

Discounts and discussions as area seniors meet with MLA over coffee

By Stephen Dafoe

Seniors can now expect a 25 per cent discount on personal registry services. That was some of the news delivered by Morinville-St. Albert MLA Dale Nally, Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction, to seniors

at the Rendez-Vous Centre in Morinville on Tuesday, April 2. The Registry Office discounts, announced by the province on March 28, apply to personal registration services and vital statistics for those 65 and older. The discount applies to seniors purchasing

personal registry services online through MyAlbertaeServices or in person at registries throughout the province. "If you need any personal registry services and vital statistics - when you go to register your car, driver's licence, a marriage certificate,

birth certificate, any of that information is 25 per cent off," Nally explained, noting the announced registry services savings are part of a three-phase price cut for seniors. A second 25 percent discount will apply to seniors' driver exams and is expected to come into effect as early as this summer.

vehicle registrations, or optional products, including personalized and specialty licence plates. **Discontent with some government direction** However, for the roughly dozen-and-a-half seniors who met with Nally, other issues were at the top of their minds, including CPP, hospitals, and health care, and not delivering on a promised income tax cut, the latter of which Nally said would come in year two or three.

they see as a government that is not listening. On the topic of an Alberta Pension Plan, Nally explained that the discussion stemmed back to the 2019 Fair Deal Panel and that, ultimately, Albertans would have the final say by way of a referendum.

"We never committed to doing it," the MLA said. "We said that we would look at it and it would be Albertans who decide." Nally explained the matter is currently in the hands of actuaries. The number presented by the provincial government's hired actuary was roughly 300 billion, while others suggest the number is closer

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A discount on camping reservations for seniors will come next year. The province says more than 725,000 Alberta seniors can expect to benefit from the service fee reduction. The seniors' discount does not apply to corporate and business services, personal property services, commercial

Minister Nally fielded many questions and comments, some of which were delivered to the MLA in harsh tones, from those who expressed their upset with what

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Morinville resident Gerald Skowronski talks to Morinville-St. Albert MLA Dale Nally, Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction, at a coffee gathering at the Rendez-Vous Centre on Tuesday, April 2. - Stephen Dafoe Photo



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Council approves amendments to Strategic Plan to reflect evolving community needs

By Colin Smith

“Morinville is a mid-sized community with a welcoming ‘small-town’ feel where we live and grow together.”

The new community building goal statement is one of several changes in the amended Morinville 2022-2025 Strategic Plan approved by council at its regular meeting on Tuesday, March 26.

Initiated in 2022, the strategic plan is intended to provide a decision-making framework that guides the town administration on where to direct its resources and capacity while delivering core services and programs.

Another aim is to enable collective working with residents, businesses, and organizations on the community’s strategic priorities.

“I thought it was important to bring

this forward so that residents understand some of the background work that administration has done, and that council has done,” said Mayor Simon Boersma at the meeting.

“I hope the residents will look at some of these changes that we feel were very important to move this strategic plan forward.”

Council met twice earlier this year in special Committee of the Whole meetings to review the plan, following the development of a municipal corporate planning and reporting framework.

The resulting update includes amendments to the six priorities set out in the plan: community building, community safety and wellbeing, financial stewardship, environmental responsibility, economic development, and collaborative

relationships.

Along with changes to the wording of goal statements, there were some amendments to priority objectives.

The environmental responsibility objective of developing a climate action plan for Morinville by 2025 has been dropped, along with leveraging the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre to conduct an energy audit.

The rationale for the move is resource and feasibility limitations over the next one to two years.

An adjusted objective is the education of the public on environmental initiatives, risk assessment and disaster preparedness.

The previous economic development objective was to grow the proportion of non-residential assessment from 14% to 16%. No numerical targets are specified in

the amended version, which simply calls for growing the proportion of non-residential assessment.

Transparency has been added to accountability and service excellence as core values in the strategic plan, emphasizing Morinville’s commitment to openness, clear communication, and decision-making responsibility.

In addition to approving the amended plan council voted to rescind the outdated Strategic Priority Sponsorship Policy and Strategic Planning and Management Policy.

