

**TOWN OF IRRICANA
AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING OF COUNCIL
Date: March 01, 2021 Time: 7:00 P.M.**

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ATTENDANCE

C. AGENDA

D. PRESENTATIONS

E. MINUTES

1. Minutes from February 16, 2021 Council meeting

F. CORRESPONDENCE FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

G. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. CAO Report

H. OLD BUSINESS

1. None

I. NEW BUSINESS

1. RFD – Operating Line of Credit
2. RFD – Linear Taxes (Roll 159002 & 159003)
3. RFD – Write Off Uncollectible Utility Accounts

J. COMMUNICATION / INFORMATION

1. Donation Fund – Update
2. FCSS Covid-19 Grant
3. Fire Hydrant Plaque
4. Farm Safety – Letter from Executive Director
5. MAP (Municipal Accountability Program) Update

K. FOLLOW-UP/ACTION & STATUS

L. PUBLIC INPUT

-
1. Please fill in the question sheets with all information fields completed.
Your questions will be answered by the appropriate person.

M. CLOSED SESSION

1. Labour
2. Legal

N. ADJOURN.

TOWN OF IRRICANA
Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council held
February 16, 2021
Virtual Council Meeting (due to COVID restrictions)
MGA: Section 199

ATTENDANCE

As per Section 199(1) of the Municipal Government Act, a Council meeting may be conducted by means of electronic communication. Notice of the electronic version was provided to the public including the way in which it was to be conducted.

As per Section 199(2) of the Municipal Government Act, Councillors participating in a meeting held by means of a communication facility are deemed to be present at the meeting.

Mayor:	Frank Friesen
Deputy Mayor:	Kim Schmaltz
Councillors:	Debbie Day, Jim Bryson, Tracy Shields
CAO:	Barrie Hutchinson

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Friesen at 7:00 pm.

AGENDA

- (i) Adopt Agenda
28:21 Moved by Councillor Day to adopt the Agenda as presented
CARRIED

PRESENTATIONS

- (i) RCMP
(arrived at 7:32 pm)
- (ii) Meadowlark Trail – Janet Richter
Presentation 7:01 – 7:14 pm

MINUTES

- (i) Minutes from February 1, 2021 Regular Council meeting
29:21 Moved by Councillor Bryson to accept the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council for February 1, 2021, as presented.
CARRIED

CORRESPONDENCE FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- (i) CAO Report
30:21 Moved by Councillor Shields to accept Committee Reports as presented.
CARRIED

OLD BUSINESS

- (i) None

NEW BUSINESS

- (i) Business License (as per Mayor Friesen)
Discussion only

COMMUNICATION/INFORMATION

- (i) Cheque Listing
Cheque listing for the period January 26, 2021 to February 4, 2021, totaling \$166,823.41

31:21 Moved by Councillor Day to accept Cheque listing as presented
CARRIED
- (ii) Skateboard Park – Updated Information

Presentation: RCMP (7:32 pm 7:49 pm)
- (iii) Public Participation at Council meetings
32:21 Moved by Mayor Friesen to direct administration to update the Council Procedural Bylaw by amending the Public participation portion to read: Questions to be submitted to Administration by Monday noon of the Council meeting day.
CARRIED
- (iv) Emergency Response Plan
Updated information.

33:21 Moved by Deputy Mayor Schmaltz to accept Communication/Information items as presented.
CARRIED

FOLLOW-UP/ACTION & STATUS

- (i) Motion Tracking Sheet
34:21 Moved by Councillor Day to accept the Motion Tracker as presented.
CARRIED

PUBLIC INPUT

- (i) Due to the online format of the Council meeting, Residents were asked for written questions to be submitted to Town Administration electronically prior to the Council meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

- (i) Closed to Public
35:21 Moved by Mayor Friesen to go into Closed Session at 8:11 pm to discuss items of which disclosure may be harmful to the interests of a third party, as per Section 16(1) of the FOIP act.
- (ii) Open to Public
36:21 Moved by Mayor Friesen to reconvene to the public portion of the meeting at 8:48 pm.

ADJOURN

- (i) Adjournment
37:21 Moved by Mayor Friesen to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 pm.

