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SPECIAL FIREFIGHTERS ISSUE

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Choir performance rates standing ovation



In a visually stirring number, “As the Ship Went Down” (composer Woodpigeon, arr. George Chung) the choir sways on the waves of this expressive sea ballad with featured soloists Tristan Plaisier, Taylor Beaumont, Siri Warwaruk, Micah Thiessen and Krysian Dupra along with instruments - drum, bells, sticks and melodica.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virden AUD Theatre resonated with the swell of beautiful voices of Westman Youth Choir performing amazing music from around the world.

Conductor Kendra Obach first joined WMYC in 2015 and the choir board says they’re “excited to have her back for another season!”

For the first time, choir alumnus Clint McLachlan of Brandon shared in conducting these young voices. He’s appeared on Virden’s stage with the Konektis Choir as well.

With pianist Danielle Guina, these conductors drew a depth of talent from the 54-voice choir as they performed powerful and imaginative music for the audience. After just two weekends of rehearsals at Camp Wannakumbac it was a magical evening eliciting hearty applause and a standing ovation finish.



WMYC instrumentalists and singers.

PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

Among the students from 16 Westman communities were Virden’s Avrin Kriesner, Charley Dunning, Krysian Dupra, Micah Thiessen, Reed Plaisier, Sarah Lindsay, Tristan Plaisier and JJ Thiessen and from the southwestern corner – Amelia Alphonso

(Pierson) and Eve Campbell (Waskada).

Judy Poole with Virden Music and Arts Festival was emcee and WMYC board members Julie Poole and Marlin Peters thanked the many supporters and donors who made the 2025 choir possible - busi-

nesses, clubs and a school division.

Listed on the program were memorial donations by Michelle Chzyk for her parents Pat and Marie Angers; Tenley & Herman Dyck in memory of Bill Lawson; and Karen Maryniuk for Keith Harpelle.



HOME GAME
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1
VS. SWAN VALLEY
STAMPEDE
PUCK DROPS AT 7:30PM

Inside...



THANK-YOU
FIREFIGHTERS
P9-12 & 19



VIRIDEN WELL
UPDATE
P3

Phase One of accessible playground brings joy



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

With shrieks of glee, some Grade 3 kids swarm the carousel installed on the rubberized playground surface. Nixon Gray in his chair is in the centre of it all. Adults celebrate the completion of the project, (L-R) Scott Major, Dana Rudniski with Westman Dreams for Kids; Mary Montgomery School principal Brad Hayward; Parent Advisory Council playground committee Andrea Gray, Beth McConnell, and Michelle Leslie.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Mary Montgomery School Accessible Playground committee celebrated a grand opening on Thursday afternoon, Oct. 16 where two representatives of the largest donor organization - Westman Dreams for Kids – attended to congratulate the committee. A small group of parents and kids also attended.

November 2025 will mark two years since grant applications went out and fundraisers began on the journey to see a playground area dedicated to ease of entry and a safe play area for those with disabilities.

“It’s great to see it become a reality,” said Mary Montgomery School principal Brad Hayward.

Members of the committee say Andrea Gray has spearheaded the effort from the start and through every fundraiser.

“We’ve selected some additional pieces to add to this rubberized pad. Some interactive pieces, some musical pieces,” said Gray. The rubberized area will be extended toward the school building where an outdoor learning centre and additional seating is planned. “We’d like to add some shade structures too.”

Completion of Phase One cost about \$152,000. Without a final plan, she guesstimates another \$75,000 will be required for Phase Two, which they hope will be installed next summer.

The afternoon of Oct. 16 was breezy and damp but spirits were high seeing the excitement of Nixon Gray in his wheelchair playing among young friends on the newly installed rubberized playground surface.

Nixon said he’s explored the play area and reported to his mother Andrea, “Guess what! We were going so fast, my shoe fell off.”

Members of the playground committee Beth Mc-

Connell and Michelle Leslie noted the community’s support: “We’ve done a lot of fundraising in the last two years. There’s been a lot of folks in the community helping out behind the scenes.”

The community has supported this construction through purchasing 50/50 tickets, donating raffle prizes, supporting the carnival where hundred attended in the playground in June of 2024.

Along with a slew of corporate and community group grants and donations, individuals have also stepped up to donate to this playground that is not just for the school.

They said, “Adults with accessibility issues who can’t necessarily play with their kids on a play structure can play with their kids here. It’s created a space that’s inclusive for anybody in our community who could benefit.... That’s why we want to add the outdoor seating. If you’re a grandparent who uses a walker or a wheelchair or a cane, it’s really hard to navigate gravel surfacing on playground.”

Castle Oilfield Construction did the excavation work without charge. Play Quest was hired to install the equipment and rubber surfacing.

When Phase Two is completed, a sign at the playground will display donor names.

Virden varsity girls volleyball team hosted tournament and won consolation



Getting ready to serve #5 Scotlyn Chadney.



PHOTOS BY KIAHNA BARKLEY

Virden varsity girls #7 Libby Verran prepares for the next volley.

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Critical update: Water rationing required

Virden races to assure water supply



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Virden water source returns to this site adjacent to former wells (known as Erco wells).

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Town of Virden issued a solemn warning to citizens last week but this week the Oct. 21 notice read, “CRITICAL: Water Conservation Notice.... Your cooperation is not only appreciated but required at this critical time for our citizens.”

Virden has not run out of water in recent memory, but the water carried naturally occurring arsenic, difficult to remove. In 2021 Virden’s water source was relocated to wells about 8.5km north of PR 259 in the Assiniboine Valley.

Now, this source is failing, sending Virden back to a former well site in the valley adjacent to PR.259.

The recent notice explains that current water usage is not sustainable and as of Tuesday the Town pulled out of the aquifer. Water will bypass all primary treatment, but will maintain chlorination in water sent straight to the reservoir. (Potable water storage reservoir is approximately 2000 m³; additionally 400 m³ of storage in the water tower.)

“This water will be discolored and have an unpleasant odor, but at this time, will be blended with the 2021 aquifer water. Due to blending the impact will not be as noticeable for tonight (Tuesday), but if consumption is not reduced immediately, the quality will continue to deteriorate.

“It was critical that the Town transition off the 2021 aquifer today (Tuesday), as levels are extremely low.... This has not provided the Town adequate time to get the old water system to a quality that can be ran through the full treatment system. The Office of Drinking Water has been advised of this requirement and will not be issuing any further advisories.”

Canary stops singing

The first sign of trouble was when water levels dropped drastically in private wells on the 2021 well site, the canary in the coal mine. While Virden’s wells were in a deeper part of the aquifer, it was a warning.

A water conservation notice was posted by the Town of Virden on Oct. 7 asking all residents and business owners to conserve water until advised otherwise. See notices on the Town website, www.virden.ca.

However, water usage has risen in the past few days. Messaging asking residents and businesses to reduce water use seem to have gone unheeded.

The saying goes, ‘you never miss the water until the well runs dry.’ Water previously taken for granted now should to be limited to cooking, drinking, and essential hygiene.

Mayor’s concern

Mayor Williams says, “My greatest concern is that people are not following the Water Conservation Notices that are being posted and are making the transition more complicated and costly than it needs to be.”

Finding an abundant water source without contaminants like arsenic has, for years, proved a challenge for Virden. Several times from about 2009 and onward new filtration was added to the water plant with reverse osmosis membranes and other substrate termed ‘green sand’ to handle the arsenic. But provincial standards for arsenic

continued to drop as testing improved.

Health Canada has established a maximum acceptable concentration (MAC) for arsenic in drinking water of 0.01 milligrams per litre (mg/L). Water from this former well site and aquifer has contained persistent amounts of arsenic over 0.01mg/L.

For that reason, Town of Virden website has a drinking water advisory from Manitoba Health and the Office of Drinking Water: “A precautionary water quality advisory is being issued so that water users are aware of the risks and can take action to reduce these risks.

“The arsenic guideline is based on lifetime exposure (70 years). Drinking this water over long periods of time can slightly increase cancer risk. It is beneficial to try to keep arsenic levels in drinking water as low as possible.”

This advisory gives people an opportunity to buy bottled water for drinking, preparing food or beverages, including ice and infant formula.

Boiling the water will NOT reduce the amount of arsenic in the water and may potentially increase the concentration of arsenic in the water very slightly.

Williams said, “I understand people’s concerns about going back to the old source, but we need to ensure that we have an adequate quantity of water for our citizens even if the quality is not optimal. We will continue to optimize (water) treatment to deal with any possible arsenic issues from this source.

“My major concern at this time is ensuring the water continues to flow.” -Mayor Tina Williams

Supplies must not run out. Everyone relies on it and the hospital, care

homes and seniors’ residences are the most vulnerable.

This project was expedited in early October as Virden has worked tirelessly with provincial partners including Manitoba Water Services Board (MWSB), the Office of Drinking Water and Prairie Mountain Health to determine the right course of action.

Team work

Williams says, “The Town has a knowledgeable, dedicated project team that are working very hard to make sure this happens as quickly and smoothly as possible. This group is completely committed to do everything they can to make sure the Town continues to have a safe and adequate water supply.”

“Friesen Drilling Ltd. and Associated Engineering, working with the Town and MWSB, have made this project a top priority, with FDL having already commenced the installation of the new well as of October 15.”

In a joint statement issued late Tuesday evening the Town of Virden and the R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth state they’ve been in contact regarding Virden’s current water situation.

“We understand the challenges Virden is facing and appreciate the importance of ensuring reliable water access for the community,” said Reeve Clayton Canart of the RM of Wallace-Woodworth. “Our Council is open to sitting down with Virden and provincial partners to look at potential short-term solutions and what kind of infrastructure that would require. Due to our system’s existing capacity and commitments, a full supply connection is not feasible, but we are willing to explore what limited or temporary assistance may be possible.”

Williams expressed appreciation for the R.M.’s willingness to discuss cooperative options as the Town continues working with the Manitoba Water Services Board and other agencies to secure a long-term, sustainable water source.



MONEY MATTERS

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Tanner Lewis
Financial Advisor
Keystone Wealth | Aviso Wealth

"FALL FINANCIAL PLANNING:

Preparing for the Holidays and Year-End Expenses"

As October arrives with its crisp air and golden leaves, it marks not only the heart of autumn but also the beginning of the holiday season. While this time of year brings warmth and celebration, it can also lead to financial stress if not properly managed. Thoughtful planning now can help you enjoy the festive season without worrying about money. Here are some smart strategies to prepare for holiday and year-end expenses.

Start by creating a detailed holiday budget. List all anticipated expenses—gifts, travel, decorations, meals, and events—and set spending limits for each category. This helps you avoid overspending while still celebrating meaningfully. Use past holiday spending as a guide, and look for areas to trim without sacrificing the joy of the season. A well-defined budget acts as a roadmap and helps keep impulse spending in check.

Gift giving is a major holiday expense, so it's wise to plan ahead. Make a list of everyone you plan to buy for and assign a budget to each. Look for meaningful yet affordable alternatives like handmade gifts, shared experiences, or charitable donations in someone's name. Shopping early allows you to take advantage of discounts and avoid the last-minute rush, when prices are often higher.

If travel is part of your holiday plans, book as early as possible. Airfare and hotel prices tend to rise closer to the holidays. Flexible travel dates and loyalty program discounts can also help cut costs. Consider alternative travel options like driving instead of flying, or staying with family to save on accommodations.

The year-end shopping season, with events like Black Friday and Cyber Monday, can be a trap for overspending. Make a list of items you genuinely need or have been planning to buy, and stick to it. Comparison shopping and using price-tracking tools can help you find the best deals without straying from your budget.

Lastly, if you're expecting a year-end bonus, plan how you'll use it in advance. Allocate portions to different goals—paying off debt, boosting savings, contributing to retirement, or covering holiday expenses. Being intentional with your bonus ensures it supports your financial well-being rather than disappearing on unplanned purchases.

By planning ahead this October, you can enjoy the holiday season with peace of mind. A little financial foresight goes a long way toward keeping your celebrations joyful, stress-free, and on budget.

