

MILESTONES

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

2019



Photograph courtesy of Travel Alberta

Lesser Slave River
MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF LESSER SLAVE RIVER #0124

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Lesser Slave Lake. Courtesy of Travel Alberta.

 Instagram

RUGGED AND REAL ADVENTURES.

#EXPLORELSR

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MESSAGE FROM YOUR CAO

“Lesser Slave River aims to be affordable to profit-focused businesses, farmers and homeowners alike by being open for business, and by reducing red tape in our planning and development process while protecting public interest.”



ALLAN WINARSKI
Chief Administrator Officer

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Ice is coming off Lesser Slave Lake early this year. At the writing of this message, ice has also been off many of our streams for a few weeks already. To be certain, dry weather conditions and stagnant economic growth combined with a new provincial government introduce elements of uncertainty for Lesser Slave River. However, with a healthy

dose of optimism we hope for sun to enjoy our lakes and the great outdoors; rain to grow the crops and dampen the forests; Enbridge Line 3 and Trans Mountain Pipelines to enable upstream hydrocarbon opportunities; and a provincial government partner focused on infrastructure repairs and reduced regulatory obstacles.

Despite some significant energy industry write-offs for taxation, the financial position of Lesser Slave River remains strong.

Once again, the composition of energy activity and the diversity offered by the forest sector has spared Lesser Slave River. As a result, impacts to service delivery — such as how fast we maintain our road infrastructure — have not been impacted. Comparatively, this economic diversity has not been the case for other rural municipalities in Alberta. To date, we have been fortunate in this regard.

Be found when it matters most. Get on the Grid.

Earlier this year, Council asked itself what it could do to enhance sustainability. How does (or how should) Lesser Slave River differentiate itself so that it can continue to be a prosperous region within Alberta? What does Council really control? The answers to these important questions came from a focus on lifestyle and incremental growth in assessment for right-sized municipal services that do not denigrate the experience for those of us already living here.

Later in this issue, a discussion about the Lesser Slave River Economic Development Growth Policy is presented. Essentially, Lesser Slave River aims to be affordable to profit-focused businesses, farmers and homeowners alike by

being open for business, and by reducing red tape in our planning and development process while protecting the public interest. At our core, we seek to preserve and enhance our status as a place where people want to live and work.

I'd like to give a shout out to our citizens who braved last June's flooding. Nobody likes high water lapping at their properties. Witnessing teamwork, neighbours helping neighbours, and volunteers pitching in the way they did makes me proud to be a Northerner. Fingers crossed; we will not experience such conditions this year. Regardless, efforts are underway to obtain assistance for flood planning and mitigation through the provincial government. This

assistance is critical for Marten Beach and Eating Creek areas of the Municipal District.

Given that we reside in a wilderness where flood and fire are a part of the fabric of our lives, I urge all of you reading this message to provide your current contact information to the MD (including your cell phone number) so that our Emergency Notification System can alert you to emergency or critical information. To "Get on the Grid" as we call it, please visit mdlr.ca/Get-on-the-Grid. Rest assured, we are not spammers at the MD. If we are calling you with this system, you can be certain the information is important.

As always, I thank Council for their governance, and of course the hard-working staff of Lesser Slave River. I know that I am very fortunate to work with both groups. ***Now...let's enjoy summer!***

— Allan Winarski
Chief Administrative Officer





MURRAY KERIK
Reeve

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“

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all MD employees and administrative staff for their steadfast commitment to the Council members and communities of our great rugged-and-real municipality.

”

INTERVIEW WITH YOUR REEVE

06

Q: How has this new Council term differed from the others?

“The Council we have now makes me very proud to be involved. Each member contributes to discussions in Council chambers with an honest, intent focus on making good decisions. We don’t always agree on everything, but once a motion is passed, we all support it.”

Q: What have you helped accomplish this term as Reeve?

“This first part of the term has involved wrapping up many of the MD’s legacy recovery

programs while dealing with emerging issues like the flooding we’ve seen in the communities of Eating Creek and Marten Beach.”

Q: How have your Community Council sessions been received by the public?

“These sessions have been well-received by the community members who have attended. When we bring Council sessions into the hamlets, the atmosphere is casual, and agendas are largely focused on the host community. We plan to continue these Community Council sessions on an

ongoing basis, and we’d like to foster even stronger public attendance. We welcome all comers, from the idly curious to those wishing to participate.”

Q: Are there any issues Council is focused on this year in particular?

“Our MD has exceptional potential. At the Council table, we need to ensure this potential can be easily tapped into. This means facilitating growth and diversification by way of land use planning — the rules of which are reflected in our Land Use Bylaw. We continue to push for Land Use Policy review, and we’re making decent progress. At some point soon we will be engaging the public for their valued input on this issue.”

DID YOU KNOW THE MD REGULARLY POSTS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LATEST COUNCIL MEETING ON YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY KIOSK?

Q: There is a lot of talk about intermunicipal cooperation. What is that about?

"Intermunicipal cooperation is one critical area where we are far ahead of most municipalities. One shining example is our Tri-Council collaboration with the Town of Slave Lake and Sawridge First Nation. We continue to work steadfastly with our neighbours including Big Lakes, Athabasca, Westlock, Woodlands, Opportunity and Northern Sunrise on agreements."

Q: What are some of the MD's biggest challenges to mitigate/overcome?

"Some of our capital projects have been placed on hold until the economy recovers. Freezes on assessment modifiers and increased costs from the carbon tax have not helped either. The already-high costs of resource road maintenance and bridge repairs appear to be climbing, so we hope the provincial government will realize where their royalties come from and assist more in this regard."

Q: Why is the MD spending more on road infrastructure this year?

"Over the last few years we have increased gravelling programs and ditch pulls. The schedule we had been using was setting us further behind, which would have led to much higher costs in the future had we not remedied it. Our new program is costing more at present, but will save us considerable money in the future."