Mayor Frank Friesen

Barrie Hutchinson
Chief Administrative Officer



Chief Administrative Officer Report
Review of February 17, 2021 to March 01, 2021

Public Works

Shop Inventory is underway along with Public Works completing Water Reads the last week of February.

Regular Lagoon maintenance and various Town equipment maintenance being done.

One of the Public Works employees has now completed the Pesticide and Herbicide courses, with exam writing to follow.

Water/Sewer:

There have been several water meter and water line breaks recently, due to the extreme cold. One was a Meter that blew out from frozen water lines. All of these have been repaired.

Regular monthly sewer checks conducted to ensure proper flow and search for any potential trouble areas.

Roadways/Sidewalks:

With the change in temperature, there has been more ice due to daytime melts and overnight freeze. Public Works have been busy sanding roads, snow removal on sidewalks and pathways.

Parks & Recreation:

Snow has been cleared from the ice rink and some maintenance has been done to the ice surface.

Community Facilities:

The playschool floors have been stripped, waxed and polished.

Repairs have been done to the sink, lights, toilet and water lines in the Boys & Girls Club. During these repairs, an internal water leak was discovered and repaired.

Bylaw Services:

Spoke with Rocky View County to discuss potential utilizing and cost sharing of their Bylaw Enforcement.

FINANCE

Utilities:

- Outstanding Utilities = \$49,120 (all Arrears)
- Water Reads are being completed by Public Works for the Jan/Feb billing cycle
- Bills are expected to be in the mail by March 5th, with a due date of March 31st.

Taxes:

- Outstanding Taxes = \$137,379 (all Arrears)
- Reminder Letters have been prepared and sent out
- Properties over 2 years in Arrears will be placed on Tax Notification by March 31st and all affected property owners have been notified.
- Two properties were scheduled for Tax Auction on March 27th, however, one of these have now paid the Arrears, which leaves only one still set for Auction.

Property Assessments:

- Property Assessments have been processed and sent out to Property Owners, along with an Information Sheet which provides an explanation on the differences between Property Assessments and Property Taxes.

Pet & Business License Invoices

- There are a number of Pet and Business License Invoices still outstanding, which were due by January 31st. Second Reminder letters are being mailed with requests for updates on the status of Pets and Businesses for renewing in 2021.

CURRENT ACCOUNTS			
Account Name	Number	Currency	Available Balance
Business Account		CAD	295,941.71 (incl Grants not yet transferred)
SAVINGS ACCOUNTS		TOTAL	
T Bill Savings Account (MSI)		CAD	148,215.83
T Bill Savings Account (Land sale)		CAD	71,368.65
T Bill Savings Account (BMTG)		CAD	69,746.63
		TOTAL	289,331.11

Barrie Hutchinson
CAO Irricana

Request for Decision

To: Mayor Friesen and Council

From: Barrie Hutchinson, CAO

Date: March 01, 2021

Subject: Operating Line of Credit – Borrowing Bylaw #3:2015

CORRELATION TO STRATEGIC PLAN OR POLICY:

Under Section 251 of the Municipal Government Act, a municipality may only borrow funds as authorized by a Borrowing Bylaw, and Section 256 applies to borrowing made for the purpose of financing operating expenditures.

KEY ISSUES AND BACKGROUND:

The Town of Irricana currently has a Borrowing Bylaw, 03:2015, which allows for the borrowing of certain sums of money to assist with the day to day operating expenditures.

Throughout the past two years, there were a number of unforeseen expenses, either not budgeted or exceeding budget, which has carried forward a shortfall in cash flow. This has also resulted in a shortfall in the current cash requirements to cover day-to-day operating expenses for the months of February month end to June of 2021.

This cash shortfall, combined with Tax and Utility receivables sitting at around \$200,000.00, has led to the municipality requiring the need to utilize the Operating Line of Credit, as set out in Borrowing Bylaw #03:2015.

Currently, there is \$xxxx available for day to day operating expenses and Administration estimates monthly payables of \$358,654.00 for the months of Feb month end to June 2021.