Also rescinded as no longer necessary was a motion passed in 2021 by the previous town council directing administration to undertake engagement related to truth and reconciliation.

According to an administration report, funding to support that direction never



Community safety and well-being continues to be a major component of Morinville’s Strategic Plan. A number of traffic and pedestrian safety improvements are scheduled for 2024, including the installation of crossing lights at Grandin and 100 Avenues, a joint partnership between the Government of Alberta and the Town of Morinville.

came through but the current council has made it a goal to build and strengthen relationships with Indigenous and Métis peoples on shared interests, opportunities, and concerns.

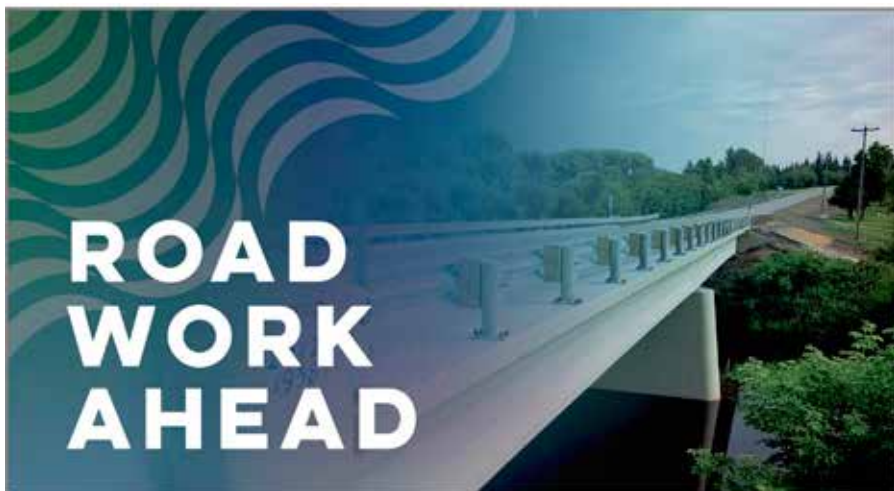
Efforts include the Alexander First Nations/Town of Morinville Joint Partnership Task Force, raising the Treaty 6 Flag at Town Hall and accepting invitations to participate in important Indigenous events.

Administration has worked collaboratively on fire initiatives and to integrate Indigenous culture into town

facilities and the Lite Up the Nite festival, the report stated.

Support for implementation of the Morinville 2022-2025 Strategic Plan will come through communication of progress and accomplishments to the public, enhancing transparency, regular council reviews and identification and elimination of redundant policies.

“The amendment of the strategic plan went a lot smoother than the actual putting together of the strategic plan,” said Councillor Ray White. “It was not painful at all.”



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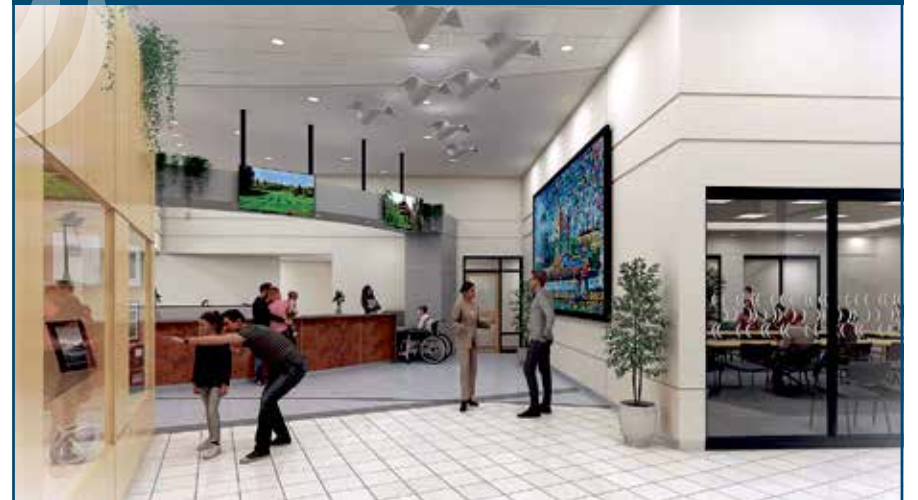
All Information Sessions 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

DIVISION 1 & 2: Wednesday, March 13
CFB Edmonton - WOS & Sgts’ Mess
210 Ortona Rd., Lancaster Park
*CFB Edmonton requires ID after 6 p.m. for base entry.

