



Reeve's Report

**Jered Serben: Reeve and Councillor for Division 5
June 19th to August 22nd**

June 20th, 2025 – Smoky Lake Foundation Meeting (Jered & Dominique)

- CEO, R. Cormie provided an overview of the Chief Executive Officer's report. Highlights included:
 - Meal Feedback Cards were introduced on June 5, 2025, allowing residents to share meal-related feedback anonymously.
 - Union employee job descriptions have been updated to clarify roles and support recruitment.
 - Save On Mechanical is performing seasonal HVAC maintenance and starting up A/C at BVN.
 - Globaltech is conducting annual life safety inspections at all supportive living and senior apartment sites.
- CEO, R. Cormie reviewed financials for supportive living and housing programs.

June 21st Smoky Lake Indigenous Day Metis Crossing (Jered)

- Attended Metis Crossing's Indigenous Day event and read the following speech:

Good morning, everyone,

As we gather here today to celebrate Indigenous Day, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you. It is an honor to stand before you as the County Reeve representing our residents and Council on this significant occasion.

Today, we come together to recognize and honor the rich cultures. The histories. The contributions of Indigenous peoples in Alberta and across Canada. June 21st is not just a date on the calendar. It is a day of reflection, celebration, and commitment to understanding the diverse Indigenous cultures that have existed on the lands for thousands of years.

As we celebrate, let us also remember the importance of reconciliation. It is our collective responsibility to listen, learn, and engage with Indigenous communities. To honor their voices, and to support their rights and aspirations. Together, we can build a future that respects and uplifts Indigenous cultures and traditions.

Today, I encourage each of you to engage in the stories, art, and teachings that will be shared. Let us celebrate the strength of Indigenous peoples and let us commit to a better understanding and respect in our community.

Thank you for inviting me to be a part of your day and for your commitment to celebrating and supporting Indigenous peoples. Together, let us make this Indigenous Day a meaningful and memorable occasion.

Thank you.



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June 23rd, 2025, MCC For Smoky Lake Development Corporation Shareholders (All Council)

- Reviewed the MCC for Smoky Lake Development Corp. Bank Statement for the Period Ended May 31
- The MCC shareholders will repay \$490,000 each to Smoky Lake County and the Town of Smoky Lake, as per their investment bylaws, following the dissolution of Smoky Lake Tourism Company Ltd.

June 25th, 2025 – Regular Council Meeting All Council (Linda Virtual)

- That Smoky Lake County sponsors the Vilna & District Agricultural Society Boomtown Days Fair in the amount of \$1,500 to sponsor a children's activities.
- That Smoky Lake County agrees to add the replacement value of unattached equipment on the fire trucks as a separate item on the Heavy Equipment insurance policy, with a \$5,000 deductible. This change will increase the annual premium by \$1,841.
- That Smoky Lake County amend Policy 01-49-01 Delegations to County Council, to reflect the repeal of Bylaw No. 1303-17 in 2021 and its replacement with Bylaw No. 1400-20.
- That Smoky Lake County Policy Statement No. 62-28-07: Mowing Program, be amended to cease mowing operations November 1st each year, to update the secondary seasonal pass to go to the property line.
- That Smoky Lake County Council amend Policy Statement No. 62-10-10 Agricultural Service Board Business Plan 2025 to include changes made to Policy Statement No. 62-28-07 Mowing Program and 1080 Toxicant recall.
- That Smoky Lake County Council approve the delivery of two loads of three-quarter inch belly dumps to the west side of the Waskatenau Agricultural building and coordinate a delivery date with Dave Harsuala the president of the Waskatenau Agricultural Society.
- That Smoky Lake County Council direct administration to prepare parade floats for the following:
 - Smoky Lake Town Stampede
 - Vilna Boomtown Days
 - Waskatenau Fair Days
- Smoky Lake County Council hosted delegations from the following members and engaged in an open discussion regarding but not limited to:

Landon Reppert, Construction Manager, North Central Region, Transportation and Economic Corridors and Michael Bortos, Regional Director, North Central and Ft. McMurray Regions at Government of Alberta

- The 2018 corridor study of Highway 28 from Edmonton to Cold Lake Alberta. The study included improvements to increase safety and performance, which included climbing passing lanes, intersection improvement and but not limited to rest areas.
- Current projects including paving work near Waskatenau (curve improvements and intersection improvements)
- Capital maintenance and renewal (bridge construction and highway rehabilitation) projects scheduled over the next 3 years
- Tentative future paving projects (projected for 2027) on highway 28 included a 41-kilometer portion from Warspite to highway 36.



