

STARLAND COUNTY

TAXATION MILL RATES FOR 2011

The Council of Starland County has finalized the Municipal Budget for 2011.

The following table outlines the individual total mill rates approved for 2011 as compared to the previous year's total mill rate:

Assessment Class	2010 Tax Rate	2011 Tax Rate	% Increase (Decrease)
Class 1 Residential (Public)	7.9686	7.9686	0.00%
Class 1 Residential (Separate)	7.9686	7.9686	0.00%
Class 2 Non Residential	19.5879	19.6676	0.41%
Class 3 Farmland (Public)	13.3715	13.3715	0.00%
Class 3 Farmland (Separate)	13.3715	13.7515	0.00%
Class 4 Machinery & Equipment	15.4545	15.5849	0.84%

Council has worked very hard to adopt a budget that will not result in an increase in property taxes. Most property tax total mill rates are unchanged from last year's rate, or have increased at less than 1.0%. This was accomplished despite a 4.73% increase in the School Foundation fund for non-residential properties (Class 2), and an 84.40% increase in the mill rate for the Senior's Foundation that affects all property classes.

While there was no change in the mill rate for residential properties, please remember that they are assessed annually at their market value. Market value

is defined as the price a property might reasonably sell for after adequate time and exposure to an open market. As you might expect, these market values fluctuate throughout the County depending on where the property is located, or if improvements have been made on a specific property. As such, it is very important that every landowner carefully review the combined Assessment and Taxation Notice. If you have a complaint or inquiry regarding your assessment, it is very important that you first talk with the assessor. Some matters or information may be corrected by contacting the assessor prior to filing a formal complaint. Please contact our office, and we'll provide you with the contact information for the appropriate assessor that deals with your property class.

Starland County continues to have a minimum tax of \$20.00 per taxable property. This minimum tax covers the cost of generating, mailing and collecting individual property taxes.

In all cases, you should carefully review the information on the notice to ensure that you understand and agree with the assessment information. If you have any questions on the assessment of property, it is important that you address these concerns in the first 60 days after receiving your combined tax and assessment notice, and prior to **August 23rd, 2011**. After the appeal period has expired, any assessment changes will not be incorporated until the following year.

Education Property Taxes

It is important to note that the Combined Property Assessment and Taxation Notice also includes the Provincial Education portion of your property tax. Your notice contains a breakdown of how much of your local tax is paid to the Alberta School Foundation Fund.

If you have specific questions about the Education tax, we would encourage you to contact Alberta Municipal Affairs Education Taxation Team at (780-422-7125). This number can be reached toll free by contacting 310-0000 and then entering the above noted number.

Assessment Changes

The Municipal Government Act was subject to major amendments that became effective last year. Most of the changes relate to how you can access assessment information, the appeal process itself, and it also required Assessment Appeal Board members and staff to obtain mandatory training.

As there are sweeping changes to these processes, if you have any questions about your property assessment, we encourage you to contact our office. If we can't provide the information required, we will provide you with the contact information for our Municipal Assessors, and they will ensure that you understand your property assessment.

We have also added a number of documents to our website (www.starlandcounty.com), and these are also available upon request to our office. These documents will help to explain the property and assessment process:

1. Guide to Property Assessment and Taxation in Alberta
2. Access to Property Assessment Information
3. Is Your Property Assessment Fair and Accurate
4. Filing a Property Assessment Complaint and Preparing For Your Hearing
5. Assessment Review Board Complaint Form
6. Assessment Complaints Agent Authorization Form

Your assessment notice will show

1. The same information that is required to be shown on our assessment roll
2. The date the assessment notice is sent to the assessed person
3. The date by which a complaint must be made. This date must be at least 60 days after the assessment notice is sent.
4. The name and address to whom the complaint must be filed.

Please note that you have until **August 23rd, 2011** to appeal your assessment. Of course, we would encourage you to contact our office and assessor if you have any questions.

Bylaws to be aware of:

The Municipal Government Act gives Starland County the authority to pass local bylaws. Bylaws often deal with issues like the safety, health and welfare of people and the protection of people and property. It is important to note that bylaw violations can lead to fines, enforcement actions and even imprisonment.

The County has a number of important bylaws we want to make you aware of:

Land Use Bylaw:

The purpose of a Land Use Bylaw is to control and regulate the use and development of land and buildings within the County. It is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that their property and uses conforms to the Land Use Bylaw prior to the commencement of any development. Land Use Bylaw No. 1064 in Starland County has many regulations controlling the kinds of developments

as outlined in the Municipal Government Act. We strongly recommend that you contact our office for further information on the required permits, prior to any development or changes to your property. Failure to obtain the required permits will result in enforcement actions.

Fire Bylaw

The Forest and Prairie Protection Act states "no person shall light an outdoor fire during the fire season on land in a permit area unless that person is the holder of a subsisting fire permit." In Starland County, Council has passed Bylaw 1042 which requires residents to obtain fire permits on a year round basis. During extremely dry conditions, Council can extend a fire ban on all fires if they feel that conditions are unsuitable for burning. Fire permits can be obtained free of charge at the County Office. Failure to obtain one can result in charges, or being charged with the cost of a fire truck visiting the scene of a fire where no permit was issued.

Traffic Bylaw

A new and updated Traffic Bylaw contains a number of rules and regulations surrounding the use of local roads and road allowances. It is very important to note that all road allowances are the property of the County, and activity on road allowances is regulated by the Bylaw. For example, unauthorized development like cultivation of an undeveloped road allowance is a contravention of the Bylaw. If you are planning any development or use of a road allowance, please check with our Administration Office to ensure you have the authorization to proceed.

Nuisance Abatement Bylaw

Bylaw 1092 increases the County's control, supervision and regulation of unsightly properties. The Bylaw includes restrictions on the: accumulation of refuse, uncut grass or weeds, abandoned vehicles, and the lack of repair or maintenance of buildings, structures or premises. Under the Bylaw, you can be issued an order to clean up property, and as a final measure, the County can carry out the corrective measures, and add related costs to the property tax roll. Our Bylaw Services will work with you to try and resolve clean-up issues.

Payment Options

For your convenience, you can now pay your property taxes and other Starland County invoices online or through telephone banking at the following financial institutions: A.T.B. Financial, Credit Union, C.I.B.C., BMO-Bank of Montreal and the Scotiabank. Please remember that the regular payment deadlines still apply, and that penalties will be applied on all late payments.

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