

# Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

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## Quebecer searching for a new start out west, pioneer style

BY JULIA DIMA

In Canada, the sight of a cowboy-hat clad man sitting in a covered wagon pulled by two Belgian horses heading westward in search of a new life would not seem peculiar two hundred years ago. But on the paved highways of Southeast Saskatchewan, with pick-up trucks and semis whizzing by, the sight of Pierre Cloutier could raise some eyebrows.

Cloutier is living out a lifelong dream to travel across the country with a covered wagon, reflecting the journey taken by the early pioneers of Canada, traveling about 30 kilometres a day to ensure his horses are not overworked or sweating too much in the cold weather.

"The idea came from the old times where they didn't have any more work in the East, so they just moved out West," Cloutier says.

As a boy growing up on a dairy farm in Quebec, Cloutier would think about taking a trip in a horse-drawn wagon. His dad bought him his first horse when he was 12, and he knew one day he wanted to travel with his horses. "There are a couple of people who travel with horses cross-country but put the horses in a truck at night or whatever—that is not real traveling for me, I wanted to travel like the pioneers did when they built the West. That is why I made the original wagon," he says.

The dream stayed in the back of his mind, and in 1985, he started to build a wooden wagon from scratch on the farm. He did not know when he would start his trip, or if he would at all.

Like everyone else, life caught up to Cloutier, and the dream was put in the background. He started his career, working as a horse-shoer and auctioneer, and dating a long-term girlfriend. He took on a part-time job as a truck driver that turned into 20-hour days that took their toll on Cloutier and his relationships. His long-term girl-



Above: Cloutier built his wagon for the trip himself. Along the way, he's received help keeping it in top shape, including having people at the Hutterite Colony build him a windshield to stay warm.

Below: Cloutier feeds oats to his two Belgian horses, Kelly (left) and Bobby (right). He says that his connection to his horses and his dog, Eska, have been strengthened along the way.



friend broke up with him.

That is when the dream came back—Cloutier says that figuratively, life

kicked his butt out of the door to start the trip.

Three weeks later, Cloutier held a large auction,

and sold all of his antique farm equipment and belongings, and started planning, doing the final work

on his two wagons.

He knew he wanted to bring his Belgian horse, Bobby along with him,

since Bobby had been with Cloutier for 10 years. He had a mare that was not safe for traveling on the road, so Cloutier needed to find a partner for Bobby. He approached the person who sold him the horse originally 10 years ago, and still had the sister, Kelly. Though reluctant to part with the calm and well-behaved mare, after hearing Cloutier's plans, he agreed to sell, and Kelly joined the team.

Cloutier also wanted to bring his dog along for the trip to have a companion, but the little corgi he had was in an accident just before he planned to leave. Cloutier bought Eska, a Huskie-cross, just before the trip. Originally, Cloutier figured that just like the pioneers of old, he'd be sleeping in the bush, having to defend himself against wild animals, so a big dog like Eska could help protect him. But far from it, Cloutier has found open arms and open doors all along his journey.

The team of four set out from Rigaud, Quebec in early November, about a month later than planned, since the wagons needed more work.

"In the beginning, I wasn't supposed to share so much with people. I am carrying enough to be alone for seven days, and every seven days, I was planning to buy some hay and whatever else. But, the first day, someone passed by me on the road, and offered for me to stay with him. I slept there for two days, and after that, kept going," he says. "The first couple of places I asked on the road, that's how I found places. After that, people were more interested, and even helped find me other places because with the farmers, they knew someone down the road."

Cloutier remembers the first time he was offered that help, which was in Ontario. Back home in Quebec, Cloutier says he was the one offering a helping hand, so to receive so much help was overwhelming emotionally.

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# New Happy Nun Cafe owner following her passion for food

BY JULIA DIMA

In many ways, Katie Vinge was set up to become the new owner of the Happy Nun Cafe in Forget. When Shannon and Don Shakotko decided they would be selling the iconic restaurant and music venue, friends in the Wawota and Carlyle area were already nudging Vinge, and her fiance, Riley Riddell to take a look. Riddell teaches at Wawota Parkland School, and Vinge was working at the Willow on Wascana restaurant in Regina.

"A lot of people in the area were trying to set me up," Vinge says with a laugh. "I mean, Riley had so many people come to him—because a lot of the teachers come here for meetings and stuff like that—and they kind of put a bug in his ear, like 'you know the Happy Nun's for sale, Katie should come look at it.' Because they knew I was a chef, and they really wanted us to be in the area, they wanted Riley—he plays hockey, and he's a pretty big part of the community there, so they were just trying to find a way to keep us here. One of Riley's principals in Manor, Ron Wardrope, who is married to Shannon's cousin, he had said to Riley as well that we should really come look at it. So, that's how it came to be."

Vinge says she and Riddell always wanted to find a way to build their lives in the Southeast part of Saskatchewan. Though she's originally from Fair-



Katie Vinge at the bar of the Happy Nun. She says feels 'at home' in the Happy Nun Cafe. The Nun's opening is this weekend.

view, Alberta, Vinge's family owned a cabin at White Bear Lake, and she spent her summers in the Kenosee region.

"It almost felt more like

home here at the cabin than it did in Alberta, which is kind of strange to say, but we've always loved Saskatchewan. We have some of the best memories out at

the lake . . . We had a boat-house there, and we'd go down to the beach every day, and I worked at the Moosehead for years, serving, hosting, and I worked

in the kitchen," Vinge says.

When Vinge first came to see the Happy Nun to meet the realtor, Ray Boutin, and the Shakotkos, there was music playing outside of

the quaint little restaurant. Vinge says the second she walked in, she knew she was done for, and had to have the Nun.

*Continued on page 23*

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# Wawota Winter Spirit Festival

The Canadian Parents for French (CPF) Wawota Chapter held their annual Winter Spirit Festival on Feb. 28. The festival had outdoor games like human dogsled races and curling, and hockey golf. There was also kids activities, sleigh rides, a supper, bingo, and a movie played in French at the end of the evening. The day's events were about having fun as a community, but the group works to preserve the French language in the community, and make French language resources available to parents who want to raise their chil-

dren with a second language. Last year, Wawota Parkland School lost its French program, so now, CPF is working on keeping French alive.

Monique Myers sits on both the local and provincial board for the Canadian Parents for French, and was the French instructor at Wawota Parkland School. She says she'd like to see French programming return to the school, and believes it is possible. Meanwhile, CPF is where the passion for French in the community thrives.

"It's just another option, it keeps

those language learning opportunities alive. We're here to promote as well as enhance French second language learning," she says. "For myself, obviously, being a French teacher, it's something that is very near and dear to my heart, and that I'm very passionate about . . . but being part of the organization gives me the opportunity to keep that passion alive."

Sarah Weatherald with CPF believes that CPF has a role to play in keeping French thriving despite the programming changes.

"Right now, we want to showcase and remind people the value of a second language, and that the opportunities are not lost just because we can't offer them in the school right now," she says. "It would be an ideal that we could bring French back, I'm not sure that's in the cards, but I think it would be of great benefit to the students."

Both Weatherald and Myers say the Winter Festival—the second one put on by CPF Wawota—was a success, and did attract new families that are not members CPF Wawota.



Kids taking off on a horse-drawn sleigh ride.



The Swag Team—members Sierra Murray, Anna McCarthy and Kelton Ford—push their team mate Hanna Johnson in the human curling game.



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# Tornado chasers educate students in off-season

BY JULIA DIMA  
Being a tornado hunter in tornado alley is a busy occupation from March to September, but like everyone else in the Prairies, it's a long winter for the chasers. Regina-based chasers Greg Johnson, Ricky Forbes and Chris Chittick make up the Tornado Hunter Team, and spend their winters between Argentina—which has a high frequency of tornadoes all year—and classrooms, gymnasiums, and meeting rooms, educating the public about tornadoes and tornado chasing. Johnson offers photo seminars in Regina, Forbes travels to schools across Alberta to share tornado stories with students, and Chittick travels to schools in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. On February 6, Chittick visited Rocanville School to share tornado stories with the students. Chittick is originally from Michigan, and spent ten years as a chaser in Oklahoma before mov-

ing to Regina two years ago. Chittick always loved chasing storms. Before moving to Oklahoma full time and joining a group of storm chasers who would become the subject of Discovery Channel's *Storm Chasers*, Chittick would spend his summer break with a friend driving from Michigan into Oklahoma in search of twisters. Chittick started with the Tornado Hunter team in Regina two years ago, and is the team's videographer and forecaster. Johnson is the team's still photographer and also a forecaster, and Forbes is the team's medic and driver of their signature bright orange Ford F-150 nicknamed 'Flash.'

Chittick explained the jobs of a tornado hunter to the students in Rocanville. "Our goals when we're out there chasing a storm is first, we call weather authorities, and let them know information about the tornado, so they can get watches and warnings out to the public. Second,

we get as close as possible to the storm while being safe, and I try to shoot the best video of the day. Then I take that video, make a youtube clip, news clips, and sell it to news stations around the world, that is how we make our money doing this. The other thing is that all three of us are first responder trained—very often, we are the first on the scene in a storm, so if we see a storm move over a small community, we will drop everything and go into search and rescue mode, help people who are injured, if it's serious, we'll get people to a safe spot and keep them comfortable until medics arrive," Chittick explains.

