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February 23, 2021

RURAL MUNICIPALITIES CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE AS UNPAID TAX AMOUNTS OWED BY OIL & GAS COMPANIES INCREASE

Submitted by Rural Municipalities of Alberta

The Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA) has conducted a member survey identifying that approximately \$245 million in property taxes currently

owed to rural municipalities by oil and gas companies have gone unpaid. This continues the now multi-year trend of this issue worsening, as a similar survey conducted in early 2020 showed unpaid amounts at an estimated \$173 million,

and a 2019 survey estimated the amount at \$81 million. The latest survey shows a 42% increase in unpaid tax amounts compared to 2020, and a 203% increase from 2019.

Continued on Page 3

LAC STE. ANNE EAST FOOD BANK

Submitted by Janet Fluet, Chairperson | Lac Ste Anne East Food Bank

What is a food bank? A food bank is a non-profit, charitable organization that provides food to those who have difficulty purchasing enough to avoid hunger.

The Lac Ste. Anne East Food Bank is located at 5028 -48 avenue, Onoway. The LSAEFB was started sometime in the mid 80's and was initially operated out of the Baptist Church.

Now the food bank is located in a small house directly east of the church. (5028 48ave).

This food bank boundaries are: west to Darwell & Alexis Reserve, north to Rich Valley, east to Sandy Lake, and south to parkland border.

The support of many organizations, businesses, churches and individuals are needed to keep the food bank open and able to help those in need, as well as the hard work of volunteers.

The Food Bank operates

on a call-for-request, and referral system. If you are an individual or family that are having some financial difficulty and need some extra help, please call the food bank at (780) 271-3131 for assistance. Requests for hampers must be received by noon on Tuesdays and then pick up is from the food bank Wednesday mornings between 9 & 10am

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

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WHITECOURT APPROVES 2021 INTERIM BUDGET

Submitted by Town of Whitecourt

Whitecourt Town Council has approved the 2021 Interim Operating and Capital Budget. The Interim Budget includes over \$50 million of capital and operating expenditures and requires a 2.32% overall tax change.

The interim budget reflects Council's strategic priorities, other guiding plans and the needs of the community. The budget maintains the \$1.1 million in reductions made in 2020, and allows the municipality to maintain service levels and continued investment in local infrastructure.

2021 Capital Budget Highlights:

- The 2021 Street Improvement Program includes street, lighting, and sidewalk repairs at locations throughout the community. Following the allocation of \$1.25 million in funding from the Municipal

Stimulus Program, drainage improvements and roadway enhancements will also be completed along Dahl Drive.

- Construction on the Water System Upgrade Project will be completed. The project includes construction of a dedicated supply main and other system upgrades, including pressure reducing measures to improve the distribution network and fire flows, as well as the extension of the waterline from east of Dahl Drive to the bottom of Eastlink Park.

2021 Operating Budget Highlights:

- Continue with the Odour Control Program at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (chemical treatment, permitting of haulers, etc.).

- Continued collaboration and development of new agreements through voluntary arbitration with Woodlands County for services that benefit residents of both municipalities.

- Following the receipt of \$15.6 million for the construction of an Arts & Culture Centre and new library from the Investing in Canadian Infrastructure Program, the Town of Whitecourt will be re-engaging community stakeholders and members, and undertaking a public education campaign.

- Conduct the general municipal election in October 2021.

- Implement enhancements to online services to the community, including a website redesign; development of an app/website to connect organizations with community volunteers; and, launch of an online e-send system to allow the Town to provide utility and tax customers with the option for online billing.

The 2021 Budget will be finalized in the spring of 2021 once the Provincial budget is adopted, and final assessment figures are established. The 2021 Interim Budget Report can be viewed on www.whitecourt.ca.



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JOKE of the week

A group of kindergarteners were trying to become accustomed to the first grade. The biggest hurdle they faced was that the teacher insisted on no baby talk. "You need to use 'big people' words," she'd always remind them. She asked Chris what he had done over the weekend. "I went to visit my Nana."

"No, you went to visit your Grandmother. Use big people words!" She then asked Mitchell what he had done. "I took a ride on a choo-choo." She said: "No, you took a ride on a train. Use big people words". She then asked Bobby what he had done. "I read a book," he replied. "That's wonderful!" the teacher said. "What book did you read?" Bobby thought about it, then puffed out his little chest with great pride and said: "Winnie the Sh*t".

