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AUGUST 22, 2025 | EMPIRE: VOL 121 NO 1 / ADVANCE: VOL 140 NO 3 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS

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## THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIRDEN INDOOR RODEO AND WILD WEST DAZE



PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT, ACTION PLUS PHOTO

Virden's own Dr. Joe King won steer wrestling competition with a time of 4.1 on Sunday, August 17.



PHOTO BY JESSICA COULTER

The future rodeo riders watched from the chutes, learning and deciding on which event they will want to compete in when it is their turn.



PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT, ACTION PLUS PHOTO

Virden's own Jessica Brown made her way to the final ten in the Ladies Barrel racing where she placed 4th with a run of 13.602 seconds.



PHOTO BY JESSICA COULTER

Mutton busting, is where young children attempt to ride sheep for as long as possible. This young lady was not letting go and lasted the longest on Saturday night, August 16.

## Inside...



**MORE ABOUT THE RODEO**  
**P2-3, 8-12**



**LEWIS STEPS UP TO U SPORTS LEVEL**  
**P13**

## SUMMER SIZZLER SALE

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# THE VIRDEN INDOOR RODEO AND WILD WEST DAZE



Rodeo President Thomas Hagan and team roping partner Shane Brown won the Team Roping event on Sunday, August 17. Both received high points from the weekend.



Kash Cattoor of Virden competed in multiple events including tie down roping. He earned high points from the weekend, winning \$1,167.



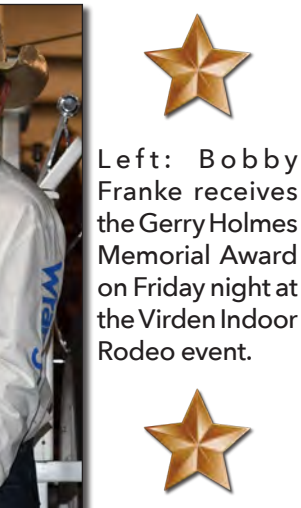
Dean and Debbie Fenty were inducted into the Horsemen's Hall of Fame on Saturday, August 16.



Junior girls barrel racing, Billie Cowan from Virden places 4th with a score of 14.048.



PHOTO BY JESSICA COULTER  
Rodeo Entertainer and Clown, Scott Byrne told some of the best 'dad' jokes to the delight of the crowd.



Left: Bobby Franke receives the Gerry Holmes Memorial Award on Friday night at the Virden Indoor Rodeo event.

## Short Go - Sunday night results

In rodeo, the "long go" refers to the preliminary rounds, while the "short go" is a final round for the top performers.

Place	Member Name	Hometown	Points
BAREBACK			
1	Quaide Skjonsberg	Bluffton, AB	81
2	Ty Ferguson	Foremost, AB	77
BULL RIDING			
1	Davis Young	Leader, SK	84.5
2	Joel Fisk	Moosomin, SK	81
JUNIOR GIRLS BARREL RACING			
1	Allee Kapeller	Beechy, SK	13.268
2	Mcauy Hutchison	Balgonie, SK	13.568
3	Kelsey McGee	Deloraine, MB	13.623
4	Billie Cowan	Virden, MB	14.048
5	Andi Chartier	Virden, MB	19.025
LADIES BARREL RACING			
1	Chloe Woods	Moosomin, SK	13.124
2	Marty Salmond	Weekes, SK	13.308
3	Julie Glaicar	Waldron, SK	13.41
4	Jessica Brown	Virden, MB	13.602
5	Mallory McLeod	Morse, SK	13.727
6	Teri Pegoski	Neepawa, MB	13.857
7	Shealie Miner	Bellevue, MB	18.336
8	Madelyn Warkentin	Virden, MB	19.105
9	April Williamson	Mankota, SK	23.068
LADIES BREAKAWAY ROPING			
1	Daylynn Olliver	Vibank, SK	2.2
2	Kelsey McGee	Deloraine, MB	2.4
3	Lacey Jordison	Moose Jaw, SK	2.9
3	Shelby Gillies	Virden, MB	2.9
5	Madison McGee	Deloraine, MB	3.1
6	Danae Zieffle	Maple Creek, SK	4.2
SADDLE BRONC			
1	Cohen Larson	Macrorie, SK	78.5
2	Cache Schellenberg	Cochrane, AB	77.5
3	Blake Rasmuson	Moosomin, SK	75.5
4	Tyler Winters	Boissevain, MB	73.5
5	Reid Gustafson	Crossfield, AB	72
6	Hayle Lueders	Sherwood Park, AB	67
STEER WRESTLING			
1	Joe King	Virden, MB	4.1
2	Scott Sigfusson	Tugaske, SK	5
3	Dawson Loewen	Battleford, SK	5.5
3	Dayton Martell	Regina, SK	5.5
5	Justin Miller	Virden, MB	5.7
6	Ty Ellis	Maymont, SK	13.3
7	Garrett Zieffle	Consort, AB	16
TEAM ROPING			
1	Thomas Hagan (H)/ Shane Brown (F)	Virden, MB Virden, MB	7.5
2	Tryan Wells (H)/ Tyler Winters (F)	Goodlands, MB/ Boissevain, MB	13.3
TIE DOWN ROPING			
1	Laramie Collen	Virden, MB	9.9
2	Scott Sigfusson	Tugaske, SK	10.8
3	Kevin Dunham	Souris, MB	11.2
4	Garrett Zieffle	Consort, AB	11.3

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# Cowboy size pancakes and sausage



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Front L to R: Renee Veldhuis Deli Manager, Faye Gerring Virden C-Store/Gas Bar Manager, Kyle Gilson, Bulk Lubricant Manager, Amber Vandale Torrance PR Marketing Manager. Middle L to R: Dwayne Barkley Meat Manager, Blake Krahn Operations Manager, David Wowk General Manager, Joe King volunteer, Rob Fairbairn Bakery Manager, Sue Capern Energy Division Manager, Vaughn Wilson President Board of Directors. Back L to R: Lorne Grychuk Grocery Manager, Curtis Gervin Member Board of Directors, Jonothan Hodson Member Board of Directors, Tyler Clarke Crop Supplies Manager, Marcie Barkley Human Resources Manager.

**By Jessica Coulter**  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

There is no better way to start a rodeo than with extra large cowboy size fluffy pancakes and mouth-watering sausage. Valleyview Co-op was happy to serve up these pancakes and sausages to the community. The team of servers were all volunteers from the Valleyview Co-op team and the co-op board members. The breakfast was served at the Tundra Oil and Gas building in the Sunrise Credit Union Banquet room on Thursday, August 14.

The team served over 300 riders, rodeo volunteers, townspeople, visitors and friends. The Virden chapter of the Manitoba High School Rodeo Association fundraiser received \$1470 at the Valleyview Breakfast as each person who attended the event was given the option to donate for their pancakes.