The storm chasers start their season as early as March, when it begins in the south part of Texas. As the summer progresses, tornadoes and their hunters gradually move north through Tornado Alley which stretches from the Texas area into the Canadian Prairies. In the early



Greg Johnson Photo

Chris Chittick (right) films a tornado from nearby the Tornado Hunter team's truck while driver and medic, Ricky Forbes watches the massive funnel cloud.

part of the season, they will drive all the way to Texas from Regina—an 18-hour drive—to sometimes arrive to a dissipated storm.

"In that sort of situation, you just grab some ice cream or something, and head back," Chittick said. "There's lots of ups and downs with tornado chasing, it's a bit of a roller-coaster ride, but it is what it is . . . and there's lots of unhealthy eating in this job—usually by the time we're done with a day of

storm chasing, all you can get are gas station burritos and McDonalds."

Chittick explained that storm chasers look for the ingredients for storms in weather reports—a thunderstorm that is capable of producing a tornado forms when cold air from the northwest around the Rockies meets moist wet air from the Gulf of Mexico and warm dry air from Southern California. These different air flows converge in the tornado alley area and create the formu-

la for storms.

When winds move in different directions at different speeds through the upper atmosphere, this causes the turbulence that produces a tornado. Chittick showed students examples of storms forming, and what a 'tornadic supercell' looks like—a massive anvil-shaped cloud that looks a bit like an explosion, with a storm front area that drops heavy rain and hail, a flanking cloud on the opposite side of the front that sucks moist warm air out of the sky to keep a storm moving, and at the very bottom of the massive cloud formation, a wall cloud, which is the part of the storm that produces and drops a tornado to the ground. Land-borne tornadoes come in three basic shapes, the Stovepipe formation, which looks like an upsidown cone coming from the sky, the needle formation which is relatively thin from top to bottom, and wedge tornadoes, which are wide from top to bottom, and typically cause the most damage because of the wide area they can cover.

Continued on page 16

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In study of jurisdictions for mining investment:

# Saskatchewan, Manitoba come out on top

The Fraser Institute Annual Survey of Mining Companies was released recently showing Saskatchewan is the most attractive jurisdiction for mining investment in Canada, and Manitoba is second in Canada.

Saskatchewan is the second most attractive jurisdiction worldwide, behind Finland, and Manitoba comes out fourth in the world, according to the study.

Saskatchewan is also second in the world for mining potential, and Manitoba is eighth.

The annual global survey of mining executives rates 122 jurisdictions around the world based on their geologic attractiveness and the extent to which government policies encourage exploration and investment.

**SASKATCHEWAN MOVES UP**

"Saskatchewan is the best place to invest for mining, and we've been working hard to get that message out around the world," Energy and Resources Minister Bill Boyd said. "Our government has been very focused on offering competitive resource royalty structures, reliable, transparent and stable government policies, and best of all—a province that has a wealth of resource possibilities for those that invest here."

Saskatchewan improved in 2014 compared to the 2013 report, where Saskatchewan ranked second in Canada and seventh worldwide.

Boyd credited the provincial government's continued commitment to acquiring high quality, easily accessible geo-science information and focus on improving mining policies for the improvement.

"In addition to our wealth of natural minerals, we have been striving for reduced red tape and enhanced customer service for the mining industry," Boyd said. "Our MARS staking system that provides online claims staking is just one example of improvements we've made that save mining companies millions of dollars—dollars that can be spent on exploration and development, rather than



Saskatchewan and Manitoba are among the top jurisdictions in the world for attractiveness of mining investment, according to a new study, ranking first and second in Canada. Above, PotashCorp Rocanville, where PotashCorp is completing a \$2.8 billion expansion project.

administrative processes."

Saskatchewan was followed by Manitoba and Quebec in the Canadian rankings, with Alberta placing eighth, Ontario ninth, and British Columbia tenth. Five Canadian jurisdictions finished in the top 10 worldwide: Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador and Yukon. Ontario and British Columbia placed 23rd and 28th, respectively.

**MANITOBA MINISTER PLEASSED WITH RANKING**

Manitoba Mineral Resources Minister Dave Chomiak said he is happy with Manitoba's ranking.

"The Manitoba government has created one of the best mineral exploration incentive packages in Canada, and this survey sends a clear message to mining companies that our province is a great place to invest," Chomiak said.

He said benefits to mining companies include the Mineral Exploration Assistance Program, the Manitoba Prospectors Assistance Program and the Manitoba Mineral Exploration Tax Credit. Manitoba is the only Canadian jurisdiction to offer double assessment credits, which help companies explore during challenging economic

times, Chomiak noted.

"Working closely with industry partners, Aboriginal and northern communities, and other stakeholders is one of our greatest strengths," Chomiak said. "In addition, the Manitoba Geological Survey provides information on Manitoba's mineral potential, which greatly assists companies in developing their exploration initiatives."

Chomiak said the Mining Advisory Council is an important forum for government, industry partners and First Nations to work together to address mineral resource exploration and development issues. The council is working to increase Indigenous communities' participation in the Manitoba mining sector.

The creation of the Mineral Potential Assessment Committee will also help ensure the decision to establish parks and protected areas is balanced with the sustainable development of mineral resources, the minister said.

The survey was conducted between August 26 and November 15, 2014, and includes the responses of 485 mineral exploration and development company executives from around the world. Exploration budgets reported by companies participating in the survey totalled \$2.7 billion US in 2014 and \$3.2 billion US in 2013.

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# Focus on Agriculture

## How to pay yourself

Structuring farms as corporations offers lots of tax advantages. Since most farms qualify for the federal small business tax credit, the federal rate is only 11 per cent. The maximum provincial corporate tax rates vary from 11 per cent in British Columbia to 16 per cent in Nova Scotia and P.E.I. This is a fraction of most farmers' personal tax rates. It's no wonder many farmers try to keep as much of their economic activity as they can inside a corporation. However, sooner or later everyone has to withdraw money for personal use.

There are several ways you can do this, says Kelvin Shultz with Wheatland Accounting in Fillmore, Sask. The two most common are wages and corporate dividends. Both come with advantages and disadvantages.

Any land or tax-paid assets you roll into the company at time of incorporation qualify as a shareholder loan—which isn't classed as income when repaid.

"Taking money out of your corporation as wages allows you to build up RSP (retirement savings plan) room at a rate of 18 per cent of your gross salary," Shultz says. "It also allows you to pay into Canada Pension Plan."

A less obvious but significant advantage is that the corporation calculates the tax you owe and submits it to Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) on your behalf.

This is an advantage, because if you take money out of the company in any other fashion, you have to calculate and submit your personal taxes, and accounting fees are paid personally.

Up until a year ago, producers who took money as dividends instead of wages paid about two per cent less tax, Shultz says. However, due to recent tax rate changes, that's no longer the case. While every province's rates are still a bit different, there's now so little variance it hardly matters which method you choose. The only reason you would choose one over the other comes down to whether you want to pay into CPP and build RSP room through wages.

**Manage your dividends**  
Dividends can be used to transfer money out of the corporation to any eligible shareholders, Shultz says. However, you have to remember that every shareholder who has the same class of share must be paid the same dividend per share.

"Most producers structure their corporations so that each spouse, child or other shareholder is issued a dif-

ferent class of shares," Shultz says. "One will receive Class A shares, another will receive Class B shares and so on. Each share type might have exactly the same attributes, but having different share classes allows you to pay dividends to everyone at different rates."

Corporations do pay a higher tax rate on certain types of income, Shultz cautions. So if your corporation receives dividends or capital gains income, you will almost certainly want to take money out of your company through dividends instead of wages.

These types of income go into something called a refundable dividend tax-on-hand account, better known by its acronym RDTOH. If you pay a dividend while you have an RDTOH balance, about 33 per cent of it will qualify as a tax credit to the corporation. So if the corporation paid a \$10,000 divi-

dend, it would receive about a \$3,333 refund. If you are sitting on a sizeable balance in RDTOH accounts, it's likely advantageous to pay dividends rather than wages.

**Options with benefits**  
CRA does offer farmers a few other options, Shultz says. These include rental income and a variety of benefit options, like medical plans, that are tax deductible for the corporation but don't have to be declared as personal income.

"It's quite common for producers to charge their company rent for farmland they personally own outside the corporation," Shultz says. "Of course, this becomes income to you personally and does attract GST or HST. Rental income also can be used to build up your RSP room, but it doesn't qualify for CPP."

You can also claim a tax-free

mileage allowance on your vehicle. If you keep track of the kilometres you are using for business, CRA will allow a per-kilometre claim on that vehicle the corporation can deduct and you don't need to include in personal income.

Any land or tax-paid asset rolled into the company at time of incorporation also qualifies as a shareholder loan. The company can pay this value back any time without it being classified as income.

Producers shouldn't take money out of the corporation by charging a management fee, Shultz cautions. CRA now frowns on this once-common practice. Its position is that management fees should be considered wages, and the corporation should have withheld and submitted the taxes and statutory deductions owed on it at the time of payment.



