

Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

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People enjoying the Moosomin skating path at Bradley Park



Kipling's outdoor rink, built by Allan Batters in memory of his son, Benjamin Batters, who passed away from Cancer at the age of 11.

Popular skating paths back this winter

Who doesn't like to strap on a pair of skates and go for a leisurely skate on a beautiful winter day with the sun sparkling off the snow and the air crisp on your face?

When the towns of Moosomin and Esterhazy decided to create outdoor skate paths in 2020, they didn't realize what a popular decision that would be. With local rinks booked up for ice time, and outdoor rinks often used for shinny, the outdoor skating paths proved to be the perfect solution for people just looking for a nice winter skate.

Both communities have decided to create skate paths again in 2021. The skate path in Moosomin starts at the outdoor rink and loops around one of the ball diamonds. Christmas lights are strung along the path for night time skaters. The skate path in Esterhazy winds along the roads of the Esterhazy Regional Park. There's even a spot to stop along the way and have an outdoor bonfire, and the path is lined with lights.

It doesn't matter if you are eight years old or eighty. Anyone can enjoy the skating paths this winter, so go ahead and get outside for some skating fun! Both skating paths are free of charge!



Above: The Esterhazy skating path through the regional park. Below: An aerial view of the Moosomin skating path at Bradley Park.



Kipling's outdoor rink a labor of love for Alan Batters

For the third winter, Alan Batters is building an outdoor rink for the people of Kipling to enjoy.

The first time he did it was in the winter of 2019-2020 for the Winter Carnival.

"They were looking for an outdoor rink and they approached me because I had this property across from my house. A lot of families were out there on Christmas Eve," said Batters.

Batters decided to build the rink again last year, and is building it for the third time this winter.

The location of the rink the site of the former Kipling Union Hospital.

"There is a little bit of sentimental value to that land. That land used to be the Kipling hospital. My son died of brain cancer on Christmas day in 2013. He was only 11. He was born in that hospital and sadly passed away in that hospital. So, when they tore it down, I said that I would like to buy (the land) if it ever comes up for sale. I purchased it. It is a nice park area, it is right in the middle of town, it has trees. So there is nothing better than putting a rink there for kids to enjoy it. It is a little silver lining," said Batters.

"You can have lots of kids that would not normally go to the rink that are out skating. It is very informal. You can't have any organized events, you can't say you are having a hockey game. It is just an open thing for the public the lights are on 24/7. Last new on New Year's Eve we had people out there past midnight."

Any good rink needs a proper zamboni to keep the ice smooth and safe for those who want to skate on it. Again, Batters stepped up and got one for the rink.

"I bought a zamboni. It has my son's memorial photo on it, so whenever the zamboni is on the ice, he is on the ice," said Batters.



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100-year-old veteran Gordon Jones proud of his service

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

100 year old veteran Gordon Jones, is one of the few veterans from the Second World War that is still present with us today.

"There's not many left of us now compared to what it used to be. I made a lot of real good buddies during that time," veteran Jones says.

"You can't really describe it. You have to be really in it to understand the affects and stuff it has on you. It was certainly an experience."

He joined the army when he was 20 years old, along with two other men from the Wapella area.

"I joined up right here in Moosomin on the fifth of June in 1942, I was still 20 years old. For a young country boy, I never been further than Moosomin so it was quite an experience."

Jones' is originally from the community of Wapella and belongs to the White-wood Legion. Jones now lives in the Southeast Integrated Centre (SEICC) in Moosomin.

During the Second World War, veteran Jones faced many battles. He was a machine gunner, operating a Bren machine gun.

"I'm proud that I did my duty, a lot of people wanted to stay in Canada. I'm proud that I joined the military and did my part. I couldn't sit back and watch my buddies go and not do my duty," veteran Jones says.

He says at the time there were a lot of young men who joined the military

and they should be proud for serving their country.

"A lot of young men at that time left Canada to go defend. If a person felt like there was not much for them in the area, then they would join the army. As a farm boy who was never away from the Prairies it was exciting but you never really know what it's like away from home until you get into it."

After returning to Canada, veteran Jones says it took a while to adjust to civilian life.

"It took quite a while for me to get back to civil life again. During the battle you get split up with friends. I don't know of anyone now who is still around, the fighters that I know have passed on," he says.

"I made a lot of friendships during that time. If you made a friend in the army that was your friend for life. That was a hidden treasure, it wasn't all bad."

Many of the medals Jones' proudly wears on his chest represent the different campaigns he was part of, which took him through several countries.

"We landed in England, and then we were in Italy for six months," Jones says. "We went over to France, and from there I went to Germany. I was in Germa-

ny for the last three months as part of the occupation force. You don't realize until you get into it what it's all about. In Germany there was some night warfare, and at one point I couldn't get back to my unit."

"It was a little difficult getting back to civilian life. The war affected people differently, there were some guys that were happy-go-lucky and some went the other way," he says.

"There's not many of us left compared to what there was at the time. You can't really describe it. You're just a cog in a wheel. I did have a lot of trouble after the war, I could barely sleep. But as time went by things seemed to change. I've had a good life."

He said serving as a soldier was a big part of his life, but it isn't something he thinks back on every day.

"I don't even think about the war anymore, it's all in the past. I'm just proud that I did my part, I served my country, I did what I could."

This Remembrance Day, with cold temperatures and high winds, Gordon Jones attended the White-wood Remembrance Day Service, standing for the entire service through the bitter cold.



Second World War veteran Gordon Jones is one of the few veterans from a time of war who is still here with us today and is able to share his experience from the past in honor of the sacrifices veterans have made.

Steven Bonk, MLA

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HER Girl Club all about exploring possibilities

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The HER Girl Club is a youth organization that was created with a mission to provide a safe and empowering place for girls to be themselves while radiating love back into the community.

The group was created in October 2020 and has members from the communities of Rocanville and Moosomin. Its president, Paige Hutchinson, created the organization in hope of bringing young women together on a monthly basis safely during the pandemic.

"It was a really good time to start the group because I think a lot of people used the pandemic as an excuse to not connect, but there's so many safe ways to connect around it. You can do things outside, wear masks, follow guidelines or even do things virtually. There's many ways to connect and I wanted to make this happen, I'm glad we got it started.

"It was great that we started it when we did because there wasn't anything going on. All these kids didn't have any connections or activities to do while school was canceled for them. That was a positive to it because there were girls looking to connect, no one was busy at the time so it worked out."

The HER in the clubs name stands for honesty, empowerment and radiance.

"The 'H' stands for honesty, just to honestly be yourself and showing up as who you are and not who society wants you to be or who you think a girl should be. The 'E' is for empowerment, for the girls to feel empowered and for them to empower other people. The 'R' stands for radiance meant for radiating that honesty and empowerment back into the community," Hutchinson says.

The organization currently has 15 to 20 girls from ages grade 5 to grade 12 that attend each event. The events are hosted on a monthly basis and always involves a female mentor who provides activities related to their goal for that month.

November's event was hosted by Class with Cass Holistic Nutrition and focused on teaching the girls about nutrition and why it's important for their health.

Hosted by Cassidy Robidoux, the event consisted of the girls making healthy gingerbread houses while taste testing some fresh juice 'shots.' Robidoux also educated the group about nutritional facts. By teaching them about what foods contain high contents of protein, vitamins, minerals and the differences between macronutrients and micronutrients.

After building their own gingerbread houses, the girls had to explain what fruits, nuts and syrups they used and why they were healthy.

Hutchinson says the group is all about exploring possibilities.

"To me it's about exposing the girls to possibilities. Like I went away from Rocanville for university for five years and my eyes opened up so much, in terms of personal growth, self-development, opportunities, career paths. Especially as a woman sometimes growing up there's still that mind-set of thinking 'I could be a nurse, a teacher,' just those traditional roles and I think that's still the mentality especially in a small town.

"I just want to expose the girls to as many female role models as possible and be like, this is what's possible for



In celebration of the HER Girl Club's one year anniversary, the girls who are a part of the organization celebrated its success in October.

you. If you have dreams, if you have goals, these are possible. I just want the girls to get a head start in life, to assist that growth journey sooner," Hutchinson says. *Continued on page 9*



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Tipi built at École Saint-Lazare

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

On Tuesday, citizens from the Métis community and First Nations communities gathered at École Saint-Lazare in Manitoba, to celebrate the installation of a tipi being built at the school.

The Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM) plans on placing a tipi at each of the elementary schools that offer its pre-kindergarten program, as part of its Truth and Reconciliation program to encourage children to learn about First Nations cultures.

The principal of École Saint-Lazare, Richard Fiola, said there are about five francophone schools in the province of Manitoba that offer pre-kindergarten classes.

"Our school board DSFM, offers a pre-kindergarten class in schools that do not have a daycare. We are integrating young children as early as four years old to learn French and participate in our culture. During Covid, we have chosen to release quite a few projects outside. The tipi is to add a new area to do outdoor teaching."

École Saint-Lazare is the second DSFM school in Manitoba to have the tipi installed. The first placement was at École Jour de Plaines in Laurier, which took place on National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Sept. 30.

"The people from the Truth and Reconciliation program organized this to happen, so there's four or five schools in the province planned to have tipi installations. We are the only one in the West part of the province that have pre-kindergarten. Part of that program included having classes outside, so they had given every school that had that pre-kindergarten program a tipi to be set up outside."

He says the program focuses on educating children at a young age about the cultures and history of First Nations, as opposed to introducing the subject to students at the high school level.

"I think that younger kids don't have



Scott Lynxleg Tootinaowaziibeeng, Treaty Reserve Treaty 4, and Tanya Huberdeau-Simard (pre-kindergarten teacher) using the rope to tighten the poles of the tipi.

any apprehension, so learning languages and learning different things, they are like a sponge. I believe that if we give them the base on the respect, and on the reconciliation aspect of the history that we are trying to write again, that should be good for the next generation so that they will better understand the errors and write a new page for our relations between the First Nations and citizens and Métis community."

Fiola said the tipi project happened at the request of the federal government, which asked localities to take action to build positive relations with First Nations around their Métis community.

At the ceremony, Fiola said the following:

"I am happy to have you here this afternoon for the installation of the tipi on the grounds of the St-Lazare school. For centuries people have passed through Fort Ellice to cross Canada. From their first travels, First Nations, Métis and travelers stopped here to rest, trade in furs and pemmican, or repair their ca-

noe or carts. This tipi can be found a few steps away from the crossroads of the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle rivers."

