings and billing for Warspite residents.
- Worked with the Interim CAO on the development of the 2026 Natural Gas Budget.
- Continued collaboration with the Fire Department to review fire permits and brush-pile management to prevent damage or burial of natural gas infrastructure

6. Next Steps & Outlook

- Preparing all natural gas infrastructure for winter conditions.
- Inspecting and testing line heaters to ensure reliable performance during cold temperatures.
- Installing additional pressure test points at customer meter locations currently lacking them to strengthen system pressure monitoring throughout the winter season.

Department: Public Works **Reporting Period:** November 5 2025

1. Key Accomplishments to be completed:

Dry weather throughout most of October created a high demand for road maintenance as harvest progressed. Grader operators were out continuously, addressing rough spots and working to keep roads as smooth and safe as possible. Rain received near the end of the month significantly improved road conditions and supported more effective grading.

Crews completed extensive patching on oil-based roads across the County. Damaged signs were repaired or replaced, and new installations were completed as required. Tree cutting and cleanup occurred in various locations, and hydro-axing of rights-of-way began following late-October rainfall.

Multiple culvert installations and culvert maintenance activities were completed. Divisional and targeted gravel hauling continued, including private gravel deliveries. The Cat was deployed to all dump sites for cleanup and is currently pushing brush at Legacy Pit. At White Earth Pit, the track hoe and rock trucks are actively moving material.

Public Works also began winter yard preparation, including organizing material stockpiles and winterizing equipment. Mechanics remained busy keeping all County fleet and assets operational, including installation of winter wings, servicing of heavy equipment, and ongoing reactive repairs.

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions

Public Works continued to experience staffing pressures, with four employees on medical leave. Reduced manpower affected the Department's capacity to keep up with high seasonal workload demands.

3. Staffing & Resources:

- Four employees on medical leave significantly affected productivity levels.
- Mechanics managed a high-volume workload to keep winter-essential equipment service-ready.
- Recruitment continues in partnership with HR for upcoming vacancies and temporary seasonal coverage.

4. Interdepartmental Collaboration

Planning & Development

- Completed road inspections for Bonnie Lake Resorts Phase 3 & 4 prior to issuance of a Development Final Acceptance Certificate (DFAC).
- Provided input on grazing lease and road encroachment issues near Legacy Pit.

GIS

- Worked closely on road policy consolidation (Policy 03-15) and reviewed service-level expectations.
- Supported WebMap updates related to grader beats, road categories, and road condition assessments.
- Coordinated with GIS for culvert data, asset location verification, and mapping support.

Health & Safety

- Participated in safety supply distribution for Public Works fleet and facilities.
- Completed scheduled inspections, emergency response drills, and winter-readiness safety planning.
- Worked with the Joint Health & Safety Committee to address operational concerns.

Executive Services / CAO Office

- Provided information for policy updates, road maintenance requirements, and project support associated with upcoming Council meetings.

Agricultural Services

- Collaborated on roadside vegetation concerns, tree removal locations, and pest-related burrowing issues affecting roads and culverts.

5. Next Steps & Outlook

- Public Works will focus on the following priorities in the upcoming period:
- Continuing regular road maintenance as freeze-up approaches.
- Completing yard winterization and ensuring all heavy equipment is fully operational for snow and ice control.
- Finalizing grader wing installations and preparing sand/salt inventory for winter operations.
- Continuing hydro-axing and tree cleanup as weather permits.
- Supporting other departments with transportation, inspections, mapping, and operational needs.

Department: Agricultural Service Department **Reporting Period:** November

1.Key Accomplishments to be completed: What are you working on?

The Agricultural Service Department's primary focus for November is preparing materials for the upcoming ASB meeting. This includes gathering background information and drafting Requests for Decision (RFDs) for items scheduled to be brought forward. Work will include consultation with other municipalities regarding Coyote Bounty Program policies and procedures, as well as continued development of the Extension Program RFD.

Preparation of the December 2nd ASB agenda and meeting package is underway. The department is also coordinating with Horizon Ag to place an order for a John Deere 6M 155 Tractor.

Due to compromised staff emails earlier this year, Alberta Agriculture and various partner organizations will be contacted to update the department's primary point-of-contact information. Updated ASB Orientation Packages will also be created, incorporating the latest information from Alberta Agriculture.

2. Operational Challenges & Solutions

A key operational challenge has been the need to manually contact numerous organizations to update the department's email address following the summer security incident. This has resulted in delays and confusion for external partners who have been attempting to reach the department.

3. Staffing & Resources:

The agriculture department consist of an Agricultural Fieldman that is only in 8 days a month and a part time Pest Control Technician.

4. Interdepartmental Collaboration

Continue to collaboration with all departments as issues arise.

5. Next Steps & Outlook

- *ASB Agenda and meeting package for Dec 2nd*
- *RFD for Extension program*
- *RFD for Coyote Bounty*
- *LARA Contract for 2026, if required.*
- *Follow up on Mature Asset Strategies- oil and gas and landownership*
- *Update Alberta Ag with New ASB Member information.*
- *Amendments to ASB Resolution process to be included in next package.*

- *ASB Business Plan 2026*
- *Pesticide Service Registration Renewal for 2026*
- *Year end Inventory of Chemical and Explosives*
- *Send in 1080 documents to AB Ag*