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Plain & Valley

April 2023 • Volume 16 Number 4

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba



This photo shows the fireworks over Moosomin Lake in 2019, the last time a fireworks show was held at Moosomin Regional Park.

Kim Poole photo

Drone shows, fireworks for August Long at Moosomin Regional Park

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

For the first time since before Covid restrictions shut things down in 2020, the skies above Moosomin Lake will come alive with fireworks on the August long weekend this summer.

There will be both drone shows and fireworks shows on Saturday and Sunday nights on the August long weekend as the Living Skies Come Alive once again.

"On both Saturday and Sunday night there will be a drone show that will be followed by fireworks," said Jamie Hintz of the organizing committee.

"We were going to do just the drones but we thought it might not draw enough people. Everybody loves the fireworks so we're going to do them too."

"North Star Fireworks will be doing the shows. Patrice Guy is working with them now. He ran the Philippines

fireworks show here a few years ago. They work together and started the drone company. They're the company that did the drone show for the Grey Cup. They seem to be pretty excited to come out here because they say that they've never really done that before with the two together, the drone show and the fireworks show the same night."

There will be some differences between the shows on Saturday and Sunday nights. "The fireworks will be a lot more on Sunday night as a finale," said Hintz.

Two popular Saskatchewan party bands will be playing at Moosomin Regional Park for the Living Skies Come Alive weekend—Odd Man Out and The Blu Beach Band.

Odd Man Out is a dance/party band based in the Grayson area of East Central Saskatchewan. They travel around the province playing the Saskatchewan cabaret scene and

many of the "A" Circuit clubs.

The Blu Beach Band has become hugely popular in southeast Saskatchewan in recent years. The indie rock group was originally based out of Langenburge and Esterhazy, made up of Carter Vosper, Remi Berthelet, Eric Vosper, and Riley Buchberger. In 2022 they released their second album titled 'A Dog's Breakfast' followed by a summer long tour.

The weekend will also include vendors and food trucks. The park is actively looking for vendors for August 5-6 and interested vendors can email moosominregional-park@sasktel.net for more information.

And while serviced campsites have all been booked for that weekend, there are still non-serviced sites available. These sites can be booked through the Moosomin Regional Park Office by calling 306-435-3531.

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Saskatchewan 2023 budget:

Esterhazy health facility approved

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

Saskatchewan's provincial budget unveiled March 22 includes funds for planning a new integrated health care facility for Esterhazy, as well as \$10 million to construct a new long-term care facility in Grenfell.

The announcement of the planning funding for Esterhazy comes as a relief for many people in Esterhazy, where people have been raising funds for the facility for many years.

Rural and Remote Health Minister Everett Hindley said the community made its case and convinced the government a new facility is needed.

"There has been a lot of community engagement. I had the opportunity earlier last summer to go out and visit the folks and the leadership in Esterhazy, to tour both of those facilities and spend about half a day there.

"I knew coming into this role that this was one of the projects that was near the top of the list. We do have a number of projects that need to be undertaken whether they're hospitals, health centres, or long term care facilities across Saskatchewan. In this particular case, Esterhazy made a compelling argument. So we'll be providing \$250,000 in this budget to essentially green light that project and begin the work that needs to be done to start towards a new integrated facility for Esterhazy.

"These are facilities that are—and I saw it firsthand—that are in need of replacement. St. Anthony's Hospital was built in 1966 and it's rated in fairly poor condition as a result of that. The special care home was built in 1969 so it has also seen better days.

"In both of those facilities. There's money being put into maintenance to keep them running but what's really needed there is a new facility."

"It's just great community collaboration and regional collaboration towards, not only fundraising, but advocacy for this very important project. We as a government are very proud to support that, initiate that project and get it going."

Hindley said he learned a lot when he visited Esterhazy in person last summer.

"I learned a couple of things on the visit to Esterhazy," he said. "One was being able to walk through the facilities and talk to the amazing staff that work there providing care, both in the long term care facility and also in the hospital, being able to see the condition of the facility and to see some of the challenges there that staff, residents and patients are dealing with day-to-day.

"Just as importantly, what I was able to see when I was visiting Esterhazy this summer, alongside the MLA there, Warren Kaeding, who's just been an excellent, super



Officials at the 2023-24 Provincial Budget Release that announced funding for Esterhazy's new healthcare facility. **From left:** Melville-Saltcoats MLA Warren Kaeding, Esterhazy Economic Development Director Tammy Macdonald, Don Hood with St. Anthony's Hospital Foundation, Don Bernath with St. Anthony's Hospital Foundation, Esterhazy Mayor Grant Forster, and Saskatchewan Health Minister Everett Hindley.

strong advocate for this project and for that community and the area, was the amazing community commitment to this, from local leadership, the residents of Esterhazy and the surrounding area. I understand that over \$10 million has been raised by local communities and the foundation thus far. So that financial commitment to it is clearly evident and in addition to that, support from companies like Mosaic who are making substantial investments into that area, into the mine operations there—this is a priority for them as well."

Hindley said work now begins on planning for the new facility.

"Today's announcement is essentially the green lighting of the new project, the new integrated facility for Esterhazy. What will happen next is that officials from the ministry will be connecting with local leadership at the town, at the foundation level and with others to engage with those who are operating the existing facilities about what the next steps are.

"There's a lot of work that needs to happen now in

terms of planning and determining what the project is going to look like, what the scope is going to be, and the number of acute and long term care beds that are needed, not just now but in the future.

Continued on page 7

Steven Bonk, MLA
for Moosomin Constituency

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Moosomin named one of top 5 places to live in Saskatchewan

Sam Mattie created a video featuring his opinion of the top five places to live in Saskatchewan, which includes Moosomin at number five.

Three of the top five are in southeast Saskatchewan. Mattie includes certain stats in his videos, including crime rates, average incomes and housing costs, which explains why southeast Saskatchewan communities ranked so high.

Kevin Weedmark and Sierra D'Souza Butts reached out to Mattie to ask him about the videos.

First of all, how did Moosomin make the list of The Top 5 Places to Live in Saskatchewan?

So it's kind of funny. I go to school in Nova Scotia and my first year I met some friends that I live with now in my fourth year. One of my roommates is actually from Manor. In 2021 we drove from Nova Scotia out west with one of our other roommates who's from Alberta. So I offered to come out with them to help them with the driving and my friend from Manor said "Well, when you come through you've gotta stop at our place and look at the farm." So we did and we visited the farm and then we booked a hotel in Moosomin. We stayed at the Best Western, ate supper and went out a little. It's just such a nice, small town. At that time I was just sort of getting into making the videos and talking about places and I took a lot of pictures, footage and all that stuff.

I knew that when I got around to making a video about Saskatchewan that Moosomin was one hundred per cent going to be on the list. It was kind of just like a fluke because we were looking for a town that had a Best Western because I had points built up for free nights, so I was looking for one that was somewhat close. It's kind of just random how it happened but I'm glad we stopped.

We ate supper at The Red Barn and we were only there a night but it was a lot of fun—it was definitely one of the highlights of our trip.

So have you done a lot of travelling around Canada?

Yeah, so I've actually been to every single province and one of the territories, I've been to Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories. I haven't done much in British Columbia because one of my roommates, he's from the Banff area so we just drove into B.C. a little bit. I can say that I've been there and visited but I haven't been to Vancouver or Victoria. I'm really hoping to get there soon.

How did you start this whole thing and why are you



Sam Mattie named Moosomin as one of the top five places to live in Saskatchewan. Kevin Weedmark took this photo of a sunrise in Moosomin last summer.

doing these travel videos?

I'm just really interested in geography and travelling is my favourite thing to do in the world. I played hockey growing up and you do a lot of travelling for tournaments and stuff so that's where I started to get the urge to travel. Ever since I stopped playing hockey I kind of wanted to find a new pastime, and with my roommates here we're all really into the whole travel/geography/history thing, so I figured that we might as well start talking about it.

The first two videos that I made were pretty much back to back. One was on the U.S. State of Arkansas and the other one was about Quebec. When you're starting out you have no viewers or anything like that, so it's kind of just a matter of luck that they get found. So I kind of just made them and then left them for a couple of months

and then it was actually when I was on the road trip out west, once I made it to my roommate's place in Alberta, I hadn't been on in a couple of weeks and I went on to check things and my notifications just blew up.

My two videos had around 10,000 views a piece and I was just getting comment after comment after comment. Then the algorithm on YouTube swings it to the rest of the videos and then I started to get a little more consistent with it.

It's been a bit hard over the last couple of years to stay on top of it, especially with school and I work full-time during the summer, so I haven't been necessarily as consistent as I would like to be with it. But it's just been really interesting to watch them.

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Around 70 people from the community came out on March 22, to hear community builder and internationally known speaker Doug Griffiths speak about collaboration, co-operation, and the future of communities, at the Moosomin Conexus Convention Centre last Wednesday evening.

Community builder Doug Griffiths speaks about regional collaboration in Moosomin

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

On March 22 at the MCC Centre in Moosomin, best-selling author of 13 Ways to Kill your Community Doug Griffiths, gave an engaging and enriching presentation on how communities can improve their economic growth by collaborating with their neighboring communities.

A few years ago, Griffiths came to Moosomin to give a presentation based on his book. This year his presentation—I've seen the enemy and it's my mom—focused on collaboration, co-operation, and the future of communities.

He said in an interview following the presentation that the response he received from the community was positive.

"(People were) talkative. People were louder than I remember, but I also think that's because of post-pandemic," said Griffiths.

"We're much more desperate to talk to each other so that was good.

"There was a lot of laughs and a lot of positivity. A lot of people were nodding, smiling, and laughing.

"I've talked in communities before where you can tell they are holding themselves back because there's still a lot of arms crossed. There's sort of the 'hmm he's talking about me,' but I didn't get a sense from a single person here that looked like that. It was good."

During his presentation, Griffiths mentioned that people from communities he has visited recently, have pointed out how well Moosomin is doing in terms of growth.

"I have talked to a lot of communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, all the way to the Ontario border and all the way to the Alberta border," he said.

"And, probably north towards Saskatoon, of course the further you get the less common it is, but it's surprising how many people I've heard say, 'look what's going on in Moosomin, look at what they're doing there,' which is why every time I come through I

drive through to see if I can catch something.

"I'm going to admit, I don't see a lot that's different. Maybe the recreation stuff and the MCC facility, but I don't see a lot difference which tells me it's the people that they're talking about. Because there's obviously a different message going out, and that's part of the external marketing and branding I talked about.

"If people are being positive and exciting, that could be really infectious."

"If you go east into Manitoba, when I interviewed people in a community there when we were working there and having a discussion about their future, there were so many people who said 'why can't we be like Moosomin? Look what's going on in Moosomin.'

"They have a lot of stuff on the highway, I think it was more about the can-do attitude more than the stuff that's actually taking place. And I hear that a lot, so that bodes well."

Positive attitude goes a long way, says Griffiths

Griffiths was asked what he thinks makes that difference for Moosomin to stand out.

"A few people in the community," he said.

"You put 100 people in a room and if the first ones negative it can be infectious. It comes down to just a few people.

"When I was in politics on my first day in caucus someone said you'll know who to listen to, and you'll figure it out right away.

"I watched, someone would put up their hand and it would be their turn to talk and half of the room would go get coffee, but for someone else it would be their turn to talk and everyone would sit down, the room was dead quiet.

"If you have the right people who are talking who are positive, it becomes infectious and it changes the culture.

"It's why one of the new books I'm working on is about the 13 neuroses of communities.

Continued on page 7

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Directors of southeast Sask daycares say \$10 a day fee will cost parents more

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

On March 6, the Government of Saskatchewan announced that parent fees for regulated full time child care in the province will be reduced to \$10 a day starting April 1, 2023.

However, directors for daycares across the southeast area of the province have stated that the general \$10 a day fee will force centres to charge parents who use their services part time more than they are already paying for, as well as cause daycare centres to cut families in order to make room for full time spots.

"This might be good for some families who are paying really high fees right now, but what it looks like in our daycare is potentially having to cut families because we need to have these full time spots available," said Cara Werner, director of Dream Big Child Care in Rocanville.

"They're basically cutting out our part time spots completely. We had part time monthly fees that we would charge our families. As long as they were under 99 hours a month, they were in that part time spot.

"What this does now is it completely switches that. It's no longer based on how many hours they're in the daycare, it's based on how many days they're in the daycare."

The provincial government's announcement states that parents whose children are under the age of six and attend regulated child care on a full-time basis, can expect to pay \$217.50 per month.

According to the Government of Saskatchewan, the fee reductions will result in families saving an average of \$395 to \$573 per month for each child under six from the average comparable fees as of March 31, 2021.

Yet, Werner said the new policy will actually cost families more than what they are paying for now on a monthly basis, both for part-time and full-time childcare.

"For example, if we were to look at an infant spot for our part time monthly rate, at this point in time, it would be \$120 for under 99 hours a month. That is with the 70 per cent reduction that the government has already put into place," she said.

"Now, if they're over that 10 days (which is considered full time) they will be paying \$217.50. If they choose to stay at the days they're currently at, let's say 10 days a month, they're going to be paying twice as much than they are paying right now. And, if they want to take up those full time spots and have more hours, it's actually going to force us to cut some families from the centre which is really unfortunate."

In September 2022, the Governments of Saskatchewan

and Canada reduced regulated child care fees for families with children under six by an average of 70 per cent, compared to March 2021 levels. The fee reduction was part of the close to \$1.1 billion being invested to transform child care in Saskatchewan through the 2021-22 to 2025-26 Canada-Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

"Also, for our full time families, it would actually be a slight increase too because right now they're paying \$200, which again is with the 70 per cent reduction from the government," said Werner.

"The parent portion they pay is \$200, they're now moving up to \$217.50, they'll be paying \$17.50 more a month with this new announcement."

Terri Low, director of Play Fair Daycare in Moosomin, said the policy will also have negatively affect Moosomin's community daycare too.

"It's going to cause us to run differently, I do suspect, because we are on an hourly fee," said Low.

"With this \$10 a day fee, now we're going to have to go to full time and part time spots. If we have to put them in full time and part time spots, trying to juggle parents who put in random schedules, it's going to be tricky. Hopefully we can get it worked out, but it's obviously going to cause a waitlist too, increasing more than what they already are."

Currently the daycare centre in Moosomin has a capacity of 71 kids. With these new changes in effect, Low said she expects the centre's waitlist to increase.