Maintaining infrastructure while remaining fiscally prudent is a never-ending balancing act. Much time is spent on budget as our assessment is shrinking, which reduces our finances. Council works hard to continue to deliver services to our residents without forcing big tax increases."

Q: If you could change one thing in Lesser Slave River, what would it be?

"Our rural municipality is special because of the parts that DON'T change, like our enviable natural assets or the close-knit fabric of our communities. Our job on Council is to preserve

these aspects of the MD while evolving processes to help our region do business better, and to attract newcomers to Lesser Slave River. I am excited about the economic development initiatives we have begun to help us achieve these goals"

Q: What does the future of Lesser Slave River look like to you?

"I believe we have a Council that cares about our future, and a staff that never fails to work above and beyond requirements to steward our region and satisfy the needs of its residents. With continued fiscal restraint and resourcefulness, I am confident we will weather this economic downturn while continuing to cement our MD's stellar reputation in the eyes of the rest of Alberta."

Council represents the interests of everyone in the community.

Council meetings are held the second and fourth Wednesday of each month and are open to the public.



COUNCILLOR BECKY PEIFFER

Division 1

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"I am very proud to live, work and play in this region, and I am especially honoured to serve its people. I am particularly proud of the working partnership we've developed with the Town of Slave Lake, and of our successes in intermunicipal agreement. The upcoming Land Use Bylaw changes are a priority for me. It's vital that we make zoning and development as fast, painless and practical as possible. These refinements, coupled with low taxes, will attract and retain families and businesses. I will also continue to advocate for the safety and stability of our roadways — a major ongoing concern."



COUNCILLOR ROBERT ESAU

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"Faced with challenging economic conditions and expanding demands on resources, fiscal matters grow more challenging each year. Despite these realities, we have maintained a balanced budget with minimal tax increases. This monumental achievement has been reached while maintaining normal service levels (and even managing to upgrade many facilities). A shining example of working with my fellow Councillors and MD administrators to achieve meaningful outcomes. Together we make a great team."



COUNCILLOR SANDRA MELZER

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"Now well into my first term, I have a much better understanding of the MD, its moving parts, and how best to work with municipal entities to the net benefit of our region. I am a strong proponent of sustainability; a goal I feel is achieved through our schools and communities, and through robust economic development activities. To achieve these goals, Council is strengthening its commitments to work collaboratively and share resources with our municipal neighbours. We will also continue to lobby the provincial government for any available funding to support our goals."

REACH OUT TO YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLOR TO
SEE HOW YOU CAN HELP INFLUENCE THE GROWTH
AND PROSPERITY OF YOUR COMMUNITY.



**COUNCILLOR
BRIAN ROSCHE**

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"Between flood damage at Marten Beach and Eating Creek, Widewater Complex renovations, and the unbudgeted costs to rehabilitate the MD admin building, 2018 was a year of challenge. The 2019 budget required serious belt-tightening as Council dealt with declining revenues and trimmed more than \$2 million from the budget while keeping tax increases minimal. Looking ahead, our biggest challenge will be how oil and gas markets impact MD revenue through taxes, linear assessment and government grants. Difficult financial decisions lay ahead for Council, but also new opportunities."



**COUNCILLOR
BRAD PEARSON**

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"I believe every hamlet within our boundaries deserves a community hall, good roads, recreational opportunities, and essential services — all which form the foundation of a comfortable lifestyle with the potential to attract and retain families and businesses. To this end, partnering with our municipal neighbours makes sense on many levels. Our excellent working relationship with the Town of Slave Lake is one such example. In these challenging economic times, we must also ensure our voice is heard at the provincial level to leverage funding opportunities and influence policy."



**COUNCILLOR
JEFF COMMINS**

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"The year was marked by numerous challenges, from floods, washouts and power outages to unforeseen building repairs and project overruns. Despite these setbacks, Council forged ahead to focus on the issues at hand. We are living proof of the adage 'that which does not kill you makes you stronger.' I am eager to make progress on the Land Use Bylaw, and I hope to hear from residents during this process. Given the current political and market uncertainties, I believe now more than ever we must think outside the box and work together to forge a resilient and prosperous local economy."

Our special part of THE

Key segments along The Great Trail

The Trans Canada Trail (coined *The Great Trail* in 2016) lays claim to the world's longest network of recreational trails. It offers a wide range of activities through diverse landscapes: wilderness, greenways, blueways, urban, rural and roadways.

Once complete, The Great Trail will stretch nearly 24,000 km from the Atlantic to the Pacific and Arctic oceans, linking Canadians in more than a thousand communities. To download a map showing the segments of The Great Trail across the Lesser Slave Region, visit mdlsr.ca/Great-Trail, or simply take a look at page 31 of this magazine.



GREENWAY TRAIL NORTHSHORE TRAIL

1

The Northshore Trail is 21 km.

Starting at Marten Beach and winding westward, this key Trans Canada Trail connector supports a wide variety of pursuits like hiking, biking, quadding, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, snowmobiling and more.

mdlsr.ca/Greenway-Trail

THE GREAT TRAIL

Lesser Slave River's contribution to Canada's recreational trail system provides a multitude of activities for all.



GREENWAY TRAIL FREIGHTER LAKESHORE TRAIL

2

The Freighter Lakeshore Trail is 18 km.

Leading from Marten Beach into the Town of Slave Lake, this trail runs through Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park. The trail boasts spectacular views and allows unpowered leisure activities like hiking, cycling, snowshoeing and skiing.

mdlr.ca/Greenway-Trail



BLUEWAY TRAIL LESSER SLAVE RIVER BLUEWAY TRAIL

3

The Lesser Slave River Blueway Trail is 65 km.

