

Mackenzie County 2020 Flood Recovery



June 8th Telephone Town Hall Questions Addressed in the Meeting

Are you moving the town?

- We have not discussed moving the town. Moving some of the residents is one option of several that we have to consider as we develop a recovery plan for Fort Vermilion.

When will there be temporary housing? When can I move out of the hotel?

- Council has approved a temporary housing plan to install self-contained wellsite trailers on the running track at the recreation centre starting the week of June 15th.
- The County will be contacting residents to discuss temporary housing options available to them.
- There are numerous discussions underway with AB Emergency Management (AEMA) and AB Seniors and Housing and we will communicate when we have more information.

Who decides who qualifies for temporary trailers? There are more families in need than there will be trailers available.

- Mackenzie County staff are developing a list of which residents will be out of their homes for various lengths of time.
- Mackenzie County will be reaching out to residents directly to discuss housing opportunities available to them.

Who will be making the decisions about rebuilding the town?

- We all are. We are not going to do anything that the community does not want.

- We have to be mindful of what might come in the future and we have to protect Mackenzie County as well as the communities of Fort Vermilion, Butter Town and Beaver Ranch area. Ultimately Mackenzie County Council will take the decisions in conjunction with the provincial and federal governments, and residents.

Do you have a plan that you aren't sharing with us?

- No, we are not keeping any information from residents. We continue to gather the information from various government agencies, to ensure all residents and Mackenzie County Council can make informed decisions. As plans begin to take form, we will be discussing it through community engagements.

What will happen to those who do not own our own homes in Boreal Housing?

- Mackenzie County has been working closely with Boreal Housing to identify temporary and longer-term housing options for those residents.
- Repair work on some of the Alberta social housing units has started. We encourage you to contact the Boreal Housing Foundation housing manager for updates on progress of repairs.
- Residents including renters and owners in the Boreal Housing area are encouraged to submit their applications for DRP funding as soon as possible.

My house's basement is gutted. To make my home livable, I need a furnace and a hot water tank, can I go ahead with these repairs?

- Every DRP application file has been assigned a case manager from the Alberta Emergency Management Agency. They can be contacted at 1-888-671-1111.
- If your residence requires a furnace and/or hot water tank and the cost will be over \$2,000, the DRP will require two (2) separate cost quotes for those items.
- Landlords, landowners and tenants are all eligible for DRP funding. Landlords and landowners should submit their applications under the small business section of the DRP funding portal.
- Temporary permits are required for any repairs required to make your home habitable. Please contact the Mackenzie County office at 780-927-3718 to make an appointment.

DRP has assigned a caseworker to my file. How long will it be until I hear about the next steps from them?

- If you would like to discuss the status of your DRP application, please contact Alberta Emergency Management Agency at 1-888-671-1111 or by e-mail at drp.info@alberta.ca
- If you have a file number from AEMA, you can track the status of your application online.

I rent out houses in Fort Vermilion. Am I allowed to provide temporary housing for my tenants?

- We want as many residents as possible to be able to come back to the community. We are encouraging owners, including landlords to undertake the repairs to houses' first floors and higher that would allow residents to return to the community.
- Temporary permits are required for any repairs required to make your home habitable. Please contact the Mackenzie County office at 780-927-3718 to make an appointment.
- If you have additional rental housing available, please contact the County office.

I am not a permanent resident, but I own property. I do not qualify for most of the aid. Is there a timeline of when I can come back to work on my property? What are the restrictions?

- You can return to your property but would require temporary permit to conduct repairs.
- You can contact the Mackenzie County Planning Department to discuss which permits might be required for your properties.

Can the county look at suspending some of its bylaws? Can rezoning be made easier so a structure can be moved to higher ground?

- We do not have any discretion to allow variances to safety code requirements and permits required for those types of work.
- The County is granting temporary permits to allow for repair work to homes on the first floor and higher and residents/owners should contact the County office to discuss those.

Do we have a timeline on a decision on what we are going to do?

- No, we do not have a firm timeline for determining any plans and what specific actions we will be taking within those plans. But we are working on plans with the various related government agencies every day.

Will we be able to recover any loss due to the devaluation of our homes?

- Evaluators will determine whether homes will require repairs or a rebuild.
- If you have insurance, you should contact your insurance company immediately.
- Residents are encouraged to work with your DRP caseworker to identify options available to you depending on the evaluation of your property.
- Residents can also reach out to Samaritan's Purse at 1-800-663-6500. They can provide valuable guidance on options depending on your particular circumstances. Samaritan's Purse will be assigning a caseworker for Fort Vermilion beginning on June 15.
- Residents should also contact Jennifer at the Mackenzie County office at 780-927-3718 if their property has been identified as a rebuild.

