



# Fieldnotes

## Palliser Regional Municipal Services



### PRMS STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The PRMS Strategic Plan was ratified by the full membership at the 2010 Spring General Meeting. Since that time the staff has been working diligently to implement the goals and objectives of the plan. The defined strategies for success include:

**Fee Schedule** – developed based on actual costs to deliver services in user pay areas (ie. Subdivision)

**Timely Planning Policy review** (ongoing) – a 5 year rotating schedule developed and adopted by the Board of Directors, 2011 as Year One with Hanna, Special Areas, Delia, Standard, M.D. of Acadia and Empress on the schedule

**Bylaw amendments process formalized** – An application form and process developed to

provide amendment services for the member municipalities similar to the subdivision services structure while meeting all statutory requirements of the process including application, circulation, planning reports and attendance at public hearings similar to the services provided by a municipal planning department

**PRISM Group/ GIS Leadership (ongoing)** - PRMS to provide the regional leadership necessary to implement the vast potential for GIS uses in the municipal framework. A succinct regional vision and strategy to be developed that defines the role of PRMS in municipal GIS development. The PRISM group to be re-established and regular forums held where communication, training and information

dissemination is completed effectively.

**Mapping quality and consistency** – great improvements in GIS skills – mapping products have improved greatly and continue to be updated as time permits

**Training opportunities for safety codes basics** (municipal office admin staff) discussed with Superior SC – dates tbd

**Application forms/ process for safety codes online availability** – to be part of revised website

**PRMS website overhaul** – professional web presence (currently under development)



### **Railway Discontinuance Recovery Project— Municipalities in negotiations**

The municipalities of Starland County, the Town of Drumheller and Wheatland County have continued to work together to negotiate and develop a purchase agreement with CN. There are currently options of

retaining the rail from Hanna or Delia to Lyalta and a decision will be dependent on the interest expressed on the east end when the terms of the agreement are structured. The railway business plan

has been revised to use the Hanna/ Delia to Lyalta rail sections to determine the business structure and viability potential.



#### PRMS SEMI ANNUAL MEETING: June 22, 2011

All member CAO's and elected representatives are invited to attend the semi annual meeting. The meeting will held at 4pm in the Palliser Boardroom on Wednesday June 22 and will be followed by supper, networking and door prizes.

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## Regional Bylaw Enforcement Exploration Study Is a Go!



Palliser Regional Municipal Services received approval from the Alberta Municipal Affairs Regional Collaboration Program for \$75,000 in funding to proceed with a review of the feasibility of regional bylaw enforcement with the Town of Coronation as the managing partner.

The regional bylaw enforcement services exploration study was requested by municipal members/shareholders of Palliser Regional Mu-

nicipal Services as a regional service that should be reviewed and considered due to the small size of the interested municipalities and the lack of efficiency of having bylaw enforcement services on an individual municipality basis.

The purpose of the study is to identify and assess potential options and determine whether the benefits of regional service delivery of bylaw enforcement services outweigh the costs. The study will provide various approaches to service delivery on a regional basis considering various parameters and scope. The results of the study will be reviewed by the interested/involved municipalities

to determine if regional bylaw enforcement should be pursued. If it is decided that there is enough interest to proceed, an implementation program and operations plan will be developed.

Regional Bylaw Enforcement Services will be implemented if a cost effective and viable option is determined through the project. As many of the supporting municipalities are small and remote, regional services are often seen as the most viable option to ensure the necessary expertise and abilities are retained to provide critical municipal services.

## The Model Process For Subdivision Approval and Private Sewage



Prepared by the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties in partnership with Alberta Municipal Affairs

A new version of the Model Process for Subdivision Approval and Private Sewage was released this year to replace the document that was originally developed in 2004 and provides guidelines for the evaluation of a proposed subdivision which rely on private sewage disposal systems. The process helps the determining bodies in the decision making process to ascertain whether private sewage systems are a suitable treatment method for the proposed subdivision.