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19	THURSDAY	SHEEP SALE NOON
21	SATURDAY	PLEASANT DAWN CHARLOIS BULL SALE
23	MONDAY	BUTCHER SALE 9 A.M.
25	WEDNESDAY	PRESORT FEEDER SALE 10 A.M.
27	FRIDAY	BRED COW & C/C SALE 11:30 A.M.
30	MONDAY	BUTCHER SALE 9 A.M.
April		
1	WEDNESDAY	REGULAR FEEDER SALE 9 A.M.
		PEN OF 5 REPLACEMENT HEIFER SALE 1 P.M.
4	SATURDAY	CATTLEMAN'S CLASSIC BULL SALE
8	WEDNESDAY	BUTCHER/REGULAR FEEDER SALE 9 A.M.
13	MONDAY	BUTCHER SALE 9 A.M.
15	WEDNESDAY	PRESORT FEEDER SALE 9 A.M.
20	MONDAY	BUTCHER SALE 9 A.M.
22	WEDNESDAY	REGULAR FEEDER SALE 9 A.M.
24	FRIDAY	BRED COW & C/C SALE 11:30 A.M.
27	MONDAY	BUTCHER SALE 9 A.M.
29	WEDNESDAY	REGULAR FEEDER SALE 9 A.M.
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# It's time to revisit the idea of crop rotations

**CORY JACOB, REGIONAL CROPS SPECIALIST,  
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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**

The concept of crop rotations has fallen out of favor lately, whether it's due to economics, lovely Mother Nature, or logistics in the busy season. I think that it is time to revisit this concept and to understand why it has been promoted in the past.

Crop rotations are designed for improving crop and soil health over the long term, and some would argue economics too, all to ensure sustainability. I really want to emphasize sustainability, as many producers seem to not be considering this.

If you have a son that will be taking over the farm or are a young producer, think about the issues and consequences of less crop diversification and tight crop rotations 10, 20, 30, and 40 years down the road. Crop rotations are a great way to lessen these risks and consequences as they keep pests off balance, while maintaining soil nutrient levels and using water and nutrients efficiently.

Herbicide resistant weeds and weed management are issues associated with tight crop rotations, where the same crop is grown and a similar herbicide is used year after year. Plants are smarter than we give them credit and adapt to our farming practice and eventually the weed

population shifts to weed species that are resistant to that herbicide or mode of action. Herbicide resistance develops from a genetic mutation or natural tolerance in a weed population, and if the same herbicide or mode of action is continually used, that weed does not die and goes to seed and spreads, then you have more and more herbicide resistant weeds to deal with. Once they are present, they are a long-term tenant on farmland.

Minimizing disease levels is also an important aspect of crop rotations, which reduce the growth, reproduction and survival of soil stubble borne pathogens, which cannot survive without a susceptible host or plant tissue. Crop rotations will not eliminate these pathogens, but will reduce their population size so that there is less crop damage and control options will become more effective.

Rotation of fungicide groups and modes of action will ensure fungicide efficacy. Using one, single mode of action fungicide year after year will select for organisms that have resistance to the fungicide or mode of action and soon the fungicide will not be effective against the disease. Selecting a variety with disease resistance will also help, but do not only depend on that, as resistance will break down and new strains, with no known resistance are discovered.

Crops have different rooting depths to capture nutrients and water. Peas, lentils, and flax have shallow root systems, while cereal crops have a deep-rooted fibrous root system, followed by canola and mustard with a deep rooted taproot, and alfalfa with a very deep rooted taproot. The deep rooted taproot allows the plants to obtain nutrients such as nitrogen and sulfur that leach down in the soil profile, especially in these wet years. Shallow roots and the fibrous roots system of cereal crops allows the plants to capture phosphorus and potassium, which from seeding are higher up in the soil profile and move only a few

mm in the soil every year.

As well, including pulse crops in crop rotations is a way to get free nitrogen from the crop when it is inoculated. Pulse crops fix 50 to 90 per cent of their nitrogen. Fabia bean fixes 90 per cent, 80 per cent for pea and lentil, 70 per cent for chick pea, and 50 per cent for soybean and dry bean, and these crops leave residual nitrogen for the following crop as pulse stubble is broken down relatively quickly.

At the end of the day, I understand that economics and Mother Nature play a big role in choosing crop rotations. I wanted to provide some food for thought.

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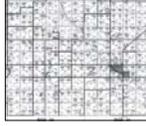
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# Focus on Agriculture

## Big data down on the farm

BY PETER GREDIG

The term big data refers to the fact that we are all walking, talking data-generating machines. Our online activities, debit and credit card purchases, social media participation and mobile device use all create data sets on purchase decisions, movements and lifestyle.

### BIG DATA IN AG

In agriculture, big data really started 20 years ago with the introduction of the yield monitor, which captured a yield data point every two seconds and

tagged it to a GIS co-ordinate. We collected enormous amounts of yield data, created yield maps and, well, stared at them—an early lesson that generating data is easy. Spinning it into gold is the tough part.

Today, it's possible to access seeders or planters, sprayers, grain carts, UAVs (drones), robotic milkers, feeding systems, environmental controls, grain dryers and monitoring systems—all generating data that is increasingly apt to be transmitted wirelessly and effortlessly to cloud

or web-based resources. This is just the beginning. Almost any machine or device can now be built or modified to be operated remotely (via smart phone) and generate and wirelessly transmit data.

Generating data is easy. Spinning it into gold is the tough part.

### WHAT'S YOUR DATA WORTH?

While farmers struggle to pull value from all these numbers, agribusiness is racing to obtain them. The big prize is aggregated data sets from thousands of farmers that

show trends in how we're farming and our purchase patterns.

So, how much is your data worth? At least one company is willing to share the wealth. Farmobile LLC sells hardware you plug into the ISOBUS connection in your tractor, combine, sprayer, etc. The data is sent wirelessly to the Cloud for real-time viewing by the user or to be

exported to other software for record-keeping.

The novel part of the business plan, which is still at the conceptual stage, is that if farmers opt to share their data through Farmobile, they would get 50 per cent of revenue derived from selling the data.

Most of the data chasers promise your data remains anonymous. But there are concerns, especially when

we hear about instances of data hacking.

A project called the Open Ag Data Alliance recognizes that farmers own their data. The objective of the non-profit is to create secure and standardized data systems that allow safe exchange and let farmers choose from various service companies without being locked in to a proprietary system.



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# Focus on Agriculture

## There's a way to have those difficult conversations

BY GLENN CHEATER  
For all their strengths, farms are notorious as places where things get left unsaid, and that's a shame.

Take, for example, the topic of control. Just mention that issue, and watch Dad's jaw muscles tighten and that look come into his eye.

The "work comes first" attitude is another. How many spouses say silent prayers every day as their bull-headed partner heads out for yet another long, gruelling, gotta-get-it-done day?

The popular term is "difficult conversations," and nothing's more difficult than talking about mortality—whether that's preparing for the day you won't be around or why your work practices could hasten that time.

### PEOPLE OPEN UP

Yet these topics are exactly what people want to talk to Leona Dargis about. Every time the motivational speaker from St. Vincent, Alta, gives a presentation (47 of them in four countries in the past two years alone), people are waiting afterwards to speak with her.

"There's always at least five people, and sometimes a dozen," says the 29-year-old. "I think it's because I bring the personal side. And I have a true connection. I'm one of them: I've picked rocks and done all the hard work that farm kids do. When I share my story, I remind them that this can happen to anybody. I am happy to help in any way I can."

What happened was the loss of her parents Jean and Joanne and grandmother Anita in a plane crash in 2007, leaving Dargis and her four younger sisters to run a multi-million-dollar operation while dealing with their grievous loss. The lineups after her presentations are testament to her openness and positive attitude. "Life is exactly as you make it" is her motto.

### LET'S TALK

"I'd say 99 per cent of people want to share their story—whether it's an experience or just to say they recognize that it could happen to them and they want to be pro-active," she says.

"I remember one farmer who said he was going to skip my presentation because 'What could this young lady possibly say that I don't already know?' He said he was really glad he stayed. It was just before Christmas and he told me, 'When I go home, we're going to sit down at the kitchen table and have that conversation about our future and what we need to do going forward.'"

That response is exactly why Dargis spends so much time on the road talking about feelings that most people wall away in-

side themselves.

"It all comes down to communication, communication, communication. If something is going wrong, let's talk about it."

### OPEN TO CHANGE

And people do want to talk, she says. She didn't believe that at first, but hundreds of those brief but deeply personal conversations with total strangers have convinced her people actually want to talk about buried feelings.

They're just looking for a way to begin, Dargis

says, and sharing her story somehow gives them permission to do that.

People are also open to change, she adds.

For example, Dargis always advises parents to tell their kids what is in their will.

"The initial reaction is always, 'Why would I do that? They'll find out what's in it when I'm dead,'" she says. "Then I talk about how it will be read, that a will is really your last testament of love, and there are likely to be issues.

"I tell them that if the kids hear it from you and understand your reasons, then they won't turn on each other after you're gone. When you put it like that, it really strikes them as something they should do."

### POSITIVE RESPONSE

She gets an equally positive response about putting family ahead of work when she tells the story of how that fatal plane crash came after her parents decided to take time off during silage season for a family event.

"Normally it's nose-to-grindstone during silage time, but my parents decided we'd have fun that weekend," she says. "I ask people to think about that. How often as farmers do we fail to pay attention to life around us? If we miss out on friends and family, what are we doing here? What are we living for?"

### POWERFUL ADVICE

Difficult conversations? Certainly. They're about life and being mortal. They're about change, whether that's about passing the reins or risky work

behavior. These aren't issues that get settled in one conversation, but things won't get better if you don't have that first difficult one.

So how do you do that? Dargis has some very simple, but powerful, advice.

"Just be genuine, just be yourself," she says. "If it comes from the heart, then it's irresistible. That's something I believe in—if what you're saying comes from the heart, then it will reach out and touch the other person's heart, too."