This portion of The Great Trail is actually the connected waterways of the Lesser Slave, Otauwau, Fawcett and Saulteaux Rivers. The Blueway Trail runs from the weir on the Lesser Slave River to Smith and ends at the Athabasca River, where the Moose Portage to Smith Trail begins.

mdlr.ca/Blueway-Trail

*True to its name, **The Great Trail** embodies the vastness of our terrain and the diversity of our people.*



ROADWAY TRAIL
MOOSE PORTAGE TO SMITH TRAIL

4

The Moose Portage to Smith Trail is 24 km

This scenic trail connects the Peace River Trail to Smith and the Athabasca River via municipal roads that wind through varied landscape such as farmland and boreal forest. Both ends of this trail are accessible by vehicle.



GREENWAY TRAIL
PEACE RIVER TRAIL

5

The Peace River Trail is 35 km in MDLSR/25 km in Athabasca County

Beginning at Sawty, north of the Town of Athabasca, this trail runs through a stunning wilderness full of native flora and fauna and views of the Athabasca River. Moose, elk, deer, black bear and boreal mammals are abundant.

We're proud of the work

we're doing to make

Lesser Slave River *even* better

IN ADOPTING ITS NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROWTH POLICY, LESSER SLAVE RIVER IS EXPLORING NEW BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES WHILE BOLSTERING COMMUNITY SERVICES AND ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE.

Hewing opportunity out of the boreal landscape is second nature to the people of Lesser Slave River. The intrepid spirit of those who founded farms, built businesses and raised families in generations gone by remains to this day. With a renewed focus on economic development, MD Council and administration have embarked upon a path to help this spirit thrive.

The Economic Development Growth Policy was adopted by Council in late January, with the

twin goals of making it easier for regional businesses to conduct business and positioning the region as an attractive work/live/play destination. To achieve the first goal the MD plans to implement efficiencies wherever possible, from minimizing red tape and other administrative roadblocks to maintaining low development levies and fees to developers. Additionally, the MD will continue to do its utmost to maintain low rates of taxation for every sector of the community, from the agricultural producer or small business owner to the average tax paying citizen.

Another tenet of the Economic Development Growth Policy is the move to introduce fees for service. While incrementally injecting capital back into the MD, these types of fees will encourage users of these services to adapt their behaviour in accordance with what they actually consume.

MD administrators have already begun to flesh out some of the underpinnings of the new policy, such as setting growth priorities, formulating destination

marketing strategies, and setting aside appropriate resources to further differentiate this unique boreal region apart from the rest of northern Alberta.

As the MD lays down its economic development groundwork, it plans to communicate and coordinate these activities with its regional partners wherever it makes sense to do so. This type of intermunicipal collaboration lends itself especially well to the MD's economic growth plans as collective knowledge, resources or political influence can be leveraged to the net benefit of all communities involved.

With this new framework, MD administrators plan to create a common vision to strengthen Lesser Slave River's business community, enhance its tourism opportunities, and ultimately grow its economic base. The overarching goal is to create new assessment for taxation that will sustain right-sized municipal services and infrastructure, and further support a quality of life unrivalled in other rural regions.



Rural Beautification

Meeting the needs of a diverse community.

Founded in the fall of 2011, Lesser Slave River's Rural Services department provides essential programs and services designed to preserve the beauty of the region, and to positively impact the quality of life of its residents. One of the ways this essential department helps the municipality is by keeping its community infrastructure well-maintained, and by cultivating the natural elements around it.

Under the direction of Rural Services Director Russ Jassman and Rural Services Supervisor Tim Wright, the Rural Services Landscape Crew performs

many duties — but with one common goal: to balance natural assets with man-made elements to help locals and visitors alike enjoy the region's abundant beauty to its fullest. This department works year-round on a variety of new and legacy projects, but it is the spring and summer months when their hard work and artistry really shows. From May to August, nine seasonal crew members are added to the ranks as they mow, trim, sweep, plant, weed and generally groom their way across the dozens of parks, community facilities and viewpoints that dot the MD landscape.

The Landscape Crew is tasked with a spectrum of duties ranging from routine inspections, maintenance and repairs of MD-managed facilities to mowing, watering and weed control of parks and playgrounds.

The MD's collection of community information kiosks (and soon-to-be-installed tourism kiosks) are also the purview of the Landscape Crew. In addition to general landscape care, each of these structures is adorned with tasteful floral arrangements courtesy of the department's Flower Beautification program. This

Get to know the crew that keeps the MD looking its best.

To learn more about Rural Services many programs and initiatives, mdlr.ca/Rural-Services.

As the municipality continues to evolve, Council recognizes more than ever the need for a dedicated department that encompasses and preserves the many different aspects of rural living.

program also extends to the main administrative office and Flatbush sub-office grounds.

At first glance, the MD's playgrounds are relatively basic structures — but they need to be inspected and maintained by Rural Services in order to receive annual certification. Presently, this includes the Canyon Creek Wildfire Legacy Park and Playground, Widewater Fire Hall Park and Playground, and Flatbush Community Hall Playground.

When they're not planting or cultivating vegetation, the Rural Services Landscape Crew is busy keeping it at bay. Each season, extensive weeding and trimming takes place at all MD-managed parks, ball diamonds and walking trails. This is also

the team that performs ditch mowing and trimming in all of the MD hamlets, as well as vegetation management around all traffic signs and guardrails on the municipal road infrastructure — a seemingly never-ending task if there ever was one.

One of the newer beautification initiatives adopted by Rural Services is its Bench Dedication Program. Under the terms of this program, wood and concrete park benches are placed at scenic locales in the MD. Each commemorative bench is accompanied by a bronze plaque with a personal message, and offset by tasteful hardscaping and floral arrangements. It can mark the memory of a friend or family member, celebrate a birthday

or anniversary, or observe any other type of significant event. This program provides visitors with a tranquil place for reflection, and pays homage to memories and moments in time, while beautifying the MD's rural landscape.