Rhythm and Glue daycare Frances Lansing and her team love to bring out their daycare children to the Thursday rodeo events. On Thursday morning she starts her day by taking her

group of kids to the Valleyview Co-op breakfast. Before the rodeo, Frances and her team have the kids make an article of clothing as a craft project at the daycare. Then on rodeo day, the kids wear that piece of clothing to help the daycare workers easily identify the kids in their group. They have done this for years. This year, the kids made purple tie-dye t-shirts with Rodeo 2025 written on the front. The adults wear the same shirts, so the kids can find them at all the days of events. Later, the group was found dancing up a storm at Victoria Park during the Corex BBQ.

Volunteers for this amazing event included Valleyview employees, board members, Joe King and a half dozen Manitoba High School Rodeo competitors. All of these amazing people gave of their time to serve up a fantastic meal to help support this fundraiser that Valleyview has done for years and plans to continue doing in the future.

"It's been exciting to see this event grow and welcome more



PHOTO BY JESSICA COULTER

Rythum and Glue Daycare came early Thursday to the Sunrise Credit Union Banquet Hall to enjoy the pancakes.

visitors each year. Our local Manitoba High School Rodeo participants are an energetic and dedicated group who embody our values of integrity, community, and excellence. Many of them even spent the morning serving visitors before competing later in the day. Valleyview Co-op is proud to take part in so many wonderful community events, and it's an honour to serve both our neighbours and guests at the Manitoba High School Rodeo, as well as the Virden Indoor Rodeo and Wild West Daze," said Amber Vandale Torrance, Public Relations and Marketing Manager Valleyview Co-op.

Co-op Gold Pancake Mix, Co-op Gold coffee, and in-store made sausage made by Co-op staff. The breakfast was a display of the quality Canadian products that the local Co-op is able to provide its members. The Co-op Gold Mixed Berries and Co-op Gold Whipped topping were an addition to the breakfast menu that began in Oak Lake two years ago. Community response was so positive that Valleyview Co-op has continued to offer the option at their breakfasts. "Travel is a big part of the summer season for our rodeo and agricultural families. With loads of pancake breakfasts to attend, if Valleyview Co-op can offer something that brings a bit of variety to their day, we are happy to help," said Amber.

"It was great to see the employee and board participation provide engagement and support at the breakfast. Working together like this can be a lot of fun, too. Valleyview Co-op has a strong commitment to community investment and involvement as we strive to strengthen the brand in the communities we serve," Vaughn Wilson, Board President.

## Pancakes: flipping good vibes your way

### Lions Rodeo Breakfast

**By Jessica Coulter**  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On Saturday, August 16, the Virden Lions Club hosted their annual pancake breakfast to help fuel up the community for another great rodeo day. This breakfast falls just before the parade and is a great way to get all the parade float makers and watchers full of sweet, delicious syrup covered pancakes. There was juicy and savory breakfast sausage to enjoy with the pancakes, as well as coffee and juice.

The meal is free, although donations are always welcome. Approximately 250 people came out to enjoy these fluffy pancakes. The pancake mix was donated by Parrish and Heimbecker.

All proceeds raised from the event are credited to the Lions Club donation account. These funds will eventually assist needy individuals or groups as the club receives requests. The breakfast raised \$1,468.20 in donations this year.

Along with the assistance of volunteers from the Sunrise Credit Union, RBC and the CIBC, the Virden Lions members and spouses donated their time to make this event happen. Some had to rush over to be on the Lions float right afterwards. The volunteers prepared and served the pancakes and sausages for the full crowd. There were about a dozen volunteers that worked very hard and got up very early to make this breakfast a success.



PHOTO BY BARRY O'GRADY

Virden Lions Graham Hume and Jim Tapp cooking up breakfast out back of the Legion Hall on Saturday morning, prior to the rodeo parade.

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## River Valley Annual Potluck Picnic

Date: Sunday, August 24  
Time: Starts at 4pm, food served at 5pm  
Where: The old Stone School yard in the Valley off highway 259 near Virden

It is a potluck style supper, please also bring your own utensils, plates, and cups  
Coffee will be provided.



**CLOSED FROM AUG 23 - SEP 1**  
The Empire-Advance will be closed from August 23 to September 1, returning September 2. There will be no issue distributed on August 29.  
Sorry for the inconvenience.  
We have appreciated your business all summer!

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Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



Putin playing with us all

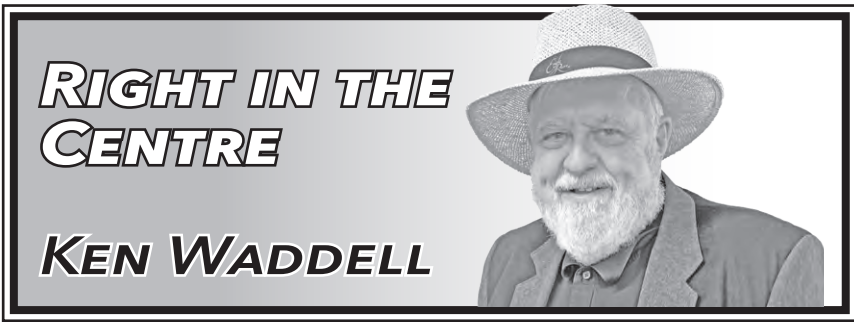
The timing on this column is a bit awkward as it's Monday morning. This past Friday, President Trump of the United States met with President Putin of Russia. Prior to the meeting, and on several occasions, Trump boasted that he would end the Russia-Ukraine war in short order. That didn't happen, obviously, and it didn't happen last Friday.

I believe that Putin has played Trump like a cheap violin. Putin praises Trump, and Trump, being who he is, soaks it up like a petunia in the sunshine.

Putin and Russia have no intention of ending the Ukraine War until they get the last drop of Ukrainian blood on the ground and have possession of most, or all of Ukraine. The area has been fought over for centuries and it seems there have been few productive lessons learned from history. I believe Putin is upset about Ukraine wanting to join NATO. That could well be, but if Putin, along with former and future Russian leaders, would take a breath and figure out the costs of their misplaced ambitions, Russia could be the power they once thought they were.

If one looks at an interactive historical map of Europe, borders have changed hundreds of times in the last 1000 years. Tyrants, dictators and overly zealous emperors have moved the borders over and over again. That's all Putin is doing. He has the energy, the power, and the forces to do as he pleases. Well, he did until he invaded Ukraine in what was supposed to be a very brief war. He miscalculated. Heavy tanks and equipment can't always cross farm fields easily. Roads clog up and weather delays travel. Russia's poorly trained troops and poorly maintained equipment bogged them down literally.

So, in spite of early failures, Putin



and his headstrong military doubled down and tried a war of attrition. They forgot how hard invaded people can fight back on their home turf. Sabotage, human sacrifice, and devious defence mechanisms can bring about heavy losses, and that has proven to be the case in this war. If military and political leaders would study history and actually learn from it, park their egos, and think, they would come to a better conclusion.

When Russia invaded Ukraine, other countries should have rallied to the cause and given Putin a two word message, "Go Home!"

But, they didn't. Like most historical leaders, they tried to cajole and appease. They supplied munitions to the Ukraine and the war has dragged out with poor results and costs that the rest of us will be paying for. It's very annoying.

Now, with Trump following after Putin like a willing retriever dog, Putin will get what he wants, at least for now. If Putin lives a few more years, he will want more.