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Tundra
By Chad Carpenter



Sometimes it's too little, too late

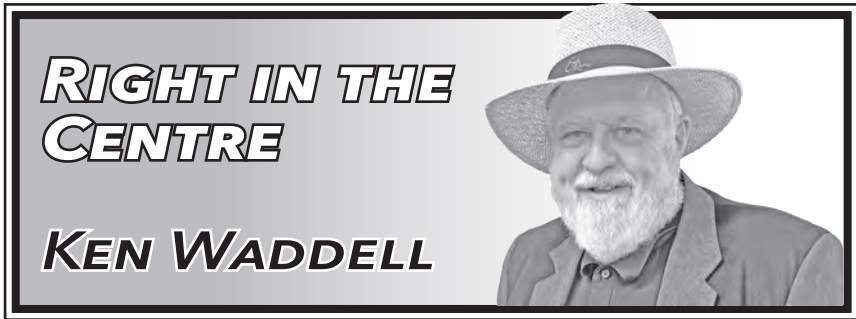
I was thinking about municipal politics recently and pondered for a moment about how young I was when I first became aware of municipal affairs. I know it was in the early 1950s and I would have been about 7 years old. During a particularly heavy snow year, the roads to town in the RM of Victoria were blocked for several weeks. My dad had a “school van” route and had to switch from a 1952 International truck to a horse drawn old-fashioned school van for several weeks.

I am not sure if that wintery ordeal was the instigation for my dad to visit a neighbour to encourage him to run for reeve but I distinctly remember the condition of roads, especially in winter was a major problem. Dad, and some neighbours thought that Fred Harrison would make a good reeve and hoped that he could convince the RM of Victoria to have bigger and better equipment to grade the roads in summer and plow the roads in winter. It was my first example of seeing that the most important level of politics in Manitoba is municipal.

Fast forward by about 70 years and my memory bank is full of events where municipal affairs have affected our daily lives and livelihood.

As an adult, I have now lived in two RMs and the Town of Neepawa. I have attended countless council meetings as a taxpayer and newspaper editor. I also served as mayor of Neepawa from 1998-2002 and from 2012 to 2014. I have seen municipal successes, struggles and a few disasters. In my first term as mayor of Neepawa, I was in the council chair when the Neepawa water treatment plant failed completely. That was about five days of stress, expense and finally, a solution.

The biggest current issue, dare I say crisis, in the coverage area for our three papers at Virden, Rivers and Neepawa is the evolving issue of water quality and supply at Virden. Virden's water



supplies are running low and an emergency well drilling project is underway to try to avoid a full scale water shortage crisis. Back in the day, the Virden council received well-intended advice that a new well would supply lots of water and do away with the arsenic level issue. That said, the arsenic level was never very high, but it was above legislated limits and as everyone would assume, having any arsenic in drinking water isn't a good feeling.

I don't think any council or officials can be blamed for the current crisis but it has happened and is being addressed and to that, I say good on Virden Council.

There may have been an earlier solution and what has been suggested is that the RM of Wallace-Woodworth reportedly had better water and in good supply. I don't know if that is so. Maybe Virden and Wallace-Woodworth should have worked together on a regional system.

My personal opinion is that the biggest problem we have in rural Manitoba is a lack of cooperation between municipal entities. Before anyone gets too upset with that statement, please note I said it's my personal opinion but it is an opinion based on many years of municipal experience and observation.

Back around 2010 or so, the NDP Greg Selinger government decided to “enforce” amalgamation. It didn't go all that well as there was severe distrust between municipalities and government and also between municipalities. For

over a 100 years towns and RMs had been competing to stay alive, to achieve levels of service and at the same time, watch populations dwindle as farms got larger, many RMs and towns shrank. Forced amalgamation was not popular. That said, several amalgamations took place across Manitoba and in our newspaper coverage area.

Personally I think RMs and Towns should amalgamate. Long gone are the days when as one reeve said long ago, the government should just leave us alone as all we need to worry about is plowing the roads in winter and grading the roads in the summer.

Towns, villages and RMs all have to deal with much more than roads. There are challenges with water supply and distribution, sewage treatment and disposal, garbage and recycling, health care facilities and much more.

I am told there are over 20 CAO vacancies in Manitoba. Maybe we have to pay CAOs more money. Municipal politics has become too complicated, expensive and risky to stick with what I would call the more casual approach of the past.

It's rare that any major municipal project comes in under a half million dollars nowadays. The Virden water repair will be that high and it costs over \$100,000 to simply pave a block of street let alone install or replace water and sewer pipes.

We owe all our councillors and staff a vote of thanks but that doesn't include sticking with outdated practices.

Homebodies
RITA FRIESEN



Fruit cake
revisted,
20 years later

Those who know me well will find this difficult to believe- I was studying a cook book. Not reading it for pleasure, for that's absurd on many levels, but studying as if I was preparing for a quiz, like I had a major exam coming up. “Easily Made Christmas Cakes and Fruit Cakes” page 51 of the old “A Guide to Good Cooking, compiled by the makers of Five Roses Flour”, copyright 1938.

Oh, it's not the first fruit cake I've ever made, but it is the first one in almost two decades, and I got to choose from three hand written recipes. I chose the dark cake, not two cups of molasses dark, just one tablespoon dark. It was a separate shopping trip to pick up the ingredients. My basic kitchen shelves do not hold two pounds of raisins, one pound of currants, half a pound of slivered almonds, three quarters of a pound of mixed peel nor one pound of glace cherries! It did contain the cinnamon, the molasses, the nutmeg and the allspice - not the mace so I chose to forgo it! On hand was a pound of butter and eight eggs.

The night before baking I carefully cut the brown paper to fit the three sizes of pans. And called my sister to see if she double or triple layers the paper, remembering faintly that our mother used three. She only uses one, so I was down for that. Then I pre-mixed all my fruits, one recipe said that would allow the flavours to blend. And called my sister to see if I should dust them with flour so they remain separate. Again, thinking that was something we used to do. She said no, and I rejoiced.

Mixing day and I enlisted the strong arm of my grandson. It gets to be heavy work! The wooden spoon did not bend or break, and we took turns adding the eggs to the flour, and the fruit to the batter. A slow oven...how slow?? One book said 325 degrees, another said two fifty. And called my sister to double check the temperature. She said try three hundred. And so I did. I did check on line to see which shelf level was recommended, and the middle won.

The littlest cake was brown and firm in about an hour, the other two more than twice that long. It could have been a shorter time if I hadn't opened the oven so frequently to check on colour and firmness!

So, out of the oven, cooled and ready to store. And, I called my sister to see how she stores her, and read the cookbook again. She said that after they are cool wrap in tin foil, then plastic and store in a tin or a plastic container in a cool, dark place. And so I will!

Some major changes in baking the cake this time compared to the last time. One thing is the price. All I can say is that it better be good! And second, the time was when my sister might have asked me for some input, and now I rely on her!

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A 30-year-old male charged with breaking and entering

Westman RCMP Service Report for Oct. 12 to Oct. 18

Submitted
By WESTMAN RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 65 calls for service. Some of these calls for service include 15 traffic offences, 5 break and enter, 4 wellbeing checks, 5 mental health act, 4 assault, 2 false alarm, 2 suspicious person, 2 uttering threats against a person, 1 abandoned vehicle and 5 mischief files.

On Oct. 12, during a routine traffic patrol within the RM of Sifton, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 121 km/hr in a 100 km/hr zone. RCMP initiated a traffic stop and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$325.

On Oct. 13, Westman RCMP received a report of an attempted theft of a vehicle that occurred throughout the night within the Town of Virden. The door handle of the vehicle was broken and the steering column near the ignition was damaged. The vehicle had been rummaged through and some change was stolen. Police encourage residents to ensure that vehicles are kept locked at all times and that keys and valuables are not left inside vehicles.

On Oct. 13, Westman RCMP were dispatched a call of a Break & Enter and Assault that had occurred within the Settlement of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. Police attended and learned that two males entered a residence and assaulted someone in the home by holding a knife to his throat, punched him several times and then pointed a handgun at him. Police were able to locate the suspect, and he was taken into custody without incident. A 30-year-old male has been charged with Breaking & Entering, Assault with a Weapon, Using an Imitation Firearm in the Commission of an Offence, Uttering Threats Against a Person and two counts of Possession of a Weapon for Dangerous Purpose. His next court appearance will

be in November.

On Oct. 15, Westman RCMP were dispatched to a call involving an assault that had taken place in the Settlement of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. RCMP arrived on scene and observed obvious injuries to the victim who was then taken to the hospital to be treated for her injuries. Upon investigation, a 37-year-old male was arrested without incident and transported to the Virden RCMP detachment for lodging. He was remanded into custody and will appear in court later this month on a charge of Aggravated Assault.

On Oct. 16, during a routine traffic patrol within the RM of Pipestone, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 124 km/hr in a 90 km/hr zone. RCMP initiated a traffic stop and the driver was issued Traffic Offence Notices for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$495.

On Oct. 17, during a routine traffic patrol within the Town of Virden, RCMP observed a vehicle turning onto King Street bearing a license plate that was inactive. RCMP conducted a traffic stop with the vehicle where it was discovered that the driver also had a suspended driver's license. The driver was issued Traffic Offence Notices for Driving without Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance which carries a fine of \$672 and Driving While Disqualified which carries a fine of \$672. The driver was also issued a warning for Drive an Unregistered Vehicle.

On Oct. 18, Westman RCMP were dispatched to a call in the Settlement of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation regarding a female who had been assaulted with a hockey stick. Police attended the scene and spoke to the victim who had obvious injuries. She was taken to the hospital to be treated for her injuries. A 28-year-old female was arrested and charged with Assault with a Weapon and Failing to Comply with Undertaking Condition. She will appear in court in December in relation to these charges.

Southwesterners receive 4-H Leaders of Tomorrow Scholarship

By VEA Staff
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

In total, four outstanding 4-H Manitoba members have been selected to each receive a \$10,000 scholarship in support of their post-secondary education.

Attending Brandon University, Allison Beaumont of Neepawa is the recipient of a \$10,000 scholarship presented to her in honour of the late Sharon Evans, of Hartney 4-H Club.

In 2025, Beaumont served as secretary of the South Parkland 4-H Council for groups from Kenton, Hamiota and northward to Riding Mountain and Neepawa.

Ashlyn Whetter has been with the Alexander 4-H club for many years. She's Manitoba's representative to 4-H Canada's Youth Advisory Committee. Attending University of Manitoba Whetter is in her fourth and final year of an agronomy degree where she's the 2025-26 Vice-President of U of M Future Leaders 4-H Club.

Brooklyn Piasta, at U of M was awarded the scholarship in honour of Estelle Bahuaud, Headingley 4-H Club and Sarah Meggison, also at U of M University received the scholarship in honour of Lois Clarke, Poplar Hill 4-H Club.

The 2025 Leaders of Tomorrow Scholarships were awarded from a \$1 million endowment fund established by Manitoba Government with the Brandon Area Community Foundation.

"We're very proud of this year's scholarship recipients and excited to see where their paths take them," said Greg Penner, President of 4-H Manitoba. "Each of them has shown real leadership, dedication, and a commitment to their communities. Supporting them as they take the next step in their education helps build a strong future for Manitoba."

4-H Manitoba's mission is to build leadership in youth and adults while developing essential life and leadership skills as members "Learn To Do By Doing."

"One hundred and twelve years ago, Canada's 4-H move-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

4-H Ashlyn Whetter.

ment began here in Manitoba, paving the way for a long and successful history of opportunities for Manitoba's youth to develop leadership and communication skills while learning about agriculture and environmental sustainability," said Agriculture Minister Ron Kostyshyn. "On behalf of the Manitoba government, I congratulate all of the 2025 scholarship recipients and extend my heartfelt wishes as they head toward a bright future in our province."

Lions Club Donations - Part 11



PHOTO BY CASSY HUME

Virden Lions Club member Alex Sundell presenting a donation to Virden Palliative Care, accepted by Chris Dunning on May 28. Over the next few weeks we will be showing all the wonderful donations made by the Virden Lions Club to different organizations.

Town Office: 204-748-2440

Virden Landfill: 204-748-6033

Tundra Oil & Gas Place: 204-748-2736



Animal Control: 204-851-5881

Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440

Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540

Property Tax Notices

Reminder – Property taxes are due by October 31.

If you have not received your 2025 tax statement, please email info@virden.ca or call the Town Office at 204-748-2440.

Noon Hour Shinny Starting October 27

12:00-12:50 PM - Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

\$5 drop-in or season passes available at the Town Office - \$125+GST

Visit our facility schedule at www.virden.ca.

2025 Citizen of the Year Nominations now open!

Nominate a deserving citizen or community group for Citizen of the Year.

Deadline to submit your nomination is **November 14, 2025.**

Visit virden.ca/p/citizen-of-the-year or call the Town Office for more information.

