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## NEWS RELEASE

June 24, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Parkland County tightens off-highway vehicle control.**

PARKLAND COUNTY, AB. Parkland County Council gave first, second and third reading to a new bylaw governing the use of off-highway vehicles (OHV) within the County. The most significant change from the previous bylaw is the minimum age of OHV operators, which has been increased from 14 to 16 years of age.

“Kids under the age of 16 simply don’t have the strength or the experience to operate OHVs, especially not along roadways with other vehicles around them,” said Mayor Rob Wiedeman. “We don’t allow 14 year olds to drive cars alone on the roads – it doesn’t make sense to allow them to drive OHVs on the roads.”

Increasing the age limit echoes the recent ‘Too Young to Drive, Too Young to Ride’ campaign from Capital Health, Stollery Children’s Hospital and the Northern Lights Health Region Foundation. Launched May 28, 2008, the campaign focuses on the dangers of children operating all terrain vehicles. The campaign was initiated as a result of an alarming number of children coming to emergency rooms as a result of OHV-related incidents. According to Capital Health, there were 12 children admitted to the Stollery Children’s Hospital this past Victoria Day long weekend. Of those 12, over half were considered major traumas. Other statistics on the Capital Health website also confirm the need for Parkland County to increase the minimum age of operators.

“According to the Capital Health fact sheet, 100% of crashes involving youth between 1998 and 2003 happened in rural areas,” said Mayor Wiedeman. “We need to be more proactive in protecting our youth and I think this is an excellent step in that direction.”

## “OHV Bylaw”

Parkland County also has an Off-Highway Vehicle education program developed in conjunction with the Stony Plain and District Crime Prevention Association. This unique and successful program, now in its third year, has Parkland County and Stony Plain Peace Officers giving presentations on OHV safety at local schools and community groups.

“The new bylaw provides for the designation of specific zones in which OHV use is not allowed on County highways or parks, recreation areas and other lands owned or controlled by the County”, said Al McCully, General Manager, Community Services.

On June 24 Council also passed a notice of motion to consider prohibiting OHV on County highways and park areas in a zone between Hwy 60 and the east boundary of the County, adjacent to Edmonton. A non-statutory public hearing is scheduled for Wednesday July 9, 2008 at 1:30 p.m. in Council Chambers at County Centre for Council to receive public comment on the proposed zone.

Other changes include aligning regulations in the bylaw with the Province’s *Traffic Safety Act* as well as the addition of a fine schedule. “In the old bylaw, people were fined \$100 for a first offence, \$200 for a second, and \$500 for subsequent offences,” said McCully. “We have adjusted the fines to match those contained in the *Traffic Safety Act* and they better reflect the seriousness of some of the offences.”

Parkland County first passed a bylaw regulating OHV use in 2003. There have been no amendments to bylaw since that time.

For more information on the new OHV Bylaw 38-2008, visit the Parkland County website at [www.parklandcounty.com](http://www.parklandcounty.com) or contact Parkland County Patrol Services at 780-968-8400. Information on the ‘Too Young to Drive, Too Young to Ride’ campaign is available on the Capital Health website at [www.capitalhealth.ca/safeATV](http://www.capitalhealth.ca/safeATV).

Parkland County is a rural municipality located immediately west of Edmonton. Covering an area of 242,595 hectares (599,500 acres), it is one of the largest in size and one of the highest populated of all rural municipalities in Alberta. Parkland County has grown to a community of over 30,000 people and has seen generations of families continue to enjoy country living.

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