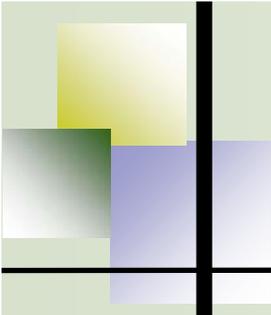


*A Guide to Rural
Living in
Kneehill County*

Published in 2010



Living in Kneehill County offers residents many unique and exciting challenges. By learning how to be a good neighbor and how to take care of your property you will create a wonderful and second to none living experience.

Please note that this guide does not contain all of the information you may need. If you require any other information on County services please phone the Kneehill County Office @ (403) 443-5541 or toll free at 1-866-443-5541.

You can also find answers to many of your questions on-line at www.kneehillcounty.com

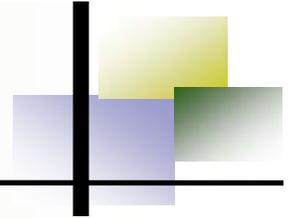
*Photo credit:
Denise Meyer and Roger Bryan*



A Guide to Rural Living in Kneehill County

*Kneehill County will serve,
enhance and promote our community.*

232 Main Street
Box 400
Three Hills, AB T0M 2A0
Tel: 1-866-443-5541 www.kneehillcounty.com



The Code of the West for Rural Living.....

Zane Grey, the famous western writer, first recorded the unwritten rules of the "The Code of The West."

The pioneers who settled this county were bound by these unwritten rules which focused on hospitality, loyalty, self-reliance and respect for the land.

In keeping with this tradition we have produced "A Guide to Rural Living in Kneehill County" to help guide new citizens who move to our rural areas.

Kneehill County has much to offer new residents, from pristine crop land in the west to beautiful river valleys in the East. While the area is stunning in diversity and beauty it will offer unexpected challenges that you may not be accustomed to from your urban roots.

Therefore, the following pages contain a brief collection of information about Kneehill County and will help you to consider transportation, communication and public services. It is important for you to realize country life is different than that in urban centers. Please don't let this discourage you from moving, but rather, look forward to your new role as stewards of the land.

*Welcome to Kneehill County
a great place to live, work & grow!*



The Original Code of the West.....

Before Zane Grey (original name Pearl Grey) died at age 67 in 1939, he completed 57 novels, 10 books of Western non-fiction, and 130 movies; essentially shaping the way people viewed the "Old West."

The "Code of the West" written by Grey in 1934, framed a code of behavior from the unwritten laws that settling men and women lived by. The following are an adapted list of Grey's "Code of the West" rules. They have been revised by western historian Ramon Adams. Adams explains, "The Code of the West was a gentleman's agreement to certain rules of conduct. It was never written into the statutes, but it was respected everywhere on the range."

Loyalty. A cowboy took pride in being loyal to his "brand." The highest compliment a man could receive in the Old West was: "He'll do to ride the river with." This was a tribute from the old trail days when only the fearless dared to swim herds across treacherous rivers. If a life-threatening mishap occurred in the crossing, the help of the nearest cowboy would be the difference between life and death.

Friendship. There was no more sacred obligation than to be there when your friend needed you.

Hospitality. There were no motels in the Old West. Anyone who wandered in - even an enemy - was welcome at the table. The same was true for riders who joined cowboys on the range.

Fair Play. Westerners despised duplicity or under-handedness of any kind. The Code dictated that one could not shoot an unarmed or unwarned enemy (also known as "the rattlesnake code": always warn before you strike). All bets were off, however, if someone was being stalked.

Liquor. Drinking on duty was grounds for instant dismissal and blacklisting.

Generosity. Most cowboys were generous to a fault.

Curiosity. It was dangerous to inquire into what someone was back "in the states." On the frontier it didn't take long to take the measure of a man.

Kindness. Consideration for others was central to the Code. You didn't stir up dust in the vicinity of the chuck wagon; you didn't wake up the wrong man for herd duty.

The Environment. The cowboy spent most of his time in the open. He would rarely smoke during rides across fire hazard country. He had no tolerance for those who would disfigure trees or rocks.

Integrity. Honesty was an absolute. Locks on doors were unknown until nesters moved in. Your word was your bond; a handshake was more binding than a 100 page contract. When the terrible winters of 1887-89 virtually wiped out the cattle industry, ruined ranchers literally worked their way into early graves rather than go back on their word. Should a parent die before debts were paid off, the inheriting son or daughter assumed them. Bankruptcy was not an option.