How do we know that? Just look at WWII Germany as Hitler nibbled away at his European neighbours until the whole world was sucked into a war. The answer that should have been given to Putin, that is "Go Home!", should have been given to Hitler on Day 1 of his first invasion. Had European countries, and especially France, stood up to Hitler, there would have not been a WWII.

But here we are today in a bloody mess with no end in sight.

By the time you read this column, there may be some kind of Russia-Ukraine truce, but I doubt it will last.

What should happen is that all countries should hunker in and build their economy by means of internal and external trade. There are billions of people to feed, clothe, and equip for what could be a bright future for all if the efforts and money put into war would be geared to peaceful commerce, trade, culture, and yes, feeding everyone.

Putin and Trump are theoretically smart men, but they are not using their power properly. I will give Trump credit for aiming for peace, but he needs to stand up to Putin and say "Go Home!" and when that happens the world can perhaps stop the absolute futility of war and live in the security that God has set us up to achieve. When there is peace, there is prosperity. When war strikes, famine follows closely behind.

Ironically, Putin doesn't need to be a war monger for Russia to prosper and he should know that. I think Trump knows that but has trouble with his ego getting in the way. I guess somehow cutting ribbons for the opening of a flour mill and bread factory doesn't rank as high as military parades.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this column are the writer's personal views and are not to be taken as being the view of the newspaper staff.



"I'll get me home"....

Studies show that everyone dreams. Frequently. And therefore, I must also dream, frequently. However, I seldom recall a dream, let alone with any degree of clarity. That's why this dream was so outstanding.

The setting was a semi public building, split level, with a wide staircase. The players were a hodgepodge of familiar and unfamiliar. One very familiar couple, now well into middle age, had just had a baby, as had one of their children. So that makes child and grandchild the same age. While we were gathered informally, a fire siren blasted. The bins and augers of the local grain elevator were engulfed. The call was for evacuation. Immediately meet at the muster station, a near by school. In this dream, and thankfully it was a dream, I could not find my shoes or my jacket. And I would not leave without them. What I did find was a pair of fuchsia colored runners, rather like soccer shoes. They fit and I took them. I did leave without a jacket, but chose to push a lawn mower to the meeting place. Walking past the elevator, I noted that the blaze had been extinguished and only the bins and augers gone. Needless to say, I arrived late. After hiding the mower in some bushes I encountered the supervisor for the evacuation. 'you missed the bus out.' 'I know'. 'what are you going to do?'. 'I'll get myself home!'. And I woke up. Again, thankfully it was only a dream.

You know how, when you wake up, you try to figure out what triggered the dream and how it may pertain to your life? With the news being filled with fire and evacuation stories it made sense to think about them after falling asleep. Why Lisa had a baby at her age- I have no idea! But several family members have just had little ones and more are carrying. So that could be a trigger. Take a lawn mower? Not a riding mower, but a push one. That could only slow me down. Again, mowing lawns and the sounds of lawn mowers are fairly common these days...so, ok.

What struck me as I reviewed the dream was the calm assurance I experienced while searching for footwear, while walking past the scene of the fire, and the awareness that I missed the bus out. No panic, steady and steadfast approach to the task at hand. And then, again, the calm assurance that I would get myself home. Not a plan in place, not a person to rely on. But the assurance that I would get myself home.

I do think of myself as self reliant, a problem solver, and capable. I do not embrace danger, look for anxiety producing moments (no high risk adventures for me!) nor am I one to too frequently disobey orders or bend too many rules. (Check with family and friends on that one!)

I will spend more time dissecting this dream, it's so seldom that I remember one that there must be a reason for this one. I will laugh at myself for spending so much time on the project!

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# Red Apple re-opening a huge success

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Customers made an early morning trip to Red Apple on Friday. Community support was outstanding for the Virden store's Grand Re-opening on Aug. 15 making the extra efforts well worth it says store manager Marilee Coulter.

"I was pleasantly surprised," she said. "It was a wonderful day for the community, my regulars and my staff."

The ribbon was cut with Mayor Tina Williams, and for Red Apple, Lynne Ross (district manager), Scott Schuler (renovations), Vice President David Johnston and the full Virden team were on hand.

Coulter and the vice president of the company welcomed customers, handing each a free laundry basket and a \$10 gift certificate.

The 28-day renovation meant a few hard days as the store remained open throughout. But that's all behind them and the results speak for themselves. Customers were treated to a bright new shopping experience. An unprecedented crowd



PHOTO BY RED APPLE FACEBOOK

In a rush to be among the first 100 shoppers, Red Apple's early morning line-up extends down the sidewalk.

filled the store. Coulter had all hands on deck and said, "On re-opening day the team just pulled together, there was not a hiccup."

Jorja, a local person, was the \$1000 shopping spree draw winner.

The Virden location is one of four Red Apple locations in Canada that were renovated this summer.

# Council supports local events, RCMP engagement

By Dale Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

## RCMP Report

Virden RCMP Acting Sgt. Ed Giannico and Acting Cpl. Jessy Casavechia attended the regular Town of Virden council meeting on Aug. 12 to give their monthly report.

The officers informed council that a new sergeant who will serve as acting detachment commander was scheduled to arrive on Aug. 13. A member previously off duty is returning to work starting with four-hour shifts.

The detachment recently participated in several community events. Giannico said, "On July 1 one of our Mounties dressed up in a red serge uniform and did the Canada Day parade." He reported they took their vehicles to the Touch-a-Truck event at Mary Montgomery School as part of Hero Week for the day camp program. It was an opportunity for the children to interact with RCMP officers and get close to their police cars.

Council asked about

plans for a police presence at the Downtown Daze event. Giannico said RCMP members would be present to monitor the area to discourage infractions and ensure that liquor laws were followed.

## Sewer and Water Installation

Operations and facilities manager Tom Zelenesky reported additional work on Rutherford Street's sewer and water project. Structural instability in the trench required early removal of asphalt and relocation of the water main, adding approximately \$7,603 in water service line costs. Combined with issues like poor soil quality and additional fill requirements, this phase exceeded the contract by about \$54,000. Council approved a \$686,277 progress payment for the project to Rob Smith and Son Backhoe and Trucking Ltd.

## Airport and Park Heating

Council approved quotes from LRB Electric to install a gas-powered boiler at the airport (\$15,280.39 before tax) and relocate the existing

electric boiler to Victoria Park's washroom building (\$5,270.53 before tax). Coun. Marc Savy said, "In-floor heat lines are already in place in the washroom building so this installation could potentially allow year-round use of the washrooms or for an event during the winter without the risk of water lines freezing. The gas-powered boiler at the airport will be part of the gen set installation."

## 2025-2026 Winter Ice Rates Increased

Council approved a 3% increase in ice rental rates for Tundra Oil and Gas Place. Rates for the 2025-2026 season will be \$51.50/hr for morning ice, \$67/hr for non-prime use and \$128/hr for prime time.

## Downtown Daze Sponsorship Increased

Council approved \$1,500 in cash sponsorship plus \$1,000 in in-kind staff contributions for the 2025 Downtown Daze, set for August 14 on 7th Ave. The \$500 increase from last year's funding qualifies the Town of Virden as a presenting sponsor.

