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**Lamont County Community Engagement Meetings  
Re: Development in Lamont County's Heartland  
Industrial Area  
Input Report**

**September 2012**

## Introduction

In 2007 Lamont County significantly expanded the land zoned for industrial development in its Heartland Industrial Area. Although the world economic downturn resulted in relatively limited new industrial development in that area and in the broader Alberta Industrial Heartland Zone over the next number of years, improving economies could now generate increased interest and activity in the immediate future.

Lamont County hosted a series of public engagement meetings in August 2012 specifically for residents and landowners within the Lamont Heartland Industrial Area, as well as others with a specific interest in development in the area. The meetings were conducted to provide the opportunity for residents and landowners within the designated area to learn more about plans for future industrial development in the County's Heartland Area and to give them the opportunity to provide their ideas on how the County should proceed with industrial development and growth, while meeting the priority needs and concerns of County residents.

These initial engagement meetings were targeted specifically for residents and landowners within the Lamont County Heartland Industrial and Agricultural Areas. There will be additional meetings later in the year that will be open to all residents of the County.

A letter of invitation to the meetings was sent to all residents within the Heartland Industrial and Agricultural areas as well as to landowners in the designated area who do not reside on their land. The meetings were also advertised on the County's internet website, on signage along major roadways in the area and through the local news media. The invitation letter included a *Question & Answer Fact Sheet* about Lamont County's Heartland Industrial Area to give some background information before the meetings.

A written *Questionnaire* was also included in the invitation package, giving the opportunity for those unable to attend a meeting to still provide their input by completing and returning the survey to the County.

Stakeholders were also invited to the engagement meetings, including businesses located within the Lamont County Heartland Area, representatives of the Towns of Lamont and Bruderheim, and the Elk Island Public School Division.

The County retained an independent meeting facilitator, *Downey Norris & Associate Inc.*, to conduct the meetings, record input received at the meetings and prepare this *Input Report* for County Council.

The meetings were scheduled at a variety of times over a period of several weeks in August to maximize the opportunity for as many individuals as possible to attend. The meetings were held:

- ❑ Thursday, August 16, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. – Bruderheim Fire Hall
- ❑ Saturday, August 18, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. – Bruderheim Lions Den
- ❑ Tuesday, August 21, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. – Bruderheim Lions Den
- ❑ Thursday, August 23, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. – Bruderheim Lions Den
- ❑ Thursday, August 30, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. – Bruderheim Lions Den

In total, approximately 90 individuals attended the meetings and 11 written questionnaires were completed and returned. The following is the input provided by meeting attendees and those submitting written comments. Effort was made by the consultant to remove duplication but retain the diversity of the comments received. The input is presented in an Executive Summary and seven detailed input categories including:

- ❑ Overall Views on Future Development in Lamont County’s Heartland Industrial Area
- ❑ Residents’ and Landowners’ Issues and Concerns To be Addressed as Development Proceeds in Lamont County’s Heartland Area
- ❑ Actions That Residents and Landowners Believe the County Could Take to Address Issues Identified with Industrial Development in the Heartland Area
- ❑ Key Information Needs of Residents and Landowners About Development in the Lamont County Heartland Area
- ❑ Residents’ and Landowners’ Preferred Ways to Receive Information About Development in the County’s Heartland Area
- ❑ Other Unrelated Issues, Concerns & Comments
- ❑ Meeting Format Evaluation

It is important to note that the documentation and interpretation of the input received through the engagement meetings is that of the independent consultant, *Downey Norris & Associates*, and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Lamont County Council and Administration, nor of individual participants at any of the meetings. It is the consolidation of the input heard and recorded by the independent facilitators at each meeting. They are the views and opinions expressed by participants and were not assessed by the consultant for accuracy.

Following the presentation of this report to Lamont County Council and administration, residents and landowners in the Lamont Industrial and Agricultural Areas will receive a summary of the report and access to the full report on the County’s website or from the County Office. As well residents and interested parties across the County will be invited to economic development update meetings where they too will be given the opportunity to provide their input on industrial development in Lamont’s Industrial Heartland Area.

## Executive Summary

The following is a summary of the key themes, as identified by the consultant *Downey Norris & Associates Inc.*, coming out of Lamont County's August 2012 community engagement meetings with residents, landowners and key stakeholders within the Lamont County Heartland Industrial and Agricultural Areas, regarding how the County should proceed with industrial development and growth while meeting the priority needs and concerns of County residents.

