TOWN OF ELK POINT

Box 448, Elk Point, Alberta, T0A 1A0
Phone: 780-724-3810
Email: town@elkpoint.ca

Website: [www.elkpoint.ca](http://www.elkpoint.ca)


*Our Mission – With accountable leadership we work collaboratively to provide service excellence that is responsive to our community.*

**MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contacts:**Lorne Young, Mayor
Cell: 780-614-0715
Town of Elk Point

Ken Gwozdz, CAO
Office: 780-724-3810
Town of Elk Point

**Town of Elk Point Mayor & CAO Meet with Premier Jason Kenney**

Town of Elk Point, AB

Wednesday evening, the Town of Elk Point Mayor Lorne Young and CAO Ken Gwozdz met with Premier Jason Kenney and MLA David Hanson, along with municipal neighbors County of St. Paul, Town of St. Paul and Village of Glendon.

Mayor Young addressed the need for broadband in our community, region, and province. Mayor spoke about the importance of high speed internet for education, healthcare, emergency services, energy sector, agriculture, and many other organizations. Mayor Young advised how the Town of Elk Point needs to diversify and attract industry to create jobs and how broadband plays a huge part in being sustainable. Mayor Young requested the Premier to look into why Minister Glubish’s department has not responded to the report prepared on broadband by the economic development alliance, Alberta HUB, represented by 38 municipalities, which include 4 metis settlements, and 3 first nations.

Premier Kenney agreed broadband is needed in rural Alberta and would look into why the Ministry has not responded.

On behalf of Council, the Mayor also spoke in support of the County’s opposition to the Assessment Review currently underway. Though the proposed significant reduction in the assessment of Designated Industrial Properties most obviously affects the County, the impacts of reduced assessment means Town residents would be paying more for seniors housing, and most likely school taxes. As was pointed out to the Premier, this will negatively affect every joint agreement within the newly negotiated Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework that encompasses everything from our joint fire agreements to the new recreation agreement.

The Premier said that there may be problems with the current assessment model but the proposed changes were not intended to hamstring municipalities in their ability to serve their citizens. He will more closely review the proposed changes and inform our MLA of any changes, if any, that may occur.

Mayor Young thanked Premier Jason Kenney and MLA David Hanson for their insight, however, we will reserve judgement for when the results of the review are made public.

We would like to extend our gratitude to Premier Kenney for taking time out of his busy schedule to speak to Mayor Young and our neighbors.