Property Tax revenue, which is usually due by June 30th, will alleviate any further borrowing requirements, and the debt borrowed will be repaid in full from these receivables.

Administration is requesting Council approve drawing on the Line of Credit of up to \$358,654.00 to cover day to day expenses, with repayment from the 2021 property tax revenue.

BENEFITS:

- 1) To allow for day to day operations to continue.
- 2) To allow the Town to meet monthly financial obligations.

DISADVANTAGES:

- 1) Utilizing debt may affect budget requirements.
- 2) Interest paid on the amount borrowed added to the Budget.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) None

IMPLICATION ON FINANCES:

- 1) Increase to budget for interest paid on amount borrowed.
- 2) Increase to Operating Budget due to repayment of amount borrowed.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

To approve the borrowing of \$358,654.00, as set out in Bylaw 03:2015, to cover the shortfall of cash flow for day to day operating expenses, for the months of February month end to June 2021, with repayment in full of these borrowed funds from 2021 property tax revenue.

MUNICIPAL BORROWING BYLAW
For the Purpose Specified in Section 256 of the Municipal Government Act
Bylaw No. 03:2015

WHEREAS the Council of the Town of Irricana (hereinafter called the "Corporation") in the Province of Alberta, considers it necessary to borrow certain sums of money for the purpose of:

To assist with the day to day operating expenses.

NOW THEREFORE pursuant to the provisions of the Municipal Government Act, it is hereby enacted by the Council of the Corporation as a By-law that:

1. The Corporation borrow from Alberta Treasury Branches ("ATB") up to the principal sum of \$490,000.00 repayable upon demand at a rate of interest per annum from time to time established by ATB, and such interest will be calculated daily and due and payable monthly on the last day of each and every month.
2. The Chief Elected Officer and the Chief Administrative Officer are authorized for and on behalf of the Corporation:
 - (a) to apply to ATB for the aforesaid loan to the Corporation and to arrange with ATB the amount, terms and conditions of the loan and security or securities to be given to ATB;
 - (b) as security for any money borrowed from ATB
 - (i) to execute promissory notes and other negotiable instruments or evidences of debt for such loans and renewals of all such promissory notes and other negotiable instruments or evidences of debts;
 - (ii) to give or furnish to ATB all such securities and promises as ATB may require to secure repayment of such loans and interest thereon; and
 - (iii) to execute all security agreements, hypothecations, debentures, charges, pledges, conveyances, assignments and transfers to and in favour of ATB of all or any property, real or personal, moveable or immovable, now or hereafter owned by the Corporation or in which the Corporation may have any interest, and any other documents or contracts necessary to give or to furnish to ATB the security or securities required by it.

3. The source or sources of money to be used to repay the principal and interest owing under the borrowing from ATB are:

Taxes, Reserves, or Grants

4. The amount to be borrowed and the term of the loan will not exceed any restrictions set forth in the Municipal Government Act.
5. In the event that the Municipal Government Act permits extension of the term of the loan and in the event the Council of the Corporation decides to extend the loan and ATB is prepared to extend the loan, any renewal or extension, bill, debenture, promissory note, or other obligation executed by the officers designated in paragraph 3 hereof and delivered to ATB will be valid and conclusive proof as against the Corporation of the decision of the Council to extend the loan in accordance with the terms of such renewal or extension, bill, debenture, promissory note, or other obligation, and ATB will not be bound to inquire into the authority of such officers to execute and deliver any such renewal, extension document or security.
6. This Bylaw comes into force on the final passing thereof.

Certificate

WE HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing Bylaw was duly passed by the Council of the Corporation therein mentioned at a duly and regularly constituted meeting thereof held on the 1st day of June, 2015 at which a quorum was present, as entered in the minutes of the said Council, and that the Bylaw has come into force and is still in full force and effect.

WITNESS our hands and the seal of the Corporation this 1st day of June 2015.