"As those rivers meet here, we want this space to be a meeting place between generations and between our peoples. This tipi will be a testimony that we want to recognize the presence of First Nations long before the arrival of the Europeans. Our tipi will be a meeting place to share, to reflect and to recognize ourselves and share the richness of our respective cultures."

"Our gathering is intended as a response to the actions requested by the Truth and Reconciliation report. As part of an educational process, we recognize that there are other steps to be taken in the future. I hope that our students, staff and the people in the community will be able to take the initial steps so that our footsteps meet and our paths cross. We cannot change the past, but we can write the pages of the centuries to come. I trust that this meeting will

mark a starting point in the recognition of our peoples and the beginning of sharing our cultures."

Fiola said it's important to have the tipi placed at the school because it allows children to learn about the culture of First Nations and be educated on the land they are on.

"Since we are on Treaty 2, and Treaty 4 was signed here on St-Lazare and Fort Ellice, I think it's important for the kids, our Métis kids and even for some of our European origin kids, to get to know the culture and the people that were here long before us."

"I think the cultural part is what we want teachers and students to gain from this. We want to provide a space that the kids will have a place to respect and have writing sessions outside, reflections outside and activities like that," Fiola said.

"In the long run, writing, doing their homework, singing, art classes, any activity really. We'll be doing more of cultural teachings always with a First Nation present."

The activities the school has planned to further educate its students on the different cultures of First Nations include the music, the dances, culinary and the history. He said it will be led by the teachers and First Nations people from communities of Gambler, Waywayseecappo, Tootinaowaziibeeng, Rolling River, Sakimay and Pine Creek.

"We already have a course planned for grade nine and grade ten students that focus on First Nations studies but we want to enrich it. We hope eventually there will be a curriculum at the high school and elementary level."

"We hope to be proud of our origins, as we are a little Métis community here but we want to also recognize the First Nations that are our neighbors. We want good relations, we want to acknowledge that we recognize errors of the history but we want to write the pages for the next century on a good basis."

Continued on Page 6

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Tipi built at École Saint-Lazare

Continued from Page 7

In addition to the installation of the tipi, the community honored Louis Riel to acknowledge the 136 years since his passing.

"Today is an important and sad day in the history of the Founder of the province of Manitoba, Mr. Louis Riel. This Canadian politician was the leader of the Métis people on the Canadian Prairies. He led three resistance movements against the Canadian government in an effort to protect Métis rights and culture, as Canadian influence grew in the Northwest Territories. After several requests for a new trial to take place and for an appeal to Queen's Privy Council for Canada to be rejected, Riel was hung for treason on November 16, 1885. Let us take a minute of silence to remember this sad event in our history because it is 136 years since Louis Riel died."

Significance of the tipi ceremony

As the tipi was built from the crossroads of the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle rivers, Boh Kubrovich Lead Keeper of Treaty 2 territory, talked about the significance of its placement at École Saint-Lazare. "Fort Ellice for many years was a trading post but also an area for our Anishinaabe, Cree, Dakota and Nakota Nations peoples. This is a huge moment for us because we are able to transfer the knowledge we have, and the resources and research that we have, to the younger children today. It's good for us as a territorial government to showcase after 150 years that we are here. That we are still here.



From left: Terry Haney, president of the local MMF Fort-Ellice, Boh Kubrovich, Lead Keeper, and Richard Fiola, principal of École Saint-Lazare, stand by the finished tipi.

This is a great moment for us." "The Gambler Nation is a very important nation to us, why because the day before treaty, as the sovereign Anishinaabe people, the Gambler would go everywhere all over the territory to tell all their relatives and everyone who would listen 'don't sign the treaty, don't make the treaty' and 150 years later our Treaty still hasn't been honored or identified in the process of Canada," he says. "So what we have done now as a sovereign government is very exciting, we have built Canada

for the lands but we're also making sure that we can have reconciliation. We put that 'c' in there and we're doing as much action as we can. We want to build hockey arena's, we want to have wellness and well-being centres in our names. We want to embrace our relatives and our nations, for our Anishinaabe people." Lead Keeper Kubrovich, gave each student at the school a replica medallion that shows the handshaking relations between the Crown and the First Nations Treaty 2, on August 21, 1871.

"We're honoring the handshake because we are telling Canada that in our area and in our flag we don't have a hatchet. We have what is considered our first constitution, what is our first lodge." Allen Sutherland Skownan First Nation Treaty 2, spoke about the meaning the tipi has to Treaty 2 territory. "My English name is Allen Sutherland Skownan, but my real name is Waabski Minazoot Michtaaitim which means white spotted horse. A tipi is one of the shelters, it's our travel home.

There are many kinds of shelters that help us get away from the elements of the cold. This tipi is one of many."

Skownan said the location the tipi was placed at, exemplifies the history of how First Nations were treated but also demonstrates a new beginning of relations.

"We had a long relationship with newcomers from the other side of the world. We started off our relationship with peace and friendship, with the idea of can we live with you so we said there's plenty of room on mother earth.

"We became neighbors and as good neighbors should be, we always looked after each other. And that's been the history of eventually calling our place Canada."

"Indigenous people played a central role to create the foundation and building of this country. As friends, allies and neighbors. But what we are celebrating here today is that history took a wrong turn, we weren't included after to build up that nation. We were generous in the first place to share our treaty, like Fort Ellice and many other nations but somewhere along the line people forgot about treaties."

"Yet, treaties is a blood relationship. As long as we call ourselves Canadians we are all treaty people and right now you are on Treaty 2 territory. This is a very important thing to understand the generosity of sharing our place. We want to control our own destiny. But what we are looking forward to is that when I'm going to be introducing myself as Anishinaabe Saulteaux Canadian, and then the work is complete."

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Cross country skiing around the area this winter

Whether you're looking for sport, fellowship, exercise, or an opportunity to simply enjoy the outdoors during a Prairie winter day, there are lots of options for cross country skiing around the region this winter.

The cross country ski trails at Rocanville have been a popular spot to ski since 1995, when local resident Dennis Hack cleared some trails through the trees on his farm located two miles south of Rocanville. Since then, the club has developed into an organization with regular members, while many non-members also take to the nine-kilometre groomed track through the winter.

The Rocanville Cross-Country Ski Club's clubhouse amenities provide everything you need for a day of skiing. The club has all different sizes of boots and skis for rent at low cost, and a wax station to prepare your skis for the day's travel. Payment is based on the honor system.

Esterhazy Cross Country Ski Club is a volunteer-run organization made up of people excited to share their love of fresh air, exercise and beauty of the outdoors. Their trails consist of 14 km of classic and 6 km of skate-ski trails. Volunteers maintain equipment, clean and stock the ski hut, keep wood supplied for outside fires and the



Esterhazy is home to some excellent cross-country ski trails. This photos was taken at an Esterhazy Family Ski Day held in February.

wood stove inside of the ski chalet, wax skis and any other jobs that are required to keep the club running.

The town of Moosomin has also added ski trails this year. The trails are

located at Bradley Park, with ski equipment available to sign out at the town's Sporsplex located at Bradley Park. The ski trails are new this year, and plans are to expand them in the coming years.

Daryl Harrison

Member of the Legislative Assembly
Cannington Constituency

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New medical service in Moosomin

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

A new service is available at the Southeast Integrated Care Centre in Moosomin, CareLink Express.

Patients who have to have their cardiac devices checked at an urban hospital can now have the procedure done at the Southeast Integrated Care Centre in Moosomin through CareLink Express.

Vicki Ehrlich, the Saskatchewan Health Authority lead responsible for Cardiosciences (South), says the pandemic indirectly led to the new service coming to Moosomin, and says the new service in Moosomin and other communities is serving patients closer to home, and taking the load off Regina General Hospital, where all the tests had been done. "I knew of the technology about two to three years ago, prior to the pandemic," she says. "Because of the pandemic we had a two-part problem. Patients were cancelling appointments because they were nervous to come into Regina General Hospital because of fear of Covid, and we had service reductions because I had to redeploy staff. Therefore, we were not booking as many patients. That created very extensive wait lists. We have timelines on which we should be assessing the device itself and we were not meeting those timelines."

"So we connected in with our main vendor that we purchase our cardiac devices from—the pacemakers and other devices, and

we asked what's involved, what's the cost to offer this in more facilities. The cost is relatively inexpensive considering the sheer positive aspects of what this has done.

"We worked with our IT partners in Moosomin and Trent Truscott in Moosomin, and the managers, and we got the service operating. It's actually a pretty slick way and an easy and non-technical way to get the services the patients need."

Ehrlich says patients can have their device checked in Moosomin and save a trip to the city.

"If the patient's pacemaker is brand new we have to see them in the clinic once and then after that it's at certain check points, it's either at one or two years depending upon the device we're looking at."

"By us having CareLink Express, the patients simply get an appointment in Moosomin, they go in and all the person does is they get a wand put over the pacemaker site. The wand is the size of a deck of cards and then that will allow us to remotely connect the patient's pacemaker to the Regina General Hospital's device clinic team computer and the transmission takes place. It takes eight to 10 minutes."

"What's really great about it is grandpa or grandma get to stay in their own home community and they're not having to drive maybe on bad roads, and when we are so busy with the pandemic



A patient having his cardiac device checked through CareLink Express at the Southeast Integrated Care Centre in Moosomin.

it helps us. There's less foot traffic in the General Hospital.

"If the patient is elderly, having the check done in Moosomin means the son or daughter or grandson or whoever doesn't have to take time off work, go pick up grandma and take her into the city."

"Moosomin, as you know, is two and a half hours away from Regina so it's a whole day affair to go into the city. This service keeps them in their home community, and once the transmission goes through we send out a letter to the physician, the GP, to say the patient's pacemaker is functioning just fine, there's no further requirement needed. If we find something we'll tell them,

we may also call them depending upon how severe it is and if it's something like a battery that needs to be changed, we will make an appointment to bring that person into the hospital and we will take care of them."

Ehrlich said no special staffing is needed at the sites providing the CareLink Express service.

"If a patient comes into Moosomin, it can be a variety of people who help them, it doesn't have to be a registered nurse," she said.

"It can be a laboratory assistant, it can be a medical office assistant because there's no real technique involved other than good patient interaction and putting the wand on the chest. Then it automatically sends that impulse in. I've got teams on my staff on my end that if they're assigned to CareLink transmissions for the day that's all their view. We view it in real time."

