

STARLAND COUNTY HISTORY

In 2008, Starland County celebrates it's 65th Anniversary. Although local government has existed in the area since 1913, it wasn't until February 01, 1943 when the enlarged municipality we have today was formed by the amalgamation of the Municipal District of Michichi No. 277, the Municipal District of Lambton No. 306, and the Municipal District of Starland No. 307. The new municipality formed was called the Municipal District of Morrin No. 277. The Government Order-in-Council also designated five electoral divisions within the municipality, and established February 17, 1943 as the date for receiving nominations for the office of councillor for each of the divisions, and establishing the first election, if necessary. Mr. Henry Swallow of Rowley was appointed as the Returning Officer for the first election, and the business of operating the local municipality commenced.

The first meeting of the Council of the new and enlarged Municipal District of Morrin No. 277 was held at the Alexandra Hotel in Drumheller on Friday, March 12th, 1943. When the Provincial Government formulated the amalgamation order, they also appointed the first Administrator of the municipality. Mr. Thomas A. Potts was empowered by the Minister of Municipal Affairs to administer the affairs of the newly formed District until the first Council assumed control of the municipality's affairs. Mr. Potts was also authorized to decide on all questions arising over the division or apportionment of the property, rights and liabilities of the new district, and of the former districts which were merged into the new district. Mr. Potts called the initial meeting of Council to Order, and Returning Officer Swallow reported the election of the following Councillors:

Division 1	W.L. Carter of Delia
Division 2	Alex Edwards of Drumheller
Division 3	R.W. Waters of Morrin
Division 4	D.B. McPheeters of Rumsey
Division 5	George Smith of Delia

Councillor McPheeters was elected as the first Reeve of the municipality, and Councillor Carter was the first Deputy-Reeve. The first item on the agenda at the meeting was the appointment of a Secretary Treasurer and an Assistant Secretary Treasurer. Mr. S.R. Hooper, of Rowley, was appointed as the first Secretary Treasurer, and his annual salary at that time was \$2,160.00 per annum. Mr. Bruce Ramsay of Craigmyle was appointed as the first Assistant Secretary Treasurer, and his annual salary was \$2,000.00. Mr. C.R. Moritz was appointed as the first road construction foreman, and he was authorized to hire men for the road construction crew once the positions were ratified by Council. The schedule of fees for wages set by Council clearly illustrates that times have changed. A single man working on the road crew was paid 50¢ per hour, foremen and gradermen received 60¢ per hour, and a man with four horses was reimbursed at 90¢ per hour.

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Another item of discussion at the initial council meeting was the name of the newly formed Municipal District. The original Order-in-Council referred to the new municipality as the Municipal District of Morrin No. 277. At the initial council meeting, it was moved and carried that the name of the municipality be changed to the Municipal District of Starland No. 277, and that an application be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs to request the name change. The request was approved by the Minister, and in April of 1945, when most municipalities were re-numbered, the name of the municipality became the Municipal District of Starland No. 47. In May of 1998, the Council decided to change the municipality's name to the more universally familiar "county" name, and became Starland County. The Village of Craigmyle dissolved and became a Hamlet under the jurisdiction of Starland County back on January 1st, 1972, as did the Village of Rumsey which dissolved on January 01, 1995.

Another difficult decision that faced Council in the first year of operations was the decision of office location. At the initial Council meeting, the first motion presented was to locate the office in Drumheller, but that motion was ultimately defeated, and the Village of Morrin was selected. The issue was not totally resolved though, because at the second meeting of the Council, a petition was presented to Council by a "goodly number of ratepayers adjacent to the Hamlet of Michichi, praying that the Municipal Office be located in Michichi". Council at that time discussed the idea of holding a plebiscite to decide the location of the office, but that motion was lost, and the office location remained as Morrin. Another petition was received by the Council on October 12th, 1943, asking Council to locate the office in the City of Drumheller, but again, Council prevailed and stuck to the decision to locate in Morrin. One and half lots were purchased directly south of the Bank of Montreal building for \$500.00, and an additional \$250.00 was allocated to have the office moved from Rowley. In 1944, some additional land was purchased from the Village of Morrin for \$100.00, and this ultimately became the location of the road workshop. The first garage and workshop was constructed by W. Greene Construction of Drumheller for \$3,775.00.

