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Plain & Valley

October 2022 • Volume 15 Number 10

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba



Left are, Cora and Cliff Halbach. The two live near Esterhazy and are coming to Rory Allen's tribute to Elvis show in Moosomin, in support of STARS Air Ambulance.

"STARS Air Ambulance saved my life"

Halbachs have a personal reason to support Elvis show in Moosomin

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Seven years ago Cora Halbach almost lost her life in a car accident from hitting a moose. She said if STARS Air Ambulance did not rescue her at the moment of the accident, then she would not be alive today. "A lot of people probably think after seven years why now that I'm telling my story, but we will never forget it," said Cora.

"STARS saved my life."

After the accident, Cora was taken to Regina General

Hospital from Yorkton. She was put on life-support for five days and was kept in the hospital for six weeks until she was healthy enough to leave.

"When they took me down the stairs afterwards in the hospital, I was pulled by this woman, I didn't know her, but I can remember her saying that I was very lucky," Cora said.

"I told her, you know I'm not lucky, I'm fortunate, and I still believe that today."

Her husband, Cliff Halbach, said he is forever grateful for STARS's help.

"It took a road ambulance an hour and a half to get to the scene at the time of the accident," said Cliff.

"There was no way she would've made it by road ambulance, no way. The only thing that I think saved her from being in the cold for that long, was her body going down to almost hypothermia."

The accident happened in February, 2015.

Cliff said they were driving on Highway 16 with their three grandchildren in the truck, and got in the accident about 20 minutes away from the city of Yorkton.

Continued on page 24



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Mosaic Esterhazy finishes second overall in International Mine Rescue Competition

Mosaic Esterhazy finished second overall out of 22 teams from around the world in the International Mine Rescue Competition, and finished first in Technician and second in First Aid. As well, the Diamonds in the Rough all-female Mine Rescue Team, including Kirstin Hanson of Nutrien Rocanville and Justine Fuchs of Mosaic Esterhazy, took second in Rope Rescue and Third in Theory and Technician. In back from left are Greg Sweet, Colleen Parkin-Kempton, Jared Cook, Skyler Hladun, and Jamie Smart-Sondergaard. In front are Clint Hollingshead, Aaron Polvi, Jeremy Lundgren, and Dylan Bachtold.

Mosaic Esterhazy second overall in international mine rescue competition

From September 11 to 16, members of the Esterhazy mine rescue team competed at the International Mine Rescue Competition that was held in Beckley, West Virginia.

Esterhazy finished second overall of the 22 teams at the competition. They competed against teams from Australia, Canada, Columbia, India, Poland, United States, Zambia, Finland and India.

A few days prior to the competition, the teams trained at MSHA (Mine Health and Safety Academy), where the competition was being held.

They competed in multiple events throughout the competition which included Mine Rescue Simulation and Skills, First Aid, Firefighting, Theory Exam, Rope Rescue and the Technician Event.

Mosaic Esterhazy had a very strong competition, placing second place in First Aid, and Clint Hollingshead won first place in the Technician event.

Following is an interview with Greg Sweet, one of the local team members:

How did Mosaic Esterhazy win the right to compete at the international competition?

It all started in 2019. This team won the Saskatchewan

Provincial Competition in 2019. That gave them an entry into the competition in Fernie, the National Western Region Mine Rescue Competition in 2019 and they won that one. With winning both of those competitions it gave them a place in the international competition that was supposed to happen in 2020. But it was postponed until this September.

This was the same team that won in 2019 but we were able to add a couple more people because of the way that they do their competitions—you can have a maximum number of 10 people at this competition. Our Saskatchewan group limit is seven.

Do the same 10 people compete in the different events or are there different folks for the different events?

Yes, we moved them around. For each event we picked who we thought was most comfortable and experienced for that part and that way we were really able to utilize the skills of everyone in the group.

Walk me through the different events in a mine rescue competition and what happens in each of them.

This one is a little bit different than what we see in a

Saskatchewan event or the Fernie competition. They had a two-level mock mine setup where we had to go in and deal with different scenarios. They had a fire set up, and they had to go in and fight that. Then they were simulating high gas ratings so they weren't able to breathe without a breathing apparatus, so it was unsafe conditions to move anybody around.

Continued on page 15

Steven Bonk, MLA
for Moosomin Constituency

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Taylor Beltz's elementary class at Plainview Colony School. A new school has been built on the colony.



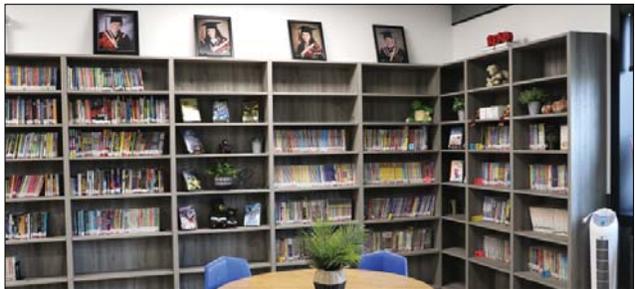
The school's library is filled with books for students and the community to enjoy.



The staff at Plainview Colony School. From left are Taylor Beltz, Shelley Warnica, principal Pam Jamieson, Jamie Martin, Crystal Chisholm, and Carly Hayward. Missing is Dana Poole.



Outside of Plainview Colony School.



In the school's library, there are photos of all the students who have graduated from Plainview Colony over the years.

Plainview Colony opens new school building

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
After almost five years of construction, Plainview Colony officially opened the school's new building in March of this year.

Principal Pam Jamieson said students and staff are excited to be learning in a new and bigger environment.

"I think this school gives us a chance to provide the students with more opportunities because we have the space to do so," said Jamieson.

"We have the ability to do more projects with the kids, even if we are such a multi-grade school because we have to be, we now have more access to resources.

"We have the space now with our gym for presentations. We hope to have people come in and speak with the kids about different goals in our division, like numeracy and literacy, education for sustainable development, mental health, integrating Indigenous cultures into our curriculum, those types of things."

Taylor Beltz, one of the teachers at the school, added that the new building makes a huge difference for the kids.

"I can honestly say it's life changing for these kids because now they have this space," Beltz said.

"They have a gym which is huge. Before if the weather was minus 30 we would have to go outside for physical activity. It's been life changing for the teachers too, because now we have all this space and more technology, and the kids have lots of opportunities."

Jamieson was asked what the difference is from a school in a colony compared to schools in the city.

"You feel that you're right immersed in the community here," Jamieson said.

"It's also cool because in our lives we feel that we're kind of a minority. We step into this culture every day and you have to be respectful of something that's different than ours."

The students at the school have their lessons in English and end the day with

schooling in German. "Another cool thing about our kids here is that they speak fluently in German," she said.

"I think that's why it's so important for them to have German school here, to teach that language so it never gets lost."

About 80 per cent of the school was built and designed by people from Plainview Colony.

Jamieson said students are very appreciative of the school's new building.

"We went for a walk the other day with the kids and they said the old school was old, but that they had great memories there," she said.

"The kids are really excited, I think they take pride in the school. We don't have a custodian here, the kids do the chores and on the weekend, the ladies will come to do a thorough clean."

Jamie Martin, who has been a teacher and librarian at Plainview Colony for 27 years, said working on the colony brings a sense of community.

"I love it here, it's like one big family. Everyone gets along, the parents are good here," Martin said.

"They're very nice people, you're not going to find nicer people than the Hutterites. I've waited so long for this school, my mom was principal here for 30 years as well."

The building for the school prior to this one had about four classrooms. Martin said having this new building benefits the community tremendously.

"The big thing is hopefully they respect this building, that they look after it and keep it clean because it is beautiful," said Martin.

"People also come use the building for other stuff. They had a funeral here in the gym last week. As far as our library too, we likely have the biggest library of any other Hutterite colony."

Jamieson said Plainview Colony plans on having an opening with the community to celebrate the new building in the near future.

Roy Allen

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Dylan Southam, in the role of Bruce, on stage with the students.



Mrs. Wormwood and Rudolpho as ballroom dance partners.