Upcoming Council Meetings
November 4 and November 18
Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN’S KITCHEN

From the Manitoba Pork Producers web site, “Manitoba pork producers are proud to provide consumers at home and abroad with some of the best tasting and highest quality pork in the world.” HyLife is now selling their pork products in local Neepawa grocery stores, FreshMart and Co-op. Today’s main meal recipe showcases this affordable and delicious locally produced meat.

Oven pork stew

This simple and delicious pork stew recipe will warm you up on the chilly days that are coming. Pork stew is a cozy, hearty one pot dinner filled with tender pork and vegetables in a flavorful broth. If your Dutch oven cannot be placed in the oven transfer the stew to a small roaster before placing in the oven.

- 1/4 cup oil
- 2 1/2 lbs. boneless pork shoulder, fat trimmed and cut into 1 1/2 inch pieces
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 tsp. each salt and pepper
- 1 liter chicken broth
- 1 medium to large onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely diced
- 2 celery stalks, cut into ” pieces
- 1 small red pepper, diced
- 5 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1 small sweet potato peeled and cut into 2 inch pieces
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tsp. dried marjoram or thyme
- 1 tsp. Dash
- 2 Tbsp. flour mixed with 1/4 cup water

Whisk together flour, salt and pepper in a medium bowl then toss the pork cubes in it until coated. Heat oil over medium-low heat in a large Dutch oven. Once oil is hot, place the pork in an even layer on the bottom of the pan. You may need to do this process in 2 batches depending upon the size of your Dutch oven and amount of pork used. If doing this save some of your oil for the second batch. Brown the pork for 2-3 minutes on each side until all pieces are browned and then transfer to a bowl. When all the meat is browned add back to the Dutch oven. Add the remaining ingredients except for the flour and water and place in a preheated 350 F oven and bake for 1 1/2 hours. Remove from oven and add the flour and water mix. Bring to a gentle boil on the stove and cook for several minutes until the stew thickens. Remove the bay leaves. Season with additional salt and pepper if needed, then serve with a slice of bread.

Banana oatmeal cake

For a sweet ending to your meal and to help fill the lunch box try this banana oatmeal cake recipe. It will become a family favourite.

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup quick oatmeal
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 1/2 cup mashed ripe banana
- 3/4 buttermilk
- 1/2 cup butter at room temperature
- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 2/3 cup raisins or chopped walnuts or chocolate chips
- Caramel icing:
 - 1/3 cup butter
 - 1 cup brown sugar
 - 1/4 cup milk
 - 1 tsp. vanilla
 - 2 cups icing sugar

Preheat oven to 350 F (180 C). Lightly grease a 9X13 inch cake pan. In a bowl mix together the flour, oatmeal, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon. Set aside. Mix the bananas and buttermilk together. Set aside. In an electric mixer bowl cream together butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and vanilla and mix well. Add the half the banana mix alternately with the flour mix mixing lightly after each addition. End with the flour mix. Stir in the desired raisins or nuts or chocolate chips. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake for 35-40 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Cool and ice with caramel icing. Icing: Sift your icing sugar first to remove any lumps. Do not miss this step! Melt the butter in a heavy bottomed pot. Stir in the brown sugar. Heat to boiling stirring all the while. Then turn down the heat and while stirring gently boil for two minutes. Stir in the milk and heat to boiling. Remove from heat and add the vanilla. Gradually stir in the icing sugar and quickly spread over the cake. Enjoy with your favourite people.

Elkhorn Manor upgrades fire safety

Renovated courtyard also in the works

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Lindsay Cooper, the Manager of Health Services for Elkhorn Manor, attended the Oct. 16 meeting of the Wallace-Woodworth council to explain preparations for a provincial fire and life safety renovation project. The upgrades to the Manor are part of a \$286 million Manitoba Government initiative affecting 180 healthcare sites and personal care homes. They include installing or modifying sprinkler systems, generators, fire alarm and CO detection systems and sealing between areas of the complex. Because Elkhorn is not on a municipal water system, the work will also require a new pump house.

Timeline

Although the exact timeline is uncertain, similar projects in Reston and Melita, took 18 months to two years, but Cooper expects Elkhorn’s to be about one year, since the building is smaller and single level.

The project will go to tender soon, with construction expected to start within three to six months. During the renovation, some rooms will need to remain vacant for safety and logistical reasons, meaning admissions are currently on hold. Cooper said that this may cause concern in the community, so she wants council to be informed and prepared to look after any questions. She stressed the importance of building relationships with local councils and of open communication between care facilities and municipal leaders.

Public Communication

Coun. Mark Humphries asked how Prairie Mountain Health will communicate this information to the local public, given that residents may hear rumors or express concern about closed beds. Elkhorn Manor often has more empty beds than other regional facilities, with no provincial waitlist to fill them. This allows Elkhorn to act as a flexible site, accepting residents from other regions while they wait for a preferred placement closer to home.

Humphries said, “What we find is that misinformation

has people guessing and then the rumour spreads and then there’s something that (sounds) disastrous and it’s not... You’re trying to improve the safety conditions. You’re trying to make sure that it’s up to date.” Humphries noted that clarity and transparency are important and added, “For the locals to know that sometimes we do have four and five beds spare takes the panic out of the fact that you’re going to take four or five beds out to do the renovation.”

Staffing levels are generally strong at Elkhorn and all nursing positions are filled except for one 0.45 part-time vacancy. Among health care aides, there was one full-time and one 0.8 position open, but existing part-time and casual staff had been successfully covering the shifts. Housing was cited as a major barrier to staff recruitment.

Courtyard renovation

Another new project will improve outdoor spaces at Elkhorn Manor. Cooper shared plans to transform the back of the property into a safe, enclosed area with a cement walking path, new sod and shrubbery, and a chain-link fence around the perimeter. The goal is to create a space where residents can enjoy outdoor gatherings, host music events, and socialize safely.

The proposed project, estimated at around \$200,000 will replace uneven paving stones and increase accessibility. The team hopes to begin fundraising and promotional efforts in 2025.

Cooper noted that provincial funding through Shared Health or other health authorities does not extend to outdoor improvement projects, meaning the effort depends entirely on donations and fundraising.



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Miniota News

Submitted
BY LINDA CLARK

The 2nd Annual Sportsman's Dinner was held in the Miniota Community Hall on Saturday, Oct. 18th with over 200 attending to enjoy and support the Enhancement Committee in their fundraising endeavours. The hall was tastefully decorated by community ladies for this special evening.

Chairman of the Enhancement Committee, Jeff Poppel, brought greetings to the crowd, giving an update on the status of this major project, that of adding one more ball diamond to the sports grounds and artificial ice in the skating rink, with additional rink updates as funds are secured.

A roast beef supper, catered by Little Kitchen on the Prairie, was enjoyed prior to hearing Lorne Molleken tell his hockey story, a professional goal tender in the NHL, followed by being head coach for the Chicago Blackhawks, and a major support and coach for the Saskatoon Blades team for many years.

A hat auction followed with \$33,000 being raised. Another wonderful fundraising event with thanks to all who supported this community cause.

An announcement was made this week of a \$30,000 grant being received for

the Miniota Enhancement rink project from Twin Valley Co-op and Federated Cooperative Limited through their Co-op Community Spaces granting. This is truly appreciated by the Miniota community.

The Miniota United Church choir with Lynne Cornish at the piano and Linda Clark leading a Thanksgiving worship service visited The Sherwood in Virden this past week. Following worship, fellowship was enjoyed with our many Miniota and area friends and others over coffee.

This past week our community was pleased to benefit from the work and inspiration of Birtle Legion #55, as banners were hung around town in honour of our veterans. John and Noreen Stowe are members of the Birtle Legion and tell us that if you wish to have a family member (a veteran) honoured, to ask for an application and this work will be furthered next year. Our hats are off to the Birtle Legion for initiating this most worthy project. Cars can be seen driving by the banners slowly to take in all the names. Our community is invited to attend the Remembrance Day service at Birtle on November 11th. Let's We Forget!

"Choosing to have joy is not naively thinking everything will be easy. It is courageously believing that there is still hope, even when things get hard." - Facebook quote, Author Unknown

Over \$1.1 million committed to Miniota Enhancement



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Miniota's Brad Cole (L) with his former coach and guest speaker, NHL player and coach Lorne Molleken, beside the fundraiser storyboard.

By VEA Staff
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On Oct. 18, Jeff Poppel, Chair of the Miniota Enhancement Committee told the crowd at the sportsman's dinner last Saturday evening, "Over the past year, our committee and community have achieved incredible things. Through your generosity and hard work, we've raised and committed over \$1.1 million toward our facility enhancement project."

He called it an "astounding achievement" in the small community, accomplished by people coming together with "purpose and pride."

"Following last year's Sportsman's Dinner, we launched a community canvassing campaign that brought in over \$260,000 in donations. We continue to welcome contributions from anyone who still wishes to support the project. Though we won't be doing the door-to-door campaign this year, the door to help is always open and we welcome your support towards phase three of our project!"

Funding came from corporate donations and from the local business, North Mountain Welding, plus a municipal grant. Prairie View Municipality supported Miniota's project to the tune of \$351,000.

Poppel said, "We held our first-ever Alumni Golf Tournament this summer, which raised more than \$45,000, and the Growing Miniota community harvest was once again a tremendous success. With thanks to our local farmers, sponsors, and volunteers, the 2025 crop is projected to generate another \$100,000 for our efforts."

In February 2025 the ice plant and flooring system was ordered. In May, Phase Two began.

"One of our major milestones—the concrete pour—took place on Sept. 8, and... on Oct. 6, the ice plant arrived in Miniota," said Poppel adding, "Connection and commissioning are now underway, and we're on track to have a fully functional arena by early to mid-November."

Taming the fire: Fun and holistic ways to beat heartburn

PUBLISHED AUTHOR, HOLISTIC WELLNESS CERTIFIED HYPNOTIST C.H.
MARIE EVELYNE GINGRAS

Let us face it. A few things ruin a good meal faster than that fiery feeling rising in your chest. Heartburn can make even the most delicious dinner feel like a regret-filled science experiment. But before you reach for the chalky tablets, let us discuss some holistic, natural, and surprisingly fun ways to cool that inner volcano.

First, let us start with how you eat, not just what is on your plate. Picture your stomach as a patient little campfire. It burns best when fed slowly and gently. When we scarf down food like we are in an eating contest, we overload the flame and end up with a flare-up. So, chew like you mean it. Put your fork down between bites and taste your food. Pretend you are at a five-star restaurant even if you are eating Tuesday leftovers.

Next up: posture. After a meal, resist the urge to flop onto the couch like a satisfied seal. Lying down too soon invites acid to

sneak back up your throat. Instead, sit up straight or go for a gentle walk. Even a stroll to the mailbox helps gravity do its job. Think of it as your digestive system's version of teamwork.

Now, about what is on your plate; your spicy buffalo wings, fried goodies, and triple-shot lattes might be part of the problem. But the good news is that heartburn does not mean you have to live on bland food forever. Add cooling foods like cucumber, melon, or aloe juice to balance the heat. And when it comes to drinks, swap that coffee for a peppermint tea with honey. Peppermint soothes the digestive muscles, and honey adds a sweet coating that feels heavenly when acid strikes.

If heartburn hits anyway, a few quick natural fixes can work wonders. Try a warm glass of water with a pinch of baking soda to neutralize acid or sip on ginger tea to calm your stomach. Chewing fennel seeds or

a little papaya after a meal can also help but just make sure you do not mistake the fennel for confetti at your next dinner party!

One superstar worth mentioning is chaga mushroom. This earthy wonder is loaded with antioxidants and helps soothe inflammation in the digestive tract. You can enjoy it as a tea or add a spoonful of powdered chaga to smoothies. It also helps balance stomach acidity naturally. Think of chaga as nature's way of saying, "I've got your gut."

And we cannot forget stress. Your mind and your stomach are best friends and when one gets upset, the other tends to follow. Try deep breathing, meditation, or tapping on your wrist at the Pericardium 6 point to calm the nerves.

Finally, a bedtime reminder: eat early, sleep slightly elevated, and let your food settle before you dream. Your stomach will thank you in the morning.

Heartburn might feel dramatic, but with a few mindful tweaks, a little chaga, and some humour, you can keep the fire where it belongs, warming your heart, not your throat.