DARWELL DISTRICT RECREATION ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday, March 8, 2021
Darwell Centennial Hall

The Darwell District Recreation Association (DDRA) operates the Darwell Centennial Hall for the benefit of the Community. Come help the DDRA plan for the future. All area residents are welcome.

This will be a Virtual Zoom meeting.
For details on how to attend or more information
call: Greg at 892-3159 or Maria at 892-3099

JOIN TODAY

PARKLAND RCMP RESPOND TO COLLISION WITH TRAIN

Submitted by Parkland RCMP

Spruce Grove, Alta. - On Feb. 19, 2021 at 1:44 p.m. Parkland RCMP responded to the scene of a collision between a train and a semi-tractor trailer. No one was injured.

The train collided with the

tail end of a semi-tractor trailer unit that was carrying automobiles.

The railroad crossings south of 16A that intersect with Golden Spike Road and Campsite Road were blocked by the train. Traffic was re-routed.

The investigation is ongoing.

Rural Municipalities Continue to Struggle as Unpaid Tax Amounts Owed by Oil and Gas Companies Increase

Continued from Page 1

The \$245 million amount is based on a 100% response rate to the survey from all 69 RMA members.

Non-payment of property taxes by some oil and gas companies is an ongoing and increasingly urgent threat to the ability of rural municipalities to provide the core infrastructure and services that the oil and gas industry relies on to access natural resources. RMA members manage over 70% of Alberta's roads and 60% of Alberta's bridges, and the

revenue needed to manage this critical transportation network is almost entirely derived from property taxes. If municipalities are unable to depend on taxes being paid, they may be unable to manage roads and bridges at a level required by the oil and gas and other industries.

"The fact that every rural municipality in the province took the time to complete this survey speaks to the anxiety and frustration that rural leaders are facing on this unpaid tax issue.

Continued on Page 4



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PUBLIC NOTICE 1860211 ALBERTA LTD. WATER ACT NOTICE OF APPLICATION

Notice is given that **1860211 Alberta Ltd.** has filed an application under the provisions of the Water Act for an Approval for bank stabilization on a creek located at Lot 8, Plan 6967ET, Lot 9, Plan 209MC; part of S ½ 36-053-01-W5.

Any person who is directly affected by this application may submit a written statement of concern within 7 days of the date of this notice to:

Environment and Parks
Regulatory Approvals Centre
5th Floor, South Petroleum Plaza
9915 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2G8
Phone: 780-427-6311
Fax: 780-422-0154
Email: aep.waapplications@gov.ab.ca

The written statement of concern should include the following:

- Quote the OneStop application number: **5054839 (EMS Application 001-00472568)**
- describe concerns that are relevant to matters regulated by the Water Act
- explain how the filer of the concern will be directly affected by the activity and/or diversion of water proposed in the application
- provide the legal land location of the land owned or used by the filer where the concerns described are believed to be applicable
- state the distance between the land owned or used by the filer and the site in the application
- contact information including the full name and mailing address of the filer. Please provide the telephone number and/or email address for ease of contact.

Environment and Parks will review each written statement of concern, seek more information if needed, and notify each filer by letter of the decision to accept or reject their written submission as a valid statement of concern. The Public Notice of this application will also be posted on the Department's website at

<https://avw.alberta.ca/PublicNoticesViewer.aspx>.

Please quote One Stop file number: **5054839**

Statements of concern submitted regarding this application are public records which are accessible by the public and the applicant. Failure to file a statement of concern may affect the right to file a Notice of Appeal with the Environmental Appeals Board.

Copies of the application and additional information can be obtained from:

Bob Quazi
River Engineering Consulting
Phone: 780-462-1138
Email: quazi@telus.net

Rural Municipalities Continue to Struggle as Unpaid Tax Amounts Owed by Oil and Gas Companies Increase

Continued from Page 3

In some municipalities, unpaid tax amounts are so high that service levels are being reduced, municipal staff are being laid off, and serious discussions are occurring about whether the municipalities can continue to function.” – Paul McLauchlin, RMA President

While municipalities can take action to recover unpaid taxes on most residential and commercial properties, the oil and gas industry is subject to a legislative loophole that does not allow municipalities to place special liens or use other tax recovery tools on linear property. This puts rural municipalities in a powerless position to enforce the payment of property taxes on oil and gas companies and has made recovering unpaid taxes from both operational and non-operational companies extremely difficult.

According to the member survey results, approximately 57% of unpaid taxes are the responsibilities of companies that continue to operate.