READ FOR A FIRST TIME this 1st day of June, A.D. 2015

READ FOR A SECOND TIME this 1st day of June, A.D. 2015

UNANIMOUS CONSENT for THIRD READING this 1st day of June A.D. 2015

READ FOR A THIRD TIME this 3rd day of Oct, A.D. 2016


MAYOR


CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Request for Decision

To: Mayor Friesen and Council

From: Barrie Hutchinson, CAO

Date: March 01, 2021

Subject: Cancel Linear Taxes – Roll 159002 & 159003

CORRELATION TO STRATEGIC PLAN OR POLICY:

Under Section 347 of the Municipal Government Act, Council may consider cancelling or reducing property taxes.

KEY ISSUES AND BACKGROUND:

Irricana has several Linear Properties which are assessed each year by the Province. Linear Assessments are described as properties that are comprised of wells, pipelines, railways, telecommunications and electric power systems.

In 2019, two new Rail Siding Assessments were added as Linear Properties. This resulted in the creation of two new corresponding property tax rolls for Irricana, increasing our tax base.

Property Tax Notices were completed and sent out for the 2019 Tax Levy, including these two new linear properties. Property Taxes for 2019 were:

Roll #159002	\$ 1.07 (\$1.10 was paid)
Roll #159003	\$620.92 (No payment received)

Roll #159003 is currently in arrears. Follow up Reminder Letters were mailed over a period of several months, with no response. The Town then reached out to an Advisor with the Linear Assessment Unit to try and obtain additional contact information.

The Town eventually received updated information that both of the above linear properties had reported they no longer had inventory in Irricana, as the rail siding had been terminated in 2019.

Administration would like to request cancelling the balances currently outstanding in each of Roll 159002 and 159003, which includes several penalties. The total amount requested to be cancelled = **\$639.70**.

Roll 159002	(\$ 0.03)
Roll 159003	\$639.73

BENEFITS:

- 1) To delete these two non-existent properties from our tax records.
- 2) To eliminate administrative follow up on uncollectable accounts.

DISADVANTAGES:

- 1) Uncollectable property taxes from 2019 totalling \$639.70
- 2) Additional administrative adjustments as these remain active but no longer have current assessments or tax levies applied.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Cancel the balances for each of the two linear properties totalling \$639.70
- 2) Do not cancel and these two linear properties will remain on the books as active properties with an uncollectable balance accumulating penalties.

IMPLICATION ON FINANCES:

- 1) Uncollected property taxes from the 2019 Tax Year
- 2) Deficit in the 2019 taxes carried forward for the equivalent amount written off

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

To approve the cancellation of property tax balances outstanding for Roll 159002 and Roll 159003, as these rail siding linear properties were terminated in 2019. This will allow administration to delete these two properties from the Town's tax base.



Request for Decision

To: Mayor Friesen and Council

From: Barrie Hutchinson, CAO

Date: March 01, 2021

Subject: Uncollectible Water/Sewer Accounts

CORRELATION TO STRATEGIC PLAN OR POLICY:

Budget 2021; Utility Penalty Bylaw #04:2016.

KEY ISSUES AND BACKGROUND:

There are currently six Uncollectible Utility Accounts from 2018 and 2020 still on the books with unpaid balances, totaling **\$185.22**. Each of these accounts represent Final Billings for properties sold in those two years. 2019 had zero outstanding final bills, as the Town was able to collect on all of the final billings in that particular year.

Two of these six accounts went into arrears in 2018 and several attempts were made to collect, with no success. Without being notified of forwarding addresses from the seller or previous owner(s), the Town sent final billings and follow up reminder letters to the Irricana mailing addresses on record. As time went by, the practicality and expectation of the recipients receiving our notifications and forwarding payment were minimal to none.

Three of the accounts have outstanding balances from an August 2020 sewer adjustment, which were processed after Final Billings had already been sent and payments received. The last account has \$1.05 outstanding, which is a result of a shortfall in the final payment submitted.

Bylaw #04:2016, Section 4(h) does allow for transferring of a Final Utility Bill to the Tax Roll at possession date, however, this may result in the new owner(s) being burdened with a debt, should the new tax amount not be paid by the seller or their lawyer during final disbursements.