The level of services provided by the municipality at formation in 1943 was somewhat lower than those we have become accustomed to. For example, in a motion passed on September 14th, 1943, the ratepayers were advised that "as this Council does not contemplate snow-plowing to any extent this season, ratepayers be requested to cut or otherwise take care of weeds on the roads travelled by them." Special provisions were made for the local councillor to acquire a caterpillar for snow removal if a child had missed 25 consecutive days of school. The Municipal District did start an ambitious construction and gravelling program. At the first annual meeting of the municipality held on February 19th, 1944, Reeve McPheeters reported that 35 miles of road had been high graded and 21 miles gravelled, and he further noted that the municipality received a grant of \$12,000.00 from the Provincial Government to help with the costs. At the annual meeting, a motion was passed requesting that the Morrin to Stettler road be taken over by the Provincial Government as a primary highway. An important relationship between the Municipal and Provincial Governments began even then, and

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the value of having a strong local government to relay concerns to the senior levels of government became evident.

With the creation of local government came the creation of local laws or By-laws which were required to authorize Council to carry on the business of the municipality. The first By-law of the Municipal District of Starland was passed on April 15, 1943, and its purpose was to enact the provisions of the Local Tax Arrears Consolidation Act 1935, for the municipality for the year 1943. In all, five By-laws were passed at the April 15th, 1943 meeting. By-law No. 2 authorized a 7 percent discount on all current taxes paid before September 1st, 1943. By-laws No. 3 and No. 4 were passed to establish the first local taxation rates for the School and Hospital requisitions, and By-law No. 5 was passed to govern the running at large of domestic animals within the Municipal District of Starland. The municipality also started its first year of operations by borrowing funds from the Bank of Montreal to meet the requisition payments required for the School and Hospital jurisdictions. The decision to use the Bank of Montreal in Morrin for the municipal banking business started a banking relationship that lasted for over fifty years, until the Bank sold their business in the Village of Morrin to the Mountain View Credit Union. Starland County also operates the Alberta Treasury Branch Agency (ATB Financial) in Morrin. This arrangement allowed the County to maintain this banking service in the Village and allowed for additional staffing to assist in priority projects.

In 1943, \$45,000.00 was borrowed at 5 percent interest rates in order to pay the school requisitions, and another \$5,000.00 was borrowed at the same rate to allow for the full payment of the Hospital requisitions. There were four school districts or divisions that requisitioned the municipality in the first year:

Requisitioning School	Requisition	Mill Rate
Castor School Division No. 27	\$ 73.96	12.0
Drumheller School Division No. 30	\$46,020.13	10.0
Drumheller School District No. 2742	\$ 171.82	7.0
Stettler School Division No. 26	\$ 1,240.92	12.0

There has been a significant change in the school requisition authorities, as today, the County pays the majority of the local requisition to the Alberta School Foundation Fund, and the Province of Alberta re-allocates the municipal education funding to the new regional school board.

In 1943, the following hospital requisitions were paid:

Requisitioning Hospital	Requisition	Mill Rate
Drumheller Hospital District No. 7	\$ 8,596.31	2.0
Hanna Hospital District No. 9	\$ 3,581.69	5.0

Much like the schools, the requisition process for hospitals has also changed. Today,

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the County is no longer funding health services, as the Province has assumed these costs. The County does partner with Health Authority 5 for the delivery of ambulance services in the municipality.

In addition to the requisitions that were required to be paid, the municipality required operating funds to carry out the municipal operations. The first year of operations was carried out on a municipal budget of \$65,355.65, and a levy of 8.0 mills. Most of the early By-laws passed by Council fell into three categories: first, there were By-laws relating to finance, either authorizing borrowing, or establishing requisition mill rates as described above; secondly, there were By-laws approving grants to charity organizations like the Red Cross or Canadian Institute of the Blind; and finally, there were By-laws relating to the sale of property through the tax recovery process. By the end of 1945, the Council had disposed of over 3,200 acres of tax recovery property. The land transaction prices ranged from \$3.01 per acre to \$13.13 per acre, but the average price for the sale of agricultural land was \$5.17 per acre in those first years. In addition to the agricultural land that was sold, several hamlet lots were also sold pursuant to the provisions of the Tax Recovery Act. Lot prices in the Hamlets ranged from \$15.00 per lot in Rowley to \$25.00 per lot in Michichi.

