



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Thursday, March 22, 2007**

## **REGIONAL DISTRICT OF FRASER – FORT GEORGE HIGHLIGHTS OF 2007 BUDGET**

**PRINCE GEORGE, BC** – The Regional District of Fraser – Fort George Board of Directors approved the 2007 Operating Budget and Five Year Financial Plan at their meeting on March 22, 2007.

The Regional District provides 94 services to residents of its seven electoral areas and to the City of Prince George, District of Mackenzie, Village of Valemount, and Village of McBride. Operating expenditures for the Regional District in 2007 will total \$22.9 million, of which \$13.6 million will be funded through property taxation.

The 2007 budget reflects the Board's on-going commitment to deliver relevant services in locations where they are needed. Funding for three new services, Valemount and District Rescue Service, Bendixon Sewer, and Buckhorn Sewer, is included in the budget, together with financial support for the Regional Cultural Plan implementation.

The tax requisition level in the budget reflects increased support for several Fire/Rescue Protection Services, the 9-1-1 Emergency Response Service, the Prince George and District Library Service, Electoral Area Community Grants, the Robson Valley Recreation Centre, and improvements in the Rural Transfer Station Service.

Chairman Art Kaehn said, "The Board is committed to tax requisition levels which are fiscally responsible, sustainable and responsive to the service needs and expectations of the regional residents and businesses. The Regional District of Fraser - Fort George provides an effective political and administrative framework for the delivery of these important regional and sub-regional services."

Significant 2007 budgeted expenditures provided by the Regional District include Solid Waste Management (\$5.9 million), 9-1-1 Emergency Response Services (\$2.9 million), Protective Services (\$3.4 million), and Recreation Services (\$2.3 million).

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON HOW THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF FRASER – FORT GEORGE  
BUDGETS FOR THE SERVICES IT PROVIDES

Regional District of Fraser – Fort George

The Regional District of Fraser-Fort George (RDFFG) is a federation of rural areas and municipalities as elected representatives of the City of Prince George, District of Mackenzie, Village of McBride and Village of Valemount, come together with seven electoral area Directors to form the Regional District Board of Directors. Approximately 100,000 people live in the RDFFG.

The purposes of the Regional District are to:

- ◆ provide specific services to small-unincorporated communities within our region;
- ◆ provide regional services that transcend municipal and electoral area boundaries; and
- ◆ provide a forum for political debate and decision making.

Examples of the services provided by the RDFFG include fire/rescue protection services, recreation centres, library services, water and sewer services, and community halls. The majority of these services are voluntarily established at the request of the public. Fundamental to this approach is that the area that benefits from a service pays for the service.

Regional districts also provide services throughout broader sub-regional areas or the entire region. Region-wide services include Solid Waste Management, the 9-1-1 Service, Regional Parks, Land Use Planning Service, and Heritage Conservation Service. In the case of region-wide services, the costs are shared among the four member municipalities and seven electoral areas. Members that share in a service are referred to as “participants” in that service. Again, the areas that participate and benefit from a service pay for the service.

RDFFG provides 94 individual services, and, by law, separate budgets must be maintained for each service. Municipalities and electoral areas participate to differing degrees in these services as some may be mandatory and most are voluntary. Because of this, the level of taxation varies between these “participants” based on the services they receive.

Assessments (Property Values):

For the majority of services, regional districts are required to use converted assessment values to determine the share of taxation for a particular service when there is more than one participant. The funds to be raised for each service are approved by the Board. The Board does not set a “mill rate” for taxation as municipalities do. Rather, the individual municipality’s or electoral area’s share of the taxation is derived from their assessment value as a proportion of the total assessment amount for all participants in a particular service.

When assessment values change, the increase or decrease varies throughout the region. This usually results in some shifting in the proportion of taxation paid by a given municipality or electoral area. The total tax for a service can stay the same; however, the proportionate amount paid by each participant will increase or decrease depending on the changes to their total assessment values.

To illustrate this, the first 2007 assessment roll from the BC Assessment Authority indicates an average property value increase of 14.5% for all of the RDFFG, over 2006 values. This varies from a low of -2.3% in Electoral Area F to a high of 19.5% in Electoral Area D.

The following graph illustrates the percentage change in 2007 property assessments (converted values) for the electoral areas and member municipalities within the RDFFG over 2006 assessments.

**% Change in Converted Property Assessments - 2007**

