

# SPECIAL AREAS BOARD



Report to the Ratepayer—Fall/Winter 2016

## Message from the Chair

Welcome to the fall edition of our ratepayer newsletter, one of the ways we are using to connect with you—the ratepayer.

Fall is fading, and with winter close upon us our crews and staff are busy with fieldwork needed to complete projects. Our road construction and surfacing projects will be completed by the end of October, with crews completing approximately 80 km of work despite challenging weather conditions. The Special Areas Board is committed to ensuring our road network is built and maintained to meet residents needs. Currently, we are accomplishing this through a maintenance partnership with the province for three-digit highways. The Board recognizes the need to maintain surfaces on roads using our staged surfacing strategy, while finding practical and cost-effective ways to complete this work.

A major project completed this season was the extension of the Shirley McClellan Regional Water Services Commission potable waterline from Consort past Monitor. This project was constructed using the Building Canada Fund in partnership with the federal and provincial governments, and with the Shirley McClellan Regional Water Services Commission. As a result of extremely competitive construction costs, we were able to extend the waterline an additional 10 km past Monitor, getting this waterline closer to our eastern communities located along Highway 12.

Like families and businesses throughout the Special Areas, we are living through difficult economic times - impacting operations through decreased assessment and resulting tax revenues. Moving forward into budgeting for 2017, the Board continues to review operational and capital plans to realize cost-savings, pursue partnership and grant funding opportunities, and refine operational priorities. The Special Areas Board remains focused on making smart budget decisions which reflect economic realities while supporting the people, businesses, and communities of this region.

The Board continues to work with our municipal, business and community partners to develop economic opportunities throughout the region. A current project is the work examining the impacts and opportunities of the potential phase out of the Sheerness Power Generation facility, a result of the provincial Climate Leadership Plan. Completed in partnership with the Town of Hanna and Cactus Corridor Economic Development Corporation, we are expecting some recommendations to be presented to the Town of Hanna before the end of the year. These reports will help outline potential next steps both for the Town and for the larger region.

If you are looking for any further information or have concerns you would like to speak with us about, I encourage you to contact your local District Office, Area Administrator or catch up with us online at [www.specialareas.ab.ca](http://www.specialareas.ab.ca).

Best Regards,

Jordon Christianson, Chair

For more information, go to [www.specialareas.ab.ca](http://www.specialareas.ab.ca) or find us on



Contact Us At:

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**IMPORTANT  
DEADLINES!**

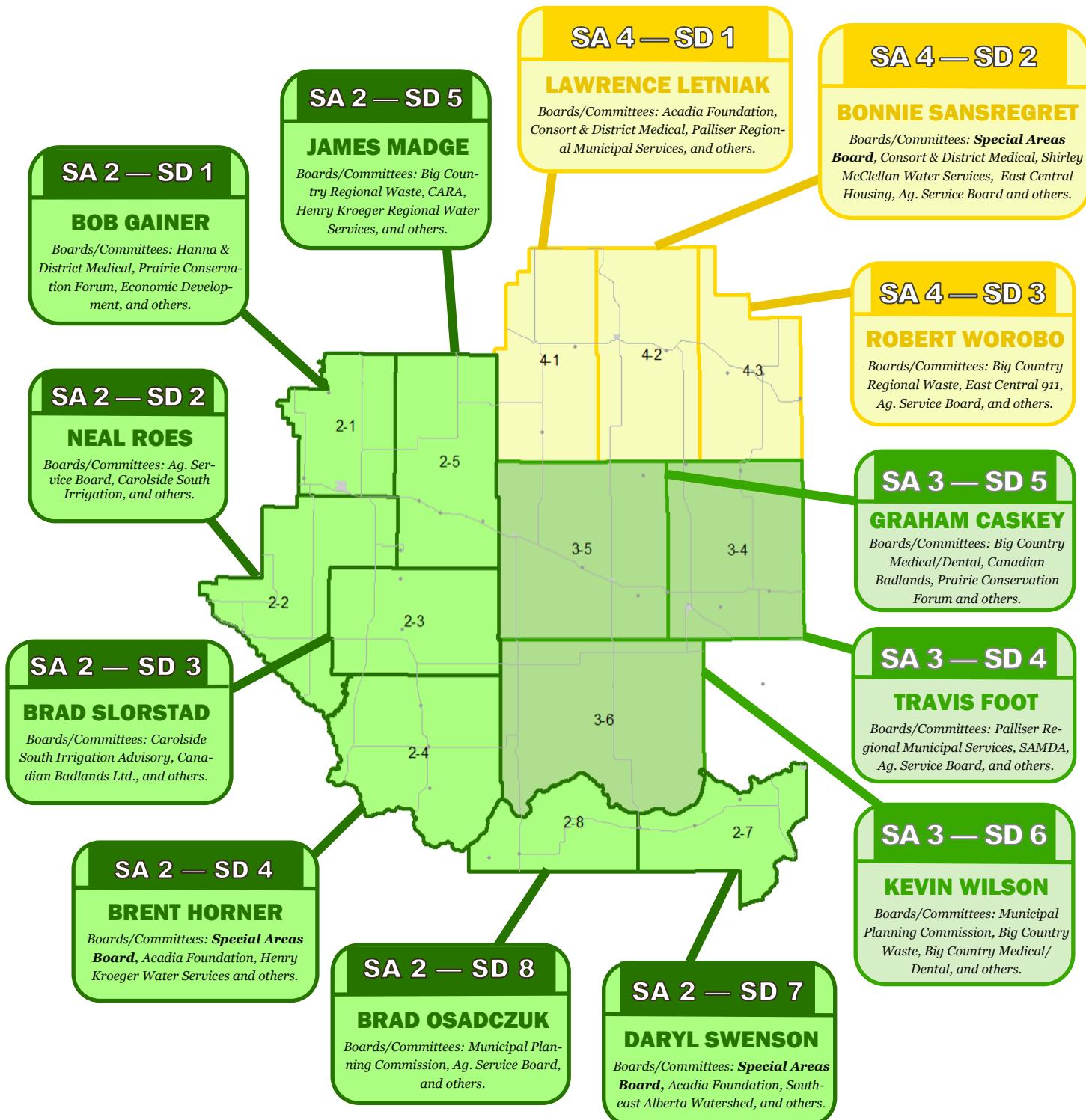
**DUE**

- Taxes—Nov. 15, 2016
- Lease Rentals—Dec. 31, 2016
- Community Pasture Application—Dec. 31, 2016

# SPECIAL AREAS ADVISORY COUNCIL

The *Local Authorities Election Act* governs municipal elections, including the election of 13 Advisory Councillors in the Special Areas.

The Advisory Council meets quarterly to discuss current issues and communicate strategic direction for the Special Areas Board. The four member Board is comprised of three Councillors appointed based on the recommendation of the Advisory Council. The Chair of the Board performs the role of Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and is appointed by the Government of Alberta.