*continued on page 15...*



# GO CAPS GO!

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2025/26

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# The buzz about bee venom

## Why I should never complain about bees in my pool

*PUBLISHED AUTHOR, HOLISTIC WELLNESS CERTIFIED HYPNOTIST (CH.)*

**MARIE EVELYNE GINGRAS**

This summer, I found myself scooping honeybees out of my pool like I am running a tiny insect rescue mission. At first, I complained. A lot. Why do they keep diving in like they are auditioning for the Bee Olympics? But the more I learned about bees and their secret superpower, bee venom, the more I realised I should be grateful instead of grumbling.

Bee venom, bee-lieve it or not, is one of nature's most fascinating medicines. It has been used for centuries in traditional healing, and now modern science is catching up. Inside that tiny sting is a cocktail of compounds that have been studied for their ability to reduce inflammation, improve circulation, and even boost the immune system. People with arthritis, for example, have reported relief from joint pain after bee venom therapy. Some even call it "liquid gold with a sting."

Now, I am not suggesting anyone go buzzing barefoot through a bee yard asking

to get stung. But researchers have found that bee venom contains melittin, a peptide that has powerful anti-inflammatory properties. It can help calm swelling and pain, making it a potential natural alternative to certain medications. Some studies are even looking into its role in fighting infections and supporting the nervous system. Imagine that the very thing we swat at during picnics might actually be the answer to some of our aches and pains.

The more you think about it, the more bees start looking like tiny, winged pharmacists. They already gift us with honey, which soothes sore throats, propolis that boosts immunity, and royal jelly that is packed with nutrients. Add venom to the mix, and suddenly that buzzing around the pool does not seem so bothersome. These little insects are practically carrying a first-aid kit in their stingers.

Of course, I will not pretend a sting feels pleasant.

But for many, controlled exposure in a medical setting has shown promise for conditions like multiple sclerosis and chronic pain, even killing cancer cells. Bee venom creams and ointments are even popping up in beauty aisles, marketed for their ability to plump skin and reduce wrinkles. Who knew the secret to glowing skin might be hiding in the very creatures floating around my pool noodles?

So, the next time I see a honeybee doing the backstroke, I might remind myself that these tiny swimmers are working harder than almost any creature on Earth. They pollinate crops, keep ecosystems alive, and offer up a venom that could help humans heal in ways we are only beginning to understand. Complaining about bees in my pool feels a little like complaining about free healthcare. It might be inconvenient at times, but the benefits are undeniable.

This summer, instead of grumbling, I will gently scoop my little visitors out with respect. After all, they are more than pool crashers. They are healers, helpers, and tiny reminders that sometimes life's sweetest gifts come with a bit of a sting. So let it be!

## Miniota News

**Submitted**  
BY LINDA CLARK

Congratulations to Ryan and Victoria Lelond and big sister Ava Joy on the arrival of their daughter, Emma Eileen on Aug. 14 at Brandon Regional Health Centre.

Visiting with Bill and Renee Armitage were Renee's daughter Tracie and Jason Groff and their sons Justin and Joshua of Stoney Creek, Ont. Other family members Ron and Shelley Gardham and family from Arrow River and Neil and Cheryl Stewart and their family Lanny Stewart and Shawna and James Pauls from Brandon also visited.

Our community extends our thoughts and

prayers to Colleen Brown following surgery at Brandon Regional Health Centre. Grant and Colleen have returned home following a stay for some recoup time with their daughter and son-in-law, Carla and Darren Grills.

Get well wishes are also being sent to Linda Armitage Schrader following surgery at Brandon hospital. Our thoughts are with you Linda.

Millie and Ron Leonard, Karen and Peter Wotherspoon and children from Regina, Sask. and Maggie McDonald from Memphis, Tennessee, along with cousins and friends attended the funeral for Ernie Stowe on Aug. 16 at Miniota Community Centre.

Many Motorbike friends travelled from various prairie towns and formed a cavalcade to lead the family to the Miniota cemetery.

Congratulations to Aiden Lewis and his coach Trevor Lewis on the great showing for the Manitoba Midwest 18U team in Alberta. The boys made it to the final with a 4-3 loss against British Columbia. Way to go Aiden!

Sending most special birthday wishes to Michelle Bryant's grandma, Alice Bolter at Sunnyside, on the occasion of her 102nd birthday on Aug. 18. Happy birthday Alice! We hope you enjoy your cake and all those cards!

The Enhancement Committee is busy at the rink with the installation of the artificial ice. Volunteers have been

# HELEN DRYSDALE

## OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

I have had a busy summer preserving summer's bountiful harvest. It's been tempting to romanticize our grandmothers' many jars of preserves in neat rows upon the basement shelves, but instead I reflected upon their tenacity to provide for their families. Canning, drying, pickling and preserving to have enough food for the winter was hard work. I do not have a wood stove to do my canning on and the hot and cold running water makes my work a breeze compared to my female ancestors. I am sure those hard working ladies measured their accomplishment by the quantities of provisions stored away in those cellars for the long winter months. Today I have the luxury of preserving what I like to eat and not be worried about having enough supplies to last the cold winter months.

### Crisp pickle slices

- |                                 |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 16 cups sliced medium cucumbers | 6 medium onions, sliced |
| 2 red peppers, diced            | 3 cloves of garlic      |
| 1/3 cup pickling salt           | 4 cups white sugar      |
| 2 tsp. turmeric                 | 2 tsp. celery seed      |
| 3 Tbsp. mustard seed            | 3 cups vinegar          |
- Wash and do not peel cucumbers. Slice thinly. Add onions, peppers and whole garlic cloves. Add salt, cover with ice and mix thoroughly. Let stand 3 hours; drain well. In a large pot bring the remaining ingredients to a boil. Add the vegetables and bring back to a boil. Immediately seal in hot sterilized jars. This makes about 5 quart jars.

### Autumn Relish

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 4 cups chopped ripe tomatoes                  | 3 cups chopped cabbage              |
| 4 cups chopped cucumber                       | 2 cups chopped onion                |
| 1 cup chopped green bell pepper               | 1 cup chopped red bell pepper       |
| 1/2 cup pickling salt                         | 4 cups white vinegar                |
| 3 cups sugar                                  | 2 tsp. dry mustard                  |
| 1 tsp. celery seeds                           | 1 tsp. turmeric                     |
| 1 tsp. paprika                                | 1 tsp. red pepper flakes (optional) |
| 2 Tbsp. cornstarch blended with 3 Tbsp. water |                                     |
- Prepare the Vegetables: In a large mixing bowl, combine the tomatoes, cabbage, cucumber, onion, green and red bell peppers. Sprinkle with salt and let stand overnight. Drain well making sure to press out all liquid. In a large pot combine vinegar, sugar, mustard, celery seeds, turmeric, paprika and red pepper flakes. Bring to a boil. Add the drained vegetable mixture and return to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Stir in the cornstarch and cook for a few minutes more, stirring until thickened.
- Pack into sterilized canning jars, leaving 1/2 inch of headspace. Use a thin knife to remove any air bubbles from the jars and top it off if needed. Wipe jar rims clean, then cover with lids and screw bands on until fingertip tight. Place the filled jars in a boiling water bath and process them for 10 minutes. Remove jars and allow to cool completely.