As the MD continues to evolve, so too does the importance of the Rural Services department and its seasonal landscape crew. Through their diligent work and attention to detail, these individuals help beautify our communities, fostering a pride-of-place felt by those who venture to our rugged-and-real region — whether for a short visit or a lifetime.



SPOT SOMETHING NOT QUITE RIGHT? ALERT THE MD STAFF QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY. SUBMIT THE ONLINE ACTION TRACKER FORM.

Municipal employees work hard to keep the region running smoothly, but they can't be everywhere at once... and there's a lot of ground to cover in Lesser Slave River. Often, the eyes and ears of residents can be the MD's first sign that something's wrong. The *Municipal Action Tracker* system is designed as a quick, convenient and confidential way for the public to bring issues to the attention of different Lesser Slave River departments. From potholes and road kill to property matters, simply submit the form available online at mdlsr.ca/Action-Tracker and your issue will be escalated in accordance to its severity and available resources.



Transportation and Infrastructure Services

Maintaining momentum of Lesser Slave River's progress

Lesser Slave River's Transportation and Infrastructure department maintains the region's extensive network of roads, bridges and transportation infrastructure. We repair, rehabilitate and maintain MD roadways by way of roadside brushing, gravelling, sanding, grading and snowplowing. This department is responsible for the construction and maintenance of a wide spectrum of public infrastructure projects.

Road maintenance continues into 2019 with a full schedule of planned work to be done. Hot oil projects for the year ahead include 3.4km along the Old Smith Highway from River Hill to west Fawcett; 2.3km from east Mitsue to the Old Smith Highway; and 1.8km from the west end of Southshore Drive east to Highway 2.

The MD-wide rural addressing project is on its final push to completion by private sector contract service providers. This initiative was undertaken to bring the MD's legacy system into alignment with its municipal partners and provincial standards. The last signs have been ordered for those missed or incorrectly labeled, with a plan in place to install these signs in the near future. The information

has been uploaded to the Alberta Municipal Data Sharing Partnership, ensuring parity with our municipal neighbours.

Each member of this team works diligently to address ratepayer concerns in a timely and appropriate manner. Of the nearly 700 action requests submitted by residents in 2018, 84% were cleared. This represents an average of three action requests addressed each work day. **Action requests are typically unbudgeted items that Transportation and Infrastructure works to dovetail into other projects and operations.** Residents

are thanked for their patience and cooperation as this work is conducted, and are reminded that limits to the annual

In its many roles and responsibilities, this vital department strives to preserve, enhance and develop the MD’s extensive municipal infrastructure.

budget and resources of this department may factor into completion timelines.

While customer service is a paramount consideration

for Transportation and Infrastructure, it becomes increasingly difficult to assess or resolve issues when they become embellished or exaggerated. All MD vehicles and equipment are GPS-equipped, enabling crews to quickly confirm — or rule out — any given issue. With these occurrences, however, the department must work to filter out mere wants from urgent needs, which itself strains already limited resources. When residents are succinct and factual in their requests, crews can be more efficient in their response.

Water and Utilities

The numbers below indicate monthly distribution flows in cubic meters for the four Lesser Slave River communities.

MONTHS	POPLAR LANE		SMITH		FLATBUSH		CANYON CREEK	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
January	2,415	2,287	3,966	4,155	155	106	10,462	9,595
February	2,140	2,057	4,008	4,131	128	88	7,859	8,525
March	2,285	2,283	4,292	3,946	129	120	8,811	10,332
April	2,187	2,031	3,636	4,018	140	139	8,930	9,050
May	2,681	3,004	5,333	5,723	207	210	11,104	13,234
June	2,815	2,696	4,064	4,785	216	189	13,079	12,278
July	2,665	2,866	4,271	4,790	180	164	11,432	12,445
August	2,778	3,019	4,135	4,055	133	166	10,598	11,895
September	2,567	2,289	4,000	3,310	153	120	9,344	10,392
October	2,320	2,230	3,746	3,606	155	126	9,778	10,569
November	2,231	1,977	3,443	3,605	114	119	8,975	9,835
December	2,255	2,115	3,741	3,663	126	122	9,491	10,530
TOTAL	29,339	28,854	48,635	49,787	1,836	1,699	119,863	128,680



Why is a census so important?

Municipal Census

MAY 1 – JUNE 30, 2019

Because when it comes to provincial and federal grant funding, each MD citizen represents a set dollar amount.

When our MD population numbers are up-to-date, maximum grant dollars can be leveraged toward community programs and services. A new online census is being conducted May 1st to June 30th, and your input is vital. Keep an eye on your mail for your personal

ID number — a requirement for the online census. Submit your online census before May 15th and be entered to win a Fitbit Versa Smartwatch! Door-to-door and phone census campaigns will run May 16th to June 30th.

*You could win
a Fitbit Versa
Smartwatch...*

Submit online

MD of Lesser Slave River
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Municipal Census Coordinator

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mdlsr.ca/Municipal-Census





Agricultural Services

2018 PROVED CHALLENGING FOR AREA PRODUCERS. We saw a drastic production year due to fluctuating weather conditions; smoke filled skies that hampered crop maturation; and a very short harvest season. These setbacks affected not just producers, but all who call our rugged-and-real region home. Through dedication, perseverance and cooperation, a relatively good harvest was achieved in the field, the pasture and the backyard. However, this stressful year placed undue pressure on our rural community, as evidenced by the Agricultural Service Board's broadcast of a 24/7 mental health contact number to all area residents. This first step of awareness provided a starting point for spirit, communication and cooperation within our rural community where family and friends supported each other throughout the fall and winter months. During this turmoil, the ASB hosted its 16th annual Fall Social — an overwhelming success for area sponsors, contributors and attendees. The "Luau" (a much-needed break) proved enlightening and refreshing

Cooperation, partnership and extension of municipal agricultural informational services plays a vital role in 2018.

for the 300 or so attendees, providing "a time to recharge," as one attendee aptly commented.

