

Lac La Biche County *Policy*

TITLE: Strategic Communications Planning Policy

POLICY NO: ADM-15-003

RESOLUTION: 22.928

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 9, 2018

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: Communications

NEXT REVIEW DATE: October 4, 2026

POLICY STATEMENT:

Lac La Biche County believes that the County’s overall Strategic Communications Plan must be effectively managed and responsive to a variety of information needs. New communications initiatives derived from the Plan should address information gaps, support the County’s goals, improve operations, and add value to the organization.

"Original Signed"

Chief Administrative Officer

October 18, 2022

Date

"Original Signed"

Mayor

October 20, 2022

Date

SPECIAL NOTES/CROSS REFERENCE: Strategic Communications Planning Procedure ADM-15-003; previously CS-15-003

AMENDMENT DATE: October 11, 2022



Procedure

TITLE: Strategic Communications Planning Procedure **PROCEDURE NO:** ADM-15-003

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE: Communications **EFFECTIVE DATE:** October 9, 2018

NEXT REVIEW DATE: October 4, 2026

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

1. Lac La Biche County's Strategic Communications Plan will be updated annually, and this effort will be led by the Communications department, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and other departments as necessary.
2. Communications plans and marketing campaigns will be developed in accordance with Schedule A of this Procedure, taking into account target audiences, current goals and objectives, and other considerations.
3. The Strategic Communications Plan is a living document, and updated annually as necessary.

PROCEDURE:

1. Using the Strategic Communications Plan, which forms Schedule A of this Procedure, the Communications department will assess communications needs and priorities and identify opportunities for enhancement.
2. Schedule A of this Procedure will be a guiding document for the creation of communications plans and marketing campaigns for County programs and services. Any proposed changes to Schedule A, to reflect new goals and objectives or other amendments indicative of changes to the organization's overall approach to communications, will be presented to Council for approval.

SCHEDULE A:

Lac La Biche County's Strategic Communications Plan, following this procedure.

"Original Signed"

Chief Administrative Officer

October 18, 2022

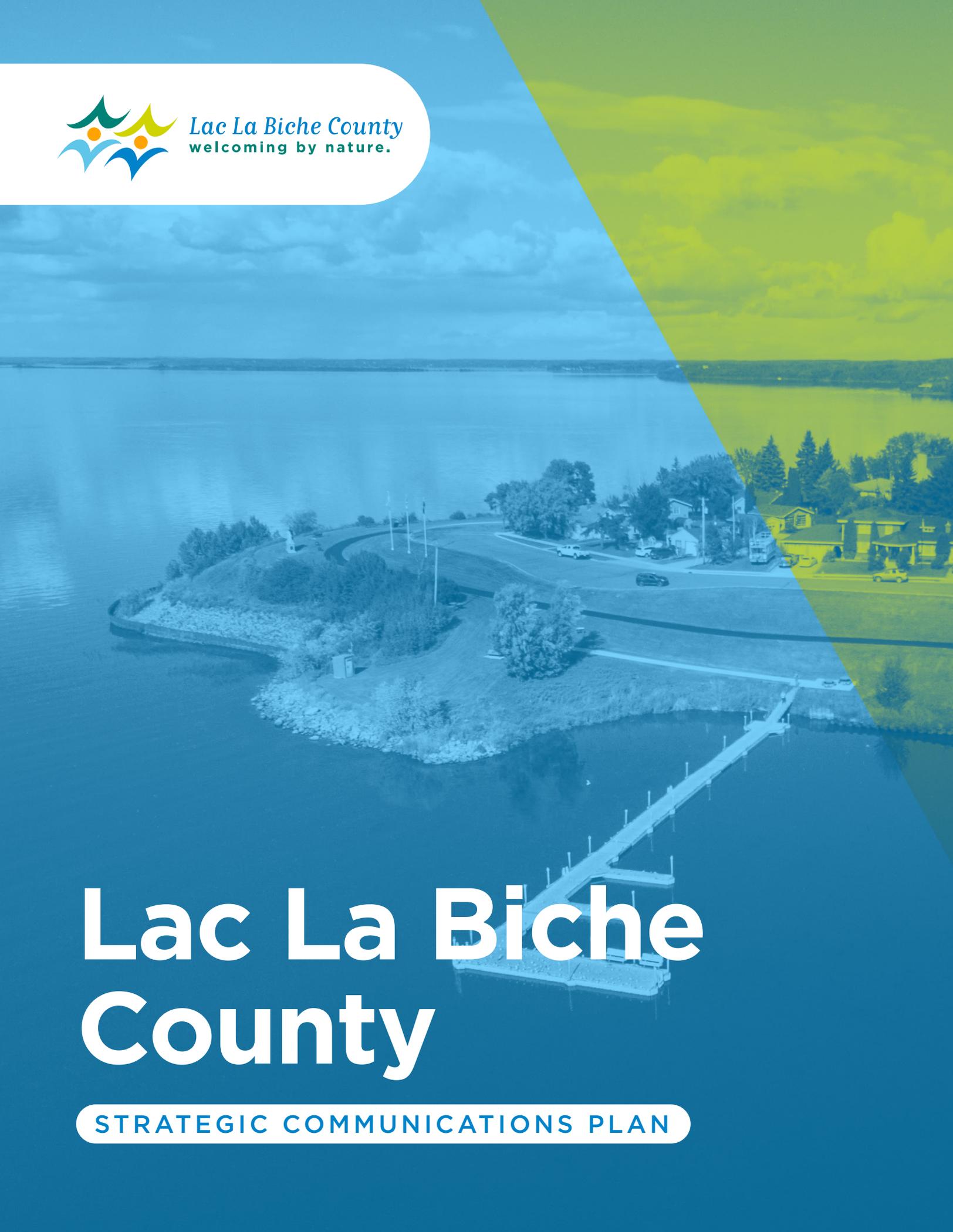
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Lac La Biche County
welcoming by nature.