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Wallace-Woodworth to support Deep Sky lobby

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Rural Municipality of Wallace-Woodworth Council met on Oct. 16 and dealt with many matters including a delegation to present plans for Elkhorn Manor (see story: Elkhorn Manor upgrades fire safety).

A project to create a carbon capture and storage site in the RM of Pipestone has been proposed by Deep Sky who have developed the technology. Council expressed concerns over Association of Manitoba Municipalities' (AMM) handling of support for an amendment to the Carbon Capture Storage Act.

Reeve Clayton Canart suggested that AMM should represent collective lobbying strength and not dismiss issues just because they don't currently affect all municipalities. Canart said, "I thought the point of AMM was to have the strength of

the whole group lobbying and advocating for an issue." The RM of Pipestone has already written to the Minister and shared a copy of their correspondence with the Wallace-Woodworth council. Canart added, "We can reach out to Pipestone to say if they need any extra help, we'd be willing to support them."

Water

Council approved a resolution to sign the water connection agreement between the RM of Wallace-Woodworth and High-Life Ltd.

Manitoba Municipal Administrators (MMA) are asking municipalities to help lobby for increased funding for the Manitoba Water Services Board (MWSB) by supporting a resolution to increase MWSB's budget from \$24 million to \$100 million. The agency has received 346 project applications from 103 municipalities in 2025 with a total estimated cost of \$1.35 billion, far more than

it could support. Council expressed some uncertainty about whether the figures referred to the capital budget or the general corporate budget, so they decided to get clarification before passing the resolution.

Transportation

A "Watch for Children" caution sign will be installed on Road 62 near SW 16-11-28, and "Hearing-impaired child at play" signage on Road 56 near NW 10-10-26.

Council approved a change order to expand the bridge on Cemetery Road from a 9-meter to a 12-meter span. The change increases the cost by \$48,760 bringing the total contract to \$1,044,904.60. Council then approved the first progress payment to Samson Developments for \$131,466.35, covering design and replacement work completed so far.

Elkhorn

Council passed a motion approving the one-year extension of the Elkhorn Child

Care Facility inspection contract for LRB Electric at a cost of \$6,960.47.

The former Elkhorn Municipal Shed at 10 Grange St. is beyond repair and council felt it would not fit in well at the museum grounds where the Manitoba Antique Automobile Museum is featured. Council agreed that the building should be demolished and will advertise that the building will be available for salvage for a limited time, allowing residents to remove and reuse the lumber at their own risk, provided it was taken off-site by a set deadline. Notices will be posted locally and, in the Empire-Advance.

Canada Post

Council considered correspondence regarding potential changes to Canada Post operations. Canart expressed concern that while much of the federal discussion seems focused on reducing door-to-door delivery, the municipality

needs to remain vigilant in case future changes affect rural post offices. He stressed that maintaining rural mail delivery is vital for small communities and that council should be prepared to lobby against closures if necessary.

Councillor reports

Coun. Barb Stambuski attended a Manitoba Antique Automobile Museum meeting and reported that roof replacement has begun. The committee received a \$20,000 grant, leaving them only \$3,000 short of their fundraising goal. She also attended the grand opening of the renovated Virden branch of the Border Regional Library and said, "I'm really impressed. I never could have imagined that the facility could look the way it does now."

Coun. Mark Humphries agreed that the library renovation was a great success and praised the commitment of the staff in

keeping the library open during the process. Humphries also attended the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame ceremony where a local Pipestone producer received a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Reeve Canart reported on his meeting with the Town of Virden and said, "They called me after a committee meeting last week to let me know what was going on with their well. They're in a very unfortunate situation having to basically abandon their new well they drilled and looking for alternative options. As a council we all know, you sit in these positions and rely on professional advice and engineers to give you advice on what's best for your community. And you pay well for that information. And then you do make decisions that you feel are the best decision based on the information you have at hand." Canart thanked Virden council for notifying him before the news went public and said that Wallace-Woodworth will give any support needed.

UMPIRE MEMORIES

REF TO
WRITER

GERRY
NOLAN



The game I will refer to was between the Hamiota Huskies and the Melita Bisons southwest hockey league played in the old Hamiota arena. The old rink had no glass around the boards, which meant the fans were right on top of you and leaning over the boards, it was awesome back in the day, not like today. The only thing back then was the lighting was not that great, sorta dark compared to the rinks today.

Melita Bisons were in Hamiota to play the Huskies, this was early in the season. Maybe it was even exhibition hockey, which I really disliked doing because it tended to get rough because players were not in shape.

The first period there was a lot of energy to say the least and both teams were flying up and down the ice. There was lots of hitting, but it did not take long for gloves and elbows to rise and, of course, some players who were not used to getting hit much were taking their share of bumps. Then the chippy play started which led to a couple of fisticuffs. A steady stream of players were heading to the penalty box and neither team seemed to be concerned that this was happening. Both teams had full benches so, what the heck, more body space on the bench.

When the first fight broke out, I was yelling for players to go to their respective benches. This was a new rule that season and Brian Franklin had told the officials to really crack down on this in the exhibition games, so players would know when the regular season began. This was the way it was going to be officiated. If you did not go to where the referee instructed you, there would be game misconducts assessed.

A fight breaks out after some collisions along the boards and a player from each team gets at it. I am yelling at the players to go to their respective benches. Nobody is going to their benches and others are pushing and shoving and telling each other how they are going to beat them up etc. etc. I am sure you get the picture! There were already 3 or 4 players in the penalty box and I just did not see the sense of putting 8 other players in the penalty box. After the linesmen had escorted the 2 original players who were fighting off the ice, I assessed a Game Misconduct penalty to the hard of hearing 8 players. I figured the benches would not be so crowded and it would take the silly rough stuff out of the game.

Now none of the players were very happy about leaving the game via Game Misconducts. Gordie Lyall was standing by the blue line where I was standing watching the parade of players leaving the ice surface. Gordie said, "Gerry, what did you give them for penalties?" I told Gordie I had given them all game misconducts for not going to their players' bench. He just laughed and said I would have done the same thing!

Brad Oliver from Melita was especially unhappy about being kicked out of the game as I think he had a score to settle with a Hamiota player. Brad was cursing at me and said he would have started fighting if he knew I was going to assess him a Game Misconduct. I said to him, so you're saying you didn't hear me yelling to go to the benches? He said, "Yes I heard you." I said you have no excuse then for not going to your player's box. I also said and maybe I should not have, but I said if you fight like you listen you would have come out second in that too. He is skating away and about 20 feet away stops and turns back and gives me the what for statement. I said look at the bright side, you get all the hot water you want and maybe the coldest beer of the night.

The old Hamiota rink holds some really special memories of hockey games played there and of some of the crazy things that took place in the old barn. I am sure this will not be the last time I will have an article about the old Hamiota arena!

TORONTO BLUE JAYS HAVE HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Toronto Blue Jays have had a great season. They finished first in the American baseball season and thus have home field advantage for the playoffs.

We have all seen the highs and the lows that any team can go through at any given time during the course of a long season. The Blue Jay success has been based on solid defense and the fact they put the ball in play. They just do not strike out very much at all. You can not get on base by striking out, so cut down the swing and get base hits.

Canadians have been rejoicing in the victories and are hoping for another World Series appearance. Toronto will face Seattle in game six tonight as of this writing.

The shocking thing about the coverage on the Blue Jays team is after they won the division, then defeated the New York Yankees is the language they were allowed on public television. Sportsnet and even CBC news carries live interviews and the language we hear is awful. I would copy all the things they say, but I will not.

If your children are watching this, I am sure they will figure it is acceptable to speak in front of a microphone using the same foul language. If professionals say it, why can't I? It's acceptable on television so why not in the school, in the playground, in the classroom, in the hallway? Where does it end? Can it be stopped? People talk smack as well, even publicly! Any consequences for this? Does not appear so!

Maybe post game interviews should be monitored, a time delay. They did to Don Cherry, and he was not swearing. Again, we feed the minds that what is taking place is acceptable. Well, it is not!

There is a time and a place for such talk, we used to call it the barnyard talk. Apparently, the barn has moved to public television for all to hear from the Blue Jay Manager and his players, who by the way have not yet captured the World Series Championship. Times aren't like they used to be, are they?

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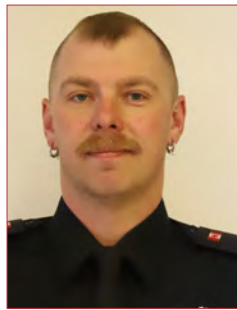
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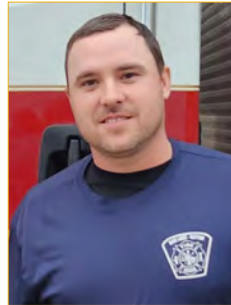
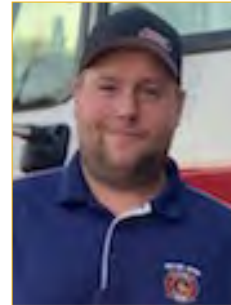
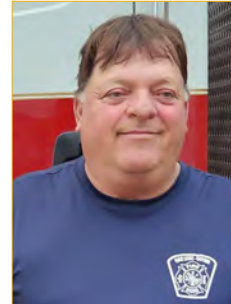
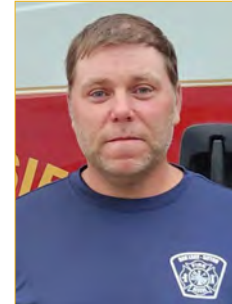
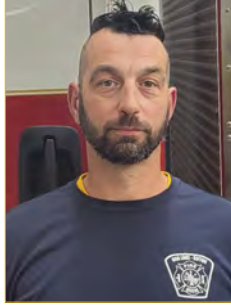
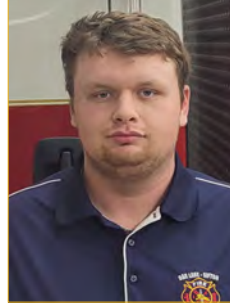
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SPORTS

OIL CAPS BEAT FLYERS, BATTLE PISTONS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Oil Capitals split their two games last weekend.

On Oct. 17, the local Manitoba Junior Hockey League team defeated the visiting Winkler Flyers, 6-2. It was their fifth victory in six games. The next night, the Oil Caps fell 5-2 to the league-leading Steinbach Pistons.

The Virden team came into this week with a 7-4-0-0 record. The Oil Caps were set to host the Portage Terriers on Oct. 23 after the Empire-Advance deadline. On Oct. 25, the team is in The Pas to play the Northern Manitoba Blizzard.

Oil Caps 6, Flyers 2

The hosts delighted the 711 fans at the Tundra Oil & Gas Place with a trio of third-period markers to get past the Flyers. Winkler left the weekend with a 3-7-1-0 record.

"I thought it was a good effort top to bottom against a team that is far better than their record shows," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey. "We had a game plan and stuck to it and were rewarded for it."

The Oil Capitals' Brooks Siemens scored the lone goal of the first period. With his fourth goal of the season, he has already surpassed the three he accumulated as a rookie. In the second frame, Marshall Light and London Hoilett both scored to increase Virden's lead to 3-0. It was the first goal of the season for Light, who is from Moosomin. The Flyers responded with two power play goals by Kam Thomas to pull to within one, 3-2, before the second intermission.

In the third period, Virden's own Bryce Bryant as

well as Colten Worthington and Noel Englot lit the lamp. Englot's came on the power play. Worthington, who had two points, was the First Star. Bryant received the second star, and Hoilett, who had two points, earned the Third. Liam Goertzen was named Virden's Hardest Working Player.

Virden goalie Braxton Burdeny stopped 35 of the 37 shots he faced. Leif Ekblad made 31 saves for the Flyers.

Things got physical late in the third period. Oil Capitals Carson Wright, Goertzen, and Cohen Lewko received fighting majors as did Flyers Charles Bernier, Oliver Schroeder, and William Lyons.

Pistons 5, Oil Caps 2

In front of 1,970 fans in Steinbach, the Oil Caps outshot the league's top team 35-26. The Pistons scored three of their goals with the man advantage as they went three-for-four on the power play. Virden was one-for-five with the man advantage.

"Five-on-five we played a very strong game," Ramsey said. "We defended well, moved the puck well, and our forecheck was heavy. Special teams were the difference in us being successful and getting a point



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPS

Virden Oil Caps celebrating after making another goal on Friday, October 17, against the Winkler Flyers.

or two. Our powerplay wasn't sharp and we took too many penalties and our penalty kill was unstructured. Some positives for sure, but not consistent in all parts of our game."