Virден Theatre Productions putting on Matilda the Musical in November

Virден Theatre Productions can hardly wait for its exciting return to the Auditorium Theatre stage with the blockbuster show *Matilda the Musical*.

This show is a really clever, imaginative, new production, and it has won multiple awards including Best New Musical.

We began plans for this production in 2020, and the cast has changed slightly—including all the young talent becoming two years older!

The characters of *Matilda* are so very colourful, and we have our actors brilliantly cast to entertain you. The set, choreography, and magic of *Matilda* are offering us endless exciting, theatrical challenges and possibilities.

Souris talent, Nyah Perkin, will play the title role of *Matilda*. Nyah is an experienced performer fresh from a summer of performing professionally at Winnipeg's Rainbow Stage. She has appeared in a Hallmark movie and plays a lead role in a soon-to-be-released feature film.

The memorable villain in *Matilda* is Miss Agatha Trunchbull, and local actor Todd Plaisier is guaranteed to bring the house down in his performance as the school's headmistress.

Susan Martens, a golden-voiced private music teacher from Virден, is perfectly suited to her role as the sweet and supportive teacher Miss Honey.

Matilda's horrible parents, the Wormwoods, will be played by audience favourite Dean Munchinsky (who is also sharing directing duties) and Brandon rock star Mariah Phillips.

Veteran actress Karen Chrest of Brandon will play Mrs. Phelps, the quirky librarian and VCI's Zander Janzen will make his VIP debut as *Matilda's* lazy brother, Michael Wormwood.

One of the most exciting components of *Matilda*, and absolutely the reason it was chosen as our next show, is



A shot of Trunchbull in action.

the ensemble of students.

Our 2022 student ensemble is chock full of incredibly talented local youth.

Dylan Southam will be truly amazing in the role of Bruce, and Charley Dunning will shine as *Matilda's* best friend Lavender. Fourteen of Westman's finest teens fill out this exceptional group—Laura Archambault, Keira

Peters, Daelyn Fefchak, Evan Terin, Sam Andrew, Sarah Keown, Darien Dunning, Cody Thiessen, Jamie Thiessen, Avrin Krieser, Piper Sisson, Paige Rampton, Tristan Plaisier, Reed Plaisier, and Scotlyn Chadney.

Virден Theatre Productions is also fortunate to have incredible professional level performers in the dynamic (and some hilarious) supporting roles of *Matilda*—Darrell Corbel as the doctor, Greg Kirk (Santa from Elf) as the children's entertainer, Rob Lovatt as the escapologist, Chloe Sheane as the acrobat, Joey Simms (Buddy the Elf) as Rudolpho, and George Baker as Sergei.

To top it off, we have some amazing adults rounding out our cast (and supporting all the youth)—Marlin-Peters, Wendy Bancescu, Mark Keown, Mike Thiessen, Adelle Gervin, Scott Perkin, and Cheryl Sisson.

Our biggest challenge this fall is finding a way to make this show, with its budget of over \$30,000, happen.

Each year we rely on our faithful volunteer crew, local sponsors, and ticket sales to fund performance rights, facility rental, technology, sets, and costumes.

This year poses an extra challenge as our headset microphones have come to the end of their lives, and somehow we need to raise an extra \$20,000 to replace them.

We are certainly hoping our community supports us, as we know how our productions invigorate our community and make it a destination for audience members from all over. We have something incredibly unique to be proud of.

Tickets for *Matilda* went on sale September 10 for five shows on November 9, 10, and 12 at 7:30 pm and November 12 and 13 at 1:30 pm.

Go to the website <https://www.eventbrite.ca/cc/matilda-the-musical-viden-theatre-productions-1099319> for tickets and show details.

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Saskatchewan

Petreny honored with major veterinary award

BY KARA KINNA

When Dr. Lerelei Petreny from Moosomin attended the banquet at the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association fall conference in Saskatoon on Saturday, September 10, she had no idea that the top veterinary award in the province was going to be awarded to her that night.

She had been asked by Breanne Barber, who works at Valleyflats Vet Clinic in Moosomin, to come to the banquet with her so that she wouldn't be alone.

It wasn't until the information on the recipient of the J.J. Murison Distinguished Veterinary Award was read out that she realized that she was the recipient.

"When you work with the people that I work with, everybody's so hard working, dedicated and smart, so I feel really flattered to be singled out in any way. I looked around that room, and up until they said my name, I didn't think that they were talking about me," says Petreny.

"The technician, Breanne from work, and my daughters conspired a little bit to get me there. Because you look around the room of veterinarians, and especially people of my generation, and I think everybody's the same. Everybody works long hours, volunteers for everything in their community and donates money back to their community. So it is really humbling to be singled out at all—especially in that crowd of people."

The J.J. Murison Distinguished Veterinarian Award is the highest level of recognition the SVMA can bestow on a member. The criteria for selection include service to the SVMA, the profession and the public as well as competency, personality and character.

"It's a meritorious service award, not only for contributions to the veterinary world but also to your community, and not just on the medical end of things but also for your service to the Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association," says Petreny. "It's called a Distinguished Veterinarian Award so it's quite an honour to be given it."

Petreny has been a veterinarian for 31 years. Her career started in Saskatoon and eventually led her to Moosomin where she ran the vet clinic along with her husband Joe for many years.

"I worked in Saskatoon for a couple of years as a student between second and third and third and fourth year at Central Animal Hospital there, and then I worked for that clinic for a year after I graduated," she says. "Then Joe and I got married in 1991 right after we graduated and he wanted to own a practice. We had looked at a few in Saskatchewan and this one in Moosomin was for sale at that time. So on January 1, 1992 we bought it. I moved out for my first calving season right after that. We owned it until 2010 when Joe got cancer and then I've worked for Rebecca (Gervin, the current owner of the clinic) since then."

Petreny says she and her husband always worked hard and didn't give a second thought to doing as much as they could.

"When we had the practice, there were times that we had other vets working for us and there were times we didn't. So there were two-year stretches where Joe and I were on call all of the time, or we had one day off in a two year period. It's just what the community needed from you, so that's what you did."

"When work has let up for us a little bit, when we had other help or when we sold it, I tried to volunteer. I was Treasurer of the Skating Club and Treasurer and President of the Gymnastics Club. Wherever I could, I tried to help out. I certainly tried to dedicate that time to my kids a bit more. They were competitive skaters so that took up a fair bit of my time too, but I just tried to give back where I could give back. I served on the SVMA Council for four years and was on several committees there too. Being on council, that's a once a month trip to Saskatoon for meetings and that takes up time."

Why did she do it all?

"You just do," she says. "My dad was



Dr. Lorelei Petreny, left, receiving a painting as part of the award for winning the J.J. Murison Distinguished Veterinarian Award in Saskatoon on September 10. Beside her is Breanne Barber who nominated her for the award.

the vice-principal of a high school in Wadena where I grew up and you know what teachers are like. My brother is a teacher and my sister-in-law is a teacher. They coach everything and they're not at school from 9 am to 3 pm, they are there from 9 am to 9 pm. That's just the work ethic that I grew up with. You help where you can help and you just do what your community needs you to do. I guess that I never thought twice about it—if you see a need, you fill a need."

Petreny says it was an honor for her to receive the award. She was nominated by Breanne Barber of Valleyflats Veterinary Clinic.

"When I look back at some of the other people who have received that award, people that had been given that award taught me at school. It's humbling to be given it, really, and to even be considered for it."

Petreny says she has always truly loved the world of veterinary medicine, but right now it's facing a major issue.

"The veterinary world is really facing a crisis in terms of shortages, just like all medicine is," she says. "We're all trying to pressure our government to fund more seats at the Veterinary College in Saskatoon so that there are more veterinary graduates per year to fill that need. So if anybody is talking to their MLA, the Minister of Education or their Minister of Agriculture, we're really on the cusp of a crisis and we just need more people."

"It's technicians as well as veterinarians. I think that there are enough people around here that would entirely fund their own education without any help from the government if they would just provide the spaces for them to go to school. We just need more people."

Following is the nomination letter written by Breanne Barber:

As I write this nomination letter I am full of emotion but the overall one I am feeling is sad. I am sad because I have only had the last three years to get to know this amazing veterinarian but in the last three years she has been an excellent coworker, surgeon and friend. She has spent the last

31 years learning, loving and growing in her profession.