The key themes are:

- There is support from a number of meeting and questionnaire participants for continued industrial development in the County, with that support coming particularly from those most interested in selling their properties and those who see increased development as a net benefit to the County from a tax revenue and growth perspective. Some residents and landowners encouraged the County to more aggressively promote its industrial development opportunities.
- When considering future increased industrial development within the County's Heartland Area, current residents and landowners identified the following issues as those of most concern and in need of consideration or attention:
  - Increased traffic on County roads and the impact of heavy traffic on the condition of the roads and the safety of other drivers
  - Increased rail traffic and the resulting noise, vibrations and delays at rail crossings
  - The cumulative effect of increased noise, light, air and water pollution from new industrial developments
  - Increased difficulty in "enjoying" their land and/or selling their land as more industrial development establishes closer to their properties
- There continues to be concern among some residents of the Heartland Industrial and Agricultural Areas about the rezoning of their land by the County in 2007 and the perceived adverse impact that rezoning has had for them as residents. Among their primary concerns are:
  - The limitations rezoning has imposed on them relative to the use of their land
  - The increased difficulty they have in selling their land due to it now being inside an industrial development zone
  - The loss of "enjoyment" they experience using their land and a negative impact on their lifestyles due to their close proximity to industrial development
  - A perceived lack of consultation in 2007 leading into the rezoning of their land

- ❑ Residents and landowners want to be well-informed as far in advance as possible on the details of any proposed new developments and want the opportunity to be involved and engaged in County decision-making processes related to approvals for new developments. Many meeting attendees do not feel that adequate information and engagement opportunities have been provided by the County in the past.
  
- ❑ Residents and landowners want the County to do more and better planning for development so that appropriate infrastructure can be in place before development happens and so that the priority needs of residents and landowners can be met when development does take place.
  
- ❑ There was a high degree of approval with the nature and timing of this round of engagement meetings and the opportunity provided for residents and landowners to receive information and provide input, and it is felt that such information and input opportunities must continue into the future.

## **Overall Views on Future Development in Lamont County's Heartland Industrial Area**

Many of the residents and landowners submitting written input as well as those attending the meetings indicated support for continued industrial development within the Lamont County Heartland Industrial Area. Indeed, a number of participants indicated that the County has not done enough in the past to promote industrial development opportunities within the County and should do so more aggressively in the future. A number of those individuals feel however that the County does need to address some key issues and concerns prior to and during new development.

At the same time, some residents of the Heartland Industrial Area are not supportive of further development or of even having a designated area for industrial development.

## **Residents' and Landowners' Issues and Concerns to Be Addressed as Development Proceeds in Lamont County's Heartland Area**

Meeting attendees were provided an overview of how industrial development is proceeding in Lamont County's Heartland Area. They were then asked to identify any issues or concerns that they have with how development is proceeding and anticipated to proceed in future and that need to be considered or addressed by the County. The most frequently mentioned and common topic areas included:

### **❖ Quality and Safety of Roads**

- Numerous attendees raised the issue of increased vehicle traffic and the impact on County roads from future industrial development. It was expressed that the traffic on County roads is already high, especially at peak times during the day, and a major problem in terms of volume, noise and safety risks. It was also expressed that the line-up of heavy trucks on the roads and highway seriously impedes traffic flow and poses a serious risk to other drivers, especially those needing to turn across the flow of traffic or those moving agricultural equipment and vehicles.