Rhylan Baxter and Bryant scored Virden's goals. As of Oct. 20, Bryant led the Oil Caps with eight goals and 14 points in 11 games. Burdeny made 21 saves on 25 shots.

Ryan McDonald scored twice for Steinbach. Luke Bogart, Evan Gradt, and Grady Hoffman had the Pistons' other goals. Easton Thvedt had 22 saves.

VETERAN BURDENY GUARDS NETS FOR OIL CAPITALS



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPS

Virden Oil Caps #35 Braxton Burdeny.

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

A last-minute decision made more than a decade ago started a hockey journey that led Braxton Burdeny to a big role this season with the Virden Oil Capitals.

When the Winnipegger's mother was signing him up for U9 tryouts, Burdeny opted to be a goaltender. Now the 20-year-old is providing a veteran presence in net for the local Manitoba Junior Hockey League team.

"I had played a little bit of it the year before and

really enjoyed it," Burdeny said. "What drew me to the position was getting to see the awesome equipment they got to wear and watching guys like (Hockey Hall of Fame member) Martin Brodeur dominate while growing up. I would always pretend I was playing goalie while watching hockey and doing the movements on my couches."

He spent the first two seasons of his junior career with his hometown Freeze, now known as the Monarchs. Burdeny was a crucial player for the Freeze last season. He competed in 40 games and finished fifth among MJHL goalies in minutes.

As of Oct. 20, Burdeny has backstopped the Oil Capitals to four victories. On Oct. 3, he earned his first MJHL shutout with a 26-save performance against the Swan Valley Stampede. The 6-foot, 155-pound Burdeny entered this week with a 2.90 goals against average and a .899 save percentage.

"Braxton is an experienced junior goaltender that understands his own game and how he needs to play to be successful," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "He has the ability to make routine saves and can settle things down for us when we get on our heels sometimes. He can also make big, big saves to keep us in games and give us a chance to win every night. His work ethic is outstanding on and off the ice, and he is a leader in our dressing room. We are very fortunate to have Braxton here in Virden."

While playing for the Oil Caps, Burdeny has enjoyed the atmosphere in Virden. He said, "Everyone comes to the rink wanting to win and to get better every single day. It's also so much fun to look around the rink and see so many people who care about the team and coming to watch us play. We also get to volunteer lots around Virden, which is always a blast getting to try new things and meet more people."

Burdeny stated he has been "incredibly lucky enough" to billet with the Elliott family. He said, "They're phenomenal billets and even better people. We share a similar taste in food, which could not have worked out any better. I also share a lot of common interests with them, and as well with their three kids, who are so much fun. I also love living on a farm since it's a big change from living in a bigger city."

Currently in his final junior season, Burdeny would like to continue his hockey career at a university and study environmental science.

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SPORTS

ROSSOUW TACKLES NEW SPORT AT ACC

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virden’s Jomari Rossouw is certainly not afraid to try something new. The daughter of Bertus and Lizel Rossouw is in her first year playing women’s soccer for Brandon’s Assiniboine Community College. She had not played soccer competitively before. Rossouw grew up in South Africa. She moved to Canada with her family in 2022 when she was 16. “I played different sports in South Africa, but I have never played soccer before until I came to ACC,” Rossouw said. “I enjoy everything about soccer, but the thing I enjoy most is learning new skills.” She noted that her parents have backed her involvement in the sport. Rossouw said, “Even though I have never played soccer before ACC I still have their support in trying something new.” For the ACC Cougars, she primarily plays in the

midfield. At times, Rossouw is used on defence as a fullback. “Even though this is a new sport for her, she is always willing to learn and she tries to follow my instructions as well as possible,” Cougars women’s soccer head coach Manuel Luben Lozano said. “She is also a great person.” Rossouw has grown up on farms, so it is perhaps only natural that she is studying agribusiness at ACC. She said, “The thing that got me into agribusiness was that I’ve always enjoyed taking part in it on our family farm and helping my dad.” Rossouw has liked life in the classroom and on the soccer picture as ACC. “The thing I have enjoyed most about studying at ACC is the practical engagement the teachers have with the students,” she said. “It’s not all just about sitting in a classroom but also about doing activities. I have enjoyed playing for ACC because of the great friendships I have made on the team and the experiences I have gotten out of it.”



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Virden’s own Jomari Rossouw is enjoying College soccer.

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Virten varsity boys volleyball team



PHOTO BY REBEKA PENNER

The varsity boys volleyball team beat the Deloraine Colts 3 sets to 1 at VCI last night. The boys are now 2-1 in league play. From left to right (back row) Beckham Clarke, Braden Rowan, Reed McGrath, Dexen Routledge, Mack Fefchak, Krysian Dupra, Coach Nathan Holovach (front row) Kyle Casuga, Hayden Southam, Isaiah Barrate, Dixon Tough, Preston Studer

SPORTS NOTES: OIL KINGS SEEK THHL CHAMPIONSHIP

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

After making it to the Tiger Hills Hockey League finals a season ago, the Virten Oil Kings are excited to hit the ice to try to win the first senior championship in team history.

In 2024-2025, the squad went 13-2-0-1 to post the second-best regular season record in the THHL. It made it all of the way to the best-of-five league finals. The Oil Kings fell in four games to the Killarney Shamrocks.

"We had a great season last year and a solid playoff run," Oil Kings goalie Eric Reid said. "I think we can build off that into this season and with a great group of returning guys I'm looking forward to taking another run at a championship."

The Oil Kings open their season on the road in Hartney on Oct. 25. The team then plays in Boissevain on Nov. 1 before hosting its home opener on Nov. 2 against the Sandy Bay Flying Feathermen, who joined the THHL this season.

Diaz Rengifo Competes at Nationals

Alexander's Robinson Diaz Rengifo recently helped his AK Academy club team to third place at Canada Soccer's 2025 National Championships U-15 Cup. The

Winnipeg-based team earned its berth in the prestigious event by winning provincials. In the national semifinals, the Manitoba team fell 1-0 to a Quebec side. It then defeated an Alberta team, 4-2, for third. Diaz Rengifo said overall the team and himself were happy with their performance.

"I got to come into the tournament every single match as a part of the starting 11 for my team. I gave it my all. I gave it my everything for the badge when I stepped on the field," he said, noting that being a team player is key for him.

The U-15 Cup was held in Charlottetown, P.E.I. Although it was cold, Diaz Rengifo praised the host city and said the event was very well organized.

Skating Event This Weekend

The Skate Manitoba Junior Senior Sectional Championships and Fall Open will be held Oct. 25-26 at Tundra Oil & Gas Place. It is hosted by Skate Manitoba and Skate Virten.

At the sectional portion of the event, junior and senior skaters will try to qualify for the 2025-2026 Skate Canada Challenge. The Fall Open event is an open competition for Star 5+ as well as pre-junior, junior and adult skaters.

MJHL SEASON UPDATE

MJHL HOCKEY DEREK HOLTOM

So, are the Selkirk Steelers for real this year? The answer just might be yes. Or at the very least, they are positioned to get back into the playoffs this year for the first time since 2022.

A month into the season, the Steelers sit atop the MJHL standings with 20 points in 11 games, one more than the Steinbach Pistons who have 19 points in 10 games.

The Steelers rocketed out to a similar strong start last year, only to flounder as their schedule got tougher. The finished nine points back of the Niverville Nighthawks for the final playoff spot – a team that has since their addition to the MJHL has edged out the Steelers for the final playoff spot in the East Division.

Admittedly the Steelers' schedule this year has had them playing many weaker opponents in the MJHL. This includes three games against the Winnipeg Monarchs, two against the Northern Manitoba Blizzard and one against both the Swan Valley Stampeders and Winnipeg Blues. All those teams are currently outside of the playoff line.

By comparison, the Winkler Flyers have played only playoff teams such as Steinbach, Waywayseecappo, Portage, Niverville and Selkirk. Their lone "easy" game was a 7-1 victory over the lowly Winnipeg Monarchs.

More importantly though is a pair of wins against the Winkler Flyers, who are also below the playoff line (and only have two victories in nine starts this year). For the Steelers to get back into the playoffs, they're going to have to beat teams that have traditionally struggled against. The Winkler Flyers, who won the MJHL championship two years ago and had the best record in the league last year, is the sort of team the Steelers need to finish ahead of in the standings if they want to make the playoffs.

All that said, the only loss for the Steelers this year is the only game they have played against a team in the playoffs – a 5-3 loss to the Steinbach Pistons.

In the next 10 games the Steelers face teams such as the Dauphin Kings, Waywayseecappo Wolverines, Niverville Nighthawks and the Steinbach Pistons – all playoff teams. How they fare in the next 10 games will give us real

insight into whether the Steelers are contenders, a playoff team, or if another collapse is in the works.

· A light week in the MJHL in terms of trades with just a pair to report.

First up, the Winnipeg Blues sent forward Nolan Masson to Timmins from the NOJHL for a player development fee (PDF).

As well, the Niverville Nighthawks sent forwards Lucas Bertolin and Matthew Bertolin to Thunder Bay of the SJHL for a PDF.

· The MJHL Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries three stars of the week are headed up by forward Niklas Gudmundson of the Winkler Flyers. Despite their slow start, Gudmundson has a hot hand, and shown by his four goals and three assists for seven points in two games last week.

Next up is goaltender Bryson Yaschysyn from the Dauphin Kings. The Morden native won both of his starts, posting a 1.00 GAA and a .957 save percentage.

The final winner is forward Bryce Bryant from the Virten Oil Capitals. In three games Bryant scored four goals and added one helper for a five-point week.

· And a good old-fashioned donnybrook (two of them actually) that went down when rivals Steinbach and Portage clashed has led to several suspensions.

The most severe went to rookie forward Dylan Karran, a native of St. Albert, Alta., from the Terriers. He was dinged eight games for leaving the bench to fight and being part of multiple fights at same stoppage. Other Portage players hit with suspensions include Breck Hirschof (one game for fighting off the playing surface), Noah Therrien (two games for multiple fights at the same stoppage), and head coach Blake Spiller (one game for failure to control the bench).

Steinbach Pistons suspensions include two games for multiple fights at the same stoppage to Liam Doyle and Rory Gilmour, as well as a one-game suspension to Brett Kaiser for fighting off the playing surface.

Karran finished the game with 59 minutes in penalties all by himself. Collectively, the two teams amassed a staggering 272 minutes in penalties – numbers not seen in a MJHL for years following changes to limit fighting.

That might not be the hockey the MJHL wants its players being a part of, but I'm betting the 568 fans in attendance didn't mind one bit.

In my opinion RE: Hockey

REF TO
WRITER
GERRY
NOLAN



I used to watch a lot of hockey and of course Hockey Night in Canada. After they fired Don Cherry, I will not watch much Hockey night in Canada and, of course, Ron McLean comes on I hit the mute button. I do watch the Winnipeg Jets and the Chicago Black Hawks.

Saturday afternoon, I turned on the television and there on SportsNet was the game between the Florida Panthers and the Buffalo Sabres. It was 1-0 for Buffalo so I thought I

would watch some of the game, the first game I have watched this season.

There seemed at times to be some chippy play and there were some penalties called. In the second period of the game, Buffalo defenseman, Rasmus Dahlin crosschecked Florida forward Brad Marchand from behind and knocked him down to the ice. No penalty called. This occurred inside the Florida defensive end zone. Brad Marchand gets up off the ice and is skating to the other side of the ice when Rasmus Dahlin comes at Brad Marchand again and there is a collision only this time, Brad Marchand skates over to Rasmus Dahlin and begins throwing punches with his gloves on. The only penalty called on the play is Brad Marchand for roughing. Now for the tantrum. On the way to the penalty box, Brad Marchand picks up the Rasmus Dahlin helmet and takes it to the penalty box with him. Once in the penalty box Brad Marchand rips off the plastic part of the helmet where the chin strap does up and then throws the helmet back on the ice. The linesman picks up the helmet and takes it to the Buffalo Sabres players bench, where an equipment staff member will fix the helmet.

In all of this, Brad Marchand receives a 2-minute minor for roughing. Now if you have read the account of this play, what would the penalties be?

Rasmus Dahlin should have been assessed a 2-minute penalty for cross checking Brad Marchand and a 2-minute minor for roughing. Brad Marchand should have received a penalty for ripping the helmet apart, be it a minor or a game misconduct. Brad Marchand did not receive any kind of a penalty for this, a temper tantrum. The National Hockey League Referees for this game allowed him to have his tantrum with no penalty.