One key outcome of ASB efforts can be seen in the cooperation and partnership of our unique Weed Control Partnership Program that was utilized fully in 2018. A total of 760 acres of prohibited noxious and noxious weed species were eradicated or controlled. More than 30 landowners and producers took part, and \$14,500 was reimbursed to participants for their dedicated partnership. This program will be continuing into the future, and may even be expanded. Through the cooperation of area landowners and producers, 424 formal weed inspections/contacts were achieved without the need for a formal notice issued.

Area canola producers provided excellent cooperation with MD

inspectors and the Provincial Inspector. Of all 47 parcels surveyed, no signs were found. It is evident that producers are following good management practices to minimize the spread of clubroot in canola.

Moving forward, the ASB has prioritized communication and the extension of agricultural informational services. It is in this spirit that the inaugural "Rural Roots" newsletter was produced, featuring expanded ag-focused content and distributed via mail, social media and the MD website. Additionally, a Livestock Antibiotics Use Workshop was hosted in November, and will be followed by additional topic workshops to be held in the upcoming months. Watch for these upcoming opportunities at mdlsr.ca/Agriculture.

Waste Management

How long until it's gone?

Nearly *all* plastic made still exists.



450+ Years
Plastic Bottles



10-500 Years
Plastic Bags



30 Years
Takeaway Coffee
Cups



50 Years
Styrofoam Cups
and Boxes



200 Years
Plastic Straws



50 Years
Wax Milk Cartons

Why so long?

Because plastic is made from oil, *it contains no naturally-occurring materials*. This means that micro-organisms responsible for breaking down food and paper waste can't digest plastic.

Over a very long time, plastic does degrade via a process known as photodegradation (the breakdown of plastic molecules due to long exposure to the sun's UV light).

So even though a plastic straw is said to take 200 years to break down, *it will never truly go away*; it will degrade into smaller and smaller pieces of plastic.

Let's all do our part, learn how at: mdlsr.ca/Waste-Management.

Source: NOAA, US/Woods Hole Sea Grant

**We seek individuals
with a solid work ethic
and a *genuine passion* for
customer service**

Human Resources. We truly value and respect our employees for the diversity of skill, experience and knowledge they bring to the organization. To cultivate a corporate culture that attracts and retains great people, we provide a work environment that acknowledges and rewards participation, teamwork and commitment to excellent customer service. We've worked hard to develop a healthy and flexible workplace that encourages employees to think strategically, work collaboratively and champion new ideas. Lesser Slave River strives to offer a progressive workplace with opportunities to grow and develop staff through ongoing training and development while also supporting work-life balance. To learn more, check out mdlsr.ca/Careers.





What's the Purpose of our Community Kiosks?

Dotted throughout Lesser Slave River in places like Wagner, Marten Beach and Flatbush, these landmarks provide community context, local news and goodwill galore!

Lesser Slave River 2020 Calendar

The 2020 Lesser Slave River calendar will be available at the MD Slave Lake and Flatbush offices late fall. Each month of the year is accompanied by a full-page photo of our rugged-and-real region. With stunning pics and plenty of room to jot down important dates, you'll be sure to pin this on your wall with pride! Keep an eye open for its release date, mdlr.ca/News.

Did you know that the MD regularly posts highlights from the latest Council meetings? Or that there's a large public space on the flip side for residents and business owners to post messages of their very own?

With a fresh facelift and more structures recently installed, these kiosks provide local knowledge and timely information for both community residents and seasonal visitors to the area.

Community kiosks feature information that is not likely to change (such as community noise protocols or OHV regulations) as well as more timely MD news that can be replaced on a regular basis. The MD also aims to educate the public that, during any emergency event that curtails electronic or broadcast messaging, the signage cabinets will remain current with important news.

In addition, a large public space on the flip side of the community kiosks invites local residents and business owners to post messages of their own. Please do not post anything on the front of the kiosks.



The third largest park in Alberta, Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park features the longest stretch of sandy beach in Western Canada

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITOR ON THE FINANCIAL SUMMARY

To the Reeve and Council of the
Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No. 124

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No. 124 (the Municipal District), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2018, and the statements of operations and accumulated surplus, changes in net financial assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information. In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Municipal District as at December 31, 2018, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Municipal District in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with those requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Information

Management is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, but does not include the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The Annual Report is expected to be made available to us after the date of this auditors' report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Municipal District's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Municipal District or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so. Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Municipal District's financial reporting process.

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but it is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Municipal District's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Municipal District's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditors' report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditors' report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Municipal District to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

METRIX GROUP LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants
EDMONTON, ALBERTA APRIL 10, 2019

Full financial statements are available for viewing on the municipal government website, mdlr.ca/Finance. A hardcopy is available at the Municipal District Administration Office in Slave Lake.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

DECEMBER 31, 2018

	2018 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL
FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Cash and temporary investments	\$10,573,312	\$21,305,963
Receivables		
Taxes and grants in lieu of taxes	420,957	365,628
Trade and other receivables	1,766,288	721,459
Other long-term receivables	938,144	1,099,107
Debt charges recoverable	2,250,005	2,484,783
Investments	14,184,627	19,409,797
	30,133,333	45,386,737
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	3,467,761	1,747,720
Deposit liabilities	331,288	344,275
Deferred revenue	2,209,204	16,167,629
Employee benefit obligations	168,160	239,661
Liability for contaminated sites	338,210	338,210
Long-term debt	4,828,190	5,325,368
	11,342,813	24,162,863
	18,790,520	21,223,874
NET FINANCIAL ASSETS		
NON-FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Tangible capital assets	111,546,511	97,714,615
Inventory of consumption	1,741,339	1,290,870
Prepaid expense	216,161	212,464
	113,504,011	99,217,949
	\$132,294,531	\$120,441,823
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS		

Did you Know?