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# Favourite artifacts at Virden Pioneer Home Museum



Party-line telephone.



1881 Wedding dress.



1920s ice box.

**By Claire Armandico**  
PIONEER HOME MUSEUM

When I first started working at the Virden Pioneer Home Museum, I thought I would just be looking after old objects. But I quickly learned that each item here has a story to tell and sometimes, those stories make you see the past in a whole new way. Out of everything I've come across, three stood out to me: a purple wedding dress, a 1920s ice box, and a party-line telephone. Together, they show how much daily life has changed and how some things really haven't.

The purple wedding dress was one of the first things that caught my eye. It was donated by the Madge family and dates back to around 1881. Even before the museum opened in 1970, this dress was already part of the collection. Its deep purple fabric and detailed stitching on the sleeves and bodice make it beautiful even after more than a century. I used to think all brides in the past wore white, but this dress taught me otherwise. In the late 1800s, brides often chose colourful dresses blue, green, yellow, even red because they could wear them again for other special occasions. White was hard to keep clean, so it was mostly worn by wealthy women. Queen Victoria's white gown in 1840 made the colour fashionable, but it took time before it became the standard. Seeing this dress up close makes me think about how fashion trends come and go, but also about how practical people had to be.

The second item is the 1920s ice box, loaned to the museum by Gladys Bray in 1976. Before electric refrigerators, this was how families kept food cold. The top

compartment held a block of ice from the Assiniboine River, which icemen would cut during the winter and store in sawdust to keep it frozen until summer. They would deliver it to homes, and families would place it inside the ice box where it slowly melted. I'd seen the term "ice box" before, but I didn't realize it once meant an actual wooden or metal cabinet used every day, not just a camping cooler.

The third artifact is the party-line telephone. At first, I thought it was just an old phone with a crank, but it turns out it was much more than that. Back then, several households shared the same phone line, and each family had its own ring pattern,

like "long-long-short." The catch? Anyone on the line could listen in. People used it for important messages, but also for gossip, warnings, and a bit of fun. It was both useful and a little nosy and it makes me realize that even today, with our private cell phones, we still like to share stories and keep in touch.

This article marks the final piece in the Favourite Items series written by the Virden Pioneer Home Museum staff. We hope these stories have sparked your curiosity and encouraged you to see the treasures in our collection as more than objects, they are memories of the people who came before us, and reminders of how their lives still connect to ours today.

## Lions Club Donations Part 3



PHOTO BY CASSY HUME

Virden Lions Club member Paul Pennycook presenting a donation to Manitoba Brain Injury Assoc., accepted by Kevin Tutthill and Chance Toder on May 28. Over the next sixteen weeks we will be showing all the wonderful donations made by the Virden Lions Club to different organizations.

# The Little Girl on Ken's Car

**By Barry Lambkin**  
ELKHORN AUTO MUSEUM

In 1912 the idea for building the Saxon came from Hugh Chalmers whose Chalmers car was among the most popular medium-priced automobiles in the country. Chalmers believed that consumers wanted a small well-built low-priced automobile. The Saxon is part of the lineage of the modern Chrysler Corporation.

The first Saxons offered big-car features including a four-cylinder engine, shaft drive, and electric lights which were an option until becoming standard in 1915. Three thousand Saxons were built in 1913 and sales skyrocketed. The company moved into a larger factory to keep up with demand.

Smaller cars were available, but the Saxon was advertised as a "woman's car" – easy to control and care for. Some notable Suffragettes crisscrossed the nation in a Saxon to bring the vote to women. In 1916, a 1916 Saxon Model 14 roadster, nicknamed the "Golden Flyer," was famously used by suffragettes Alice Burke and Nell Richardson to promote women's suffrage across the United States. They drove the car, sponsored by the National American Woman Suffrage Association, on a 10,000+ mile tour, covering the Eastern Seaboard, the South, and the West Coast, engaging with the public and advocating for women's right to vote.

In 1914 a Saxon roadster was driven 135 miles a day for 30 days, a total of 4,050 miles, averaging 30 miles per gallon. In its transcontinental trip, it was among the first cars to drive the new Lincoln Highway. The Lincoln Highway was the first transcontinental automobile highway in the United States, stretching from New York City to San Francisco. It was established in 1913 by the Lincoln Highway Association to promote better roads and showcase the potential of automobile travel. While initially a concept connecting existing roads, it played a significant role in the development of the modern U.S. highway system.



PHOTO BY BARRY LAMBKIN

1916 Saxon

A six-cylinder engine was introduced in the spring of 1915 and became an instant hit. By 1916 Saxon was ranked eighth in the industry and poised to continue growth. The car was heavily marketed to women, farmers, and businessmen with the promise of economy, ease of operation and durability.

In 1917, 28,000 Saxons were built, both four and six-cylinder models, but the company management had overextended by buying the larger factory. It was left with little cash on hand and the recession that followed World War I ultimately led it to cease production. It was advertised as "a high-grade well-designed, carefully built, two passenger automobile with four-cylinder motor, standard tread and other standard features, produced by an experienced organization, soundly financed and well managed". The latter two attributes did not prove to be true and the company entered bankruptcy in 1922.

Ike obtained the car from Lumsden, SK, and it was formerly owned by a Mr. Shooks of Regina SK. Ken Prouten of Elkhorn lovingly restored the Saxon and would drive it in the parade on July 1st. He was a good friend to the museum, and someone I got to know over many cups of coffee, so I always refer to it as Ken's Car. I know if he was still around, he would make a point of showing me the ghostly image of the girl on the radiator badge. So, when you come in, I will show you because Ken would have liked that.

This is based on the best information available.



## NEWS RELEASE

### 2025 Nuisance Gopher Control Program

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth will be undertaking a Nuisance Gopher Control Program this summer and fall. The program aims to control the gopher population in the Village of Elkhorn that has been an ongoing nuisance. The Municipality has been in contact with the RCMP and Manitoba Conservation District regarding the program.

While gophers may appear harmless, they cause extensive damage to landscapes, crops, and even underground utilities. This year has been particularly challenging, with the population continuing to grow and impact property owners, municipalities, and farmers across the region. Gophers are not directly dangerous to people, but their burrowing habits can cause significant property damage and may carry indirect health risks.

In light of the risks a growing population of nuisance gophers pose to the community, there will be three volunteers authorized by Council as part of the Nuisance Gopher Control Program. Authorized volunteers will be permitted to discharge firearms during daytime hours. The designated volunteers will be working throughout the community and will carry letters of authorization from the Municipality. Duration of the program will be from September 2025 to October 2026.

If you have questions about the program, contact CAO, Iris Vercaigne at 204-748-1239 or email [info@wallacewoodworth.com](mailto:info@wallacewoodworth.com).

For gopher related complaints, please contact the Municipal Office.

# Welcome to the 35th Virden Indoor Rodeo & Wild West Daze



PHOTO BY JESSICA COULTER

Rodeo Board Member Steve Dryden.