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Rural Municipalities of Alberta Members.

Kara Westerlund, President

Kevin Wirsta, Director: District 5

Tasha Blumenthal, Executive Officer of External Relations & Strategy

Duane Gladden, CEO & Executive Director

- **Concern raised about healthcare access:**
There is a significant lack of healthcare professionals (including doctors, specialists, and nurses) in Smoky Lake County, which is making it increasingly difficult to support the county's growing population.
- **Efforts to improve housing access:**
The Smoky Lake Foundation is working to expand access to senior and social housing within the County
- **Firefighter funding challenges:**
The lack of funding for fire apparatuses, training, and volunteers has made it difficult to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. Additionally, volunteers are often expected to maintain healthcare coverage while working on highways, further complicated by a shortage of ambulances
- **Policing and crime efforts:**
Smoky Lake County continues to work closely with the Smoky Lake RCMP and K Division to reduce the crime rate and strengthen public safety in the region
- **Policing, crime, and justice system concerns:**
Smoky Lake County continues to collaborate with the Smoky Lake RCMP and K Division to address crime and improve public safety. However, it was also noted that effective policing must be supported by improvements within the judicial system, as there are ongoing concerns about the need for a more efficient and supportive legal framework to ensure lasting impacts on crime reduction

Tina Warawa Chief of Staff of MP Shannon Stubbs

- **Request for updates on policing and funding:**
Smoky Lake County would like to get regular updates on crime stats, policing efforts, and where funding is being spent to make sure resources are being used effectively
- **River access updates:**
Smoky Lake County is asking for updates on river access—both for emergency response purposes and for recreational use
- **Ocean and Fisheries Act concerns:**
Smoky Lake County would like updates on the challenges related to the Ocean and Fisheries Act—especially how it affects replacing bridges with culverts. They're looking for ways to make the process more accessible and easier for rural municipalities to navigate and implement.

June 25th, 2025 – Municipal Planning Commission - All Council (Linda Virtual)

- That the Municipal Planning Commission APPROVE Development Permit No. 025-25, located on the lands legally described as PLAN 7821750, BLOCK 1, LOT 7 for the development of a GARDEN SUITE, subject to conditions.



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July 9th, 2025 – New Holy Family Catholic School Breaks Ground – Waskatenau (Dominique)

- Board Chair Brockhoff, Bishop Franken, and MLA Glenn van Dijken joined in the ceremony
- This marks an important milestone in the construction of the new Holy Family Catholic School, approved by the provincial government in the 2023–24 budget
- Students will benefit from a full-sized gymnasium, a dedicated music room, and flexible classroom environments tailored to support developmentally responsive, inclusive, and academically enriched programming.
- Prepared the following speech that was presented by Farrah Ollikka, Principal of the Holy Family Catholic School in my absence:

Good morning and to a beautiful day.

Today marks a milestone. The groundbreaking ceremony of a new Catholic school in the heart of Waskatenau. The school will not be just about bricks and mortar. This new school, just as the current school, represents the commitment to education, faith, and the development of our children. The difference is that this will all be done in a leak free and a more comfortable environment and adding a wonderful asset to the Waskatenau community.

This school will be a new place of hope and learning, instilling in our children the values of compassion, respect, and integrity. The new building will create a hub for socializing and celebrating and what it means to be a part of the community.

On behalf of County Council, we are thankful and grateful for the vision of the Waskatenau community, local leaders, and everyone who has worked tirelessly to bring this project to fruition. This new structure will allow teachers to encourage students to thrive, to learn, and continue in their roles of leadership.

What an exciting day this is! This is not a new book rather, a new chapter for the journey ahead.

We wish you the absolute best of luck with the new construction.

Thank you.

Jered Serben,

Smoky Lake County Reeve.