"It will benefit families, I get what the government is doing they're are trying to make it so that both parents can go to work, but it's just going to increase the demand for spots, and we can only do so much here.

"I hope this is has positive affect on our families, but people need child care and there's not a lot in Moosomin. I just feel like the demand is going to be even more, and that our waitlists are going to be longer than what they already here.

"We provide quality care here, we're a facility that parents can feel comfortable leaving their kids for the day while they go to work. We're beneficial to the community."

Saskatchewan ahead of affordable child care agreement

Although Saskatchewan is one of the first Canadian provinces to make this change, they are also three years ahead of the province's plan for bringing down child care fees to \$10 day by 2025-26.

"The fact that they're ahead three years means they're doing something wrong and they're missing something," said Nichole Kessel, Director of Whitewood Wiggles & Giggles Childcare Centre Inc.

"They need to be opening more childcare centres, they need to be training more early childhood educators, they need to get everything in place that when this \$10 a day does come, not in three weeks, but in three years from now, there will be centres and educators ready to take in more families so that in can accommodate this change."

Kessel also serves as the vice-president for the Southeast Saskatchewan Directors Association. She was asked what she thinks needs to be done before the change to \$10 a day for regulated childcare is put into place.

"They need to immediately revoke this announcement and talk to the directors of the centres to see what would actually work for us. They have three years to do it, we have lots of time to sit down and have meetings about what will help and work."

Directors association asking for extension on \$10 a day child care

With all of the administrative work that is needed to be done before the policy goes into affect on April 1, president of Southeast Saskatchewan Directors Association Treena Epp said the association will be sending a letter to the Government of Saskatchewan asking for more time to be given before the rate of \$10 a day is officially put into place.

"We can put a halt to this really, because it's supposed to be for 2026, in three years, and it's (now) only three weeks. We need more time," said Epp.

"I was a bit shocked hearing about this, there wasn't much notice. The government regulates that we give one month notice to our parents and here we have three weeks to give them notice.

"I'm still waiting for a response from my consultant for clarification, but with that email (from the government) also came with a letter for parents. I sent that out to parents right away.

"I don't think it's quite clear with parents and families yet, I think the next step is going to have to be clarity."

Epp is also the director of Wawota Early Learning Center. She said out of the 38 families the centre serves they are going to have to cut the eight part time families.

"I'm dreading that we have to notify families that we can't take them," she said.

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Saskatchewan 2023 budget: Esterhazy health facility approved

Continued from page 3

"I've had the opportunity to have a meeting and conversation today with leadership from Esterhazy and just give them my commitment and ensure that officials from the ministry are going to contact them fairly quickly to help lay out what the next steps for the project are between the announcement today towards tendering the project and the design of the project, start of construction and completion of construction.

"We will work with officials and with the local community as to what that's going to look like and we'll be able to provide further details as the project advances."

Handley said lots of factors will go into determining the size of the new facility.

"I think the number of existing beds is 14 acute beds at St. Anthony's and then 52 LTC beds at the special care home plus a respite bed. It's obviously too early to prejudice what that final number is going to look like and what the facility is going to look like, but I would say that we'd be taking a good, long look at not only what it serves now, but what could be the potential use in the years ahead because the new integrated facility in Esterhazy will be a building that serves the area for

quite some time and for decades to come so we want to make sure that we get it right.

"I think it's fair to say that Esterhazy's had some significant growth and is poised for more growth and greater demand for healthcare services in the future. So again, without predetermining what those numbers might look like, those are the types of factors that we would look at in planning what that facility would look like in terms of its capacity, how many beds does it have, how many staff do we need and how does it fit into the region for being able to provide that healthcare.

"This is a great step forward for Esterhazy and there are a lot of much needed projects across the province but this is an important one and that was plain as day when I had the opportunity to visit.

"Thank you to the community and to the foundation for the work that's been done thus far and to MLA Warren Kaeding for his advocacy. This is the first step in this and there are a lot more steps to go but this is a significant day and an important day for Esterhazy and the surrounding area."

Esterhazy Economic Development Director, Tammy Macdonald said "We are looking forward to next steps, working together



ESTERHAZY MAYOR GRANT FORSTER

as investments by the provincial government in our healthcare facilities and investments in our community."

The process of getting a new healthcare facility for the community has been ongoing for some time.

Last June, ministry officials visited Esterhazy and toured the town and hospital. They were able to meet with members of the hospital foundation, members from the community, doctors and hospital staff.

This highlighted the healthcare needs of the community.

Esterhazy Mayor Grant Forster was invited by Saskatchewan Health Minister Everett Hindley

to attend the budget at the Legislature that day. Forster said it was welcome news.

"It was one of those days that you wait for, for a long time. It was nice to hear that announcement in person. It was the talk of the town," said Forster in an interview following the budget.

"We had faith it was at some point going to come. But after a while you sort of have to wonder. Knowing how these things work, the faith was always there. It was a little bit frustrating when you have to keep waiting and waiting and waiting, but the waiting paid off."

So what happens next?

"There are a number of things that go on from this point on," says Forster. "We have to set up a board locally to oversee the project locally, and that will be over and above the foundation. It will very likely include community members and elected officials and others, not just from the town, but from the municipalities surrounding us because they all have an interest in this as well. And then the government will come out, review the potential places for the hospital to go, and make a decision at some point in time as to where the location will be.

"And it will be shovels in the ground to get the land ready be-

cause we don't have any land available right at the moment that's serviced and ready for building. From the town side, that's going to become our number one priority to get ready for that. And once the government says we think this is where we want to go then we'll begin the process of getting the services put in and then just wait for them to come across with the money.

"While that's going on there will be consultations in terms of what we want to see in the new hospital. And by that I mean do we want to look for mental health services, for dialysis, do we want to have cancer treatments, and those sorts of things.

"Between this board and Saskatchewan Health and the other interested parties, we'll sit down and make that decision, and at that point they'll tell us how many beds we get, how many beds in the care home we're going to get, and what it's going to cost us, and then away we go."

Forster says he hopes to be there when the ribbon for the new facility is cut.

"I'm counting the years out and thinking if I run one more term and get elected, that should at least put me at the ribbon cutting as mayor opening the new hospital," he says. "I'm definitely looking forward to that."

Community builder Doug Griffiths speaks about regional collaboration in Moosomin

Continued from page 5

"Consultants go in and do a strategic plan and then nothing happens. If you do that to a person and say you just need to go to university and get a job, get a house and everything will be great, but if they're suffering from depression what good is telling them to do that?"

"You treat the depression, you treat the anxiety, you treat the addiction, you treat the neuroses or the trauma response they have, then they can move forward. And, communities suffer, they get depressed, they're addicted to one resource. Alberta is the perfect example.

"If you work with someone who's got an addiction and you try to get them off of it, they'll be sitting there saying, 'just give me one more hit. One more hit and I'll be fine and get through this.' But, you know if you give them one more hit, it all starts over. Well we had bumper stickers in Alberta that said give me one more boom, nothing says addiction like our bumper stickers.

"If you don't treat a community for that, then that negativity stays and that could be the difference between communities.

"I would say whatever's happening in Moosomin, people are buying in with the excitement and the energy, and it's from some key leadership."

Griffiths says newspapers are vital

Griffiths mentioned having a community newspaper is essential for community collaboration as well.

"Newspapers, newspapers are so important. I wrote a column with Graham Thomson about it, he's a newspaper reporter in Alberta," he said.

"People always ask me what's the number one sign that a community won't bounce back and it's they lose their newspaper. That's the number one indication.

"And, during the pandemic smaller newspapers had a blossoming because CTV and CBC, nobody told you what the pandemic was doing to your community, but your community newspaper did.

"It is the one that tells your story and celebrates, and I've seen negative newspapers tear a community apart, and positive ones lift it up from the ashes."

Throughout his career, Griffiths was an Alberta MLA, the minister of municipal affairs, and a junior high school teacher. After retiring from politics in 2015, he decided to pursue his career in consulting and focus on helping smaller communities grow, and work together with neighboring communities.

Based on his visit to town and speaking

with people from the community, Griffiths shared what he thinks Moosomin can be doing better to work with surrounding communities.

"I would need to know more details, but the first thing I would say, this is a guess, but Moosomin is surrounded by smaller communities. It's sort of the hub or the bigger centre," he said.

"One of the challenges with the smaller communities is that they won't see their role, and how they play their role in it. Instead of talking about economic development, there needs to be identifying of what makes each of those other communities unique. Where they're going to grow, where their opportunity is, and how.

"Otherwise, the impression can be 'this is about Moosomin and I'm just supposed to keep being a feeder place.' No, we're all going to be stronger together, but that means you need to go out and say how 'this is your role, this is how you're going to be stronger, this is how you're going to be better, this is how you're going to attract new people, and we're all going to do this together."

"It's what helps foster deeper relationships because then if you lead people saying, 'what's in it for me and how am I going to grow?' They'll know the collaboration is important, but they won't put their heart

into it. "But, if they know as Moosomin grows I can grow too, and I'm going to grow because I'm going to be unique and creative, then you get more buy in."

"Then the relationships continue to evolve because instead of saying we need to collaborate for success, it's like 'okay, what are we doing next?' They might even lead some of the initiatives instead of being told why they need to be pulled in," said Griffiths.

"My experience is that most regions even collaborating well, haven't told or sold to the smaller ones of what makes them stand out, so that they know how they're going to be prosperous. My guess is that it always needs to be redone over and over again."

Griffiths spoke about what he hopes people take away from his presentation's like the one in Moosomin on March 22.

"That there's a pathway to success," he said.

"That everything they heard tells them I'm not buying into this, it won't work, this won't happen, this can't be done.

"It can be done, but we need to own it, and that's what I hope everyone walks away with."



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Nine inflatable water parks operated on Saskatchewan lakes last summer. The provincial government has an RFP out to add an inflatable water park at Kenosee Lake, since it does not believe the Kenosee Superslides will be opening.

RFP out for water park at Kenosee Lake

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK
Saskatchewan's Ministry of Parks, Culture, and Sport has put out a Request for Proposals for an inflatable Water Park at Moose Mountain Provincial Park.
The Kenosee Superslides have not been operating for the last two summers and the ministry doesn't expect it to open this year. Inflatable water parks have been set up at other provincial parks, and the ministry has set up a Request for Proposals to add a new inflatable water park at Moose Mountain Provincial Park.
"The Superslides are not expected to be operational in 2023 and any future plans are still to be determined," the ministry told the World-Spectator Friday.
"The Saskatchewan Health Authority

has identified concerns that would need to be addressed before future operations could be considered.
"The ministry has a Request For Proposals open on www.sasktenders.ca to 'Own and Operate an Inflatable Water Park at Moose Mountain Provincial Park.'
"In the absence of the Superslides, the ministry believes an inflatable waterpark will be a positive addition to the park and provide a unique and safe experience for park visitors."
There were nine inflatable water parks operating in Saskatchewan last year. The loss of the Superslides and the Moosehead restaurant have had a huge impact on tourism in the Kenosee area.

Daryl Harrison
Member of the Legislative Assembly
Cannington Constituency



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Justin Young new GM of Nutrien Rocanville

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS AND KEVIN WEEDMARK

The new General Manager of Nutrien Rocanville says the mine will continue to be busy with capital investment in addition to day-to-day mining over the next several years.

Justin Young says capital investment in the mine will remain around the same level over the next five years.

There have been major investments in the mine in recent years, with upgrades to the mill, expansion to the tailings management area, expansion underground, and the addition of an electrical generation plant.

"If you were to look at our capital forecasts, there will continue to be lots of work around here to reach our production network target of approximately 18 million tonnes over the coming years," he said.

"In our business we're never really done with maintaining and investing in our assets. There's still a large sustaining capital requirement to be able to maintain and keep up with our mining and milling facilities.

"When we look at responsible and sustainable mining, our mine plans are forecasted into the future a long way."

When asked about the possibility of an underground expansion and the potential for another shaft, Young says:

"We have a very detailed five-year site plan. We know where our miners are going to be, the development we need, the amount of underground infrastructure we need, and the upgrades we need to do in the mill from a sustainability standpoint. Then we look out at our 20-year mine plan, we have a good understanding where the mining panels are, and the amount of

work we need to do to be able to sustain the production of 5.2 to 6 million tonnes.

"Based on those long-range plans, we get to a spot where we need to do something for ventilation and power underground. There are a few options. One is another shaft, but there are some other options outside of doing a shaft. A company our size spends a lot of time reviewing and making sure we make the right decision."

Mine employees come from a wide area, Moosomin one of the main communities

Young said employees commute from as far as Saskatoon to work at the Rocanville mine, but most employees are in the local area.

"We have people who drive from Saskatoon and rent a room in the area. Others settle in the local area, with Moosomin being a big contingent. We just had a new hire group come in this week. There were 11 employees in this group and about half of them would be looking to stay in the Moosomin area," he said.

"A couple are renting in Rocanville, some in Manitoba, some are moving to other small communities in the area. They are typically spread around the area, but I would say Moosomin is probably one of our biggest populations for employees just because it has a few more amenities."

Since starting at the mine, Young has seen significant growth.

"You can easily say the staff has doubled," said Young.

"Before my time we were at about 400 employees when we were doing half of the capacity.



New General Manager

Justin Young has been working at Nutrien's Rocanville mine for 12 years, and was recently announced as the new General Manager for the site.

We doubled our workers since the expansion, and we've seen certain areas of the business grow.

"For example, we've seen the amount of capital spend required to continue to operate a facility this large grow, so we built our own capital management team on site."

Rocanville Nutrien's largest mine

Nutrien Rocanville has close to 900 direct employees in addition to many contractors.

"We have 895 employees right now," said Young.

"The number of contractors varies. There are peak seasons. In

a turnaround we've been up to 1,200 to 1,400 contractors alone, plus all our employees. There's been days where the swipe-ins at security were over 2,000 people.

"Rocanville is the largest and lowest cost producer among Nutrien's six potash mines."

Continued on page 18

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Night at the Races fundraiser coming up in Rocanville



BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS
 Rocanville's second annual Night at the Races fundraiser will be happening on Saturday, April 22 at the Nutrien Rocanville Community Hall.

Doors will open at 7 p.m., and the first race will start at 8 p.m.

The night will include popcorn, drinks, music, and a midnight lunch for people to enjoy, while they watch races on a screen and participate in buying tickets for which horse they think will win during the different races.

"It's based on Kentucky horse races. Everyone comes and we get all dressed up in the big fancy hats and nice outfits," said Kelsey Selby of the pool board.