The following is a listing of each of the outstanding Final Billing Accounts, totaling \$185.22:

<u>Utility Account</u>	<u>Date Closed</u>	<u>Amount</u>	
4700-000	Aug 2018	\$102.75	(final bill not paid)
48000-001	April 2018	\$ 21.16	(final bill not paid)
5450-000	June 2020	\$ 37.94	(sewer adjustment in Aug 2020)
20100-000	May 2020	\$ 16.74	(sewer adjustment in Aug 2020)
61000-000	May 2020	\$ 5.58	(sewer adjustment in Aug 2020)
23600-001	Nov 2020	\$ 1.05	(shortfall in pymt amount)

BENEFITS:

- 1) Decreases the number of outstanding uncollectible accounts currently on record
- 2) The status would change to 'Closed', reducing administrative follow up.

DISADVANTAGES:

- 1) Increase in the 2021 Budget for the equivalent amount for bad debt write off.

ALTERNATIVES:

- 1) Accept the request to write off the total of \$185.22
- 2) Deny the request, leaving these uncollectible accounts carried forward each year
- 3) Provide for a partial write off of the total presented.
- 4) Provide an alternative to uncollectable final billing accounts.

IMPLICATION ON FINANCES:

- 1) The amount would be added to the 2021 Budget line item for Bad Debt.
- 2) There was currently \$0.00 budgeted for 2021 Bad Debt

RECOMMENDATION:

Administration recommends Alternative #1 above.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

That Council approve the request to write off outstanding Utility Account arrears, totalling \$185.22, for the following Utility Accounts:

4700-000 - \$102.75;	5450-000 - \$37.94;	20100-000 - \$16.74;
23600-001 - \$1.05;	48000-001 - \$21.16	61000-000 - \$5.58.

Communication / Information

March 01, 2021

Donation Fund

Administration would like to update Council with some recent information related to the Town's Donation Fund, which was originally set up in August 2018, to be expensed at Council's direction.

This Fund originated from several Donations made to the Town from various sources, including a Town BBQ, Production Company filming in Irricana and private donations.

Council was informed at the February 1, 2021 meeting that this fund held a balance of \$2,755.02, which we recently discovered was incorrect. The current balance available is \$155.02.

It appears \$2,600.00 was utilized as 'Covid Cash' vouchers, which accompanied Food Hampers as part of the FCSS (Family and Community Support Services) Covid-19 Grant allocation to Irricana. These Vouchers were redeemed at local businesses in Irricana, and did not fit into the funding criteria under the FCSS special grant program, therefore were expenses through the Donation Fund.

FCSS Covid-19 Emergency Funding

In early 2020, the Alberta Government created a Grant through FCSS to support Covid-19 affected individuals. The Town of Irricana applied and received funding.

In May of 2020, the Town received a total of \$35,000.00 under the Covid-19 FCSS Grant program, to provide additional support and assistance to individuals, seniors, families and other vulnerable citizens who may have been impacted by measures to contain Covid-19.

According to a letter sent to the Ministry of Community and Social Services in September 2020, a portion of these funds were used to support 19 local households, comprising of 61 individuals, with food hampers and prescription cost coverage.

Another \$10,000.00 was utilized to purchase two disinfecting aerosol foggers for use in the Irricana ECS/Playschool classrooms and the Municipal Town Hall/Library.

A brochure is included for information purposes on the funding criteria.

Social Services Support for COVID-19 Funding Criteria

Overview

The Alberta Government is providing \$30 million to municipalities, charitable and non-profit organizations to provide help to individuals, seniors, families and other vulnerable Albertans who are isolated or impacted by measures to contain COVID-19.

Through grants from their local Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) in Edmonton and Calgary, and from Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA) representing the remainder of the province, funding will be distributed to civil society organizations.

These organizations will support a range of services needed from at-home help for seniors, crisis and helplines, food security issues, emotional and mental health counselling or any other identified community issues.

FCSS Funding Distribution

The \$30 million in funding will be distributed to the following municipalities:

- \$7 million to Edmonton FCSS (one-time grant)
- \$9 million to Calgary FCSS (one-time grant)
- \$14 million to Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA) to municipalities and Metis Settlements outside of Edmonton and Calgary (one-time grant)

- Municipalities and Metis Settlements who require funding will be required to submit a funding request to the FCSSAA.