DIVISION 3 & 4: Tuesday, April 16
Calahoo Community Hall
#9, 54500 Rge Rd 275, Calahoo

DIVISION 5 & 6: Wednesday, March 27
Gibbons Community Cultural Centre
5115 – 51 Street, Gibbons

 **Sturgeon COUNTY** For a full list of projects view SturgeonCounty.ca/Roads



The County Centre renovations include barrier-free washrooms, increasing the size of the main boardroom, and front counter enhancements.

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- ▶ Construction will begin April 2, 2024 with an anticipated completion date in Summer 2024.
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 **Sturgeon COUNTY**

Property tax rate slightly lowered for 2024 amidst rising assessment values

By Colin Smith

Morinville residents and businesses can expect a lower property tax increase in 2024 as a result of higher-than-anticipated municipal assessment values.

During discussion of the 2024 Property Tax Bylaw at its regular meeting on Tuesday, Mar. 26, council was told that the assessment value increase, determined in February, was 3.88%.

That is up from the estimate of 3% used in

determining the tax rate increase set out in the 2024 operating budget.

If that approved 5.25% rate increase was maintained, the amount of tax levied would be \$108,949 more than budgeted for.

Council has decided that money should remain in the hands of Morinville property owners through a reduced tax rate increase, in the process rejecting an administration recommendation on dealing with the unbudgeted income.

The draft property tax

bylaw presented to council by administration called for some of the additional revenue above the original budgeted estimates to be used to reduce the tax rate increase. The remainder would be added to the town's capital reserve.

The recommendation was that about \$67,000, 61% of the assessment income increase, be used for to lower the tax rate, while \$42,000, 39%, would go to reserves.

That reflected the fact that the increase is due both to real growth in residential

properties, 39%, and inflationary value growth in residential and commercial properties, 61%.

In addition to this recommended path, administration presented council with

Continued on page 5



A pair of geese spent some time hanging out on the roof of the St. Jean Baptiste Parish building on Tuesday afternoon. - Stephen Dafoe Photo

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PUBLIC HEARING – Bylaw 1649/24, Amendment to Land Use Bylaw 1385/17 Notification - Bylaw 1650/24, Sturgeon Industrial Park Area Offsite Levy Bylaw 1548/21

Sturgeon County Council requests public input on proposed Bylaw 1649/24.

In accordance with Section 692 of the Municipal Government Act, Sturgeon County Council requests public input on proposed Bylaw 1649/24. This Bylaw would redistrict a portion of Lot A, Plan 4595NY from AG - Agriculture District to I4 - Medium Industrial Serviced District.

The property owner would like to bring their existing fleet service/ trucking business, located at 55013 Hwy 825 (legal description: Lot A, Plan 4595NY) into compliance with the County's Land Use Bylaw. This land is currently zoned as AG Agriculture, which does not allow this type of activity.



Public Hearing details

The Public Hearing will be held in person and via videoconference on:

Tuesday, April 23, at 2:00 p.m. (or as soon as practical thereafter)
Sturgeon County Council Chambers (9613 100 St. in Morinville)

You can view the hearing online at sturgeoncounty.ca/CouncilMeetings

And, in accordance with Section 648 of the Municipal Government Act, you are hereby advised that Sturgeon County Council is considering including the same lands within the Sturgeon Industrial Park Area Offsite Levy Bylaw.

View the proposed bylaw at sturgeoncounty.ca/hearing-1649

Questions? Contact us!

Kyle Schole
Planning and Development Services
780-939-1397
kschole@sturgeoncounty.ca

Important information about Public Hearings

Requirements for speakers

All speakers have five minutes to speak and are encouraged to provide a written copy of their submission before the Public Hearing.

Speaking in person

To speak at the Public Hearing in person, contact Legislative Services at 780-939-8277 or 780-939-1377 to pre-register.

Speaking via videoconference

To speak at the Public Hearing via videoconference, you **must** register by April 22 at 2:00 p.m. by contacting Legislative Services at 780-939-8277 or 780-939-1377. This ensures you receive instructions to access the videoconference.