Religion. To the average cowboy, religion meant living by the Golden Rule.

Information from: Dr. Joe Wheeler, *Why You Should Read Zane Grey*, <http://www.zgws.org/zgwsread.html>, (1996)



Kneehill County Public Safety.....

Kneehill County Public Safety is staffed by Provincially appointed Peace Officers and provides a supplementary enforcement service to the RCMP.

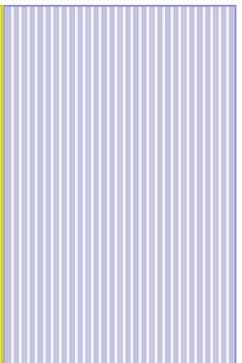
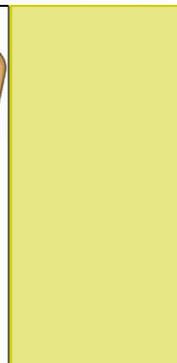
Public Safety conducts activities within the boundaries of Kneehill County, Acme, Linden, Trochu, Carbon, and Three Hills.

The department enforces compliance with select provincial statutes and municipal bylaws. Particular attention is paid to infrastructure protection (commercial carrier compliance), to public safety initiatives and enforcement.

Some examples are:

- Traffic Safety Act (eg. Speeding, Uninsured motor vehicles)
- Game and Liquor Act (eg. Public Intoxication)
- Animal Control Bylaw (when applied to hamlets). Dog licensing is mandatory when residing within Hamlets and is at no charge.
- Parks Protection Bylaw
- Nuisance Bylaw

For a full list of Statutes, Bylaws and activities of Public Safety please visit www.kneehillcounty.com, or contact the Senior Peace Officer at 403-443-5541 ext 114.

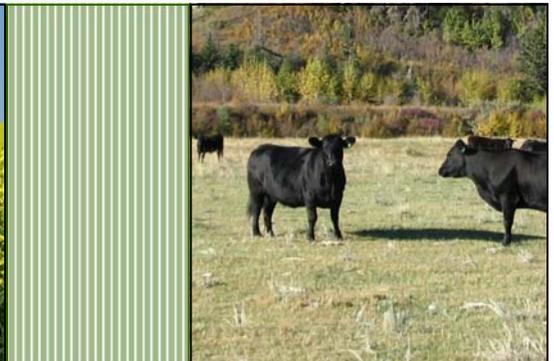


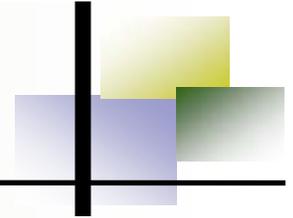
Agriculture



Agriculture remains the backbone of the local economy, complimented by a strong oil and gas industry. Since farming sustains a large portion of our residents, understanding farming practices will help you to respect your neighbors livelihood, property and build great relationships with your farming neighbors.

- Dust is created from vehicles traveling on gravel roads and by farmers working in the fields completing jobs like harrowing, and combining. Dust will be more noticeable during dry and/or windy conditions.
- Farmers often work very late into the evening or around the clock during seasons like seeding and harvest, and this may disturb your quiet at times. Please have patience, it won't last long.
- The use of fertilizer and herbicides are important tools for growing crops and pasture. Sometimes planes are used for spraying herbicides. If you find you are sensitive to herbicides, please take appropriate precautions such as staying indoors.
- If you are a neighbor to a livestock owner be aware that animal manure smells! It can't be helped.
- Please take care that your livestock and pets are kept on your land. Use adequate fencing. It is each landowner's responsibility, if they own livestock and/or pets, to make sure the animals stay on their own property. Issues could arise if your animals leave your property. For example, dogs may roam to neighboring properties and this could cause a problem if your neighbor has livestock. Dogs may travel on their own or form a pack with neighboring dogs and chase and spook livestock. Spooked livestock may break down fences, and injure themselves, or become hazardous to people if the animals are on a roadway at night.
- Being a good steward of the land includes weed control and sustainable grazing practices (if you are a livestock owner). Overgrazing can lead to soil erosion and increased weed problems which can be expensive to control. Both weed issues and soil erosion may devalue your property and are enforceable under the Alberta Weed Control Act and the Alberta Soil Conservation Act. For more information on these Acts or good grazing principles please contact the Kneehill County Agricultural Service Board Office.





