

# Lamont County



## A Guide to Rural Living



# Living in Lamont County

## Living in the Country – Things to Consider

Living in the country can be a wonderful experience. The unique landscape and diverse natural elements of Lamont County is what makes it such an attractive place to live. There are real benefits to living in the country, but it is important to understand the challenges you may have not thought about.

The sheer size of Lamont County prevents it from offering the same level of service as our urban neighbours. Many services provided in the villages, towns and cities such as water, sewer, garbage removal and roads need special consideration in rural areas.

This communiqué provides information on the many aspects you may experience living in the country. Lamont County staff will be happy to answer any additional questions or log on to our web site at [www.lamontcounty.ca](http://www.lamontcounty.ca).

### Aspects to consider:

- Gravel **roads** are maintained and repaired as timely as possible, but prepare for times when travel on gravel roads becomes difficult. Winter snow fall can sometimes make it virtually impossible to travel, rains can cause gravel roads to become slippery, and they can develop washboards. A 4x4 vehicle is strongly recommended for those times when traveling on gravel roads becomes difficult and remember to give yourself ample time to travel during unfavourable weather. Also regular travel on gravel roads may result in increased vehicle maintenances costs.



- **Utilities** like electricity, natural gas, propane, cable/satellite and telephone services are all provided by private companies and service calls may take longer than in urban areas. MCS Net does provide high speed wireless internet service to many areas in the county. However there are places that still depend on dial-up connections for internet service.



- Most rural homesteads do not have access to treated potable **water**. Ground water wells or water cistern systems are typically used to provide rural residents with water. Contact your local PFRA office or Alberta Environment or a water well drilling company for additional information.
- **Sewage** disposal is also something rural landowners must provide for themselves. Check the Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standards of Practice for sewage system guidelines (Safety Codes Council).
- Whether you are in a hamlet, on an acreage, or living on a farm, you are responsible for properly disposing of your refuse. **It is illegal to create your own trash dump, even on your own land.** Garbage attracts problem wildlife and insects, and poses a threat to neighbouring livestock. Lamont County does have a regional landfill located on NW 7-56-18-W4. Contact the Lamont County Landfill at (780) 895-3808 for hours of operation.
- If you purchase property that has an existing dwelling or farmstead, have the water and sewage systems inspected by a professional.
- Although there is rural route mail delivery in some locations, it may not be available to all rural residents. Ask Canada Post to explain the mail system in your area. A PO Box from your nearest Canada Post office may be required.

## Getting Along with Your Farming Neighbours

Agriculture is the vein of life in Lamont County. Our farmers and ranchers can be some of the best neighbours you will ever have if you take the time to understand their way of life and appreciate the hard work they do.

Owning land in Lamont County means knowing how to care for it and how your neighbours use their land. If you choose to live among the farms and ranches of our countryside, there are some aspects of farming activities that may affect you. Here are some things to keep in mind about your new farming neighbours.

- Lamont County will not intervene in normal day-to-day operations of farming.
- It is possible that adjoining agricultural uses could disturb your peace and quiet. **Noise and dust** can affect you, especially during peak agricultural seasons such as seeding or harvest. During these times farmers may work around the clock. Expect large machinery to be running all night long and watch for this machinery traveling down the roads.



- Weed control is important as weeds can spread quickly from your land and damage crops, forages, and even poison livestock on your neighbour's land. The Alberta Weed Control Act requires all Alberta residents to keep their lands clean of noxious and restricted weeds. Contact the Lamont County Agricultural Department at (780) 895-2585 if you have questions.
- Be aware that farming operations may include the spraying of chemicals on their fields. Most spraying takes place during early morning hours and may even be applied with crop dusters (low-flying airplanes).

- Calves are generally weaned from their mothers in the fall and can create quite a ruckus as they adjust to life without mom.



- Livestock and their waste can cause unpleasant **odours** which cannot be controlled. A farmer may spread manure on his land; during the spreading process the odours may be very strong but will dissipate once the spreading is complete.
- Lack of **fencing** around neighbouring lands does not mean you may access it for recreational purposes (snowmobiling, ATVs, horseback riding). Seek permission from your neighbours before you enter upon their lands.
- Owning a residence in the country does not mean your dogs can roam free. Ensure that your **pets** stay on your property for your as well as your neighbour's sake. Even the gentlest pet can take a liking to chasing cars, cattle and wildlife.