**Residents' and Landowners' Issues & Concerns... Continued**

- Highways #15 and #29 were cited as specific examples of major traffic problem areas, along with #831 having heavy truck traffic. Roads #202 and #203 were mentioned as being inadequate to handle any increased traffic beyond what exists now. A few individuals feel that the Highway #15/#29 intersection is more dangerous after recent improvements were made to it than it was previously.
- It is felt that increased development in the Heartland Area will only make the current problems worse and that there seems to be no clear plan for the County to control/address the problem. There is a major concern that companies already exceed the original development permits in terms of their traffic volumes.
- Many attendees were also concerned with trucks exceeding the speed limit regularly and the danger that causes for local residents.
- There is also a related concern by some meeting attendees that Alberta Transportation does not respond adequately to the County's road needs or even respond to demonstrated traffic volume statistics. There is a fear that Alberta Transportation has no plan or priority to address the County's needs for many years into the future.
- Associated with the concerns about increased traffic volumes and the impact on the condition of roads, was a concern regarding the amount of dust generated especially during construction of projects. The County noted that it works with the developer in the development permit process to attempt to address potential dust issues.
- There were also concerns by several participants that industrial developers are not taking appropriate action in sharing in the responsibility for upgrading and maintaining roads in the County.
- A number of meeting participants feel addressing traffic and road issues should be the highest priority for the County in moving forward.

**Residents' and Landowners' Issues & Concerns... Continued****❖ Restrictions of Living in an Industrial Development Zone**

- A number of meeting attendees expressed concerns with the impact of the 2007 rezoning and the resulting restrictions on their use of their land. Common concerns were that the rezoning has seriously restricted their ability to use or sell their land; has resulted in increased taxes on their land yet is accompanied by decreased property values; and that these property owners have had their “enjoyment” of their property adversely impacted by surrounding industrial development. Some feel that they are in a “no win” situation unless a major developer wants to buy their property.
- The concern was also expressed by one participant that developments are sometimes planned and land rezoned or people moved out but then the developments are cancelled and nothing happens. It was felt that in these cases people’s lives have been impacted for no reason.
- It was stated by several meeting attendees that landowners with smaller parcels of land face significantly greater difficulties in selling their land than do the holders of larger parcels of land. It is felt by some that, few buyers or developers are interested in smaller parcels of land and there is little potential to sell to “residential buyers” because of the restrictions on land-use and the proximity to current or future industrial development.
- Several comments were made that landowners in “transition areas” that are zoned as Heartland Agricultural Areas also major problems selling their land due to the close proximity to industrial development and land zoned for heavy industrial development. It was indicated that this is particularly true for landowners “sandwiched” between the Lamont County and the Strathcona County Heartland Areas.
- It is felt by a few participants that the Voluntary Residential Property Purchase Program (VRPP) operated by the *Alberta’s Industrial Heartland Land Trust Society* is not really a viable option for landowners impacted by industrial development in the County’s Heartland Area desiring to sell their land because the Program lacks the funding to purchase their properties.
- Several meeting attendees raised concerns with the initial County Council decision in 2007 to rezone their land as part of the creation of the County’s Heartland Industrial Area and the perceived lack of consultation at the time with residents living in the area to be rezoned.

## Residents' and Landowners' Issues & Concerns... Continued

- It was suggested that a number of residents in the rezoned area had not supported rezoning at the time and still do not support it. Two attendees stated they feel that the rezoning was equivalent to having their land “stolen” from them.
- One meeting attendee encouraged meeting participants to protect their interests by doing their own “research” and not simply trusting information received from developers or governments.

### ❖ Rail Traffic

- A number of meeting attendees raised concern about the potential for increased railway traffic - more trains and longer trains - that would come with future industrial development and with certain proposed initiatives in particular. There is concern about increased noise and vibration problems associated with rail cars, as well as traffic delays and potential accidents at level road rail crossings. Delays at rail crossings for road vehicle traffic are seen as a particular concern for emergency response vehicles.

### ❖ Noise

- A number of meeting attendees were concerned with overall “noise pollution” resulting from the construction and operation of industrial operations and with the cumulative noise impact of increased development in the area in the future. Associated with this was the concern about noise from industrial construction and operations in the “off-hours” such as early morning, late evening or even in the middle of the night.

Other issues and concerns about future development in the County’s Heartland Area that were raised at the meetings, though somewhat less frequently, include:

- ❖ The issue of “light pollution” resulting from increased development in the area was raised a few times, with the proposed rail yard in the Heartland Industrial Park highlighted as a specific example. It was noted that Elk Island National Park has a “dark sky initiative” to reduce light pollution and that major development in the County’s Heartland Area could impact on the long-term success of that initiative or similar efforts in other parts of the County if not managed well.

**Residents' and Landowners' Issues & Concerns... Continued**

Associated with this concern was a concern by one participant that excessive light pollution could disrupt the migration patterns of waterfowl and other migratory birds that use Elk Island Park and Beaver Hills as staging areas. In particular concern was raised over potential impact on the program currently attempting to reintroduce the Trumpeter Swan into Elk Island Park.