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# Canada's cattle market: What to watch

BY BRIAN PERILLAT

It's been a very positive and exciting year for the cattle industry with record high prices and profits. It's also important to remember that prices don't rise forever. Producers need to be aware of the key market drivers and what risks may lay ahead.

Cattle prices rose in 2014 through a combination of low cattle/beef supplies, strong demand, a weaker Canadian dollar and lower competing meat supplies. Lower feed costs have been supportive to calf prices as well.

Nothing is for certain in a market, but we do know it will take at least two to three years to start rebuilding cattle numbers and beef supplies. The Canadian dollar can be volatile, but it's expected to remain in a relatively lower trading range, and grain stocks also remain abundant for the time being. These factors should remain supportive to the market.

Demand is somewhat less certain, as it often depends on consumer preferences and choices of the day. That said, the strongest indicator of beef demand is wealth. Consumers with more money tend to spend more on beef.

An improving economy in North America, particularly the United States, has been good for beef demand, but growing wealth in developing countries creates great opportunities for the beef and cattle market. The growing middle class in China and in many parts of South

East Asia has increased the demand for beef significantly, and this strong global demand has supported prices in Canada.

Global economic growth has been increasing and is likely to continue, but not without turbulence. An economic slowdown or uncertainty in key markets will have a negative impact on beef prices and demand.

The other market factor mentioned was competing meats; mainly poultry and pork. In comparison to the other market factors, additional pork production and lower pork prices are showing the most immediate pressure on cattle prices. Larger breeding herd numbers, lower cases of porcine epidemic diarrhea virus (PEDv) and struggling pork exports have made North American pork supplies somewhat burdensome. Pork and beef prices have historically trended very closely together. The U.S. Choice cut-out price is almost 12 per cent higher than last year, while the U.S. pork cut-out price is 17.5 per cent lower than a year ago and is at its lowest level in five years.

In the current market, the spread between pork and beef prices are record large. Although the price spread between beef and pork may widen moderately due to these different supply and demand dynamics for beef versus hogs, the current record large spread will likely put a cap on beef prices unless there is a shift in the current hog and pork market.

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McCulloch (centre) with coaches Justin Higginbotham and Maury Demmans after Team Sask won Gold at Western Canada Games in 2011.

## McCulloch named National Softball team assistant coach

By JULIA DIMA  
Moosomin-raised Todd McCulloch is adding another gig to his coaching experience list as an assistant coach for Canada's National Junior Mens U19 Softball team heading to the International Softball Federation (ISF) World Championship in 2016. For each championship, Softball Canada interviews a pool of applications for coaching positions, and selects a head coach and two assistant coaches. The coaches scout, hold training camps, and select the group of softball players that will head to the World Championships, which will be held in Midland, Michigan in 2016.

McCulloch has applied to coach the national team three times now, and the third time was the charm for him. Coaching the national team has always been a goal.

"Anytime you can put the national team jersey on, it's certainly exciting," he says. "I grew up in Moosomin and started coaching there 13 years ago and it was kind of a goal I've had for myself to coach this team."

Finding out he was selected was a relief. "It's always tough waiting to get the call whether you get in or not, and it was certainly exciting when I got the call," he says.

McCulloch grew up playing softball in Moosomin and with the Fleming Jets, and in 2002 started his coaching career with the Fleming Junior Jets. McCulloch has had a long coaching career over the past 15 years, coaching at the provincial and national level in softball.

As a coach and assistant coach, McCulloch has coached both men's and women's teams in the province, winning medals at Western Canada Games and provincial and national championships. Currently, McCulloch is the assistant coach for the U18 women's Team Saskatchewan alongside head coach Andrea Wolf.

Wolf, also on the Softball Canada Board of Directors, found out McCulloch was selected weeks before he knew, and she believes he is the right pick to coach the team to Worlds.

Continued on page 20



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# Mowbray wins award for saving drowning children

BY JULIA DIMA

This past summer, Veronique Mowbray was home in her community of St. Lazare and picked up a job as a lifeguard at Birtle Riverside Park for the summer. She says most days were relaxing, and her work day usually included reminding kids about the rules at the beach when they tried to do something unsafe.

But one day in the early weeks of the job, Mowbray was reminded of what it really meant to be a lifeguard.

Mowbray had only just started her noon shift, and the beach was filled with people. A large group from a nearby reserve were having a large get together, and the pool was filled with 60 kids. The Valley Recreation Board, which oversees the park and pool, was not expecting a group that day. Mowbray, and her co-worker Travis Dreilich were the only two lifeguards on duty. Mowbray remembers trying to call the other staff but not finding anyone who could come in to help.

"It was a difficult day, trying to keep track of all the kids, making sure everyone was safe," Mowbray says.

It was about an hour into that shift that Mowbray spotted two young girls, both under four years of age standing near the edge of the water. She says that they looked unsure about entering the water, and did not have life jackets or water wings, so Mowbray kept her eye on them as they stepped into the water.



Photo courtesy of Brenda McKay

Veronique Mowbray at the pool at Birtle Riverside Park. Mowbray has been awarded a Lifesaving Society Rescue Award for saving two young girls from drowning at the outdoor pool during the summer of 2014.

"I saw their heads go under, so I jumped up, and I ran to the pool—it was crazy, I still had my sweatpants on and my hat flew off my head as I ran. I just grabbed these two little girls, and carried them out

of the pool," Mowbray says. "The second I saw their heads go under the surface, it was an instant reaction, I was up and running toward them. It was very nerve-

wracking, but I am glad I was able to get to them on time."

The young girls were breathless, and shocked, Mowbray recalls, as they looked for their parents on the beach.

"We found their parents way out of reach from where they were in the water. That was disappointing. I know I am a lifeguard and everything, but parents need to supervise their kids at the pool, as lifeguards, we have so many kids to look after, we especially did that day," Mowbray says.

"This was my first time having a serious procedure. Other than that, there are kids that try to be bad and you have to remind them of pool rules, but this was the only serious event I had at the pool," she adds.

For the rest of the summer, Mowbray says she was alert and prepared for the worst to happen. But things went smoothly for the rest of the summer.

Mowbray hopes that the event will raise awareness about the importance of supervising children and about the work that lifeguards do.

"There is not one minute of that job where you're slacking off. People think lifeguards just sort of sit there and do nothing, but that's not the case, we sit and make sure everyone is safe and everyone is having fun, and in good hands. If something does happen, you are responsible," she says.

Continued on page 22 ☞

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# New Arts Centre being planned for Redvers

BY JULIA DIMA

After the flood in the summer caused damage to their long-standing arts centre, Redvers is ready to pick up the pieces and start fresh.

The arts centre has been a part of the community since the late 40s, when it was built to serve as a community hall, hosting dances, weddings, and other events. In the mid 80s, the Redvers Arts Council was formed, and used the hall to provide a venue for dance, aerobics, art shows, concerts, movies, and more.

With a theatre upstairs offering movies on weekends from September to May and a concert venue all year, a large studio space downstairs for dancers, art shows, and hall rentals, the arts centre is an important part of people's lives in Redvers.

When the rain hit, about sixteen inches of water filled the basement.

"It was sad—looking at that, you know there's a lot of work ahead," says Gwen Arthur with the Arts Council.

The rain was only the start of the problems. Cleaning up the damage and having a structural engineer inspect the building revealed pre-existing problems in the basement of the building.

"We'd put in an application with PDAP, and at that point, they sent out an adjuster, but also an engineer to look at the damage, and when the engineer saw it and looked at some of the other structural

concerns with the building, they felt that the building needed to be closed to the public due to structural concerns," says Graham James with the arts council. "Due to the age of the building, due to some previous structural problems, in a way, the flooding made it worse, but it also revealed some of the other damage that was pre-existing. So, when the engineer was in there, they looked at the floor and looked at the water level, but also looked at some of those other structural problems, especially our south basement foundation wall, which was starting to push inward."

The building stayed closed, and another structural engineer was brought in to determine what the best course of action was moving forward. They were told it would be possible to repair the building to its condition before the flood, but it would still have structural problems that put the lifespan of the building at five to 10 years.

"The arts council decided we could fix the building, or we could decide not to fix it, and build a new building," James says. "We have chosen to do the new building project, mostly because we felt, and the engineers felt too, that we could do the repairs to bring the building up to what it was before the flood, but then you still have this old building, where other parts of the building may fail in 5-10 years. So, we decided instead of spending a



Arts council member Gwen Arthur outside the current Redvers arts centre which has been closed due to flood damage.

substantial amount of money for a short term fix, we'd rather fundraise for, well, a much more significant amount of money in order to have a long-term solution for a new theatre and multipurpose space."

The council held a public meeting in late January and found that overwhelmingly, people were in favor of building a new building for the community.

Continued on page 20

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# Redvers plans to build new arts centre

Continued from page 19

"It was pretty clear that people felt it was most sensible to not worry about fixing the old one, they wanted a long-term solution, and if a long-term solution meant a new building project, then that was something they felt was important to rally around for the community."

Since the building was closed to the public after the floods, there have been impacts on those who used the arts centre.

While the concert series the arts council puts on each year continues, venues have been churches, the school gym, and anywhere else that can host a show, instead of the theatre space.

The dance lessons that are hosted in the studio space serve about 140 dancers. The various lessons have had to be moved to different places around town as well, and the visual arts shows that were held in the basement have all been cancelled for the year.

As well, the movie theatre's absence is being noticed by those who made it part of their winter routine.

