

# SMOKY LAKE COUNTY



<b>Title: Communications</b>	<b>Policy No: 44-01</b>
<b>Section: 01</b>	<b>Code: P-I</b>
	<b>Page No.: 1 of 5 E</b>

<b>Legislative Reference:</b>	Alberta Provincial Statutes
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<b>Purpose:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Smoky Lake County seeks to inform its residents, businesses and visitors by engaging in a proactive Communication program.</li><li>2. Communication Policy is an ensemble of objectives, procedures, principles and directives for the internal and external communication to provide a solid foundation of purposeful language by implementing different communication tools deployed for understanding the direction, programs and services of the County.</li></ol>
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## Policy Statement and Guidelines:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. STATEMENT</b><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.1 The County's Communication Policy is to ensure that communications – both to external and internal audiences – are proactive, strategic, effectively managed, consistent and responsive to the diverse information needs of the County's key publics.</li><li>1.2 Smoky Lake County, through its Departments is committed to fostering a thorough understanding of the direction, programs and services of the County to its publics.</li></ol></li><li><b>2. DEFINITIONS:</b><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.1 <b>Communications:</b> the practice of receiving, interpreting and transmitting information.</li><li>2.2 <b>Publics:</b> as taxpayers, employees, community organizations, businesses, suppliers to the County, levels of government, and all individuals and groups which the County works with and serves.</li></ol></li><li><b>3. OBJECTIVE:</b><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3.1 To provide a framework for the County to enhance its two-way communication, improve stakeholder relationships, and encourage public participation in the municipal process.</li><li>3.2 To generate greater understanding of and support of County programs and services; and increase awareness and interests of Council activities and responsibilities.</li><li>3.3 To affirm Smoky Lake County Council and its personnel's role to ensure the success of the Communication Policy requires working collaboratively across departments to ensure the County's communication efforts are well coordinated and responsive to the needs of the public.</li></ol></li></ol>
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**Policy Statement and Guidelines:**

**4. GUIDELINES**

- 4.1 Communication foundation “Model” has been developed based upon the eight (8) principles of good communication, to be utilized when implementing a Communication Tool; namely –
  - 4.1.1 **Visibility:** To maintain a strong two-way communication relationship with the public’s, is important that the County is visible as much as possible. Visibility leads to recognition and acceptance; as well, it allows the community to see the range and value of the municipality’s work.
  - 4.1.2 **Simplicity:** Communication must be simple and straight forward and reflect timely, accurate and clear processes.
  - 4.1.3 **Repetition:** Wherever possible a repetitive schedule will be devised for message placement to ensure it receives the public’s consideration. The more the message is repeated the wider its audience will become, and the more the message will be retained by the audience.
  - 4.1.4 **Value:** Ensuring the message has a reasonable level of value for the public is paramount to gain their attention and interest.
  - 4.1.5 **Variety:** To ensure a message is received by the publics-at-large, it needs to be transmitted through a number of different communication tools. The more mediums the message appears in - the wider the coverage will be.
  - 4.1.6 **Listening:** Good (and effective) communication requires two parties – the sender and the receiver. When a message is sent, you must expect to receive some form of response at times. It is important that feedback on all issues is encouraged and processed.
  - 4.1.7 **Consistency:** To build credibility and a positive reputation messages need to be consistent.
  - 4.1.8 **Evaluation:** The only accurate way of knowing if communication is good or not is to evaluate its effectiveness.
- 4.2 **Brand** defined: “Who are we”? and “Why do we matter”? The County identity is the image of Smoky Lake County (as shown) by design elements and correct use of the County’s signature, logo, and service profile. Consistent use of the Smoky Lake County identity strengthens the relationship with the public by expressing a vision and direction in a way that people can understand and support.
  - 4.2.1 Smoky Lake County logo is contemporary, yet simple and sophisticated. Description of Logo: “**Smoky Lake**”: stylized cursive writing (red), underlined. “**County**”: capitalized print (black) is inset within the bottom of the circle pattern (blue). Interpretation of Logo: represents “**Smoky Lake County**” is a united community.



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<b>Section: 01</b>	<b>Code: P-I</b>	<b>Page No.: 3 of 5 E</b>

