

Municipal District of Bonnyville Media Release

M.D. stresses need for people to stay off Lessard Bridge

July 10, 2018 – Despite many warnings, including a photo of the state of the Lessard Bridge’s structure, people continue to move barricades and put themselves in danger.

Only a week after the M.D. issued warnings that the bridge was not safe, and that fines will be given to people moving the barricades, not only have the “Road Closed” barricades been moved, but the extremely heavy cement barricades placed at either end of the bridge have been dragged across the bridge and left in the middle of the road. The barriers would not have been able to be moved by hand, which means someone had a motorized vehicle on the bridge as well.

The barricades were also spray-painted with profanity and racial slurs, and the roads have been ripped up by people spinning their tires in the loose gravel.

“We are extremely disappointed with this blatant display of disrespect,” said Reeve Greg Sawchuk. “It’s not only disrespecting the municipality, but also our residents and visitors to the area.”

As previously mentioned, the fine for moving the barricade is \$310, and possible arrest.

“It’s disheartening to see,” said Industry Liaison Denise Hourd, who is responsible for bridges in the M.D. “We are simply looking out for the public’s safety. The bridge is unsafe. We don’t want to see anyone hurt, or even worse, any loss of life.”

The bridge structure was damaged earlier this spring when ice and high-water flows damaged the pillars that hold up the bridge deck. After engineers inspected the bridge, M.D. Council agreed to move forward with a \$1.3 million repair.

As the Beaver River is a fish bearing stream, Alberta Environment and Parks must complete a 60-day aquatic study. The findings of the study will affect how the engineers create a fix for the bridge. The tender should go out by the end of September, with the repair scheduled for completion by the end of 2018.