

infinite landscapes



infinite possibilities

THE BUILDING OF
W H E A T L A N D
County

a brief history
with overview of our
hamlets and localities



welcome



from Reeve

AMBER LINK

As a long time resident and elected representative of Wheatland County, I welcome you to our story. Our story is one of the discoveries of our infinite landscapes and infinite possibilities. This region has provided for millennia to our indigenous people everything that they needed to flourish and build a foundation of culture and life. To the peoples who came here over the last few centuries to the present, that belief in possibility has provided additional fabric to the culture and prosperity of Wheatland County.

Agriculture is a foundational sector of our economy and has now diversified into oil & gas, green energy, manufacturing, tourism and more. Emerging industries through time have found a way to thrive here. It is the people and the land that seems to make this happen. Through respect of both, it is the secret to our infinite possibilities.

This Community Overview provides a snapshot of our path and the data to show where we are today. We hope through our story, you see possibilities and understand the opportunities in your future as a business or resident of this place.

Our Community & Development Services brand of the WC and its promise of infinite landscapes and infinite possibilities is our mantra. Many innovations and hard work within this community have designed our municipality and the quality of life we treasure within it. We welcome you to share in this experience and opportunity.

Reeve, Amber Link
Wheatland County



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Wheatland County



The information in this document is subject to change without notice and as data is obtained this document will be updated and reproduced.

It is advised that the reader verify all data before making any decisions or conclusions based on any of the information contained in this document.

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Wheatland County has a population of 8,788 residents. The County is bordered on the west by Rocky View County, the south by Vulcan County and Siksika Nation, the east by the County of Newell and Special Areas 2, and on the north by Kneehill County and the Town of Drumheller. The prairie's natural beauty fills the eye in all parts of Wheatland County. From the golden fields near Standard to the badlands of the northeast, to the tranquility of the Bow River near Carseland, Wheatland County is an ideal blend of rural and urban lifestyles; we are next door to the city of Calgary, the fastest growing city in the most vibrant province of Canada.



2Welcome from the Reeve
3Introduction
4-8 History and the Hamlets



HISTORY

Welcome to Wheatland County

On January 1, 1955, Improvement District No. 41, part of Improvement District No. 42, part of the Municipal Districts of Bow Valley No. 40, Serviceberry No. 43, and Kneehill No. 48, were merged into one new municipal district to be known as the Municipal District of Wheatland No. 40.

The Municipal District of Wheatland No. 40 and the Wheatland School Division No. 40 joined together on January 1, 1961, and became known as the County of Wheatland No. 16.

On March 6, 1996, the name was changed from the County of Wheatland No. 16 to the name currently used, Wheatland County.

The communities within Wheatland County have a long and proud agricultural history and there are many century farms still in operation.



Today, Wheatland County is a diverse and growing region consisting of nine hamlets (urban areas) that the County governs and the three villages of Hussar, Rockyford, and Standard, as well as the Town of Strathmore. The villages and Strathmore are governed by their own elected councillors and mayors.

Irrigation brings settlement and the Canadian Pacific Railway across southern Alberta

The Western Irrigation District's roots are firmly planted in the history of Alberta. The federal government agreed to grant arable land to the Canadian Pacific Railway in payment for the construction of a railroad joining Canada from coast to coast. Included in this grant was land previously described as fit for homestead only if an irrigation system could be supplied. With the mountains in the background and the vast prairies to the east, the slope of the ground was ideal to construct a gravity irrigation system.

The Hamlets

Carseland

Carseland is located on Highway 24, approximately 23 km (14 mi) south of the Hamlet of Cheadle, Alberta and 26 km (16 mi) south of Strathmore.

The advent of the cattlemen in the late 1800s to the Bow River country, west of the Blackfoot Indian Reserve brought men like: Major General Thomas Bland Strange (1881), Charlie Hawks, Colonel Arthur Goldfinch, Felix McHugh (1886), and Colonel Arthur Wyndham (1887) to the Carseland area.

When the Military Colonization Company, which Strange had founded ceased to exist, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) permitted free grazing on their 3,000,000 acres (12,000 km²) on the north side of the Bow and it attracted many new settlers to the area.

The Addemans, Moffats, and McGregors purchased the Horsetrack from the Goldfinchs and started the Horsetrack Cattle Company in 1901. Others such as Groves, Moorhouse, Brown, McHughes, McKinnon, and Newbolts soon followed.

When the open range came to an end, most of the areas cattlemen became the first grain farmers of the district.

In 1903, the CPR brought irrigation to its large land acquisitions in the Carseland area.