CareLink Express is now offered in several communities in southern Saskatchewan—Swift Current, Yorkton, Moose Jaw, Estevan and Moosomin.

"We rolled out Swift Current and Yorkton just before the pandemic really started and then I rolled out Moose Jaw, Estevan and Moosomin during the pandemic, in the spring of this year," says Ehrlich.

She says there has been very positive feedback on the new service.

"We have done satisfaction surveys and the patients love it," she says. "They like to stay in their home community, they don't like to be on the road, it saves time for

them, there's a financial saving for them because they're not paying for fuel and maybe a meal out and that sort of thing."

"We have extensive wait lists that have been reduced and now we are going to start booking appointments in advance probably by January. We're going to get caught up, which is tremendous. We were substantially behind and now we're in a much, much better position."

Ehrlich says patients within a large area around Moosomin will be having their checks done at SEICC instead of having to travel to the city.

How did the program come about?

"It came about because we knew of the technology,"

says Ehrlich.

"Both directors, myself and my colleague from Saskatoon, have a really good working relationship with our current vendor and we knew of the technology and we simply wrote a briefing note asking to be able to purchase them. We could see what was happening with our appointments and we knew we were headed for a significant issue if we couldn't get these patients in, from a safety perspective."

"So thankfully we didn't have anything untoward happen but there was the risk, so this technology has greatly assisted us to keep everybody safe. I think this has been a great way to keep the patients of Saskatchewan safe."



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JOB OPPORTUNITY BIRDTAIL SIOUX FIRST NATION HEALTH CENTRE CASE MANAGER – FULL TIME

Birdtail Sioux First Nation Health Centre is seeking applications for a full-time, Case Manager (RN/Teacher/BSW/SLP/OT/PT), funded under the Jordan's Principle – Child First Initiative Project.

The purpose of the newly funded project is to implement a comprehensive and integrated approach of co-ordinated services to help provide support and respond to children with complex and special needs and their families, in partnership with other health and social professionals and agencies. These services should significantly contribute to quality of life, ensuring that children and their families are enabled to experience a life that is as full and as normal as possible.

POSITION SUMMARY:

The Case Manager position provides a comprehensive community health service in conjunction with its health care team. The Case Manager will provide supervision to the Child Development Workers, Wellness/Assistant Case Manager, Wellness Worker, Respite Workers, Administration Clerk and Janitor in community to provide a model of service delivery for children with complex needs and their families. Provide elements in which services have a particular responsibility to take the lead in securing effective development, delivery and review of services. Recognize the deficits with service systems and the need to protect children through early intervention, sharing of information, effective co-ordination of services and appropriate training.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- RN nursing background in rehab care and must be in good standing with CRNM, Teacher, OT/PT/SLP and/or BSW;
- Supervisory and case management experience;
- Experience working in First Nation communities;
- CPR and First Aid Certification;
- Knowledge of Birdtail Dakota language and culture;
- A highly-motivated individual who is innovative and has a proven ability to work with a very high degree of accuracy and attention to detail;
- Excellent time management and facilitation skills;
- Effective verbal and listening communication skills;
- Strong leadership, critical thinking, decision making and problem solving skills;
- Valid driver's license with driver's abstract
- Must clear criminal record check

Must provide a criminal record check, child abuse registry check and vulnerable persons check, a resume along with 3 written job references and a cover letter as a full package (incomplete package will not be called for an interview) in confidence to:

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HER Girl Club all about exploring possibilities

Continued from page 4

The HER Girl Club's vice-president Lauren van Dyke was able to get a grant of \$1,000 from Nutrien Rocanville.

"The donations and grants run our events. Our events would not be possible if it wasn't for the donations or fundraising. We're a non-profit organization and we started this group with no money, also most of our events were funded by the girls just to run them."

Hutchinson says there is a \$2 payment for the girls to participate, which helps fund the events and supply the rental costs. She says the ultimate goal is to have the girls access the events free of charge.

"If anyone is looking to donate, even \$45, it helps with our rental. Last year Jen Gawryluk called me and said she wanted to donate, I told her that \$50 would help to cover our rental space. Then she sends me an e-transfer, I open it to be \$500. So last year Jen was our main sponsor and then she donated again this year and paid the fee for all of the girls at one of the events."

Other donations have come from event hosts Shaquyll Cook, Amanda Selby and Cassidy Robidoux.

"Usually what people donate is their time, their skills and supplies, and that's the best way to do it. We don't need a lot of money, obviously the more money the bigger things we can do but at the end of the day that's not our goal. Our goal is to connect these girls to as many role models and opportunities in the community as possible."

"Your time is the most valuable thing that you can donate to our club, if that's something people ever want to get involved with then that's something we need," Hutchinson says.

Hutchinson says she is proud of the girls in the group.

"I definitely didn't know it would come to a year, I'm always starting new projects and I thought if it takes off that's great but if not at least we had the chance to run a few fun events. I'm really proud of the girls, the girls are very excited to come and they're really involved. Their really grateful, I couldn't ask for a better group of girls to come to these events."

"I guess I'm just really proud of them, it's really awesome to see their enthusiasm because that will take you so far in life."

"If you're enthusiastic and care about things, that's all you need whether it's in your personal life, your family life or even your career."

Part of the HER Girl Club's advocacy is to give back to the community, Hutchinson says the group does that by inviting women role models to host their events.

"There's very few events that we ran that don't involve women from the community. We've done a paint night, bowling night, some of them are a bit more fun like we went to the theater. It's also a local thing, we're supporting locals by using the facilities in the community. Also because it was during Covid, some of those facilities weren't as busy so it was great to get out there and support them," she says.

Hutchinson says she hopes the organization continues to flourish and wishes to keep introducing the members of the group to more female role models.

"It lights you up inside when you know you're doing something meaningful. I'm really hoping there's retention and people want to get involved to continue this legacy on and, hopefully have it pass down for a few years. Especially because these girls are great and I know there's a lot of grade four girls that cannot wait to join next year, so that's something I'm looking forward to."

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Scenes from a curling clinic in Maryfield in early 2020.



Maryfield receives funds for youth curling

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

More than \$200,000 in funding over the 2021-22 and 2022-23 seasons will be invested in youth curling across Canada, and Maryfield Curling Club is one of the first groups of recipients as announced by Curling Canada in its November 5, 2021 news release.

Funding for these opportunities to get more youth from all backgrounds involved with their friends and classmates in the sport in a fun and welcoming environment was made possible thanks to the curling community's support of Curling Canada's For the Love of Curling philanthropic program.

"I don't think it's any secret that the future of our sport depends on getting youth actively engaged, and in the process continue to change the face of our sport to fully represent our country's diversity," said Helen Radford, Curling Canada's Manager, Youth Curling, and NextGen. "What was truly gratifying about the application process was the eagerness and creativity of our country's Member Associations, curling centres and communities; they truly share our ambitions, and I know these funds will be put to extremely good use and it will benefit our sport for years to come."

There were three main targeted program areas: Inter-city/Inter-club leagues; targeted recruitment of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People Of Colour) youth; and school programs.

Curling Canada was looking for innovative program ideas that not only meet the specific criteria per program area but also demonstrate sustainability, inclusivity and never diverse participant recruitment.

Forty grants are being awarded, with total funds being distributed over this season and next exceeding \$217,000. Maryfield Curling Club, one of 19 clubs, has received a \$5 000 grant (\$2,500 annually) to run a On-Ice School Curling Program.

Students in Grades 3 to 8 at Maryfield School, as well as home-schooled children in the community, will receive eight two-hour sessions in each of the 2021-22 and 2022-23 curling seasons.

Instruction will occur during the school day as a part of their physical education program. Instruction will include on-ice sessions as well as off-ice sessions; participants will focus on curling techniques—basic slide, rock release, weight control, sweeping—as well as game strategy.

Sessions will see the young curlers involved in drills to develop their skills and mini-games to focus on strategy. Off-ice sessions will engage students in activities to develop an understanding of scoring, curling terminology and game strategy.

Janet Lemon and Barb Swallow will oversee the project and form the base of the instructional crew along with local curler, Randy O'Greysik.

Guest instructors will be invited to enhance the instruction, allowing youth to learn from the knowledge and experience of some very talented Saskatchewan and Manitoba curlers.

It is the program's goal to ensure that all youth in the community have the opportunity to learn the basics of the sport of curling, a life-long sport that is well-known for its physical and social benefits.

"We thank Curling Canada for the funding to make this opportunity a reality for our local youth," said Barb Swallow.

"Thanks to the Maryfield School staff for being open to incorporating the program through their physical education hours. Thanks to the Maryfield Recreation Board for the use of its facility for this important educational opportunity.

"It will be exciting to see the youth take to the ice and experience the game first-hand."

Barb says the aim of the program is to expose kids to a variety of curling skills.

"We look for instructors that have different kinds of backgrounds and can do different kinds of things with the kids and show them the opportunity that curling has for them," she says. "We have some people that are very talented and have considerable curling background that live close to us. For instance, Lydia Fraser is a teacher here still, part-time, and she's curled provincially with me. So Lydia, I know, is going to be a guest instructor one time. Brittany Lemon, who is Janet's daughter, will be one of our guest instructors. She lives nice and close. She has lots of experience, lots of background, and is a very talented

curler.

"Then we've got talent right here locally, like there's myself and Barb Boon, and Randy O'Greysik is a well-known local curler here. He's on board with us, he and I and Janet will form the base, and then we'll go from there and still hope to bring in four or so guest instructors to change things up some for the kids and just give them a different perspective."

Barb says it takes quite a bit of time and organization to plan the sessions for the kids.

"Some of us have been doing it for a lot of time so we have that background, but it still takes some work to formalize the lesson plans, because when you have youth that age involved, you need to change things up really, really often," she says. "So we will need to definitely plan some different drills and change things regularly through our two hour sessions to keep the kids engaged and keep them focused on the skills we hope to develop."

Maryfield is a community that has always had a deep love of curling and has produced many professional and

competitive curlers over the years.

"There are so many of us here that really enjoy the game," says Barb. "We love the game, we know the advantages of the game. We would like to see that continue for years to come. It is a game that you can play without investing a ton of money, it's a game you can play well into your later years and still enjoy."

"So I think it's our goal to introduce as many people to that game as we can and to ignite some type of a fire within them so that they too come to enjoy the game and thereby keep it alive in our area here."

"It's not an easy battle anymore, people are so busy with their lives. Not everybody takes the time to go out and enjoy local recreational facilities and we'd like to keep ours alive along with that love of the game of curling which we want to keep alive in our community."