"We purchased races from a UK company and they're projected up onto a screen. Then people are allowed to purchase tickets on whatever horse they prefer."

All proceeds from the event will be donated to help with the upgrades for the Rocanville Aquatic Centre.

There will be six different races, where people have the opportunity to buy tickets for each race.

"We'll be playing on a screen the first part of the race," Selby said.

"At the beginning it will announce each different horse. Each race is sponsored by a different business.

"For instance, our business is sponsoring one of them, and we got to name all of our jockeies and name all of the horses.

"It announces on the screen which horse is which, by a professional announcer.

"Then, we pause our video and people go and buy their tickets. Then when they come back and sit down, we play the race and see whichever horse wins.

"People cheer their horse on and stuff like that. If you bought your ticket for that horse then you essentially win that race.

"We usually have little intermissions between each race to have a drink or visit.

"This year we're going to have some music after the races, some karaoke too."

Continued on Page 23

Last year's A Night at the Races fundraiser in Rocanville was a hit. This year, the pool board will include six different races, as well as music and karaoke at the end of the night.

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Moosomin and southeast Saskatchewan, including Kenosee, caught the attention of Sam Mattie, who has listed the top five places to live in Saskatchewan

In ranking of best places to live in Saskatchewan:

Moosomin named one of top 5 Places to Live

Continued from Page 4

For whatever reason my top viewed video is the one on New Brunswick and it's got over 150,000 views now—it's kind of insane. I maybe spent 45 minutes putting it together. I remember making it and it was between exams one day and I had some free time so I thought I'd throw it together and sure enough it's my top viewed video.

I don't do it for the views or anything, I just like talking about places and sharing what other people think or different opinions. I'll put top five from a certain state or province and then you get people saying, "What about this place?" or "I can't believe you didn't put that place!" It's pretty fun and just interesting to debate with people who put their input in because everyone has been to different places, lived in different places and had different experiences—that's probably my favourite part of it honestly.

Do you plan to keep going with this? Do you plan to create more of these?

Yeah, so I have a bunch of videos that are already scripted and some of them are already recorded but I just haven't gotten around to edit them because editing is the most time consuming part of it by far. During the school year it's really tough to find the time to put the whole thing together because what I like to do is I like to do them all sort of in one go instead of record, have a bunch queued up and then going through and editing, I prefer to just script, record, edit and then upload all of them at once so I can stay focused on the same one. But it's a good three or four hours to get one done so once school is over in May I'll probably get back into it because I don't start back to school until September. So my goal is to focus on it a lot more and have a bunch lined up and get more consistent with it.

Have you thought of coming out to Moosomin this summer and doing a follow up?

Yeah, well you know what, my roommate's dad lives in the Manor area but his mom lives in Miniotia, Manitoba and I'm flying out to Winnipeg in July, we're going to be there for the bonspiel and then I'm going to drive to Calgary and fly home from there. So we'll probably be passing through.

And where is home for you?

I'm from a small town about 45 minutes west of Montreal.

In terms of when you go to different places, what is something that sparks out to you when you're with your friends? What do you guys look for most in a community?

It kind of depends on the place we're going to. I don't really care about the size of the place that we're going to—I just like a nice downtown where you can walk around from your hotel or wherever you're staying. It's based on what you have for restaurants, bars and just the overall vibe of a certain place. When I make trips to bigger areas I sort of base it off of whether I would be able to go to a sports game in the place. Like a couple of weeks ago we had our spring break for school and I based the whole thing on going to an NHL game. So I got to three NHL games in a week and that was fun. But in terms of when I'm doing more of a road trip, in between the city stops I like doing small towns. Last summer I flew to South Dakota and drove across the U.S. to come back to Nova Scotia for the start of school, and there's this one little town that we stayed at in Illinois called Nashville, Illinois and it had like 2,500 people. It was about 45 minutes to St. Louis and that was one of the most fun nights we had on the trip. You just get to experience a small town that most people have never heard of and you get to learn about how people live there, what it's like and what the local scene is like. That's one of my favourite parts of travelling—getting to see all of the different places along the way, and it's not necessarily all about going to the big cities and seeing the big things. It's about how the small towns all have something to offer.

In your list of Saskatchewan, you were mentioning crime rates, income rates and house prices. Do some of the stats go into the mix in picking your top five?

Yeah, absolutely. I don't want to make them purely statistical because I don't think that's necessarily the best way to go about rating somewhere because you could have a place that has above average crime but it's just something like petty theft. That doesn't represent what the town is like—and everywhere you go there's good and bad. But at the same time when you're making a video and you're ranking something from best to worst or worst to best or just top five, if you were to do one that has some sort of statistical representation of what it would be like to live there or visit,

and when I look at housing or crime, those are just statistics that are important to me if I was looking for somewhere to move. They're just factors to consider. Whenever I'm looking at a place, even if it's just like I visit a place and I get curious, even if I have no interest in moving there, I'm always curious about what a house goes for or an apartment, like what rent is in the place. I just use metrics that I would find useful or would be interested in when learning about a new place.

A lot of people who have seen your video have commented on the fact that three of the top five were in South-east Saskatchewan.

Yeah, it's a really cool region of the province. My roommate's farm is near Parkman and so we went to Kenosee Lake and that area is just beautiful.

That's not what you think of when someone talks about Saskatchewan—that flat, boring, nothing. There is so much more than that. So then we went to Regina, came down and went to the Corner Gas set. I was a huge Corner Gas fan growing up—loved that show.

Just so you know, if you didn't grow up in rural Saskatchewan, that's really what it's like. Corner Gas pretty much captured it exactly.

I remember that I started watching that show probably younger than I should have been. I grew up with it. I had shirts and hats. My aunt and uncle did a cross-country trip once and they brought me back a book from the souvenir store when it was still up. It was just a really cool drive and it's a really interesting part of the province because a lot of people, even a lot of Canadians, they don't know a lot about the province. It's probably one of the least known provinces that we have and the people that do know think of Regina, Saskatoon, maybe Moose Jaw and Swift Current. Then they probably have heard of the Battlefords for being crime ridden or whatever, but that's pretty much it.

There's just so much more to it and that's another thing that I try to share when making the content.

A lot of people probably haven't heard of half of the places that I've talked about in any video I make. So I like to share and expand people's view that this place is more than just the two biggest cities or the places that get a bad reputation.



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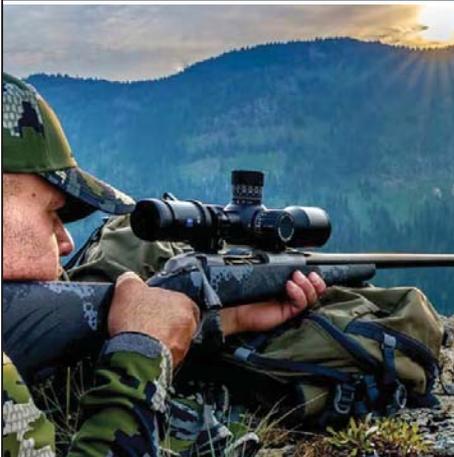
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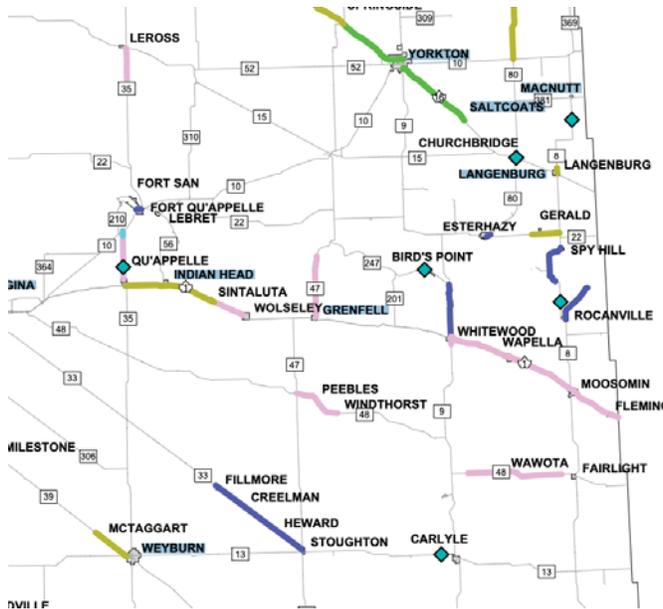
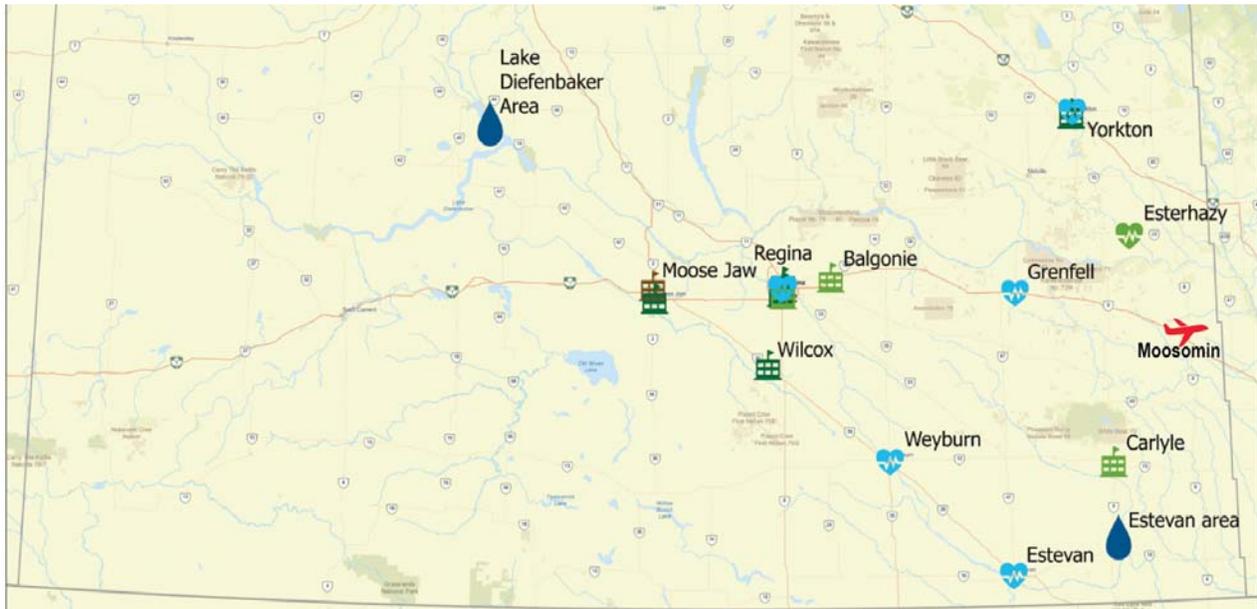
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Capital investments in 2023 budget

Many of the capital investments contained in the 2023 Saskatchewan budget are in southeast Saskatchewan.

The map above shows all of the airport (stylized airplane), education (stylized schools), health care (stylized hearts), and water projects (water drops) in southern Saskatchewan, and most are in the southeast, including major health projects in Esterhazy, Grenfell, Weyburn, Estevan, and Yorkton. The province had already announced the \$1.3 million for Moosomin's Airport project which was mentioned in the 2023 budget. There is also funding for Moosomin's new water treatment plant.

The map at left shows highway projects in southeast Saskatchewan, including work on Highways 1, 8, 48, 9, and the Rocanville mine access road.

2023-24 Saskatchewan Budget *Growth That Works For Everyone*

Saskatchewan is growing at its fastest pace in more than a century; *this budget is designed to ensure that growth continues and that it's growth that works for everyone.* Our government will pay down operating debt this fiscal year, reducing interest costs and investing those savings into needed services like healthcare, education and infrastructure. Investments in Southeast Saskatchewan include:

- ▶ restart the *Parkland College firefighting training* program in Melville
- ▶ **\$10.0 million** for *Grenfell long-term care facility*
- ▶ planning for the *Integrated Care Facility in Esterhazy*
- ▶ another **\$300,000** to continue planning for the *Yorkton Regional Health Centre replacement*
- ▶ a new K-12 school to *replace and consolidate the elementary/high school in Carlyle*
- ▶ *Moosomin Water Treatment Plant* upgrades
- ▶ *Moosomin Airport Upgrade project*
- ▶ *Water system upgrades at Moose Mountain Provincial Park*



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Cowessess FN receives mineral rights in treaty land entitlement transfer

Under the Cowessess Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) Settlement Agreement, nearly 60 hectares (approximately 147 acres) of Crown mineral rights will be transferred to Cowessess First Nation upon the surface attaining reserve status. This is part of the province's continued commitment to the TLE settlement agreements.

"Reconciliation is demonstrated through TLE settlement agreements, which support First Nation land acquisition for new reserve lands," Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis Relations and Northern Affairs Don McMorris said. "The TLE process exists in order to ensure that the federal and provincial governments are

meeting our Treaty obligations and working with First Nation communities as they grow and succeed."

The Ministry of Government Relations co-ordinates and manages the provincial implementation of the TLE agreements between Canada, Saskatchewan and 36 First Nations. Most recent were three TLE agreements finalized with Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation, Mistawasis Néhiyawak and Zagimé Anishinabek in 2022. Two additional First Nations are currently in negotiations for a TLE agreement with the province at this time.

The TLE Agreements provide First Nations with entitlement monies to purchase

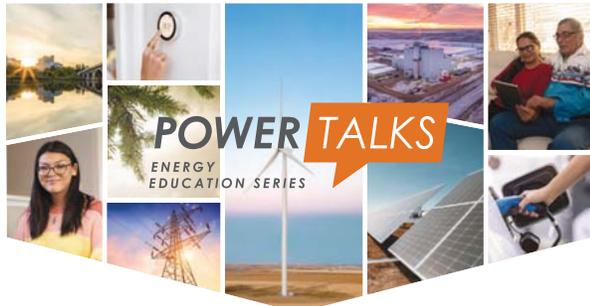
land anywhere in the province on a "willing buyer-willing seller" basis and add it to their reserves. Under the terms of the TLE Agreement, all undisposed provincial Crown minerals underlying lands purchased by the First Nation are to be transferred to the Government of Canada for purposes of reserve creation at no cost.

With the acquisition of new reserve lands, successful TLE agreements support community growth and traditional land use as well as partnerships between First Nations, businesses and neighbouring communities, advance opportunities for business development in urban centres, and create economic development and

employment opportunities in the mining, oil and gas, business and agriculture sectors.