- ❖ It was suggested by a couple of participants that Long-Term Municipal Plans sometimes negatively impact on short-term land use by residents. Restrictions on land use are often based on very long-term plans and projections, plans that may never happen.
- ❖ It was suggested by several participants that County Council has not taken the steps necessary over the past five years to prepare the County and County infrastructure for increased development in the Heartland Area, including not doing adequate transportation studies to forecast the future impact of increased traffic and prepare for it.

It was also stated by these attendees that County Council promised five years ago that they would communicate regularly with residents about development in the Heartland Area and that regular communication has not happened.

- ❖ Several meeting participants felt that building and development permit requirements are not adequately monitored or enforced by the County.
- ❖ Concern was raised by some meeting attendees about the long-term sustainability of the family farm, farming communities and agriculture as a whole in the County given the apparent high priority being placed on industrial development. As well, it is felt that high quality agricultural land is being sacrificed for industrial development. Some attendees feel that the land in the Heartland Industrial Area is among the best agricultural land in the County and it will eventually be lost to industrial uses.
- ❖ Concern was expressed by a few participants about the potential impact of future development on local wildlife and birds through the loss of habitat.
- ❖ Several participants feel that increased development will put increased pressure on emergency response in the County, including policing, fire and ambulance/health care. This infrastructure will need to be in place prior to further development.

**Residents' and Landowners' Issues & Concerns... Continued**

- ❖ Concern was raised by one attendee about the potential impact on cattle from the *Tervita* project (*Alberta Sulphur Terminals*), a potential project that would construct a sulphur processing facility. The County noted that at this time no application for a development permit has been received
- ❖ A concern was raised by one participant that the former *ERCO Worldwide* plant site may not have been adequately “cleaned up” from an environmental perspective before it was sold and it is now being redeveloped without the necessary clean-up. A question was also raised as to why the County did not rezone the *ERCO* land back to agricultural use when the *ERCO* plant was closed.
- ❖ The concern was raised by one attendee that the County has indicated that it desires population growth, yet the restrictions on land development for residential purposes within the Heartland Area results in a large amount of land “sitting vacant” with no potential to support new residences for any potential population growth.

As well, while “population growth” is claimed as a benefit for the County resulting from increased economic development some meeting attendees believe that most employees of major companies locating in the County will never become County residents, especially the more senior staff of the companies.

- ❖ A concern was raised by one participant that building or adjusting culverts as part of road building or upgrading might require prior approval of the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.
- ❖ One participant was concerned that increased air emissions resulting from increased industrial activity could have a greater negative effect on residents with existing health problems or even hospital patients if the industrial operation is “upwind”.
- ❖ There was a concern raised by a meeting attendee about potential impact on the land directly north of the *Transmark* operation (*Alberta Midland Railway Terminal*), particularly the noise generated by the pump jacks.

## **Actions Residents and Landowners Believe the County Could Take to Address the Concerns Identified**

Meeting attendees were then asked to identify actions that they believe the County should or could be taking to address the concerns raised about current and future development in the Heartland Area. The suggestions in primary topic areas included:

### **❖ Quality and Safety of Roads**

- Many meeting attendees believe that Highway #15 needs to be twinned in the County, at least as far as the Junction with Highway #29, or even further. The County is urged to actively and aggressively lobby the provincial government to move forward with the twinning of the highway. Some attendees also felt that there is a need for traffic lights on Highway #15 due to the already heavy traffic. Other attendees disagreed however, feeling traffic lights would slow the flow of traffic on Highway 15 too much, while others were concerned that twinning the highway would only increase problems for local traffic.
- Some attendees also recommended that Highway #45 should be re-routed around the Town of Bruderheim to avoid truck traffic going right through the town. This suggestion was also made in terms of the highway through the Town of Lamont. It was recognized however that these are decisions requiring the involvement and support of the provincial government.
- It was suggested a number of times that overall, traffic flows and volumes for the entire area, both current and projected, need to be fully reviewed and an appropriate action plan developed. Again however, it was recognized that this was not completely in the hands of the County and needed major involvement from Alberta transportation.
- It was also suggested that perhaps the County could better manage traffic flows and volumes by adjusting the load limits on bridges.
- One participant recommended that the County should designate specific roads in the County for industrial use and restrict traffic on other roads.