The MD's assets are property owned, controlled and/or used by local governments. These assets are managed directly or indirectly for the benefit of constituents to achieve local service delivery goals. The MD had assets valued at just under **\$112 MILLION** at the end of 2018:

LAND	\$2,734,801	
ENGINEERED STRUCTURES	\$64,044,828	
BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES	\$20,200,877	
MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT	\$4,214,212	
VEHICLES	\$800,059	
WORK IN PROGRESS	\$19,551,734	

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND ACCUMULATED SURPLUS

DECEMBER 31, 2018	2018 BUDGET	2018 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL
REVENUE			
Net municipal property taxes	\$13,266,734	\$13,271,922	\$12,849,666
User fees and sales of goods	1,408,110	1,611,608	1,473,764
Government transfers	752,474	897,987	765,041
Investment income	492,900	836,962	670,107
Penalties and costs of taxes	113,000	176,005	110,317
Licenses and permits	39,500	40,064	29,064
Other	96,000	590,413	311,923
TOTAL REVENUE	16,168,718	17,424,961	16,209,882
EXPENSES			
Legislative	274,200	282,417	286,549
Administration	2,973,418	3,088,130	2,445,853
Protective services	1,308,183	1,575,563	1,345,103
Roads, streets, walks, lighting	10,708,430	9,299,166	8,839,735
Common services	1,769,924	1,822,917	1,591,318
Water supply and distribution	2,350,587	2,341,483	2,011,758
Wastewater treatment and disposal	1,634,619	1,518,383	1,496,730
Waste management	383,077	364,922	628,460
Family and community support	103,636	100,460	92,261
Agriculture, planning and development	1,039,598	951,514	858,627
Parks, recreation, culture	786,104	742,759	1,081,922
Inter-municipal cost sharing	450,000	1,011,434	415,057
TOTAL EXPENSES	23,781,776	23,099,148	21,093,373
ANNUAL SURPLUS (deficiency) BEFORE OTHER REVENUE	(7,613,058)	(5,674,187)	(4,883,491)
OTHER REVENUE			
Government transfers for capital	1,776,909	17,369,480	4,055,400
Gain (loss) on disposal of tangible capital assets	318,150	157,415	(45,755)
	2,095,059	17,526,895	4,009,645
ANNUAL SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(5,517,999)	11,852,708	(873,846)
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$120,441,823	\$120,441,823	\$121,315,669
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS AT END OF YEAR	\$114,923,824	\$132,294,531	\$120,441,823

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

DECEMBER 31, 2018

Net cash inflow (outflow) related to following:

OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2018 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL
Annual surplus	\$11,852,708	(\$873,846)
Non-cash items included in annual surplus:		
Amortization of tangible capital assets	6,986,533	6,756,404
(Gain) loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	(157,415)	45,755
Net change in non-cash operating working capital balances:		
Decrease (increase) in taxes and grants in place	(55,329)	19,805
Decrease (increase) in trade and other receivables	(1,044,829)	(110,206)
Decrease (increase) in long-term receivables	160,963	214,070
Decrease (increase) in debt changes recoverable	234,778	(2,434,783)
Decrease (increase) in prepaid expenses	(3,697)	(8,063)
Decrease (increase) in inventory for consumption	(450,469)	181,729
Increase (decrease) in accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,720,041	(332,700)
Increase (decrease) in deposit liabilities	(12,987)	16,535
Increase (decrease) in deferred revenue	(13,958,425)	(2,455,270)
Increase (decrease) in employee benefit obligations	(71,501)	31,087
Increase (decrease) in reclamation liabilities	-	(73,400)
Increase in environmental liabilities	-	338,210
Cash provided by operating transactions:	5,200,371	1,265,327

CAPITAL ACTIVITIES

Purchase of tangible capital assets	(20,818,429)	(6,769,692)
Proceeds on disposal of tangible capital assets	157,415	122,059
Cash applied to capital transactions	(20,661,014)	(6,647,633)

FINANCING ACTIVITIES

Long-term debt issued	-	2,600,000
Long-term debt repaid	(497,178)	(397,782)
Cash provided by (applied to) financing transactions	(497,178)	2,202,219

INVESTING ACTIVITIES

Decrease (increase) in investments	5,225,170	19,489,933
Cash provided by (applied to) investing transactions	5,225,170	19,489,933