Since 1992, the provincial and federal governments have committed \$687 million for TLE settlements in Saskatchewan. To date, approximately 885,500 acres have been transferred, with 1.48 million acres outstanding. Of the amount transferred to reserve, more than 630,400 acres of undisposed Crown minerals were transferred at no cost.

Saskatchewan has transferred more acres to reserve status under our TLE agreements than any other province in Canada.



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Justin Young new GM of Nutrien Rocanville

Continued from page 11

"This year we're anticipating about 5.2 million finished product tonnes.

"Out of all our potash sites, we are responsible for about 40 per cent of the overall production.

"Our low cost per tonne comes down to our ground conditions underground. We're able to use a long room and pillar mining method, some would call it rock farming, where we cut straight ahead for about 5,000 to 6,000 feet, turn the miner back around for a second pass, then go back and cut the third pass; where our other mines have to mine in a stress relief fashion with shorter rooms and more ground control required, which is a lot more work."

How does Young explain the size of the Rocanville mine to people?

"Most people have been to the city of Calgary," he says. "If you drew a line around the perimeter of Calgary and overlaid it over our mine plan, it's about that size. Our underground workings are vast."

Experience prepared Young for new role

Young said his years of experience have prepared him for his role as general manager.

"I'm from the area. I was born and raised in Wapella. My wife and I made the choice we should come back from Alberta. My parents are still here. My wife's parents are still here, and we had young children at the time when we moved back in 2011.

"My first role in the mine was a senior project engineer. After about a year, I took on the underground engineering manager position.

"Then a year after that I got involved in the expansion project and I saw that through to completion in 2016. I

was then transferred to the mill where I became the mill maintenance superintendent for a few years. After that I became the assistant general manager and most recently became general manager.

"Being the assistant GM and stepping into this role, there isn't that much change," he said.

"In terms of the day-to-day operations with my past role, it's very similar to the expectations I have in this role.

"There's now more collaboration with our corporate office and supporting the facilitation of the strategic initiatives we are working on. Knowing how the site operates, allows the GM to share what will work, what won't work, things like that. I will now have more say and involvement in that process, which will probably be the biggest change."

Biggest challenge

He said that attracting and retaining people is the biggest challenge for the mine.

"Right now the biggest challenge we have is the war for talent," said Young.

"It's very hard to find skilled people and to get people to come to our community.

"The other thing is keeping them here once we get them here, especially our professionals. That's one of our biggest challenges right now. If they have a connection in the

area they will stay, but if they don't have a connection to someone or something in the area it's hard to keep them here."

Biggest reward

Young said the most rewarding part about the job is the people and working closely with everyone on the team and getting them home safe every day.

"If I had to summarize the perfect day, it would be spending time in the field interacting with our employees and then leaving work knowing that everyone went home to their families safe, everyone's able to provide for their family by working here," said Young.

"And, that we hit our production targets. That we produced what we said we're going to produce, and we did it as efficiently as we could, and under budget.

"That would be the perfect day for me. We call them 0-20-60 days—zero injuries, no one got hurt, we produced 20,000 product tonnes, and we mined and hoisted 60,000 tonnes, which is a productive day."

And when asked why he does it?

Young says: "I love what I do and the industry I am in, I like the opportunity Nutrien provides for my career, the opportunity it affords my family, the opportunities it provides for my work family and the opportunities it provides to our community as a whole."

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Plain and Valley is delivered to post office boxes across Southeast Saskatchewan and southwest Manitoba.

Canada Post Customer Number 2116693.

Canada Post Contract Number 40011909.

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Virden singers perform at Carnegie Hall

BY ANNE DAVISON

Six top choirs in Canada joined their voices to bring 'Canada at Carnegie' to New York City's Carnegie Hall on April 1. The Brandon choir, Konektis, under the guiding hand of Virden's Michelle Chyzyk, was one of those choirs.

"Excitement is building," Chyzyk said before heading to New York. "There, we're going to be working with two fabulous professors, Carrie Tennant from Vancouver, and Jamie Hillman from Toronto."

Tennant is the founder and artistic director of Vancouver Youth Choir. Dr. Hillman was appointed to University of Toronto Faculty of Music programs in Choral Conducting.

"It's going to be very, very exciting," says Chyzyk.

Canada at Carnegie took place on April 1 where 35 members of Konektis joined choirs from B.C., New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and two from Ontario.

This trip had been planned since the fall of 2022. Choirs were chosen by audition or by invitation.

"We're very lucky because Carrie Tennant is a big connection. So, she was more than thrilled we were going to attend," said Chyzyk.

A Carnegie Hall performance is a highlight, however, the entire trip will be an experience to remember.

"We've got our fan clubs with us," says Chyzyk. "Some singers have their parents coming along. And some have their children coming along. Because of course, we're all different ages."

As an educator and long-time choir director, she said she was looking forward to this trip with an adult choir. "Everybody is kind of making New York their own experience." From jazz clubs to opera, there's so much to do in the Big Apple.

Location, location! The choirs stayed in a hotel on Times Square in downtown Manhattan and rehearsed together in the hotel's ballroom. "Carnegie Hall is not too far away down the block," said Chyzyk, adding "all the Broadway theaters are close by."

An accomplished pianist, singer and chorale conductor, this was not Michelle Chyzyk's first appearance on the Carnegie stage. In the 1990s she accompanied Brandon professor Elizabeth Grant's chamber choir for their performance in Carnegie Hall.

"I was a very busy accompanist. I traveled many, many places accompanying choirs. It was a great way to learn from so many wonderful conductors."

Chyzyk gives praise to Konektis' pianist as one of the group's heroes. Virden Collegiate graduate Justine (Gould) Burke has been with the choir since its inception. She's also the grade 5-12 music teacher at Carberry.

One of Burke's favourite pieces for the NYC concert is a commission just for Carnegie, "The Wind Is My Shepherd" by Sarah Quartel. It ranks favourite with other singers too.

Burke says of this opportunity, "It'll be good. It'll be wonderful."

In the weeks leading up to the departure, excitement was mounting for one of



Michelle Chyzyk conducting Singkap Siaga by Tracy Wong, with soloist, Sara Sylvester. This is one of the numbers that was performed in Konektis' Carnegie Hall performance. It includes body percussion and a "gutsy and fiery energy" according to the composer.

Rob Lovatt/Keywest photo

the youngest members of Konektis. VCI student Dylan Southam says, "I'm just ecstatic to be able to go on this trip to New York with Konektis, and not just to be at Carnegie Hall, but perform at Carnegie Hall with them. Konektis is such a close, tight knit group. And I'm just so glad to be able to do that with them."

Southam was pumped about their Times Square location, the focus of world famous musicals. "So, I'm going to try to go to as many Broadway shows as I can."

In his final semester at VCI, Southam plans to attend Brandon University School of Music "and hopefully become a high school music teacher."

Todd Plaisier is one of Konektis' mature bass voices. He says the NYC trip was not something he ever thought he'd be doing. "It's something that you never really think of, to be honest."

A high point for Plaisier was having their daughter join Konektis on stage. "My daughter Brianna, I invited her to come along with me. And because she's actually a fairly accomplished singer herself, she's going to be singing with us as well in Carnegie. So that was a nice little surprise!"

Plaisier's experience with Konektis runs deep and wide. "I enjoy the rehearsing. I enjoy the camaraderie, the making music,

and the emotions that go along with making music."

Having family join him is a pinnacle. "The important thing for me . . . I've always managed to sing with two of my children when they were singing with the high school choir and with Westman (Youth Choir) . . . Having Brianna sing

with me in New York is something fantastic for me."

The Plaisiers were planning to take in some Broadway shows. But Todd's a sports fan too. "And so, I grabbed some tickets for the Yankees home opener Thursday afternoon. We're gonna go catch the ball game as well."

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Jacqui Harrison with her historic painting of the Town of Moosomin while it was still being auctioned for. The painting was sold for \$3,500 to Tyler Thorn, Kim Setrum, and Dale Nixon, and will be placed at Broadway Commons for everyone to enjoy.



In Broadway Commons, there are 10 photos within the building that showcase the Town of Moosomin back in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The World-Spectator created the canvases for the photos from the newspapers archives. The photo above is the original photo that Jacqui Harrison used when creating her historic painting of the town.

Painting auction brings in \$3,500 for CT Scanner

Total raised for CT Scanner for Moosomin region now at \$95,000

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

The winning bid for a historic Moosomin painting was \$3,500. All of the proceeds from the auction were donated towards helping fund a CT Scanner for the Southeast Integrated Care Centre in Moosomin, bringing the total amount raised to \$95,000 for the cause.

The successful bidders of the painting was the Tykida Group, who consist of Tyler Thorn of Moosomin Celebration Ford, Kim Setrum of Royal LePage, and Dale Nixon of Nixon Electric.

"When the auction for the painting first went up I put a bid on it. I just thought it was for a good cause," said Thorn.

"With the pictures that are here (in Broadway Commons), this is the perfect building to hang it in.

"A week or two later, Dale had bid on it then we just got chatting and we said we should just buy it for Broadway Commons rather than bid each other up."

The painting was created and donated by Jacqui Harrison of Moosomin.

Harrison donated her art to help support

the community's need for a CT Scanner, that the Moosomin region has been working hard towards getting government approval from.

She said it took her about 12 hours to finish the painting.

"I appreciate and thank everyone for placing bids, and for their compliments about the painting," said Harrison.

The painting will be hung up inside the Broadway Commons building for everyone to enjoy.

Thorn said having a CT Scanner at the hospital in town is essential for people in the community and surrounding area.

"It's vital to our future, to the hospital and to the region," he said.

Wendy Lynd of the Moosomin and District Health Care Foundation said the foundation will start actively fundraising for the CT Scanner, once they receive approval for the project from the government.

However, various people and organizations in the community have already shown their support by donating to the foundation for the scanner.

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Moosomin Economic Development working to attract Ukrainian newcomers

The latest flight of displaced Ukrainians arrived in Saskatchewan March 27, and Moosomin Economic Development was at the first event where the Ukrainians were welcomed to Saskatchewan, where they were helped with health cards, social insurance numbers, and introduced to some of the employment opportunities in the Moosomin Region.

Above and above right, Ukrainian newcomers are welcomed at Regina International Airport. **Top right,** EDO Casey McCormac and World-Spectator graphic designer Olha Volokh with a sign that reads "Your Future is in Moosomin" in Ukrainian. Casey attended a job fair in Regina last week aimed at displaced Ukrainians and other newcomers to Canada. "I had quite a few families that took information on Moosomin and said they were interested," Casey says. "There was an immigration officer there that was bringing people to my booth because she knew we had helped families from other flights."



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Night at the Races fundraiser coming up in Rocanville

Continued from Page 12

The sponsors for the races are Rocanville Remedial Massage Therapies, Decker's H2O & Spirits to Go, Universe Satellite Sales, Fouillard Steel Supplies in St. Lazare, and Rick's Mechanical.

started seeing the races, people were cheering and getting excited for it.
"Then afterwards everyone stuck around and hung out.

"It was a lot of fun and something different that you wouldn't normally get to do, especially in cold Saskatchewan."

Fundraiser to help support the Aquatic Centre

With the upgrades for the Rocanville Aquatic Centre underway, the pool board is aiming to raise the same amount, or more, than they did at last year's event.

"Last year I believe we pulled in around \$7,000. Of course we had our expenses," Selby said.

"This year, hopefully, we make the same. Nutrien also donated us the use of the hall, also lots of our decor stuff is donated or stuff that we have from last year already.

"With selling popcorn, our ticket sales, and money from the races, it usually is a pretty good chunk of change for us."

Selby spoke about how important the event is to the pool board.

"We're finally starting to see them getting a few things done in the pool," she said.

"They started to get things pulled apart in there, and it's exciting for us to finally see things start happening. That all of our fundraisers and everything is finally starting to pay off a little bit.

"Quite a few of our board members have kids who are going to want to take swimming lessons like we did when we were kids. It's very important to us."

Dress code for the night

Selby said people should come in their fanciest and best outfits for the night

"People can go all out," she said.

"Last year we had lots of women in fancy dresses and skirts. People were wearing big floppy hats, and fascinator hats. Some of the men actually wore jockey outfits.

"Other people wore a full on sports coat and a dress shirt with bow ties. It was pretty fancy."

There will also be prizes for best outfits.

Presale tickets for the event are \$15, and tickets at the door will be sold for \$20.

People can purchase tickets for the event through the pool board at the town's recreation office.

Aside from being an event to help raise money for the pool, Selby said it is a night that people would not want to miss out on.

"It was a ton of fun last year," said Selby.

"It's something that's different. As people were getting more into it and realizing what was going on, once they

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WHERE: Moosomin Conexus
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April 2023 • Page 25

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

Elize Steyn submitted this photo of spring seeding in 2021.



Feds, province sign new agreement to support sustainable agriculture

BY SIERRA D'SOUZA BUTTS

The federal and provincial governments have agreed to a new five-year plan under which \$485 million will be invested for strategic agricultural initiatives in Saskatchewan, as part of the new five-year Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP).

"The process for the Sustainable CAP started a couple years ago to negotiate and work through what the next five-year funding program would look like," said Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit.

"It came to end in a formal signing in Saskatchewan last July of the overall agreement with the Government of Canada and all the provinces. Then what happened was all the provinces work out how that program money would best serve their industry and stakeholders.

"Obviously Saskatchewan would be a lot different than Ontario or even Manitoba. It's what our priorities are versus what Ontario's are. It's how they want to use their

money, how we want to use our money, and if the feds would agree to how we want to use our money."

The Sustainable CAP is a five-year \$3.5-billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments intended to help strengthen competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector. It also includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities, and \$2.5 billion in cost-shared programs and activities by federal, provincial and territorial governments.

Over the next five years, the Sustainable CAP will prioritize the following five areas:

- Building Sector Capacity, Growth and Competitiveness: \$176.6 million investment to build the agriculture sector capacity, ensuring growth and competitive advantages.
- Climate Change and Environment: \$53.4 million to support the long-term resiliency and sustainability

of the sector.

- Resiliency and Public Trust: \$40.2 million to support the sustainability of the sector by anticipating, mitigating and responding to risks while building public trust.
- Market Development and Trade: \$2 million to assist industry in expanding domestic and international trade opportunities.
- Science, Research and Innovation: \$175 million invested in research and development activities, enhancing the diversification and profitability of agriculture.