Brad Marchand, what an outstanding example you are to all the youth hockey players who play hockey? To the referees of this match, what an outstanding performance of not issuing a call, you cowards? A professional having a melt down like a little kid is disgusting! This is also on the National Hockey League Officials who let this crap go on game after game. Brad Marchand's childish act will undoubtedly be copied by some youngsters who may have watched you do it, or watch sports centre because the media will play it up as something great.

I really like Brad Marchand as a player, but after yesterday maybe not so much. I shut the game off and you know as I get older, I just do not see the reason to watch this. I also have not watched the National football league as their officiating is biased and frankly disgusting, just like the National Hockey Leagues officials!

CLASSIFIEDS

Tender

MUNICIPALITY OF TWO BORDERS
PUBLIC NOTICE
REGARDING GENERAL BORROWING
(LEASING) BY-LAW NO.129/2025
TO PAY FOR A SHARP BP70C31
ADVANCED SERIES COLOUR
DOCUMENT SYSTEM

The Council of the Municipality of Two Borders has scheduled a public hearing in the Council Chamber at 138 Main Street, Melita on **November 6, 2025 at 10:15 a.m.**, at which the first reading of proposed By-law No. 129/2025 will be given and the following proposal presented:

The lease of a Sharp BP70C31 Advanced series colour document system

The total estimated cost of the lease term is \$8,700.00 (\$145.00 monthly for 60 months)

The borrowing will be repaid over 5 years at a rate of 7.52% interest.

The annual repayment amount will be no more than \$1,740.00 to be levied annually as part of the general municipal levy.

At the hearing, Council will hear any potential taxpayer who wishes to make a presentation, ask questions or register an objection to the proposal.

Further information / inquiries / copies of the proposal are available at the municipal office located at 138 Main St., Melita, MB.

Dated at the Municipality of Two Borders this 24th day of October, 2025, and issued pursuant to Section 174.1 (1) of The Municipal Act.

Grace Carr
Chief Administrative Officer
Municipality of Two Borders

MUNICIPALITY OF TWO BORDERS
PUBLIC NOTICE
REGARDING GENERAL BORROWING
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TO PAY FOR A SHARP BP70C31
ADVANCED SERIES COLOUR
DOCUMENT SYSTEM

The Council of the Municipality of Two Borders has scheduled a public hearing in the Council Chamber at 138 Main Street, Melita on **November 6, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.**, at which the first reading of proposed By-law No. 130/2025 will be given and the following proposal presented:

The lease of a Sharp BP70C31 Advanced series colour document system

The total estimated cost of the lease term is \$6,771.00 (\$ 112.85 monthly for 60 months)

The borrowing will be repaid over 5 years at a rate of 7.52% interest.

The annual repayment amount will be no more than \$1,354.20 to be levied annually as part of the general municipal levy.

At the hearing, Council will hear any potential taxpayer who wishes to make a presentation, ask questions or register an objection to the proposal.

Further information / inquiries / copies of the proposal are available at the municipal office located at 138 Main St., Melita, MB.

Dated at the Municipality of Two Borders this 24th day of October, 2025, and issued pursuant to Section 174.1(1) of The Municipal Act

Grace Carr
Chief Administrative Officer
Municipality of Two Borders

Help Wanted



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
LANDFILL SITE ATTENDANT – KENTON

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a motivated individual for the position of **Landfill Site Attendant** for the Kenton Nuisance Grounds location. The Landfill Site Attendant assists the Transportation Superintendent in operating the waste disposal grounds in compliance with the Waste Disposal Ground Operating Permit for the site, municipal policies, and Workplace Health and Safety regulations.

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Notice

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER OF the Estate of **EMMA SCHNEIDER** late of the Postal District of Elkhorn, in Manitoba, Deceased.

ALL CLAIMS against the above-mentioned Estate supported by a Statutory Declaration must be sent to the undersigned at 1-49 Clear Springs Road East, Steinbach, Manitoba, R5G 1V2 on or before the 10th day of December, 2025

DATED at Steinbach, Manitoba, this 21st day of October, 2025.

Larissa Sosnowski
BUREAU AVOCAT SIMARD
(Solicitors for the Executor)

Obituary

IN LOVING MEMORY
ALICE MARIE GABRIELLE
NOVEMBER 2, 1936 – OCTOBER 20, 2024

Born Alice Marie Gabrielle on November 2, 1936, Alice Barré passed away on October 20, 2024, at the age of 87, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, surrounded by her family. Alice's passing was preceded by that of her parents, Joseph Gabrielle and Simon Gabrielle (nee Chacun), brothers, Roger and Maurice, dearest cousin Lucy Jones, and husband, Albert Barré. She is survived by her brother, Larry, sons Peter (and Ivy Oandasan), Louis and Travis, and grandchildren, Tyler, Chloé, Ally and Georgia, along with numerous nephews and nieces, extended family and friends, including her dear friend, Josie Bordeau d'hui of Brandon.

Alice grew up on a farm north of Bellevue before the family moved to the farm just south of Virden. After leaving school, she worked for nine years as a nurses' aid at the hospitals in Virden and Brandon, mostly in the emergency department. These years laid the foundation for Alice to spend much of her life caring for family and friends. As an independent young woman in the 1950s, Alice had a great sense of adventure and traveled on her own, by bus, to Vancouver and to Toronto, to visit friends – such solo ventures were not common for a single, young woman at that time.

In 1962, Alice married Albert, left her life and job in the city behind, and moved to the farm in Bellevue, where she and Albert started their family - their three sons, Gerrard (Pete), Louis and Travis. Raising the boys, managing the household, feeding and caring for the family including the hired men, caring for Albert when he had multiple heart surgeries and broke his back, maintaining a huge garden and canning enough food to last the entire year, milking the cows, baking dozens of loaves of bread each week, and being the emotional heart and backbone of the family, Alice knew what hard work was! After 35 years on the farm, primarily as cattle farmers, Alice and Albert retired to Virden in 1997.

Alice's retirement was characterized by her continued passion for gardening and baking, new found passions for garage sales and Christmas lights (garnering her recognition many years for that very well lit house on the corner of King and 10th), and most notably her hospitality and caring for family and friends. Alice spent nearly 20 years in service to the community, caring for many elderly persons and others in need of support. Few knew the many hours each week that Alice volunteered, visiting and feeding residents in the nursing home, grocery shopping for those who couldn't easily leave their homes, accompanying those without family to medical appointments and advocating for them, and along with Albert being at the bedside of the sick and dying, holding their hands while they took their last breaths. Alice was also on the Board of the Association of Community Living, which her brother, Maurice was part of, for many years. A woman of faith and member of Sacred Heart Parish for decades, what many might not know about Alice was her deep sense of justice; the mistreatment of people and marginalized groups, especially Indigenous people, upset her deeply. Kindness, tolerance and forgiveness were principles she lived by.

In 2016, Alice was widowed by the passing of Albert, after 54 years of marriage. She missed Albert dearly - a love that never faded; and for the first time in her life, at 79 years of age, Alice lived alone and began her next chapter. With that great sense of adventure she had put on pause for more than 5 decades, Alice surprised friends and family by hanging off the CN Tower in Toronto (Edge Walk) and later tandem skydiving in Ottawa, for her 80 birthday. She was always eager to take on any adventure, particularly if it involved her grandchildren, and more adventures were planned when she had the devastating experience of a very severe brain bleed (stroke), at 82 years of age. Alice was left hemi-paralyzed and unable to speak for weeks. She spent more than three months in the Brandon hospital, on a feeding tube, with daily rehab, and had to learn to walk, talk, read and write all over again. Fiercely determined, and with the support of family and friends, Alice returned to her home in Virden, and continued to maintain her yard (with support) and welcome friends and family to enjoy her kindness and hospitality.

In 2022, Alice embarked on her final chapter by moving to Winnipeg to be closer to family. As with everything else in her life, Alice fully embraced this new phase. Visited every day by her boys and regularly by her grandchildren, she lived alone in an apartment where she continued to bake, plant flowers on the balcony, and welcome family and friends. Her days of hard work and that big garden on the farm were long behind her and she was able to enjoy her favorite TV shows, go see Trav perform at the local clubs at every opportunity (which she loved), enjoy lunches out and regular manicures (those hardened farm hands finally softened up), and spend time with family and friends. She hosted out of town family with her classic roast beef dinner and apple crisp dessert, followed by a family Thanksgiving dinner, just one week before she passed.

An obituary that failed to acknowledge Alice's sense of style would indeed be remiss. Alice had a passion for fashion from the time she was a young woman on the farm, until the day she passed. With an extensive collection of clothes and coats with fur collars, Alice was always elegant and stood out in the crowd. Even until shortly before she passed, strangers would stop her in the mall, or after church, to tell her how beautiful she was. And, she would pause, be gracious and create a special moment, leaving every feeling touched by the experience. And somehow, the older she got, the cooler she got.

Alice lived her life to the fullest, with a sense of adventure, devotion to family, humility, and service to her community. She knew what it was to love and to be loved, with all that love brings; and what it meant to live a life of purpose, literally to her last breath, surrounded by family. What more could one ask for.

Having just marked the one year anniversary of Alice's passing, Alice's family would like to thank all of her friends and family, including the communities of Bellevue and Virden (and those special neighbours next door), for being part of her life, and especially for supporting her in the latter years. By the grace of God, and the kindness and connection to all of you, Alice had a rich and rewarding life.

A remarkable lady indeed, Alice will be remembered with gratitude and love, for how she (and Albert) made our lives better, and for the date squares and apple crisp she served to so many of us!

CLASSIFIEDS

Notice

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the Estate of Tammy "Joan" Sararas, late of Virden, Manitoba, Deceased.

All claims against the above estate, supported by a Statutory Declaration, must be sent to the attention of:

Russell Sararas, PO Box 375, Virden, Manitoba, R0M 2C0 on or before the 12th day of December 2025.

Dated at Virden, Manitoba, this 24th day of October 2025.

Russell Sararas
PO Box 375,
Virden, MB., R0M 2C0
Executor

Coming Events

Maryfield St. Andrew's United Church Fowl Supper

Due to a planned power outage, our supper, will now be held

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2025

from 4:30-7:00 pm SK time.
Maryfield Auditorium Lower Hall, Maryfield, SK

Tender

Tender Invitation Snow Removal Services

Princess Lodge in Virden is accepting tenders for snow removal services for the upcoming season. Contact us for a full description of the job and to submit your offer.

Email:

PrincessLodgeVirden@outlook.com

Deadline: November 14, 2025.

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Tender

LAND FOR SALE BY TENDER

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has the following land for sale by tender:

Municipality of Brenda-Waskada NE 22-3-24 WPM, SW 27-3-24 WPM
& W ½ of SE 27-3-24 WPM
392 acres

Two and a half quarter-sections of land for sale. Property contains approximately 242 cultivated acres and 150 acres of low-lying marsh/wetland. Property being sold subject to the registration of a Conservation Easement Agreement. Bidders must choose one of two options:

1) Ducks Unlimited Canada places a Conservation Easement Agreement on the **WETLAND ACRES ONLY** (150 acres). Under this option, no restrictions will be placed on the cultivated cropland. Property can be used for annual grain production if desired. Cultivation into wetlands is also permitted but these ponds must not be drained or filled.

OR

2) Buyer agrees to seed the 242 cultivated acres to forage by spring of 2027 and have DUC place a Conservation Easement Agreement on the entire property. Under this option, the land may be used for haying and/or livestock grazing. DUC would allow cultivation of tame forage after 10 years, for stand rejuvenation purposes. Once broken, these acres must be seeded back to hay after 2 years of cropping. Forage acres would then remain intact for another 10-year term, before being eligible for rejuvenation once more. Five-acre parcels will be excluded from the Conservation Easement lands on each quarter section to allow for future yard site/building development. Buyer will be responsible for forage establishment and associated costs.

Bidders must clearly indicate which option they are selecting and base their offer accordingly. All bids will be considered by DUC, regardless of option chosen.

Written sealed tenders are to be mailed or dropped off to the address below. Please indicate **'Land Tender - Municipality of Brenda-Waskada'** on envelope. Bids may also be emailed to Ducks Unlimited at du_brandon@ducks.ca. Be sure to place **"Manitoba Land Tender Bid"** in the email's subject line. Interested parties should rely on their own inspection of the property. Bids on individual quarters will not be accepted. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted. **Property information packages, including a sample copy of the Conservation Agreement are available - call Scott Henowitch at 204-761-5106 to have one emailed or mailed.**

Tender Closes on November 3, 2025 at 4:00 PM.