Lac La Biche County

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



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Communication Matters

ABOUT

Lac La Biche County Marketing, Communications, and Engagement is responsible for managing the image, brand, and reputation of Lac La Biche County with all its audiences. The team assists County departments internally as well as informs and engages the community in County matters and services.

Effective communication helps ensure residents are aware of what is available to them and supports

informed decision-making around the choices available to our community. In developing proactive and strategic messages, the team helps the organization speak with a unified voice and with a resident perspective about the long-term vision of the County, our objectives, and goals, as well as the range of County programs and services available.



OUR PLAN

This Strategic Communications Plan outlines a framework for the County's communications over the next five years, covering communication with internal and external stakeholders. It is intended to serve as an evolving roadmap for how to design our communications so that they meet the information and engagement needs and expectations of our diverse community.

Our team works to deliver information on issues important to the community, while building confidence in the responsiveness, effectiveness, and accountability of the County.

OUR GOALS

Our goal is to have a strategic communication plan that connects the community to the organization and connects the dynamic elements of the County in ways that actively engage residents. We strive to ensure:

- + Lac La Biche County and the Region have a positive image, brand, and reputation, locally, provincially, and nationally
- + Residents are proud of their County
- + Residents, elected officials, and County employees believe they receive timely, accurate and complete information regarding emergent issues, County services, and activities that are important to them
- + Residents value the information services from the County and the two-way communications and connections with Lac La Biche County
- + County employees and residents understand, support, and work toward common goals that strengthen our community

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Marketing, Communications, and Engagement team is responsible for helping fellow County departments and project teams connect with the community by providing the information needed to understand issues and initiatives, and by providing opportunities for two-way communications between staff and residents that enables public inquiry and feedback. Media relations and public relations based on the strategic plan helps the County more effectively advance business goals and provide services that respond to residents' needs and expectations.

Whether it's digital, print, social media, or mainstream media, the Marketing, Communications, and Engagement team helps residents find information on everything the County is responsible for including public involvement opportunities, County assets such as the Bold Center, policy and taxation decisions, infrastructure developments, or playing host to attractions and events.



TIMELY

We share information that is responsive and expedient



MEMORABLE

We share impactful information



ACCURATE

We share information that is factual



ACCESSIBLE

We share information that is readily available, easy to find, and straightforward



RELEVANT

We share information that resonates



MEASURED

We are always looking for ways to improve



PURPOSEFUL

We share information that achieves a goal

What Guides Us

VISION

Lac La Biche County is proud to be a diverse, healthy, and safe community. Our citizens are engaged and enjoy enhanced social and recreational amenities. We are economically resilient as we continue to invest in top-quality infrastructure and services. We are environmental stewards who promote our natural assets, making Lac La Biche County the destination choice of northern Alberta.

MISSION

To build a region of excellence by delivering progressive, sustainable programs and services.