Marit spoke about how Saskatchewan will focus on the different areas over the next five years.

"The Building Sector Capacity, Growth and Competitiveness is about how we build that, how we work to be competitive globally, and how we deal with the capacity of growth," he said.

Continued on page 30

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Provincial Budget 2023:

19 per cent increase in ag budget from previous year

Saskatchewan's 2023-24 Provincial Budget was released on March 22. This year's Agriculture Budget is \$548.2 million, a 19 per cent increase from the previous year, with a strong investment in programs, services and agriculture research, as well as a fully-funded suite of business risk management programs.

"Supported by this year's budget, the industry is well-positioned to continue to take on the challenges inherent to agriculture and build on their success," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "This budget will help Saskatchewan's farmers,

ranchers and agri-business remain competitive and operate sustainably while continuing to deliver safe, high-quality food."

The 2023-24 Agriculture Budget contains \$89.8 million for strategic initiatives under the federal-provincial Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership, which will launch in the new fiscal year. The budget provides increased support for producers to develop sustainable agriculture water sources like wells, dugouts and pipelines, as well as increased funding for irrigation programming.

The budget includes \$1.0 million to target invasive weed control on agricultural Crown land pastures, promoting continued productivity and stewardship of this resource and more than \$38 million for agricultural research.

There is \$408 million to fund a suite of federal-provincial risk management programs including Crop Insurance and AgriStability. Average Crop Insurance

coverage for 2023 is at a record-high level of \$446 per acre due to increased commodity prices and yield coverage. The AgriStability compensation rate will increase from 70 to 80 per cent for the 2023 program year, to better support farmers in times of need.

Saskatchewan producers harvested a crop of nearly 35 million tonnes in 2022, with record agri-food exports valued at \$18.4 billion.



As farmers look forward to spring, the Saskatchewan government announced \$548.2 million for agriculture in the provincial budget. Above: An aerial view of crops in Southeast Saskatchewan.

As farmers gear up for the busy spring season, be diligent and stay safe.

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Water Security Agency launches emergency flood damage reduction program for 2023

The Water Security Agency (WSA) is announcing the launch of the Emergency Flood Damage Reduction Program (EFDPR) for 2023 to help Saskatchewan com-

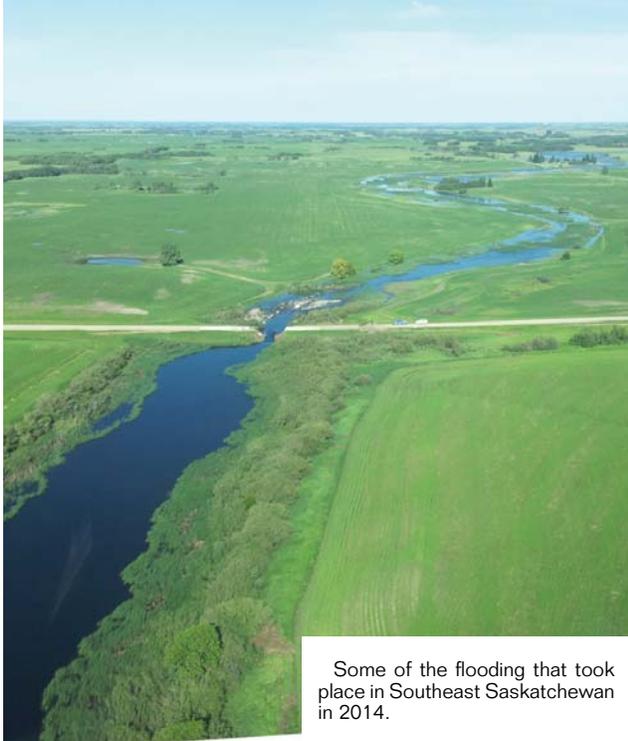
munities and residents respond to the challenge of possible flooding. WSA is investing up to \$500,000 for 2023. "Although runoff conditions are expect-

ed to be near to below normal for most of the province this spring, localized flooding can still occur if conditions are right," Minister Responsible for WSA Jeremy Cockrill said. "This funding ensures communities, rural residents and businesses have the immediate support they need to prepare and respond to a possible or unexpected flood event."

The EFDPR was first established in 2011 to help implement emergency flood damage protection measures for communities, rural municipalities, businesses, non-profit organizations, individuals with rural yard sites, country residences and cottages to prevent damage from imminent risk of flooding.

The EFDPR provides financial, engineering and technical support to evaluate the potential flood risk to buildings and to identify options to mitigate the risk when flooding is imminent. Services include client discussions, site visits, hydrological and other technical evaluations, developing mitigation recommendations and cost share funding for permanent flood defenses and temporary relief through pumping.

EFDPR expenditures do reap long-term preventative financial benefits. WSA has reviewed the program and determined each dollar invested in flood damage prevention saves a future \$20 to \$30 in property damage.



Some of the flooding that took place in Southeast Saskatchewan in 2014.

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There's no controlling when spring will arrive

Spring must be here! There was this feeling inside me the other day when the sun was shining and the great outdoors was calling my name, so much so that I pulled my car out of the garage—nothing speaks spring more than getting that car out after a long winter season. Of course, once I actually got outside, I realized I needed my heavy winter coat, my scarf and my mittens. Perhaps even a toque for good measure.

And so, this is our spring, at least right now. Perhaps by the time you read this, a few days from when I actually wrote it, temps will rise into the high teens and the snow will have disappeared. Now there's a dream that's not likely to materialize quite that quickly.

The twins (nearly 12) and their friend were over one day after school and when I offered to feed them a snack if they came inside, they all collectively said no. It's not very often you offer kids a snack where they say no. Instead it was more about horsing around in the snow and pulling out the sleds for the hill out on the town parking lot. There is nothing about winter that those boys don't like — especially snowmobiling. Yes, there's hockey and there's curling but nothing beats snowmobiling. This is when I know the apple hasn't fallen far from the tree. They are their dad.

Once these young fellows finally came inside, they didn't turn down melted Toblerone and chocolate and we had a chance to talk about the Brier. "Did you see that shot Matt Dunstone made?" I asked as I pulled up the video. The minute it started playing, all three, as they looked closely at my phone, were, "Oh yeah, where he went between those two guards and took that rock out?" Oh yes, they were well aware of that shot!

And so, with the Brier behind us, calving still ongoing, and the snow still before us, we have no choice but to wait patiently, or impatiently as it may be, for warmer days. At least the days are getting longer and when the sun shines, you just know the time is getting closer to getting that seed in the ground. I asked the twins the other day how many calves I had on the ground now and they gave me one of those "oh boy Grandma, you have lost it" looks. They weren't sure what to say. I think they were hesitant to break the news to me that we are now cattle-less. They both looked a little relieved though when I told them I knew I didn't have any cows anymore.

The twins of course are in no hurry for the snow to melt because they aren't quite ready to park those snow-machines. I am confident though that they will have a change of heart once they know I can get into the camper and stock the fridge with chocolate bars, freezies and To-

The Lighter Side of
Life...
DOWN ON THE FARM
by donna beutler
FREELANCE PHOTOJOURNALIST
dl_boutlor@yahoo.ca



blerone!

As time marches on (another way of saying we are getting older), I really see parts of my husband that are so much like our parents. When we were traveling south this winter, we hit some snow and slush in South Dakota and Nebraska and though it was only for about a hundred miles, our truck looked like it had traveled through some serious bad weather. My husband who can spot a spec of dust or the tiniest of scratches on his vehicle, was seriously itching to find a car wash. I wasn't too worried—after all it would get taken care of sometime along the way, I figured. In fact, I thought, maybe I could hand wash it once we checked into our rental once we arrived in Phenix.

When I mentioned that out loud, I thought of driving into "our" resort where we had rented a park unit for a month was not an option for my husband and so it was that a car wash along the way became more than a desire—there was no other option. And that got me thinking...

Back when I lived on the farm with my parents and my brother, we raised cattle and crops and if nothing else, we worked hard. But the amount of dirt on the side of our half ton didn't necessarily, in those days, prompt quick action to clean it off.

When I got married, one of the first jobs I did on the farm that summer, along with my husband, was to bale hay—square bales. Yes, I am that old. Though round bales were becoming more and more popular, in those early years of our marriage, we baled square hay bales. And so off I went on a windy, dusty day to join my husband in getting the bales on the south quarter baled up but when I returned to the yard, there was my father in law ready and waiting with rags, pails and the hose to wash the tractor. I had just entered

another world.

Now don't get me wrong. My father-in-law was the best and always had a smile and the best heart of anyone I knew. But there was dust on his tractor and that, apparently, could not remain. Even though that very tractor would be going out the next day to the next hay field.

Over the years, I got quite used to the Beutler men and their OCD ways over certain things, particularly vehicles, so one day I decided to see how my husband would react to an intentional faux pas on my part.

Our half ton had gotten pretty dusty—it was, after all, harvest time. So I pulled the truck up in front of the house and washed one half of it while supper was cooking. Then I took supper out to the field.

Before you laugh at what you quite likely are imagining his reaction might be (and oh there was a reaction!) you need to know that we lived, at that time, along a main highway so no matter where you went when you left our yard, it was onto the highway. You know, where others also drive.

"You drove this like this in public?" he said. "Well, yeah, but after supper I will finish washing the other side, it's not a big deal," I replied. "Oh, no, no, no," he responded. "It is a big deal. You can't wash one half and not the other!" "Why ever not?" I asked, ever so innocently. And so it went, I not the least worried, he having a panic attack. The way I look at it, I did a good thing. He was tired after many days of harvesting at that point and the adrenaline rush he got that day when he saw his truck likely meant he was able to work later than usual that night.

And now, many, many years later, I know exactly how he will react and how much like his dad he is in this respect. There is some consolation though: as worked up as my husband gets over dirty vehicles and minute scratches (oh right, there is no such thing as a minute scratch), his brother is way worse. As for the trusty old combine interior, he doesn't overreact over the dust and a hundred empty water bottles in there—go figure. He just keeps on rolling along.

We are a long way off from combining though and all eyes are set on seeding—if we can actually ever get into a field. It seems to me last year was wet and late as well, though this year may be even later. And that's okay. We have farmed long enough to know we have zero control over a hundred different things and we have learned to roll with the punches. For now, we may as well enjoy these longer, sunnier March days as best we can. As for all the farmers out there—here's to a great seeding season and/or calving season or whatever it is that makes your life down on the farm the best it can be!

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Federal gov't, province agree to support sustainable agriculture

Continued from front

"On the Climate Change and Environment it's really looking at the whole environmental impact, the assessment side on soil and health, water quality. That all falls under that sector.

"The Public Trust one is really building on how we can engage the populace of the country to really accept what agriculture is here, what we do here, how we do it, how we're recognized globally, and to ensure that prosperity as well.

"That overlaps and intertwines as well because we have the Market Development and Trade area. That's obviously in conjunction with trade missions and the opportunity to grow the business outside of Canada, but also finding ways that we can attract foreign investment into the province, in the value added sphere and how we can work with that.

"Then obviously research is going to be a big part of it. It is every year. You're looking at roughly about \$90 million annually between the federal and provincial governments for the program, and research is going to take almost 40 per cent of that. It tells you the importance of the research dollars, and innovation that's in there as well.

"All aspects fall into this whether you're a primary producer where there's grain and oil seeds or livestock, or even the value added processing as well."

With the new agreement being in effect starting April 1, Marit was asked if there were any differences from the former one.

"No not really. The federal government was adamant on a new program. They call it the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program (RALP) and that one really looked at water quality and bio-diversity," he said.

"We were already doing a lot of that in some of our other programs like the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP) which is important to us. Soil health, all of that, dealing with the producers on crop rotation, looking at opportunities around crop development and different varieties, disease resistance, things that could really work to improve soil and health, but also improve productivity as well.

"There is an overlap in a lot of them, but we wanted to make sure that some would be strategic in one initiative, but where another one would overlap. An example would be the FRWIP because it would have an environmental impact, yet it still has the sustainability sector capacity piece as well."

Governments investment will help improve

Saskatchewan's market for Ag

Marit spoke about how the federal, provincial and territorial governments investment in strategic agricultural initiatives for Canada will help strengthen Saskatchewan's competitiveness in agriculture.

"What this really does is have an impact because we have a story to tell, and we have one of the best," Marit said.

"This all leads to what we're doing, whether it's improving plant health, animal health, or working with all sectors with research dollars. A good example would be working with Fertilizer Canada on the 4Rs with fertilizer placement and fertilizer emission reduction. How can we do

that? We found some good ways, and we're already doing them with variable rate on feeding with sectional control. Is there new technology that we can implement and that we can fund that innovative piece, and that's where that falls in. Yet it still falls in on an environmental lens as well.

"That's where we see a lot of the opportunities for growth which will really help the producers, both from livestock and grains and oilseeds to tell the story globally. An example would be from some of the research we had done where we can actually quantify that Saskatchewan producers who grow canola, their carbon footprint is 60 per cent better than our nearest competitors. Sixty per cent is not a small number. That is significant."

Marit said he believes that Saskatchewan's carbon footprint being 60 per cent lower than nearest competitors should be explained more globally.

"That's a story we have to tell as a government, as the ministry," he said.

"I've told it on trade missions and it gets the attention of the suppliers that are looking for product globally. Also because their customers are starting to question how it's growing, where it's growing, and the big one is how.

"When we met with some of the major players in the world as far as food processing, this really got their attention because they said, 'wow if that's a story to tell then we're very interested in your product.'"

With concerns of food security being raised recently sharing Saskatchewan's story of how producers continue to grow their production for food will continue to carry its weight over the next few years, Marit said.

"What we heard from the recent travels we've had is food security and in light of that, it's very unfortunate what's happening in Ukraine," he said.

"These companies are saying they want to make sure they have food security, and we need quality insurance as well.

"Plus, they want to, quite frankly, deal with a government that adds on for trade and stuff like that. Is there challenges? Sure there is. Some of the challenges obviously is we're land low, and how do we overcome some of that, and how do we work with the railways and the shippers to make sure we still have continued supply.

"That's the one thing we've heard in our missions is some of the logistic challenges, but hopefully we can work through all of that because we see great opportunity here.

"I think in the next few years you're going to see some great opportunity where you're going to see companies globally come in to say, 'I want to be at the source.'"

Through the five-year Sustainable CAP initiative, \$89.4 million will be invested annually in strategic programming for Saskatchewan farmers, ranchers and agri-businesses. This comes after a 25 per cent increase from the \$71.2 million in the previous federal-provincial partnership.