“As a homeowner, I am responsible for paying my property taxes or facing stiff penalties. Small business owners across the province are expected to pay property taxes regardless of the profitability of their business,” McLauchlin said. “There is no reason why oil and gas companies should have an option to pay property taxes and face no consequences if they choose not to. Not only does this non-payment impact municipalities providing the infrastructure that those companies use every day, but it is also disrespectful to every other homeowner and small business in the municipality who will see their taxes increase or their service levels decrease due to the irresponsibility of some oil and gas companies.”

Although this issue continues to become more serious, there are actions that could be taken by the Government of Alberta. The most straightforward provincial solution would be to amend the process through which the Alberta Energy Regulator approves the acquisition and transfer of energy licences and approvals. The current approval process uses a variety of financial criteria to determine whether an energy company has the fiscal capacity to take on additional licences. However, the process does not consider whether the acquiring company has outstanding municipal property taxes, a condition that could easily be added. The province could also amend the Municipal Government Act to clearly state that municipalities may use tax recovery powers available for other property types to address non-payment oil and gas property taxes. The province could also choose to no longer require municipalities to provide education property tax funds to the province on properties for which taxes are uncollectible. Under the current model, not only are municipalities not able to recover unpaid oil and gas property taxes, they are actually on the hook for forwarding a portion to the province, even if they are unable to collect it from the property owner. Unfortunately, the province has yet to take any action, despite repeatedly indicating that they take the issue seriously over

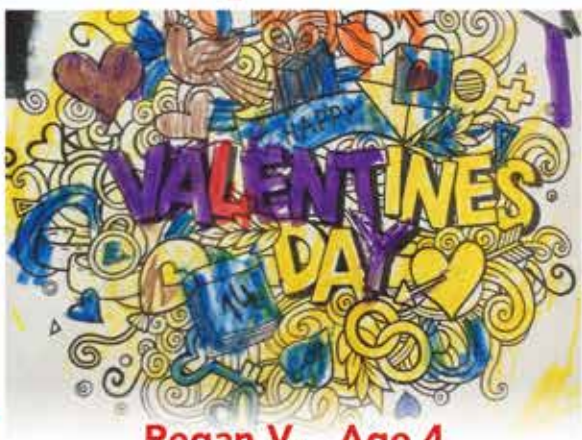
the past several years.

McLauchlin said, “We appreciate that this is a complex issue, and that the province needs to thoroughly evaluate the options available. However, action is needed now. RMA and its members are willing to work with the province and the oil and gas industry to develop tools and incentives to lessen the property tax burden on industry during these difficult economic times. However, constructive dialogue will not take place while the oil and gas industry continues to take advantage of municipalities through the non-payment of property taxes, and the province stands by and does nothing. Let’s have a conversation about how municipalities, industry, and the province can work together to support one another, rather than continue to let some companies take advantage of legislative loopholes.”

It is important to note that while this is a province-wide issue, most oil and gas companies pay taxes on time, or work with the municipality to develop an agreement to defer taxes or pay through installments. Many rural municipalities have recognized the issues facing the industry in recent years and have extended payment deadlines and reduced penalties for late payments. However, some companies still prefer to simply avoid paying property taxes, regardless of the impacts on the municipality and other property owners.



Cupid's Valentine



Regan V. Age 4



Kate C. Age 5



Maci M. Age 6



Makenna Age 8

We loved every
entry but these
are the 2021
**Valentine's Day
Colouring
Contest
Winners!**



Liesha Age 10



County News Highlights

FORKS UP FOR CANADIAN AGRICULTURE

Let's raise a fork to the food we love and the people who produce it!

On February 23rd, celebrate **Canada's Agriculture Day** and let everyone know how you feel about this awesome industry.

Show your ag pride and make some noise on social media for Canadian food! Here's a few ideas on how you can share your love for Canadian food online:

- Post a photo or video celebrating Canadian ag
- Cook an all-Canadian meal
- Post a "Forks Up" Selfie

No matter how you get social, make sure to use **#CdnAgDay** when you do. For more information, visit LSAC.ca/agriculture.

"NEW PERENNIAL" DESIGN WORKSHOP – PART 1 Adventure on Alberta's Boreal Edge!

An interactive workshop with basic principles for a "New Perennials" design, tips for choosing a location, and examples of prairie-hardy plants.