**The following is Rodeo Board Member Steve Dryden's speech at the VIP supper on Friday August 15.**  
"I bring greetings today on behalf of Virden Indoor Rodeo Committee, from myself and my co-chairs on sponsorship Kyle Dagliesh and Jessica Brown.

I would like to call out Deb King and her staff of volunteers so we may show them our gratitude for the beautiful meal they have served.

I also want to recognize Brian & Lynn Renard from Renard's Meat Services and Dewayne Barkley from Valleyview Co-op for the amazing cook on the prime rib.

Big Shoutout to Tundra Oil & Gas for the sponsorship of the VIP Lounge. Your support is greatly appreciated.

How did we get here? 3rd weekend of August 2025 35th Anniversary is a great milestone. Many events don't get to have this celebration. For me at times like this, I like to look back and reflect on the journey.

Looking at the Virden Indoor Rodeo & Wild West Daze event today, one might conclude this it's a well-established, well attended, well ran weekend festival and they would be right on all fronts. However, Virden Indoor Rodeo started from a humble beginning.

1989- Year 1, The chamber of commerce wanted to replace the original Canadian Fireman's Rodeo and therefore pursued hosting an actual Western Rodeo. At that time Virden was not really known as a rodeo hub, that it is today.

There are a few people in the room tonight, who were ap-

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proached to consult with the chamber of commerce to make year 1 a success. This was the foundation of Virden Indoor Rodeo organizing committee you see today. The old arena was the venue, event purses were app.\$200, and sponsorship was lean, but the journey began.

Over the years, many great rodeo's created momentum and started to put Virden Indoor Rodeo on the map with fans and contestants. During this time, Virden Indoor Rodeo was awarded the MRCA Rodeo of the Year 12 plus times.

Fast Forward a few years to 2011 - TOGP was built. This was a big benefit to this event. Climate controlled venue, individual seating plus added crowd capacity really allowed our organizing committees, to get creative, in how we host this event. Many new features were added to the event in this time frame, to enhance the fan experience, as well as modernize the event in order to compete with other major events in the region.

Over the years there have been many great people involved with Virden Indoor Rodeo. Past & current committee chairs, scores of volunteers, stock contractors and rodeo personnel too numerous to mention, all have made great contributions to the event.

There have been many key parts to this rodeo's success, but none more important than the people sitting in this room today. Without you, our sponsors, today would not be a reality.

As the journey continues our momentum is still strong. The 2024 rodeo production was again awarded the Canadian Cowboys Association Rodeo of the Year. Three times back-to-back, a tradition we would love to continue.

Today our sponsorship family has grown to over 100 organization and individuals. Purses continue to rise, contestant entries

are the largest ever, while thousands of fans will be entertained over the weekend. This is the direct result of your continued support.

New for 2025 is a partially updated sound system. This project started last fall, with the support from many organizations along with the Town of Virden this project moved forward. Crucial to this projects funding were three community investment grants awarded by the following companies: Kingston Midstream, Tundra Oil and Gas and Valleyview Consumers Co-op. WETHANK YOU! We look forward to the final stages of the upgrade, being completed by summer of 2026. Tonight will be a small sample of what the future holds related to arena sound.

I would like to recognize the following key individuals involved with your sponsorship.

Felicity Hagan - Chair of Program Development & Inhouse digital advertising

Charlotte Artyshko - Social Media  
Adelle Gervin - Banner & Website Co-ordinator  
Gwen More - Co - chair of Website  
Amber Vandale Torrence- Marketing & Digital Strategy  
Kendra & Brett Stewart - Flag Co-ordinators  
And your hosts of the Tundra Oil & Gas VIP Lounge - Dr's Joe and Gitta King.

These individuals along with all committee members and teams of volunteers donate countless hours of their time to make this event a success.

So, on their behalf, I thank you "Our sponsors" for your continued commitment. Without your support this event cannot happen.

Have a fun and safe weekend -Enjoy the rodeo!"

## Oak Lake Memorial Golf Tournament

By Ev Nolan  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Oak Lake Golf Club was the place to be on Saturday, August 16, as 72 golfers hit the greens for the Annual Memorial Golf Tournament. What started off as a chilly morning quickly turned into a perfect prairie summer day, with sunshine and blue skies setting the stage for a great mix of golf, laughter, and community spirit.

Players arrived early for the check-in, greeted with familiar smiles and plenty of good-natured ribbing as teams prepared for the shotgun start. The format was best ball, with two-person teams working together across 18 holes. Some came to compete, some came for the fun, and many came for both and of course, for the BBQ burger and cold plate lunch that was included with registration. The \$60 entry fee also went a long way, covering prizes, great food, and a day full of memories.

The top 10 teams had earned their spot in the much-anticipated Horserace, which teed off at 3:30 p.m. With plenty of laughs from the sidelines and a few nerves on the greens, the competition was close right to the end. When the final putt dropped, Lawson and Callen Hayward were crowned champions, claiming the \$220 top prize. Close behind were Dustin Smoke and Justin Packo, who walked away with \$170 in second place, and Brad Myers with Dave Drummond, who rounded out the top three with \$150.

The individual contests added even more fun to the day. Ryan Walker showed off his power, winning the Men's Longest Drive and \$42, while Jeffery Bailey's steady hand earned him the Men's Longest Putt at an impressive 18 feet, 2 inches, good for \$52. Nathan Wasicuna's accuracy landed him Men's Closest to the Pin and \$85. For the ladies, Tara Davies claimed the Longest Drive for \$26, Natalie Bailey drained an 8-foot, 3-inch putt for the Ladies' Longest Putt and \$14, and Sandy Hayward's pinpoint approach shot to just 8 feet, 6 inches from the pin won her \$20.

According to Clubhouse manager Alayna Bailey, the event raised just under \$10,000 for the Oak Lake Golf Club, a cause close to the hearts of many in the community. Knowing that their swings, putts, and even the missed shots were contributing to something local added an extra layer of pride and purpose to the day.

The event would not have been possible without the incred-



PHOTO SUBMITTED

These guys had a great time playing the game. L to r: Devon Maxwell, Cory Dreilich, Lance Lobreau, Jeffery Bailey

ible generosity of local sponsors. From small businesses to family names that everyone in town recognizes, the list was long and heart-warming. Anchor Salon & Spa, Cherry Point Lodge, Fusion Credit Union, Four Seasons Virden, Tundra Oil & Gas, Virden Dodge, Whyte's Lumber, Virden Home Hardware, and many more all chipped in to make sure the day was a success. Families like the McNishs, the Browns, the Baileys, and the Enns also lent their support, proving once again how a small town can rally together for something special.

By the end of the day, the tournament had delivered everything it promised - a healthy dose of competition, plenty of prizes, good food, and great company. The early morning chill was long forgotten as golfers shared stories of their best (and worst) shots of the day, already talking about "next year" before they even left the course.