The last three years I have learned so much from her and how you can thrive in veterinary medicine all while maintaining a work-life balance.

She has been an employee and an employer; she has been a wife, a widow and mother. She has been a person I can rely on to help me work through life struggles, work problems and also be that friend that I need when I need to vent.

She has been an inspiration to me and many others, I look forward to seeing her retire and enjoying some time to travel and spend time with her family.

Lorelei has volunteered her time on SVMA council and other committees in her early years as a veterinarian. She has worked in small animal clinics, mixed animal and has even spent some time in the USA.

She eventually settled into the Moosomin area and decided with her husband Joe (also a veterinarian) that this is where they would build their home. Lorelei and Joe successfully ran South East Veterinary Services for many years.

Creating a work-life balance was important to her and her family because raising three beautiful girls who were interested in figure skating and other activities would involve a lot of travel!

She continued to work and be an amazing mother and wife, all while owning a business through some tough times in her life. She lost her husband far too early in his life to cancer and continued to raise three girls while still being a veterinarian and practice owner.

Eventually, Lorelei sold the practice but continued to work for the new practice owner, coming in twice a week to do small animal surgeries.

Lorelei is appreciated and praised by all the people who have worked with her over the years and continue to seek advice from her because they value her opinion.

She is still requested by local residents for their pet's routine surgical procedures. She has left a lasting impression in the community, the residents, the animals and anyone who has worked with her.

She will be greatly missed by the community as a veterinarian but with her elegance and wisdom that she has bestowed to her fellow employees her knowledge will carry on in all of us.

Wallace-Woodworth Employment Opportunity

PUBLIC WORKS SUPERINTENDENT

The Rural Municipality of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a motivated individual for the position of **Public Works Superintendent**.

The Public Works Superintendent assists the Chief Administrative Officer in overseeing the R.M.'s Transportation Department, along with urban transportation sidewalks and urban road networks. The candidate will also be responsible for overseeing sanitation & landfill management; and operation & management of the R.M. Equipment Fleet.

The successful candidate should possess a high level of maturity; proven management and leadership skills in developing an effective and efficient team; excellent communicator; strong analytical problem solving and conflict management skills. Leads by example. Shows respect and support for others & the goals that are set out from management. Exhibits positive and professional attitude to keep building a strong team.

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS:

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- Knowledge of motor graders, loaders, and other equipment is important (ability to operate and train on this equipment would be considered an asset)
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COMPENSATION

The Municipality offers an excellent benefits package; a competitive salary commensurate to previous experience and qualifications; and participates in the Municipal Employee Benefits Plan & Association of Manitoba Municipalities' Manitoba Blue Cross Group Health Plan.

A more comprehensive job description is available upon request. Interested candidates should submit a resume with three references by:

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Mail/Drop-off: R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth Municipal Office

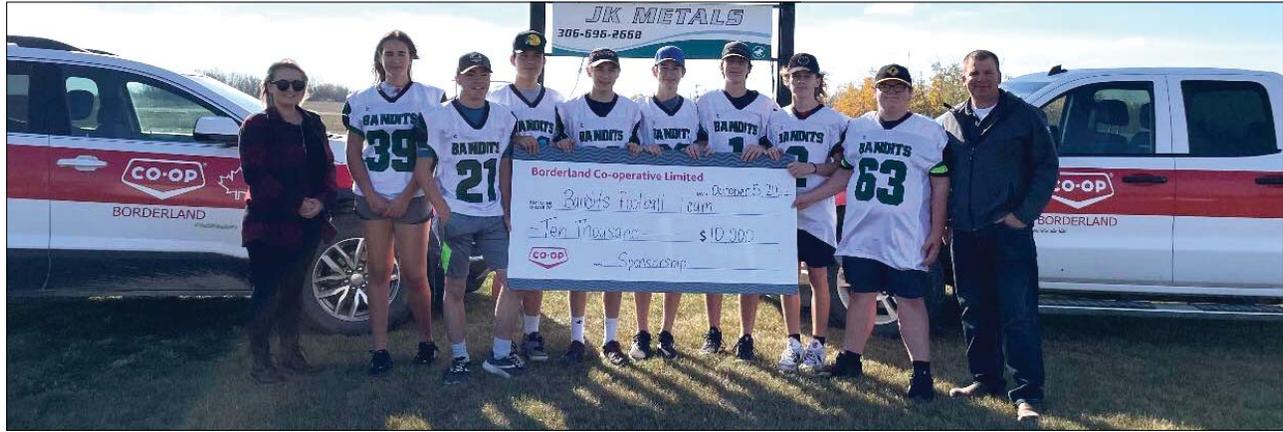
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Applications will be accepted until filled. This position is not included in a Collective Agreement. The selection process for this competition will include testing and panel interviews. This posting will remain open until a suitable candidate is located. This position commences as soon as possible.

3-2c

Contact us at 306-435-2445

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\$10,000 donation to Broadview Bandits

Borderland Co-op made a \$10,000 donation recently to the Broadview Bandits football team. The donation will go toward new lights on the football field, so that the team is able to have late practices and home night games, making it easier for locals to attend.



Kim Poole photo

The Rocanville Tigers and Whitewood Orioles in action last season.

Sask East Hockey League adds two more teams
 Ten teams in total make up SEHL

BY KARA KINNA

The Sask East Hockey League will consist of 10 teams this season, with the addition of two more teams to the league last week—the Swan Valley Axemen and the Grandview Comets, formerly of Manitoba's North Central Hockey League, which is taking a one-year hiatus.

The addition of the Axemen and the Comets comes on the heels of an announcement by the Wapella Blackhawks that they would be forming a team this year and also playing in the SEHL, after decades without a senior hockey team.

The SEHL will play on 18-game schedule, beginning in early November. Teams will play a home and home against each of the other nine teams for the regular season schedule.

There will be two divisions formed for playoff purposes and the first place team in each division will play the fourth place team in a best-of-three first round series while second plays third. The fifth place team in each division will not make the playoffs. Division finals will also be a best of three and the league championship series for the Emile Balogh Trophy will be a best of five.

The 10 teams that make of the SEHL this year are the Wapella Blackhawks, Rocanville Tigers, Whitewood Orioles, Langenburg Warriors, and Ituna Avalanche in the South Division, and the Swan Valley Axemen, Grandview Comets, Cote Selects, Canora Cobras, and Theodore Buffalos in the North Division.

The league schedule will be finalized in early October.

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All-female mine rescue team: Diamonds in the Rough do well at IMRC

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK AND SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

Justine Fuchs, from Mosaic Esterhazy Mine Rescue, and Kirstin Hanson of the Nutrien Rocanville Mine Rescue, attended the International Mine rescue Competition as members of the Diamonds in the Rough mine rescue team.

"This is an all-female team that is made up of women from all across Canada, from various mines.

Diamonds in the Rough received second place in Rope Rescue and third place in Theory, fourth in Firefighting and sixth overall out of 22 teams from around the world.

Hanson said the Diamonds in the Rough are a very different Mine Rescue Team than most, which come from a single mine.

"Most mine rescue teams compete together quite often and they practice for say 3-4 weeks prior to a competition so they're in sync going into it. As for the Diamonds, we all met a week prior to competition. We had some Ontario women, a woman from New Brunswick, a woman from B.C., a Manitoban, myself, and Justine. We had to meld quite quickly and we were lucky actually the whole group of us got along amazingly. It was hard leaving because you become so close that short time you are living together, practicing together."

Members of the Diamonds in the Rough team come from a wide variety of mining backgrounds.

"I am with Rocanville, Nutrien and Justine is with Mosaic. The other girls, there were two of the girls on the same team in Ontario, and the rest were all from different mines. We had girls from nickel, gold, potash, and diamond mines."

Members of Diamonds in the Rough have different levels of experience.

"A couple of girls on the team had never actually competed before, but we all had the same base of training," says Hamilton. "Ontario had some slight differences, but generally it's all fairly similar. Our captain had quite a few competitions she had partaken in. Our vice had taken part in a couple, but the rest of us only had one or two and then a couple didn't have any."