In reviewing the By-laws and Minutes of the Municipal District of Starland No. 47, there are a number of significant events that have combined to create the municipality we have today. For example, on November 9th, 1954 the municipality entered into an advertising contract with the Drumheller Mail. For \$1.25 per resident per annum, the Drumheller Mail would distribute a copy of the paper to each resident, and publish the Minutes and public notices of the municipality. Council has just recently negotiated another three year extension with the Drumheller Mail that will see this service continue at least until 2004.

In May of 1961, the Council authorized \$34,000.00 towards the construction of the Starland Seed Cleaning Plant. A previous motion in April of 1953 to build the Seed Cleaning Plant in Michichi went to a plebiscite, and was resoundingly defeated (Against 255 - For 85). The Starland Seed Cleaning Plant continues to operate today in Delia, and their Board has been very proactive in upgrading the seed cleaning equipment and services available to farmers in the municipality.

On July 12th, 1960, Council decided to purchase a C.N.R. reservoir at Michichi, a total of 81.46 acres, for \$800.00 cash. The reservoir was purchased to allow the continued stock watering, and to provide for future development of recreational opportunities for the residents of the municipality. In addition to the reservoir at Michichi, the municipality also had purchased land for the McLaren Dam in February of 1957, the Morrin Bridge Campsite in July of 1987, and entered into a long term lease with the Provincial Government for the use of the Starland Recreation Area, directly north of the Morrin Bridge. All three sites now form a major local recreation and tourism network within the

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On August 12th, 1958, the Council of the municipality decided to purchase some additional property for expansion to the public works shop in Morrin. At that time, there was some speculation that the municipality would be forced into becoming a County, and it was felt that some additional room would be required to accommodate the storage of school busses. The transition to a County never materialized, but 3.13 acres of land was purchased from Gideon Winkjer for \$950.00, and the land base was in place for what is now our public works yard. On June 20th, 1967, a By-law was passed to provide for the construction of a new public works shop on the property that had previously been acquired. The original By-law had met with some opposition, and was ultimately quashed; however, in October of 1967, a second by-law was attempted, and a new shop measuring 100 feet by 60 feet was constructed for \$46,498.00.

In January of 1970, the Villages of Delia, Morrin, Munson, Rumsey and Craigmyle, along with the Municipal District of Starland No. 47, joined together to form a regional recreation board called the Starland Recreation and Parks Board. Changes to provincial grants led to the demise of the Recreation Board, although Starland County does continue to distribute annual operating grants to the many halls and community organizations in the area.

On October 30th, 1972, the Council of the Municipal District of Starland No. 47 came to the realization that the office building located on Lot 10 and the North Half of Lot 11, in Block 2, in the Village of Morrin was no longer large enough to accommodate the administration. A By-law was passed that would see the construction of a new administration office on Lots 7, 8 and 9, in Block 1, Registered Plan 4110 A.J., in the Village of Morrin. The office was designed by the architectural firm of Beatson and Finlayson of Calgary, and the tender for the construction of the 64 foot by 58 foot building, with a full basement, was awarded to Greene Construction of Drumheller for a low tender price of \$129,940.00. The construction of the office was financed in a very creative manner that included the use of \$12,000.00 in reserves, \$39,976.28 from the tax sale surplus account, \$32,000.00 of Government of Canada Bonds, and a \$60,000.00 short term loan which was to be paid off by a 2.0 mill increase in taxes for the years 1973-75. A Federal Government Winter Works Program required construction to commence in October of 1972. A fire occurred in the office prior to completion of the construction, and this greatly delayed the opening of the new municipal office. The office was, however, completed and it continues to be a very functional building. Council is working on trying to improve the accessibility of the structure today, but the basic building is still very functional.

Fire Protection Agreements with the Villages within the municipality have existed for several years. On February 12th, 1963, the Council decided that the Hamlet of Michichi should also have its own fire department. A 466 gallon tank and a 3 ton Dodge truck were purchased for \$3,905.40, and they were stored in "Sandy's Garage" to ensure the truck was always ready to go. Joint funding agreements were reached with each of the

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Villages wherein the municipality would cost share improvements to the Village departments.