The update Model Process now consists of three documents which are available online at [www.aamdc.com](http://www.aamdc.com) and are broken down into the following three titles:

- The Model Process for Subdivision Approval and Private Sewage
- Model Process Technical Resources
- Example Level Three Assessment of Site Suitability (which is an unrevised 2003 version)

## The Model Process For Subdivision Approval and Private Sewage (cont.)

In order to assist interested parties in becoming familiar with the process and to help integrate the process into the approval of subdivisions, a number of training sessions were held in early March throughout Alberta.

Within Alberta private sewage treatment systems (PSTS) are in use by homes and businesses not connected to a common wastewater treatment facility. Within the rural areas PSTS is generally the most common methods of handling any wastewater although community systems are being used in some of the higher density municipalities and growing in popularity. The “model process” or guidelines were developed to help provide municipalities with a framework for making decisions on the suitability of PSTS for subdivisions and development. This process provides a checklist on site evaluation as well as provides for the range of qualified persons whom may undertake site assessment in decisions to supporting development with regards to private sewage treatment systems.

The process is made up of two parts; the first being the *Guidance Document* which outlines the municipalities’ process to approve subdivisions in regard to private sewage and the second, *Technical Resources* which lays out the requirements for site evaluation, methodology, soil logs, lots sketches, water quality and impact risk assessment. This ensures that there is no negative impact on the drinking water, aquatic ecosystems, and quantity of water supplies for a sustainable economy and is best achieved if the soils and receiving environment are suited to using the private sewage disposal systems and designed and maintained properly as well as noted that not all soils are suitable.

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) and the Subdivision and Development Regulations provide the municipality with the discretion to determine if a proposal for subdivision is a suitable and appropriate use of the land. As part of the MGA, the Subdivision and Development Regulation gives jurisdiction to the municipality and approving authority to require the applicant to provide information in relationship to the suitability and viability of the land for PSTS. Included in the information to be provided for such site evaluation and determination is as follows:

- Sketches or plans of the proposed subdivision
- If the proposed lot and/or remainder of parent parcel are to be served by individual water wells and PSTS;
  - show the location and type of any existing or proposed private sewage disposal systems and the distances from these to any existing or proposed buildings and property lines as well as
  - indicate the existing and proposed access to the proposed parcels and the remainder of the parent parcel.
- At the discretion of the approving authority the applicant must also submit:
  - an assessment of subsurface soil characteristics, susceptibility to slumping, depth to water table and the suitability for any proposed onsite sewage disposal system;
  - if the proposed subdivision is not served by a wastewater collection system a report must be supplied by a qualified person with respect to the intended method and suitability and viability of the PSTS for each lot within the proposed subdivision
  - a description of the use or uses proposed for the land within the context of the application



The Model Process is a guide for municipalities and their approving authorities to make decisions that are responsible and sustainable with regard to the treatment of sewage within their communities and take into consideration anticipated future development. The Model Process as a guide can be used in part or in its entirety in determining if private sewage treatment systems are an effective or appropriate method for managing and treating wastewater within a subdivision.

For further information please contact the Palliser Regional Municipal Services office or to review the rest of this document please view on our website: [www.palliserservices.ca](http://www.palliserservices.ca)

## Subdivision Activity –

As the subdivision numbers to date would indicate, when compared to previous years, the turn-around in the east central economy has not yet materialized. The number of subdivisions to the end of April for this current year, when compared with the previous seven (7) years from 2004 thru 2010, to the same time frame indicate that activity is down to an all time low despite the amount of telephone enquiries regarding subdivision received in the early part of the year. The current numbers show that PRMS applications are down to only 56% of the activity of this time last year while at only 22% of the numbers in 2006. Both Special Areas and Starland County activity is comparable to last year while most of the other municipalities are showing little activity to date. Of particular note is that the applications in the M.D. of Provost, a non-member municipality, have slowed considerably in contrast to being the municipality with generally the leading number of rural subdivisions in previous years. Industrial type subdivisions make up over 30% of the applications this year as opposed to other years where they are much less.

### SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS BY MUNICIPALITY

Municipality	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
M.D. Acadia			1	3	2			
Acme					1			
Beiseker	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
Carbon					1			
Castor			1	2	1			
Cereal								
Consort								
Coronation				3				
Delia				1				1
Drumheller	1	4	2	5	5	1	2	
Empress			1		3			
Hanna			3	2	1	1		
Halkirk			1		1	1	1	
Hussar	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
Linden		1						
Morrin								
Munson			1					
Oyen			1					
Paintearth	2	2	3	2	6	1	2	
Rockyford	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
Special Areas	6	2	11	5	6	6	3	4
Standard	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A		1	
Starland	1	1	7	5	1	1	3	3
Trochu		2	1		1			
Veteran				1				
Youngstown								
**Gadsby			1	1				
**M.D. Provost	3		7	7	8	1	4	1
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>

\* All totals are to April 30 for comparison purposes \*\* Non member municipality

**PRISM Update—** Palliser Regional Municipal Services (PRMS) is in the final stages of wrapping up an in-depth assessment of our existing Palliser Regional Information System Management (PRISM) program. Initial findings have shown that there is room for improvement to our existing services and as a result PRMS is looking to completely overhaul our web-based GIS capability.



Through discussions, site visits and surveys with our member municipalities, PRMS has identified several key areas where our GIS Service can be expanded. MapGuide, the software backbone of PRISM is being replaced by the much more powerful and sophisticated ArcGIS Server. This change will allow a wealth of new opportunities not possible under MapGuide. The most striking is a method of more effective combined infrastructure management. Through ArcGIS Server, PRMS will be able to unite municipal parcel data with municipal infrastructure data either via MIMS or a custom based infrastructure mapping solution.

The new PRISM will also involve new features such as live work order tracking and management. This will allow municipalities to keep better, more consistent records on development and maintenance issues. The new PRISM will allow a user to create and export custom views and PDF documents on the fly for presentations to councils and other agendas.

The PRISM upgrade will also feature a new level of public user access. A new, completely separate, public user section is being added to PRISM. This will allow residents and visitors of the region easy access to publicly accessible local and regional municipal parcel data and recreation and tourism information. This is done by linking existing databases and websites to our PRISM system allowing users to quickly identify recreation options such as camping, golfing, and swimming while promoting tourism opportunities in the region.

Much more information will be coming out shortly on this new and exciting PRISM program. If you have any questions or would like to know more about the PRISM upgrade, contact our GIS Coordinator, Justin Hill at [jhill@palliserservices.ca](mailto:jhill@palliserservices.ca).

### **DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED: SAFETY CODES BASIC TRAINING—**

**Providing front office municipal staff with the knowledge to provide appropriate forms and advice to applicants of safety codes permits.**



## Palliser's Planning Intern Starts May 9th ~

**Yat Man (Dave) Suen** will be a new face in the Palliser office beginning in May. Our application for a Municipal Land Use Planning intern was approved in December 2010 by the Alberta Municipal Affairs Regional Collaboration Program. The program provides financial and education assistance for new planners to increase municipal capacity for the future. Dave will be working with the different aspects of municipal land use planning with the Palliser communities.

Dave Suen finished his Regional and Urban Planning degree from the University of Saskatchewan in 2010. He worked at a land surveying company as a Surveyor Assistant in Saskatoon after he completed his degree. As a student, he volunteered at the Saskatchewan Municipal Affairs office in Saskatoon and worked in the Hong Kong Planning Department as a planning trainee. Before Dave moved to Canada in 2004, he worked as a Swimming Instructor in Hong Kong. Dave looks forward to joining our team and seeking opportunities to contribute to the community.



Welcome to PRMS Dave!!

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

June 22, 2011

4pm in the Palliser Boardroom

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