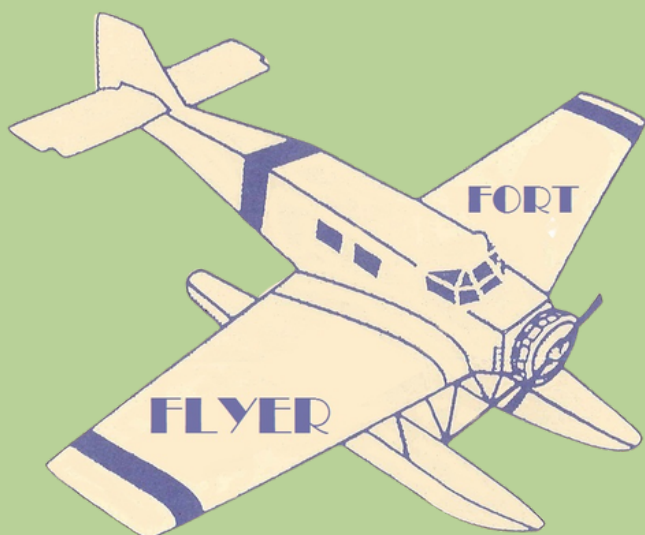


Fort Flyer

NEWS FROM THE DISTRICT OF FORT ST. JAMES

Photo by Christie Hoy



Mayor's Message
Department Updates
Community Events
FAQs



Message from the Mayor

We turned the clocks ahead for the last time last weekend and the snow levels around town are disappearing rapidly. Two sure signs that spring must be just around the corner.

Last Friday was the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Fort Forum Arena Revitalization Project. The exterior cladding, HVAC and electrical systems, washrooms, and kitchen area were all updated this year. Thank you to all of our sponsors, contractors, and the volunteers that organized the display cases and the pictures from the past that now adorn the walls. Drop by and have a look, I'm sure you will be flabbergasted.

There will be numerous projects going on in the community this year. To name a few, the refurbishing of the "Welcome to Fort St. James" sign, exterior painting of the Fort Forum Arena and Curling Rink, lagoon cell desludging and aeration, marina upgrades, Phase 3 of the waterline replacement and paving project in the Morice and Simon Fraser area, as well as numerous other projects. To put your mind at ease, these projects are grant funded and not all taxation based.

Thank you to the 274 respondents that took the time to respond to the Cottonwood Park Revitalization Community Survey. This was the highest survey response rate to date. Your responses and comments will now be forwarded and an updated concept plan will be brought forward later this year.

Enjoy the spring. It won't be long before we start to put away the winter toys and brush the dust off our summer ones.

"However difficult life may seem, there is always something that you can do well and succeed at" - Stephen Hawking.

Take care and enjoy,

Mayor Martin Elphee





Public Works & Capital Projects Updates

Public Works has several projects coming up this year - some have already begun!

You may have noticed the Fort St. James welcome sign is missing. The sign is currently being refurbished and is expected to be back out on the highway in April.

Coming this year:

1. Phase 3 of the waterline replacement and paving project will begin in May.
2. Solar lighting will be installed on the walking path between Save-On and Ash Street this summer.
3. Aeration upgrades for the lagoon are scheduled this summer, in addition to continuing the lagoon de-sludging project.
4. The Fort Forum Arena and Curling Rink will be getting a refresh this summer with new exterior paint.
5. Marina upgrades are expected to be completed this summer. Get excited for a new boat launch, breakwater, and upgrades to the lighting, walkway, and decking, among other important work!

& Several other small projects throughout the spring and summer!

As usual, the Public Works team will work hard to implement improvements to our parks, trails, flower beds, and boulevards once the snow melts. If you see them out and about, say hi and thank you!

Photo by Taylor Hansen



Economic & Community Development

The **Cottonwood Park Revitalization Community Survey** received an amazing 274 responses – our highest survey response to date! Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and we’re grateful for everyone’s participation. This project is important for community wellbeing, resident attraction, and tourism! [Click here to download the full report.](#)

The highest priorities for the community are washroom upgrades and the construction of a new playground. Washroom upgrades were rated at 80% importance. The playground was the only feature where most respondents voted for the higher budget. We heard you – you want bigger, better, and more inclusive! Upgrades to the beachside walking path were rated at 63% importance and will likely be included in the revitalization. Upgrading the picnic shelter is not a community priority, so we’ll just plan for some basic refurbishing.

Phase 1 of the Cottonwood Park Revitalization Project will be a new stage. Respondents want a weather-proof design, backstage area, and accessible ramp. The location and orientation of the stage will stay the same. Stay tuned for more updates from Public Works!



Tourism Corner

The snow is still here but we’re getting excited for our summer tourism season! The **Visitor Centre** will have its 2026 Grand Opening on May Long Weekend. Come out and meet the new Manager, get some food, and browse the updated gift shop. Stay tuned for updates!