Date: Saturday, March 27, 2021

Time: 11:00 am – 4:00 pm

Location: Lac Ste. Anne County administration building*

Instructors: Maria Beers and Clara Qualizza

Cost: \$50/person via e-transfer (please register by **March 13**)

**As COVID19 restrictions allow. If necessary, workshop rescheduled/refunded.*

For more information or to register for this workshop, please contact PeggBotanicGarden@gmail.com, or visit PeggGarden.org.

Workshop co-hosted by: Double Dutch Landscape Design & Consulting, Meadow & Thicket Farm Flowers, George Pegg Botanic Garden.

Sponsored by Lac Ste. Anne County.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

NOTICE OF DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPROVALS

The following Development Permits have been approved or conditionally approved under the provisions of the Land Use Bylaw. This list does not include Permitted Uses. Interested parties are encouraged to contact the Planning and Development department at 1-866-880-5722 or devassistant@LSAC.ca, Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm to request additional information on a permit.

PERMIT #	LEGAL LAND DESCRIPTION	DESCRIPTION	APPEAL DEADLINE
21-D0021	NW 16-56-06 W5M 56221A Range Road 64	3 - 12.0' x 60.0' oil rig camp combined to a single dwelling, Dwelling 60.0' x 36.0' (2160.0 sq. ft.) 8.0' walls	March 14, 2021
21-D0010	Lot 7, Block 3, Plan 8722602 Woodland Bay within SW 27-53-6 W5M 18, 6231 HWY 633	1983 Manufactured home 14.0' x 74.0' (1036.0 sq. ft.), addition 12.0' x 24.0' (288.0 sq. ft.) and deck 12.0' x 24.0' (288.0 sq. ft.) on blocking	March 14, 2021

Anyone who claims to be affected and who wishes to lodge an appeal against any of the above developments must do so in writing on the applicable form on or before 4:30pm on the above noted date(s). Secretary of the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board, c/o Lac Ste. Anne County, Planning & Development department, Box 219, Sangudo, Alberta, T0E 2A0.

PLEASE NOTE: Lac Ste. Anne County requires that a non-refundable fee of \$250.00 be paid for every appeal served on the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board. Fees may be paid by Cheque, Visa, MasterCard, Interac or Cash.

**The numbers don't lie.
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we're beating this.**

Together we are turning the tide on COVID-19. If we stay the course and follow the protocols, we will emerge from the pandemic faster. Let's keep it up Lac Ste. Anne!



Find out how Lac Ste. Anne is doing at bendthecurve.ca

Bridal Guide

February 2021

Your Guide to Planning Your Big Day

Filled with helpful planning advice, savvy how-to tips and the latest wedding trends, as well as a host of local wedding vendors here to help you plan the perfect day!

Bridal Guide

HOW TO PLAN A WINTER WEDDING

Weddings take place throughout the year, but some months have traditionally proven more popular times of year for happy couples to tie the knot.

Summer was long known as the most popular season for weddings, but that trend has shifted in recent years. According to the 2020 WeddingWire Newlywed Report, 36 percent of couples get married in the fall, making autumn the most popular time to say "I do."

Though October and September are the two most popular months to marry, budget-conscious couples may want to consider getting married in winter. December, January and February are the least popular wedding months, but the experts at WeddingWire note that getting married during the slow season has its benefits. Vendors, including wedding planners and venues, may offer

their services and facilities at discounted prices in winter to account for the slow season. And guests might be thankful to have a fun event to look forward to during a time of year when social schedules tend to be less busy.

Many wedding components will stay the same regardless of when couples walk down the aisle. However, couples may need to take a few things into consideration as they begin planning winter weddings.

- Avoid holiday weekends. Just because social schedules are not always so busy in winter that doesn't mean couples can pick any winter weekend to tie the knot. The holiday season, which begins on Thanksgiving weekend in late November and lasts until New Year's Day, is a hectic time of year for many people. Avoid holiday weekends like Thanksgiving and the weekends before or

after Christmas and New Year's Eve/New Year's Day. These weekends already are busy travel times, so couples might not be able to get guest-friendly rates on hotel rooms, and some guests may already have plans to visit family. In addition to the December holidays, avoid the first weekend in February. That's Super Bowl weekend, and many people may be reluctant to travel on the day of the big game.