As the land prospered and more product was being shipped by rail to market, the CPR began construction of the Gleichen/Shepard cut-off in 1913. These rails carried troops to the First World War in 1914.

Due to its proximity to the river crossing and railway, Carseland grew rapidly into a prosperous community during the 1920s through 1940s. It boasted six grain elevators, a railway station, school, general store, barber shop and pool-room, post office, restaurant, garage and Ford car dealer, well house, lumber yard, hardware store, meat market, bank, stock yards, two churches, hotel, and community centre. Only three original buildings remain standing on Railway Avenue. They are the hotel, former Carseland Meat Market owned by the Bonitz family and the former hardware store - all of which were built in 1916.

Chancellor

Chancellor is a hamlet in southern Alberta, Canada within Wheatland County. It is located approximately 26 kilometres (16 mi) north of Highway 1 and 86 kilometres (53 mi) east of Calgary.

Chancellor originally was built up chiefly by Germans, who named the hamlet after the office of Chancellor of Germany.

Cheadle

Cheadle is located 2.6 kilometres (1.6 mi) south of Highway 1, approximately 30 kilometres (19 mi) east of Calgary.

The Canadian Pacific Railway named the community Cheadle for Dr. Walter Butler Cheadle of Milton and Cheadle explorers

History

In order to attract settlers to the area, the CPR began construction of a network of irrigation canals and reservoirs starting with a diversion weir across the Bow River in Calgary in 1904. With the construction of Main Canal, water was carried from the Bow River into Reservoir #1 (Chestermere Lake) and in 1905 it was filled for the first time. By 1910 secondary canal systems were constructed and settlers had already received delivery of irrigation waters.

Following the collapse of the economy in 1929, the CPR planned to divest itself of the two irrigation districts which had been developed. On May 1, 1935, the Eastern Irrigation District (EID) was formed. Originally the CPR had planned on closing the western section but after two years of meetings between the farmers and the CPR, the Western Irrigation District (WID) was born on May 1, 1944.

(from the Western Irrigation District website www.wid.net)

Rich Indigenous History

Blackfoot Crossing, located near the hamlets of Cluny and Gleichen, has been a focus of human activity for many generations and a meeting place for many peoples and aboriginal cultures. For this reason the site is of integral importance to the traditions of the Siksika Nation. At the cultural and geographic centre of traditional Blackfoot territory, it was one of the few places where the Bow River could be forded safely. Consequently, it was the site where representatives of the five First Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Kainai, Siksika, and Piikani) met Canadian treaty commissioners in September 1877 to sign Treaty No. 7. Tsuu Tina, Dene and Nakoda are Souix who where in transition through the territory at the time of the treaty.

The rich variety of the archaeological resources at Blackfoot Crossing reflects the long history of the site and its importance in the traditions of the Siksika. The social and cultural values of the site for the Siksika Nation are enhanced by the rich variety of the archaeological resources that reflect the long history of Blackfoot Crossing.

The remains included medicine circles, boulder effigies, cairns, buffalo and antelope jumps, Sundance sites, and tobacco planting fields. Nearby are the earthworks of the Earthlodge Village built circa 1740 by an, as yet unidentified Aboriginal people, which bears witness to the interaction of different native cultures at the Crossing. In more recent history, the grave of Crowfoot and his last campsite and the monument to the Cree Chief Poundmaker are of especial importance to the Siksika Nation. In addition, the sites of the first Oblate mission, a whisky trading post, and an Indian Agency post, are evidence of more recent interaction of native and white cultures.

Sources: Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, Minutes, November 1992; July 2009.

The Hamlets

who traveled across the prairies and Rocky Mountains in the 1860s. Dr. Cheadle and Lord Milton were co-authors of the book "The North-West Passage by Land" (London, 1865), which described their expedition in considerable detail.

A record was made when laying the railroad tracks between Strathmore and Cheadle when the railway was built. In one hour a mile of steel was laid. At the end of the ten-hour working day, the rails were laid to Cheadle, nine miles and 300 feet for a record. The ties had been strung the night before.

There was just one minor building in Cheadle when the early ranchers and homesteaders began to arrive in the late 1890s. It was a post office, store, and boarding home, run by Mrs. Florence Belwer for the CPR section-men. Cheadle began to grow in the years 1906-1916 to a hardware store, barbershop, blacksmith, restaurant, pool hall, dance hall, three grocery stores, water tank, CPR station and section houses, stockyards, lumberyard, two grain elevators, and several residences. The CPR had once planned to locate Ogden Shops in Cheadle.

At one time, grain was hauled to Cheadle from Carseland. The transport teams ate and rested in Cheadle before returning. This all brought much of the business to Cheadle and raised the total number of grain elevators to 3. By 1971, Cheadle's post office and grocery store closed.