"The Oak Lake Golf Club has always been the heart of our community! But this year is extra special for us! Adding in our Liquor License and our new Kitchen Menu has evolved the Golf Course into something we never could have dreamed up! We are so thankful for all the support this season and will continue to provide amazing food and delicious drinks to all our customers! The golf course has never looked so great! The greens are incredible! We have people coming from all over Canada to see what we have done with the place! It's a true blessing to say this year has been our best one yet! I've been with the Club for almost 8 years now and it's always been my passion to see it succeed! To see our profits this year would blow you away! Thank you for all the ongoing support!", says Clubhouse Manager Alayna Bailey.

The Annual Memorial Golf Tournament is about more than just golf. It is about tradition, community, and coming together to honour memories while making new ones. And with nearly \$10,000 raised for the Oak Lake Golf Club, this year's event proved once again how powerful a day on the greens can be.

# Grill and Chill: BBQing at its finest



The Corex team has a ton of fun cooking up the burgers and dogs for the whole community on Thursday afternoon.

PHOTOS BY JESSICA COULTER

By Jessica Coulter  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

**S**izzle and sear, Corex BBQ was a huge success on a beautiful warm sunny day. On Thursday, August 14, Corex hosted their annual BBQ at Victoria Park. This free BBQ is open to everyone and is a wonderful way to welcome all rodeo fans and riders to Virden.

Corex brings in only local ingredients from the local Valleyview Co-op for the event. Patties, hot dogs, buns, all the fixings, drinks, cookies and chips are all ordered well in advance and picked up from the Co-op to be served to the community. Approximately 1200 hamburgers and 700 hot dogs were served to the masses. A big shout out to Saunders Water and Ice for providing a freezer for the Corex team to keep the frozen patties and wieners before cooking. All unopened left-over supplies were donated to the Food Cupboard in Virden.

The first few years that Corex put on this event, they did not have matching shirts. It was then decided it would be a nice idea for the community to be able to identify the workers. They originally started this BBQ in July 2004 at which time they were owned by Chevron Canada Resources. At the time, Chevron had sold to Enerplus Resources and was exiting Virden area. Corex held the BBQ as an opportunity to welcome in the new ownership group which signalled to the area that oil production was still here to stay. They did not do a BBQ in 2005 but in 2006, Corex came up with the idea to host it as a kickoff to the rodeo. In December of 2012, Enerplus sold to Corex Resources Ltd. and the directors and management felt it was important to continue the tradition. Since then, it has been an annual event, and the rest is history.

Only six local Corex members were missing from the event this year and only due to yearly maintenance that was being done at one of their facilities. Usually there are 35 members from the Virden office and a few senior management members from the head office in Calgary fly in to help out as well. The Calgary management team members are always amazed to see the event.

Not only does Corex cook up a fantastic meal, but they provide entertainment for the afternoon too. For the past few years Corex has had DJ Bryan Podworny from Expressions Entertainment out of Ninette play for the crowd on the Victoria Park stage. Bryan is a very talented DJ who put on a great show and was great at interacting with the crowd, including the large number of kids that make it out each year for this event. The local daycares and day camps bring all their children down to the park for an afternoon of food and fun. Byran's enthusiasm and energy with the kids was just amazing.

Corex also gives away dance ribbons and beach balls to all the kids that come out. The children were waving their ribbons and dancing the afternoon away listening to the DJ. Or they were playing with their beach balls all around the park. Corex brought 300 dance ribbons and 200 beach balls to the park that day and they were all gone. There were string backpacks and fridge magnet clips for the adults too. Sharon Rhodes won a Corex logo blanket, lawn chair, and hoodie door prize.

It was great to see so many people come together to have a fun and relaxing afternoon in Victoria Park.



The children from multiple day camps and daycares had a blast dancing up a storm at the Victoria Park during the Corex BBQ.

# 2025 Demolition Derby a smashing success



PHOTO BY DALE DAVISON

As main event winner Shawn Gardner exits his vehicle, he gets a high five from Tyler Mead.

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Rodeo weekend would not be complete without Demolition Derby and on Sunday afternoon hundreds of fans filled the sixteen sets of stands at the Derby pit to watch all the action. Music by Sonic Sladen kept things rocking between heats and Wallace District Fire Department

had two trucks on site to keep things safe.

Twenty large cars competed in four qualification heats with the top two cars in each heat moving on to the feature event. After the dust settled Shawn Gardner's car came out on top, with Jesse Carruthers in second and Cole Kroeker taking the Sportsman award with third place.

There were five entries

in the truck event with Kevin Price taking first place. Kevin Gagnon won the small car heat.

Jason Carruthers had the best dressed car and split the win in the Mad Dog showdown with Chris Flannery.

The derby car built by the VCI power mech class was raffled off with the \$2320 raised, earmarked for the purchase of tools.



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# WILD WEST DAZE AND RODEO PARADE DEE

By Ken Waddell  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

As hundreds of people strolled the streets of downtown Virden on Thursday night, it was obvious that the Wild West Daze Downtown Events held in conjunction with the Virden Rodeo was well received. “Best ever!” was a comment heard along the way. From 5pm to 10pm on Thursday August 14, vendors lined the streets offering a multitude of wares and promotions. The boa snake was popular with young and old alike as the handler encouraged people to not only pet the snake but let it wrap around peoples’ arms and neck.

Vendors were doing a brisk business. Of major interest was the Winnipeg Blue Bombers booth where fans could sign a huge bulletin board wishing the Bombers well in their season. Winnipeg is hosting the Grey Cup this year and of course, hope to be in the big game. Visitors at the booth could enter a contest to win a pair of tickets to the big game.

And there were food trucks galore, as they lined the streets serving up everything for mini donuts to poutine to Filipino food. Prospective cowboys and cowgirls practised calf roping and bulldogging. And as expected, the mechanical bull presented a challenge to riders with the expected results of getting bucked off.

**Virden car show biggest ever**

A big part of the Thursday evening Downtown Events was the car show put on by Westman on Wheels car club. Club spokesperson Kevin Williams told the Empire Advance that this year’s show was the largest on record at 177 entries. “Everybody seemed to enjoy the show. Car show participants came from Rocanville, Melita, Brandon and all over Westman. It’s not only about the cars but the story behind the car. Williams said the group started using the Westman on Wheels name about five years ago. They use the name to advertise events and as a bulletin board for members.

After the music faded away and the streets were cleared and organizers had a chance to catch their breath, the Wild West Daze Downtown Events organizers were overjoyed with the event’s success. Attendees were saying the Downtown Events were the best ever. Spokesperson Jillian Irvine said in an interview with the Empire Advance, “It was absolutely great! With the whole weekend there was just something in the air that made it over the top.” Irvine noted the addition of the entertainment stage and the large attendance both at the street events and the whole weekend was amazing. “Without the whole community working together, this wouldn’t happen.” Irvine said the Virden Chamber of Commerce looks after the Downtown Events and also has a rep on the rodeo committee. Irvine noted, “The 35th anniversary rodeo was the best ever and having so many local participants and winners was just great.



PHOTO BY JESSICA COULTER  
Firefighters teach children how to point and shoot targets with water hose at Downtown Daze on August 14. Training the future firefighters of Virden.