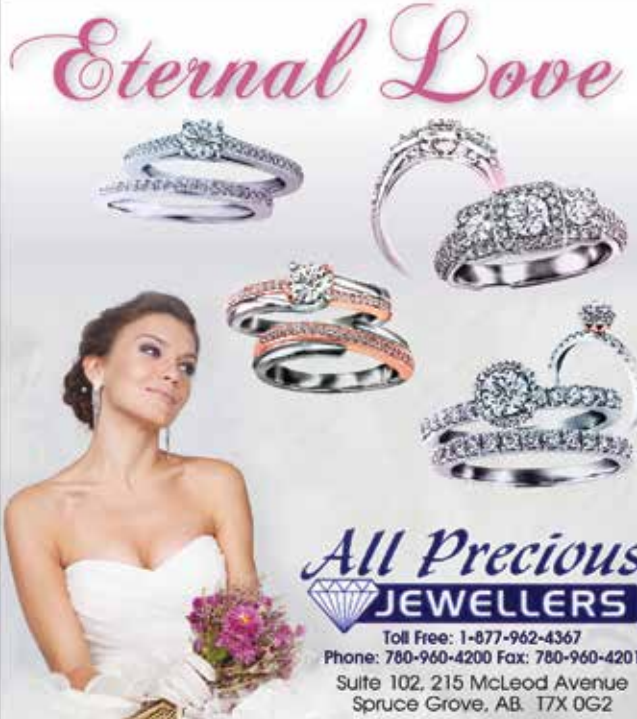
- Research local weather. It's impossible to predict the weather, but savvy couples can research local weather in the town or city where they're getting married to determine when is the most travel-friendly month to host their weddings. Some regions get heavy snowfall in January, while others may be more susceptible to late winter snowstorms. Couples with a lot of out-of-town guests should choose a winter

weekend where snowfall is unlikely so guests don't have to endure travel delays on their way to and from the wedding.

- Purchase wedding insurance. Wedding insurance is a wise investment for every couple, but it can be especially valuable for couples tying the knot in winter. Each policy is different, but wedding insurance policies should protect couples' investments if storms force local officials to declare a state of emergency that prohibits travel. Make sure the policy covers both cancellations and postponements.

Winter weddings can help couples save money. Planning such affairs may require paying attention to details that would not garner much consideration during other times of year.

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Bridal Guide



3 TOOLS FOR KEEPING WEDDING GUESTS INFORMED

Weddings give couples an opportunity to share the joy of joining their lives together with a host of friends and family members. Guests live up the party and help make the celebration that much more memorable.

According to The Knot 2019 Real Weddings Study, the average wedding in the United States hosts 131 people. Data indicates this number has been slowly decreasing over the years, after the average wedding size reached an all-time high of 153 in 2007. No matter how big or how small the guest list, keeping guests informed of what's happening regarding the upcoming nuptials is a courtesy couples can provide. Couples can explore various avenues for keeping guests informed and ensuring they'll be able to take part in the festivities.

Save-the-date announcements

Save-the-date announcements have become an increasingly popular component of wedding planning. Instead of waiting on the wedding invitation, which traditionally arrives one or two months prior to the wedding itself, save-the-date cards provide guests with an advanced advertisement of the celebration to come. According to the photo and invitation specialists at Shutterfly, it's customary to send save-the-date notes around six months before the wedding. For a destination wedding, which will require extra travel plans, an eight- to 12-month advance can be helpful.

Save-the-date cards generally have basic information, including the wedding date and the venue. Many will feature a photo of the couple as well. If you're planning on sending save-the-date announcements, coordinate with your photographer to have a photo taken exclusively for

these cards.

Wedding website

Couples are increasingly embracing technology as they plan their weddings. Brides magazine states that, during the typical 15-month engagement period, 48 percent of couples will launch a wedding website. A wedding website is a versatile tool that can help answer questions that guests may have. The website can spell out specifics, including dress code, whether children are invited, the names of wedding party participants, overnight accommodations, transportation providers, and even restaurants near the hotel for a quick bite between ceremony and reception.

Wedding websites also can be used as fun ways to keep guests engaged. "Throwback Thursday" photos or funny memories and anecdotes can be included.

Video conferencing apps

As the world continues to adapt in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, video conferencing applications like Facetime, Zoom and Microsoft Teams enable people involved in the planning process to routinely "gather" and go over details about the wedding, helping to limit in-person meetings as much as possible. These apps also can prove invaluable when conferring with wedding vendors, such as florists or musicians.

You also can schedule smaller meetings with specific guests who may be playing key roles in the wedding, such as those giving speeches, doing readings, escorting guests, or serving in other capacities.

Certain resources can help couples keep guests informed about what's to come in regard to their weddings.