Marit was asked what the Government of Saskatchewan hopes to achieve by the end of the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership initiative.

"I hope by the fifth year we have a very good program. This is a huge financial impact, obviously by the federal government, but most certainly for the province of Saskatchewan," he said.

"When you look at our investment versus per capita basis versus any other jurisdiction, we're quite high. Obviously it's an investment by the people of this province to

see agriculture grow and flourish. We hope by the end of the five years which would be 2028, that we hit our growth target.

"That we've hit our 2030 growth targets, and that's hitting exports of growing over 45 million metric tons, seeing livestock receipts hit over three billion, and seeing the agri-food exports hitting well over 20 billion. We're close. We were at 18.4 billion last year.

"That's what we sort of want to do, but at the same time we want to make sure that our primary producers are prosperous and viable as well. That is key. If we're not competitive globally, and that was our key message in the whole negotiations with the federal government is before we can do anything from an environmental lens as far as that side of it, our primary producers have to be competitive and profitable. They have to be, otherwise none of this matters. "At the end of the five years, I hope we can look back and say agriculture is doing very well and continues to grow. Then we can start all over again and hopefully find an agreement similar, or even better than this."

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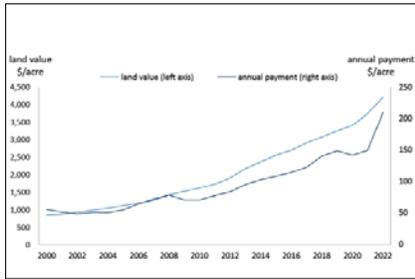


Figure 1. Canadian average farmland values vs. average annual farmland payments

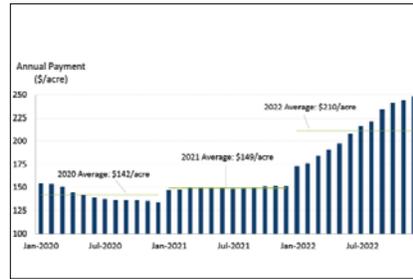


Figure 2. Impact of purchase timing and interest rate on annual farmland payment

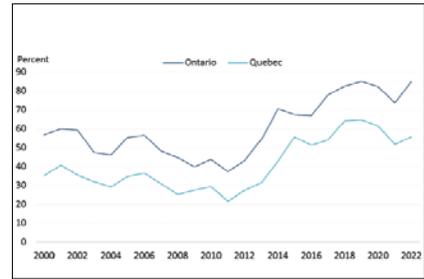


Figure 3. Annual average farmland payments as a percentage of gross crop revenue (corn/soybean rotation)

Exploring farmland affordability trends through purchase timing and crop revenues

BY JUSTIN SHEPHERD, FCC SENIOR ECONOMIST

Canadian agriculture faced many challenges in 2022 but ultimately came out with strong farm cash receipts and positive profit margins across many sectors. With the availability of farmland for sale remaining tight, average farmland values increased 12.8% in 2022, up from the 8.3% increase in 2021. Inflationary pressures led the Bank of Canada to increase its overnight rate from 0.25% at the start of 2022 to 4.25% by the end of the year.

This post investigates land affordability related to the timing of purchase which was highly impacted by rising interest rates in Canada during 2022. In addition, we compare annual land payments against gross revenue generated by different crop rotations in western and eastern Canada. While important nuances exist across provinces, farmland is near or at its least affordable level in the last 20 years.

Most farmland is purchased with a combination of equity and debt, and affordability is a matter of land prices, financing costs, and farm revenues.

Consider a land purchase with a down payment of 25% and a loan amortized over 25 years. Let's use the effective average business interest rate (a weighted average of market interest rates), which averaged 4.4% in 2022, up from 2.3% in 2021, to estimate the annual loan payment.

Farmland values and annual payments tend to evolve at the same pace (Figure 1). On average, Canadian farmland values have increased 8.3% annually over the last 10 years. In 2022, values rose 12.8%, the highest jump since 2013. Average annual payments increased 9.7% per year in the last decade, but 2022 recorded a large jump of 41% to \$210/acre due to rising interest rates.

Interest rates fell through 2020, so land purchased at the

start of the year had higher payments relative to land purchased at the end if it had the same purchase price (Figure 2). During 2021, interest rates stayed consistent, and land purchases at any time throughout the year would have resulted in similar payments.

In 2022, interest rates rose steadily, resulting in a large jump in payments depending on when the land was purchased. Annual payments would have been \$75/acre higher at the end of 2022 than on similarly priced land at the start of the year.

Assessing average provincial yields and crop prices generate an estimate of gross revenues for soybean-corn rotations in Ontario and Quebec and canola-wheat rotations in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Farmland payments as a share of gross revenues estimate farmland affordability.

Quebec and Ontario operations recorded similar crop revenues per acre over the last decade. Farmland payments as a share of revenues differ mostly because of land prices (Figure 3). In 2022, purchasing new land in Ontario generated a land payment equal to 85% of gross crop revenue, tying 2019's record high. Meanwhile, Quebec payments equaled 56% of gross crop revenue, just above its 10-year average. Different dynamics in the farmland market explain differences in farmland prices.

Saskatchewan and Alberta farmland values are driven predominately by grain crop revenues. In what follows, we capture a canola and wheat rotation. Land payments relative to gross crop revenue in 2022 ticked upwards (Figure 4). The Alberta ratio hit 43%, above its long-term average of 37% but below the 2019 high. Saskatchewan's ratio was 24%, above its historical average of 18% and just below the 2019 high. Gross crop revenues have been in-

creasing in both provinces over the last decade, but farmland values and corresponding payments are appreciating at a faster rate.

After 2021's historic low interest rates, interest rates rose quickly throughout 2022, leading to sharp price jumps in payments on newly purchased land. Interest rates are projected to remain around current levels during 2023, meaning annual land payments will remain well above a year ago. Farm cash receipts are expected to remain strong, but high farm input costs and interest expenses call for thorough assessments of the financial risks in an operation as the economic environment evolves.

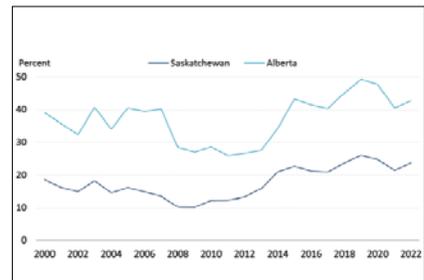


Figure 4. Annual average farmland payments as a percentage of gross crop revenue (wheat/canola rotation)



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New members welcomed to USask Strategic Advisory Board for Livestock and Forage Centre

Robert Johnson of Fairlight is new board chair

BY LANA HAIGHT

The new chair of the Strategic Advisory Board of the University of Saskatchewan's Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence is eager to ensure the voice of producers continues to be heard.

"It's really important as an agricultural producer to be part of the conversation whether it's research or policy. If you don't get involved, you are on the outside looking in. You are not at the table; you are 'on the menu,'" said Robert Johnson, who owns and operates a bison ranch with his wife Rebecca near Fairlight, Sask.

The Johnsons own about 400 bison cow-calf pairs and feed to the finishing stage about 800 animals annually that are shipped to the United States because processing capacity in Canada is limited. Some of the bison meat is then imported back to Canada and sold as Noble Premium Bison.

As the newly elected chair of the board, Johnson will be involved in crafting the strategic vision of the board.

"It's really encouraging to see the people who were on the board for the first couple of terms and they developed a real identity for the board. Now, we have new people coming in with new ideas. They are experienced, whether it's in governance or hands-on. We've got a really good group," said Johnson, who started his second three-year term on March 1, 2023. The chair position is a one-year commitment.

Johnson added he appreciates the support of the deans of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Agriculture and Bioresources as well as LFCE director Dr. Scott Wright (PhD), who are ex-officio members of the advisory board. Dr. Gillian Muir (DVM, PhD), Dr. Angela Bedard-Haugh (PhD) and Wright are very engaged and connect well with the producer, industry and government representatives.

At their March 1 meeting, the advisory board members welcomed three new people who will serve a three-year term.

Calvin Gavelin and his wife operate a mixed farm / ranch with Red Angus cattle near McCord, in southern Saskatchewan. In addition to running the cow-calf operation, they background and finish their cattle to supply a farmgate, direct-market beef business. Four years ago, they completed a Holistic Management Course where they learned



Left: At its meeting on March 1, the Strategic Advisory Board members discussed five key priorities for research at the LFCE: ecological goods and services/sustainability; discovery, innovation, research, technology; teaching, training, translation; outreach; and indigenous relations. **Right:** Robert Johnson, the new chair of the Strategic Advisory Board, spoke at the annual Beef and Forage Research Forum at USask on March 2.

how to implement regenerative agriculture principles. He has served on many industry boards and was the reeve of the Rural Municipality of Mankota. Gavelin is currently a director-at-large with Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association.

Kyron Manske and his wife own and operate East Poplar Simmentals, a purebred and commercial cow-calf operation near Coronach, in southern Saskatchewan. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness from USask and is a board member of the Saskatchewan Simmental Association, Saskatchewan Stockgrowers Association and South Saskatchewan Ready, as well as a councillor with the Rural Municipality of Hart Butte.

Dr. Leigh Rosengren (DVM, PhD) and her husband farm near Midale, in southern Saskatchewan. She earned a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine and a PhD in Veterinary Epidemiology from USask in the early 2000s. More recently, Rosengren completed a Masters of Agribusiness from Kansas State University, which was instrumental in improving the management systems of their grain farm and influential on the decision to disperse the cow-calf herd to consider other opportunities in the sector. Rosengren continues to work in the livestock industry as chief veterinary officer with the Canadian Cattle Association and as an epidemiology consultant.

Stepping down from the board after serving the maximum of two terms are Duane Thompson (chair from March 2018 to November 2021), Tamara Carter (chair from

November 2021 to March 2023) and Neil Block. All three have served since the board was established in March 2018. Carter will continue as an ex-officio member for the next year, providing support to Johnson.

Manske says he's always been interested in research and hopes to contribute to growing the beef industry as a member of the LFCE's advisory board. He has a particular interest in developing the use of technology in the cattle industry.

"I'm a curious kind of person. I'm not satisfied doing things the way they have always been done. I'm always looking to the future and new and better ways to do things," said Manske.

The Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence is a world-class research facility with a 1,500-head cattle feedlot and a 400-head cowherd, but it also has a two bison herds: Woods bison and Plains bison.

Johnson says producers have much to learn from the bison.

"The Northern Great Plains exist today because of the bison. They formed the eco-system through the grazing and their hoof action as the keystone species. We keep hearing that we need to graze (cattle) the way the bison do. Why re-invent the wheel? Let them work for us instead of us working for them."

After meeting virtually for the past couple of years because of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, Johnson is looking forward to effective and efficient meetings where the board members can work through issues as a group.

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Former APAS President Todd Lewis named 1st Vice-President of Canadian Federation of Agriculture

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA) has announced their executive has been acclaimed for 2023.

Keith Currie of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture has been acclaimed President, and Past President of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) Todd Lewis was acclaimed 1st Vice-President. Pierre Lampron of the Dairy Farmers of Canada joins the executive as the acclaimed 2nd Vice-President.

"It's an honour to work on behalf of Saskatchewan's farmers at the national stage," Lewis said. "Saskatchewan's leadership in Canadian agriculture is dynamic, growing, and evolving. We are innovation and environmental leaders in our farm management practices and representing Saskatchewan's perspective on the national stage is tremendously important and I am deeply humbled to have been chosen."



Todd Lewis

"Todd is a tireless advocate for Saskatchewan farm interests at the national table," APAS President Ian Boxall added. "He listens intently to all perspectives and passionately provides his view on every issue always looking for a solution that works. He is an incredible mentor to our APAS Board and we look forward to continuing working with Todd to ensure Saskatchewan solutions are heard and considered nationally."

APAS proposed seven resolutions to the CFA Annual General Meeting in Ottawa. All seven of them passed with over 90 per cent support from CFA membership. One of those resolutions includes calling on the CFA to work with member organizations to examine and support the development of a national cost-shared insurance programming for livestock, including the potential development of a cow/calf production insurance program.



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Objectives for better beetle management

BY KEITH GABERT

Flea beetles are the pest of greatest economic risk to canola production, according to our 2022 Canola Council of Canada survey of canola growers. With more striped species, which emerge earlier in the spring and seem more tolerant of common seed treatments, and with spring weather conditions that challenge rapid crop emergence, flea beetle damage seems worse than ever.

Canola growers have two major objectives to reduce the risk.

Objective A: Rapid canola emergence

The ideal flea beetle buster is a canola crop that establishes quickly with five to eight plants per square foot. More plants mean more food for the flea beetles, which limits the damage per plant.

Scenarios that require multiple in-season foliar sprays are often the result of a slow-establishing, non-competitive crop. Many factors can cause this, including moisture, temperature, plant populations, seed treatment and overall flea beetle numbers.

Management steps to reduce the risk include:

- Seed shallow into warm, moist soil. Consider seeding cereals first as they can tolerate cooler spring soils. Seed canola after soils have warmed up and ideally just before or after a spring rain.

- Use an advanced seed treatment to improve flea beetle protection in high-risk areas. These include Buteo Start, Lumiderm, Fortenza and Fortenza Advanced.

- Use safe rates of seed-placed fertilizer. The recommendation is to use only phosphorus in the seed row at rates of 20 lb./ac. of actual phosphate. Higher rates of seed-placed fertilizer can add more stress, slow the pace of growth and reduce the stand.

Objective B: Effective foliar sprays

Fields under moisture stress may not meet objective "A". Flea beetles love dry conditions, crops don't. In that case, growers should set up for effective foliar in-



Left: Two species of flea beetle – striped and crucifer – on the same canola plant. Striped species emerge earlier in the spring and seem more tolerant of common seed treatments. **Right:** Farmers can reduce flea beetle risk with a canola crop that establishes quickly with five to eight plants per square foot. More plants mean more food for the flea beetles, which limits the damage per plant. Source: Canola Council of Canada

secticide.

What makes a spray effective?

First, apply it at the right time. Action thresholds for canola are when damage exceeds 25 per cent cotyledon or leaf area loss. However, in warm weather with actively feeding flea beetles and slow-growing crop, this threshold can be passed quickly.

Growers will want to anticipate the speed at which damage is developing and proactively begin spraying before 25 per cent defoliation. In some cases, early spraying around headlands may be enough when damage is localized from flea beetles entering the field edge.