Keeping your pets at home can prevent them from falling prey to not-so-friendly wildlife including porcupines, skunks and coyotes. Dog owners are also responsible for ensuring that their dog's

barking does not bother neighbours. The Lamont County Land Use Bylaw limits the amount of dogs per lot to 4 and has requirements for confinement and care facilities.

## Preparing for Mother Nature

Living in a rural setting allows residents to experience the wonders of Mother Nature the way urban dwellers cannot. Lamont County living can be idyllic and all that you've dreamed of, but there are some unique challenges than rural residents face on a daily basis. Preparing for the good and the bad that Mother Nature offers is an important part of rural living. Some things to be aware of include:

- Wildlife is wonderful but they can also cause accidents, property damage, and livestock deaths. Be aware of wildlife in your area.
- Water from the spring melt and summer storms can sometimes pool or cause flooding before finding natural drainage courses.  
Keep natural and artificial drainage systems clear and....be patient.
- Severe snowstorms or heavy snowfall can cause roads to become impassable for days. County crews will be out in full force, but that does not mean your front door to the nearest highway will be snow-free in a matter of hours. During the winter months, make sure you are well stocked with supplies such as food, water, wood, and/or propane and inform your friends/family/employer that you live in a rural area.
- Insects, like most wildlife, thrive in the County's natural setting. Insect populations for the most part are beyond control. Being diligent with trash removal, waste removal, and taking proper care of your lands help to reduce insects around your property.
- Wildfires are a major concern in rural areas, especially during dry years. The vast expanses of hay fields, crops, and brush can easily ignite and spread quickly. Rural residents need to keep their lands clear of dead brush and be very careful with any outdoor fires. Before starting any fire, contact your local fire department for information on fire permits or fire bans.



## County Roads

The County maintains approximately 2089 km of local roads of which 1931 km are gravel roads. That is almost the same distance if you were to travel from Edmonton to Toronto! Maintenance and repairs are completed as timely as possible. There are a few things to know about County roadways:



- The County maintains all public roadways with the exception of primary (two numbered highways) and secondary highways (three numbered highways). These are the responsibility of the Province. The Province contracts out the maintenance of these primary and secondary highways to private contractors. In the Lamont region, the primary contractor is Carillion Canada Inc. Private driveways or roadways are the responsibility of the landowner including their maintenance and clearing.
- Spring and summer months bring dust. Only some of the high traffic roads are treated by the County with a dust suppressant. Landowners, too, can apply to the Public Works Department for dust control application in front of their residence. Call the Public Works Office at (780) 895-2547 for costs and additional information.
- Winter months can bring heavy snowfall. During these times, major roadways and school bus routes are first priority for snow removal. County crews work diligently to open all public roadways in a timely matter. It normally takes 3 to 4 days for all local gravel roads to be cleared of snow and after a severe snow storm it may take even longer. Be sure you are prepared for Mother Nature.

- Snow removal for private driveways is offered by the County. Grader flags can be purchased through the Public Works or County office and through the Town of Mundare and Village of Andrew municipal offices. The flag is good for one driveway clearing. It must be displayed at the entrance to the driveway and will be picked up by the operator at the completion of the work. Please note that flagged driveways will be ploughed after all public roads have been opened.
- To report a problem such as signs down, dead wildlife or refuse along roadsides, fallen trees, or any other road or infrastructure related concerns, please contact the Lamont County Public Works office.

## **Rural Addressing**

Lamont County has incorporated a rural addressing system throughout the county. This initiative has been developed to make it easier for emergency crews, utility employees and the general public to find your home quickly. Each property is designated an address that relates to the range road, township road or named road from which the property is accessed. Contact the County office for more information.

## **Purchasing Land**

It is important to research all the issues before purchasing or developing land. You should check with the County's Planning & Development Department to confirm that you can build on a particular piece of land.

Easements may require you to allow construction and maintenance of roads, power and other utility lines, etc. across your land. Fences that separate properties are often misaligned with the property lines. You can confirm the location of your property lines through a land survey. Some subdivisions have covenants that limit the use of property. Please make sure you can live within those rules.

