

# RM of Birch Hills No. 460

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## **OFFICE HOURS**

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

**Control Burn Number**  
**1-866-404-4911**

**Locate Requests**  
**Sask 1<sup>st</sup> Call**  
**1-866-828-4888**  
**[www: sask1stcall.com](http://www.sask1stcall.com)**

## Reeve's Message:

As I write this message, the RM is not experiencing fires, severe drought, or grass-hoppers like some areas of the Province. Crops are looking good and although some areas of the RM could use more rain, recent moisture has been timely.

The RM has not had to utilize the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program in 2014 or to date in 2015. Two projects from 2013 were completed last summer which brings the total funding received for 2011, 2012 & 2013 to almost \$1.27 million from the Provincial & Federal program.

Due to excessive moisture in previous years and the age of infrastructure, the RM's road network has required extra attention. Culvert

replacements and gravel application have been higher than average - gravel usage has increased from an average of 10,000 yards per year to over 18,000 yards per year. Gravel retention was better this spring so it is hoped to return to normal usage rates. The majority of old culverts have been replaced and continues this year. RM Council is planning for the future and intends to replace & repair both the road network and equipment needed to supply the level of service taxpayers expect.

Council has instituted a fair taxation approach for 2015. Taxation in Saskatchewan is based on the assessment of property. The Province determines the taxable value

and classification of property. The mill rate and factors have been set this year to bring the percentage of tax paid by a property class in line with the percentage of assessed value of the same property class.

Council appreciates and takes seriously any unresolved issues brought forward. Please contact the RM Office by telephone, contact the Reeve or Division Councillor, write a letter or send an email with your question or concerns. We ensure a response will be sent to all inquiries. Any resident is welcome to attend RM meetings as they are open to the public. To address Council, an appointment is required. If interested, please contact the RM office to make arrangements.

**Alan Evans**

## Council and Employee Changes

### **Council**

Reeve: Alan Evans

Div 1: Chris Hovdebo  
Div 2: Kyle Jensen  
Div 3: Steven Adams  
Div 4: Ted Boutin  
Div 5: Dean Manson  
Div 6: Leyton Elsaesser

Administrator:  
Shirley Pratchler

Office Assistant:  
Cherie Opseth

On Saturday, December 6, 2014, one staff member and two Councillors were recognized for their service to the RM.

Gaylen Torgunrud was recognized for 30 years of service as a member of the Public Works Staff. The RM sincerely thanks Gaylen for his hard work and dedication.

Gerald Olsen and Greg Cochet were recognized for serving as Councillors. Gerald represented

Division 6 from 1986-2014. Greg Cochet represented Division 4 from 2009-2014. The RM sincerely thanks both Gerald and Greg for their contributions to the RM.

2014 was an election year for Divisions 2, 4 and 6. Kyle Jensen was acclaimed as Division 2 Councillor. Ted Boutin was elected in Division 4 and Leyton Elsaesser was elected in Division 6.

The next municipal election will be October 2016 for Reeve, and Divisions 1, 3 and 5 Councillors.

### **Staffing:**

Gaylen Torgunrud, Todd Devenis, Pat Lepine and Vic Doderai all continue to provide excellent service to the RM in the Public Works Department. Gerald Holmgren returned in the grader for a short time and Brian Evans started in a seasonal role in mid-June.

**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.*

**WEED****CONTROL**

*Barry Swanson continues to serve as Weed Inspector for the RM. Please contact the RM office if you are having issues with prohibited, noxious or nuisance weeds.*



Please report any suspicious activity to the RCMP; even the smallest tip can help an investigation.

**Coxby Road**

The four party land exchange agreement regarding Coxby Road has been signed by all the required parties and the title for the road is in the process of being transferred to the Province and RM.

The RM now has 'care and control' of the portion of the road that crosses

Muskoday First Nation from the intersection of Hwy No. 3 to New England Road. RM staff have completed a heavy pull and reshaping of the road and gravel has been applied.

An application was previously submitted for Clearing the Path designation and it has

been conditionally approved. With this designation, the RM is eligible for yearly maintenance funding for the entire 18.5 km of Coxby that crosses the RM of Birch Hills. It is anticipated that there will be less traffic on Lake Park Road now that Coxby has been improved and regularly maintained.

**Items of Interest:****Public Works Training:**

The Public Works Staff and Council took part in a two day workshop this spring to learn the latest techniques for maintaining the municipal roads. All attending the workshop found the information to be beneficial and the new knowledge has been implemented as part of our road maintenance practices.

**Fire Protection:**

The RM jointly owns the Volunteer Fire Department with the Town of Birch Hills. This only provides for the

costs associated with having the Fire Department trained and equipped to respond to calls 24/7. **RM residents are responsible for the charges associated with the Fire Department responding to a call and are encouraged to carry firefighting insurance.**

**\*\*Please remember to call the Control Burn number prior to starting all control burns @ 866-404-4911 to avoid unnecessary charges.\*\***

**Road Signs:**

Efforts are being made to replace faded and

knocked down signs, let the office know if we've missed any.

**Frost Boils/Tire Shred:**

The RM is using Tire Derived Aggregate (shredded used tires) as a replacement for pit run gravel to repair frost boils in our roads. Tire shred reduces frost penetration, has good drainage qualities and is lightweight while being a cost effective alternative to using pit run for such repairs. The areas repaired in 2014 are showing good results with this product.

**For Your Information ...**

**Receipts:** To reduce postage costs, please indicate if you require your receipts mailed to you when you make payment to the RM. The receipt can be emailed or faxed if you need a copy for your files.

**Financial Statement:**

The 2014 audited financial statement is available at the RM office or on the RM's website.

**Waste Disposal:** A reminder that a \$150 one-time payments per site is available to ratepayers who have set up their

own waste disposal site – contact the RM office for further details.

**SAMA:** Questions about the assessment of your property? Visit SAMAView at [www.sama.sk.ca](http://www.sama.sk.ca) to view your property details.