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emailed to: classifieds@communityvoice.com, dropped off at Onoway Registries, or mailed with your ad and payment to: COMMUNITY VOICE, BAG 3595, SPRUCE GROVE, AB T7X 3A8. Ads may also be placed on the web at www.communityvoice.com/classified.htm

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Anselmo Community Hall, Phone 780-786-4280

Bright Bank Hall, 780-968-6813

Cherhill Legion, Mary 780-785-3578.

Cherhill Community Assoc. Hall, Kevin 780-785-8153

Darwell Centennial Hall, 780-892-3099

Darwell Seniors, Phone Debra 780-785-2907

Goose Lake Hall, Contact Deanna (780) 584-3738

Gunn Hall (G.A.R.S.) 780-951-9452

Hathersage Community Centre, Noreen at 786-2946

Lake Isle Community Hall, PH: 780-892-3121 or Email: lakeislehall@mail.com

Magnolia Hall, 727-2015

Manley Goodwill Community Hall, 963-9165 or 916-0146

Mayerthorpe Diamond Centre, Charlotte at 786-4659

Mayerthorpe Legion, 786-2470.

Onoway Community Hall, 967-4749.

Onoway Heritage Center - Gym/Classrooms, 967-1015

Onoway Legion, 967-4980

Park Court Community Hall, 727-4476

Parkland Village Community Centre, 780-298-9155 @ PVCCentre

Ravine Community Hall, 325-2240

Rich Valley Community Hall, 967-5710 or 967-3696

Rosenthal Community Hall, 963-7984

Sandy Beach Rec Hall, 967-2873

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Stettin Nakumun Comm. Hall,
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SUDOKU

of the week

Here's How It Works: Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

ANSWER:

4	1	3	2	6	5	7	9	8
7	9	5	1	4	8	6	2	3
8	2	6	3	9	7	1	5	4
6	4	7	5	1	9	3	8	2
1	8	9	6	3	2	4	7	5
5	3	2	7	8	4	9	1	6
3	7	1	8	2	6	5	4	9
2	6	4	9	5	1	8	3	7
9	5	8	4	7	3	2	6	1

	1				5	7		8
	9	5	1				2	
8	2				7			
			5					
	8		6			4		
	3			8				6
3	7				6	5	4	
2		4	9				3	
9				7		2		

Church Directory

Rich Valley Community Church

Sunday School
10:00 a.m.
Worship Service
11:00 a.m.

Catholic Parish of Lac Ste. Anne

Sunday
10:00 a.m.

Mayerthorpe Baptist Church

Worship Service
Sunday 10:30 a.m.
Children's Church
10:30 a.m.
4606-54 St. Mayerthorpe
(780) 786-2677

Alberta Beach Alliance Church

Sunday Worship
Service & Kid's
Church 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School
10:00 a.m.
(780) 924-3282

St. John's Anglican Church

Onoway
Sunday Service
10:00 a.m.
Everyone Welcome

St. John's Lutheran Church

Alberta Beach

Sunday Service
11:00 a.m.
Sunday School

Zion United Church

Sunday Service
10:00 a.m.
Sunday School
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Sangudo United Church

Christmas Eve Service 6:00 p.m.
Worship Service
3rd Sunday 11:00 a.m.
4907-50 Ave. Sangudo, AB

St. Mary's Anglican Church Service

Holy Communion
2nd Sunday each
month 11:00 a.m.
at Sangudo United Church
Reverend Barry
Rose Officiating

Cherhill Community Church

Sunday School
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Worship Service
Sunday 11:00 a.m.

St. Michael Lutheran Church

Sunday Services 1st &
3rd Sunday at 2:00 p.m.
Pastor Rick Chappell
(780) 674-2618
Mystery Lake

Trinity Lutheran Church (LC-C)

"The Church of the Lutheran Hour" - Rockyfort Bridge
Pastor Dan Hansard
Church (780) 778-2035
Sunday Worship
9:00 a.m.
Senior's Service & Cottage Bible Study - Phone for locations

Crossroads Community Church

P.A.O.C.
Rev. Arnold Lotholz
Sunday Service
10:30 a.m.
(780) 786-2424

Onoway Baptist Church

Sunday Service
10:30 a.m.
Pastor Greg Garbutt
(780) 967-2266

Roman Catholic Church

St. Agnes' Parish, Mayerthorpe
Sunday 9:00 a.m.
St. Elizabeth Parish,
Evansburg
Saturday 7:00 p.m.
(780) 786-2032

Calahoo Alliance Church

Family Worship
Service Sunday
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