Hanson said it feels great to have done so well at the international competition.

"Oh, it's amazing. We got second in rope rescue, third in theory, fourth in firefighting, and sixth overall out of the 22 teams competing. It is an amazing feeling. You go in and you're not sure what to expect because you are competing against the world's best.

"These are male dominated teams we were competing against. A couple of the teams had some women on them, but they were mostly men and we were an all female team that had just met. You're very intimidated going into it. We practiced hard and we felt confident, but it all depends on your opponents as well.

"It was amazing, I can't even describe the feeling of how well we did. After, every event we were just excited. We know we executed it as best as we could. It was an amazing team."



Diamonds in the Rough is an all-female team that is made up of women from all across Canada, from various mines.

She said there are many different events the teams compete in.

"You have a mine rescue problem which imitates usually a fire or a lost employee. There's always lost employees where you have to go find where they are. There could be a fire, there could be smoke, there could be dangerous gases.

"For this particular event, there were a couple employees in a refuge station on one level with gases. We had to ventilate the mine so we could clear it out and walk these individuals out. On the second level there was actually smoke and they had a smoke machine so you couldn't see anything and then there was another person up there so we had to vent it out and rescue that employee. It's a really great simulation for real life events."

She said there is serious competition at the event, and the organizers put a lot of effort into making the mine problems as realistic as possible.

"There is a lot of money put into it. A lot of time, different groups and organizations put a lot of time organizing it and putting it on. It was amazing just how real each event was. There were people watching everywhere. People on the teams would also go and watch each event. It was throughout three or four days of competition. You only did a couple of the problems per day."

She said the competition was demanding.

"It is hard work. You're exhausted when you are done because it is very physically demanding, you are wearing your air packs, you have a 40 pound backpack on supplying you with your oxygen. You are very active, but I love it. I feel that is probably the general consensus. Absolutely everyone loves it, and it's very important, and that's why we are all there."

One part of the competition that was new for Hanson was the Rope Rescue event.

"Rope rescue is for example an employee has fallen down the shaft. We actually send another employee down there in harness gear. During the event it was a person that fell three storeys so we had to send a lady to that level through a hole. Send the stretcher down to her and she was able to load the dummy onto the stretcher, tie the person onto the stretcher and then we had to hoist this person up three levels to where we were. So you hoist them up to our level, unhook that stretcher, send both save lives."

Hanson said that, while mining has traditionally been a male-dominated industry, that is changing.

"It is definitely a male dominated industry, but there are a lot more women coming into the mining industry. I noticed Nutrien just posted something about one job site that has a 60 per cent women crew. Diamonds in the Rough is kind of breaking down those barriers, showing it doesn't matter whether you are man or woman you can still do the job and still save lives."

She said she is grateful to have taken part in the mine rescue competition.

"It was an unreal experience and I personally feel now in the event of an emergency, I feel I am dialed in and able to just go in to do the job and make sure everyone gets home safe."

Continued on page 10

Daryl Harrison
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All-female mine rescue team: Diamonds in the Rough do well at IMRC

Continued from page 9

Justine Fuchs, from Mosaic Esterhazy Mine Rescue, explained how she became part of the all-female mine rescue team.

"I competed against Diamonds in the Rough at Saskatchewan Mining Association (SMA) in June," Fuchs said.

"Kari was there, she was a judge. It was brought to my attention that they were looking for new members. A friend of mine who was actually on the Mosaic team down in West Virginia said I should apply for the team.

"With what was going on in life I thought that I was too swamped and didn't really have time to fully dedicate myself. Then some time passed and Greg Sweet, our mine rescue manager at Mosaic, brought it to my attention again and then my fellow rescue members also said I have this opportunity to represent Mosaic in Diamonds in the Rough.

"I think it was in that moment where I thought that I need to take this opportunity for what it is and embrace it, and I'm really glad I did."

With the limited amount of time the group of women had to get to know each other and prepare for the competition, Fuchs said she is proud of how well the team did.

"We melded so well, which was awesome. We had everyone with different skill sets, we had women who haven't competed ever, many of us actually have under three years of experience with mine rescue," she said.

"We all had our specialties, we just brought together what we could and we just executed with the knowledge that we previously had and that was brought from our own jurisdictions."

Participating in the competition and working closely with other women across Canada made Fuchs learn things about herself as a mine rescue worker.

"This (competition) did show me that from what I do know and what I've been taught from my fellow mine rescue members, that I can do this, even though I may not feel prepared, I am," she said.

"With the tools and knowledge that I've already been taught, I just needed to have more faith in myself, which was actually a great eye opener because everyone was telling me to go for the experience and bring home some hardware. It was sort of funny in that regard."

She explained how she first got into mine rescue.

"I think there was one other woman that was involved (in the mine rescue team), and I didn't know if



Justine Fuchs of Mosaic Esterhazy and Kirstin Hanson of Nutrien Rocanville compete as part of the Diamonds in the Rough all-female team.

it was something I would be interested in," Fuchs said. "Then a few years ago Mosaic hosted this (event) where women could go and see what it was all about. Everything was set up at the Churchbridge rink (where local mine rescue competitions are held in a mock mine) and I just thought I would give it a try.

"From that point forward it's been amazing. I've learned so much at Mosaic. There's a couple other women, but generally speaking the guys are phenomenal. They have so much patience, they taught me everything and it turned out to be something I absolutely love.

"There have been more women working at the mine,

I feel it's constantly increasing over the last few years which is really good to see.

"We do have a few women in mine rescue, but I do think that from these experiences, more people will definitely see the potential they have to get involved, and that it's something they can do too."

She said it was great working with other women in the field.

"We're all just normal women, but especially the fact that we were from all different types of mines and from all over, we got to learn about so many different ways for doing things. It really opens up your perspective to what can be done."

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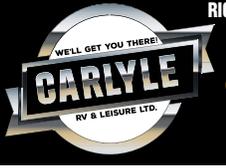
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Jared Cook competing with the Mosaic team in the Mine Relay event at the international mine rescue competition in West Virginia.



Mosaic Esterhazy in the tunnels for the firefighting event.

Mosaic Esterhazy second overall in international mine rescue competition

Continued from page 3

They had to go in and find a couple of miners, and once they found those people they had to ventilate the mine. Once they did that they got the all-clear that the air was good. They would check their exits to the mine to make sure that all of the air was good enough to bring the workers out of the mine. So they did that and then they go back to get the people and get them out.

Once they did that, they had to crawl up a ramp into the second level where they had it filled with fake smoke. The whole area was filled with smoke so they had to do a search and rescue looking for more people and more objects—in this case there was another worker staged up there and they had to find that person in the smoke and get him out into the fresh air. They were able to do that with a different kind of breathing apparatus.

In all of these events it's always the safety of the team first, then safety of the workers and then you deal with what's on hand, like is it a fire or bad air.

We had 75 minutes to do this one and sometimes you're under the clock—you have to be out of the mine before the time runs out—but in this case we were just able to run the clock out if we needed.

Are you judged by how quickly you can get the people out are how safe you were? How do they judge something like that?

All of the above. There are a lot of points and demerits for safety—making sure that you're always checking your surroundings, you're not putting yourself in danger of any kind, there's a lot of communication with your team members, and that you're not rushing through the mine, running or anything like that. They want to see you move at a good steady pace. They judge you on safety, how you deal with the situations in the mine, how you fight the fire, deal with the bad air, deal with bad ground and those different scenarios. Then there are points for first aid on the casualties like whether you're rough-handling or packaging them with care and always reassuring them. There are lots of points too for what we call an emergency centre. We have that team that is underground or in the mine but we also have a group of people that is in a command centre on surface or what we call a fresh air base, and those are the people giving the directives and getting information from the team and relaying that to make good, safe decisions on how we're going to deal with the situation.

What is the rope rescue event?

We went to the Beckley Fire Department, where they just built a brand-new fire hall in 2020. They had a three-storey tower setup and they simulated that a person had fallen down a few storeys.