"I think it takes local people that really enjoy the game and want to continue to pass that on to the youngsters in the community and to their parents, because it takes parents to get involved to keep it alive as well."

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Local trails systems available for snowmobilers

Every winter a group of dedicated volunteers maintains hundreds of miles of snowmobile trails from Fleming to Spy Hill, ensuring local snowmobilers have a safe and scenic ride.

Tri Valley Trails is a local snowmobile club providing safe, groomed trails for riders. The club is also affiliated with Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association (SSA). Since TVT formed 20 years ago it has maintained several miles of trail systems which connect three valleys—the Qu'Appelle, Assiniboine, and the Pipestone. The trail system also joins up with the SnoMan trails (Manitoba system).

Any snowmobile licensed in Saskatchewan also has their trail pass covered in Manitoba, and vice versa, allowing licensed snowmobilers to ride between provinces on one license.

The Tri Valley Trails are designated SSA trails, therefore trail users are required to register their snowmobile.

The club currently maintains 300 kilometres of trail in the Moosomin, Fleming, Rocanville, Welwyn, Tantallon and Spy Hill areas. There are three groomer operators who spend hours grooming the trails each winter, plus a number of volunteers who go out onto the trails at the beginning of the season to stake signs along the trails.

The trails provide a safer way to ride.

Warmup shacks are located at Moosomin, Rocanville, Welwyn, and Spy Hill, and are stocked with firewood for those wishing to take a break and build a fire. There are also signs along the trails for local businesses who support the trails system, many who provide services to



snowmobilers, such as meals, repairs, and accessories.

While a membership in the Tri Valley Trails club is not required to ride the trails, buying a membership is a great way to support the trails system and the club so that the trails can continue to be marked and groomed in the future.

For more information on the trails, visit the Tri Valley Trails website, which is regularly updated, at www.trivalleytrails.com.

For those in the Esterhazy area looking for a fun activity this winter, the Esterhazy Super Sledders are a group of dedicated snowmobilers whose members ensure their

trails are in the best shape when the snow begins to fall.

The scenic trails are located in the Qu'Appelle Valley stretching from Grayson to Rocanville down the old rail bed. The Esterhazy Super Sledders acquired the rail bed system 15 years ago, but have been grooming them and using them since the rail bed system was abandoned 25 years ago.

The Esterhazy Super Sledders is a non profit organization which provides fun and safe ATV/snowmobile trails, and hosts events with the help of its many members donating their time.

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Curling: It's fun and healthy!

Curling is a staple in small towns and communities around Canada every winter, but few people give thought to how beneficial the sport is. Not only is curling fun, it's a way to keep healthy and active in the winter. It provides a great way to foster social interaction during the long, cold winter months, and it's also a great workout!

Some of the main benefits of curling are as follows:

Aerobic fitness: Working out in the cold can burn more calories, and since curling is played on ice and players are constantly competing and running back and forth from end to end, it will definitely increase your heart rate and improve the cardiovascular system.

Strengthens your muscles: Sliding on the ice and being in a constant squatting position strengthens the calves, glutes and quadriceps. You can also get a good core workout by practicing curling and sweeping vigorously ahead of the stone.

Social interaction: In many communities, curling clubs are among only a few recreational resources available. It becomes a place where they can talk with others, build friendships, and take leadership roles, increasing both their confidence and resiliency when coping with challenges.

Flexibility: The team member who delivers the stone in a curling game often stays very low to the ice before pushing the stone. Staying this low to the ice requires a great deal of flexibility.

Precision: Curling requires precision. It has been nicknamed as "chess on ice" for the amount of strategy involved in winning a game. This is one of the reasons it is so popular among both players and spectators.

Stretching and toning legs: Stretching and toning your legs is a way the players workout before playing the game. The stretching and toning not only helps with flexibility for the game but it also carries



out in day-to-day activities.

Promotes weight-loss: Sliding on ice burns a lot of calories, yet because you are playing on ice, you don't perspire as much. Curling requires a lot of sliding back and forth, which burns calories.

It can be done by anyone, including the disabled: Curling is a sport that can be enjoyed by everyone, no matter the age or ability. In fact, the Paralympic Games feature a Wheelchair Curling event.

Fun and interactive: It is a sport for both men and women and is played by both adults and kids of all ages. Not only is it a great way to meet people who have the same interest in curling, but it can be a great networking medium. In addition, many people with depression turn towards curling because it's a fun and interactive sport that opens up their social realm.

Check out your local curling club and give curling a try this winter!



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Lots to do in Minot

Thinking of heading to Minot?

The city of Minot, North Dakota was founded in 1886 where the Great Northern Railway's construction crew set up their winter camp. As if by magic, a tent town formed practically overnight and grew to a population of 5,000 in the next five months—giving Minot its best-known nickname "The Magic City."

During the Prohibition Era, some people called Minot "Little Chicago," but today the city's reputation is different from those bootlegging days. Minot was thriving and growing in the 1950s. In 1957, the construction of the Minot Air Force base had a profound impact on the city of Minot. The base brought diversity to the Minot community and allowed for new shops and restaurants to open constantly. Businesses in the area became very successful.

Things changed in 1969 when the Souris River overflowed its banks and swept through homes and streets overflowing the residences and businesses with water. The citizens came together to rebuild showing the resilience of the community. In the 1970s, life went back to normal and Minot's population was just over 32,000. The North Dakota State Fair attendance reached over 100,000 people.

In the next 30 years (2000), Minot had grown

to 37,000 residents, and soon after with the formation of the Bakken in 2006, Minot's population began to rapidly grow. North Dakota was in the thick of an oil boom, despite a national recession. Minot's economy was thriving.

During 2011, growth halted when the Souris River overflowed its banks once again leaving many homes in Minot underwater forcing 11,000 residents to evacuate. When the water subsided, residents came together again to get the city back to 'normal' to begin healing after the devastation. Since the flood, Minot has gotten back to normal, and has started growing in population once again.

Minot's Visitor Center is housed in a beautiful Norwegian-style building located in the Scandinavian Heritage Park at 1020 South Broadway (Hwy 83) in Minot. The main level of the Visitors Center includes local, state, and regional travel information

such as maps, brochures, and guides as well as a unique gift shop offering many North Dakota made products, authentic Scandinavian specialty gifts, Norsk Høstfest items, apparel, keepsakes, souvenirs and more.

Visitors to Minot will find a wide variety of shopping and dining opportunities awaiting them, as well as lots to do. Over the last decade, Minot has changed a lot, with lots of new retail locations, restaurants, and hotels popping up in the city. Two of the biggest and more popular events that Minot is known for each year is their annual North Dakota State Fair in the summer, and Norsk Høstfest in the fall.

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Season's Greetings
CHRISTMAS 2021



Communities in the area have been finding all kinds of ways to celebrate Christmas. Shown here are some moments from Moosomin's Moonlight Madness, including horse-drawn hay rides and photos with the Grinch at Borderland Co-op Home Centre in Moosomin.

Merry Christmas

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Season's Greetings

CHRISTMAS 2021



Left: The town of Esterhazy held photos with Santa on December 2—the same day as their Moonlight Magic event. Kids could have their photos taken with Santa at the Legion Hall. Shown here are Aria and Austin with Santa.



Left: The town of Wawota held Santa photos and wagon rides on November 27. At left are Jaxon, Riley and Mattix Dykun getting their photo taken.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas!
 As you celebrate with those you love, may your Christmas season be filled with warmth, peace and joy!

Daryl Harrison
 Member of the Legislative Assembly
 Cannington Constituency

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Honourable Warren Kaeding, PAg
 MLA for Melville-Saltcoats

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan and my assistant, Rick McIntyre, I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

As we look forward to 2022, it is time to give thanks for the many blessings we enjoy in Saskatchewan.

I wish you all the best for a safe and happy holiday season.

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Wishing you a bright Christmas season and safe New Year!

Steven Bonk
 MLA for Moosomin

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Contact us

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Deadlines

Deadline for the Plain and Valley is 5 p.m. Wednesday for the following week's issue.

Online access

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Merry Christmas!
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Above: Photographer Ed James took photos of the some of the beautiful lit Christmas displays in yards and businesses around the village of Elkhorn, Manitoba recently. Elkhorn held its light up on December 4, with businesses offering specials that day, along with events around the village and a parade that night, officially kicking off the Christmas season!



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Next issue
 January 14
 Deadline:
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Craft brewery planned for Moosomin

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

Plans are in the works for a craft brewery that could be operating in Moosomin by 2023.

Plans are in the early stages, but Aaron Grandguillot and Gina Shepherd are planning to move from Ontario to run the operation. It will be a major transition for Grandguillot, who has left his career as a property claims adjuster to take a two-year brewmaster course.

"We're still pretty early days," says Grandguillot, "but the plan is for us to open a nanobrewery in town, probably in early 2023."

The brewery will include a tap room where people can buy and enjoy some of the beer produced onsite.

"We'll be focused mainly, at least to start, on producing everything on site and having a tap room where people can come and enjoy the product, buy some, and take some home. We're not looking to be a restaurant. We don't want to compete with the existing restaurants in town. I think we'll have to have some food options on site but we're still working on how we're going to do that. We're going to be brewing on site, producing everything as locally as possible and hoping everybody comes out and enjoys a beer."

The Shepherd family grows hops on the family farm southeast of Moosomin, and the hop farm led into the brewery.

"The idea started out indirectly because of the hop farm connection, but really I'm just a craft beer fan," says Grandguillot.

"We currently live in Ontario but we've lived in Vancouver and Moosomin previously, and Gina is from Moosomin. We're just into craft beer. During the pandemic everybody was reexamining their lives and realizing what's important.

"I wasn't overly happy in my previous career and I thought if I was going to do something, what would I want to do—and this is it, start a craft brewery. So I enrolled at Niagara College and I'm taking the Brew Master program. I'm learning how to brew and run a brew house and I'll be done that program at the end of next summer. Then the plan is to move to Moosomin and open our own shop. We'll have a small team on site brewing and serving and making the beer. My wife will be involved as well but she's also got her own career. So to start with at least while we get off the ground it's just going to be mostly me but we'll be moving back there."

What kind of brews is Grandguillot planning?
 "The best part of a craft brewery or a nanobrewery is you can make whatever people want really. We'll probably start off trying to make some good Pilsners and IPAs and stout. Once we see what's popular we'll go from there, or if anybody has a request, we should be able to make whatever people want."