## **Developing Property**

When you live in a rural area, be assured that the surrounding lands will not always remain the same. The view from your property may change. The development of property ranges anywhere from building a new home, to the construction of a major multi million dollar industry. If you are considering developing or building on your land please check with the Planning and Development Department prior to commencing any development: (780) 895-2233.

There are a few things to keep in mind. The zoning of your property and the surrounding areas, may restrict what you might be able to build. Be aware of the zoning of your property and how it may affect future development. Also be aware of what developments are being planned in your area. All development permits issued by Lamont County are posted on the county website. Additionally, permits issued for permitted uses are posted in the county office and those issued for discretionary uses are advertised in the Lamont Leader.

## **Subdividing Land**

If you are interesting in subdividing your land, please call the Planning and Development Department for information relative to what you can do. Applications for subdivisions however, are to be submitted directly to Municipal Planning Services (Alberta) Ltd. along with the required fee. The County web site has information you can easily access regarding subdivisions.

Please remember that an access is required to each parcel of land and this would be at the property owner's expense. Please contact the Public Works office prior to developing the access as there are minimum standards that must be met.

## **Taxes**

Taxes are levied annually. They are usually mailed to every property owner in May of each year and are due June 30<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions regarding your taxes or assessment, call the Lamont County office and ask for the Tax Department.

The mailing address entered into our tax system is taken from the land title copy the county receives directly from Land Titles. Remember, it is your responsibility to advise the County Office of any address changes.

## Emergency Services

Call **911** for any emergency where assistance is required from the RCMP, Fire or Ambulance. Lamont County covers a very large area. Emergency response times can not be guaranteed.

Ambulance services are provided by a private contractor: Prairie Emergency Medical Systems.

Lamont County engages the services of 5 Fire Departments and all fire fighting members are volunteers. These Fire Departments are responsible for all fire suppression activities. If you are interested in joining the Fire Department, please call the County Office.

RCMP coverage in Lamont County is provided from 3 different detachments: Fort Saskatchewan, Two Hills and Vegreville.



## Emergency Preparedness

Previously communicated in this brochure was information on preparing for Mother Nature. Occurrences that can happen in this area of Alberta are severe snowstorms or power blackouts. Is your family prepared?

### DO YOU KNOW THE 3 STEPS?

#### Step 1



**Know the Risks:** Identify the hazards in your region,

Although the consequences of disasters can be similar, knowing the risks specific to your community and your region can help you better prepare. Find out what the hazards are in your region.

#### Step 2



**Make a Plan:** Know what you and your family should do in case of an emergency. It's easy and essential. Every Canadian household needs an emergency plan. It will help you and your family know what to do if disaster strikes. Make your own plan and print it out today.

#### Step 3



**Prepare an Emergency Kit:** It doesn't take long – find out what goes into an emergency kit, or where you can buy one. An emergency kit helps ensure you and your family are ready to cope on your own for at least the first 72 hours of an emergency.

Emergency Management Alberta recommends you maintain a three day supply of what you need should you be stranded at home with no power or ability to travel: food, medications, a three day supply of drinking water for each member of the family, wood and/or propane, first aid kit, battery run radio, toilet accommodations.

For more detailed information, visit:  
[www.getprepared.ca](http://www.getprepared.ca)

## **Public Services**

Living in the country does not mean there are limited services available. Lamont County has an excellent education system with 5 schools servicing the area, a hospital, numerous recreation facilities including ice arenas and curling rinks, halls, Family and Community Support Services, Community Adult Learning, seniors facilities, the list goes on. Contact us to find out more about the many great services in Lamont County.

## **Communication**

Lamont County posts all notices, employment opportunities, programs, workshops and general information in the back page of the Lamont Leader **newspaper**. The section is called Lamont County In Focus.

**Web site:** [www.lamontcounty.ca](http://www.lamontcounty.ca)

The Lamont County **web site** contains information like:

- Current news
- Planning and development forms & regulations
- Weed control and other agricultural information
- Public works processes
- Council minutes
- Programs and workshops
- Economic information
- County policies
- General Information

### **Contact Us:**

County Office: (780) 895-2233

Toll Free: 1-877-895-2233

Public Works Office (780) 895-2547

Toll Free: 1-877-895-2547

Agriculture Department (780) 895-2585