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From the prairies to the highlands tour 204 - part 8

By **Gerry Nolan**
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Our next stop was a boat ride at Loch Ness. We boarded the van and were on our way for another fun-filled day. We had been staying in Dornoch at The Eagle, so we had a roll call and boarded the van, again under the capable hands of our driver Donald Caldwell. This was one of the only days we had cloudy skies with some rain, but that was not about to dampen our spirits as we set out to see Nessie.

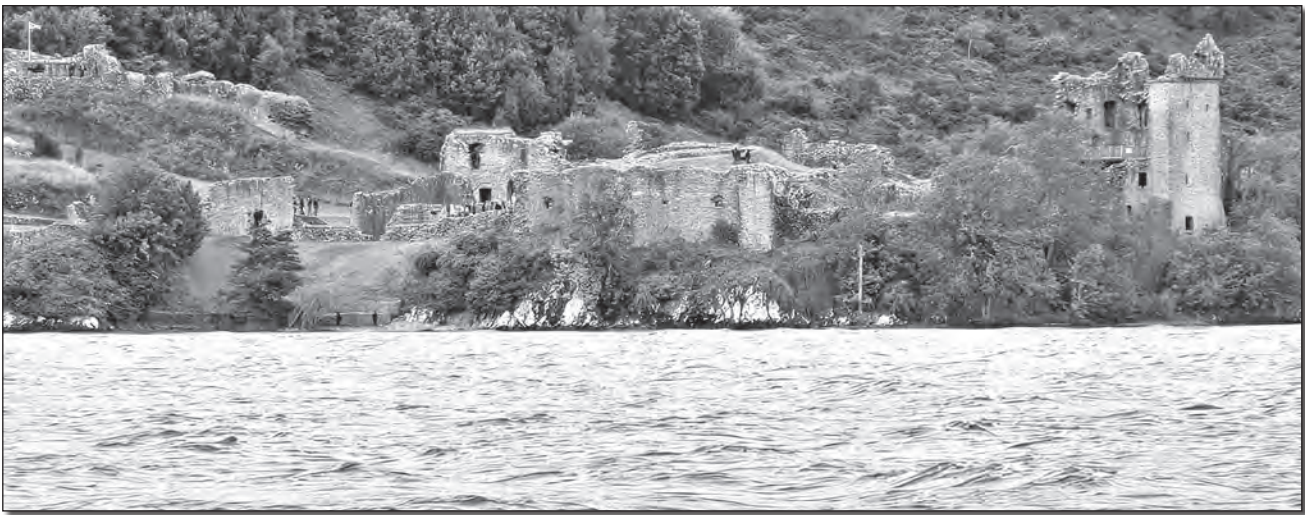
When we arrived, we went to the Clansman Hotel Harbour where we had a quick look in the gift shop, then we were ushered to the boat.

Loch Ness is in the heart of the highlands. This location is stunningly beautiful. As we got onto the boat, we learned that Loch Ness is one of the largest lakes in Scotland and the whole of Great Britain. The water is 755 feet deep and it stretches over 23 miles. The

shoreline is dotted with trees; this is the highlands. Up on one of the hillsides is a white house on a farm site on the side of the hill. It was so amazing to see. Celia claimed this as her place she would live. I am all for it too! Man, it was a sight to behold, beautiful!

Loch Ness is a large freshwater loch in the highlands. It takes its name from the River Ness which flows from the northern end of Scotland. It is best known or claimed to have sightings of Cryptozoological Loch Ness Monster. There have been more than a thousand sightings of the creature dwelling in the Loch. The earliest sighting was in the 6th century. In 1934 a photograph depicted what appeared to be a long-necked creature rising out of the water. This became one of the most famous and controversial images associated with Nessie.

Over the years, countless eyewitness accounts have described Nessie as a creature with a long serpent neck and a hump



Urquhart castle on the shores of Loch Ness.

PHOTO BY CELIA NOLAN

in its back. There is no conclusive evidence ever produced to definitely confirm its existence, and so the mystery goes on.

Out on the water, we arrive at the magnificently situated Urquhart castle on the shores of Loch Ness. This location has some of the most dramatic chapters in Scottish history.

Urquhart castle offers a spectacular vantage point for a panoramic view of the Loch. As you approach the shoreline, you get the idea of the location being

a huge defensive advantage during times of attacks by its enemies.

It is built high up on an edge of a cliff. Looking down from the castle you could stop any potential attack from the enemy.

This was such a beautiful location in all of Scotland. With our boat ride over it was back to the gift shop, a very crowded one at that, where gifts were purchased and then like Willie Nelson said, on the road again!

We headed back to Dornoch. We freshened up

after our day's excursion and went to the Dornoch Castle where Donald and Devon were staying. The rest of the crew were staying at The Eagle. We went for supper at the castle and right across the street is the Dornoch Cathedral built in the 13th century. This is where Madonna was married in the year 2000.

The Dornoch castle was built in 1500 and has been a hotel since 1947. It is in the centre of Dornoch. It was originally built for the bishops of Caithness but

was later held by the Earl of Sutherland.

One of the most interesting features was a tiny pub within the walls of the castle. The entrance was all stone, and you had to bend over so you did not hit your head on the top of the stone door.

You may have noted the reference to the Sutherland whiskey and the Earl of Sutherland. Two of our travellers, Chris and Les are both Sutherland, and next week you will learn of the Sutherland Castle.



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Elkhorn SAIL hold community meal

Senior Living with SAIL

Submitted
By KRISTA PEDERSON

Each month, Elkhorn SAIL hosts a community meal for area residents. It's a wonderful time to enjoy great food, entertainment, and of course, socializing with their neighbours and friends.

On Friday, October 17, at the Elkhorn Legion Hall, SAIL cook, Kristina Walker served up a tasty fall meal. Mouth watering ham and scalloped potatoes, veggies and salad were enjoyed, followed by an assortment of homemade desserts. And yes, pumpkin pie and whip cream was absolutely included!

Resource Coordinator Karen Mitchell not only greets you at the door, she also enjoys decorating the tables up in a monthly theme, this month being Halloween. As well, she also sets up some great people to entertain the crowd after the meal is completed. "I think a great event is when all aspects of the event work together to ensure the participants have a great time," explained Karen. "When someone comes out, they are guaranteed to have an amazing home cooked meal, a welcoming table and atmosphere, and some toe-tapping entertainment. All of this, especially during the winter months, will make coming out worthwhile, and fill up a bit of an afternoon for those who don't get out a lot. That's exactly what we want to provide for people, a reason to come out and smile."



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Gary Gould, of Bede, entertained the crowd after the meal by singing some good oldies and telling a few jokes and stories.

The Elkhorn community meal is held on the third Friday of each month, and alternates venues. Both Elkhorn Legion, and the Elkhorn Elks Hall support the event by offering their facilities free of charge. The community is very fortunate to have such dedicated and generous donors. And speaking of donors, starting in November, Twin Valley Coop has donated 10x \$25 grocery gift cards to be used as a door prize. What a great way to help out with the rising cost of groceries.

All are welcome to attend the meals, however you are asked to sign up before the event so staff know how many to plan for. A sign up sheet can be found in the Elkhorn Post Office or at the Elkview Lodge. Find out all of the details monthly on our Facebook page, and if you are in the Elkhorn area, watch for

posters. Also coming up in Elkhorn in November is a community dance. The event will take place at the Elks Hall on November 6 from 2:00-4:00pm. "Straight up Country", from Moosomin, will be on stage. Tickets will need to be purchased ahead of time. All of the details are on the "Seniors Access to Independent Living" Facebook page.

Cattle on the Mooooove!



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Fall is here. Nykoliation family (Tri-N Charolais) cowherd is making the nine mile walk home from the late Francis Alexander's land to their ranch south of Crandall. What a great year in the cattle industry with great prices and adequate rain!



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PHOTO BY ROB WADDELL

On a clear day, you can see forever. For motorists and hikers that ascend the Riding Mountain escarpment, fall is a great time of year to take in one of the best views in Manitoba. Even on into mid October there were lots of colour to see and warm weather to enjoy.



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Together we grow: local farmers contribute to Canadian Foodgrain Bank

By Joshua Jackson
FARMERS' ADOVCATE

A group of farmers in the Beautiful Plains region is making a difference worldwide one harvest at a time.

As the harvest in the region is drawing to a close, some farmers in the area are taking off the last of their crops for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFB).

Locally, the Whitemud Growing Project began in 2013, after Jake Hamm purchased some land near Plumas and started planting a crop of corn as well as a crop of wheat, thanks to donated land. The project has continued to expand in the region thanks to eager farmers and local Hutterite Colonies stepping up to donate.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 Canadian churches and church-based agencies working together to end global hunger. The Foodgrains Bank sells donated Canadian grain and uses the proceeds to buy food locally in developing countries, which is then distributed during crises or used for long-term development projects. Through the Federal Government, the CFB leverages donations from individuals, churches and businesses, up to a ratio of 4:1 for food assistance in the developing world—up to \$25 million each year.

Volunteer Representative Jake Hamm said he's proud of the work that's been done for the CFB in the area, as well as the number of volunteers who contribute.

"It's a big harvest, especially with the matching funds from the federal government," he said. "It's nice to be provided a vehicle where others could jump in and add



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Farmers from various parts of the region continue to produce grain for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Grain is harvested and sold to raise funds to invest in development projects around the world. The Canadian government matches the funds 4:1. Pictured here are several area farmers.

to it, and they have added to it big time. So, it's really appreciated."

One of their big hauls of grain comes from 136 Acres of land that are cultivated north of Gladstone. It marks a unique project for the local chapter of the CFB, as the lands were donated by a local lawyer who has since passed away.

"This year, we had wheat on it. With dry weather and heat, the wheat wasn't terrific. It was 40-plus bushels per acre this year, which was marketed directly to Parrish and Heimbecker in Gladstone. They made room for us right off the elevator, so we don't have to store it."

Other contributors in the Whitemud Growing Project included Odessa Colony and the Spring Hill Colony, which

harvested 106 Acres of canola, averaging 59 bushels per acre. Riverdale Colony had 50 acres of canola, while Riverside Colony also delivered a load of wheat, and the Odessa Colony and Pine Creek Colonies brought in some wheat as well, which they delivered directly.

There is also a CFB growing project in Austin, split between the MB Agricultural Museum and the Austin Heritage Harvest Growing Project.

Hamm noted there will be more deliveries being made as the season winds down, and the local project is hitting a huge milestone.

"This year, we will hit 2 million dollars that we have sent in from the White Mud growing project with this surrounding support," he said. "It's amazing what we can do collectively. One person alone couldn't do it, but collectively, we can. When you get the matching government grant, you can feed a lot of people."

According to its website, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank started in 1974, after Canadian farmers were harvesting a bumper crop at the same time that families in Bangladesh were facing famine. This grassroots initiative to send Canadian grain to people in need was the catalyst for nearly 50 years of humanitarian efforts.

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Farmers' Advocate

Memories in agriculture: growing registered seed

By Casper Wehrhahn
FARMERS' ADVOCATE

Note: This history piece was written using information culminated from the Canadian Seed Growers Association, and the book 'History of Riding Mountain and Area'.

The Canadian Seed Growers Association (CSGA) has a history spanning 121 years. Founded in 1904, it was formed to pursue crop improvements in Canada.

The Manitoba Branch of the CSGA kickstarted in 1922, when a man named M. P. Mountain, of Sols-girth, was elected as its president.

However, there are strong local bonds to the CSGA as well. One example of those bonds is Tom W. Spafford, of Riding Mountain.

Spafford became a registered seed grower in 1934, when he grew his first registered seed crop. His dedication to growing crops with registered seed throughout the years since then led him to becoming an "elite stock" grower.

According to 'History of Riding Mountain and Area', elite stock is obtained from "breeder seed"—seed that is of the highest status and used as the 'parent seed' to produce all other classes of pedigreed seed. This breeder seed is developed by the Department of Agriculture.

To this day, breeder seed



PHOTOS FROM HISTORY OF RIDING MOUNTAIN AND AREA

Ken, Gordon and Tom Spafford, of the Riding Mountain area, at Tom Spafford's registered seed plot. Inset: A close-up of Tom Spafford, pictured in 1967. He was at his Registered Neepawa Wheat plot for this photo.

is still sown, usually with a drill, in plots of an acre or two in size.