Written submissions

Email your written submission to Legislative Services at legislativeservices@sturgeoncounty.ca. Written submissions are accepted up to the close of the Public Hearing.

If making a written submission, you must include your name, state your interest in the matter (such as a County resident directly impacted by the proposed bylaw), and indicate if you are in favour of or opposed to the proposed bylaw.

Watching the Public Hearing

You can view the Public Hearing in person or online at sturgeoncounty.ca/CouncilMeetings. To view the livestream, click on the meeting date on the calendar, then click on the video link.

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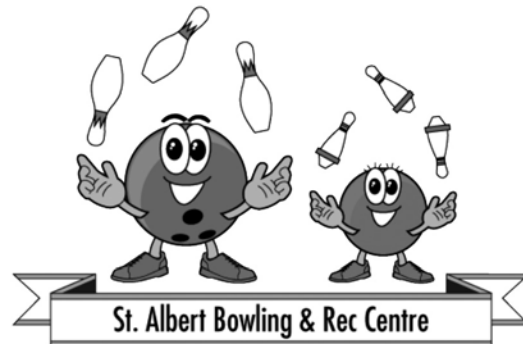
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Property tax

Continued from page 3

two alternatives.

Alternative one was to reduce the overall tax levy by the total amount of the additional revenue generated through assessment growth, with no funds going into capital reserves.

The other alternative was no reduction in the tax increase set out in the 2024 budget, 5.25%, with all the additional revenue devoted to the capital reserves.

After first reading of the budget was passed, council opted for the first alternative.

Councillor Ray White moved that council

reduce the overall tax by the total amount of additional revenue generated through assessment growth.

White said that in the case of a lower-than-expected assessment, taxpayers would be asked to pay more, so they should benefit from the increase.

Support for that alternative was also expressed by Councillor Stephen Dafoe.

Dafoe remarked that while the recent budget anticipated putting more funds into reserves than in past years, the \$42,000 differential was not that significant.

“We have asked for a lot of funding from the

residents over time,” said Mayor Simon Boersma. “It’s not easy out there. If we can bring some money back into the pockets of our residents that is good.”

The motion passed unanimously.

The property tax bylaw, amended to reflect council’s decision, will receive second and third reading in April.

Once passed, it will reduce the 2024 property tax rate increase to 4.45%.

The average home, valued at \$350,000, will see an annual tax increase of \$128.40, or \$10.70 monthly. For the average business, with a \$650,000 value, there will be a jump of \$1,282.32, or \$106.86 a month.

The administration bylaw presentation report warns that choosing alternative one, and not contributing to capital reserves, eliminates investment revenue potential as well as the possibility of reducing future tax rate increases.



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INFORMATION SESSIONS

Tuesday, April 16

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Pinewood Community Hall
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(Highway 651 between Range Road 233 and 232)

Thursday, April 18

6:30 to 8 p.m.
Calahoo Community Hall
#9 54500 Range Road 275 in Calahoo

SturgeonCounty.ca/FireSmart



A sparrow rests in a lilac bush, enjoying the higher-than-average temperatures on Tuesday. - Stephen Dafoe Photo



STURGEON COUNTY COUNTRY LIVING EXPO

April 13, 2024 | 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

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sturgeoncounty.ca/country-living-expo



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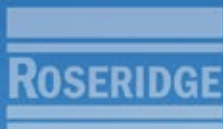
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NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND CLAIMANTS

Estate of Mary Lou Mckenzie who died on September 8, 2022
If you have a claim against this Estate, you must file your claim by May 17, 2024.

with **Andrew Lawson**
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Celebrate



Attention all businesses and individuals! It's that exciting time of the year again, as we approach the graduation of the remarkable Classes of 2024.

Do you want to send your heartfelt congratulations to these bright young minds? Whether you're a local business, a proud family member, or a supportive community member, now is your chance to shine!

Showcase your support and admiration by placing a congratulatory ad in our special editions dedicated to the graduating classes. Your message will be prominently featured, expressing your pride and well wishes.