Grandguillot plans to source as many of the ingredients locally as possible.

"There's so much quality barley in the province and there are a few malsters operating in the province. As much as we can, we want it to be a Saskatchewan product. We're going to be small, we're not going to be competing with Molsons or Great Western or any of the big guys. We're going to be small, we're going to be serving the local area and if we can I would like to support local farmers with the ingredients we put into our beer."

Grandguillot is looking forward to the challenge.

"I used to be nine to five or on-call and now I'm having fun learning about brewing. I haven't run my own business before and making beer is a totally different thing. I'm working with my hands instead of adjusting claims, it's a lot different, it's been a lot of fun learning to do it and I'm having a great time.

"I'm a full-time student now in my mid-30's which is definitely a change but they are training us in an operating brewery. So we are working, we're making beer on a system that produces as much as 600 litres per batch. So we're learning how to work within a commercial environment."

The design of the Moosomin facility is in the early stages, and will require approval from the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority.

"I want the brew house to be visible, I want people to



Hops growing at JGL Shepherd Farms south-east of Moosomin.

be able to come and take a look at the equipment and ask questions and learn about beer and how to make beer," says Grandguillot.

He says the initial focus will be on local sales.

"To start with our focus is going to be sales in our tap room and locally," he says.

"If restaurants want to put our beer on tap, I'm sure we can work that out and accommodate it without issue."

What are Grandguillot's favorite styles of beer?

"I have my favorite styles that I like to drink. I like a good pilsner, clean and crisp. I like having an IPA. We're coming into winter now so a stout is really good. These are all my favorite styles, so I'm sure I'll lean towards that but at the same time I'll be interested in hearing some people locally. What are your favorite kinds of beers and I'll try to learn how to make those and make them well and hopefully we have something for all different kinds, because when it comes to craft beer there's endless kinds. People can make pilsners or lagers or they'll make European style, Belgian ales or sours or biters. There's so much you can do with beer. I would like to be able to have an option for anyone who's curious about whether they have favorite styles already or they just want to try a bunch of new stuff."

Grandguillot says he's looking forward to getting the craft brewery, which will be located in Eastgate Business Park, up and running.

"I can't wait to get started," he says.

"To do it right you have to take your time and cross your T's and dot your I's but I wish it was early 2023 and I was done my program and we had a building ready to go, but that will come. There's a lot of work between now and then but I can't wait to get started."

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APAS says shipping delays cap off a tough year

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

With the recent heavy rainfall in B.C., the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) speaks about what their plans are in supporting farmers in the province during these tough times.

APAS' president Todd Lewis, speaks about what farmers should expect during the delays of grain transportation across the country.

What are the immediate impacts on the Prairie commodities in the market, based on the infrastructure closures in B.C.?

"Well we really have to see how it's going to affect the market, we're expecting some delays in shipping of course. The number of days it has been delayed always works it's way back to the farm gate. I think we're at the stage now where it's not something that can't be overcome, if they're able to resume as quickly as possible, hopefully repairs will be made in a safe and sound manner.

"The wild card in all of this is seeing more weather related events, there's talk about more rain on the coast for the next number of days and of course we are going into the winter period, the weather is always unpredictable around the winter time too. It's not unusual to have shipping delays in the winter but really some of the damage to the track and to the infrastructure is unprecedented. Of course we are hoping the repairs will keep going on as well as they have, and that we'll see some resumption in service this week some time."

How have the CP rail and CN rail, informed you about how this will impact grain shipments?

"We've been following what's been on the news, there have been a couple of government calls over the last week and so. We know the CN and CP are doing their best, it's their business to ensure that the train gets up and running as quickly as possible. We're satisfied that these are amazing jobs that they are doing, as far as engineering and the jobs trying to get product the places that have been mashed out. There's lots of issues as far as maintenance repairs, you know we trust the railroads to our best and of course, the safety of the workers who are trying to do these repairs, we just wish everyone well. We're satisfied, I think our producers are satisfied, an are being patient and just hoping for the best."

Do you have an idea of how long this impact will affect shipments of grain?

"Not yet, to be fair we'll see that as we go forward, particularly over the Christmas season is a little bit of a slower pace with grain shipments and we really don't see that changing much. After these repairs have been made, the system is going to take a while to get back, it's a big complicated system and it's going to take a while to get up to speed. We expect to see service restored as quickly as possible and resume to normal as quickly as possible, but it's going to take a while to get there and we understand that. We just hope that these repairs get made and do their best to get back to normal shipping, as soon as possible."

Aside from this recent issue, are shipments of grain a concern?

"I think the shipping season you know as we go forward, there's less crops to ship this year of course because of the drought. We want to ensure there's enough engine power there too to ensure this year's crop. Of course we're simply hoping to see labor and equipment maintained to a level that we're able to ship the crops in a timely fashion, really the whole shipping system is under stress coming out from Covid. There's been lots of backlogs. Grains are no different, we certainly hope to see shipping get back to normal sooner than later. We'll be keeping a close eye over the winter Winter."



APAS President Todd Lewis

In your opinion, does the federal or provincial government have a grain strategy for farmers in Saskatchewan?

"They certainly do, the provinces and the federal government. The federal government are the regulators of the railroads, we only have two railroads operating in this country, it's a duopoly. The minister of transport as well, the Canadian Rail Transportation (CRT), they all work together. There's also collaborations for disasters like this, there's the government in B.C. as well."

"I think governments want to see grains move as well, it's an important part of the Canadian economy, not just Western Canada, not just Saskatchewan but a huge part of our trade balance with our trading partners. It's important that we see grain move and I think we'll see the government step up as well to do their best to ensure we get through this difficult period."

In the long run, what needs to change to ensure Prairie commodities can get to the market on time?

"Well CP and CN rail both have winter grain movement plans and I think we need to see those plans being robust. That when the plans are put in place, the shipping schedule that is within those plans, if some of those plans don't occur we need to see why they didn't happen and just understand some of the problems that can arise. Over time we understand better when the railroads have problems, that these problems are recognized and alleviated as quickly as possible."

"This particular issue now with the heavy rain fall and the damages that arose, nobody can foresee that kind of damage and that kind of storm. But at the same time, as we come out of this and we hope to see collaboration between railroads, and shippers as well, the railroads, you know to ship product - to use other

routes. Through the United States for example and up to our northern import of Prince Rupert so to see grain move in a timely fashion I think we need some out of the box thinking perhaps because we see more damage from delays. It really is important that this year's crops get to our customers because Canada has a reputation of being a reliable source of product or international customers, it's important to maintain that reputation."

In general, how big of an issue is transportation?

"Well some years in the past we've had some terrible shipping years, its cost farmers billions in the past but you know all we can do is keep moving forward. It is an evolving industry and situation, so things like this weather situation, sure hasn't helped things but that's the whole part of trying to move grain in a country as big as Canada. With the weather and large distances, it has to be covered but the industry is resilient and the railroads are resilient, you know hopefully we get through this just like we have with other crises, and to continue to see improvements to see grain move. We have an increase in volumes within the radar this year with the lower productions, but over the last decade we've seen a huge increase in volumes and we'll continue to. We're just hoping that we continue to see par with the railroads, and it's a big part of their business, grain movement. For the entire economy it's a down, it's not just the grain system, it's a huge part of the economy. The port of Vancouver for instance is the main economic driver activity in the lower mainland, and grain moving through that port is very important."

With all things considered this year, what kind of year has it been for agriculture in Saskatchewan?

"It's been troublesome, without a doubt the drought has put lots of pressure on the livestock industry and grain producers. I think the silver lining has been in the grain side, on the side of the commodity prices, the increase in them as pushed it low to a point, but the shortage of seed and water in some cases, has been very difficult on the livestock sector like the cattle, the cattle sector in particular. Really it's affected all of agriculture, we have seen lower crop production of course and that affects producers, bottom lines. It has been a difficult year and really a lot of concern going into next spring, we need to see some significant soil and moisture, especially in the Western side of the province now. Going into the next spring as well, increased fertilizer pricing and input of crops, we'll be talking more and more about that as the spring comes up. It's been a difficult year unfortunately, but we'll make it through this last year, especially on the livestock side and the reduction of herd. We're just hoping we can produce stock, as much bringing stock as possible that can be maintained so we can get through this bad year that we just had."

"Farmers' mental health is always important, if farmers are feeling the pressure, talk to your financial institutions, communication is going to be the key. There's a lot of issues around the contracts with grain companies, so if farmers are feeling the pressure in some cases, talk it out with their creditors. The sooner the better, nobody likes a surprise and hopefully farmers will be able to get their finances in place now that harvest is done, some of the cattle robust gone to market at this point. Let's hope we can get farmers in position for next spring, to keep the task going and keep the industry continuing for the future."

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The trip to Alberta and getting work done

With harvest but a distant memory, the idea of a road trip to our neighboring province to the west was enticing. With some hesitation to travel in this continuing pandemic, we finally bit the bullet and made the decision to take some get-away time in before winter is fully upon us.

We booked some rooms and planned our departure day two or three weeks ahead of time. As the days grew closer we heard the dreaded word—blizzard. Really? It had been a full two years since we had even considered an out-of-province trip and now a blizzard was on its way. As it was we didn't have to make a decision about leaving on our planned departure day because all highways in the Regina vicinity were closed and there was no question—we were storm stuck in our own home. Fortunately the highways the following day were excellent, though the city of Regina appeared to have been inundated by snow. Every south-facing side of every building there had been plastered with snow from roof to ground, windows included. What a sight!

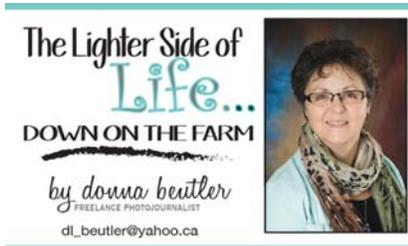
As we reached Alberta, having driven through the snow-free western part of Saskatchewan, we noticed tractors alongside the ditch up in the distance. And wouldn't you know, after travelling in post-blizzard Saskatchewan, there were mowers out cutting grass in Alberta!