OPERATING GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following are the timeless rules that govern the County's decision-making and day-to-day activities.



COMMUNICATION

We communicate effectively and transparently within the organization and to the community.



COLLABORATION

We foster a culture of collaboration and teamwork.



SAFETY & WELLNESS

We commit to working in a safe and healthy environment.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

We are stewards of the environment.



EXCELLENCE

We strive for excellence and have pride in everything we do.



LEADERSHIP

We will be proactive in addressing challenges and lead with integrity, providing clear, transparent public engagement.

What We Heard

ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Over the first four months of 2022, the County conducted community and stakeholder engagement to inform the development of this plan and to ensure that the right information is being delivered by tools that matter to residents.

— This plan is the result of a community engagement including conversations with residents, an online survey, roundtables with County staff and Council, and best practice review.

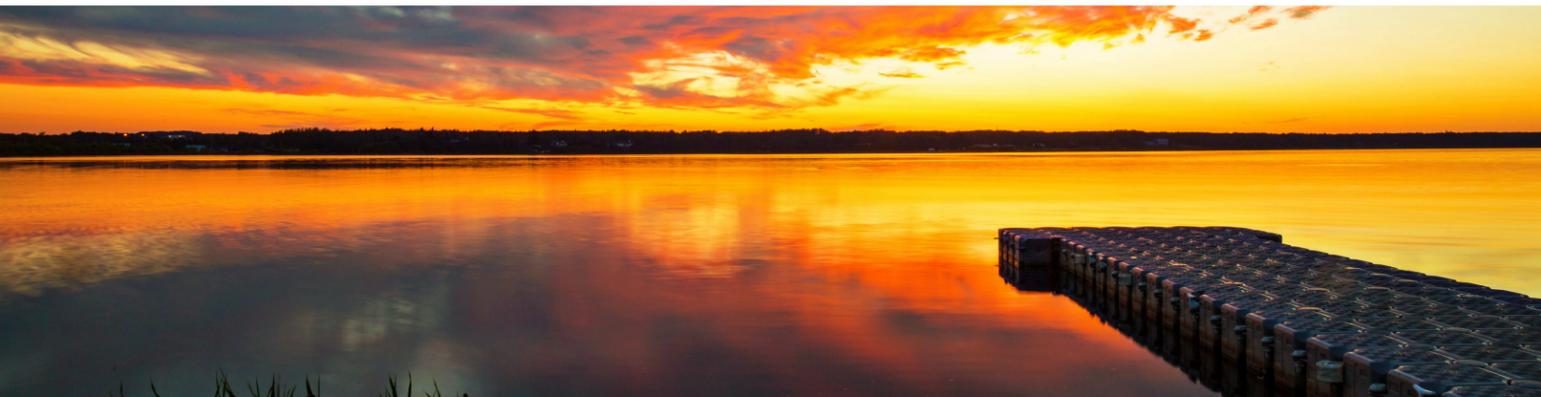
Community and stakeholder engagement told us that:

- + Internal and external stakeholders are somewhat unaware who the Marketing, Communications, and Engagement team is, what they do, and the importance of their role in the community
- + There are ample communications channels available; however, the information is often out of date
- + There are well put together internal communications processes in place; however, they are often seen as strict and inflexible
- + Bold Center communications efforts are disconnected from County communications
- + Public communications are reactive in nature, lacking positive success stories
- + Facebook, email, and the County website are the most desired communications sources by residents while Twitter and Instagram are the least desired
- + Community event information, recreational opportunities, and program & service offerings are the top three communication topics desired by residents, while council meeting materials and strategic initiatives are the least two desired

Our Audiences

INTERNAL AUDIENCES

Internal audiences are comprised of the County staff team, Council, contractors, and volunteers. There is an administration team led by the County's Chief Administrative Officer and a Council composed of a Mayor and eight councillors representing seven wards: all play a role in supporting the delivery of this plan. The County also hires many contractors each year and a roster of volunteers serve a variety of roles, and together, these internal audiences play a critical role in championing the County to both residents and visitors.



Media

Digital media has become more dominant across the region as a source for information. Facebook, Instagram, and blogs are the primary source for information by most residents as determined by community engagement and research conducted in 2022.