**Actions County Could Take ...Continued**

- It was suggested by a couple of meeting attendees that the County should require *Canexus* to contribute more towards road maintenance and upgrading costs given the expansions *Canexus* has undertaken since its development permit was first issued and the increased traffic it has put on County roads.
- One meeting attendee suggested the County should require companies locating within the Heartland Area to purchase road graders and share responsibility with the County in the grading/maintenance of County roads within the Heartland area. Associated with this recommendation, priority should be placed on the grading/maintenance of the most heavily trafficked roads in the area with less emphasis on more “remote” roads receiving much less use.

**❖ Standards & Bylaws**

- Some participants suggested the County establish “minimum distances” allowable within the County from major industrial developments to nearby residences
- It was suggested several times that the current “discretionary use” zoning category in the land-use bylaw is too vague and leaves too much “open” to County discretion. The County was asked to remove the “discretionary use” wording and to clearly describe “permitted uses” in all areas.
- It was suggested by a few participants that the County should put in place noise standards and bylaws as well as implementing “light pollution” standards and bylaws.
- It was suggested by some participants that the County should have a clearer set of definitions for use of the land in the transition area between the industrial zone and the agricultural zone (the Heartland Agricultural Area). It was also suggested that the County move away from residential/agricultural use of this “transition area” and into light industrial to reduce the impact on nearby residents.
- A number of participants feel that although operating permits are granted by the provincial government and all the County can do is impose restrictions, the County needs to control development as much as possible.

**Actions County Could Take... Continued****❖ Information & Communication**

- A number of participants suggested the County significantly improve the quality of its internet website, including the addition of more information and simplification of the website to make it more user-friendly. To achieve this it was suggested the County assign a specific staff member to be responsible for upgrading the website.
- Many meeting participants recommended that the County should regularly update residents and landowners, and especially residents within the Heartland Area, on any ongoing or future industrial development projects or proposals for projects. As well it was suggested the County needs to communicate and consult with residents as early in the development process as possible, before any development approvals are issued, to give residents adequate time to become knowledgeable and provide appropriate input.
- More information about economic development should be included in the County's *Infocus* newspaper page a couple of individuals suggested. As an example, it was felt that information regarding the *Stewart Weir Report- Profile & Census Analysis Within the Alberta Industrial Heartland*, should have been included in the *Infocus* page. It was also suggested that this report should have been shared with residents prior to the resident engagement meetings.
- It was noted by a few that the County needs to highlight to developers what it needs from them early in the development approval process and to highlight County priorities to developers.
- Some participants indicated that the County, residents and various associations and groups in the County need to work cooperatively and collaboratively in looking at all of the potential implications of future developments, including cumulative impacts, and then work together to address any issues and concerns. It is felt that the County also needs to work closely with developers to help ensure that County residents are aware of information meetings being held by developers and exactly what is being proposed by these developers.

**Actions County Could Take ...Continued**

- A number of participants felt the County should be a “public champion” of the needs and priorities of the County and its residents with both the provincial and federal governments, and that the County should work together with its residents in advocating to other levels of government and developers. As a regulator it is felt the County needs to balance everyone’s needs including the County as a whole, residents and the developers.

**❖ Environmental Protection**

- One participant suggested that the County should designate and fund “green areas” for protection (trails, picnic area, toilet facilities) within the Heartland Area and make these areas accessible to the public. Also off-road vehicles should be banned from the protected areas, both existing and new.
- It was also suggested by an attendee that the County should encourage developers to establish “green belts” and wildlife/waterfowl areas along the boundaries of their properties.
- One participant recommended the County establish a noise and air quality monitoring station near the *Sil Minerals* operation.

**❖ Requirements of Developers**

- Some participants recommended that the County require industrial developers to purchase all “small landholdings” in the immediate proximity of their development or at a minimum, provide appropriate financial compensation to the landowners for the negative impact on the “use and enjoyment” of their properties. This is seen as particularly important given the disadvantage owners of smaller parcels of land face in selling their properties in the Heartland Area.
- To reduce the impact of light pollution it is felt by some that development permits should require that lighting at industrial sites is only what is required to conduct the work safely, and that lighting should be focussed down on the work area while minimizing diffusion of light upwards into the sky or parallel to the work site onto adjacent properties.