As I drove, humming along to the country music playing on the radio, my hubby enjoying a siesta moment, I could see flashing lights in the distance. As I got closer, I saw a ginormous something on a long flat deck trailer, followed by the required "wide load" half-ton. I have no clue what it was, but to best describe it would be to say a huge (perhaps 20-foot) metal cube. Its sides stretched out over the flat deck by at least six feet on either side. And every now and then it wobbled quite extensively and then seemed to settle back in for the ride (clipping along at 100 km an hour, no less). I moved into the passing lane and slowed to allow the car ahead of me to pass this beast before I attempted to go past it myself. As I steadied my speed, this thing began to really wobble (as in nearly touching the pavement to its left, then to its right, back and forth). I feared for the car ahead, knowing it would be obliterated if this thing went over.

My heart began to race as I closed in on the moment I would start to pass, but the cube steadied itself and then, just as I began to speed up, the wobbling started again, only this time, sparks flew up from the highway as it touched down. I hit the brakes, my hubby sat straight up and the "wide-load" half-ton sped up beside me. By this time, my heart was in my chest as the ginormous cube settled back into some semblance of stability. I am pretty sure the wide-load driver next to me could feel the terror I was feeling.

My now-wide-awake guy had some words of wisdom for me as I was deciding whether to pass or drive the next hundred miles at less than speed-limit. "Put it to the floor when you go past," I was duly instructed and let me tell you, that's precisely what I did. I am pretty sure I was doing nothing less than rocket speed as I went past. Whew! That was just crazy, I thought as I continued on towards Calgary.

Our first overnight stop, with Covid precautions in mind, we chose to order supper delivered to our hotel. We gave our name, our phone number, our hotel location and room number but an hour later, we were still waiting. Hour and a quarter. Hour and a half. Hour and three-



quarters. That's when the call came asking why we hadn't picked up our food. "Didn't you tell me you offer delivery and then ask me for my hotel address and room number?" I asked. "Yes, I did," she responded. "So would you like me to change this then from pick up to delivery?" "No," I said. "Just keep it as delivery." "Okay," she answered and voila! a few minutes later, supper arrived! Needless to say, I wasn't sure this vacay was off to a very good start.

An overnight visit by one nine-year-old and two 10-year-old grandchildren a few weeks ago was a reminder that when you live on a farm and you are away from said farm, it's always on your mind anyhow, even if you are only 10. "We'll need to go out to the farm in the morning," one twin said to Gramps. "Yup, gotta feed the animals," the other said, "and gather the eggs." While they proceeded to give Grandpa instructions for morning chores in the absence of their parents, I paid little attention. I was already planning my laid-back, do-nothing Sunday.

I did suggest to them however, that we sleep in until 8:00 the next morning and have a leisurely breakfast together before anyone headed out to the farm. At 7:30 I heard someone (our 14-year-old granddaughter) let herself in (having heard it might be a good morning for a pre-hunting season drive to look for deer). By 8:00, when I got out of the shower, the kitchen was deserted. Empty breakfast plates sat on the table, the bacon and scrambled eggs were all gone and the syrup bottle sitting on the table was a reminder that not everyone eats their eggs with ketchup. Ahhh yes, the call of the farm, even if it is Sunday morning and even if you are just a 10-year-old kid.

The kids eventually returned home to snuggle under throws on the couch with iPads in hand. My question about what they wanted for lunch went unanswered; my question about what they wanted for Christmas was barely acknowledged so finally I said, "Deer hunting has been cancelled this year." Okay, now I had gotten a reaction—four sets of eyes instantly left their iPads and with shock in their faces, I asked what they wanted for lunch. "Grandma! That wasn't nice," said one as they realized I was just stringing them along.

With fall work on the farm more or less done (as if the work is really ever done), it was time to get those farm books done up to date. For some reason, that job is always back-burnered between May and October. Well October had come and gone and one thing I could say was that every drawer and every cupboard in my house had been cleaned and tidied. Every door had been washed from top to bottom. Every baseboard wiped down. Bathrooms tack-

led from corner to corner. Closets? Done. Mirrors? Done. Windows? Done. I volunteered to everyone I knew who needed a poster made or a wooden sign created that I had all the time in the world to do one for them. It's not like I didn't know I was procrastinating in getting those farm books entered, but what was it gonna take for me to get serious about actually getting them done. And then came the dare!

There's something about a dare such as that one from my hubby: "You'll never have them up to date by the time we leave for Alberta." And that's all it took! The part of farming that has always been the thorn in my side was completely and fully completed well before departure day.

A few years back, I had written a column based loosely on not being able to find my cooking oil on a busy harvest day as I was attempting to make supper for the field. The twins eventually told me, some three days later, that they had been playing store and it was under the dresser in the spare bedroom. As it was, the column ran in a fall ag issue of the Spectator/P&V and then, a year or two later, inadvertently ran again instead of a "new" one. I knew none of this until my next door neighbor, at a community function at the Legion Hall, tapped me on the back, leaned over and asked if I had found my oil yet. I laughed but at the time I had no idea what he was talking about.

Later, I discovered the story behind the story, so to speak, and over the past few years, it has become a bit of a one-liner by those who read these columns: "Have you found your oil yet?" Today the first person to ask me that question left this earth and my heart is broken. The fellow who brought us fresh garden veggies, cut our lawn if we were away, watered our flowers, welcomed us into their yard and their home for many a visit, delivered peach cobbles every single harvest and delectable Christmas goodies every Christmas no matter what, helped me raise the walls of my she-shed, shovelled many wheelbarrows of clay into the gaping hole between our homes after our new build, and in general just made our move to town so welcoming and so wonderful. Wolfie taught us how enjoyable it could be to just sit outdoors and enjoy a good old chit-chat, something we never did often enough on the farm.

And so, to all our farmer friends especially, but to everyone in general, take time in the busy-ness of life to enjoy some sit-down time for yourself, reach out to those who could use a helping hand and those who don't—after all there is nothing better than connecting with others for the simple enjoyment of a good ol' chit-chat. Until next time...

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SARM and SUMA launch Saskatchewan Rural Crime Watch Association

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Saskatchewan Rural Crime Watch Association has elected its first Board of Directors to assist local areas with the development and sustainability of local Crime Watch groups.

Ray Orb, the president of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), says rural crime across the province is a huge issue.

"For some time at least for a couple of years, rural crime is still an issue. We believe it's still too high, that's why we are addressing it by looking at this provincial wide association," says Orb.

"It's still a big problem, we still get a lot of reports and I know the RCMP do too. Whether it's about break-ins, property theft, vandalism, a lot of those numbers are too high. It's the safety and well-being of a lot of those rural people, in some areas they might not feel safe because that area may have had a lot of break-ins or a lot of thefts in their area. It's an issue, you know safety, damage to property in some cases it is pretty high. There's a variety of issues behind that but it's still a priority for us."

Orb says he hopes one of the outcomes to come from this provincial crime watch association is for citizens and organizations to be aware of what's happening in their rural areas.

"We're hoping for better ways to communicate with the local crime watch associations and the organizations, SARM, SUMA, the RCMP and the Ministry of Corrections as well. We're hoping to really get the information out there from the RCMP. One example is to keep your eyes and ears open, looking to see what's out there in rural areas."

"It might be a rash of break ins, something like that. The awareness is there and we're hoping to better facilitate this through this provincial light association by sharing this information, and creating better awareness along with providing feedback from RCMP," he says.

The most common crime that oc-



curs in rural areas in Saskatchewan is drug trafficking, Orb says.

"According to the RCMP, there's a certain amount of crime that's created by drug trafficking. There's people out there needing money because of the drug trades and there are a certain number of gangs out there as well. Honestly people travel across the country more now and in some cases, we are getting people from other provinces that are taking drugs across rural areas."

Through the Saskatchewan Crime Watch Association, citizens are able to report an incident to the association and from there, the RCMP will follow up on the case.

"It's very easy for citizens to report an incident. We work with the local RCMP attachment, if you want to go out to Rural Crime Watch Association then the individual will need to contact their local RCMP attachment," he says.

To participate in the program, Rural Crime Watch volunteers will have to complete security checks with their local RCMP. The role of members is to observe, record, and immediately report all unusual

suspicious vehicles or occurrences to their local RCMP detachment, or 911 in the case of emergencies. The RCMP, in return, will inform the Rural Crime Watch group when there is criminal activity in the area.

"By reporting suspicious activity immediately to the RCMP or 911, volunteers become the extra eyes and ears for local police when they may not be in their area," says Orb.

This non-profit association led by SARM, SUMA, Rural Crime Watch members, the RCMP, and the Ministry of Corrections and Policing is a community-led and police-supported program dedicated to preventing and reducing criminal behaviour. It's an initiative both SARM and SUMA hope community members will actively support by becoming volunteers.

"Rural Crime Watch has already been proven successful. Statistics show that areas with organized Crime Watch programs tend to have a significant reduction in criminal activity, including theft of equipment and grain, vandalism, dumping of garbage, break-and-enters, and cattle rus-

ting," Orb says.

With this association currently in effect, he says he's hoping to reduce rural crime across the province. "I'm hoping this does make a difference for when we look at the stats for rural crime numbers, that when they are reporting the numbers, we are seeing a reduction. I think to some extent they are making a difference already, because there are a number of RMs already working. But I'm hoping that we see a larger drop, especially when we look at the stats now compared to a year before or a couple of years before, we want to see a difference. That's really our goal," Orb says.

"We're happy about this and hope it makes a difference, there's still a lot of work ahead of us but we've got lots of help from our local crime watch associations already. We've got people who have been really promoting this. Part of this crime watch network would be either councillors, reeve's in the RM and some local people too that are helping us promote this. As well the RCMP too. We are really thankful to them and the ministry, also SUMA, we are really thankful for working together on this project."

Other local crime associations, and organizations like SUMA and the RCMP will be working very closely with the Board of Directors of the Saskatchewan Rural Crime Watch Association.

"Our communities have always looked out for each other," says SUMA President, Rodger Hayward. "We share a common goal of wanting safer homes and safer communities, and starting a Rural Crime Watch program in your area makes that goal actionable. Simply put, working together helps the police solve and prevent crime, which makes our communities safer places to live."

The Rural Crime Watch Association is already in Effect, as a team of Board of Directors is in motion.

The inaugural Board of Directors meeting is being planned for the near future where a President and Vice-President will be elected.

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For further information or an appointment to view,
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12-1c

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For further information or an appointment to view,
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12-1p



The Roquette pea protein plant in Portage la Prairie

World's largest Pea Protein Plant opens at Portage

BY CHELSEA KEMP

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Portage la Prairie celebrated the opening of the world's largest pea protein processing plant in November.

The "Plant for the Future" was established by Roquette to meet the rising demand for alternative proteins across the world, said the company's CEO, Pierre Courduroux.