Traditional media continues to play a role locally and includes the Lac La Biche Post newspaper and Big Dog 103.5 FM and CHPL 92.1 FM radio stations. The Coffee News serves the hamlet of Lac La Biche through direct drops at businesses and offices. Some external media from Edmonton provides information to County residents but the share of newspaper readership and radio listenership is lower than local offerings. Edmonton television stations with the best reach into the County are Global and CTV.



EXTERNAL AUDIENCES

Residents

Residents call both urban centres and rural settings home and are spread across the over 12,528.25 km² that make up Lac La Biche County. Residents are also located on the Heart Lake First Nation and Beaver Lake Cree Nation reserves, and the Kikino and Buffalo Lake Métis Settlements. There are also temporary residents who work in the County for an extended period of time but choose to live in work camps, hotels, motels, trailers or other temporary accommodations rather than permanently move to the County.

Visitors & Seasonal Residents

Lac La Biche County is a very popular place for visitors, with the population growing during the summer months. Thousands of people live part-time or spend several holiday weeks at the lakes and campgrounds within the County.

Industry, Small Business, and Non-Profit Organizations

The County has many large industries operating within the municipality. Resource companies have a vested interest in the County's programs, services, and promotions because of the impact it can have on their operations and employees. A percentage of industrial workers do not live in the County full-time and present a new audience opportunity for messaging regarding living, investing, and spending leisure time in the County. Small business owners in the County are very active and are collectively a major employer in the region. The County has a number of community groups, service clubs and other non-profits that are opinion leaders and important information conduits.



Municipal, Provincial & Federal Governments

It's important that positive relationships are developed and fostered with government officials and staff, and that they stay informed of County activities and programs. These individuals help unlock opportunities for partnerships and advocacy on key issues need to be constantly explored.

Brand Personality

An organization's image, personality, or brand can be defined in terms of the feeling that stakeholders experience whenever they meet that organization. It is critical to create a consistent brand experience through the County's communications to build deeper trust with all stakeholders. The following brand personality for the County is based on current values and culture as well as through community engagement as part of the development of the County Brand Standards and Placemaking Strategy. The County's brand personality is intended to influence how both internal and external stakeholders feel throughout the course of a year when it comes to County communications. The County communications experience is best represented by the following adjectives, to be used as the basis for all communication tactics in this plan:



COMMUNITY-CENTRIC

- + We genuinely care about our community and strive to make it a welcoming place that everyone can call home
- + Our relationships matter, and we nurture and grow our residents, from County staff members to rural landowners

ADVENTUROUS

- + This is an exciting time for our community, and we want our residents to feel that excitement
- + We are strong, stable, and fiercely committed to the success of the County

INFORMED

- + As a team, we are all familiar with the project details, and are happy to discuss with our stakeholders
- + We know that education and information are the key to engagement with our community, and we are proactive with sharing as updates become available

TRANSPARENT

- + We value openness in communication with all our stakeholders
- + We believe in honesty, and know that access to information will build buy-in from our community



DIVERSE

- + We understand that our County is home to one of Canada's most diverse populations, with over 10 countries, and 5 First Nations and Metis groups represented in our population of just over 8,000
- + We can be counted by a mosaic of residents, businesses owners and visitors, all with unique backgrounds and experiences, to provide the information, updates, and insights needed

AMBITIOUS

- + As the needs of our residents, businesses, and visitors change, so do our communications
- + We are constantly striving to ensure we are utilizing the most effective mediums available to provide the right information at the right time, for our community



Key Messages

The following key messages are the foundation for all internal and external communications about the County. They are intended to be woven into information, updates, and announcements as a way to build a clear and consistent approach to delivering messaging about the County. The key messages outlined below are based on discussions between Incite, Lac La Biche County Council and administration, and key stakeholders and are comprised of:

- + **Key Message**
- + Summary Statement to describe the overarching key message further
- + Proof Points articulate the detail of a key message by showing how it is important and true

UNIQUELY BALANCED APPROACH TO LIVING

We are home to the perfect blend of authentic rural lifestyle and urban conveniences.

- + Our County boasts its own health care facility, an excellent school system and a state-of-the-art recreation centre, all amenities that create a secure and comfortable lifestyle.
- + We are surrounded by a unique blend of lush farmland and boreal forest, providing our residents with the perfect backdrop for a spacious approach to living.
- + The wide-open spaces of forest and farmland combined with a focus on family creates a slower pace of life that lets you breathe and enjoy the small moments.
- + Our close-knit and connected mindset is the basis of safe, low-crime communities in our region, the ideal place to raise a family or start a well-earned retirement.