CHANGE IN CASH DURING THE YEAR

(10,732,651) 16,309,846

CASH AT BEGINNING OF YEAR

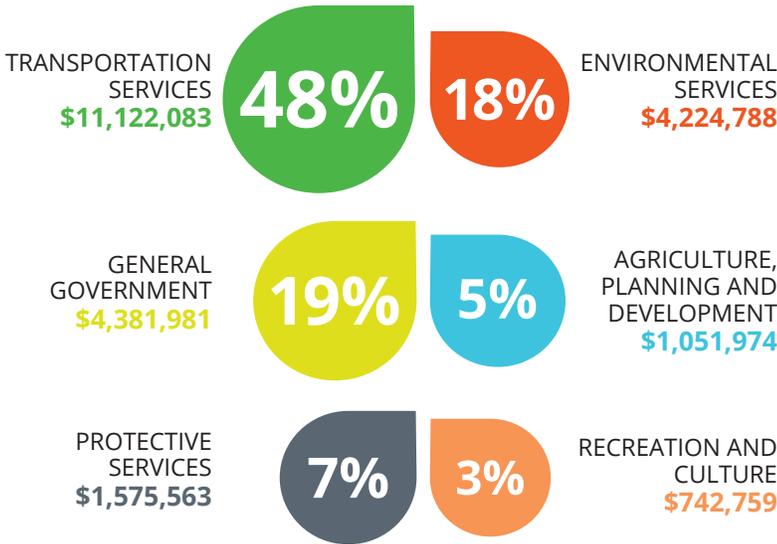
21,305,963 4,996,117

CASH AT END OF YEAR

\$10,573,312 **\$21,305,963**

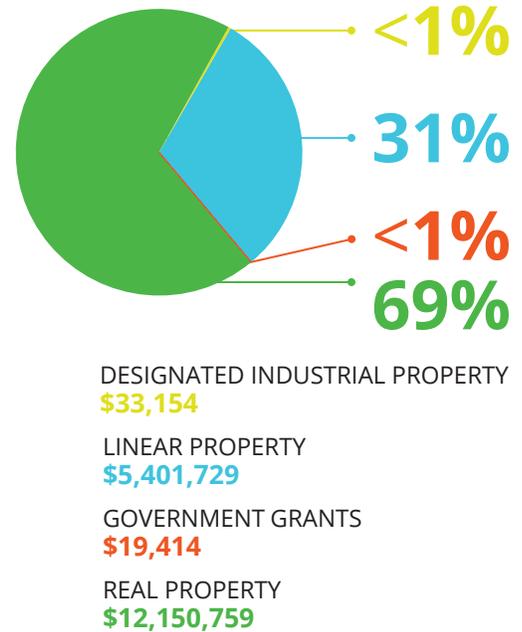
Municipal Expenditures

Almost everything the MD has a cost associated with it. Councillors spend a lot of time on making financial decisions. Their role is to safeguard the taxpayer's money and make the best use of financial resources.



Sources of Tax Revenue

Each sector represents the taxes paid in 2018 by assessment type in the MD.



STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN NET FINANCIAL ASSETS

DECEMBER 31, 2018

	2018 BUDGET	2018 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL
ANNUAL SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	(\$5,517,999)	\$11,852,708	(\$873,846)
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	(5,568,903)	(20,818,429)	(6,769,692)
Proceeds on disposal of tangible capital assets	318,150	157,415	122,059
Amortization of tangible capital assets	-	6,986,533	6,756,404
(Gain) loss on disposal of tangible capital assets	-	(157,415)	45,755
	(10,768,752)	(1,979,188)	154,526
Change in inventory for consumption	23,130	(450,469)	181,729
Change in prepaid expenses	-	(3,697)	(8,063)
	23,130	(454,166)	173,666
INCREASE (DECREASE) IN NET FINANCIAL ASSETS	(10,745,622)	(2,433,354)	(545,654)
NET FINANCIAL ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	21,223,874	21,223,874	21,769,528
NET FINANCIAL ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$10,478,252	\$18,790,520	\$21,223,874

Salary and Benefits Disclosure

Disclosure of salaries and benefits for Municipal Officials, the Chief Administrative Officer and designated Officers as required by **Alberta Regulation 313/2000** are as follows: Salary includes regular base pay, bonuses, overtime, lump sum payments, gross honoraria and any other direct cash remuneration. Benefits and allowances include the employer's share of all employee benefits and contributions or payments made on behalf of employees including pension, healthcare, dental coverage, vision coverage, group life insurance, accidental disability and disbursement insurance, long and short-term disability plans, professional memberships and tuition.

2018 SALARY AND BENEFITS DISCLOSURE

COUNCILLORS	SALARY ⁽¹⁾	BENEFITS and ALLOWANCES ⁽²⁾	2018 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL
Reeve Murray Kerik	\$35,050	\$253	\$35,303	\$34,303
Division 2: Jeff Commins	\$29,400	\$253	\$29,653	\$7,150
Division 1: Robert Esau	\$30,900	\$253	\$31,153	\$28,903
Division 1: Darren Fulmore	-	-	-	\$25,753
Division 1: Garry Horton	-	-	-	\$16,915
Division 1: Sandra Melzer	\$29,650	\$253	\$29,903	\$9,550
Division 2: Brad Pearson	\$29,400	\$253	\$29,653	\$36,403
Division 1: Becky Peiffer	\$27,220	\$253	\$27,473	\$5,400
Division 2: Brian Rosche	\$23,350	\$253	\$23,603	\$23,353
Division 2: Mike Skrynyk	-	-	-	\$24,253
Chief Administrative Officer	\$202,961	\$28,057	\$231,018	\$219,794
TOTAL	\$407,931	\$29,828	\$437,759	\$431,777

Project Accomplishments

2018, A YEAR IN REVIEW

PROJECT/PURCHASE	BUDGET	PROJECT/PURCHASE	BUDGET
Poplar Road Paving	\$150,000	Canyon Creek Arena Upgrade	\$325,900
Chisholm Pit Road	\$18,441	Main Administration Building	\$248,995
Smith Force Main and Lift Station	\$1,742,500	Flatbush Community Complex Stairlift	\$60,850
Smith Life Station Emergency Operator	\$80,000	Grader	\$450,000
Bridge Replacements	\$774,714	Loader	\$321,400
MD Signage	\$13,750	Utility, Lowboy and Landscape Trailers	\$107,500
Old Smity Highway Slide (Engineering)	\$250,000	GPS Tracking System and 2-way Radios	\$141,500
Widewater Complex Interior Renovations	\$451,000	Digital Orthophotography	\$181,620
Slave Lake Salt Shed Floor	\$107,250	10 Pick-up Truck and 1 SUV Replacements	\$468,000