"The kids in particular are missing their Friday and Saturday night movie, a lot have been asking about it, and you do get a lot of comments from the community just telling you how important this place was to them and how much they miss it," Arthur says. "Another ripple effect is that the community has rallied behind us and want to see us go forward either with a new building or a replacement of some sort—they don't want to lose it, it's too much of a value to the community."

Starting from scratch will mean a long uphill battle for the arts



Gwen Arthur shows where the south wall of the basement is beginning to crack and cave inwards.



When 16 inches of water filled the basement dance studio, it caused extensive damage, and revealed pre-existing rotting and damage underneath the floor of the building.

council to get the project going. A building committee and fundraising committee have been formed, and discussions have begun for potential locations and building plans. The new building may take the place of the old building, which will likely have to be demolished, or it will move to a new spot. In terms of building, James, who is on the building committee, says they want to have the new building able to provide the same services, with a bit more space.

Arthur says one big addition she'd like to see is a full kitchen to expand the possible uses of the centre to include dinner theatre and hosting meals.

"We've all been in agreement that we want nothing less than what we've had. Certainly, we would like maybe a little bit more space, upgrades to the bathrooms and dressing rooms, better

wheelchair accessibility. And we have a great need for a kitchen . . . We've had a dry kitchen so we can serve coffee and cookies, but we can't have a large meal, or bring in a dinner theatre. That would be the biggest addition we'd like to put to a new building," she says.

At this point in the project, there are no established building plans, or costs, but like many new community halls, the council is estimating the price could be in the \$2 million range.

"There will be community fundraising, grants, and hopefully some corporate sponsorship as well," James says. "It's kind of a catch-22, it's hard to do much serious fundraising without a plan, and it's hard to get too far into a plan without knowing what money you have behind you."

Arthur says the potential cost for the new project is daunting at

this point.

"I feel nervous—it's hard to wrap my head around how we will raise \$2 million . . . We will apply for as many grants as we can, and approach corporations for sponsorship, and I know there's support for cultural endeavors through the province. We know the Town and RM are supportive, and will back us, though we don't know to what extent," she says.

Despite the daunting plans ahead, both Arthur and James feel optimistic.

"I think the drive behind it right now is the overwhelming loss that everybody feels and how much they want to see this place back again," Arthur says. "I think there is still lots of energy, people are anxious to see it go forward, and I'm hoping that

energy stays with us for the next few years, because I'm sure we'll need it."

James agrees, saying he is optimistic that the community feels an arts centre is a worthwhile project.

"I think for a lot of people, it's hard to imagine not having that—we're missing that now, but if we never got it back again, it would be quite a blow to the things we want in our lifestyle in Redvers and area," he says. "We think what we're doing is important. There is more to small towns than the sports angle—we support the rink and everything like that, my kids play hockey here, but we'd like to have other entertainment too, and show that arts and culture isn't something that just happens in the city."

# McCulloch named National Softball team assistant coach

Continued from page 17

"He has a real good brain for the strategy of the game, he almost sees plays happening two or three plays early. He's always thinking ahead of what could happen out on the diamond," Wolf says. "He's great at scouting, really good at analyzing players and where they fit into their positions, and helping them fix things in terms of their weaknesses. With the hitters, he's really good at analyzing what they need to work on and helping them fix that. I think he will bring to the team not only that knowledge of the strategy and knowledge in picking the right players for the team, but his knowledge of pitching and hitting definitely will be a strong point."

McCulloch is a CANpitch Master Pitching Instructor and was certified as a Master Learning Facilitator last year.

"There is a group of pitching coaches from all over Canada, and through training and seminars I became a master pitching instructor, so now for the province, I'm the guy that instructs other pitching coaches in the province involved in CAN-Pitch," McCulloch explains.

"When I was selected as head coach for Team Saskatchewan, it was kind of a no-brainer to select Todd for the pitching and hitting coach of our program," Wolf says. "Unfortunately, if the Team Canada duties conflict with Team Saskatchewan, he may have to step down from that, which would not be good for our team, but I think Todd

would still stay involved (with Team Saskatchewan) as much as he could."

McCulloch says along with coaching Team Canada for Worlds, he has another commitment set in stone—his daughter's U8 ball team.

"Then I will have to see what else I can fit in my schedule. I know I will be at the ball park regardless every day," he says. "I'm lucky I have a great family that loves being around the ball park. My wife loves coming when I'm scouting and sitting there and watching, so it's great. I get to spend time with my family at the ball park, it's not like I go away and they're not there with me."

McCulloch currently coaches part-time, but he wants to make coaching ball into a full-time career.

"It's something I've really enjoyed for a long time, and I do have a goal to do this as a full time career eventually. . . . I like all aspects of coaching, I like helping kids and working with the kids and seeing them get better and succeed," he says. "It's just something I think I've always enjoyed, and when I watch games, I watch them differently—I don't just watch what the hitter is doing, I watch the game as a whole, and the strategy really intrigues me all the time. It's something I have a passion for, and I really like the challenge for sure."

McCulloch will be coaching alongside assistant coach Jean-Yves Doucet, who has coached in Canada and France and is currently coaching in Quebec, and

Tom Doucette, who has coached the Junior National team before.

"Tom Doucette is a legend really, he's been inducted in the Canada Softball Hall of Fame, and he's been at the Junior Mens program for a while. He retired after 2012 Worlds, and I was a finalist

to work with him in 2012 in Argentina. I'm going to get the opportunity to work with him now, so I'm very excited," McCulloch says. "Jean Doucet, I've coached against for the last two years in a row, in U18 boys and U21 mens. I know very little about the coaches now,

other than their reputation, but I think they are going to be great to work with and full of knowledge and I am looking forward to the opportunity."

The coaching team was announced last week, so McCulloch says now begins the process of getting to

gether as coaches and planning for scouting and training camps to pick the team that will represent Canada in 2016.

"I love the competition, and the adrenaline will be an exciting part, and it's a new challenge which is exciting too," he says.

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# Cloutier traveling west by covered wagon

*Continued from front*

"I will always remember the first guys who went in advance to find me a place to stay—that was something. It's happened a couple of times after, people give more to me than I ask for . . . I keep believing nothing is free in life, so I still believe I will pay it back some way. In BC, I want to start a country music band, and have a show, and do the same trip I did with the band, and include the horses too, just to remember and to do something good and fun for everybody who helped me," Cloutier says.

On many occasions, Cloutier says he has more help than he ever imagined he would. Earlier in the trip, Cloutier let Eska run beside the wagon with the horses, as she was always eager to be pulling with her companions. She had an accident, and jumped in front of the wagon, ending up with an injury—it just happened that Cloutier's next stop was with a veterinarian, who did not charge to patch up the dog.

Heading into the cold Prairie winter, Cloutier was approached by someone from the Green Acres Hutterite Colony near Brandon, Manitoba, who was worried about the tread on one of Cloutier's wheels. He helped him with the tread, and even built a plastic windshield for the front of the wagon to help keep Cloutier warmer as he kept traveling.

Cloutier expected to be alone on his journey, carrying hay and oats for the horses, and a few big bags of canned food.

Cloutier gave the food away when he met a family in need, and stopped worrying about replenishing the hay and oats.

"To be honest with you, I learned how to trust life—because in the beginning, I had 12 bales of hay, and four bags of grain, and I crossed Ontario with that. After 450 kilometres, I realized I still had 12 bales of hay, and I had eight bags of grain—because people feed my horses, and would give me an extra bag here or there to take with me," he says. "This is my biggest surprise on the trip, I would never imagine people could be so generous—it looks like someone is working for me up there. In the winter, a lot of the time, I'd ask to stay one night, and the next morning, if it's 40 below, I hardly have to ask to stay a day later . . . It's hard to explain why things happen that way, but I don't ask myself now, I just do it. I will do my trip anyway, hard times or easy times, but now, I've got only easy times."

Cloutier says that sharing his journey with others has been the best thing for him. Not only is he met with generosity, but he is finding himself feeling better each day.

"After those things happened

and I started to share my story, I realized it was the best thing that could happen. I was always talking, I was always moving, and I was forgetting my ex-girlfriend. So . . . mentally, it's good for me, and I started to like sharing."

He set up a Facebook page to post updates of his trip and share the stories of those who were kind enough to open up their homes to him, and their stables to Bobby and Kelly. He says he was never a person to be so public, but he is enjoying it. At each stop, Cloutier tries to get everybody's contact information and keep everyone's name in a diary—he says he hopes that one day, he will find a way to pay everyone back for their help along the journey.

"I would not be able to do the trip by myself, I realize that now—I could do the trip, but I'd have to live out there too, and the way things are going, I realize I need people along the way," he says. "What I am trying to do right now is to share as much as I can, that's what I'm trying to do to pay people back. People will ask me to come to the church or nursing homes and schools to talk."

Cloutier says his biggest lesson along the way is to trust what life has to offer.