UNLOCKED ACCESS TO THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Lac La Biche County is home to raw, untamed nature. Our backyards are a natural playground, and we have excellent access to some of Alberta's best outdoor recreation.

- + From back country trails to sandy beaches, the County offers four seasons of outdoor experiences and adventure that allow you to choose how you want to explore the great outdoors.
- + The County is home to one of the most unique camping experiences found at Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park, Canada's only provincial park located on an island.
- + The vast prairies create a seamless backdrop for hiking trails during the day or stargazing at night, all the space you'll ever need, 24/7.
- + Enjoying the lake life and water sports are part of the lifestyle here, with 152 lakes in the County, and almost all are accessible for boating.
- + Camping, hunting, and fishing are among a few of the ways you can immerse yourself in the natural beauty of our County and connect to the simplicity of outdoor living.

A CULTURALLY DIVERSE AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

One of Canada's most diverse, and generous communities, the people of Lac La Biche County work hard, take care of one another, and embody an ambitious and strong spirit.

- + The people of Lac La Biche County have all the ingredients for a strong quality of life. We are neighborly and have built a community where people take care of each other today and for generations to come.
- + Lac La Biche County is a tight knit community that embraces the small-town lifestyle characterized by the positive relationships and sense of belonging that comes with knowing your neighbors.
- + The County is home to one of Canada's most diverse populations, with over 10 countries, and 5 First Nations and Metis groups represented in our population of just over 8,000.
- + Our community is a mosaic of cultures, meaning newcomers can find social opportunities and build relationships to feel right at home.



AN URBAN SPORT AND RECREATION MULTIPLEX FOUND IN A RURAL SETTING

The Bold Center redefines life in a small community by providing a state-of-the-art recreation experience not found in communities of similar size and setting.

- + The Bold Center has a welcoming atmosphere fostered by friendly staff, an inviting space, and a diverse mosaic of guests.
- + Regardless of age, income, cultural background, or fitness level, the Bold Center strives to ensure its programming, services, and spaces are inclusive and available for all.
- + The Bold Center redefines rural living, offering a state-of-the-art sport, recreation, and community services facility.
- + The Bold Center is the hub of the community, offering a unique gathering space that helps people build new relationships, and foster old friendships.
- + With future growth plans including a state-of-the-art aquatics centre, the Bold Center has solidified itself as the County's community hub.



Our Objectives

This Strategic Communications Plan serves to support the key messaging outlined through the three objectives below. There are three objectives for communications over the next five years. These objectives will be achieved through the delivery of the planned activities and initiatives as detailed in this plan's **roadmap**.

1.

Elevate Community Understanding

Enhance the community's understanding of County operations and assets

Elevate Community Understanding

- + Bold Center Website Transition
- + Align Bold Center Brand With County Brand
- + Align Lac La Biche Region Brand With County Brand
- + Utilize Bold Center Brand Guidelines
- + Utilize Lac La Biche Region Brand Guidelines
- + Host State of the Region Event
- + Launch "Did you know?" Series
- + Publish Year in Review
- + Publish Activity Guide
- + Host Free Admission Day

2.

Foster Positive Story Telling

Strengthen our ability to share the County's positive stories using our own voice with the aim of creating and growing positive momentum in the community

Foster Positive Story Telling

- + Update Lac La Biche County Brand Materials
- + Update Bold Center Brand Materials
- + Update Lac La Biche Brand Materials
- + Develop Event Calendar
- + Develop Social Media Strategy
- + Determine Tourism Campaign Support
- + Launch Resident Attraction Campaign
- + Develop Influencer Campaign
- + Host Community Influencers Breakfast
- + Launch Friends & Family Visitation Weekend
- + Host Regional Partnerships Meetings
- + Formalize Regional Photo Contest
- + Launch Aquatics Centre Spotlight
- + Launch Planning & Development Spotlight
- + Launch Main Street Revitalization Spotlight

3.

Empower County Communications

Empower staff to communicate with confidence with other staff and the community

Empower County Communications

- + Rollout Strategic Communications Plan
- + Create One-Pager on Department Communication
- + Host Internal Brand Rollout Event
- + Create Brand Gifts
- + Develop Brand Ambassador Video
- + Assign Senior Leadership to Attend Events
- + Conduct Customer Service Training Sessions
- + Conduct Touchpoint Analysis



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welcoming by nature.