We had to set up a rope rescue situation where we had to lower one of our members down through the opening, which was about two or three feet square roughly. So we lowered them down to the casualty and he would reassure them and do basic first aid. Then we had to lower a basket down for him to put that casualty into, get him strapped into the basket, and then we would haul him back up to the third floor from the first. Then we would haul our member back up to the third floor also.

What happens in the First Aid event and the firefighting event?

This one was different because they actu-

ally had mannequins there that were computerized which were really cool. We've never seen them before. One of them would track how you do your compressions for CPR. The other one could blink, it had a pulse and you could track its breathing. You had to get actual pulses and breathing rates. Then they had one other casualty there too that had something stuck in their eye, so you had to do first aid on that person too.

The fire part was also different for us because we're used to using fire extinguishers, but in this one they had to set up two hose lines and do an obstacle course. It was a different way than just using fire extinguishers for our competition.

What's the technician event?

The technician event is for one individual and they take our breathing apparatuses, and the committee will throw little bugs in it and little defects into the machine and then that person has to go in and find them. They also have to write a written test too. Clint was part of the overall team and he was our competitor in the technician event, which he won.

You came second in first aid and then Clint placed first in the technician event, and you came in second overall. How do you feel with that showing at an international competition?

It certainly is impressive, and I definitely knew that we had a great day, but you never know that end result until you finally see those scoresheets come out.

At any competition you love to hear your names being called and awards being handed out. It was good, we got our names called a couple of times there at the event, and once we got the overall results yesterday I was joking with the guys that I had to e-mail the committee back to make sure that I was reading it correctly. There are definitely a lot of congratulations going around and we were pretty excited yesterday when we saw that we were second overall out of 22 teams from around the world.

Has Mosaic Esterhazy ever placed this high in an international competition before?

No, this is the first time that Esterhazy had ever gone to this competition. The Colonsay mine did, I believe it was in 2008 that they went, when it was held in Reno. But this is the first time Esterhazy has ever had a team at the international competition.

Were you thinking that you might end up with such a strong showing?

No, we had no idea. The competition events, with 22 teams, were spread over three days. We were pretty happy with how we did each day, and we were thinking that if we got in the top ten, that's great. You never know what you're coming up against, but we learned lots and met lots of great people from all across the world. We got some new colleagues and some new peers during the whole thing. But we never thought that we'd be second overall by any means.

Is Mine Rescue an ongoing thing—are you pretty much always training?

In Esterhazy, we train from September to April. We have about 40 members in mine rescue and all based on different crews, made up from different crews. Each team trains once a month, so four times a month there's training going on.

We train up until April and then we do

what's called an in-house competition. We make up teams amongst ourselves and whoever wins that, we use as our team that goes to the Saskatchewan Provincial Competition during Mining Week. The competition was in Saskatoon this year and will be again next year.

So what did you do to celebrate when you found out that you were second overall?

Well we haven't really done too much yet—if we would've found out that night we would've had to change some plane tickets that we had booked for the next day! It definitely would've changed the outcome of that night, for sure, if we had those results.

You must be pretty proud of your team members.

That's exactly it. It takes everyone. We've got about 40-plus members in mine rescue plus retirees and management groups and it takes everybody to pull this together. Everybody is pretty passionate about it, and we're all pretty confident that we're going to make the right decisions and be able to address

the situations that we've got at hand when we are called in the event of emergency.

So what do you think is the difference? There must be something different about your team if you came in second in the world? What do you think it is?

I think we're all just pretty passionate about mine rescue in Esterhazy, and we've always had that. I've been in mine rescue since 2010. I've kind of taken over the lead for it and we've just got a great core of people. We still talk about the big fire they had in 2006. That's a long time ago but it's still very fresh in a lot of people's minds on how that went and the situations that came out of that. We do all we can to prevent incidents like that, but sometimes that stuff happens. We find that everyone is passionate about it and I think the competitions help drive that too. We all like to win, we have a drive for that and to be able to learn the skills and show them off at competitions definitely helps. We just have great support staff too with our management groups and the spouses—everybody. It takes a great team to get it all done.

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Beauty and the Beast coming to Moosomin

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The cast and crew of Creative Vision Productions have been working hard in preparation for their upcoming performances of *Beauty and the Beast* in Moosomin.

The show is planned for November 25, 26 and 27 at the Conexus MCC Centre. There will be four performances—evening performances on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and one matinee performance on Sunday.

The directors for the show said they are enjoying the experience of rehearsals.

"It's wonderful to be working with people that we've been working with for years, and there's always new people and that's exciting too. It's been great," said Sandra Poole.

"The rehearsal process is going wonderfully. They sound amazing already," Sherrie Meredith added.

"Where we rehearse now, in the United Church, the basement is filled with costumes and color, and props—it's an exciting place to be."

There are just under 70 singers involved in this year's production. With such a big group, Meredith said they work with the cast in sections and will eventually bring them all together.

"We have close to 70 people in the cast, then probably an additional 20 to 30 people who do behind-the-scenes things, and our band of course," Meredith said.

"Of course there's also Carol Adair who has graciously taken on ticket sales. I'm sure she's the most popular woman in town these days. We're very grateful.

"We also have to thank Barry Rambold. Creative Vision wouldn't be what it is without Barry."

Rambold is a pianist who spends hours rehearsing with performers leading up to the shows, and plays piano for the actual performances as well.

Poole said the show's band have been working equally as hard.

"We usually have about nine people in the band. They've started rehearsing separately, but soon they will be joining us at least once a week to co-ordinate everything," she said.

Creative Vision Productions have been putting on shows in the community for a decade now.

They have done shows such as *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Into the*



The puppet show scene from Creative Vision Productions' *Sound of Music*. The group is putting on Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* in Moosomin in November.

Woods, *Les Misérables*, *The Sound of Music* and most recently, last year's production of *All Together Now*.

"With our friend Raven, we started this company back in 2011 and have been able to put on shows every two years," said Meredith.

"Last year we did the concert, it was still a show, but we felt that it wasn't the same show that we would've been able to do. That's why we decided to put on *Beauty and the Beast* this year."

"And, Sherrie keeps pulling Raven back in," Poole said smiling.

"Raven has moved to Brandon, but she still works on set designs and set construction. We're still a team, just not all in Moosomin."

Creative Vision kept going through Covid. "Even during Covid we tried Zoom choirs.

We sort of kept people together. It just seemed on the crew end, that people just wanted to come back," Poole said.

Meredith spoke about the benefits that came from last year's show, and how it has helped the production team for this year.

"We've been very lucky. If anything, this show is bigger in magnitude and that makes it more difficult, but in lots of ways it's easier than a year ago when we were trying to figure out the logistics during Covid," Meredith said.

"We were the first event in town that had to do vaccination checks at the door and all those types of things."

Response has been good so far.

"Tickets are selling very quickly. *Beauty and the Beast* is a well known Disney show," said Meredith.

"I think it is also that the people we have are just so talented and the shows that we're able to put on, I'm just very proud of them."

Poole said rehearsing with the cast builds a

special bond.

"It's like a little community," she said. "We had a new lady join us this year and she just loves the camaraderie between everyone."

"With the double cast they are very supportive of each other because sometimes you don't get to perform in all the shows, but our cast members seem to support each other. It's wonderful."

With a double cast, different cast members play the same character on different nights.

They said it is amazing working with groups of people who are so talented.

"The sound, as Sherrie says, that comes out is stunning," said Poole.

"The creativity and the creative outlet for all the people, the costume ladies, they are just blowing our minds every day," added Meredith. "People in charge of sets and props, and on special effects, they are so creative. It's nice to have this creative outlet for everyone."

Tickets going quickly

Tickets are going well so far.

"The first three shows, Friday, Saturday night and Sunday afternoon are getting very close to full," said Meredith.

"I have no doubt that all the shows will fill up because we've only been on sale for a few days. I think they're doing very good."

Meredith explained why they decided to do four shows.

"We have a double cast and they will each get two shows," she said.

"To have two shows in a day is very taxing on the band and on the performers, which is why we leave it to the last day. We have the opening night on Friday, then we have Saturday if there's any tweaking that we need to do during the day, for the afternoon show. Then Sunday is a huge day with a double."