As funding is being distributed outside the scope of the FCSS Act and Regulation, the 80/20 funding rule will not apply.

Charitable and non-profit organizations are encouraged to connect directly with their local FCSS program to receive detailed funding guidelines and grant criteria. FCSS will work closely with Community and Social Services (CSS) to obtain project approvals.

Grant funding must be expended by March 31, 2021. Any surplus dollars from the grant must be returned and cannot be carried over to the following fiscal year (2021/2022).

Eligible Services

For services to be eligible, they must address the social well-being of those most affected by COVID-19 and the measures implemented to limit the spread of the virus.

Those impacted may include seniors, individuals with chronic medical conditions, caregivers, families with children at home and individuals with limited access to supports. Services should align with one or more of the following funding priorities:

- help people maintain independence, build resiliency and strengthen their ability to cope during the COVID-19 pandemic;

- provide supports to help sustain people remain members in the community during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- fund civil society organizations to deliver projects for vulnerable Albertans who are in need during the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- coordinate services and programs to address the social well-being of vulnerable Albertans during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Examples of Eligible Services

- Services to allow individuals, seniors and families who are isolated to have their home needs met, including home support and support services for children and families. Examples include: transportation or delivery of goods, such as groceries or prescriptions, housekeeping services, caregiver relief and other services.
- Services to build capacity and strengthen volunteer work in the community. Examples include: food and meal service delivery, grocery shopping, helplines, volunteer support coordination, out of pocket expenses for volunteers and information services.
- Provide alternate ways of supporting individuals and families so people can function within this new environment. Examples include: telephone mentoring, counselling/emotional mental health supports and supports to help address economic and food security needs.
- Expand or supplement efforts to provide information and referral services and telephone/online support. Examples include: crisis/distress lines, 211 services, promotion of information and services, posters and signage.

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to the following:

- Any expense NOT related to addressing the social well-being of those most vulnerable due to COVID-19.
- Offering direct assistance in the form of money or shelter.
- Being primarily rehabilitative or health-focused in nature.

- Purchase of any capital assets.
- Any costs required to sustain an organization that do not relate to direct service delivery under the project.

Reporting Requirements

Organizations chosen to provide services and supports will need to sign an agreement and submit a report at the end of the grant term. This report must demonstrate that activities were completed and monies spent as described in the agreement.

Application Process

Organizations should contact their local FCSS to request funding for specific programs or services in their community. Funding for specific programs and services will not be distributed directly from the Alberta Government.

All projects must adhere to government recommended procedures and standards pertaining to COVID-19.

Key Contacts

Calgary Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)

Email: fcss@calgary.ca

Phone: 403-268-5151

Edmonton Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)

Email: grants@edmonton.ca

Phone: 780-496-4933 (please leave a message and someone will follow up)

Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA):

Email: grant@fcssaa.org

Phone: 780-422-0133

COVID-19 Information

For the most updated information, please visit Alberta.ca/COVID19.



265 East 400 South – Box 291 – Raymond – Alberta – T0K 2S0
Tel: 403 752-4585 – Fax: 403 752-3643 – Website: www.abfarmsafety.com

February 12, 2021

Irricana CAO
Barrie Hutchinson
Box 100
Irricana, AB T0M 1B0

I apologize in advance for the length of this correspondence, but the challenges and changes caused by COVID and other circumstances are many. Acknowledging the burden of budget deliberations and the fact that choices between good, better, and best can be difficult; a certain amount of detail and explanation are needed at this time.

From the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year in September 2019 until school classes in Alberta were suspended in mid-March 2020 - 40,662 rural children in 339 schools had already received our in-class farm safety presentations. Students in an additional 152 schools were booked for Safety Smarts delivery during the remaining months of the school year. A full 2019-2020 year-end report can be accessed on our website: abfarmsafety.com

In April 2020 we began working to add content to our website which would allow students to access interactive farm safety learning tools during the COVID disruption in school attendance. By the first week of May two of the game-based teaching activities typically used in-class had been adapted and made available on our website: abfarmsafety.com
Parent feedback has been very positive.

