

## Located at:

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Website: [rmbirchhills460.ca](http://rmbirchhills460.ca)

## Office Hours

Monday to Friday  
9:00 – 12:00 & 1:00 – 4:00

## Council

Reeve: Alan Evans

Division 1: Chris Hovdebo  
Division 2: Kyle Jensen  
Division 3: Steven Adams  
Division 4: Greg Cochet  
Division 5: Dean Manson  
Division 6: Gerald Olsen

Administrator:  
Shirley Pratchler

## EMAIL DATABASE

The RM would like to build a database of email addresses. Please send an email to [rm460@sasktel.net](mailto:rm460@sasktel.net) if you would like to share yours.

## Website Development

The RM website is now up and running. Please take a minute to view the website @ <http://rmbirchhills460.ca> It contains council minutes, bylaws, history, links to websites and much more.

## Reeve's Message:

2013 continued to be a very demanding year for the RM of Birch Hills. Early in the spring, the RM requested declaration as a disaster area due to the state of flooding and damage to our infrastructure. After the Province declared the RM a disaster area, an engineer inspected the municipality and a total of 41 sites were identified. With the assistance of funding from the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program, a total number of 40 sites were repaired by three different contractors with expenditures coming in at just over \$300,000. Mac's Creek is the declared site which has not been completed. Geotechnical engineers have completed soil stability tests and will be giving recommendations in early 2014 on how to deal with the ongoing problems at that site.

The municipality pays a deductible of just over \$40,000 of this cost, while the province of Saskatchewan covers the balance. The RM of Birch Hills initially pays these expenditures until the claims have been verified by the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program. In the past it has taken up to two years to recover this out lay of cash from the province. This creates an incredible demand on our cash flow.

The municipal Council and I have made a commitment to not only maintain the RM roads and infrastructure, but to make improvements. In 2013 we saw a need to increase the gravel placement on our municipal roads from a previous average of just over 10,000 to 12,000 yards to a high of just over 17,000 yards in 2013. This is due to the excessive moisture and frost boil damage to our roads. This has come at a high cost, as our gravel cost is just over \$22.00/yard by the time it is placed on our roads. As identified, frost boils on our roads this year were also a major problem. The municipality spent in excess of \$100,000 to bring major grids back to their previous condition. A commitment has also been made for better maintenance of the dirt/back field access roads since farm equipment is larger than in the past. This provides an alternative way for farmers to move machinery to keep equipment off the main roads.

The year-end financial statements are being completed, and the audit is typically completed in February. Planning will now begin for the 2014 budget year.

The municipal Council appreciates and takes seriously any issues brought forward. Please contact the RM Office by telephone, write a letter or send an email with your questions or concerns. We ensure a response will be sent to all inquiries.

Alan Evans

**Staffing:** Gaylen Torgunrud and Todd Devenis continue to work full time as Grader Operators for the RM. In 2013, Pat Lepine worked seasonally and Gerald Holmgren worked casually to assist with road maintenance. Victor Doderai maintained our ditches for the summer season. Shirley Pratchler continues to be the Administrator and Cherie Opseth continues to work part-time as the Office Assistant.

## Financial Statements:

The audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2013 will be available at the RM office and also on the RM website once completed.



### Control Burn

Phone # 1-866-404-4911

### Pest Control

Please contact the RM office if you find evidence of a rat infestation and the information will be passed onto the PCO.

Rat and mice bait is available from the RM office free of charge to RM ratepayers.

### Waste Disposal

A reminder that a \$150 one-time payment per site is available to ratepayers who have set up their own waste disposal site – contact the RM office for further details.

### Wild Boar

Have you seen evidence of wild boar in or around your property? If so, assistance is available from SARM.

*Please direct your inquiries, questions & concerns to the RM Office or your Division Councillor.*

## **Snow Removal Lane Clearing:**

Lane clearing contracts are available at the RM Office. The RM requires a prepayment of 3 lane clearings @ \$30.00/clearing be remitted to the RM prior to the service commencing as well as completion of the contract. Lane clearing is at the operator's discretion and only available if the municipal equipment can maneuver in and out of the yard.

## **PDAP Road Repairs:**

All approved PDAP road repairs for 2013 are complete. PDAP has authorized a geo-technical investigation at the Mac's Creek site.

## **Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency (SAMA):**

SAMA created a website which you can access to verify your property assessment information, compare your assessment to similar or neighboring properties, and get a general idea of assessed values in your municipality. SAMAView can be accessed by going to SAMA's website ([www.sama.sk.ca](http://www.sama.sk.ca)) and clicking on the SAMAView link.

## **Coxby Road:**

The four party land exchange agreement regarding Coxby Road has been in negotiations for many years between the RM of Birch Hills No. 460, the Muskoday First Nation, the Provincial Government and the Federal Government. On September 18, 2013, Muskoday First Nation voted in favor of the RM of Birch Hills No. 460 taking title to Coxby Road from Highway #3 to where it connects with New England Road. The agreement will take time to finalize with the different levels of government and Muskoday First Nation; any progress will be updated on the RM website as it develops.

## **Rail Line:**

The Rail Line purchase is currently in the discussion stage. Any progress will be posted on the RM website as information can be released. To date the following two motions have been passed by the Council of the RM of Birch Hills.

The RM passed the following motions in 2013 regular council meetings:

March 8, 2013

HOVDEBO:

RAIL LINE

That the RM of Birch Hills No. 460 will participate in the cost sharing of a feasibility study regarding the purchase of the rail line from Birch Hills to Melfort with the RMs of Invergordon, Kinistino and Flett's Springs. CARRIED.

April 10, 2013

HOVDEBO:

RAIL LINE

That the RM of Birch Hills No. 460 conditionally commits to invest \$50,000 for the purchase of the CN Tisdale Birch Hills spur line, and further that a final decision be made upon receipt of the feasibility study and confirmation that the investment is in Class A shares of the organization and as such third secured party. Final decision to be made at the next regular scheduled RM Council meeting. CARRIED.

*(Recorded vote: 5 in favour, 1 opposed)*

Check our website for additional information and updates pertaining to the Rail Line.

## **Birch Hills Conservation & Development Authority Election Results:**

The C & D Election was held on November 18, 2013. Returning Officer & Secretary for the C & D, Grant Getz submitted election results for the 2013 election as follows:

Kevin Evans, Brian Gordon & Mark Gordon were the successful candidates.