POLICY

Department **Communications**	Policy No. **AD(42)**	**Page 1 of 3**
Policy Title **Council Social Media Policy**	Date: **October 22, 2026**	Resolution No. **C/511/26**

Policy Statement:

Lacombe County supports the use of social media to further the strategic direction and goals of the organization. Additionally, Social Media sites are tools to provide information, ask for feedback, hear concerns, and address questions. While in office, members of Council should build their social media content with consideration given to:

- Aligning with the strategic plan, corporate business plan, corporate values; and
- The benefits, implications and risks of using social media.

Guidelines/Procedures:

Members of Council are responsible for the content shared and posted through their individual social media accounts and must follow the standards and guidelines below.

Members of Council are encouraged to exercise caution and discretion when posting on social media sites. As with all other communication tools (i.e. public presentations, email and written correspondence) it is recognized that members of Council often act as representatives of Lacombe County.

It is important to recognize that information published on the Internet can impact and reflect back upon the County, may not be purely personal or private in nature, and may be subject to discovery proceedings in legal actions and inquiries through the Access to Information Act (ATIA) and Protection of Privacy Act (POPA).

Official Spokesperson

The Reeve is the official spokesperson for the County. Announcements, official statements, and media responses come from the Reeve (unless another Councillor is asked by the Reeve to comment on a specific topic).

In the absence of the Reeve, the Deputy Reeve will be the spokesperson.

General Considerations

- Councillors are individually responsible for their comments on social media.
- Statements made by Councillors, whether personal or work-related, will reflect on the reputation of the Councillor and Lacombe County. As such, all posts are required to be made in a professional manner.
- When a more significant decision is made by Council, the announcement should come from the official spokesperson in conjunction with the official communications from the County.
    - While information related to **major** County decisions or initiatives may already be publicly available through Council agendas, meeting livestreams, Council Highlights,

or attendance at public meetings, Council members are asked to refrain from promoting these announcements on their social media until official County communications have been released.

- Communications strives to share major announcements as soon as possible and to ensure consistent County messaging is in place before broader public discussion.

Members of Council are encouraged to use social media accounts to:

- Promote municipal and community activities, events, groups, and associations;
- Repost items from the County's official social media pages or publicly available documents. This is best practice to ensure a clear and consistent message;
- Invite comments from the public to support two-way communication;

Members of Council should refrain from using social media accounts for the following:

- Discussion of any in-camera or confidential matters, including general discussion on the subject matter of an in-camera item, unless the matter was dealt with in an open Council motion;
- Posting information on County news/Council meeting decisions prior to the release through Lacombe County official channels;
- Engaging in debate or argument through social media;
- Posting information on emergency situations (with the exception of reposting/sharing information from Emergency Operations Centre/Lacombe County communications);
- Posting information to official County social media pages to promote individual and/or political opinions and/or campaigns;
- Post any information regarding ongoing investigations or police matters.

Council members using Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X, or any other social media platform as a personal account, or as a separate Council-specific account, are encouraged to post the following caveat into the information section of their profiles:

- "The views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily represent official Lacombe County communication. The County's official <SOCIAL MEDIA PAGE> is <INSERT LINK TO COUNTY PAGE>.

Opinions

- Opinions of Councillors are their own, however, opinions expressed about other individuals become the property of those individuals (as per the POPA Act).
- Prior to making personal opinions known, Councillors shall preface it by stating the opinion is their own and does not necessarily reflect the views of the rest of Council.
- If a Councillor decides to express opinions on a matter prior to debate, they are expected to keep an open mind on the item when it is presented to Council. Statements should not be made prior to debate that would tie one's hands when it comes to a decision being made.

What to AVOID doing on social media as a Councillor

- Engaging in debates or arguments.
- Posting major decisions prior to them being announced through official channels.
- Providing your own messaging on projects or issues. Please refer to the County messages or let the County Manager know if an issue remains unaddressed.
- Writing negative or derogatory comments towards people or other organizations.
- Commenting on confidential matters or emergency situations as outlined in the policy.

Interaction Guidelines

- DO post information in a polite and professional manner.
- DO invite and encourage discussion.
- DO be accurate, fair, thorough, and transparent.
- DO provide links to correct Lacombe County information if false information is circulating or being discussed.
    - i.e., “We do have a policy that prioritizes snow removal in the County, which is located on our www.lacombecounty.com under Operations.”
- DO listen to dissenting opinions and respond in a respectful manner.
- DO repost items provided by the municipality, other municipal organizations, or other Councillors to enhance the awareness of municipal initiatives.
    - i.e., “RT @LacombeCounty Join us for the grand opening of Anderson Park on Gull Lake.
- Do NOT engage in debates or arguments.
- Do NOT write negative or derogatory comments towards people or other organizations.
- DO share official Emergency Operations Centre/County communications during an emergency.
    - Do NOT comment on confidential matters or emergency situations as outlined in the policy.
- DO respond to comments in a timely manner.
- DO post pictures of yourself at community events.
- DO advise residents to speak with you in person if they wish to follow up further
    - i.e., “Thank you for sharing your views. If you’d like to discuss/provide me with further details, please PM me or feel free to give me a call”

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