Can someone provide a step-by-step process for applying for DRP funding?

- Please visit the DRP website at <http://www.alberta.ca/drp>
- In order to apply for DRP funding you will need to have a MyAlberta Digital ID (MADI) account. You can apply for a MADI account at: account.alberta.ca
- Once you have opened an online application, the portal will walk you through the application process.
- If you would like to discuss the status of your DRP application, please contact Alberta Emergency Management Agency at 1-888-671-1111 or by e-mail at drp.info@alberta.ca
- FCSS offices in Fort Vermilion, La Crete, and High Level can also assist you in submitting an application. Please phone them directly to make an appointment to discuss your application.
- If you have problems submitting your application, please contact the Mackenzie County office who will work with AEMA to have an AEMA case officer contact you. Additionally, the Métis Nation of Alberta will support Métis Nation members with their DRP application process by calling 780-927-3788.

Why is moving the town more of a priority than a dyke or a berm?

- The Province of Alberta has budgeted funds for our community's disaster recovery. We need to be aware that this type of funding may not be available the next time we flood.
- We are open to ideas of how we will manage or prevent flooding in our community in the future, but we must recognize the cost of each of our options and make the best decisions in the interest of the community as a whole.
- Our number one priority right now is to get our residents back to the community.

What happens to those who refuse to move their homes?

- We have to recognize that floods have impacted our community before, and they will again. We will have to make decisions that are best for the community so that we will not have to deal with the same types of impacts that this flood had caused.
- Moving impacted residences out of the flood zone is one of several options that we are considering, and it may be that it will be the best option for our community.
- We are working to identify business plans that position Mackenzie County to access the greatest amount of financial support to move forward in our disaster recovery plans.
- Everyone should be aware that the federal and provincial governments may not be able or willing to help us with another flood in the same area in the future.

What options are available for those willing to rebuild their homes?

- Mackenzie County is currently identifying some sites within the community if your property is identified as a rebuild. If you would like to discuss your specific property, please contact Jennifer at 780-927-3718.

- We are encouraging residents to contact the County to secure temporary permits for any repairs to homes for the first floor and above. We want to ensure that residents not complete any redundant work on their properties in the event that the decision is made to move houses and trailers to higher ground.
- Future development plans for the community are still in the preliminary discussion phase.

If I move a structure off my property, will I become ineligible for the relief funds?

- You would not become ineligible for funding however there is a moratorium on the installation of new structures or trailers on properties in the affected areas of Fort Vermilion, Butter Town, and Beaver Ranch area.
- If you have any specific questions, please call the Mackenzie County office at 780-927-3718 or 1-877-927-0677.

Why was the Fort Vermilion St. Mary's School not sandbagged and pieces of County equipment abandoned to the flood?

- Voluntary evacuation was issued 2 days prior to the flood. Businesses and properties were given time to take preventative measures during this time if they chose.
- County staff worked very hard to ensure that people were safely evacuated which is obviously where our priorities were focused.
- The County did lose one (1) truck to the flood and that is a very small loss given the size of the disaster.

What is the process if we are willing to move? How much is DRP willing to cover?

- We are currently in discussions with the provincial and federal governments to develop business cases to secure disaster recovery funding. We do not have information on specific elements that will be covered or how much money will eventually be delivered.

I was evacuated and we have not had any bills covered by the County. I went to the County office last week about the issue and they have said that they would call back with info and have not. How long do we have to wait?

- The Alberta Government made emergency payments of \$1,250 per adult and \$500 per child available to evacuees. Mackenzie County advertised extensively that the deadline to apply for this payment was June 5, 2020.
- The Red Cross also made generous \$600 emergency payments available to residents in the community. That application deadline has also passed.
- Mackenzie County has passed a motion to not invoice affected residences for utilities for May 2020.

If we want to move out of town will we still receive DRP money? Even if our property was for sale before the flood?

- If you are a landlord, you would qualify for DRP funding if you can demonstrate that the property was actively for sale prior to the disaster.
- If the property is your principal residence, you would qualify for DRP funding.

What can Samaritan's Purse help me with?

- Samaritan's Purse will have case managers located in the community to assist residents with DRP application support and to help with decisions depending on individual circumstances resulting from the disaster.
- They will also be able to provide construction and contractor support to connect people with appropriate services to meet their needs. They will be in the community starting around June 15.