"Right time" is also when flea beetles are most active. Warm, dry and calm are good conditions for spraying. In rainy cool weather, flea beetles often take shelter in the soil and don't feed as much. In these conditions, insecticides, which all rely on contact with the flea beetle target, will have lower efficacy.

Second, consider the temperature effect on insecticide efficacy. On spray days with highs over 25°C, malathion and Sevin XLR may provide better results. On days with highs below 20°C, pyrethroids (Decis,

Pounce, Perm-UP and others) will show better results. Pyrethroids have restrictions when temperatures exceed 25°C.

Third, achieve coverage. Flea beetle insecticides do most of their work through contact. Because young canola plants take up only a small percentage of the ground area and because flea beetles are small targets, effective contact requires adequate water (at least 10 gal./ac.) and medium nozzles.

Check labels for specific nozzle recommendations. Low-drift nozzles, which are a good practice for some herbicides, produce a coarse spray droplet that may not provide efficient flea beetle contact. Without coverage, results may not be as good as hoped.

This is just a quick overview of the top points. Continue regular scouting for flea beetle

damage until your crop is well established. For more on flea beetle management tips and how to make the spray decision, please see our agronomy-based articles in the Insects section at canolawatch.org/fundamentals.

Keith Gabert is an agronomy specialist and insect management lead for the Canola Council of Canada. Email gabertk@canolacouncil.org.

Daryl Harrison

Member of the Legislative Assembly for Cannington Constituency

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64 rinks and 8 youth teams compete at 6th annual Farmers and Friends Bonspiel



The last draw of the four-day Whitewood Farmers and Friends Bonspiel saw the A, B, C and D Event finalists compete for the top spots. Also playing on the far ice were the A Event Junior finalists.

BY DONNA BEUTLER
After a weekend full of bonspiel fun during the 6th annual Whitewood Farmers & Friends, the top teams walked off the ice with a huge sense of accomplishment after more than three days of curling in the largest bonspiel under one roof.

The 64-rink bonspiel plus the eight-rink youth bonspiel was held at the Whitewood Community Centre March 23 to 26 and featured a live auction, a Calcutta, a draw to the button, silent auction and more.

The championship team from Regina's Highland Curling Club consisted of Ben Gamble (skip), Rory McCusker (third), Jade Bloor (second) and Giovanni Wright (lead). The team went undefeated through the entire weekend, winning in the end against the Ray Krupski rink from Lemberg.

Capturing the B Event title was Grenfell Curling Club's team of Kelly Hollinger (skip), Jordan Hollinger (third), Bowman Bryant (second) and Marc Sales (lead). They won against Yorkton's Jason Morris team after sailing through the spiel with one loss.

The Vern Stanhope team from the Moosomin Curling Club took top honours in the C Event and included Vern Stanhope (skip), Jeff Warkentin (third), Steve Warkentin (second) and Chris Mannle (lead). Their win came at the expense of the team known as Dickies Angels which consisted of players from Maryfield and Whitewood.

Skip Scott Mannle of Whitewood and his team which included Bryce Olson (third), Todd Miskiman (third) and Blair Jones (lead) won the D Event in an extra-end playdown against the Karen Beutler rink of Wapella.

In the Junior A Event final, the team from the Esthazy Curling Club team won out over the Bartlam team of Whitewood. The team consisted of Brandon Weiss (skip), Treton Stewart (third), Nathan Weiss (second) and Elijah Chomos (lead). Their final

game was played against the Kenneth Bartlam (skip) rink and his team of Isaac Peter (third), Jake Domres (second) and Damon Stevenson (lead).

This year marks the 6th annual Farmers & Friends Bonspiel. Covid hindered the full continuation of the event for consecutive years, but thanks to a remarkable group of volunteers, they did not allow anything that would cause them to lose their momentum and came back last year stronger than ever. This year they added eight youth additional teams on top of the 64 they have each year.

Not only was there some great curling competition but this event has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars. In fact, in the five years prior to this that the bonspiel was held, a remarkable \$355,000 was raised. This year the live auction netted \$96,750; \$5,670 from the bonspiel's portion of the Calcutta; and \$8,700 from the silent auction.

The Farmers & Friends

bonspiel recognizes a community member that has devoted much of their life to recreation and this year's Recreation Lifetime Achievement award went to long-time Whitewood resident and former school teacher and principal Russ Hamilton of Whitewood.

Sponsors from all around the area have provided great items for the live auction. This year alone saw 56 items—the most ever. There was some strong bidding from a full house of bidders and spectators and almost all of the items sold for more than their value.

According to Farmers and Friends organizer Jenalee Beutler of Whitewood, the total calcutta pot was \$37,800.

"The bonspiel keeps 15 per cent and then 85 per cent as follows: A Winner gets 30 per cent, A runner up and B winner get 15 per cent, B runner up, C Winner and D winner get 10 per cent and C and D runner ups get 5 per cent," Beutler explained, "so the 'buyer' of A winner team

got \$9,639.

"The 50-50 went to the Whitewood 4-H Beef club," Beutler added in an interview with the World-Spectator following the event. The 4-H Club received \$1,970 and both 50-50 winners donated some or all of their winnings back to the Farmers & Friends.

"Non-profits that helped with bar shifts and who will receive donations were Whitewood Fire Fighters, Grenfell Curling Club and Whitewood Wiggles & Giggles Daycare," Beutler added. As for the kitchen shifts, they were manned by members of the Whitewood Skating Club and will also receive a donation.

The Farmers & Friends committee are already working towards next year's event which will definitely include the Junior event as well as the 64-rink spiel. Forty-two teams have already entered for the 2024 event which will remain open for registration of this year's participants until December 15. If there are spots open after

that date, the committee will look to the waiting list which currently has more than a dozen teams waiting for a chance to be part of the next big event.

The door prize elimination draw of \$2,000 was won by the Colton MacPherson rink and the draw to the button contest (\$500) was won by Aaron Hershmillier with Jason Morris throwing for him. Hershmillier had his name twice in the top 10 so he had to pick someone else to throw his second entry. Since it didn't cover the pin, the progressive entry pot will carry over to next year and will now start at \$2,780 next year.

Beutler said the business support for sponsorship

has truly been remarkable. This year there were 100 either silver, gold or event level sponsors plus bronze sponsors on top of that.

"Overall," Beutler concluded, "it was another tremendously successful weekend with nothing but positive comments from curlers, sponsors and spectators! Raising this amount of money over one weekend in our small town is nothing short of remarkable and it takes many different groups of people to make that happen—sponsors, auction supporters, curlers, volunteers and committee members!"

Next year's spiel is slated to run March 28 to March 31.

<p>FARM EQUIPMENT AUCTION for Robinson Farms Tilston, MB SATURDAY APRIL 22ND, 2023 AT 10 AM DST <small>This Sale is Live In Person w/internet bidding.</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>No Buyers Fees</i></p>	<p>CONSIGNMENT AUCTION SATURDAY APRIL 29TH, 2023 AT 12 NOON DST at Melita yard, MB <small>This sale is Live In Person w/internet bidding.</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>No Buyers Fees</i></p>	<p>CONSTRUCTION & RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT, SHOP TOOL SALE for Bill & Marilyn Pierce Pelican Lake, MB FRIDAY, MAY 5, 2023 AT 10 AM DST <small>This Sale is Live In Person w/internet bidding.</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>No Buyers Fees</i></p>
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<p>FARM & LIVESTOCK AUCTION for Lynn & Yolande Madsen THURSDAY JUNE 8TH, 2023 AT 12 PM CST <small>This sale is timed online only!</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>No Buyers Fees</i></p>	<p>FARM & LIVESTOCK EQUIPMENT SALE WEDNESDAY JUNE 14TH, 2023 AT 12 NOON CST for David & Bonne Frecon Antler, SK <small>This sale is Live In Person w/internet bidding.</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>No Buyers Fees</i></p>	<p>FARM EQUIPMENT AUCTION for Welbourne Farms Newdale, MB WEDNESDAY JUNE 21ST, 2023 AT 10 AM DST <small>This Sale is Live In Person w/internet bidding.</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>No Buyers Fees</i></p>
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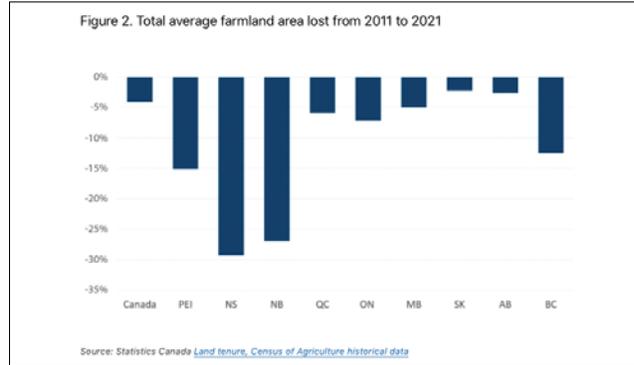
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2022 farmland values trended higher amid higher interest rates, elevated input prices and strong cash receipts

BY LYNE MICHAUD, É.A., SENIOR ANALYST, VALUATIONS

Inflation was the defining economic issue of 2022. The war in Ukraine, supply chain challenges, labour shortages and higher interest rates have been major disrupters in the agri-food supply chain. The agriculture industry hasn't been shielded from inflation as farm input prices climbed along with commodity prices. The resulting increase in farm cash receipts and limited supply of farmland available for sale led to increases in farmland values. FCC reports an average increase of 12.8 per cent in cultivated land values for 2022. This post summarizes trends observed in cultivated land, and the full FCC Farmland Values Report also presents trends in irrigated land and pastureland values.

Provincial trends

Our analysis covers the period of January 1 to December 31, 2022. The highest increase in average farmland values was observed in Ontario at 19.4 per cent (Figure 1), followed by two Atlantic provinces, with an 18.7 per cent growth in Prince Edward Island and a 17.1 per cent increase in New Brunswick.

The Saskatchewan average farmland value increase was also above the national average at 14.2 per cent. Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Quebec recorded similar

increases, with 11.6 per cent, 11.2 per cent and 11.0 per cent, respectively.

Finally, Alberta and British Columbia recorded the lowest relative average increases, with 10.0 per cent and 8.0 per cent, respectively.

Farmland values are always tied to supply and demand

Farmland availability
The tight supply of farmland for sale is a major driver of the farmland market. The outlook for agriculture is positive, and thus farmland owners have few incentives to put farmland for sale. Any neighbouring farmland parcel coming up for sale can generate significant buyers' interest considering that this may happen only once in a lifetime. Farm size and the resulting economies of scale remain a driver of profitability, which can make this neighbouring parcel fit well within the strategic plan of a potential buyer.

As documented in Statistics Canada's Census of Agriculture, a decline in farm areas over time is an additional supply factor. For example, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia recorded declines of 15 per cent, 27 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively, in farmland areas

over the last 10 years (Figure 2). The decline in total farm area is smaller in other provinces but still noticeable everywhere. This leads to more limited availability of farmland which can contribute to higher prices.

Farm cash receipts

Crop receipts climbed 14.1 per cent in 2022, driven by improved weather conditions over 2021 and strong commodity prices. Demand for farmland that is well situated can help agricultural producers develop and expand their operations at a time when demand for ag commodities is robust. Farm input prices recorded major increases along with commodity prices, but profit margins have been favourable. Higher borrowing costs slowed the demand for farmland but were offset by higher revenues.

Non-traditional buyers

The presence of "non-traditional" buyers in the market can drive the overall demand for farmland. These buyers may be individuals, groups or other entities looking to buy farmland without the intent of farming.

It is next to impossible to determine the extent of the presence of non-traditional buyers in the farmland market as there's no single database across the country that

contains all the relevant information. Leveraging the large dataset of cultivated land sales that we assembled for 2022, we could establish that between 9 per cent and 15 per cent of cultivated farmland sold was purchased by non-traditional buyers. Agricultural producers and farm operations make the large majority of purchases.

Note that transactions do not need to occur for the presence of these buyers to influence land values. The mere presence of non-traditional buyers in a market might lead to more competition in buying farmland.

Bottom line

FCC has been reporting consecutive increases in average farmland values for 30 years. Farmland prices are near historical highs when compared to farm income. Recent increases in interest rates raise the financing cost of purchasing farmland. We'll investigate these factors in next week's blog post. Producers must build and maintain a risk management plan considering possible economic changes to ensure budget flexibility if commodity prices, yields or interest rates shift. Market conditions can change rapidly, which can impact farmland values.

Watch for the FCC 2022 rental rate analysis releasing on April 11, 2023. The 2022 FCC Fruit land analysis will be released in May 2023.

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USask soil science student searches for a sustainable solution to crop disease



Sustainability of natural resources is important to master's student Jordan Shirley, who is seen here hiking in Jasper, Alta.

by Brett Makulowich
 Jordan Shirley was honoured for his academic achievement during the Indigenous Student Achievement Awards Ceremony on March 9.
 Jordan Shirley is a Master of Soil Science student in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources (AgBio) at the University of Saskatchewan (USask).
 "It is an honour to receive this Indigenous Academic Achievement Award,"

said Shirley. "As a Métis person it feels good to represent the kind of research that we can contribute towards society and be recognized accordingly."
 Shirley's research is focused on finding sustainable solutions to crop disease. His master's thesis is "Evaluation of Rhizobium spp. as effective biocontrol agents towards Aphanomyces root rot in field pea (Pisum sativum)." His thesis is supervised by Dr. Jim Germida (PhD), emeritus

professor and Dr. Fran Walley (PhD), associate dean academic and professor in the Department of Soil Science in AgBio.
 Sustainability of natural resources is important to Shirley, who previously worked as a tree planter in remote areas of Canada.
 "Seeing firsthand the scale of forestry and current practices in the industry resonated profoundly, and it is now my opinion that we can greatly improve the sustainability of these systems. It wasn't until after this experience that I was able to foster an appreciation for the ecosystems which sustain our natural resources."

To conduct his research, Shirley utilizes the plant growth chambers located in AgBio's Controlled Environment Facility (Phytotron), along with lab-based experiments. "This project is examining the potential for natural soil microbes called rhizobia to be applied to pulse crops to reduce the severity of disease occurrence. My research aims to contribute towards developing a sustainable solution to manage crop diseases as opposed to chemical treatments and sprays, which can result in widespread environmental degradation."
Continued on Page 41



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Author sheds light on mental health journey

BY MIRANDA LEYBOURNE,

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The joys and trials of living in a small farming community, and how both can play a role in one's mental health, is the idea behind Westman author Lewellyn Melnyk's new book.