Policy Statement and Guidelines:	
<b>5. PROCEDURES</b>	
5.1	The GIS/Communication Director assists County departments and Council to provide timely, relevant information to the public. Such services include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1.1 Advertising</li> <li>5.1.2 Media Releases</li> <li>5.1.3 Brochures and Newsletters</li> <li>5.1.4 Municipal Identification</li> <li>5.1.5 Promotion and Publicity</li> <li>5.1.6 Special Events</li> <li>5.1.7 Website Administration</li> <li>5.1.8 Social Media Administration</li> </ul>
5.2	In support of the County’s strategic direction, communication policy and guidelines, the Chief Administrative Officer will advise and assist elected officials, senior management, and departmental managers in areas related to public relations, (including internal communication), media relations crisis/emergency and safety communications, and public consultation.
5.3	The Communication tools utilized by the County to disseminate its information, engage its publics and obtain feedback as outlined in <b>Schedule “A”: Communication Tools</b> are indicated in color code by priorities from 1 to 15: <b>“Top Priority”</b> , and <b>“As Needed Basis”</b> .
5.4	To measure effective communication tools and to evaluate the communication processes that are utilized by the public; the GIS/Communication Department will prepare an annual survey to address current communication methods used and explore what other communication methods might work better. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.4.1 The survey will be released within the publication of the Annual Booklet.</li> <li>5.4.2 The survey will be posted on the County Website.</li> </ul>
5.5	Communication Policy is governed and guided by policies, practices, acts and relevant plans and Communications processes adhere to applicable federal, provincial and local laws. All content (messaging, data, and digital) will be managed, stored and retrieved to comply within the appropriate regulations; i.e., <i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i> .

	Date	Resolution Number
Approved	January 22, 2016	# 313-16 - Page # 12049
Approved		
Amended		
Amended		

**SCHEDULE "A"**

		<b>COMMUNICATION TOOLS</b>	
		"Top Priority": Number 1 to 7	"As Needed Basis": Number 8 to 15
Communication	Purpose	Action	
1.	<b>Advertising</b>	To promote, inform, educate the public through paid advertising, such as for employment opportunities, tax information, Grapevine, public hearings, and others.	Standards will be established for the look of ads that will be used for all advertising. Standardization will mean that an ad will be easily identifiable by readership. All advertising will include the County logo located in the top left-hand corner.
2.	<b>Calendar</b>	Internal Communications of County activities.	Produced and distributed Monthly consisting of information regarding County functions.
3.	<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System (GIS) makes information available through the County's Public Muni-Site to enhance public knowledge and promote a better understanding of the County and its government.	GIS organizes geographic data so that a person reading a map can select data necessary information for a specific project or task.
4.	<b>Grapevine</b>	Serves as a useful monthly information place for providing current information.	Published and released monthly normally following the County Council meeting.
5.	<b>Logo / Branding</b>	To develop practice to standardize branding through the use of the County logo on promotional items, letterhead, news releases, advertising, and other.  To create a positive public image and visual identity of the County.	The County logo will be implemented on all Communication vehicle sources. Currently, there is no standardized use of the logo's color. Original Logo: Color reflects Red and Blue.  Each department can develop a brand personalized to associate to its department, as long as the Smoky Lake County name is implemented.
6.	<b>Social Media</b>	Social Media vehicles used are: Facebook and Twitter. Social media methods are being use more frequently to promote any County activities.	Telling the story. To celebrate, be proud and to regularly communicate the work, successes and achievements of the County.
7.	<b>Website</b>	To provide the public with up-to-date information on County business and to be the go-to resource for information, forms, and current information that may be needed to communicate urgently.	Updated County website with a look that reflects a progressive municipality that provides information in a timely manner. <i>e.g., Bylaws, Policies, Meeting Agenda and Minutes and Departmental activities.</i>

Schedule "A": COMMUNICATION TOOLS: Page 1 of 2.

**SCHEDULE "A"**

		COMMUNICATION TOOLS	
		Top Priority": Number 1 to 7	"As Needed Basis": Number 8 to 15
Communication	Purpose	Action	
8.	Annual Booklet	To provide annual reporting on financial information, key County operations, and key contact information.	The booklet will be produced each year at Council's discretion and contents (as per purpose) will be adjusted, as necessary.
9.	Brochures and Newsletters	To provide brief information packages on topics of interest to residents.	Shall be produced, as necessary, to target a specific issue.
10	Electronic Bulletin Board	Located in the County Lobby to provide information to walk-in publics.	Limited communication to the public who come into the County building. Information posted, for example, Meeting dates, Events - Calendar.
11.	Emergency Communications	To be part of the Emergency Team and to provide communications on emergency incidents to the public, media, government and other agencies.	Communication Process is part of the Smoky Lake County's <b>Emergency Response Plan</b> .
12.	Employee Communications	To provide employees with regular communication on information on County business.	At weekly Management Meetings: Managers communication information back to the employees.  Messages from the Chief Administrative Officer and Assistant Chief Administrative Officer to Managers and staff will be distributed by email or other means, as necessary.
13.	Media: Radio	To provide the release of information on the air for immediate notification.	Radio communication will be utilized where there is a unique or urgent story.
14.	Public Consultation	Public Consultation Is a normal part of Local Government. Public engagement strengthens decision-making and endears publics to their government.	Public Consultation shall be conducted when and in such a form as per requirements of the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> , County Bylaw and at the direction of Council when necessary from time to time.
15.	Safety Communications	To promote the successes County employees achieve regarding safety standards to employees and to the public.	Communicate to all staff the discussion from the Monthly Safety Meetings as there may be discussions and outcomes that involve all employees.