"We see this as a transformational event in our history and a boost to the global plant-based food sector," Courduroux said. "Diets have changed considerably in recent years, and the desire for alternative proteins continues to grow. Our company is proud to bring this amazing new facility online to serve demand in North America and around the world."

A virtual grand opening and press conference was held Wednesday to celebrate the opening of the plant. The event included information about pea protein, cooking tips using the plant, and appearances from Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield, Courduroux, Roquette senior vice-president Jeremy Burks and Roquette's Canadian

managing director, Dominique Baumann.

Roquette has worked closely with food leaders to develop new products that aid in the development of new plant-based cuisine, Courduroux said, and these steps are creating more sustainable food for a healthier planet.

Demand for pea protein has been growing — multiple industry estimates expect an annual global growth rate between 15 and 24 per cent over the next decade.

He added with the establishment of the plant in Portage la Prairie, Roquette is the only company with major pea protein facilities on both sides of the Atlantic, which will aid in its ability to meet expanding consumer demands.

Portage la Prairie was chosen as the site for the plant because the region produces the most peas in the world, the city is close to Winnipeg and has easy access to the United States — shortening supply chains and securing access to a high-quality product.

"It really positions us as a true leader in this plant protein market to have that presence on both sides of the ocean,"

Courduroux said. "This is going to be a fantastic tool for Roquette to continue building this future with our customers and partners."

The 200,000-square-foot plant in Portage can process 125,000 tons of yellow peas per year. When combined with Roquette's plant in France, the company's capacity now rises to 250,000 tons of peas per year.

With this new facility, Roquette has largely exceeded its \$713-million (500 million euro) investment in plant proteins it had targeted in the 2015-2020 period.

The plant sits on 60 acres in Portage, and the facility is looking to expand in regards to future production on an available 200 acres they have purchased.

It will have a full staff of 120 — 114 positions have already been filled.

"It's a great feeling for us. It's been a long journey. It's not necessarily been easy all the way, but I'm so proud when I look at the achievement of the Roquette team," Courduroux said.

He added it has been a challenge scaling up production at the company, given the grand opening and construction of the plant took place during COVID-19.

Burks said they were able to learn from their operations in China and Europe and quickly adapt protocols to ensure the safety of workers.

The opening of the plant marked an important milestone for the company and the industry. He said Roquette is acting as a pioneer in the Westman area and will help grow the industry as a whole working as a leader and partner with farmers.

Burks said it has been a challenge ex-

panding the use of peas, especially because there has been a marked effort at the company to ensure nothing goes to waste.

He added the pea processor is always exploring proteins to work with and regularly deals with peas, wheat and wheat proteins.

The focus at the Portage plant will be peas.

"Peas provide a tremendously versatile protein with many different applications, so that's going to keep us pretty busy in the short term," Burks said.

Global demand for the plant protein is expected to grow, he added, describing it as a "fast-moving target."

The growth is expected to be sustainable for the future, and the Portage plant will aid Roquette in meeting consumer needs. The main market for the protein coming out of the Portage plant is human nutrition, but he did not rule out expanding into pet and animal feed.

Roquette is working across the supply chain and is looking to source a variety of peas for its plant, Burks said.

The company has a farm where different varieties of peas are grown so they can better understand their performance in a variety of conditions. This is also done for other crops.

"We work in close collaboration with the farmers ... and give them what we've learned with our own experience," Burks said. "This has to be a good deal for everybody, and we believe that by helping on the production side of our raw material, the growth of the pea, that we can make some progress there for the benefit of the growers."



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First win by a woman, first win with Clydesdale team: Michelle Newton wins Chore Team Competition at Agribition

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK
Moosomin came out strong in the Chore Team competition at Agribition this year.

Michelle Newton won the competition—the first time it has been won by a woman and the first time it has been won with a team of Clydesdales—and Amanda van de Kerckhove came in sixth.

"I had a really good couple of days there," says Michelle.

"What they did this year at Agribition is, they had to change it up a little bit to combat Covid and so they tried to get most of our competition in, in one day. So what they did is they set up a pattern. So you have to drive your horses, ground drive them to a little skid that's heavier and you drag that, you hook to that, and then you go hook to the wagon and you can't cross lines and go through an alley in a figure-eight, you have to dock, do all these things in a pattern.

"Then they time you also so you can only do it in so many minutes and you get points for each obstacle that you complete and how you do it.

"Then at the end they rate you. There were 12 teams total that they accepted entries for. Normally on other years they do a pattern competition and then they do a speed race where it's fun and you throw bales and they do a water race to see how much water you can keep in, but they didn't do the fun events this year, they just did two rounds of the pattern—one round in the morning and one round in the afternoon.

"Twelve teams did the patterns and then at a dinner break we brought in some farm equipment, some drills and stuff like that just for an audience pleaser, just to



Michelle Newton took first place in the Chore Team Competition at Agribition this year. It's the first time the competition has been won by a woman, and the first time it has been won with a team of Clydesdales. Inset is her championship buckle.

show people what else we do.

"Then they did round two of the pattern and then they placed the top six and I won first place for top six and then the finals were Tuesday at noon. So six teams did the pattern again on Tuesday at noon and that's when I won the championship."

Michelle says the competition isn't something horses can be specifically trained for.

"You work with your horses,

you don't necessarily train them for each obstacle, you just work with them, spend time with them just like any riding or any animal sport.

"You just work with them and not every obstacle is the same, each competition has their own pattern. So you get there and they tell you the pattern and that's when you know what you have to do.

"I was really lucky, I also got

chosen to be Teamster of the Year too, chosen by the judges and committee members. So I got an extra prize on top of the prizes, so it was really cool."

Michelle has been around horses all her life but has been working with Clydesdales for just a few years.

"I grew up with light horses, and I got my first team of horses just seven years ago and then from there just started doing

competitions. It was just some place to go to get together with other people that drive, and you learn things and have a good time and it's a lot of fun. Like when you're around the people that enjoy doing what you do. It was really good."

What does she enjoy most about working with Clydesdales? "Oh, their mannerisms," she says. "They've just got such big hearts. They just do what you want them to do and try their best. My mares are amazing, they give me everything they've got.

"It's my therapy. Some people hunt or golf, that kind of thing, and I have my team of horses. When you're having a good day or a bad day, that's what you go to. It's my break from reality."

Michelle says she was happy to see how well another competitor originally from the local area, Amanda Van De Kerckhove, did at the competition.

"She's in Saskatoon now. She made the top six and she placed in sixth overall out of the 12 at the end of the two days. So she did really good, too!"

Before this year, the best Newton has done in the competition is fourth overall.

"I was tied for third, but because your pattern plus time, the other guy was slightly faster so I ended up in fourth and that's the best I've ever done.

"I've won a few banners in the water race before, but never in the actual pattern. The pattern one is the hardest one, it's the most stressful I guess you could say. The feed and the water race are more entertainment and fun, it's not quite as stressful.

"So I'm very happy with how it went this year, I was really lucky!"

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Applications open for NextGen ag mentorship

Applications for the Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship Program (Next Gen) are now being accepted. Next Gen is delivered by Canadian Western Agribition (CWA).

"Investing in the next generation of agricultural producers is critical to helping the Canadian industry grow and thrive," said Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. "The connections these young people make will help them gain knowledge they can apply to their operations and become industry leaders of tomorrow."

"Ensuring security in the sector and contributing to economic growth is best achieved by mentoring future leaders," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "This program builds leadership capacity through knowledge and first-hand experiences, which is critical to a strong agriculture industry in Saskatchewan. Our government is proud to support such an important initiative."

The program develops young leaders and prepares them to take on active roles in industry leadership, governance and efforts



Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit (at right) with participants of the Next Gen mentorship program, which is now accepting applications.

to build public trust through the pairing of each successful applicant with an established member of the agriculture industry.

The federal and provincial governments will provide \$100,000 to support this round of mentees as they continue their leadership

journey in the agriculture sector. "Agribition is honoured to help pave the way for the next generation of leaders in agriculture,"

CWA President Chris Lees said. "Over the past few years we've seen valuable connections made between mentees and mentors through this outstanding program."

This year, eight applicants will be selected and paired with a mentor for an 18-month mentorship experience beginning in February 2022. Applicants should have clear developmental goals and exhibit strong leadership potential. More information about the program is available online at saskatchewan.ca/CAP or agribition.com/get-involved/next-gen-program.

Next Gen is funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year, \$3 billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen and grow Canada's agriculture, agri-food and agri-products sectors.

This commitment includes \$2 billion for programs cost-shared on a 60/40 basis by the federal and provincial/territorial governments that are designed and delivered by provinces and territories.

Sask. Agriculture Minister keeping an eye on grain transportation

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Saskatchewan's Minister of Agriculture, David Marit, spoke with the World-Spectator in November about how producers are dealing with the current issues of transportation, due to the recent flooding in B.C.

With the closure of railroads, some Prairie elevators are shipping just a fraction of normal shipments.

What fallout are you expecting for farmers, from B.C.'s transportation issues?

"We're obviously keeping on track with it, in fact I had a call with B.C.'s agriculture minister this morning to reach out to her and ask if there's anything we can do to assist and she said thank you. We've been texting back and forth the last couple of days about the transportation issue. On the transportation file we obviously have our officials, along with the ministry of highways and are constantly in communication with CN and CP just to see how they are doing and the challenges that they are having around it as well," he says.

"Obviously we are monitoring it on a daily basis and communicating, both railways have been very co-operative and communicating back to us on the status of when they get a major repair done, where they're moving to next, and the time frame. Obviously if they get more rain then there's challenges of how to get the work done while it's raining, stuff like that. But we've had live communication with both railways."

Knowing that there is a possibility of flooding like this happening in BC, do we need to look at further transportation options?

"We've always said that, we also know that in British Columbia they are having a fuel shortage as well. So instead of depending on the rail, there are pipelines that should be used to get fuel to the coast. Saskatchewan has been a strong advocate for that. As far as the grain logistics, Vancouver has been a major port but Prince Rupert is also a major port as well, and can be utilized. There's always options that I'm sure the industry is looking at, and we leave that up to the grain companies and railways to work that out on how they are going to deliver the product and to where."

How will this issue impact farmers?

"I've been in discussion with the railways just a matter of a few weeks ago and in discussion product was moving well. We thought the tonnages were moving well and the car supply was there. So is there enough product sitting on the other side of Abbotsford that is ready to go in to ship, is there product in Prince Rupert, obviously there's a lot of product going to the U.S side as well because it's a major importer of our grains as well. We're seeing that, the industry is keeping contact by communicating with our stakeholders and usually what they do if they are having challenges or concerns, they reach back to us."