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Let's come together to celebrate the achievements of these outstanding individuals and wish them success on their journey ahead. Don't miss this opportunity to be a part of their special moment!

Thank you for your support and congratulations to the Class of 2024!



Morinville-St. Albert MLA Dale Nally, Minister of Service Alberta and Red Tape Reduction, talks to local seniors over coffee at the Rendez-Vous Centre on Tuesday, April 2. - Stephen Dajoe Photo

Meeting with MLA

Continued from page 1

to 60 billion.

"The only way that number could be 60 billion is if we don't get any credit for the compound interest for the last 40 or 50 years," Nally said.

"I can't imagine that there is an actuary in this country that would say that is a fair distribution not to pay interest."

Nally said government feedback indicates that most Albertans want more information on a provincial pension plan before determining whether they favour

or oppose it.

"Quite frankly, if the number is \$60 billion, there is not support for an Alberta pension plan. But if that number begins with a three, as in 300 and something, then that changes things," Nally explained.

"We've heard that message loud and clear, and we have said we are going to wait until we get the number from the Chief Actuary of Canada. The Prime Minister has asked the Chief Actuary to deliver a number to us on what that would look like, and that number is due in the fall."

Nally went on to say that the number will determine future steps, including further consultation with Albertans if the number is worth considering.

The Morinville-St. Albert MLA also indicated he would continue to advocate for the replacement of the X-ray machine in Morinville.

Minister Nally told seniors he would take their concerns back to cabinet.

Nally also spoke to the Morinville & District Chamber of Commerce at their monthly luncheon on Wednesday, April 3.



NEW LISTING

14 ACRE HOBBY FARM IN THORHILD COUNTY

This 2-bedroom bungalow features a spacious kitchen, large living room, and a large versatile porch/flex space. Upgrades include newer windows, shingles (2015), furnace (2020), hot water tank (2021) and porch heater (2021). Both kitchen and bathroom have been completely remodeled since 2010 as well. Lots of room in unfinished basement for customization by adding additional bedrooms or family room. Bsmt roughed in for shower and sink. A heated 30X30 shop, along with outbuildings including a quonset, hip roof barn, and stable with 3 stalls add functionality and plenty of room for all your horses, cars, RV, toys, and pets. Large dugout, garden space, and planted trees complete this great acreage. **\$424,900. Call Heather to view.**



REDUCED TO \$210,000

MOVE IN READY IN WESTLOCK

This cute, well kept 3 bedroom bungalow in Westlock is move in ready. Renovations over the years include newer flooring and paint, new windows, furnace and h/w tank in 2016, bathroom renos in 2017, shingles in 2017, front and back decks, backflow valve installed in both washer drain and floor drain, and new front door and patio doors. Wall has been opened up between kitchen and living room to allow for a more open concept. Features include a built in vacuum system, pantry, solar light tube in kitchen, patio doors in back bedroom allow access to back deck and fenced yard with storage shed. Basement is partially finished with a family room space, laundry area and den which could easily be a 4th bedroom if window was made a bit larger. There is roughed in plumbing for a bathroom in the basement. Just needs flooring and ceiling installed to finish the basement. This is a great starter home or small family home. Would also be great for an investor as all the work has already been done. **\$210,000. Call Heather to view.**



ONLY \$154,900 FOR 2 BEDROOM BUNGALOW IN LEGAL

Looking for affordable living that's move in ready? This 2 bedroom bungalow in Legal is perfect for first time buyers, investors or seniors who aren't quite ready to give up their pets and move into a lodge. Many upgrades over the years including furnace, vinyl siding and windows. Renos in the past year include all new bathroom with stacked washer and dryer and on demand hot water heater, new counter tops and backsplash in kitchen, eavestroughs, sump pit and pump. Fresh paint throughout. Brand new carpet in bedrooms and lino in bathroom and back entrance and the living room/kitchen flooring is only a few years old. Large 75'x66' fenced lot with fire pit, flower beds, deck and plenty of parking space for a couple of cars and holiday trailer. Or build a garage if you like. Ramp is also in place for easy access with wheelchairs or walkers. Legal is a great small town that's only a few minutes north of Legal. Move in ready! **\$154,900. Call Glenn to view.**