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July 21st, 2025 Smoky Lake Agricultural Society Sub Committee Meeting (Jered)

- The Agricultural Society Committee reviewed the bids for the naming rights of the Agricultural Complex and announced that the building naming rights for the Smoky Lake Agricultural Society complex have been awarded to Nutrien Ag Solutions — and the facility will now be known as the Nutrien AG Centre.
- The next Agricultural society meeting will be on August 25, 2025

July 22, 2025 Physicians and Healthcare Professionals Committee (Jered/Dominique)

- Delegation presentation from Dr. Anton Raubenheimer, Chief of Staff, George McDougall - Smoky Lake Healthcare Centre and had the following comments to add:
 - Dr. Anton Raubenheimer thanked the committee for helping recruit Dr. Dr. Adriana Esterhuizen and praised their communication and support.
 - There are four doctors currently working at the Raubenheimer Clinic, and many people travel from different areas to visit the clinic and emergency department.
 - Dr. Anton will be hosting a medical student, with the hope they will stay after four years.
 - Government support for doctors is limited, and the main challenge for clinics is keeping them. Small communities need a strong, five-star strategy to retain physicians
- That Physician and Health Care Professionals Committee will apply for the Rural Health Professional Action Plan Attraction and Retention Grant, in the amount of \$1,000.00, in 2025, with the intention of using the funds to host an appreciation event in the Summer of 2026.
- Gave direction to create an advocacy plan to support doctor recruitment by working with the Raubenheimer Clinic, North Zone Medical Affairs, and Alberta Health Services as well as engagement strategy for primary care enhancements to lobby for at the provincial government level;
- Proposed to set up a Health Student Bursary program for health students who agree to work in Smoky Lake County for one year after graduation, and present a final draft of the program's goals, priorities, and board structure at the next committee meeting for discussion

July 24th, 2025 Special Council Meeting (All Council)

- That Smoky Lake County Council declare a Municipal Agricultural Disaster as of July 24, 2025, due to severe drought, low moisture, and extended heat and wind, which have badly affected soil moisture and all areas of farming in the County.
- That Smoky Lake County prepared a press release declaring a Municipal Agricultural Disaster, effective July 24, 2025, to raise awareness about the severe drought and the challenges local producers are facing now and in the coming months. This release was also forwarded to Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation – R.J. Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food- H. MacDonald and RMA Members Kara Westerlund (President) and Kevin Wirsta (Director: Division 5)



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July 25th, 2025 Smoky Lake Foundation Meeting (Jered Dominique)

- Received reports for the year-to-date Financial Statements, Capital & Operating budget, and occupancy reports.
- New Protection of Privacy Act – discussion regarding the introduction of the Protection of Privacy Act and repealing FOIP and the need for housing management bodies to have a privacy plan/program in place by June 2026.
- The Board adopted the Smoky Lake Foundation Government of Alberta 2026-2028 Business Plan
- The Board adopted the Smoky Lake Foundation 2025 – 2028 Strategic Plan
- The Government of Alberta will be completing condition assessment reports for Bar-V-Nook Manor, Supportive Living, and Vilna Lodge.
- The Board reviewed and adopted the following Board Governance Policies:
 - 100-015-002 Executive Limitations
 - 100-015-003 Chief Executive Officer Job Description
 - 100-015-004 Chief Executive Officer Evaluation
 - 100-015-005 Chief Executive Officer Expense Reimbursement
- Capital Maintenance and Replacements:
The Board received updated reports on the following Capital Maintenance and Replacement projects:
 - Shingles, Soffit, Fascia, Eavestroughs – Waskatenau Manor
 - Shingles, Soffit, Fascia, Eavestroughs – Golden Valley Villa
 - Emergency/Nurse Call System Replacement at Vilna Lodge
 - Finalization of the Emergency Generator upgrade to Bar-V-Nook Supportive Living by mid September

These projects are 100 percent funded by the Government of Alberta

July 29th, 2025 Smoky Lake Regional ICC Meeting for Regional Fire (Jered/Dominique)

- The Intermunicipal Collaboration Committee (ICC) approved the Smoky Lake County Regional Fire Rescue Services Bylaw, and recommended that Smoky Lake County, the Town of Smoky Lake, the Village of Waskatenau, and the Village of Vilna each adopt the bylaw, effective January 2026, to support a joint regional fire rescue service for the Smoky Lake Region.



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July 31st, 2025 Special Council Meeting

- That Smoky Lake County Council approve the engagement of a qualified third-party consultant to conduct a comprehensive organizational review to be completed by Sept 5, 2025 and presented at the September 11 Regular Council Meeting, not to exceed \$20,400.00. The purpose of the review will be to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organization as a whole, with the goal of enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of services and programs delivered by the County.
- That Smoky Lake County Council implement a suspension on the hiring and termination of all staff positions, excluding the hiring of those required for critical or emergency operations, until the completion and review of the organizational assessment. Exceptions must be brought forward to Council for approval on a case-by-case basis.