Munson's first agreement was approved on January 3rd, 1964; Delia on July 8th, 1964; Rumsey on May 11th, 1965 and Morrin on November 8th, 1966. The Starland Fire Protection Agreement and Committee continues to exist today and the Committee's responsible for the coordinated fire protection within the municipality. In 2000, Starland County, working with the Villages of Delia, Morrin and Munson was successful in being selected for one of three provincial multi-year Municipal Sponsorship grants. The funding assistance made available from Alberta Municipal Affairs has facilitated the purchase of three new fire trucks for the Village departments. Since that initial purchase, the County and Villages have continued to work together to upgrade fire protection vehicles, and in 2007, we again upgraded the Village of Munson Fire Truck, and moved their truck to the Hamlet of Craigmyle. We are currently working on a plan to again upgrade the Delia Fire Truck, and place their newer truck in the Hamlet of Rumsey. The Munson Fire Department has also purchased the first rapid response unit and Delia has also ordered a similar unit. The Fire Protection Committee has also initiated a major training program, and Mr. Larry Anderson has been working with the Departments to ensure that all fire fighters have first aid and at least Fire Fighter 1 level training. Starland County Council feels that we have one of the best rural fire departments in the Province.

In 1995, Starland County approved a Bylaw to establish the position of Special Constable in the municipality. Initially when the Special Constable position was formed the County jointly shared the services with the Municipal District of Badlands No. 7. Today, the County continues to share these services with the Town of Drumheller and the Villages of Delia, Morrin and Munson. The Special Constable deals with Bylaw contraventions, enforcement of selected Provincial Statutes, and overload permitting for heavy truck movement within the area. In 2007, the Special Constable designation was changed to Community Peace Officer or C.P.O. In 2008, the County also added a Bylaw Enforcement Officer to our staff to assist with enforcement of municipal laws.

The first Land Use By-law regulating the use of land and setting up districts for certain uses was adopted by Council on April 11th, 1978. The County passed a new Land Use Bylaw (Bylaw No. 1064) in 2002, and is currently working on a Municipal Development Plan for the municipality. Planning services for the municipality are provided by the Palliser Regional Municipal Services Agency in Hanna.

The Disaster Services Agency was established by Council on August 13th, 1974, and it formally established the power to declare a state of local emergency and authorized the development of emergency plans. The County continues to train staff and council in the administration of disaster services and emergency preparation. The County will be working on a new Disaster Response Plan in 2008, and is discussing the possibility of

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developing a regional response plan for the area.

In the public works area, an incredible list of equipment passed through the ownership of the County over the past 50 years. Obviously because of the initial amalgamation, the municipality owned equipment when it first started out some 50 years ago; but the first piece of equipment purchased by the Council was a truck from E.O. Parry Co. for \$1,578.00 less \$100.00 trade in on a wagon back on August 20th, 1943. Obviously, prices have increased dramatically over the years. A D7 dozer was purchased in 1950 for \$16,105.00, a Richardson 14HY Grader cost \$7,515.00 in 1950, and a new Caterpillar Motor Grader 12 was purchased in 1951 for \$19,265.00. By contrast, a Caterpillar 160M grader purchased in 2008 cost \$323,000.00 each, and our last motorized scraper or buggy purchased in 2006 cost \$740,000.00. One piece of equipment we still have is a 1951 C-18-5 Bombardier that was purchased new for \$3,540.05.

The Agricultural Service Board of the municipality is one of the longest standing committees of Council. The A.S.B. was established on July 16th, 1945. The first Board Members were R.W. Waters, who represented Council, A.C.B. Grenville, who represented the ratepayers, and N.F. Bell, who represented the Department of Agriculture. The first Agricultural Fieldman of the Municipal District of Starland No. 47 was Henry F. Irwin. Today's A.S.B. consists of three Council Members, Chairman Murray Marshall, Allen Avramenko and Norm Stanger; two Farm Members, Raymond Trout and David McDougald; and Agricultural Fieldman, Alan Hampton and Assistant Agricultural Fieldman Lindsay Cherpin.

In 2002, the County prepared a regional water study to look at opportunities for expanding regional treated water to rural residents and the Villages throughout Starland County. In 1995, the first treated water supply line was built from the Henry Kroeger Regional Water Commission treatment facility in Hanna to serve the Village of Delia and the Hamlet of Craigmyle. In 2006, a major rural water system was constructed in the Morrin and Munson areas, and the Starland Water Authority was developed to operate the system. Early in 2007, funding was received to construct a main water line north to serve the Hamlets of Endiang and Byemoor (located in the County of Stettler). In 2006, the C.L.V. Water Co-op was also dissolved and taken over by Starland County. In 2008, the County is proceeding to tender a large expansion of the rural water system in the north Craigmyle area and north and west of the Village of Morrin. The County has also led the way in alternative energy development as we have worked with our three villages to install solar power on the water pumping stations in each Village.