NEW LISTING

20 ACRES IN THORHILD COUNTY

This enchanting 20-acre parcel offers an idyllic setting for those seeking tranquility and privacy. This pristine land provides the perfect canvas for crafting your weekend escape or constructing your dream home. Perfect opportunity to set up your homestead with a good mixture of trees for windbreak and privacy and open land for pasture and gardens. Lots of open land to the south makes this a great location for off grid living with solar panels. **\$99,900. Call Heather for more info.**



THORHILD BUNGALOW

This delightful 767 square foot home boasts modern upgrades and a convenient location close to amenities, including a K-12 school and an outdoor pool within the community. Step inside this meticulously maintained 2 bedroom home to discover a bright and airy living space with modern flooring and ample natural light streaming through upgraded windows. Upgrades in the last 3 years include a new hot water tank, furnace, flooring, windows, and shingles, offering worry-free living for years to come. Bsmt family room has a nice corner woodstove and could be opened up into the adjoining den if you wanted an additional bedroom. The 2 piece bathroom in the basement has the plumbing roughed in for a shower. Large fenced yard with raised garden beds and single detached garage. Downsize to your own home that's cheaper than a condo and no extra fees. **\$174,900. Call Janine to view.**



ALMOST 20 ACRES IN THORHILD COUNTY

Nestled on 19.89 acres of serene countryside, this property offers the perfect blend of tranquility and functionality. A charming 1344 sq ft 1980's built bungalow boasts large eat in kitchen with island and pantry, living room, 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms on main floor. The lower level of the home is partially finished, offering a roughed-in rec room, two additional bedrooms, and a convenient two-piece bathroom with the potential to add a shower/bathtub. This level also provides a walk-out door. Features include large windows both upstairs and downstairs. 3 West facing windows have recently been replaced. Livestock facilities, including fencing and corrals, make it suitable for agricultural pursuits, while several outbuildings offer storage space for equipment and toys. **\$375,000. Call Heather to view.**



NEW LISTING

12 ACRE HOBBY FARM

Whether you're seeking a peaceful rural retreat, the perfect spot to grow all your own food, or a place to unleash your creativity, this 12-acre parcel with bungalow and array of outbuildings and amenities offers boundless opportunities. The house is just under 1100sq ft featuring 3 bedrooms upstairs and 1 downstairs. Plenty of outbuildings, including a 40X70 quonset, double garage, barn, chicken coops, and sheds. New septic system installed just last year. Plenty of room for all your vehicles, equipment, animals and toys. Very pretty setting with lots of large, mature trees. Conveniently located just a mile off pavement, less than an hour from Edmonton, a few minutes NE of Redwater. **\$299,900. Call Janine to view.**



NEWBROOK GEM

The effective age of this 1977 home with additions is 2015 as it was completely rebuilt at that time. The original walls were doubled to make a 2x8 frame and extra insulation added. Windows, doors (interior and exterior), siding, metal roof, bathrooms, flooring, crown moldings, furnace and paint all were done in 2015 or later. Must be seen to be appreciated. High end custom cabinetry throughout the home with granite countertops in the kitchen. Built in ss appliances, induction stove, pull up mixer shelf, pullout shelves, island kitchen, garden doors to maintenance free deck, huge w/i closet in master bedroom, 5 pce ensuite with two counters and sinks and soaker tub, and custom cabinetry in the office are some of the features. Total of 3 bedrooms and a den as well as enclosed, heated front porch. Heated single garage and asphalt back driveway. No lot rental, you own the 50x150' lot. **\$199,900. Call Janine for more info.**



5.32 ACRES READY TO BUILD ON

Gorgeous building spot or weekend getaway within a half hour north of Edmonton, right across the road from Half Moon Lake (north of Bon Accord). This 5.32 acres is one of the largest lots in this subdivision of Pinebrook Estates. Beautifully treed for privacy with mature spruce, poplar, birch and more. There is a nice cleared area with a firepit or a spot to build on. Lots of hiking or cross country ski trails throughout the property. Lots of recreational opportunities at Half Moon Lake like boating, swimming and fishing. Only about a mile of gravel to the nearest paved road. Utilities nearby. **\$99,900. Call Heather to view.**



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