Parade Float (All Council)

- Attended the following community parades:
 - the Smoky Lake Heritage Day Parade on August 2
 - the Waskatenau Fair Days Parade on August 9
 - and the Vilna Boomtown Days Parade on August 16.

This year's theme, "Farmers Appreciation," recognized and celebrated the important contributions of our agricultural community.

August 2nd, 2025 Smoky Lake Heritage Board "Back to Ruthenia School" Event (Jered & Dominique)

- Attended the "Back to Ruthenia School" Event and delivered the following Speech:

Hello and Good afternoon,

I'd like to firstly bring greetings on behalf of Smoky Lake County Council and our residents.

Here we stand at the preserved and restored Ruthenia School. A reflection of the development for education in rural Canada and Alberta. This school served as a key educational pillar for the local community, which at the time was primarily settler immigrants who were seeking new opportunities in the region.

The school was named after the Ruthenian people, a group of Eastern European immigrants who settled in the area, particularly from regions of Ukraine and Slovakia. These settlers brought with them their cultural heritage, and this influenced the community's development and the school's environment.

This school not only provided education but also served as a center for community gatherings and cultural events, creating a sense of belonging with the residents.

During the time of rapid growth, Ruthenia School adapted to the changes and educational needs of its students.

The school was well maintained and cared for during its time in service. Over the years, educational standards evolved and the population in the surrounding area continued to increase. One thing remained constant and that was to educate many children who were



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enrolled in several different grades, all at the same time, with most often, one teacher to do it all.

In the later years, Ruthenia faced challenges such as declining enrollment and changes in educational policies. This led to discussions about consolidation with nearby schools.

The legacy of Ruthenia School remains significant in the Smoky Lake area, because it symbolizes the commitment and importance for education, and this in part, characterized the early settlers efforts.

Today, Ruthenia School is remembered for its educational role in the Smoky Lake County, highlighting the importance of education while creating communities and preserving cultural identity.

Projects to preserve heritage through restoration of early construction and infrastructure is mainly, if not all done by the Smoky Lake Heritage Board and a few enthusiastic members. Smoky Lake County Council felt that a greater financial commitment would be in our best interest for communities as a whole and this is why we increased the Board's budget this year by \$15,000 and for the next 3 consecutive years before another reassessment.

Congratulations to all who have an interest to preserve these structures. They tell a story all on their own. A re creation of history in real time.

Thank you so much for inviting me here today and all the best!

August 20th, 2025 Smoky Lake County Committee of the Whole meeting (All Council)

- That Smoky Lake County Council accepts the request for discussion on Bylaw 1432-23 as information and recommends that further information be brought to the September 25, 2025, Regular County Council meeting.



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August 22nd Métis Nation of Alberta 97th anniversary at the Metis Crossing

- Attended the Metis Celebrations Event and delivered the following Speech:

Good morning and thank you for inviting me to be a part of this celebration.

On behalf of County Council, it is my pleasure to extend heartfelt greetings and thanks for the willingness of working together.

Good and long standing relationships are key to bringing project visions to fruition and we have several examples of this within our County.

Projects like Salay Prazzan that uses solar panels to convert sunlight into electricity and produces more than enough power for every Metis person in Alberta.

Healing Waters. A place of compassion and understanding that will turn desperation into hope. And hope into new life. Another step forward to strengthening humanity and leading by example.

This very place that we are gathered here today. Metis Crossing. This was a field with grass blowing in the wind a very short time ago. Who would have thought by building a cultural center would create such community, peace and serenity? A hotel on the river bank for all who want to stay and learn and experience Metis cultural heritage, celebratory festivals, and milestones.

Throughout the years, our relationship has grown stronger, at times like all relationships, somewhat strained. But with our rooted mutual respect and collaboration for a greater tomorrow we have overcome hurdles and moved mountains.

We encourage partnerships and that the voices of the Métis people are not only heard, but valued.

Let us celebrate with joy and gratitude, recognizing the important role that each of us plays in building harmonious and prosperous communities.

Thank you again for allowing me to be a part of your day and offer my gratitude on behalf of Council on your special anniversary.

Thank you.