**Actions County Could Take ...Continued**

Other suggestions and recommendations for actions that could be taken by the County that came forward included:

- ❖ A number of meeting attendees noted that increased development would greatly benefit the County from a tax revenue perspective, as well as benefiting towns in the area. These attendees and others eager to sell their lands encouraged the County to promote and advance development.
- ❖ A number of participants stated the County should ensure that necessary infrastructure (e.g. roads, environmental protections, etc.) is in place before development occurs and not only after major problems arising as a result of increased development.
- ❖ A couple of people suggested that the rail yard development being proposed as part of the planned Heartland Industrial Park development on the former *ERCO Worldwide* plant site should be located in a designated “heavy industrial zone” and not in the “light-medium industrial zone”. Despite initial suggestions by the developer that they would build a 30 foot-high berm around the operation to reduce noise, etc., it is felt this would be inadequate to protect immediate neighbours from the noise impact.

It was recommended by one meeting participant that the County should require the developer to purchase the properties of residents adjacent to this proposed development. The County noted that as of the date of the meeting it had not yet received any formal proposal from the developer for this project.

- ❖ It was suggested by one attendee that decisions made by the County or even the provincial government that “sacrifice the few” in the name of benefiting the “greater good for many” needs to be done with the support of the “few” and with their involvement and collaboration, and with a sharing of some the “greater benefits” with the “few” who have been sacrificed.
- ❖ A few attendees suggested that overall the County should be more welcoming to industry.
- ❖ A couple of attendees recommended that the County should include individual residents or landowners on any working committees the County establishes to do work related to the County’s Heartland Area.

### Actions County Could Take ...Continued

- ❖ One meeting participant recommended that the County should recruit and select its Subdivision Appeal Board (SDAB) members based on knowledge and experience with land use/development. It was expressed that County SDAB decisions do not always seem to be based on a good understanding of what is being proposed and/or the potential impact and that their decisions need to include assessment of “cumulative impacts” of multiple developments.
- ❖ One participant believes that the County has the responsibility to buy-out all landowners in the Heartland Area who want to sell their land.

### Key Information Needs of Residents and Landowners about Development in the Lamont County Heartland Area

Meeting attendees were asked what types of information they need and want about current or future development within the County’s Heartland Area. The comments and suggestions included:

- ❖ Most participants want any information the County has on proposed or potential new industrial developments, along with timelines for development and any changes/expansions to current industrial operations within the County, along with the potential impacts of these developments (e.g. traffic, air emissions, noise, housing, impact on local businesses, etc.). In particular residents want information well in advance so that they can plan their futures in the context of the potential impact of the development on their use and enjoyment of their land. Any information, even if limited in nature, of development that is proceeding immediately is seen as especially important for residents living immediately adjacent to any development.
- ❖ A number of meeting attendees feel that overall County residents do not really know or understand what is being planned in terms of developments in the Heartland Industrial Area, nor understand the potential opportunities and impacts of that development. Often the developers hold information meetings/open houses that are poorly publicized and many residents never find out about them and thus have no access to information about what development is being proposed. Residents need the information about meetings hosted by industry and developers and the information that they are disseminating.

### Key Information Needs ...Continued

- ❖ Several meeting attendees indicated a need for more information on the “risk assessments” that are done either by the County or other regulatory agencies on proposed new projects/developments, including what is addressed during the risk assessments, the process involved in conducting the risk assessment and what opportunities there are for residents to get involved and how to access the information resulting from the risk assessments.
- ❖ A few attendees suggested that names and contact information for specific individuals within the County to contact with questions or comments about economic development or about other County matters be more widely publicized.
- ❖ One participant recommended that when inviting residents to open houses and public meetings, include the meeting agenda with the invitation/information mail-outs.
- ❖ Additional information for residents was recommended by some participants about the “restrictions & rules” that are placed on industrial developers proposing to locate on County land. There are restrictions on current residential and agricultural landowners on how the land can be used and there was interest in knowing what similar restrictions might be faced by industrial landowners.
- ❖ Some meeting attendees feel that they need more information and a better understanding of what is allowed on lands within the Heartland Industrial and Heartland Agricultural areas in terms of sub-division of the land for residential and/or commercial purposes. Some participants felt that they had been given information by the County in the past that now seemed to be contradicted in the meetings about what was types of sub-divisions are allowed.
- ❖ More information was desired by some attendees regarding what buildings they could construct on their own land (in both the Heartland Industrial and Heartland Agricultural Areas) including additions or enhancements to existing residences; replacement or expansions of existing buildings; and construction of other buildings such as machine sheds, garages, etc.
- ❖ Interest was expressed by a few meeting attendees in having information on how the County ensures compliance with the requirements of a development permit once the initial project development is completed and the project/company moves into an “ongoing operational phase”. Do the initial development permit requirements still apply and is adherence to permits monitored and addressed?