SCHEDULE OF TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS

DECEMBER 31, 2018	LAND	ENGINEERED STRUCTURES	BUILDING and FACILITIES	MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT
COST				
BALANCE AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$2,733,201	\$150,249,345	\$34,378,340	\$9,810,917
Acquisition of tangible capital assets	1,600	146,452	857,258	950,919
Transfer in (out) of WIP	-	1,956,138	473,189	-
Disposals	-	-	-	(225,468)
BALANCE AT END OF YEAR	2,734,801	152,351,935	35,708,787	10,536,368
ACCUMULATED AMORTIZATION				
BALANCE AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	-	83,424,967	14,396,318	5,759,758
Annual amortization	-	4,882,140	1,111,592	787,866
Disposals	-	-	-	(225,468)
BALANCE AT END OF YEAR	-	88,307,107	15,507,910	6,322,156
NET BOOK VALUE OF TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS	2,734,801	64,044,828	20,200,877	4,214,212
2017 NET BOOK VALUE OF TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS	\$2,733,201	\$66,824,378	\$19,982,022	\$4,051,159

SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURES BY OBJECT

DECEMBER 31, 2018	2018 BUDGET (Note 22)	2018 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL
CONSOLIDATED EXPENSES BY OBJECT			
Salaries, wages and benefits	\$6,134,272	\$5,359,258	\$5,408,161
Contracted and general services	5,401,215	4,455,873	3,956,145
Materials, goods and utilities	3,315,990	3,267,318	2,820,983
Provision for allowances	248,176	660,301	65,284
Transfers to local boards and agencies	1,560,431	2,194,107	1,918,772
Bank charges and short-term interest	2,600	1,142	917
Interest on long-term debt	177,735	174,616	166,707
Amortization	6,941,357	6,986,533	6,756,404
TOTAL	\$23,781,776	\$23,099,148	\$21,093,373

VEHICLES	WORK IN PROGRESS	2018 ACTUAL	2017 ACTUAL
\$1,360,751	\$3,736,402	\$202,268,956	\$196,421,975
617,542	18,304,549	20,878,320	6,769,692
-	(2,429,327)	-	-
(386,225)	(59,890)	(671,583)	(922,711)
1,592,068	19,551,734	222,475,693	202,268,956
973,299	-	104,554,342	98,552,835
204,935	-	6,986,533	6,756,404
(386,225)	-	(611,693)	(754,897)
792,009	-	110,929,182	104,554,342
800,059	19,551,734	111,546,511	
\$387,452	\$3,736,402	-	\$97,714,615

Did you know the MD has?*

7 HAMLETS		49 BRIDGES 5 MAJOR, 19 STANDARD, 25 CULVERTS		4 FIRE HALLS	
74KM WATER MAINS	+	65KM WASTEWATER MAINS		699 ROADS MAINTAINED 27KM PAVEMENT, 676KM GRAVEL	
10,074KM² SIZE OF THE MD		131 FARMS		2 LOADERS	
1,168KM² SIZE OF THE LAKE		5 GRADERS	119,067 ACRES OF LAND UNDER AGRICULTURAL USE		
61 MD STAFF		11 MD COMMUNITY KIOSKS		DEVELOPMENT PERMITS 56 RECEIVED, 44 ISSUED	
SUBDIVISION APPLICATIONS 3 RECEIVED, 11 EXTENSIONS		10,258 CATTLE & CALVES		2 LAND USE BYLAW AMENDMENT APPLICATIONS	

Statistics as of December 2018





SCHOLARSHIP

2019 RUGGED & REAL

SUBMIT BY JUNE 28, 2019. The MD's **\$1,000 Rugged & Real Scholarship** is awarded annually to a deserving local student attending a post-secondary institution.

THE MD RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE AND VALUE of education and continued learning. In this spirit, the MD's Rugged & Real Scholarship Program is awarded annually to encourage and support our local students to pursue further educational opportunities. To be considered as an eligible candidate, applicants must be high school graduates and residents of the MD (can also be current seasonal staff of the MD, regardless of residence); provide evidence of acceptance to a post-secondary program for a trade, diploma or degree program; produce and provide a persuasive speech in the form of a written submission, or a short video/audio segment, and; provide a copy of their resume. For the Terms & Conditions, visit the municipal website, mdlsr.ca/Scholarships-Bursaries. Best of luck to all 2019 Rugged & Real Scholarship applicants!

The Trans Canada Trail

Trail Legend

- Greenway Trail
- Blueway Trail
- Roadway Trail

The Trans Canada Trail (coined **The Great Trail** in 2016) lays claim to the world's longest network of recreational trails. It offers a wide range of activities through diverse landscapes: wilderness, greenways, blueways, urban, rural and roadways.

Once complete, The Great Trail will stretch nearly 24,000 km from the Atlantic to the Pacific and Arctic oceans, linking Canadians in more than a thousand communities.

True to its name, The Great Trail embodies both the vastness of our terrain and the diversity of our people. This map shows the segments of The Great Trail across the Lesser Slave Region.

Key Segments Along The Great Trail

- 1** **The Northshore Trail**

Starting at Marten Beach and winding westward, this key Trans Canada Trail connector supports a wide variety of pursuits like hiking, biking, quadding, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, snowmobiling and more.
- 2** **The Freighter Lakeshore Trail**

Leading from Marten Beach into the Town of Slave Lake, this trail runs through Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park. The trail boasts spectacular views and allows unpowered leisure activities like hiking, cycling and snowshoeing.
- 3** **The Lesser Slave River Blueway Trail**

This portion of The Great Trail is actually the connected waterways of the Lesser Slave, Otawau and Fawcett Rivers. The Blueway Trail ends at the Athabasca River, where the Moose Portage to Smith Trail begins.
- 4** **The Moose Portage to Smith Trail**

This scenic trail connects the Peace River Trail to Smith and the Athabasca River via municipal roads that wind through varied landscape such as farmland and boreal forest. Both ends of this trail are accessible by vehicle.
- 5** **The Peace River Trail**

Beginning at Sawdy, north of the Town of Athabasca, this trail runs through a stunning wilderness full of native flora and fauna and views of the Athabasca River. Moose, elk, deer, black bear and boreal mammals are abundant.





Lesser Slave River
mdlsr.ca