Weed Control....

You may find that weeds are growing on your land, some may even be classified as noxious. According to the Alberta Weed Control Act it is your responsibility as a land owner to control and prevent the spread of any noxious weeds. If you need assistance in identifying a certain weed on your property, or assistance with control and prevention measures please contact the Kneehill County Agricultural Service Board Office. You can also phone a local fertilizer dealer, as they sell herbicides for weed control.

Pictured below are some of the common noxious weeds in Kneehill County:



Common Toadflax



Canada Thistle



Leafy Spurge



Scentless Chamomile



Black Henbane



White Cockle

Rural Emergency Services.....

Kneehill Emergency Services are all accessible by dialing 911. Through the 911 system you can reach fire, rescue, ambulance and police services. You should be aware as a county resident, that it may take longer for these emergency vehicles to reach your residence due to the greater traveling distances compared to urban settings.

There are six volunteer Fire Departments that make up Kneehill Emergency Services. Two of these also have rescue units. Three Hills Fire & Rescue provide all rescue services in the North half of the County. Linden Fire & Rescue provide all rescue services in the South half of the County. The other four Fire Departments are Trochu Fire, Carbon Fire, Acme Fire and Torrington Fire.

Rural Addressing.....

Our rural address system assists in the delivery of Emergency Services to your property. Giving the operator this address will help Emergency Services locate your residence. It is important to note that your rural address will also be required for your passport application or courier services, but does not replace your regular mailing address.

Fire Safety, Fire Permits & Controlled Burn Information...

Contact your Local Fire Guardian or Fire Department to obtain a free Kneehill County Fire Permit. In cases of deteriorating conditions, a full fire ban may be issued which will automatically cancel all existing fire permits.

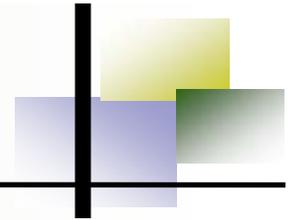
All fires must be supervised and under control at all times and fire-fighting equipment must be at the fire site. Always supervise your fire and quickly extinguish spot fires caused by embers. When you leave the site of the burn, double-check and make sure the fire is out.



Burn debris in an approved concrete block fire pit or a metal container with a sturdy wire-mesh cover to stop hot embers and firebrands from escaping. For more information please contact your local fire department or Kneehill County Office.



Assessment



Assessment....

The Kneehill County Assessment Department determines each individual property owner's property assessment. The Assessment Department calculates their assessment as per provincial legislation and guidelines.

- Residential and non-residential properties are assessed at market value using mass appraisal techniques.
- Farmland is assessed per regulated rates based on the productivity value of the land.
- Industrial oilfield, manufacturing plants and special purpose properties are assessed using the cost approach.
- Property assessment (determined by assessor) x Tax Rate (set by Kneehill County Council) = Property Tax

Property Inspections....

The Assessor for Kneehill County must re-inspect all properties within the County regularly, but cannot reassess all properties in the same year, so it is an ongoing process. The Assessor inspects to verify existing details on the assessment roll and adjusts for any discrepancies.

Kneehill County gives notice that an inspection of various properties will be made during the year in the County Section of the local newspaper.

Property tax and assessment notices are prepared and mailed to owners in June of each year, with taxes due October 31st.

Remember that the Assessor not only prepares the County assessments but is a source of information to help property owners, especially new owners, understand their property assessment. To speak with the Kneehill County Assessor please phone the office at (403) 443-5541 or toll free at 1-866-443-5541.



Pest Control...

Many wildlife species live in Kneehill County, including: moose, geese, deer and many different types of birds which are all beautiful to witness in their natural habitat. Some wildlife species in the County are actually defined as pests under the Alberta Pest Control Act. Coyotes, Richardson's Ground Squirrels (gophers) and skunks are all designated nuisance pests. Landowners have the right to control these types of pests on their own property.

Please don't encourage behavior that may increase the numbers of these pest species. For example, coyotes are very willing to feed from leftover pet food sitting outside, don't encourage this behavior by providing these wild animals with a source of food.

If you find you are having difficulties with some of these animals, please contact the Kneehill County Agricultural Service Board Office for assistance.

Other Programs....

The Kneehill County Agricultural Service Board helps to administer the Shelterbelt Program managed by the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Association (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada).

