

## COMMUNITY PROFILE

### OVERVIEW

Lacombe County is located in central Alberta, almost equal distance between the province's two major urban centres of Calgary and Edmonton with a combined population of more than 2 million people. Highway 2 is the major north-south corridor in the province that provides ready access to the County, and is supported by secondary Highways 11 and 12, which serve as the major east-west transportation corridors through the County with Highway 21 through the east side and Highways 20 and 22 to the west.

Located within Lacombe County are the communities of Eckville, Bentley, Blackfalds, Clive, Alix, Mirror, the Town of Lacombe and the Summer Village of Gull Lake. The County has a population of 10,507 people, and this represents a 4.61% increase since 2001. In addition, the Town of Lacombe has a population of more than 11,500.

The County's economic base stems from its robust agricultural and industrial activity. Significant petrochemical activity occurs in the area, including the Joffre area (Nova), the world's largest ethylene production facility, and Dow Chemicals.

In addition, there are many smaller fabrication plants and agri-food businesses including cheese production, yogurt production, and various greenhouses.

The agriculture industry is supported by the Federal Research Station, Alberta Field Crops facility and the head office for Alberta's Agricultural Financial Services Corporation within the Town of Lacombe. Other economic drivers include the Canadian University College, and a major new tourism project, the Alberta Downs Horse Racing and Entertainment Centre. This proposed \$12 million project is located adjacent to the Highway 2 traffic corridor.

### HOSPITALITY

A variety of accommodations exist in Lacombe County, including four inns offering numerous rooms and other amenities. There are also 12 restaurants, 11 fast-food eateries, five pubs/bars, and three cafes in the County.

### EXISTING ATTRACTIONS

The County has significant natural water-based attractions, featuring some of the more recognized lake-oriented destination resorts in Alberta. These include Sylvan Lake, Buffalo Lake and Gull Lake. There are a range of cultural/historic, rural and recreational attractions located throughout the region, as well as themed attractions such as balloon rides, corn mazes, and a steam train excursion.

## LACOMBE COUNTY

Some of the other attractions/events are:

- Brunch at the Beach
- Kansas Ridge Ranch Rodeo  
Pro Rodeos: Bentley, Olds, Ponoka, Rocky Mountain House, Sundre
- Tees Longears Days
- Jazz at the Lake & Shake the Lake

### **TOURISM STATISTICS**

Lacombe County is part of the larger Alberta Central Tourism Destination Region. Overnight tourism spending in the region was approximately \$456 million in 2007. Of this amount, 46% was attributed to visiting friends and relatives, 44% for pleasure and 6% for business travel. Approximately 32% (\$147 million) of the \$456 million was attributed to spending on accommodation and food/beverages.

### **COMMUNITY WEBSITES**

- Lacombe County [www.lacombecounty.com](http://www.lacombecounty.com)
- Town of Lacombe [www.lacombe.ca](http://www.lacombe.ca)
- Town of Blackfalds [www.blackfalds.com](http://www.blackfalds.com)
- Lacombe Regional Tourism [www.lacombetourism.com](http://www.lacombetourism.com)
- Lacombe Chamber of Commerce [www.lacombechamber.ca](http://www.lacombechamber.ca)
- Town of Bentley [www.town.bentley.ab.ca](http://www.town.bentley.ab.ca)
- Town of Eckville [www.eckville.com](http://www.eckville.com)
- Village of Alix [www.villageofalix.ca](http://www.villageofalix.ca)

### **TOURISM INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY – WILD ROSE COMMERCIAL PARK**

#### **OVERVIEW**

Wild Rose Commercial Park is located on the Queen Elizabeth 2 (QE 2) Highway corridor midway between Calgary and Edmonton, about 20 kilometres north of Red Deer. There are lots ranging in size from 2.42 acres to 14.43 acres and the land is now serviced and available for purchase and development. It is in close proximity to the Alberta Downs racetrack and Gull Lake Provincial Park.

Flexible zoning is intended for casual and overnight services required for visitors, including potential vehicle refueling and maintenance, restaurant and entertainment facilities, retail outlets and amusement facilities, as well as a range of discretionary uses intended to ensure that the location is a viable destination or waypoint for vacationers and business travellers.

Wild Rose Commercial Park has more than 52,000 vehicles per day pass by on the QE 2 Highway (north/south) and a further 12,000 vehicles pass by the site on Highway 12 (east/west).

#### **PROPOSED DRAW**

Local events in and around Lacombe suffer from the lack of adequate accommodations. There are few hotel/motel operations in the Lacombe area which are suitable for family events such as bonspiels, golf tournaments or conferences, and their capacity is extremely limited, due to their small size and consistent bookings for industrial crews. Most events held in or near Lacombe refer guests to facilities in Red Deer, some 20 kilometres away on the QE 2 Highway. Lacombe has a wonderful conference/event facility in the new Lacombe Memorial Centre, but has no complementary accommodations to host the event attendees. This seriously limits the tourism and visitor dollars which are spent in the Lacombe area, as many choose to stay in Red Deer. The lack of suitable accommodations is a serious barrier to growing tourism and trade in the area.

#### **SITE**

The property is privately owned and is comprised of lots ranging in size from 2.42 acres to 14.43 acres for a total 49.14 acres. It has been serviced and is available for purchase and development. It is located directly Southwest of Highway 12 and QE 2, with access from all directions via Highway interchange. The Town of Lacombe is located 4 kilometres east on Highway 12, and the sites are about 16 kilometres north of Blackfalds.

## LACOMBE COUNTY

There are no zoning issues as Lacombe County has designated the property as Highway Commercial in their Land Use Bylaw and all development falls within their discretionary uses. Any and all developments must first go to the Lacombe County Municipal Planning Commission for approval.

For more information, please visit the website at [www.developalberta.ca](http://www.developalberta.ca)

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

For more information regarding this opportunity, please contact Scott Martin.  
Phone: (780) 415-8827 or Email: [scott.martin@gov.ab.ca](mailto:scott.martin@gov.ab.ca)