"With life, you have to think in your present moment—don't think about the past or future. I am so busy I do not have the time

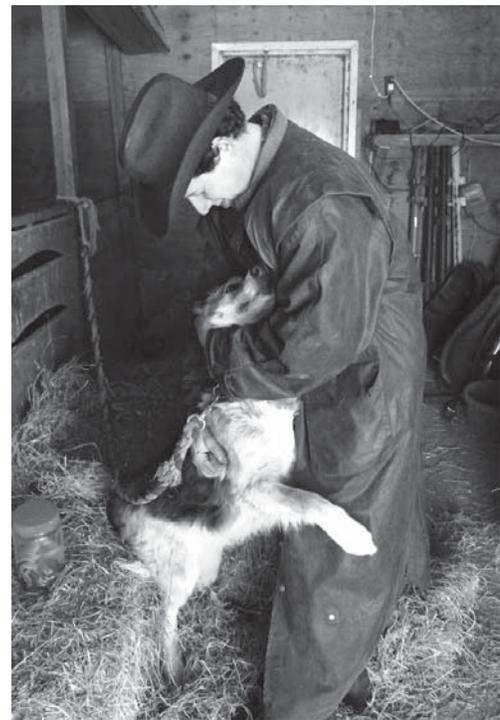
to think about the past or future. I realized that nothing is happening on the trip how I thought it would, I had so many plans and designs, but this isn't happening how I thought it would, and I can honestly say it's better . . . until I left, all the ways I was thinking about how the trip would be, it didn't happen that way, it happened differently. But, I just go with the whim. I don't fight against what happens," he says. "At the beginning, this was my dream. I didn't think about if I could go, or if I thought about everything that could happen . . . I'd never have done it, I wouldn't start."

Cloutier will be spending the next few months traveling across Saskatchewan, Alberta and into British Columbia, and is thinking about getting two more horses for the uphill in Alberta and British Columbia.

He plans to settle in the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia, and start a new life. Though he's faced some hardships, like his dog getting injured, or a horse getting sick, and the journey is long and cold through the Prairie winter, Cloutier says he has no regrets, and is only looking forward to what is down the road.

"In Ontario, a lot of people would tell me that I can't cross the Prairies in the winter, and would say 'you better go back home and think about it some more' they didn't realize—and I didn't talk about my private life at that time—but I didn't have any home. When I did that auction to sell everything, I made an ending in Quebec, and I don't regret any of it."

Cloutier's journey can be tracked on his Facebook page, 'Pierre Cloutier, Traversée du Canada à cheval.'



Left: Kelly and Bobby warming up in the stables at Sandra and Andy Robertson's farm near Carlyle, where Cloutier was staying last week. Right: Cloutier with his traveling companion, Eska.

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# Mowbray awarded Lifesaving Society Rescue Award

Continued from page 18

The summer went on after the incident, and in the late fall, Mowbray moved to Sylvan Lake to practice massage therapy in a chiropractic clinic. Just around Christmas, she was reminded of that day by an excited phone call from her mother in St. Lazare, Zeta Mowbray, telling her she had won a Lifesaving Society Rescue Award for her actions at Birtle Beach.

"My mom mailed me my letter saying I got this award, so it was pretty exciting, I was pretty blown away," Mowbray says. "I thought it was good that I handled the situation how you are supposed to, but I didn't think I'd ever be rewarded, I didn't expect to."

Zeta Mowbray says her daughter has never been the sort to brag. She says she did not know about the event until she learned her daughter had won an award.

"Veronique has done many things in her life that I am proud of that she never really ever bragged about—I'm pretty proud of her," Zeta says.

It was Brenda McKay, with the Valley Recreation District in Birtle, who wanted to recognize Mowbray for her actions.

"Since we are a partner with Red Cross and National Lifeguard we get an email from the Lifesaving



The outdoor non-conforming pool at Birtle Riverside Park.

Society about this award. They like to make sure anyone who did something honourable is mentioned, and I thought, well, I certainly know we have someone who did that," McKay says. "How could you not think of Veronique when they ask if anybody did something heroic?"

McKay says that although it was her first year as a lifeguard, Mowbray was a great staff member at the park.

"She's an amazing girl, she's a high achiever, just an all around super girl," McKay says. "I wanted

to nominate her because I know the keener she is, and I also know that saving two children at once is no small feat for anyone."

For McKay, like Mowbray, she hopes that the event, and the reward, reminds people of the importance of being safe at the pool.

"Parents today think because there's a lifeguard, they don't need to be watching," McKay says. "It's nice to be able to recognize her for saving someone, but it's not nice to be in that situation in the first place."

Mowbray will officially be given the award tomorrow at the Government House in Winnipeg. Mowbray unfortunately cannot

make it in person, so McKay will be accepting the award for her.

"It's too bad that I can't attend," Mowbray just

"But I feel pretty proud and happy and I am just really glad those kids are safe. That's what it's about, keeping people safe."

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# New owner at Happy Nun Cafe in Forget

Continued from page 3

"I came and saw it and I thought, 'Wow this is perfect for me.' If I ever thought of something I wanted it was something like this—the fact that it existed, and just that everything kind of felt right and came into place," she says.

Food was always a passion for Vinge, though she didn't always know it.

"In our family, food's always been really important to us, I guess you could call us 'foodies', we went out to eat a lot, and we always talked about food," Vinge says. "My grandma was a wonderful cook, so I started out at a young age in the kitchen with her, and I really got an appreciation for food and making things from scratch. I would say that's probably where my love for food came from."

After high school in Alberta, Vinge enrolled in a journalism program before changing course and joining the interior design program at NAIT (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology).

While studying at NAIT, Vinge read an article about the culinary program at the school, and it sparked her interest in cooking.

"My parents thought I was crazy, but the first day sitting in orientation, I finally knew that this was what I was supposed to do," she says.

After finishing the culinary program, Vinge spent six months in Finland, where Riddell was playing hockey, working in a restaurant. Afterwards, they returned to Saskatchewan, where Riddell started teaching in Watota, and Vinge moved to Regina, where she continued to pursue her passion for food. She worked at the Willow on Wascana for two-and-a-half years, and between her full-time job there, Vinge, and a fellow chef Ashley Schmalenberg started The Supper Society—Regina's first pop-up restaurant. Vinge and Schmalenberg would rent a space—like a church basement or the Regina Floral Conservatory—and set up a restaurant experience from scratch, making gourmet dinners with locally sourced ingredients, and using the long-table dining method.

"Everybody sits at one big table, you come in and there's no separate tables everywhere, we had one long table set up, so people that didn't know each other were sitting by each other, so that was really great," she says. "And then the food that we served, the first course, the second course, they were sharing courses, so we set it out in the middle of the table, so everybody had to pass it down the table and they had to talk to each other—so, really, the food was kind of the joining force."

The suppers were often an exciting challenge, working in spaces with limited resources, including some venues that did not have ovens on site. Vinge said she enjoyed the challenge, and plans to bring some aspects of the Supper Society style of dining to the nun, hosting long-table dinners with unique cuisines.

Vinge was working at The Willow full time when she heard about the Happy Nun being up for sale. It was Remembrance Day last year when everything got started. Vinge had spent some time looking at the advertisement for the restaurant, and exclaiming to her roommate how beautiful the place was.

"My roommate and I both had the day off because it was Remembrance Day and you seldom get a holiday off as a cook, so the fact that I had that day off was a huge thing, I saw it, and I just kept looking at it online, and I just kept saying (to my roommate) 'oh my gosh, you have to see this.' And she said 'well, call the real estate agent.' I said, 'Well, I don't know, that's crazy.' Anyway, she dialed the number on my phone and I ended up talking to Ray (Boutin), and I asked 'Is there any chance, I know it's really last minute, but could you meet us there?' and he said, 'yes, see you at two.'"

She and her roommate hopped into the car and were on the road to Forget.

"I walked in here, and it's completely my style and everything here has so much history, and they've just put so much thought, love and care into everything, and you can see that. And just talking to (Shannon and Don), it just felt right, and I felt like... I had been kind of preparing for this moment my whole life—I know that sounds kind of corny, but I just felt like this is what I'm supposed to do, this is where I'm supposed to be, and this is supposed to be our place. So I know that's crazy, the first day you walk into some place," Vinge says.

The Shakotkos felt the same way when they met Vinge that day.

"I loved her—I gave her a big hug right off the bat, and thought 'Oh, she looks like my kind of person.' I don't know, it's the same thing when you get a feeling for a place, you get a feeling for a person too," she says. "Someone else was interested, but they had been kind of, for months, unsure... But then Katie came in, and to have a person who was excited, it just seemed awesome—we picked her."

After the visit, Vinge did not take long to decide she wanted to buy the Happy Nun.

"I was kind of emotional on the way home. It was kind of weird, it was like a rollercoaster—I was really excited and happy and then I was like 'Oh, god, I need this place. I don't think I'll be the same if I don't get this place!' It just felt like this was what I had to do. I felt like I had to do everything in my power to make this happen for me and my family," she says. "Two days later, I got into contact with Ray, and I just said to him 'I'm in. I wrote a business plan in four days—that was kind of crazy. I would get home from work, and it was like I was in some kind of zone. I would just come home and furiously type. After I came up with this business plan, from there, we just kind of got the wheels turning. When

"My grandma was a wonderful cook, so I started out at a young age in the kitchen with her, and I really got an appreciation for food and making things from scratch. I would say that's probably where my love for food came from."

—Katie Vinge

you're really passionate about something and you want to make something happen, you will, you'll do everything in your power to make it happen, and that is what we did, on all fronts. My fiancée is a full-time teacher, he was running all over doing things, and my mom and dad too. It was that day that I knew this needed to happen for us."

Vinge says when she first told her parents she wanted to buy a restaurant, they were stunned like they were when she decided to enroll in culinary arts. It did not take long for them to jump behind her in support, however.

"They are so excited to get here and be a part of it—and move back to the area too. They really miss being around here, so this will be kind of a place for my family and friends. They bought the lot beside the Nun as well, so we're planning on building something—whether it's a home, or a market garden, or my mom is big into antiques, so they want to have a little antique shop or something like that here. They definitely want to be in the area," Vinge says.