Space is also left between every six rows in order to allow for by-hand removal of any undesirable plants.

In particular, the re-

moval of these plants, formally known as 'roguing', included "bearded and semi-bearded off types, abnoxious weeds, wild oats

and speltoids". When the crop is harvested, the progeny is kept separate and is later cleaned for the next year's "foundation crop".

and speltoids".

Inspectors also check the plots row by row, and can "pass or fail" the plot depending how many undesirable plants are found.

When the crop is harvested, the progeny is kept separate and is later cleaned for the next year's "foundation crop".

The Spaffords did their seed cleaning on the farm with a fan-milling mill and Carter disc until 1950, when they moved their equipment to a building in Riding Mountain.

The Spaffords cleaned and shipped thousands of bushels of Selkirk wheat. Manitou, Neepawa, and Rodney and Harmon Oats were also processed by the Spaffords.

Tom Spafford also served as president of the CSGA's Manitoba Branch. His term of service was from 1953 to 1955. Also in 1953, Spafford was recognized with the Robertson Associate Award—a commendation given to seed growers for distinguished.

Note: Gordon Spafford also became a seed grower in the early 60s. Like his father, he also became an elite seed grower, producing and cleaning many varieties of wheat, and some oats.

RED SEAL

INSPECTIONS

2026

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Farmers' Advocate

Manitoba farmers racing to finish harvest

Staff Written
FARMERS' ADOVCATE

The latest crop report from the Province shows that around 93 per cent of the crops have now been harvested.

Cereal Crop Specialist Anne Kirk, who compiled the most recent report, noted that there was some strong momentum out in fields before the arrival of wet weather slowed things down.

"We had pretty good progress, [though] we did have more precipitation over the weekend, so that put a pause on harvest operations, but earlier in the week, we did have some good progress," said Kirk.

In terms of specific crops, cereal and canola harvests are essentially complete, with soybeans



PHOTO BY JODI BAKER PHOTOGRAPHY

From dawn until dusk, farmers across the region have been out in the fields attempting to complete the harvesting of crops. Pictured: Jodi Baker recently captured this striking image which encapsulates that effort. These types of images and more are for purchase and can be found online at Jodi Baker Photography.

sitting around 90 per cent. Meanwhile, grain corn was at 42 per cent and sunflowers were near 20 per cent harvested.

"The crops that are left to come off are a little bit of canola, some flax, soy-

beans, sunflowers, grain corn, and silage corn," stated Kirk.

For cereal yields, Kirk noted that they have been solid across much of the province, though conditions varied depending on

rainfall.

"For spring wheat, we're looking at about 60 bushels or just higher per acre on average, depending on the region. We did have some higher yields ranging from about 70 to 90 bushels per acre in areas that got more favourable growing conditions during the season."

Oat yields ranged from 110 to 130 bushels per acre, while barley came in between 65 and 110 bushels per acre.

Recent moisture and wind in some parts of the province has created some challenges for farmers in the final stretch. But despite those issues, most producers are satisfied with how the season turned out.

"I think in general, farmers are fairly happy with their crop," Kirk said. "Some of the pockets that were really dry during the growing season do have quite a bit lower yields, and people that weren't able to get their crops off in a timely manner would be less happy with their harvest. But I think in general, things look pretty good."

Kirk also noted that winter cereal planting is complete and crops are establishing well with the majority of winter cereals at the three-leaf stage.



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Farmers' Advocate

Manitoba Forage & Grassland Association honoured with National Water Canada Award

Submitted
MFGA MEDIA RELEASE

Manitoba Forage & Grassland Association (MFGA) is the first-ever Water Canada Awards winner of the Early Adopter or Innovation Partnership award. The MFGA Aquanty Model created by Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association and Aquanty Inc., delivers Canada's first digital twin of the Assiniboine Basin to help farmers and communities adapt to extreme weather.

Mike Duguid, MFGA chair, said the award is a huge honour for all MFGA board members and staff that have worked on the model over the years, showcasing the leadership ability of MFGA to work with farmers and farm groups to key in on water management via the model and forecasting tool as well as the important role and potential of forages and grasslands in future climate change scenarios and resilience, especially around water. Duguid tipped his hat to the outstanding ongoing partnership with Aquanty and the partnerships with Assiniboine West, Pembina Valley, Souris River and Redboine Watershed Districts as well as the Rolling River First Nations/AWWD and Swan Lake First Nations/PVWD collaborations as well as the original funders at AAFC and the Province of Manitoba.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Dr. Steven Frey (Aquanty), Mike Duguid (MFGA Chair), Duncan Morrison (MFGA ex director) and Dr. Andre Erler (Aquanty) celebrate MFGA Aquanty Model's win at 16th annual Water Canada Awards Oct. 16 in Toronto.

MFGA zeros in on Province's net zero plans for Regen Ag

Submitted
MFGA MEDIA RELEASE

The Manitoba government has unveiled Manitoba's Path to Net Zero, a strategy guided by the Indigenous teachings of gathering manoomin (wild rice)—a bold plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen communities and build a resilient, low-carbon economy that benefits all Manitobans, Premier Wab Kinew and Environment and Climate

Change Minister Mike Moyes announced earlier this month.

Of special interest to MFGA audiences, the strategy includes sector-based opportunities around sustainable agriculture, including key initiatives around the advancement of regenerative agriculture and BMPs. For more information and to view the full roadmap, visit <https://manitoba.ca/netzero/>

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Memories in Agriculture: the Circle C Calf Club



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BEAUTIFUL PLAINS MUSEUM
This photograph from Manitoba's agricultural history features the Circle C Calf Club. This calf club was based in the Beautiful Plains area, and was one of many calf clubs that could be found throughout Manitoba back in the day. This particular photo is dated to the 1940s.

Pictured in the back row, from left to right, are: Peden Connell, Clarence Minkus, Merr Simon, Don Conrod, and Archie McNair.

Middle row: Joyce Campbell, Jean McNair, Verla Simon, Jean Connell, and Mary Lindsay.

Front row: Shirley Wilkinson and Clarence Wilkinson.

If anyone has further information, please email Casper at the Neepawa Banner & Press via newsroom@neepawapress.com.

Thank you for reading the Farmers' Advocate!

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Farmers' Advocate

Province extends rent freeze for agricultural crown lands

Media Release

MANITOBA BEEF PRODUCERS

The Manitoba government is extending the rent freeze for Agricultural Crown Lands (ACL) forage leases into the 2026 growing season, continuing its commitment to making life more affordable for producers. Agriculture Minister Ron Kostyshyn announced.

"Manitoba producers are the backbone of the provincial economy and our government is committed to keeping life affordable for the hard-working Manitobans who put food on our tables," said Kostyshyn. "Continuing this rent freeze provides financial stability for producers and reflects our commitment to affordability."

The current rate of \$3.66 per animal unit months remains the lowest ACL rental rate in Western Canada.

"This announcement is a relief for Crown land users and gives us some certainty after a year of severe challenges," said Brent Benson, cattle producer. "From extreme weather to the uncertainty of trade markets and feed supplies, some producers struggled to keep their family ranches operational without having to make decisions that could affect their sustainability or viability. We look forward to working with the Manitoba government as we move toward a system of fair and predictable rental rates as well as policies that encourage young producers to enter the industry, an important component to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the family ranch."

The ACL program supports approximately 1,750 leaseholders across Manitoba who rely on Crown lands for grazing, haying and cropping activities. These lands are a vital public asset, supporting the livestock sector, advancing sustainable land use, and respecting treaty and Indigenous rights, the minister noted.

Alongside the rate freeze,

the Manitoba government has launched the first phase of a public engagement process to help shape the future of the ACL program. Through an online survey on EngageMB, Manitobans can provide feedback on three areas:

lease allocation methods, limits on the total amount of land a single leaseholder can hold, and renewal options for modern leases.

"Manitoba Beef Producers appreciates the consultations about various aspects of the Agricultural Crown Lands Leasing Program to ensure it is responsive to the needs of

the cattle sector," said Matthew Atkinson, president, Manitoba Beef Producers. "We strongly encourage beef producers to make their views known during this important engagement process as it will help shape the future of the program."

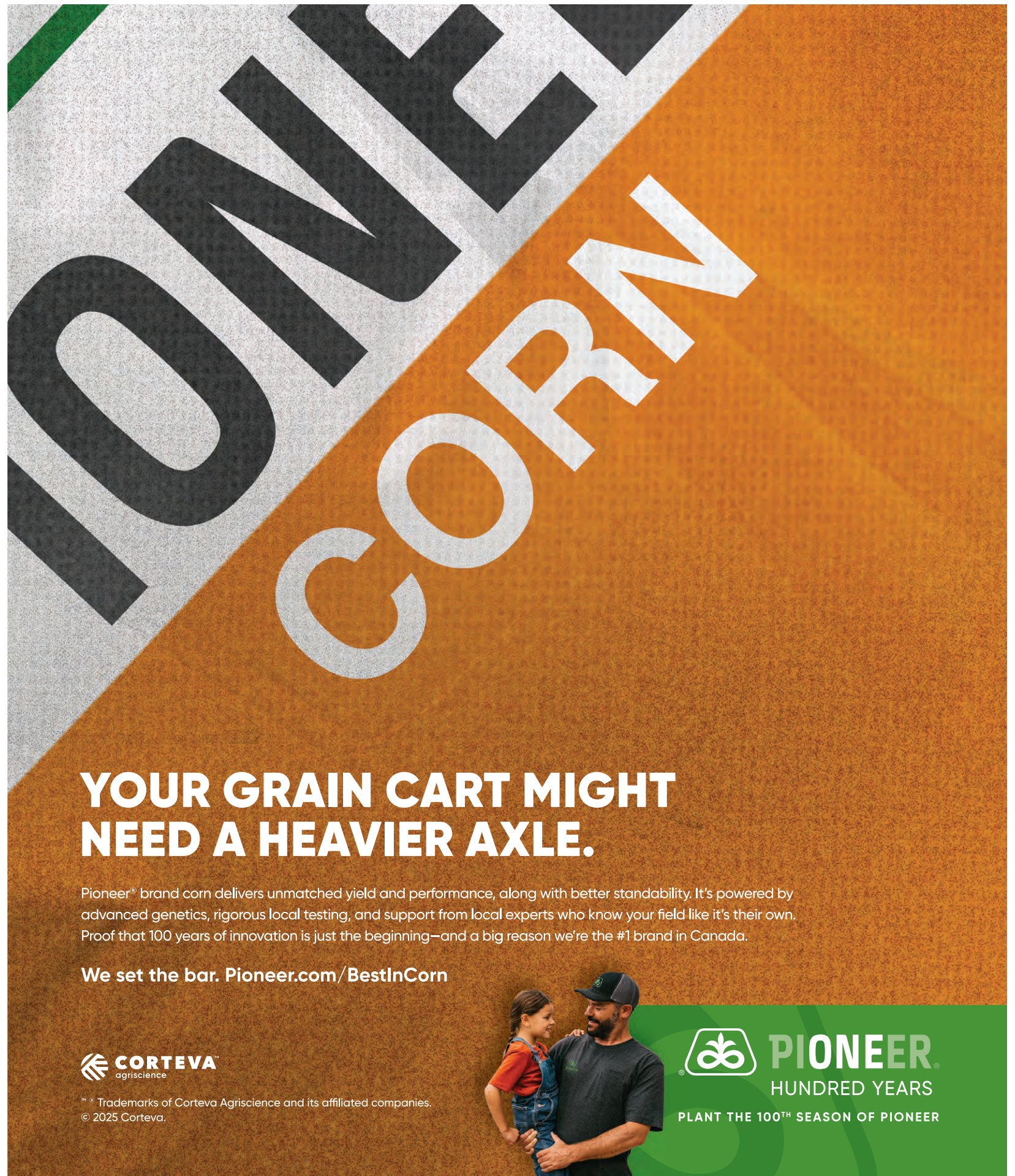
This survey represents the first phase of public engagement in the ACL program

review. Feedback gathered will help inform proposed regulatory updates and program improvements. Further consultation with stakeholders, including leaseholders and Indigenous communities, will follow before final decisions are made, the minister said.

Feedback collected through the survey and

consultations will inform final program adjustments and regulatory updates, anticipated for implementation in 2027, the minister added.

Manitobans interested in sharing their views are encouraged to visit <https://engagemb.ca/ag-crown-lands> to complete the survey by Nov. 24.



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