Melnyk grew up on a grain farm north of Russell, 140 kilometres northwest of Brandon. After working as a journalist at CKX television in Brandon, Melnyk eventually returned to agriculture. She now farms with her husband in Angusville, 162 kilometres northwest of Brandon.

Although Melnyk's passion for writing never diminished even after her career switch, it wasn't until she'd come through a particularly difficult period of anxiety and depression—which she said she'd suffered from since she was 12 years old—that she thought about writing a book.

"I didn't write that much until recently, and I really, really missed it, because when I was in journalism, I really enjoyed it. I kind of had a calling on my heart to share my story, and so I decided that my skill should get put to work again. So I sat down and decided I was going to write."

"Rooted"—part self-help book, part memoir—not only tells the story of Melnyk's personal mental health journey, but offers warm understanding and advice for those who find themselves struggling.

Melnyk's inspiration to write about mental health wasn't based solely on her own path. Having lost a friend to mental illness in 2020, she believes sharing about mental health issues and what has helped her could possibly be of help to others as well.

"I wanted to write about mental health and some tips, kind of make a guidebook for people ... about how to stay healthy, just because I had learned so much," she said.

But deciding to write and publish a book during the COVID-19 pandemic wasn't easy. Melnyk, also a mother, put the project on the backburner for a couple of months before she was able to return her focus to it. From start to finish, the endeavour took her about three years.

It's also not always easy to write about such sensitive subjects as mental health, but Melnyk's desire to positively affect people and her hope to foster better mental



"Rooted" by author Lewellyn Melnyk takes a close look at mental health and living in a small town, and how people can stay healthy in their communities.

health for rural Manitobans is what kept her going, she said.

"It is difficult to write about, no doubt, but that's why I did it, because I think it will help people."

When Melnyk was diagnosed with depression at the age of 12, there weren't a lot of options for treatment or support, even though her parents made a concerted effort to help her. Thankfully, they were able to work with a pediatrician, and Melnyk found creative outlets to help her cope.

"I did lean on friends, and my writing and music."

The Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba says that one in four people will experience an anxiety disorder in their lifetime. For Melnyk, hers showed up in her 30s, when her children were very young. She began having panic attacks and was experiencing difficulty sleeping. After getting the all-clear on a physical level from her doctor, eventually Melnyk realized that anxiety was the cause of her suffering. And though that put a name to her problem, it didn't initially help her, she said.

"I was told, 'it's just anxiety.' And that

word 'just' is kind of heartbreaking when somebody tells you that because it's not a good feeling to have panic attacks, not a good feeling to deal with anxiety. And to leave a doctor's office with a doctor telling you to go Google stuff was not helpful to me."

Although her experience with the doctor she was seeing at the time was disheartening, Melnyk soon took her healing into her own hands. She began reading books and researching anxiety, which could be enlightening and defeating in turn. In "Rooted," Melnyk hopes she'll be able to streamline the process for others.

The book lays out how she found the resources that helped her, but also relies on experts who share their experience in treating anxiety, other mood disorders and mental health issues.

It was incredibly important for Melnyk to show people what it looks like to be dealing with anxiety and depression, including tips on how to manage it and her favourite coping skills.

"I am not a doctor and I am not a health professional, but I have lived it, and those

lived experiences hold value for other people who are maybe going through the same thing," she said.

Living in a small community, where everyone knows each other and gossip flourishes due to simple human nature, can be intimidating when faced with any kind of a challenge, Melnyk said. But at the same time, it's that very interconnectedness that makes rural living so helpful for seeking support to overcome issues.

"If you're struggling, often in small towns people are going to reach out, and they're going to try to help. And that is such a blessing. I think that's what really makes our small towns strong," Melnyk's advice for anyone struggling with anxiety, depression or other mental health issues, regardless of the type of community they call home, includes eating healthy and being consistent with sleep and exercise. Connection is also something that everyone should prioritize, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic made it a struggle for people to get together for so long.

"Make sure that [you] have some people you can talk to and be vulnerable with."

It's also imperative that people understand that struggling simply means one is human, she added.

"There's nothing wrong with you, and there's no guilt or shame with that."

Another one of Melnyk's hopes is that her book, which was published in February and is available on Amazon, will help to reduce the stigma that many people still face regarding mental illness and mood disorders.

"Maybe it will normalize mental illnesses for other people, because we all struggle with mental health. And there shouldn't be guilt or shame if you do. It can be a lonely journey to find help, but I want people to know there is help out there."

So far, the feedback that Melnyk has received about her book has been very positive. She's hopeful that in the future, the book will be available in other major book retailers around Canada. And while she's not totally sure if she'll one day pen another book, Melnyk is open to the idea.

"It was a huge undertaking ... and I've sacrificed some time from other areas of my life," she said. "I'll probably still write, but I don't know if there's another book in my future. But I'll never say never."

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Program helps Manitoba farmers, families with mental health challenges

BY DAVE BAXTER,
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A program working to help farmers and their families who are dealing with mental health issues celebrated a significant milestone this month, and those who run the Manitoba Farmer Wellness Program say one year after starting up, it is proving to be a success.

"What we learned in our first year is that the program works, is valued by those who use it, and it should be continued," MFWP vice chair Roberta Galbraith said in a media release celebrating the one year anniversary of the program, and announcing plans to continue offering it in Manitoba.

On March 1 of last year, MFWP was launched as a not-for-profit to offer free one-on-one mental health counselling sessions to farmers and their families.

Statistics released in 2016 showed a high rate of mental health issues among farmers and those in the agriculture industry in Canada, as according to a study from the University of Guelph, 35% of Canadian farmers met the classification for depression, while 58% of farmers met the classification for anxiety, and 45% of farmers reported high levels of stress.

Stress and anxiety levels have also been high among farmers in Manitoba in recent years, after the province



Extremely dry and cracked soil can be seen in a canola field near Ile des Chenes, south of Winnipeg in July of 2021, when much of the province was dealing with severe drought conditions.

Dave Baxter, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

ince saw record drought in 2021, followed by record precipitation levels in 2022.

MFWP chair Marcel Hacault said because of the stress farmers are often under, and because they are often dependent on things they have no control over like the weather, it is important to make sure producers are looking after not only their farms and crops, but also their mental health, and the mental health of their families.

"We saw a need and with overwhelming support from the industry, we are excited to announce we are continuing this service in Manitoba," Hacault said.

"We are thankful for the growing community of sponsors and supporters that see value in the program, and we are in a great position for the future."

According to Hacault, MFWP is hoping to raise funds this year to be able to support 160 Manitoba farmers and their families, while he said they will also look to increase awareness about the program among farmers and those who work in the agricultural industry, as well as with health care professionals.

Through MFWP, farmers and their immediate family members can access six free, confidential one on one hour long counselling sessions with a registered counsellor with a background in agriculture.

Anyone looking for more information on MFWP can visit manitobafarmerwellness.ca.

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19	Wednesday	Regular sale followed by Cows & Bulls, Virden 9 a.m.
20	Thursday	DLMS Internet Sale
21	Friday	Sheep / Goat sale, Brandon 5 p.m.
		Tack sale, Brandon 6 p.m.
		Horses to follow, Brandon 7 p.m.
22	Saturday	Replacement Heifer Sale Bred Cow / HFR Pair Sale, Virden 12 noon
26	Wednesday	Presort Sale followed by Cows & Bulls, Virden 10 a.m.
27	Thursday	DLMS Internet Sale
- MAY 2023 -		
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2	Tuesday	Presort Sale followed by Cows & Bulls, Brandon 10 a.m.
3	Wednesday	Regular sale followed by Cows & Bulls, Virden 9 a.m.
4	Thursday	DLMS Internet Sale
5	Friday	Bred Cow & Cow / Calf, Brandon 1 p.m.
		Exotic / Small Animal, Brandon 6 p.m.
9	Tuesday	Regular Sale followed by Cows & Bulls, Brandon 9 a.m.
11	Thursday	DLMS Internet Sale
12-13	Friday-Saturday	Canadian Livestock Auctioneer Championship Okla, Alberta
17	Wednesday	Presort Sale followed by Cows & Bulls, Virden 10 a.m.
18	Thursday	DLMS Internet Sale
23	Tuesday	Regular Sale followed by Cows & Bulls, Brandon 9 a.m.
24	Wednesday	Regular Sale followed by Cows & Bulls, Virden 9 a.m.
25	Thursday	DLMS Internet Sale
29	Monday	Exotic/Small Animal, Sheep & Goat, Horse & Tack, Virden 5 p.m.
30	Tuesday	Regular Sale followed by Cows & Bulls, Brandon 9 a.m.
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USask soil science student searches for a sustainable solution to crop disease



Jordan Shirley receiving his Indigenous Academic Achievement Award from Elders Linda Sanderson and Roland Duquette. (Photo: Dave Stobbe) Jordan Shirley receiving his Indigenous Academic Achievement Award from Elders Linda Sanderson and Roland Duquette.

Dave Stobbe photo

Continued from Page 38

"The plant growth chamber trials focus on the application of these micro-organisms in the plant system, and examining how this impacts the overall plant health. The lab-based experiments involve a diverse set of rhizobia isolated from legume crops and evaluating their interactions with root rot pathogens."

Shirley's research is ongoing, but so far, he has discovered some unique results.

"It looks like soil micro-organisms can behave differently depending on which nutrients are available to them," he said. "For instance, certain micro-organisms were found to be antagonistic towards the plant pathogen when fed a specific diet, but not when fed a different diet."

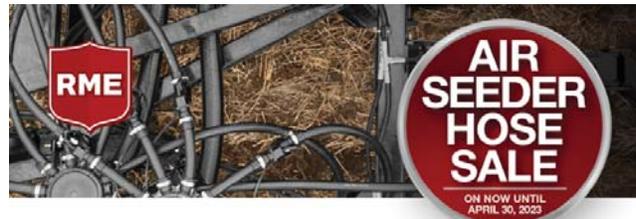
This may indicate the importance of managing nutrients in soil systems to allow certain micro-organisms to be more effective in their ability to mitigate disease in plants."

The real-world application of this research could lead to healthier and more sustainable options for agricultural producers to prevent crop loss from disease. Shirley's research receives support from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

A love for sustainability goes beyond

research for Shirley. After completing his master's degree, he would like to pursue a career in the conservation, research, and documentation of Canada's diverse ecology. He has also started his own business, Boreal Blue. Boreal Blue creates sustainable goods such as hiking sticks, coffee tables, etc., from upcycled forest waste products.

"I hope I can foster an improved connection to the wilderness near us and reimagine how we use the resources we have around us."



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It didn't take long for Justin, the working partner in the business, to pick it up. After some continued training from one of the most experienced people in the door industry, Eagle Overhead Door was off and running.

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After three years in business and hundreds of customers served, Justin says there isn't much they haven't seen. Your doors are an important part of your home and business. They not only add curb appeal to your property but also provide security and protection to your vehicles and belongings. Eagle understands the significance of a quality door and they provide reliable installation, repair, and maintenance services in Southeast Saskatchewan, and Southwest Manitoba.

Justin says Eagle Overhead Door prides themselves on excellent and quick customer service and attention to detail. They take the time to understand their clients' needs and preferences and provide personalized solutions that meet their specific requirements. They also offer free consultations and estimates, ensuring that their clients have a clear understanding of the services we provide and the costs involved.



Justin Carrier, the owner of Eagle Overhead Door in Arcola, left, and Justin Hillier, one of the company's lead technicians, right.

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SARM happy with rural support in provincial budget

The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), alongside their member RMs, say they are encouraged by the ongoing support for rural Saskatchewan in this provincial budget.

The budget increases total investment into the province's severely strained healthcare sector by 6.7%, which is desperately needed. Service disruptions, aging facilities, and the ongoing struggle to recruit and retain healthcare staff have been further highlighted and are more critical than ever. SARM will continue to work with the provincial government to ensure this new funding and programming reaches rural areas effectively.

The total Municipal Revenue sharing pool was increased from just over \$262 million in 2022/23 to \$297.9 million in this budget. SARM is pleased with the increase, recognizing that RMs are a key component in driving our economy. "More funding is needed so RMs can continue to provide a level of service expected by sectors driving Saskatchewan's economy including preparing for future growth in the critical minerals sector. We are hopeful more can be allocated in the near future," says Ray Orb, SARM President.

Funding for rural road and bridge infrastructure is imperative for RMs to continue to provide key economic sectors with a strategic transportation network that is effective and well maintained. "We were pleased with the continued investment of \$15 million for the Rural Integrated Roads for Growth (RIRG) program but more is needed if we want to revitalize and sustain this critical rural network into the future," says Orb.

Increased funding for Saskatchewan farm support programs is also welcome news. The province is providing an additional 25 percent to further enhance programming offered via the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership. "Increased support for farmers and ranchers signals to Saskatchewan's agriculture

sector that our government will be there to assist when they need it," says Orb. "This assurance is critical. It allows our agriculture sector to compete on the world market with countries like the EU and the US, who provide similar supports to their industry."

SARM says they are also encouraged by new and continued funding for crime reduction initiatives as well as \$8.9 million for the Saskatchewan Firearms Program. SARM looks forward to meeting with the RCMP and provincial government to discuss how to effectively use this increased investment to fill the gaps in the current policing system, many of those in rural Saskatchewan. When so much of rural Saskatchewan is already underserved, SARM is asking for a co-ordinated effort between all stakeholders targeting crime reduction, one that ensures we aren't duplicating efforts.

Rural broadband is an essential service; this is something SARM has been promoting for over a decade. SARM appreciates the \$412.7 million for the SaskTel 5G and rural fibre network but substantial investment is needed to reach the goal of broadband infrastructure parity for all Saskatchewan residents regardless of location. Neither people nor industry can thrive in rural Saskatchewan without reliable, affordable broadband. It's often the best option to access, markets, banking, social services, and recently healthcare. At SARM's most recent convention their members highlighted the need for better access for rural schools to effectively deliver education programming.

SARM says they look forward to working with the province to provide input on what works best for rural Saskatchewan as these new budget investments and programs are implemented.

"They will go a long way to support the continued economic growth and livelihood in rural Saskatchewan, and the entire province," says Orb.

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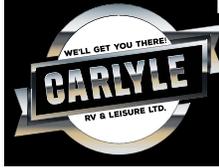


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