Both directors said they can feel the excitement and positivity during rehearsals, and are looking forward to the show.

"As much as I am excited to see the end result, I love this journey that we're on," said Meredith.

"Watching it grow from beginning to end and seeing people develop, and grow in their confidence—that to me, is the best part of it all."

Poole said she is enjoying rehearsals as well. "It's just so much fun and it's wonderful to see it come together. It will get smoother and smoother as we go along."

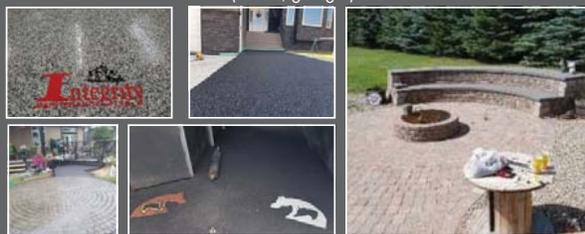
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A proud moment for Scott Williamson

The Friday after Queen Elizabeth's funeral, Kevin Weedmark spoke with Scott Williamson, originally from Rocanville, who was one of four RCMP riders leading the Queen's Funeral procession. The officers are part of the RCMP musical ride.

Sgt. Maj. Scott Williamson, who serves as riding master for the RCMP, says the musical ride and the RCMP have had a "very special" and "quite personal" relationship with the queen.

The RCMP has provided horses to the Queen and the royal family since 1969, starting with the gift of a horse named Burmese to the Queen, who rode Burmese in Trooping the Color for 18 years.

The musical ride contingent was at the front of the funeral procession. The full interview follows.

How was your trip to London?

It was something else, let me tell you. It was a whirlwind from beginning to end and there's a lot still to absorb, but it was something else.

Tell me a little bit about your history with the RCMP? Growing up in Rocanville were you always thinking that you were going into the RCMP?

Growing up I always assumed that I would just be taking over the farm from my father and become the next generation of farmers, but I would say that my interest in the RCMP really took off when I was playing Midget hockey in Moosomin.

At the time the coach was a member of the Moosomin detachment and I think that's really where my interest was piqued as far as becoming a Mountie. I never looked back from there. I decided that that's what I wanted to do. I went on a few ride-alongs with this member and said "Yes, this is definitely my calling."

How long have you been with the RCMP and the Musical Ride?

I'm going into my 23rd year with the RCMP and with the Musical ride I've been on and off about 13 years.

Now how did that come about? Did you say "Geez I'm tired of writing tickets, I want to ride a horse?"

Ha ha, it was actually kind of like that, to be honest. At the time I was posted up in Northern Saskatchewan in a fly-in community, Wollaston Lake, and typically when you're leaving those isolated northern posts, you get your pick of the litter, as it be, for detachments or postings.

I had expressed interest in going to the Musical Ride and because I was due to be posted out of Wollaston Lake, they sent me on the try-out course. I was selected and then transferred here for the intermediate course, which is about seven to eight months of training. I was successful on that and then went over to the Musical Ride where I went through another four months of training. Then I eventually did my first show with the Ride.

Certainly my passion for the Ride started there, and then I left the ride for about five or six years. I was on the Emergency Response Team here in Ottawa, which was our counter-terrorism tactical unit.

I spent six years doing that and then came back to the Musical Ride as an instructor and worked up through the ranks. Two years ago I was put into the position of Riding Master as a Sergeant Major.

So in that position as Riding Master, is this something that you knew was a potential duty of the Musical Ride members when the Queen passed, that this would be on the agenda?

As I'm sure you well know, there was a plan in place called Operation London Bridge. When I was put into the position as Sergeant Major here, that file was handed over to me, so I went through the file and it was very specific from the Queen and through the Commonwealth that each participant of the Commonwealth that was requested by the Queen had to have a certain representation as far as rank.

You had to have one Commissioned Officer, one Warrant Officer, which is what my rank is, one Junior NCO and then one Private. So I knew at the time that since I was the only Sergeant Major that had any significant horseback experience, that I would be attending. I had known for some time that I would attend, just you never know when.

Continued on page 27



Honoring the Queen

On September 19, when the late Queen Elizabeth was laid to rest, four RCMP officers on horseback led the Queen's funeral procession. One of the four is Scott Williamson from Rocanville, above.

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Sask has record quarterly population growth

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Saskatchewan's population grew by 6,465 people in the second quarter, bringing the total population to 1,194,000. "It's very good news to have over the course of the last quarter nearly 6,500 new folks call Saskatchewan home," said Jeremy Harrison, Minister of Trade and Export Development.

"That's the highest population growth that we've ever had in a single three-month period since statistics started being kept, going back over 50 years.

"It's really quite a historic day, quite a historic number, and something that reflects a broader trend which is the fact that the economy is creating jobs and opportunities for people to make that decision to relocate and move to Saskatchewan."

Harrison said one of the main reasons for Saskatchewan's growth in population is the number of job opportunities the province has to offer.

"The thing that has really driven it (the increase), and partly it's been international and migration, but really the catalyst for all of that is the fact there are jobs to be had here in this province," he said.

"The biggest challenge we probably have in the economy right now, there are a number, but the biggest that I've been hearing is around labor shortages. These are real challenges to have, but these are good challenges considering the biggest challenge in Saskatchewan in the past was everyone having to leave to find opportunities and find jobs.

"The fact that we have created 20,000 jobs over the course of the last year, the fact that we have those opportunities for young people here in this province, but also for those who are seeking to relocate from other parts of the country or other parts of the world, really speaks to the fact that we are a growing economy.

"We've been leading Canada in almost every economic category for many months now. Exports are up nearly 68 per cent over the course of the last year, just an amazing number. Wholesale trade is up 72 per cent over the last year, manufacturing sales up 27 per cent over the course of the last year.

"Those statistics that speak to the entrepreneurial spirit of this province and to those who are taking risks in creating jobs."

Harrison was asked if there are certain areas in the province where population has increased more than others.

"We're seeing a relatively diffuse growth, which is a good thing," he said.

"We are seeing growth right across the province. I can



Minister of Trade and Export Development and Minister of Immigration and Career Training Jeremy Harrison.

speak for my own community which is northwest of Saskatchewan, Meadow Lake, where we've seen significant population growth, particularly, over the course of the last few years.

"All of these things are reflective in the overall numbers. Our population is just under 1.2 million now, nearly 50 to 60 years ago the population was entirely stagnant at a million or a bit under, or a bit above. Since 2007, we've seen that population go from nearly a million to 1.2 million in a pretty sustained way and that is really a reflection of a growing economy and a government that's focused on growth."

Sask. Growth Plan for 2030

Part of Saskatchewan's Growth Plan is to grow the province to 1.4 million people and add 100,000 more jobs.

"We laid out a very detailed plan for growth to 2030. Our plan is to grow the population to 1.4 million," Harrison said.

"We think that is absolutely possible, and we're working very hard to make that a reality. To get to just under 1.2 million is a real milestone there and we're hopeful we're going to cross that 1.2 million mark in the near future."

Harrison said the government remains focused on growth.

"We're going to continue to work really hard to make sure that the conditions exist for investment and job creation to happen," he said.

"That really is what governments can do, in a positive way. Governments don't create jobs, governments can create the conditions for those jobs to be created. That is really a focus we've had through the economic ministries in this government for the last 15 years. That's reflected with the fact that we have seen record investment into the province far in excess in anything that we've seen before, and that's going to continue to be a focus.

"Also on the immigration front, we have been very clear in demanding that the federal government provides Saskatchewan the same control of immigration that Quebec has, which is not an unreasonable ask. The fact that Quebec has control over their economic immigration stream entirely is something that we need here in this province as well. We know our labour market here better than the federal government does.

"The other thing that we have demanded is a proportionate allocation of immigration spots, which we do not have in Saskatchewan. If we did, instead of having about 6,000 spots in our provincial nominee program, we would have over 12,000 spots. We have demanded equal treatment with other provinces in confederation, and we're going to keep pushing away on that whether it's this federal government, or another federal government. We're going to keep pushing on that because it makes sense for this province."

Harrison added that housing and the cost of living in Saskatchewan is more affordable than other provinces in the country.