Interested in being featured in the gift shop?
Email Jessica at tourism@fortstjames.ca



Message from Finance

MUNICIPAL UTILITY BILLS ARE COMING SOON

The biannual (twice yearly) municipal utility bills will be mailed out in mid-March. The District of Fort St. James provides water, sewer, and garbage pickup services for residents within municipal boundaries.

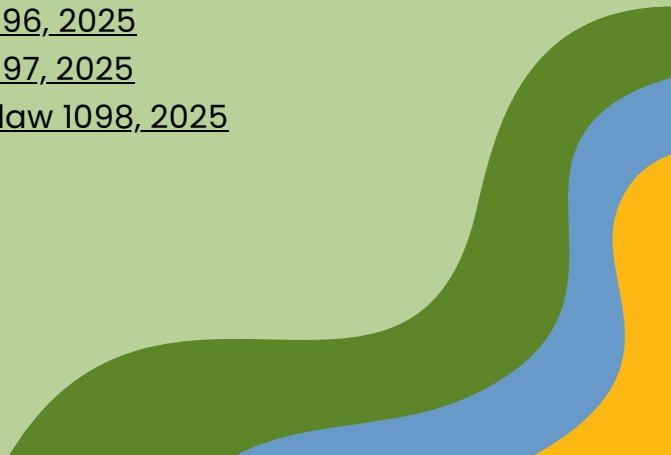
In November 2025, new utility rates were set for 2026 to 2029. For 2026, the biannual utility bill for the average residence is \$483.22. Broken down, that is \$198.47 for water, \$197.99 for sewer, and \$86.76 for garbage pickup for 6 months.

Utility bills should arrive by March 25th. If you do not receive one, the District may not have your correct mailing address. If that is the case, please contact the Finance Department at 250-996-8233. You may also need to update your mailing address with BC Assessment.

The payment deadline for the March invoice is April 30th. The second billing for 2026 will be in mid-September, and that payment is due by October 31st.

Utility Rates Bylaws can be viewed on the [District website](#), with all other bylaws. Follow the links below to download PDFs of the Utility Rates Bylaws.

- [District of Fort St. James Water Rates Bylaw 1096, 2025](#)
- [District of Fort St. James Sewer Rates Bylaw 1097, 2025](#)
- [District of Fort St. James Solid Waste Rates Bylaw 1098, 2025](#)



Fire Smart Corner

FIRESMART YOUR DECK IN TIME FOR BACKYARD BBQS

Consider a patio instead

- Ground-level stone/concrete patios are less flammable than raised wooden decks

Keep empty spaces empty

- The areas underneath, on top, and between the gaps in your deck should be kept clear of debris and flammable items when not in use

Regular cleaning

- Fine fuels like dry leaves and pine needles in deck gaps act like kindling
- Regular maintenance and cleaning are essential to reduce wildfire risk

Put away your deck furnishings

- Patio furniture, toys, planters, umbrellas, dog beds, etc. can ignite easily
- If you're travelling, move combustibles indoors or well away from your home



View the [FireSmart Homeowner's Manual](#)

Visit [PreparedBC](#) to make an emergency preparedness plan



Bylaw Spotlight

NOISE REGULATION BYLAW 993, 2018

No person shall cause or permit

- The persistent barking, calling, whining, or other persistent sound made by a pet or domestic animal
- Any sound made by an animal that is an unprovoked regular pattern of noise:
 - For longer than 15 minutes, **or**
 - That a Bylaw Enforcement Officer deems as unnecessary

First Offence: \$100 fine

Second Offence: \$250 fine

Subsequent Offences: \$500 fine

Announcements

Marina Improvements – Summer 2026

The District is undertaking Cottonwood Marina improvements this year. Improvements include the replacement of the dock anchor system, boat launch, and patio area. We will also install of a new breakwater, repair and upgrade the lights and beacon, as well as other minor upgrades.

Due to this exciting project, we cannot offer moorage this year. However, the boat launch will remain useable during this construction except for a short time while it is being replaced. Dates will be posted once they are confirmed. Stay tuned for project updates throughout the summer.

Be Bear Aware this Spring

Bears will be extremely hungry coming out of hibernation soon! This is a crucial time to practice bear awareness for human, pet, and bear safety!

- Secure your garbage inside a garage or shed until the morning of pickup
- Remove bird feeders and pick up fallen fruit
- Clean barbeques and outdoor cooking areas
- Store pet food indoors
- Manage your compost carefully and avoid adding meat or dairy
- Keep your dog close when walking on trails

Report bear sightings in residential areas to the BC Conservation Service at 1-877-952-7277 (RAPP line) and warn your neighbours. Remember, a fed bear is a dead bear. Keep bears wild to ensure their survival and our safety.



Photo by Taylor Hansen

FAQs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Is the District considering a water treatment plant to upgrade the community water system?

A. Yes. The District has been seeking funding opportunities for several years. Currently, the District is awaiting the funding decision of a recently applied for grant opportunity of \$7 million.

Q. Is there a penalty for paying my municipal utility bill late?

A. Yes. A 5% penalty is automatically added to unpaid invoices the day after they are due (spring utility bills are due April 30th). If property owners do not pay their bills by December 31st, the bill and any penalties owed are transferred to their property tax account.