Vinge connected with Sunrise Community Futures in Weyburn, which lends money to individuals wanting to open small businesses. Vinge submitted her business plan, which was discussed in a board meeting to determine if she would be approved for the loan. She remembers being on pins and needles waiting for the call from her business consultant, Teresa LaFoy, to hear what happened.

"She called me at 8:30 at night, and asked when they could make the first reservation—that they were going to take it on. I had to wait all day to hear, so that was kind of a rollercoaster of emotions too... Community Futures is a huge fan of this place, they love it here, they have meetings and Christmas parties here all the time. So, I mean, I had an idea, but you just never know, right? So, when Teresa called, I did the ugly cry for a while on the phone, because I was so relieved and so happy and then it all sunk in, and I was like, 'Oh, my gosh, this is crazy, our lives are going to change.' You know, for the better, though. It was a great feeling."

Vinge was preparing to open the Nun while still working at the Willow in Regina, commuting back-and-forth, and preparing to move out of her home in the city. She quit work on Valentine's Day, and moved down to the area afterwards.

"I always felt like this was home, so now that I know it's going to be permanent, it's just a great feeling," Vinge says. "I feel like I finally have a clear picture of what my future is going to be like. Before, it was just kind of in the cooking industry, you take it day by day, it's so unpredictable, and you never know what's going to happen. To know that I have this now, and I have a plan and something to work towards, I feel like I have it figured out, I sleep really well at night."

She began to find locally sourced suppliers for meats, cheese, and as much food as possible. In the summers, Vinge plans to plant a garden behind the Nun and both bake the weekly menu on what is in the garden, and pickle and preserve vegetables for the winter.

Like Shakotko, Vinge's food philosophy is about using local food and making things fresh. Like before, there will be a different menu each week based on what is fresh and available from the garden, with a few entrees, an appetizer, and dessert.

"I had heard about what they were doing here, and that they were using local products, and then I read more into it, and read some articles about them... and it couldn't be more perfect for my food philosophy. It just matches up perfectly. And the fact that I can walk in here and pretty much keep everything the same, and take over what they've already started is perfect," she says.

Along with the food philosophy, Vinge will also be able to carry along some of the other unique aspects of the Nun, like staff. A number of staff members would like to return and keep working at the restaurant.

Lovers of the restaurant can continue to expect live music on weekends as well. The Shakotkos will contin-

ue to book musical performances through their Ananda Arthouse non-profit.

"We know how much work it is to do the food end of things plus the tickets... booking the bands, the contracts, all the licensing... it's a lot, and we've been doing that for a long time, so we thought that was one way we could help Katie and Riley out was to keep booking the music for them," Shakotko says.

But there will be some changes to the Nun too. Instead of being open in the winters, Vinge plans to be open all summer.

"This area is so busy in the summer, with Moose Mountain there, the provincial parks and everything, all the camping. I just feel like, in the summertime, this is a great place to come to, and I feel like it will be so busy in the summer with tourists, and we have a beautiful deck on the front, we have to take advantage of that," she says.

The hours at the Nun will be a little bit different, being open for supper from Thursday to Saturday, and then open for brunch on Sunday as well.

Vinge also plans to introduce her own personal flair to the restaurant by offering catering, and cooking classes for those interested. As well, she'd like to host long-table dinners and supper society pop-up restaurants. As well, on the days the restaurant is not open, she plans to offer bookings for other community events and groups.

The Nun's official opening is this weekend, with the first supper on March 13, and a live band the next night.

Vinge says she is ready to open the doors of the Nun again for all those who missed it.

"I feel like I should be a lot more nervous about things, but it's hard, because I feel like this is what I'm supposed to be doing, and it just feels right and yeah, I think (opening day), I'll be nervous, obviously. Because a lot of friends and family, and people I don't know and people who have loved the Nun before are coming, and I want to live up to everyone's expectations, so there's a lot of pressure on me, but at the same time, I just love what I do so much, and I have such a passion for food and for this, and I almost feel like it can't not go well just because of those factors, and because my family will be here. I've got a ton of support. Don and Shannon are across the alley in case I need to run over there."

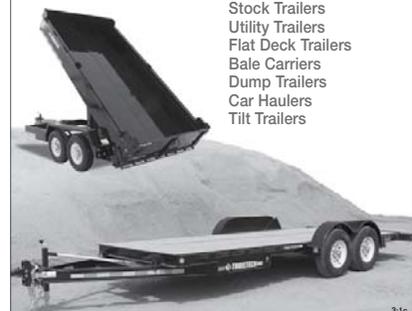
For the Shakotkos, passing the torch to Vinge is exciting.

"We love this place, but we are seriously getting pretty tired. And it seems like we keep cutting back and cutting back, when the Nun is—and she's told us—ready to fly and take off. So, it's so great to have it in the hands of someone young with great ideas, and new ideas, and to see this place being used more and to more of its potential. It's so exciting to have been part of making our dream and knowing that it was just the groundwork for someone else to be able to build their dream on as well, that's pretty spectacular," Shakotko says. "People keep asking me, 'Are you sad?' I am so not sad. I mean, I was very emotional and nostalgic... It's because we've seen this girl at her worst, and to be able to bring her up to something like this, you know, it has another dream, that's awesome. So, I was nostalgic, but not for one minute have I felt sad."

Vinge will be updating the Happy Nun's Facebook page every day, and new menus and schedules for music will be posted online as well.

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# Fundraisers being held to help Liam Barabonoff



Photo courtesy of Ardean Maki Ryan

Two-year-old Liam Barabonoff is fighting brain cancer.

BY JULIA DIMA

In his short time, two-year-old Liam Ryan Barabonoff has faced more adversity than most people do in a lifetime. But he and his family are not giving up.

At just seven months old, it was discovered that Liam had a large tumor on brain stem. The tumor was removed, but it was discovered that the tumor was an anaplastic ependymoma, a rare and aggressive form of brain cancer that spreads rapidly through brain tissue, making treatment challenging, and surgeries complicated.

The first tumor was removed and radiated, and Liam underwent chemotherapy. However, that tumor returned just after his first birthday, and Liam began radiation therapy again, since the tumor had grown in such a way that it was inoperable. The radiation therapy killed the tumor, and Liam was able to spend time being a kid with his big brother and sister, Ireland and Maddy.

A few weeks ago, the bad news was delivered for the third time—along with a regrowth on his brain stem, the tumor was now on Liam's frontal lobe. It is completely inoperable now, and radiation therapy, if it is effective, would destroy the healthy tissue and cause permanent brain damage. Liam's doctors have given him six to 12 months. The grim diagnosis is not the first the family has heard from doctors—when he went into surgery at eight-months, they were told he had a 10 per cent chance of surviving the surgery.

Now the family is starting the journey of searching for another miracle and doing whatever they can to defeat the diagnosis.

"Brittany is always on the computer just searching for any medical trial or treatment that has worked that can help Liam," says Ardean Maki Ryan, Brittany's sister. "Doctors are non-stop looking for something that may help Liam's case. . . . Right now, they are living on finding something that will be their miracle this time around."

The journey with cancer has changed the family's lives. Since Liam's first diagnosis and subsequent medical procedures happened while she was on maternity leave, Brittany was not able to return to work. Liam's father, Chad put work on the sidelines for the family, and with traveling to and from Calgary for medical treatments, it has taken a toll on the family.

They are preparing to sell their house in Regina, and while they initially were headed to Yorkton, the newest diagnosis for Liam has changed plans. Now they plan to move to White-wood, where Ardean, and other family are living. The family is originally from Tantalton.

"Things like this have put a lot of things into perspective for Chad and Britt. Having the nicest of things . . . is no longer the case. They just want the basics now—to be the closest family they can be," Ardean says.

For herself, watching her sister go through this has been difficult.

"It's really hard to put into words. As a mom myself, and being very close to my sister, it's just, really, the most devastating thing you could ever try to imagine happening," she says. "The biggest burden has been seeing their son have to go through all these medical tests—the CT scans, the surgeries, the IV pokes—little Liam has probably a dozen scars on his body, and he's only two years old."

Since the diagnosis, friends and family have offered support for the Ryan-Barabonoff family. A friend of Brittany's, Tracey Delorme, organized an online auction last week to start raising funds for the family. It's only one of many fundraisers that have popped up since the diagnosis across the region. Tonight in Weyburn, there will be a dinner held to raise money for Liam at Boston Pizza. On March 20, a live band will perform at the McLean bar with all proceeds going to Liam, and this weekend, at the Tantalton Rink, there will be a benefit supper and silent auction on March 14 to raise money for Liam.

Ardean organized this fundraiser.

"I had gone up to Brittany's when we got the bad news, and on my way home a couple of days later, I thought, 'What the heck? Our small community of Tantalton has put on fundraisers in the past, and have done fantastic with it.' Our small communities around here just love to give and support, and I thought, 'This is perfect. They will want to help and support.' And this is a way for the ones that aren't online or on Facebook to help. I felt something in the community would be well received, and it just started flying from there," she says. "There has been tons of support from the communities of Esterhazy,

Moosomin, Tantalton, Rocanville, Gerald, Yorkton, Canora—all over."

Tickets for the dinner are being sold in advance, and there are three sittings at 5, 6, and 7 p.m. The goal is to sell 100 tickets for each sitting, and already, around 200 tickets have been sold. Tickets for supper and dessert are \$20. There will also be a silent auction and 50/50 draw, and silent auction donations will be accepted up until this Saturday.