**❖ Information Needs of Residents/Landowners ...Continued**

- ❖ Several meeting attendees indicated a need for more information on the *Voluntary Residential Property Purchase Program (VRPP)* operated by the *Alberta's Industrial Heartland Land Trust Society* and other options that might be available to landowners to have their property purchased.
- ❖ Information on any traffic studies that have or will be done was requested by a couple of meeting participants.
- ❖ Information on future population growth projections for the County was a topic of interest for several participants.
- ❖ A couple of attendees identified a desire for information on what the County is doing to provide water to various lots/areas in the zone and whether or not residents along the utility right of way will be able to access water. Also several residents were interested in the ability of the current reservoir to meet longer term water needs. The County advised that the reservoir was constructed initially with the capacity to expand in the future.
- ❖ The Range Road #201 and #560 bridge was at one time weight restricted but now apparently repaired and upgraded. Several residents wanted more details.
- ❖ Information on the number of jobs to be created by a new development, the types of jobs and the access to these jobs by local residents was suggested by one participant.
- ❖ Information on the potential impact on property values in the area (e.g. sometimes a particular development could increase area property values while another development might drive values down) was identified as a shortcoming by one participant.
- ❖ What happens to Crown land within the Heartland Area in the County was a question raised by one attendee.
- ❖ One resident identified a need for information on what is being done to maintain and upgrade road #195.
- ❖ Information on how many residences and landowners are currently within the County's Heartland Industrial Area and the Heartland Agricultural Area, as well as the number of churches and schools was requested by one participant.

**Information Needs of Residents/Landowners ...Continued**

- ❖ A question was raised by one attendee as to whether the gravel roads around the *Maxim Power Peaking Station* project site were going to be upgraded by the County in light of the development there. The County noted that since the *Maxim* project would have no permanent staff on site after it begins operation there would be minimal traffic on adjacent roads and thus no need to upgrade.

**Residents' and Landowners' Preferred Ways to Receive Information about Development in Lamont's Heartland Area**

Meeting attendees were asked for their suggestions and preferences on how the County should communicate to them with respect to industrial development and the Heartland Industrial Area. Preferences include:

- ❖ Many meeting attendees feel that the County needs to use all available communications tools including direct mail, email, website, articles and advertising in local newspapers, billboards and information on bulletin boards in municipal buildings and recreation facilities to reach the greatest number of residents possible, while being sensitive to the different preferences and needs of individuals in terms of how they receive information.
- ❖ A number of attendees indicated a preference to receive information by direct mail sent to their homes.
- ❖ It was suggested by several attendees that the County should develop a specific section on its internet website to contain detailed information on County economic development activity, proposed new projects and progress/changes for current industrial development projects. Some attendees however said that they are too busy to access websites, etc.
- ❖ Several individuals suggested the County distribute a short monthly newsletter about economic development within the County, and in particular what is happening within the Heartland area.
- ❖ Several attendees supported the County using more email communication with residents and especially those in the Heartland Area. Some attendees however said they already receive too much email.

### Preferred Ways of Receiving Information ...Continued

- ❖ It was suggested by one attendee that the County have the name and contact information for the County staff responsible for economic development posted on the County's website and in the County newspaper advertising page. It was also suggested that County staff members' telephone extension numbers be on their business cards to support the new automated telephone answering system that asks callers for the extension number of the person being called.
- ❖ A number of meeting attendees noted that County staff are very helpful and cooperative when residents phone in to ask questions and get more information.