As is evident, many of the existing programs and services that are offered by Starland County are historical in their development. Today, the municipality has a population of 2,371. The municipality has an annual budget that exceeds eighteen million for operating and an additional eleven million for capital. The current total assessment of the municipality as applied to the 2008 Budget is \$735,087,690. Much of what exists

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after 50 years of development is a tribute to the elected officials, administrations and staff that have worked for the municipality over the years. Our current Council is as follows:

Councillor - Division 1:	Murray Marshall
Councillor - Division 2:	Norman A. Stanger
Councillor - Division 3:	Terri Hebert
Councillor - Division 4:	Allen Avramenko (Deputy Reeve)
Councillor - Division 5:	Barrie Hoover (Reeve)

A historical list of Council Members and senior administration of the municipality is as follows:

COUNCILLORS FOR DIVISION 1:

W.L. Carter	1943-1951
Howard Stevenson	1951-1954
Harold Chambers	1954-1960
Hans Grott	1960-1963
Val Gobel	1964-1974
Michael P. Marshall	1974-1983
J. Garry Almond	1983-1990
K. Barry McLeod	1990-2007
Murray Marshall	2007-

COUNCILLORS FOR DIVISION 2:

Alex Edwards	1943-1943
Tom Rowe	1943-1952
Arthur D. Brown	1952-1962
Bill Shadlock	1962-1967
Arthur D. Brown	1967-1980
Norman A. Stanger	1980-1992
James D. Wilson	1992-2001
Steve J.T. Wannstrom	2001-2007
Norman A. Stanger	2007-

COUNCILLORS FOR DIVISION 3:

Roy W. Waters	1943-1951
T.Vance Montgomery	1951-1957
G.H. Parry	1957-1965

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William R. Waters	1965-1983
Arthur H. Grenville	1983-2007
Terri Hebert	2007-

COUNCILLORS FOR DIVISION 4:

D.B. McPheeters	1943-1944
John Helmer	1944-1950
Lowell W. Nelson	1950-1965
Tom Bagley	1965-1974
Grover L. Hampton	1974-1980
Nicholas Gogol	1980-1986
Robert L. Nelson	1986-1992
Warren Weisse	1992-1995
Allen Avramenko	1995-

COUNCILLORS FOR DIVISION 5:

George Smith	1943-1943
Hugh S. McLaren	1943-1960
Albert C. Aaserud	1960-1980
William B. Smyth	1980-1989
Donald B. Thompson	1989-2004
Barrie Hoover	2004-

REEVES OF STARLAND COUNTY

D.B. McPheeters	1943-1944
Roy W. Waters	1944-1951
Hugh S. McLaren	1951-1960
Lowell W. Nelson	1960-1966
Albert C. Aaserud	1966-1980
William R. Waters	1980-1982
Norman A. Stanger	1982-1987
William B. Smyth	1987-1988
J. Garry Almond	1988-1990
Arthur H. Grenville	1990-2001
Donald B. Thompson	2001-2003
K. Barry McLeod	2004-2007
J. Barrie Hoover	2007-

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DEPUTY REEVES OF STARLAND COUNTY

Bob Nelson	1990-1992
Donald B. Thompson	1992-2001
K. Barry McLeod	2001-2004
Arthur H. Grenville	2004-2007
Allen Avramenko	2007

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATORS (Chief Administrative Officer)

S.R. Hooper	1943-1952
Donald J. Merritt	1952-1976
James V. Simpson	1976-1987
Ross D. Rawlusk	1987-

ASSISTANT MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATORS (Assistance Chief Administrative Officer)

Bruce Ramsay	1943-1943
Donald J. Merritt	1943-1952
Don M. Cuncannon	1952-1958
Gerald Meller	1958-1965
Douglas Siemens	1965-1973
James V. Simpson	1973-1976
Leslie W. Harrison	1976-1981
Rosina E. Giles	1981-1983
Lyle Wack	1983-1985
Howard Fenske	1985-1987
Teresa Primrose	1987-1991
Shirley J. Bremer	1991-