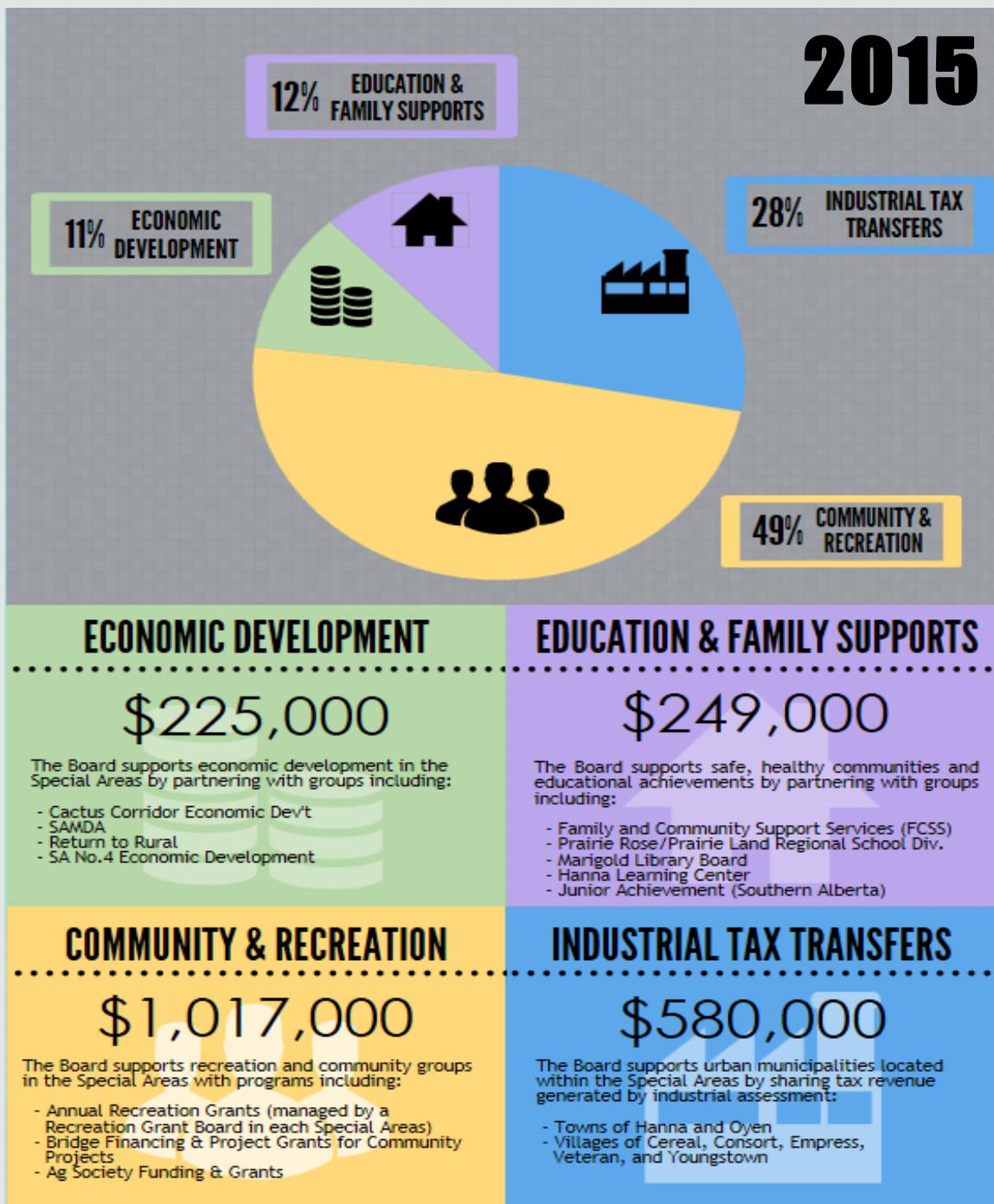


# SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

The Special Areas Board and Advisory Council is committed to supporting the sustainability of the communities located within the Special Areas and our neighboring municipalities. Using a regional perspective with many different funding mechanisms, the Special Areas Board and Advisory Council ensures funding is shared throughout many different communities, community groups and programs.

This funding strengthens our communities and groups, supports recreational and cultural activities in our region, provides low-cost financing and project grant opportunities for capital projects, and helps in the provision of administrative support to local communities and groups.

For more information on funding opportunities, please contact your local District Office to speak with your Special Areas Administrator.



Stay Connected with Us! Visit us at [www.specialareas.ab.ca](http://www.specialareas.ab.ca) or find us on



# AGRICULTURAL SERVICES

## Winter Feeding & Grazing Management

Winter is coming, so here are some tips for feeding your animals throughout the upcoming feeding season.

If purchasing feed for your animals, be sure to inspect your loads carefully. Noxious, nuisance and poisonous weeds can easily be introduced to your farm through feed sources and become a recurring problem in your future. Ergot was particularly prevalent in the Special Areas in 2016, so be sure to inspect for diseased heads prior to purchasing potentially affected feed. For further information on noxious weeds and inspection, please visit our website or contact your local district office.

Using the most efficient and economical feeding plan can make a significant impact to your bottom line, especially as prices drop and margins get tighter. To determine an optimal feeding schedule for your herd, all forages used for winter feeding should be tested for feed values including feed in bales, pits, standing or laying in the field. A wet chemistry test technique is best for this process and your local Agriculture Fieldman would be happy to assist you. Pay close attention to the mineral requirements for your animals over the winter, especially in animals close to calving. Different feed sources will have different mineral profiles and will require different supplementation for your animals. Not fully considering the effect of different sources of feed can lead to health issues in your herd, including winter tetany.

Remember, all feed sources lose yield, crude protein and energy over time. Don't assume the feed tested last year, or even a few months ago will be the same in February. Test to be sure your animals are getting what they need out of your feed.

If winter grazing your herd, there are some critical factors which will make it more successful. Making sure there is a high volume of forage, ensuring the forage is of adequate quality, monitoring snow conditions and keeping a high density of animals to break through snow crusts all help ensure success with winter grazing. Generally, herds will graze through snow depths up to 2 feet, depending on the softness of the snow, the experience of the herd, and whether they will find enough feed to be rewarded for their efforts.

## Meet your Agriculture Fieldmen

*Do you have questions about weed control, soil & water resource conservation or pest management?*

*Do you want to know more about Agricultural Service Board programs?*



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We offer support for programs including:

- ◆ Plant identification & noxious weed control
- ◆ Grazing management & strategies
- ◆ Pest management & controls
- ◆ Growing Forward 2
- ◆ Environmental Farm Plans
- ◆ Shelterbelt programs & planning
- ◆ Animal predation concerns
- ◆ Equipment rentals including RFID tag readers & pest traps
- ◆ Concerns related to *Soil Conservation Act*, *Weed Control Act*, *Agricultural Pest Act*, *Animal Health Act*, and other legislation.