### Other Issues, Concerns & Comments

Meeting participants raised some additional issues and concerns at the engagement meetings that were not directly related to future industrial development within the County's Heartland Area. These issues and concerns include:

- ❖ At one of the engagement meetings a number of attendees raised concerns with the increasing number of oil wells being drilled within the County and the increased impact from this drilling and associated pipelines and flaring. There was a lack of understanding of the different roles of the Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) and the County in approving and regulating these oil wells and a desire for residents and the County as a whole to have greater influence over the approval and operation of these oil wells.
- ❖ A number of meeting attendees were interested in learning what environmental strategies or plans the County and the Town of Lamont have in place or might be developing. It was noted that the Town of Bruderheim has an excellent strategy and that it would be good for the Town of Lamont and the County to do the same.
- ❖ A couple of meeting attendees stated that they believed the County had no legal right to place restrictions on landowners in terms of how they used their land or what they built on their land and therefore landowners did not have to follow County zoning restrictions.

**Other Issues & Concerns ...Continued**

- ❖ It was felt by at least one meeting attendee that there was inadequate risk assessment done on these oil wells and that the companies involved have inadequate emergency response plans should accidents happen. It was noted by County staff that approvals are completely within the responsibility of the ERCB but that the County is working, along with several adjacent municipalities, on trying to find ways to have more influence on these decisions.
- ❖ Concern was raised about Sil Industrial Minerals plant operations near Bruderheim and the high level of noise generated. It was felt that Sil was not being as cooperative as possible when dealing with adjacent property owners and it was alleged that Sil claimed the land was zoned heavy industrial and thus they were not restricted in what they could do. A question was raised about whether a large pile of sand on Sil's site could have an impact on groundwater. It was also noted that Sil Minerals had built a new silo on site without consulting nearby residents.
- ❖ It was suggested that Sil Industries should be promoted as an advantage of the Lamont Industrial Heartland Area when attracting other industry to the area.
- ❖ A couple of participants recommended that the County get rid of "voicemail" and have a "real person" answering its telephone calls.
- ❖ A representative of the Town of Bruderheim indicated that they too are impacted by County decisions about how industrial development proceeds and thanked the County for allowing the Town to participate.
- ❖ Residents/landowners were cautioned by one meeting attendee about realtors who may have a conflict of interest by working both for developers and residents in facilitating purchases of land.
- ❖ It was suggested by one participant that overall the County has too many gravel roads and not enough paved roads in comparison to other adjacent counties.
- ❖ One meeting participant indicated the belief that the entire country was "built on a lie" and was "a fraud" and that landowners should not have to follow "orders" issued by the federal, provincial or municipal governments in terms of how they use their land.
- ❖ It was suggested by one individual that overall the County needs more recycling facilities.

## Meeting Format Evaluation

Meeting attendees were asked their opinion on the value of the engagement meetings and whether they had suggestions for improvement. Comments include:

- ❖ The large majority of attendees feel that the meetings were very positive and that future similar meetings should be conducted by the County.
- ❖ A number of attendees stressed the timing of meetings needs to be sensitive to the requirements of farmers and their “peak seasons”. The general consensus was that the timing of these meetings did allow appropriate opportunity for farmers to participate.
- ❖ A number of participants appreciated the opportunity to select from a variety of meeting dates and times of day, making it more possible to attend.
- ❖ Some participants noted that it was good to have independent facilitators/note-takers for the meetings as it increased their comfort in the meeting and increased confidence that their input was heard and recorded.
- ❖ A series of smaller meetings is seen to work well by a number of people and several noted they feel more comfortable to speak in a smaller group.
- ❖ A number of attendees commented that they appreciated having the first opportunity, as residents of the Heartland Area, to provide input as they are the most directly affected by development and industrial activity.
- ❖ A couple of individuals indicated they would like a town-hall style meeting with all of the County Councillors at the front of the room answering questions.
- ❖ A few meeting attendees feel that the County should only consult landowners/residents within the zoned Heartland Area about future development as they are the ones directly impacted. These meeting attendees feel that residents of other parts of the County should not be involved in the current engagement process.
- ❖ A few meeting attendees indicated that they did not receive the mail notice from the County advising of the information meetings/open houses.
- ❖ Some participants suggested it will now be important that the County continue to communicate with residents, including what the County heard and what actions it is going to take.