Cluny

Cluny is located 3 kilometres (1.9 mi) south of Highway 1 on a Canadian Pacific Railway line and Highway 843, approximately 87 kilometres (54 mi) southeast of Calgary. It has an elevation of 570 metres (1,870 ft).

The hamlet at Cluny is similar to earth lodge villages found along the Missouri River in what is now North and South Dakota. This is why archaeologists first thought that the hamlet had perhaps been occupied by the ancestors of the historic Crow and Hidatsa, who came from this region. These peoples would have fled from their traditional territory along the Missouri River to escape the ravages of a Smallpox epidemic.

Archaeologists have found pottery very similar to that found at Cluny at a number of other archaeological sites throughout southern Alberta and Saskatchewan, and in northern Montana. This suggests that the region was inhabited by the same or closely related peoples. Cluny and the other sites with similar pottery might represent the expansion of a group of native peoples into those areas. These were possibly the ancestors of the historic Assiniboine.

Gleichen

Gleichen is located 2.5 kilometres (1.5 mi) south of Highway 1 and approximately 80 kilometres (50 mi) east of Calgary.

Gleichen was named after Lord Edward Gleichen in 1884. Gleichen was originally incorporated as a village on January 24, 1899 and then incorporated as a town on May 6, 1910. After nearly 100 years as a municipality however, Gleichen dissolved to hamlet status under the jurisdiction of Wheatland County on March 31, 1998.

History

Brief History of Canadian Pacific Railway Supply Farm No. 1 at Strathmore

The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR or C.P. Rail) was incorporated in 1881 for the purpose of constructing railroad west from Winnipeg to Vancouver, thereby encouraging and attracting settlers to establish homesteads across the west in a band along the railroad.

Initial plans were to construct the railroad west from Winnipeg to Edmonton, then on to Vancouver; thus avoiding the Palliser Triangle, a large tract of treeless, arid land deemed unsuitable for intensive agriculture and therefore unlikely to generate a transportation services demand sufficient to warrant the cost of establishing a railroad.

Canadian Federal Government wished to have the railroad established relatively close to the 49th parallel in order to secure a strong Canadian presence on the prairies and thereby minimize American interests in the area.

The Canadian Federal government and CP Rail, reasoned that irrigation services would make the Palliser Triangle sufficiently productive to sustain intensive agricultural practices. In turn, the increased productive capacity would attract thousands of settlers thereby increasing demand for CP Rail services as well as securing the area as a part of Canada.

CP Rail agreed to develop large scale irrigation projects if the Canadian Federal Government would consolidate the company's land grants into an area of three million acres north of the Bow River and running between Calgary and Medicine Hat.

Three irrigation projects were proposed by the CP Rail and named Western Section, Central Section, and Eastern Section. The Western Section was first to be developed under the direction of the Canadian Pacific Irrigation Division. Project offices were established at Strathmore; construction started in 1903 and was completed in 1910.

In conjunction with the new irrigation project and further encourage settlement of company lands, CP Rail established a demonstration and supply farm at Strathmore in 1908.

(from the Western District Historical Society)

The distinct municipalities within Wheatland County

The Town of Strathmore and the Villages of Hussar, Rockyford and Standard are their own self-governed municipalities within the Wheatland County boundaries and have, and continue to be part of the community development within the region along with the County.

The Hamlets

During the formation of the province, Gleichen was large enough to have its own seat in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta (see Gleichen provincial electoral district). Its population peaked at 668 according to the Canada 1921 Census.

Due to its proximity to the railroad, Gleichen was readily accessible to farmers and ranchers living in the area. Its mostly wooden structures however posed an increased risk of widespread fires. After the community burned a second time in 1912, many of its residents moved elsewhere, mostly to Calgary.

Lyalta

Lyalta is located 8 kilometres (5.0 mi) north of Highway 1, approximately 32 kilometres (20 mi) east of Calgary.

Namaka

Namaka is located approximately 10 kilometres (6.2 mi) south of Highway 1 and 55 kilometres (34 mi) east of Calgary. Its name means "near the water" in Blackfoot. The first school was built in 1909.

Nightingale

Nightingale is located 4 kilometres (2.5 mi) west of Highway 21, approximately 53 kilometres (33 mi) east of Calgary.

Rosebud

Rosebud is located on Highway 840, 10 kilometres (6.2 mi) south of Highway 9, and approximately 83 kilometres (52 mi) east of Calgary. It sits in a sheltered valley on the Rosebud River near the edge of the Canadian Badlands. This area was called Akokiniskway by the Blackfoot people, which translates roughly to "by the river of many roses."

