

Hello All,

By now, everyone has received their tax assessments. I have had reports of full time owners receiving an increase of 8-12%, full timers receiving increases of 19-22% and bare land owners increases of 70-100%. I have spoken with Delbert (Tax Assessor) and with owners who have called Delbert. He would like us to send him a letter/email/fax expressing our concern over taxes. To be clear, this is NOT a complaint. Complaints must be filed with County directly. There are 2 parts to taxes, 1 is the assessment and 2 is the Mill Rate. I think we can all agree that the assessment of your property is quite low but the millrate is very high in comparison to other counties. Delbert would like letters to that extend and a general letter of "our taxes are too high for what we get" letter. The letter that I have written Delbert is below. Please understand that Delbert is on OUR side and is willing to bring this forward to help us. Please be diplomatic as this could go the wrong way for us. Use facts and try (it's very hard) to leave emotion out of your letter. Please feel free to cc me on the letter or email me if you would like some information for content but much of the facts are in my letter.

Now there are rules here. Your MUST sign your name. Scanned in signature is preferred, attach to the bottom and email to assessor@vulcancounty.ab.ca or fax your letter attention to Delbert 403-485-2920. You MUST have you address at the lake. If you are a full-timer, you are extra important. Please indicate you are a resident and supply your mailing address including postal etc. It's stupid but they pay more attention to the full-timers as we all know but we'll capitalize on that. If you don't follow the above rules, your letter will be treated as 'information' and basically get thrown out.

Thanks

Jon

Dear Delbert,

I am writing to you to raise a concern about Little Bow Resort's Taxes. Over the past several years, taxes have been steadily rising while services to our Resort have been decreasing. In fall of 2005, myself and a fellow Boardmember approached counsel and asked for the roads to be graded more frequently. Council had agreed but we have not seen this increase. In the past few years we have seen our roads graded no more than 6 times in each year. 4 times in the summer and 2 times in the winter. I realize that the County of Vulcan is very large and has many kilometers of roads however our Resort pays significantly more taxes than other areas of the County. I have listed 2 typical tax payers below and a breakdown of taxes they pay

Scenario one.

A Farmer has a section of land and has gravel roads surrounding his property. One mile on each of the four sides. He pays about \$900 per year. He asks for grading of the roads and the County grades the main road past his driveway, (1 mile) about 6 times per year. Not a lot but enough that it is not a disaster. He also gets full access to police, fire, ambulance, public library etc. He may or may not complain but for \$900 he is getting a good deal.

Scenario Two.

A Resort unit owner pays \$3000. They drive 17km 10 miles of gravel to get to the Resort. They ask for grading and again get the road graded about 6 times per year. The combined Resort pays \$586,000 for 10 miles. They also get full access to police, fire, ambulance, public library etc.

In scenario two, the owner pays significantly more money in taxes and is getting less road grading per owner than in scenario one if we are comparing apples to apples. Dividing the gravel road into unit owners would make the owner responsible for 3/10 of a mile. 2/3 less than the farmer and over 3 times the amount in taxes.

I am all willing to pay our fair share of taxes to Vulcan for the services, whether they are used or not. I also understand that some areas will pay more tax than what they get back based on the distribution system. However, I think the proportions are getting a little out of hand.

Most property values in the cities in Alberta have gone up about 25% and the Rural areas are no different. I have no complaint on my assessed property. However, the major cities (I'm still checking the rural areas) dropped their mill rates 15-20% to bring an effective tax rate a 5-10% increase. Given the inflation rate in Alberta this increase is understandable. However, my taxes increased 24% in Vulcan minus the 5% decrease in education taxes, gives me an effective rate of 19.3%. This is considerably higher than that of other areas.

Looking at the Vulcan County 2008 budget, I can see the bulk of the 3 million dollar increase this year will go to the new tri-services (police, Fire, Ambulance) building. It puzzles me that this was 1 not financed and must be paid all at once in 1 year or 2 not added to my taxes as a special assessment so I could see that it will not be a cash cow next year. Since it was added as general tax revenue, do I understand correctly that the taxes will go DOWN next year as this building is now paid for?

In addition, I have been asking fellow owners of Little Bow and although it has not YET been proven, I am finding that full timers at Little Bow received and increase 8-12% while part time residents received increases of 19-22% and bare land has in some cases, doubled. There are residents paying more in taxes for bare land that some with houses. I certainly hope that the County is not discriminating non voting residents in an effort to raise money from those who have little power to do anything about. Perhaps the County will consider, giving the Resort more services. I have mentioned repeatedly that the Resort would be willing to negotiate a P3 arrangement on the roads and have also mentioned that our water treatment plant needs upgrading. A cost of \$300,000 which the Resort is unable to pay as the Resort just received an increase of \$125,000 in taxes. We also need a new tractor and multiple other costs in order to keep our Resort MAINTAINED, let alone give additional money for roads etc.

I thank-you for your reply

Jon Hodal

(Signature attached to Original)

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