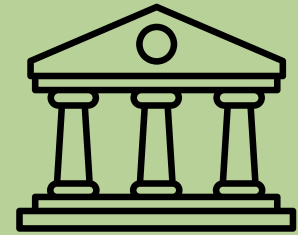
Q. When does Cottonwood Park Campground open and how do I book?

A. The District plans to open the campground for May long weekend. You can book your sites now! Call the District Office at 250-996-8233.

Q. Can I burn off my brush and grass in the spring?

A. No. District of Fort St. James Fire Regulation Bylaw No. 1001, 2018 5.1.13 prohibits the burning of vegetation, grass, or stubble when it is rooted in the ground.





Regular Council Meetings

March 10th & 24th

April 14th & 28th

May 12th & 26th

COUNCIL CHAMBERS
477 STUART DR. WEST
5:00 PM

Council Meetings



News from the Chamber of Commerce

LET'S DO BUSINESS!

Introducing the 2026 Board Members

Jonathan Ouellette, *President*

Sandra Valk, *Vice President*

Jon Gibson, Brad Gainor, Riley Willick, Morgan Davis, *Directors*

It's that time of year again

Watch your email for the Chamber Membership renewal packages. Thank you, your support lends strength to an organization dedicated to promoting business growth and economic development in the Fort St. James area.

Looking for a rewarding job?

We are hiring a Chamber Manager.

Contact 250-996-7023 or fortstjameschamber@gmail.com

Watch for our new website going live soon!

FORT ST JAMES



NAWHULNUKW BAYOH
PUBLIC LIBRARY

[CLICK HERE FOR THE LIBRARY EVENT CALENDAR](#)

[Click here to visit our website](#) & [Click here to visit our Facebook page](#)

We have not one, but *two* new book clubs!

Love to cook? Love to eat? Join the **Cookbook Book Club** on the second Wednesday on the month from 12:30-2pm.

Join a member of the Northwest Child Development Centre team and other caregivers at the **Growing Together Parenting Book Club** every other Wednesday from 10-11am.



We are always looking for suggestions to add to our **Library of Things!** Don't know what that is? Let's just say you can borrow more than books. Come by and check it out!



Community
Arts Council
of Fort St James
POPE MOUNTAIN ARTS

[Visit our website](#)

[Visit our Facebook page](#)

[Sign up for newsletters](#)

Every community has a heart. A place to gather and a place to create. Pope Mountain Arts is that place. We take great pride in the diverse mix of people who dwell here as well as the special art and culture we create. Come take part in our vibrant arts community. All are welcome to come, create, grow your soul, and get to know our amazing community.

We offer **art workshops, exhibits, music events, and a whole range of drop-in programs.** Memberships for our pottery and fibre arts studios are also available to experienced artisans. Fun fact - Stuart, the rock snake, lives outside of the Pope Mountain Arts Building.

Our gallery hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10 am to 3 pm.

Community Events

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW OUR FULL COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR](#)



**MURRAY RIDGE
SKI HILL & TERRAIN PARK**
Come have some fun in the sun!

Photo by Marty Clemens



Free Kids Skiing

March 14th & 15th

8th Annual Mt. Everest Challenge

Saturday, March 14th

50th Annual Slush Cup

Saturday, March 21st

Amazing spring skiing, hometown lodge full of friends, the BIGGEST homemade cinnamon buns.

Ski you soon!

LIVE THEATRE BY BROADWAY NORTH

Fort St. James Secondary School
450 Douglas Ave.

April 24th
5:30pm

April 25th
2:00pm

[Get your tickets](#)



FREE SIMPLE TAX CLINICS

Northern Health is offering two clinics at the Fort St. James Public Library.
425 Manson St.

Friday

March 13th and 20th
10am-3pm

[Click here for more information](#)



HOME ROUTES CONCERTS

Jordan Coaker & Mallory Johnson

April 16th

Dustin Dale Gaspard & Tanner Bingaman

May 21st

Pope Mountain Arts
675 Birch St. W.

\$30 per ticket, [available here](#)

Doors open at 6:30pm, show at 7pm



SPRING MARKET

April 19th at 11am-3pm

Community Centre
190 Stuart Drive East

Volunteer Opportunities



CALEDONIA DAYS IS BACK JULY 24TH-26TH

Horse & wagon rides, chili cook-off, trick riders, merchandise bingo, pancake breakfast, community market, & more!

We need volunteers to bring this event to life. Want to sponsor an event? Have some ideas? Email recreation@fortstjames.ca

CANADA DAY CELEBRATIONS ON JULY 1ST

We are looking for market vendors, parade floats, food vendors, or general interest!

Email recreation@fortstjames.ca



OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

[Click here to check out our extensive list of volunteer groups and community resources to get you involved in the community!](#)

WANT TO STAY INFORMED ON LOCAL EVENTS?

[Follow this link to join our mailing list](#) & select the types of information you would like to receive