Do you think it will have more or less of an impact than it would normally because of the lower yields this year?

"It's too early to tell yet, I know that when the first rainfall hit into B.C., the public was concerned that the railways would be shut down for an indefinite period of time. You know we reached out to the railways and if everything went well, it wasn't going to be a matter of weeks it

would be a matter of days. Obviously they are challenged by the weather as well, so we're just keeping in communication with them and they're keeping in communication with us on the status of their infrastructure and the repairs that they are doing."

On another issue, what feedback are you receiving from producers on the Drought Response Initiative?

"For the most part, very good responses. You look at the crop insurance side, it will probably be the highest payout in crop insurance in Saskatchewan history. I think that just speaks well on the program we have in place, about the coverage that we have. That's one thing our government has done by making those programs available, both for the grain and the livestock folks as well because we also introduced rainfall insurance, forage insurance, for the livestock sector as well. I talked to some ranchers who are in those programs and they are going to receive funds to help them buy feed and things like that."

"We just had a reception here last night in the legislature. A lot of livestock organizations and stake holders were in the room, I talked to a lot of them and most of the people are saying thank you. I think that's what I'm hear-

ing most of all is thank you for the programs that we did put in place, that did give them the ability to go try and source feed."

Is that program enough to support local farmers' loss from the drought?

"Yes I do, we made it pretty clear on the crop insurance side. Like I said, we got the highest coverages on record and the payout is obviously going to be significant as well. From the livestock sector, there was a couple of groups that I met, the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association who I met last night and they were very thankful for the \$200 they had that was going to them the ability to go and buy feed. I had quite a few ranchers come up and shake my hand and say thank you very much. I take it from that, that we've done a great job on it."



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Ag business case competition engages post-secondary students on campuses across Canada

Program will introduce students to the agriculture career track as they tackle complex business challenges in the industry

The Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council (CAHRC) is pleased to announce the launch of a new partnership with the Business and Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) to create an agriculture-focused business case competition for Canadian post-secondary students from any discipline. This partnership is made possible through generous support from the Government of Canada.

The goal of this partnership is to increase the number of post-secondary students considering agriculture as a career choice. Research conducted by CAHRC has shown that there will be a need for 123,000 more workers in agriculture by 2029. Innovative programs such as this one are essential to draw the next generation of Canadians into the agri-workforce.

"There is a real need to explore untapped labour sources as we look to the future of the agri-workforce," said Jennifer Wright, Acting Executive Director at CAHRC. "Agriculture offers outstanding opportunities and we need to expand awareness of these opportunities to students in more general disciplines such as science, information technology, business or marketing. We are excited to introduce post-secondary students to the rewarding careers available across the value-chain."

Launched in fall 2021, the business case competition is co-designed with BHER, students, educators and employer advisory groups. Working to solve real-life business problems, students from agriculture and non-agriculture backgrounds, such as STEM and business facilities, will collaborate, network and connect with employers involved in the project.

Under-represented groups, such as women, newcomers, Indigenous students and students with disabilities are encouraged to join the business case competition and bring diversity and innovation to solving agriculture's unique challenges. Participation in the program will

benefit students, educators and employers alike as they share ideas and expand networks for future career opportunities.

"The Canadian agriculture industry is a primary economic driver for Canada but faces exceptionally high job vacancies and Covid-19 has amplified the impact of this," added Wright. "The opportunity to partner with BHER to engage agriculture and non-agriculture students alike in building awareness of the industry and job-ready skills is exciting and will have a positive impact on the industry."

Three post-secondary campuses have signed on to take part in the business case competition this fall including: Fanshawe College in London, Ontario; Lakeland College in Vermillion, Alberta; and Northern Farm Training Institute in Hay River, Northwest Territories. Following the completion of campus-based competitions, the top teams from each school will take part in a national competition in winter 2022. There is still time to sign your school up for the campus competition. Please contact CAHRC to find out more.

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Time is of the essence

Former MP and Zoologist Robert Sopuck says Chronic Wasting Disease found in the region is a serious threat

BY RACHEL FLINTOFT
CROSSROADS THIS WEEK

A cervid population reduction program is in the planning stage to reduce the population of all deer, elk, moose, and caribou in response to the first positive confirmation of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) found in the province last month.

According to Robert Sopuck, a retired Member of Parliament (MP) for the constituency of Dauphin-Swan River-Neepawa, a number of options are still being considered; however, he believes the time to act is now.

"I know that the Province of Manitoba immediately sought out the advice of experts from other areas that have been affected by CWD," Sopuck explained. "This was a positive first step, since learning from what has worked in other jurisdictions allows Manitoba to leapfrog up the learning curve and institute a control program expeditiously."

CWD is a terminal disease of the central nervous system in the cervid (deer) family. The disease is caused by one or more strains of self-propagating proteins, called prions. The prions, once transmitted, begin to replicate, first in the immune system (lymph nodes and tonsils) and later, in the brain, spinal cord and other organs.

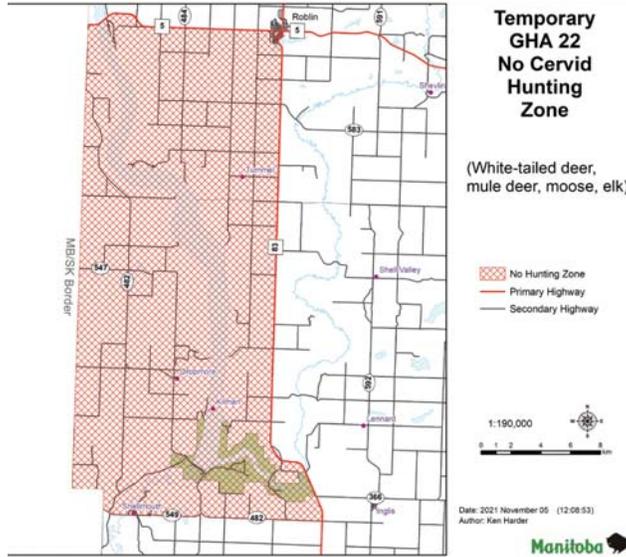
Since discovering a CWD-positive case on Oct. 14 in a male mule deer around Dropmore, a temporary hunting ban was implemented for GHA 22 zone, located west of Highway 83, and up to the Saskatchewan border, between Roblin and Shellmouth. Although no other cases have since been detected, the zone noted has been closed to all hunting until a sustainable plan to directly combat CWD can be implemented.

Bringing significant experience, Sopuck has a B.Sc in Zoology and an M.S. in Fisheries Science, having conducted many fish and wildlife studies/projects in Manitoba, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Saskatchewan, and New York State. As a prior MP, Sopuck was active in the provincial project to eliminate Bovine Tuberculosis within this direct region.

"In my view, time is of the essence. While I do not wish to inflame the issue, a CWD epidemic in Manitoba has the potential to curtail or even eliminate deer hunting in Manitoba," he stated. "Manitoba is in a unique position to arrest or eliminate CWD at this early stage, and if immediate action is not taken this disease could spread into other species beyond mule deer."

He added that it is imperative that the Agriculture and Resource Development (ARD) Minister Ralph Eichler heed the advice of scientists who are strongly recommending a coordinated, scientifically sound, cervid population control/reduction program in the affected area.

"Failure to do so would not only be a dereliction of duty, but could have catastrophic consequences for wildlife in Manitoba," Sopuck indicated. "This program, under the direction of Minister Eichler, needs to be led, managed and co-



The currently closed hunting zone GHA 22

ordinated, by the experts in the Manitoba government including conservation officers, wildlife biologists, and the appropriate veterinary staff."

Sopuck added that the program could enlist volunteer hunters to assist but they must be experienced, have all the requisite safety training and firearms permits, be expert marksmen, and be capable of following detailed instructions.

"This is not a hunting trip, but a well-managed population reduction," he said. "Every animal taken must be sampled and tested for CWD to determine infection rates and distribution of the disease. The meat from all healthy animals can be distributed to those people most in need. The fact that this region had an early snowfall will greatly aid the effectiveness of the herd reduction and sampling program."

Currently underway, the province has executed cervid population surveys to help determine and assess the effectiveness of management actions. Manitoba's CWD prevention program includes mandatory surveillance as well as prohibiting the import of native/exotic cervids, the import of unprocessed carcasses, the possession of substances containing bodily fluids, feeding of cervids in the surveillance zone and prohibiting baiting province wide.

"The department is also continuing to test samples for CWD in the mandatory and voluntary surveillance zones along the Saskatchewan and United States borders," a provincial spokesperson said. "In

anticipation of additional sampling, the province has added two new CWD sample drop-off-depots (Ethelbert and Wayseecappo First Nation) to make it easier for hunters to drop off samples from these areas, and more depot locations could be added in the future if needed."

Outlined on the CWD information page, in early stages infected animals can appear normal, while also spreading the disease. As the disease progresses, animals tend to be less alert, and fearful, with a general unhealthy look and obvi-

ous weight loss. As it progresses, infected animals become very thin and uncoordinated, with drooping ears and heads, are unaware of their surroundings and often have excessive drooling.

Infected animals can spread CWD through direct (animal-to-animal) contact transmission or by indirect transmission (saliva, feces, urine, or an infected animal carcass). There is no cure for CWD, and it is always fatal.

"Based on the limited research I have done, it appears that CWD is not transmissible to humans or domestic livestock but appears to be confined to both Manitoba deer species, plus elk and moose," Sopuck explained. "It must be noted that mule deer seem to be the most susceptible. There have been no other CWD cases detected in Manitoba's white-tailed deer, elk, or moose."

There is also an immediate relation concerning CWD and grain exports, noting that some countries are considering banning grain imports from jurisdictions that have CWD - Norway being an example.

"This provides further urgency for Manitoba to deal with this issue now rather than wait," Sopuck said. "If Minister Eichler institutes strict and effective control measures to drastically reduce mule deer numbers across Manitoba and to have an intensive control program of all cervids (deer, elk and moose), to begin immediately, I am confident that CWD will not spread. However, that conclusion is predicated on a professional and well-planned population reduction program to begin immediately."

The province outlined that ongoing communication and updated information will be accessible, and importance made for CWD awareness, education, and public action.

The exact date for the cervid population reduction program is unknown, and it had not been implemented at the time of press.

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