The hamlet was founded in the 1885 by James Wishart. While following the Gleichen Trail to Montana with his family, they awoke to the river valley covered by wild roses, Alberta's official flower.

Previously an incorporated municipality, Rosebud dissolved from village status on January 1, 1946 to become part of the Municipal District of Grasswold No. 248.

Over the years, farming and coal mining have been the primary industries. In 1972, the Severn Creek School was shut down as part of an Alberta wide education consolidating process and local children were bused to Standard and Drumheller. This resulted in many of the local businesses being closed and the hamlet population dropped to under a dozen people. However, the farming community of around 400 still support a seed cleaning plant.

In the 1980s, the Rosebud School of the Arts began to run theatre, which eventually developed into Rosebud Theatre and the school shifted its emphasis to post-secondary education. Today, the Rosebud Theatre runs as a fully professional company that offers programming year round and is a tourist attraction drawing patrons from Calgary and Drumheller.

History

Hussar pop. 190 (2016)

Hussar was unofficially founded in 1913 when the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) established a station and named it Hussar. A community grew up around the station and was incorporated as a village in 1928. The name Hussar was used in honour of a group of German soldiers who belonged to a German Hussar (cavalry) regiment who earlier had established a large farm near Hussar. With the start of World War I most of the soldiers returned to Germany and those who remained were interned for the duration of the war. The land, which was part of this German Canadian Farming Co. Ltd., was purchased after the war. Following the war, the community, both the village and the surrounding area, began to grow with an influx of settlers from around the world. English, Irish, Scots and Danes made up the bulk of the settlers. Many of those settlers' descendants still reside in or around the community.

Rockyford pop. 316 (2016)

The Village of Rockyford was first settled in 1913 and takes its name from a "rocky ford" that crossed Serviceberry Creek a half mile south of the village and was incorporated as a village in March 1919. We celebrated our Centennial in 2019, and while our history is rich in agriculture, we look forward to a strong, diverse future. We welcome new business and residents and look forward to the next 100 years.

Standard pop. 353 (2016)

Standard is a village located in the southern part of the province of Alberta, Canada. It is situated within Wheatland County, approximately 80 kilometres (50 mi) east of the city of Calgary. The village was originally settled by Danish immigrants. Standard's economy is based on the surrounding farming community and the energy industry, with a number of oil and gas rigs in operation in the vicinity.

Strathmore pop. 13,756 (2016)

The Town of Strathmore is the largest urban community within the region. Located on the Trans-Canada Highway, it is home to over 11 schools, a regional hospital, a brand-new field house sports centre, and more. The annual Strathmore Stampede is Canada's third largest rodeo and is famous for the Running of the Bulls event.

Strathmore had its beginnings as a small hamlet for the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) lines that were built in the area in 1883. Since then, the town has become a regional service hub and recently celebrated its centennial in 2011.

The Communities / Localities of Wheatland County

- Ardenode
- Baintree
- Bartstow
- Crowfoot
- Dalum
- Duck Lake
- Eagle Lake
- Makepeace
- Redland
- Rosebud Creek
- Stobart
- Strangmuir
- Tudor
- Wintering Hills

Dalum was settled as a Danish colony in 1917 with land bought of from the Canadian Pacific Railway. The community is south of the Red Deer River and the Town of Drumheller along Highway 56.

Land was offered at 10 per cent down and 20 year agreement sat \$14-\$18 per acre. Due to difficulty in the agriculture industry at that time, the agreements were renegotiated and most of the land was eventually purchased for four to five dollars an acre.

The area is a very positive mixed farming area with numerous 4th and 5th generation farms. The residents very proud of their Danish ancestry and support an active Lutheran Christian community. The original homesteaders built and still maintain a lovely replica church similar in design as those that exist in Denmark. In 2017 they celebrated a large 100 year homecoming event.

Between Hussar and Dalum in the eastern part of the County, oil and gas is active as well as wind power generation in the Wintering Hills area.

There is a five section shallow lake just north of Hussar that goes dry every 40 -50 years and take 10 - 20 years to refill. Reflective of the wet and dry cycles of the global weather patterns.

The surrounding communities of Duck Lake, Wintering Hills,, Chancellor, Makepeace utilize Hussar as a focal gathering point within Wheatland County. Many of the rural communities and localities utilize the villages and Town of Strathmore are their urban service points depending on where they are located within Wheatland County.

More history on the other communities and localities can be found in a number of publications such as Flow Beyond the Weir, Where We Crossed the Creek and Settled - Rockyford, Strathmore - The Village that Moved.



(from the Western District Historical Society)



WHEATLAND COUNTY
COMMUNITY
profile



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