In addition to the fundraisers, a gofundme.com donation collection page was set up, and to date, over \$39,000 has been raised through that.

Seeing the support is what is giving the family hope, Ardean says.

"Your heart just swells, it really does—it's unbelievable. You just can't imagine this happening to your family, for one, but then when you have so much support, and people caring and reaching out—raising the money is, yes, the bonus of everything but feeling everybody's empathy and sympathy, and caring words, and generosity—it changes your life. It's like you have renewed faith in humanity," she says.

All the money raised will go toward the costs of medical treatments and transportation for the next step in the journey.

For now, the goal is to ensure Liam can have a happy life with his family.

"Liam is still a happy two-year-old running around—his sense of humor is just hilarious. He's potty training and talking in sentences, and just being a normal two-year-old little boy, he really doesn't know what is going on, which is a wonderful thing," Ardean says. "The family is just holding off and hoping to hear something. Symptoms for this can start appearing as early as one month. So, he's running around, playing, being a happy two year old but it really can change at any moment."

Ardean says what the family needs most is positivity and prayers.

"We were always brought up to look at the bright side . . . it's just made it so much more important for us to do more things as a family, and encourage other people to slow down a little bit and focus on what's important—your kids, and doing things with your kids, making memories. We're just there for each other," she says. "I don't think we ever said, you know, 'Why us? Why Liam?' Well, of course, those thoughts go through your head, but we knew we had to do what we had to do to get Liam and the family through it, and it was always just never give up, fight, fight, fight, and ask for tons of prayers."

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### Work starting in old McNoughton Building

Members of Moosomin's Heritage Committee started work recently on cleaning up the old wooden McNoughton building on Carleton Street in Moosomin. The building has been in disrepair and neglected for some time, and the heritage group is working to save it before it breaks down. They started pulling garbage and debris out of the building on Saturday afternoon.

The building is considered the oldest commercial building in Saskatchewan. It was set up as a general store when the rail came west into Saskatchewan.

Left: The upstairs of the building was filled with garbage, according to heritage committee members who were cleaning up. Here, they toss garbage from a window into trucks.

Right: Some unique antique items were discovered while cleaning the building.

Below: The downstairs portion of the building entirely cleaned out.



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# Snow Plane rally taking place March 22

**BY JULIA DIMA**  
 The Moosomin Regional Museum's annual snow plane rally will be taking place next weekend. Each year, anywhere from six to 15 classic snow planes converge just outside Moosomin, and visitors get a chance to experience what it was like traveling across the Prairies in the winter 60 years ago.

Snow planes were one of the early predecessors of the modern snowmobile, and were used for transportation in winters before roads were maintained and cleared through the winters. They transported children to school, people to town, and doctors to emergencies. After a bad winter storm, they were usually the only mode of transportation. They were typically operated with a propeller, and traveled over the snow on skis.

They were also frequently manufactured right where they were used—in Moosomin, Robert Fudge manufactured snow planes from the early 1930s to the 1950s, and founded Fudge Industries.

The Moosomin Regional Museum has in its collection a 1946 Fudge snow plane.

"How we got involved is when we bought our snow plane—because it was built in Moosomin, we restored it, and we had guys quite anxious to get one so we had it on display in our museum—we were invited to Ituna for a snow plane meet, and it was just in the middle of a field, there was three or four snow planes, and there was a few rides. It was minor compared to what we're doing now. They like ours because of the facility we've got, and we seem to be attracting a lot of snow planes from different areas," says Dennis Barry, who organizes the snow plane rally each year.

Barry says there are less snow planes across the prairies, and subsequently less snow plane meets or rallies to connect enthusiasts, so Moosomin's rally is a way to continue preserving the early history of the snow plane.

The rally attracts snow plane owners

A scene from last year's snow plane rally in Moosomin.

Khang Nguyen photo



from all over Saskatchewan, even as far north as Lloydminster on the Alberta border. They also come from Manitoba and North Dakota for the day to talk. This year, someone will be bringing down a bombardier—another early predecessor to snowmobiles—from La Ronge, where there used to be an annual snow plane meet.

The rally in Moosomin allows these enthusiasts to share their passion.

"They are so excited, they just love

meeting with all the snow plane guys and talking about their units, and projects they've got on the go, snow planes that may be for sale—there's always people looking to buy these and restore them," Barry says. "For anyone whose got a snow plane, it's a little like a disease—they just love to get together and reminisce about the snow planes, and show-and-tell. And of course, because people don't have a lot of opportunity to ride in such a thing, they are anxious to come out and see it too."

Barry says the day attracts anywhere from 200 to 500 guests, lining up for the chance to take a ride. This year, the rally will take place from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on March 22, just behind Maple Farm Equipment in Moosomin. All the rides in the snow planes are free, with any donations going toward the Moosomin Regional Museum. There will also be a concession inside at Maple Farm Equipment shop with chili, hot dogs, hamburgers, and hot drinks.

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<p><b>2013 Ford F-350</b></p>  <p>Local King Ranch 6.7L was \$46,900</p> <p>5T051A</p> <p><b>NDS \$43,500</b> \$334 b/w</p>	<p><b>2011 Ford Expedition</b></p>  <p>Limited 4WD 1 Owner was \$26,900</p> <p>5T059A</p> <p><b>NDS \$22,800</b> \$176 b/w</p>	<p><b>2010 Ford Mustang GT</b></p>  <p>1 Owner 33,000 kms Awesome was \$21,900</p> <p>5T065B</p> <p><b>NDS \$19,900</b> \$179 b/w</p>	<p><b>2013 Ford F-150</b></p>  <p>FX4 Luxury 6.2L was \$33,900</p> <p>5T052A</p> <p><b>NDS \$29,600</b> \$228 b/w</p>	<p><b>2012 Ford F-150</b></p>  <p>FX4 Luxury 5.0L was \$33,900</p> <p>4P297</p> <p><b>NDS \$29,500</b> \$227 b/w</p>
<p><b>2011 Ford F-150</b></p>  <p>FX4 Luxury 3.5L was \$29,900</p> <p>4T219A</p> <p><b>NDS \$26,800</b> \$206 b/w</p>	<p><b>2011 Chevrolet Aveo</b></p>  <p>Awesome on fuel! was \$9,900</p> <p>4P278A</p> <p><b>NDS \$7,500</b> \$59 b/w</p>	<p><b>2011 Ford Edge</b></p>  <p>Limited AWD 57,000 kms was \$26,900</p> <p>5T049B</p> <p><b>NDS \$24,500</b> \$189 b/w</p>	<p><b>2011 Ford F-150</b></p>  <p>As Traded FX4 5.0L was \$21,900</p> <p>4T229A</p> <p><b>NDS \$16,900</b> \$131 b/w</p>	<p><b>2007 Lincoln MKX</b></p>  <p>DVD AWD Fresh Trade was \$18,900</p> <p>4T288B</p> <p><b>NDS \$16,850</b> \$161 b/w</p>
<p><b>2008 Ford Edge</b></p>  <p>As Traded Limited was \$14,900</p> <p>4T260A</p> <p><b>NDS \$11,900</b> \$91 b/w</p>	<p><b>2009 Ford Edge</b></p>  <p>Heated Seats New Tires was \$17,900</p> <p>4T296A</p> <p><b>NDS \$15,800</b> \$143 b/w</p>	<p><b>2009 Ford F-150</b></p>  <p>XTR 6.5' Box 5.4L was \$19,900</p> <p>4T286A</p> <p><b>NDS \$17,700</b> \$160 b/w</p>	<p><b>2009 Ford Ranger</b></p>  <p>Only 34,000 kms Auto was \$13,900</p> <p>5P070</p> <p><b>NDS \$12,300</b> \$111 b/w</p>	<p><b>2010 Ford Taurus</b></p>  <p>SEL AWD Low Kms was \$17,900</p> <p>4P280A</p> <p><b>NDS \$15,300</b> \$138 b/w</p>
<p><b>2011 Ford F-250</b></p>  <p>No Charge Warranty was \$26,900</p> <p>5T046B</p> <p><b>NDS \$24,200</b> \$186 b/w</p>	<p><b>2011 Ford F-150</b></p>  <p>Low Kms XLT 4x4 was \$25,900</p> <p>5T073A</p> <p><b>NDS \$23,200</b> \$179 b/w</p>	<p><b>2010 Ford F-150</b></p>  <p>One Owner King Ranch was \$25,900</p> <p>5T053A</p> <p><b>NDS \$23,900</b> \$215 b/w</p>	<p><b>2012 Ford F-150 XTR</b></p>  <p>Max Trailer Tow was \$24,900</p> <p>4T283A</p> <p><b>NDS \$22,900</b> \$176 b/w</p>	<p><b>2007 Ford Freestar</b></p>  <p>Local 7 Passenger Sport was \$5,500</p> <p>4P282A</p> <p><b>NDS \$3,900</b> As Traded</p>
<p><b>2007 Ford F-150</b></p>  <p>Only 130,000 kms XTR was \$14,900</p> <p>4T212B</p> <p><b>NDS \$12,650</b> \$181 b/w</p>	<p><b>2005 Ford F-150</b></p>  <p>XLT 4x4 Super Cab was \$5,900</p> <p>4P273A</p> <p><b>NDS \$3,900</b> As Traded</p>	<h1>ACT NOW!</h1>		

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