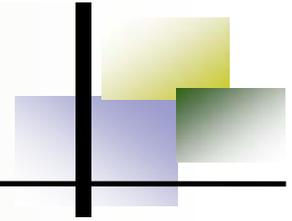
This program enables landowners with 5 acres or more to order several different species of trees to establish shelterbelts. Shelterbelts provide many benefits including energy conservation in farmyards, protection from soil erosion in fields, protection of livestock, wildlife habitat, snow collection and riparian area plantings.

Contact our Ag Services Fieldman at 403-443-5541 for more information on various programs.





Operations



Basic Operations.....

The Kneehill County Operations Department has many responsibilities including construction, maintenance, and dust control of roads. Kneehill County has approximately 210 bridge sites, and 1400 miles of road to maintain. There are also many public roads not maintained (no grading or snow removal). As a new rural resident it is important to note that in extreme weather, even county maintained roads may become impassable. You may require a 4-wheel drive vehicle for these times - which could last several days. It may take up to three days for snow removal. You should also know that school buses may not be able to run during these times.

For information on our Dust Control program please contact the Kneehill County Operations Department. Water and wastewater issues also are managed through this Department. Please phone the Operations Department for more information on any of the above listed topics at the Kneehill County Office (403) 443-5541 or toll free 1-866-443-5541.

Equipment Sales.....

At the Kneehill County Shop we sell used culverts, grader blades and other used equipment. Please phone the shop regarding types of equipment for sale and for current prices on these items. The Kneehill County Shop and Yard is located at 306 3rd Street South in Three Hills; to contact the shop please call (403) 443-5293

Garbage Disposal.....

Garbage disposal is the responsibility of the residents, take care of your own garbage disposal by visiting one of the local landfills found in the County. Facilities to recycle are available in some of the local communities in Kneehill County. You can also take advantage of Toxic Round-up Days (for paint, chemicals, etc.) which are held in most communities and advertised in the local newspapers. Locations of transfer stations include Three Hills, Kneehill (SW 20-32-26), Linden, Carbon, Acme and Trochu, for hours of operation for the transfer sites please visit our website at www.kneehillcounty.com or phone the Kneehill County Office. .



Developing Property.....

Development is defined in the Kneehill County Land Use Bylaw as an excavation or stockpile, a building or an addition to a building, the change of use or a change in the intensity of use of the land or building. Uses such as Home Occupation businesses will also require a Development Permit.

In Kneehill County the construction of most buildings (including all dwellings and residential accessory buildings) will require an approved development permit.

Development Permits

Applications for development permits are reviewed by County Planning Staff, in certain cases by the Municipal Planning Commission (MPC), to ensure that the proposed development is in accordance with the provisions of the County's Land Use Bylaw. The approval process will confirm that all the applicable development standards (setbacks from property lines, parcel size, etc.) are adhered to. In a few cases, development permits may not be required. Please contact the Planning Department to verify County requirements for your planned development.

Some situations may require other government agencies to be involved in a development and will require permits to be applied for. Examples of this are Alberta Transportation or Alberta Environment etc. For more information contact the Kneehill County Planning Department.

Safety Codes Permits

Kneehill County is the accredited agency for the issuance of safety codes permits in the disciplines of Building, Electrical, Gas, Plumbing and Private Sewage Disposal Systems (PSDS) within the Municipality. It is the landowner's or homeowner's responsibility to ensure that permits have been applied for and that the installation or construction has been inspected and approved by the relevant Safety Codes Offices (SCO).

Certified contractors performing work (e.g. electrician, gasfitter etc.) are required to fill in their certification details on the application forms. Often, certified contractors will take out the required permits on behalf of their customers.

Building Permits

Building permit applications require a "Plans Review" by a Building Safety Codes Officer (SCO) and permit approval prior to the start of construction.

PSDS

Similar to Building Permits, PSDS permit applications require a review and approval by a SCO prior to the construction and installation of any sewage treatment system. It is recommended that resident-homeowners retain the services of a certified PSDS installer prior to application; in all other cases certified installers are mandatory.

Applications and Assistance

Development packages, Subdivision packages and Safety Codes permit forms are available by contacting the Kneehill County Planning Department at the Kneehill County Office, please contact us at (403) 443-5541, toll free at 1-866-443-5541, on-line at www.kneehillcounty.com or by e-mail at planning@kneehillcounty.com