"We've seen the private sector really responding as far as building residential construction," he said.

"Housing starts are up 36 per cent over the course of the last year. One of our real selling points in Saskatchewan is affordability with living here, versus Toronto or Vancouver.

"Those who are making decisions about where to locate to, that's one of the real advantages that we have.

Continued on page 42

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Esterhazy wants new fire hall to be regional training centre

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Esterhazy's Fire Committee has started fundraising and planning to build a new fire hall, with the hopes that that new fire hall can also double as a regional training facility.

"Emergency services are needed in a community to make it a safer place for everyone," said Earl Nickel of Esterhazy Fire Committee. "A fire department is needed in every community no matter where you go, and the fire hall we have now, we've just out grown it. We've been stuffing things in there to make room for what we have."

Nickel has been part of Esterhazy's Fire Department since 1993.

Due to the building's current condition, he said the committee is aiming to expand their current hall, in addition to creating a bigger space for training at the centre.

"We also want to make more space for training. I talked to our chief and said it would be nice to have an area where we can get different communities who can bring their firefighters to come here for training," said Nickel.

"If we set up a facility here, people who come to town will be able to have all the equipment and train here."

There are currently 18 members on Esterhazy's Fire Department.

Borden Kishalowich, fire chief of Esterhazy's Fire Department, said the town's current fire hall was built in 1974.

"We're running out of space in our current hall, we have equipment that we moved over to the town shop that should be at our fire hall because it increases response time," Kishalowich said.

"We've got four units in a three-bay hall so it's tight in there. There's also no place where we can get training done which we're hoping to increase and get some local training to make the new hall big enough to invite neighboring departments in and do more training locally."

The committee is working with the town council along with other community fire departments to come up with new building ideas for designing Esterhazy's future fire hall.

"We're still trying to get everyone co-ordinated before going. I've jotted down some questions to ask other departments as well, like what would you do differently, what are you happy with, what are you not happy with, what kind of floor finish works for you, what type of lights do you use for the building," he said.

Expanding training space at fire hall

Nickel said Esterhazy's Fire Department is looking to set up a training space at their fire hall that has all the necessary equipment and space so that other firefighter groups can use it as well.

"A bigger training space would help our firefighters get more and better training, but it would also give us a chance to help out other firefighters," Nickel said.

"For some of the smaller communities, they have to send three or four people out of the area to get training, and by the time you pay for rooms, mileage and meals, it gets pretty expensive.



Esterhazy Fire Department held a barbecue fundraiser and raffle on September 20 to raise money for the new fire hall.

"If we can have the training here then we can get some of the smaller communities to come this way and they can still go home for the evening and not worry about finding a hotel room for the night."

"I also thought that if we have a few caterers in town, we can have a kitchen set up in the fire hall, that way firefighters can keep their meals warm or bring them pre-cooked, and to have fridges and freezers there for when they have lunch."

"I've gone to training sessions in other fire departments where they've done training and everyone sort of leaves at noon to go find their own way to get their meal, and some days you have to scramble back. By having the extra space would benefit everyone if everyone stays in one place while people are eating, they can sit and exchange ideas, things like that I think is better for the group."

Having a fire hall that is big enough to train groups of firefighters would open up opportunities for future provincial programs, said Nickel.

"The provincial government is bringing out regulations for more training for volunteer firefighters. For us to get in on the ground floor would be a good thing because

if we had a centre it would be better for people to come join and train, all the equipment would be set up so you wouldn't have to run around and find different things," he said.

"Hopefully it would help different communities bring their firefighters here to Esterhazy. Also the training we do is not dangerous, but it's work that people can get injured at easily so it should be a safe environment."

"The better training firefighters have is the less likely they are to get hurt on the job. That's what you want to see it's like everything else, you want to go home with your fingers, toes and arms. That's what we need to do with fire fighting, let's face it, fire fighting and emergency services is not the easiest way to make a living, but if there wasn't people that would do that the communities would be a tougher place to live in."

Nickel said he enjoys volunteering his time as a firefighter.

"I like the work, I enjoy working and helping, as well being a part of the community," he said.

"I think that's the biggest thing is being out there and helping people."

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Community Infusion winners announced

Fusion Credit Union launched Community Infusion in 2021, an initiative designed to promote economic development and entrepreneurship in their communities. Fusion's Business Development Manager Mike Csversko explains, "Community Infusion stems from the belief that economic development is the foundation behind thriving communities. With community impact being a strategic priority for Fusion, the idea of a business competition to help grow local commerce was a natural fit."

Through the annual Community Infusion competition, current and aspiring business owners can apply to share in up to \$30,000 towards a new business idea, an expanding business idea, or the purchase or improvement of an existing business. This year, Fusion received 17 submissions from entrepreneurs across their 18 communities, and the four finalists participated in the live event in Russell, Manitoba on October 4, 2022.

The 2nd Annual 2022 Community Infusion finalists included Fierce Female Hockey Camp, Moonlit Canopy, Dauphin Lake Rentals, and Modern Mini and Me online store. With over 85 audience members in attendance, the four businesses pitched their idea to the Fusion panel of judges, and the \$30,000 was awarded.

Fusion is pleased to announce that Fierce Female Hockey Camp won first place and was awarded \$20,000. Moonlit Canopy came in second place and won \$5,000, and Dauphin Lake Rentals and Modern Mini and Me each won \$2,500.

Darwin Johns, CEO of Fusion Credit Union, was on hand to award the prizes. "The joy on our winners faces tonight is an excellent reminder of how important it is to offer these opportunities," he said. "The Community Infusion event is another great example of just how much incredible entrepreneurial spirit lives in rural Manitoba."

Melissa Rushton, Fusion's Director of Credit Risk who acted as a judge at the event, commented, "It was not an easy decision to make, as we had so many fantastic entrepreneurs share their journey and aspirations with us. Community Infu-



Left: Fierce Female Hockey Camp won first place and was awarded \$20,000 during the second annual 2022 Community Infusion event.

sion provides a platform for great ideas to come to life, and we have no doubt Amy Doerksen and the Fierce Female Hockey group will do amazing things with this prize money."

Congratulations to all winners and participants! Fusion is proud to partner with entrepreneurs to help enrich and grow communities across Manitoba.

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Rory Allen says Moosomin show is 'like coming home'

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Professional entertainer Rory Allen will be returning to the area of his hometown for solo-show in tribute to Elvis. The show will be held at Moosomin Community Theatre at 2 p.m. on Sunday Oct. 23 and all proceeds will go to STARS air ambulance.

"I'm excited, it's nice to be back to be able to do shows again," Allen said.

"It feels like being a bird with your wings clipped not being able to perform these last two years.

"Of course performing is a big part of my life for the last 25 years, and having it cut off for almost two and a half years has been pretty tough.

"This is a great cause too, because the proceeds are going to the STARS air ambulance which is a key thing to have, especially in the rural areas."

Allen grew up in Rocanville, Saskatchewan and has lived in Regina for most of his career.

"I lived in Rocanville for a couple years with my family and moved to Regina and have been here ever since, but my brother-in-law still lives in Rocanville and a lot of friends and family who I've known for years still live in that area," he said.

"I've done shows in both Rocanville and Moosomin over the past 20 years, it's like coming home for me. I'm looking forward to seeing some familiar faces and hugging people again."

Allen said performing in rural Saskatchewan is special to him.

"I really love rural Saskatchewan because a lot of my shows over my career have been in rural areas," he said.

"I would say hundreds of my shows have been performed in rural Saskatchewan, like ladies nights and fundraisers. I'm excited to get on stage, I feel most comfortable in front of people, I love people so I'm looking forward to it.

"For me, rural folks are a little more laid back and I think they laugh at my jokes a little more," he smiled.

"I feel that you're very accepted especially if you're a local entertainer. I'm a Saskatchewan boy. I've been here all my life. We've been able to travel through the province well over the last 20 years.

"We've been to a lot of communities and helped raised a lot of money for people, it's just like a big family here. If you tell a joke about a combine they know what you're talking about."

He said he's happy to be part of an event that is contributing to a great cause.

