

Joint Forces Operation – Condition of Highway 762 Update - Wildfire Hazard High

Message from M.D. of Foothills Councillor Suzanne Oel, August 19, 2011

Joint Forces Operation:



Our thanks go to the Turner Valley RCMP for their ongoing support. They have accepted our request to make policing in the west area of Highways 762, 549 and 22 a priority during the summer, as residents have indicated their concerns about traffic, noise and safety issues.

Additionally, due to the many concerns expressed by our residents, I requested target enforcement of the west area. Our M.D. of Foothills Protective Services responded by setting up a Joint Forces Operation (JFO) for us on two dates: July 30 and August 7. I attended the JFO on August 7 and am pleased to have witnessed the professional conduct and efforts of our officers who are working to bring about safety and the requested enforcement in support of our residents' concerns. This JFO included our local Peace Officers, High River RCMP and Sheriffs. Motorcycle check stops and laser speed enforcement were conducted. I thought you might be interested in the results compiled by Foothills Patrol Officer Darlene Roblin from these targeted enforcement dates:

July 30th:

Hwy 762 and Plummers Rd: 2 speeding tickets issued (cars), traffic volume of motorcycles down significantly due to poor road condition of Hwy 762, very few "crotch rocket" bikes found, majority pulled into document check-stop were touring bikes, older riders, no violations found during motorcycle document check-stop

Hwy 22X and 176 St. W: 17 speeding tickets issued, fastest speed recorded (178 km/h – crotch rocket type motorcycle), traffic volumes moderate

August 7th:

Hwy 762 and Plummers Rd: 1 speeding ticket issued (car), 1 driver motorcycle with improper class licence, traffic volume of motorcycles continues to be lower than normal, road still in bad shape

Hwy 541 and 594 Avenue: 2 speeding tickets issued, 1 driver without possessing a licence, 1 arrest for 3 outstanding warrants, traffic volumes moderate

Hwy 22X and 192 Street W.: 41 speeding tickets issued, 1 tinted window ticket, 2 alcohol related tickets issued, 1 - 24 hour suspension, traffic volumes busy

Total tickets July 30th: 19; Total tickets Aug 7th: 49; Total JFO tickets for both dates: 68; Total arrests: 1

Condition of Highway 762:

As you may have seen or read, Highway 762 is in poor condition. We are aware of this. Alberta Transportation (AT) looks after this highway. However, since many of the residents in Division 4 of the M.D. of Foothills have contacted me about this, I have been in touch with AT and our MLA, Ted Morton, about this. There have been a lot of road problems this year due to the high water table and flooding earlier. This highway and other M.D. roads have been affected. The person from AT who oversees this area is Rick Nash, AT Maintenance Inspector CMA 27 High River. AT is in charge of the contractor, Volker Stevin, conducting the maintenance work.

I have been in touch with Rick about this issue since the first time the slump occurred this year. Rick has indicated that they are hoping to move on the more substantial repairs soon. I agree that this needs to be addressed as soon as possible. AT is planning work on 762, possibly next year, doing an overlay. So, they want to do more than a quick fix. They actually fixed some areas once already this year. Rick mentioned that the problem is due to the shale underground as well as, of course, the movement from the water this year. There are several areas on 762 which need attention. On the worst areas, signage and lights are set up for safety - which is the priority. Rick recently said they have a consultant working on a design for these failed areas and the ones that are starting to fail. AT will finalize the design and then try to acquire the needed property to implement this design. Apparently, AT has a design for the 2 worst areas but now is dealing with access issues to adjacent lands to implement them. So the target date is still up in the air.

Wildfire Hazard High:

Message from Karen Ritchie, Wildfire Information Officer, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Calgary Office, August 15 report:

The fire danger within the Southern Rockies area is HIGH in the south (Highwood area to the US border) and MODERATE in the north (Kananaskis to Sundre). High danger means wildfires can start easily from most causes. Caution: The engine and exhaust of an off-highway vehicle can heat up to temperatures in excess of 204 degrees Celcius, which is the ignition threshold of dried-out forest fuels. Before, during, and after your ride, take time to remove grassy debris from around these critical hot spots.

Area Fire Status: There is one fire currently active in the Southern Rockies, in the Ghost area. It is under control at 6.30 hectares. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Wildfire Management Area	Active Fires	Out of Control	Being Held	Under Control	Extinguished	Total Fires	Total Area Burnt (ha)
Calgary	1	0	0	1	156	157	76.86

Provincial Fire Status: In the last 24 hours (as of Aug. 15) there have been eight new wildfire starts. Alberta currently has 23 wildfires. Eight are being held, 13 are under control, and two have been turned over. Since the start of April 2011, Alberta has recorded 931 wildfires, which have burned 940,041 hectares.

Best wishes for the safe enjoyment of your Summer and Fall!

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