With the return of in-person program delivery uncertain, the following activities were completed between Apr - Oct 2020

- Hundreds of farm safety related still images gathered over time have been tagged, for improved access/use
- Video resources developed previously by the Centre have been reformatted to allow on-line, web-based access
- Re-formatted video resources have all been tagged, for improved access/use in adapted program delivery
- Safety Smarts materials, models, tools etc. have been gathered from regional instructors across the province
- Sorting and cleaning of models, displays and other in-class teaching materials gathered from regional instructors
- Adaptation of some existing personal experience safety videos to make them more virtual delivery friendly
- Gathering of an additional 18 personal experience safety videos – for use virtually and face to face
- Remake of the Welcome to the Farm video with both female and male youth narrators
- Completion of new K/Gr 1 book – for virtual use. Available in hardcopy when in-person delivery resumes
- Development of 65+ new age and topic specific activity sheets – for virtual and in-person use
- Adaptation of Safety Smarts presentations to make them accessible/usable virtually
- Launch of updated website to better support schools, families and organizations looking for farm safety materials
- Procurement of PPE in anticipation of new disease prevention protocols when in-person delivery resumes

We did not begin reaching out to schools in September 2020, as it seemed apparent that COVID had greatly complicated their day-to-day responsibilities in the new 2020-2021 school year. School contacts began in October as we inquired about their interest in continued farm safety learning. Without exception schools suggested we wait until 2021 to attempt any sort of outreach again.

Research into virtual delivery possibilities began in October 2020, with the purchasing of video conferencing equipment for November trials. Extensive training of delivery contractors, for potential video conferenced (Zoom) Safety Smarts delivery began in December 2020 and continued into January 2021.

In late January rural schools were made aware of our intention to attempt virtual delivery of adapted Safety Smarts presentations. Actual Zoom delivery began on February 1, 2021 and by the second week of the month 80+ school had already set up delivery schedules. Over the coming weeks we will get a better idea how virtual engagement is working and what improvements are needed to make the most of the precious classroom time invested by rural schools. We anxiously await the opportunity to again meet with students in-person, but until that is possible, we will continue with the steep learning curve of the virtual COVID world.

A few other items of note:

In October of 2020, the Farm Safety Centre was informed by GOA representatives that ALL their involvement in and support of farm safety learning and extension would end in December 2020. Their departmental staff were laid off and online resources were withdrawn at the end of the year. A portion of the printed materials and learning models they had on-hand were sent to the centre. We intend to make them available to rural Albertans in the coming weeks and months.

In December of 2020, an updated website was launched by the Farm Safety Centre. It is extremely straightforward to navigate and has many new resources available for schools, families, and organizations. Portions are still under constructions, but I would encourage you to spend a few minutes reviewing what is available. We would be happy to promote any of your upcoming happenings in our News & Events section, or on our social media platforms.

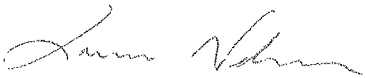
In January of 2021, the organization began a strategic assessment of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks/threats. We anticipate some findings by mid-April. Results will be available on our website in "About Us" section. Since inception in the early 1990's the FSC has had eye-to-eye learning moments with more than 780,000 rural individuals. What will and should the next 20+ years include, to ensure we continue serving rural Albertans in a meaningful way? This is THE question....

In March of 2021, I will be retiring as Executive Director after 20 wonderful years. I very much appreciate the enriching interactions I have had with exceptional individuals across the province. Jordan Jensen will be stepping in as the new Executive Director. **He can be reached at j.jensen@abfarmsafety.com or 403 593-8960 (cell) or 403 752-4585 (office).**

And lastly, the Farm Safety Centre is hopeful that in 2021 your organization will consider supporting our extension efforts. **Within the financial realities of an economically challenged province, any financial support supplied in 2021 would be greatly appreciated.**

Exactly how farm safety learning will evolve moving forward, is uncertain at this time but our organization is doing all it can to prepare itself to continue helping things go right for farmers and their families across our amazing province.

Sincerely,



Laura Nelson
Outgoing Executive Director
Farm Safety Centre