"A big part of our show over the years is to raise money for different organizations, especially for STARS. Right now, with things that have been going on in the world, it's very important."

His Tribute to the King show is filled with solid gold Elvis hits, drawing from a vast repertoire of rock and roll classics, ballads, and heartfelt gospel songs.

For his show in Moosomin, Allen will be playing 30



Born and raised in Saskatchewan, Canada, Rory Allen has been a professional entertainer for over 25 years and will be coming to Moosomin on Oct. 23 to perform.

songs.

"I'm able to be myself on stage. Of course I have Elvis's costumes and all that, but I'm Rory the whole night. I don't come off like I'm Elvis because you can't replace him," he said.

"Performing is like you're in a big living room, for me. There's 2,000 people there or 200 people, it's like a big living room party for me. I like to come out in the audience and walk around, shake some hands while I'm singing. It's just a lot of fun."

Beyond his 25 years of performing, Allen mentioned some of his wildest experiences from his career.

"There was a particular place we sang in, it was a small town in Saskatchewan," he said.

"My dressing room was upstairs which was in an old hotel and I was bit by a ferret in my room. I had to go get a tetanus shot and then the next day I had to go back and do a second show.

"A couple times I've wrecked my leather pants, it's been fun. It's nice to be in business again, I think it might be a beacon in other communities that Rory Allen's back and so many other entertainers are back now too, who have been itching to get on stage because it's not fun if that's what you do for a living and it's sort of out of our control to be able to perform."

Allen got back to performing in July of this year. He said noticed more younger people coming out to watch him and his team perform. He thinks that it is because of the recent Elvis film.

"The Elvis movie has really got the young people to see Elvis shows too," he said.

"I know we're going to be at Club Regent in Winnipeg which is about 1,200 seats, we're doing that in December, but the average age went way down for that show. We have a lot of people bringing their kids, even little kids, to that show.

"It used to be just the older folks who came because they grew up with Elvis, but now with the movie that came out and just the great music that Elvis put out."

Moosomin community excited for Rory's performance

Allen said he is happy to be doing the show in Moosomin.

"We're really grateful and thankful for Mary McGonigal in Moosomin," he said.

"She's a big fan and a big help, she was the head for the last show we performed in town. Then she came and saw us again in Regina and told us she was going to get us in Moosomin again, which I thought was great."

Mary McGonigal of Moosomin contacted Allen asking if he would be interested in coming to Moosomin for a show.

"With the last couple of years artists haven't been able to perform, I just think that we have to help Saskatchewan artists keep going," McGonigal said.

"I think Rory is very popular. When I organized the show in 2019, we filled the theater and I think tickets were only on sale for a month. I'm expecting a sell out this time."

She said ticket sales are going well and people from Elkhorn, Virden, Wawota, and other communities have already bought their seats.

"Everyone is looking to get out of the house to go have some fun, harvest should be over and snow shouldn't be falling by then," she said.

"I think by doing it on Sunday afternoon too, people can come from an hour or so away."

Advance tickets are being sold for \$20 at Pharmasave and the World-Spectator in Moosomin, as well as Mane-tain Hair Lounge and Gift Shoppe in Rocanville.

"Get your tickets early because we don't want you to be disappointed when it sells out," McGonigal said.

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Oxbow holds fire National Day of Truth and Reconciliation event

The town of Oxbow held its first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation event on September 30 at Bow Valley Park. There were over 140 people there and over 105 people served for lunch. The event was held to honor and remember the lost children and survivors of residential schools, their families and communities. Guest speakers were Angie McArthur Delorme, an elder, residential school survivor, and children's advocate, and Joanne Neddow, retired social worker/therapist and author of Grandmother Medicine for Children.

The day started with a prayer and song, and included a reflection walk, as well as a moose stew, bannock and berries lunch. It wrapped up with a question and answer period, closing prayer and song following lunch.



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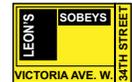
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Some moments from Oxbow's National Day of Truth and Reconciliation event, including some of the children who attended, above, a prayer and song, left, and the reflection walk, below.



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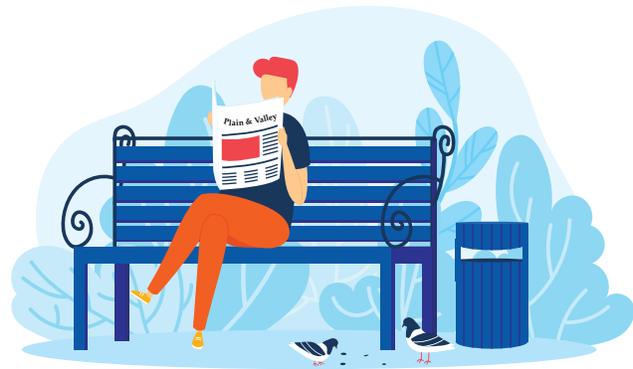
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“STARS Air Ambulance saved my life”

Halbachs have a personal reason to support Elvis show in Moosomin

Continued from front

“She wouldn’t have made it without STARS because STARS is equipped for life support, wheel ambulance is not,” Cliff said.

“Without them putting her on life support and keeping her alive, she would not be here today. I’m glad they were around or otherwise I wouldn’t have her, she wouldn’t be here.”

Since 1985, the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS) has flown more than 50,000 missions across Western Canada.

During 2021-22 fiscal year, there were 1,075 STARS missions that were carried out across the province, from their bases in Regina and Saskatoon.

Cora said when she found out that Rory Allen, an Elvis Tribute Artist, was coming to perform a show in Moosomin and that all proceeds from the show would be donated to STARS, that she had to be there.

“We donate money to STARS, but as soon as I saw in the paper about the show, I said we have to go,” she smiled.

“I’m an Elvis fan, I’m a very big Elvis fan. As soon as I heard about the show I knew we were going. We need to support it because all the proceeds from that show goes to STARS.”

The two have been fans of Elvis for decades. They grew up listening to his music and have been to many tribute performances over the years.

“We went to Alberta before Covid started and they had 17 different Elvis Tribute Artists out there,” Cora said.

“I think (the show) does bring awareness for STARS because a lot of people are Elvis Presley fans.”

Having the opportunity to see a great performance while supporting a great cause means a lot, Cora said.

“This way I get to meet some of the people from STARS too,” Cora said.

“I’d like to just meet them, and I’d like to take my granddaughter too, she’s 13 now. I want her to just talk to STARS, to ask them questions, even just to let her know what they’re about, to know what saved us.”

Support for STARS goes a long way

The Halbachs have been supporting STARS ever since the accident.

“After the accident happened, I told her we have to start supporting STARS,” said Cliff.

“We’ve donated every year since we’ve bought our lottery tickets. STARS needs the (financial) support to keep them in the air, a lot of people wouldn’t be alive without them.”

“If they don’t get support they’re not going to last. Someone has to help them to keep them up there.”

“There’s lots of stories I’ve read of people, that were taken by STARS, who would not be alive

today if it had not been for them.”

Since the accident, Cora has worked hard to be in shape, to where she is at today.

“It took a while for her body to take over on its own after the tubes from life support were pulled,” her husband said.

“She spent six weeks in the hospital. She had to learn to talk, she had to learn to feed herself, she had to learn how to walk after the accident.”

Cora said the upcoming show will help bring awareness for what STARS Air Ambulance does.

“When I did get back to Esterhazy, after the accident, I was in a wheelchair and we went back to our favourite restaurant,” Cora said.

“That was a Thursday night, and people couldn’t believe the shape that I was in.”

“I thank God everyday that I’m alive.”

Cora and Cliff said the reason why they wanted to share their story was to help support STARS.

“They (STARS) have been through all areas and have listed all the different places they’ve gone to, it’s remarkable,” said Cora.

Rory Allen’s solo-show in tribute to Elvis will be held at Moosomin Community Theatre at 2 p.m. on Sunday Oct. 23. All proceeds from the event will go to STARS air ambulance.

Advance tickets are being sold for \$20 at Pharmasave and the World-Spectator in Moosomin, as well as Manetain Hair Lounge and Gift Shoppe in Rocanville.

Right: Cora Halbach was in a severe car accident in February 2015. She said she is grateful to be alive today.



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