

A Assessment Bulletin

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Grants in Place of Taxes Alberta First Responders Radio Communications System

Alberta First Responders Radio Communications System (AFRRCS) is a province wide two-way radio network for public safety first responder agencies, including police, fire and ambulance. AFRRCS will provide these agencies with a common radio network to communicate with one another, and improve the coordination between agencies. AFRRCS is not currently operational, therefore it is non-assessable. The system is expected to become operational in part during the 2013/14 tax year, and in full by 2014/15.

Once operational, AFRRCS properties become assessable, but exempt from taxation under Section 362(1)(a) of the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)*, and therefore, the properties also become eligible for GIPOT funding under *MGA*, Section 366(2). This Section states, "The Crown may pay to the municipality a grant not exceeding that amount that would be recoverable by the municipality if the property that the Crown has an interest in were not exempt from taxation." The legislation provides for Grants in Place of Taxes (GIPOT) funding to be paid at the discretion of the Minister.

The Government of Alberta's position on the AFRRCS network, once it is operational, is that it should remain non-assessable as it provides a public benefit to all Albertans, and consumes few, if any, municipal services. As well, AFRRCS properties should be assessed equitably with similar properties, such as SuperNet (a telecommunications network across Alberta that is non-assessable under the SuperNet Assessment Regulation).

The purpose of this Bulletin is to notify all municipalities of the Government of Alberta's intention to legislate the AFRRCS properties to be non-assessable under Section 298 of the *MGA*, and thereby make AFRRCS properties not eligible for GIPOT. Since it is the Government of Alberta's intention to make AFRRCS non-assessable by amending Section 298 of the *MGA*, the Government will not pay GIPOT on AFRRCS properties, including, land, tower, buildings, and machinery or equipment, prior to the amendment coming into force.

Should you have further questions about the assessment of AFRRCS properties, please contact Sheila Young, Director, Assessment and Property Tax Policy, by dialing toll-free 310-0000, then 780-422-8078.

Should you have further questions about GIPOT, please contact Marie Juengel, Director, Municipal Grants, by dialing toll-free 310-0000, then 780-422-8105.