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WADDELL  
The Rodeo Wagon sporting a brand-new banner, driven by Jody Plett and Family from Kola MB and his team of Black Percherons in the parade.



## THANK YOU

Westman On Wheels would like to thank all the Sponsors, Supporters and Volunteers of our 2025 Wild West Daze Show & Shine. Each of you helped to make this event a success!

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• Virden Mainline Motors	• Boston Pizza
• Virden Chrysler Dodge	• Higginbotham Electric
• Sparwood's Service Centre	• Virden Water & Portables

**Supporters:** Town of Virden, Empire Advance, First Street Catering, Look Music



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# VIRDEN INDOOR RODEO CELE

By Christine Waddell  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

*Personal reflections from Christine Waddell (Lobel), co-owner Virden Empire-Advance*

*Full disclosure: I'm a '67 grad from VCI but have lived in the Neepawa area since '71. Although I'm not a rodeo follower, I do have a fair knowledge of horsemanship.*

*I loved the rodeo and all the downtown Western Daze events, the sales, the sounds and my new very special snake friend. Also watching future stars safely trying their steer wrestling moves on Thursday evening in downtown Virden. The food trucks and entertainment were excellent.*

*All those VIP passes people saw are not the traditional Very Important Person, rather it means Involved and Invested and financial sponsorship, sometimes to the second and third generation.*

*In the arena, it was great hearing names familiar to anyone from the Virden and Westman region but also as far away as Australia. It was fun hearing Neepawa names familiar to us such as Dalgleish, Gillies, Miller and Whelpton.*



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WADDELL  
Former Blue Bomber Obby Khan, PC Manitoba, had a genuine conversation as he made new friends at a dinner Friday night. Khan is shown here in conversation with Dianne Hansen, ad salesperson for the Empire Advance. Khan was a star with the Bombers. Hansen is an avid Bomber fan.

CELEBRATED BEST EVER



Photo by Christine Waddell  
Made Marshall Herb Warkentin and wife Marie celebrating 60 years of marriage riding a 1929 Case tractor in the Rodeo parade on Saturday, August 16.



Photo by Christine Waddell  
Kyle driving his Antique John Deere tractor with Accent Driving School.

CELEBRATES 35 YEAR MILESTONE



Photo by Ken Waddell  
Christine Waddell found a new very special snake friend at Virden's Western Days. Waddell said, "She is lovely and it was a perfect night for a Madagascar boa to make new friends."

Photo by Christine Waddell  
Prospective steer wrestlers practised their moves at Virden's Western Daze downtown event under the careful eye of their instructors. The action was slow and deliberate so as to give the participants a safe and fun experience

TAILGATE PARTY



PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE WADDELL  
Old Bones Buffalo played for the full afternoon at the Saturday Tailgate Party in Virden during the Rodeo. They played a variety of old time country to classic rock



Mechanical bull riding was enjoyed by the kids at this year's Tailgate Party.



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# MHSRA Virden, Scores

Shown here, placing within the top 10 are local students

T - F Place	Member Name	Thursday Time/Pts	Friday Time/Pts
HS BARREL RACING			
4 - 4	Amelia Crawford, Virden	14.014 / 7	13.895 / 7
1	Hudson Bond, Kenton		13.513 / 10
9	Leigh Day, Virden	14.325 / 2	
5 - 3	Maddie Warkentin, Virden	14.029 / 6	13.808 / 8
2	Sadie Brown, Virden	13.804 / 9	
HS BREAKAWAY ROPING			
6	Hudson Bond, Kenton		4.91 / 5
4	Keightley Stewart, Virden	15.57 / 7	
HS GOAT TYING			
5	Amelia Crawford, Virden		11.9 / 6
2 - 7	Keightley Stewart, Virden	11.06 / 8.5	12.39 / 4
4	Sadie Brown, Virden	11.07 / 7	
HS POLE BENDING			
1	Hudson Bond, Kenton		20.36 / 10
9	Keightley Stewart, Virden		23.408 / 2
4	Leigh Day, Virden	21.446 / 7	
2	Maddie Warkentin, Virden	21.401 / 9	
7	Sadie Brown, Virden	22.126 / 4	
HS TEAM ROPING			
3 - 1	Boden Bond, Kenton (HD)	7.58 / 9	12.22 / 10
2	Carter Brown, Virden (HL)	6.34 / 10	
3	Dawson Brown, Virden (HD)		24.8 / 9
5	Denver Gompf, Oak Lake (HD)	11.87 / 8	
1	Slade Hagan, Virden (HD)	6.34 / 10	
6	Spencer Gompf, Oak Lake (HL)	11.87 / 8	
4	Stetson Cutler, Virden (HL)		24.8 / 9
HS TIE DOWN ROPING			
5 - 4	Boden Bond, Kenton	25.88 / 6	25.09 / 7
4 - 1	Carter Brown, Virden	16.64 / 7	15.98 / 10
3	Denver Gompf, Oak Lake	16.19 / 8	
3	Spencer Gompf, Oak Lake		20.93 / 8
JH BARREL RACING			
1 - 1	Dally Brown, Virden	14.035 / 10	14.075 / 10
4 - 3	Emily Warkentin, Virden	14.564 / 7	14.619 / 8
8	Finley Ross, Virden	18.801 / 3	
5 - 4	Jemma Day, Virden	14.877 / 6	14.672 / 7
6 - 9	Luna Stone, Miniota	15.035 / 5	15.154 / 2
JH BOY'S BREAKAWAY			
1 - 3	Brock Brown, Virden	4.82 / 10	4.66 / 8
1	Garrett Gompf, Oak Lake		3.33 / 10
4	Kesler Brown, Virden		7.4 / 7
4	Leo King, Lenore	26.79 / 7	
2	Rory Hagan, Virden	6.16 / 9	
JH BOY'S GOAT TYING			
2 - 4	Brock Brown, Virden	13.69 / 9	16.58 / 7
2	Garrett Gompf, Oak Lake		14.72 / 9
5 - 1	Kesler Brown, Virden	16.52 / 6	12.5 / 10
9 - 3	Leo King, Lenore	20.41 / 2	15.84 / 8
10 - 10	Rally King, Virden	20.63 / 1	26.66 / 1
9	Rory Hagan, Virden		21.59 / 2
3 - 7	Slone Brown, Virden	14.25 / 8	20.83 / 4
JH CHUTE DOGGING			
2	Garrett Gompf, Oak Lake		15.87 / 9
3	Kesler Brown, Virden		17.37 / 8
1	Slone Brown, Virden		3.79 / 10
JH GIRL'S BREAKAWAY			
1	Dally Brown, Virden	16.32 / 10	
3	Emily Warkentin, Virden		14.56 / 8
2	Jo-Hannah Logan, Lenore		7.2 / 9
JH GIRL'S GOAT TYING			
6	Dally Brown, Virden	14.66 / 5	
3 - 5	Emily Warkentin, Virden	13.23 / 8	16.67 / 6
5 - 3	Jemma Day, Virden	14.59 / 6	13.86 / 8
1 - 2	Jo-Hannah Logan, Lenore	11.11 / 10	13.68 / 9
2 - 6	Luna Stone, Miniota	12.69 / 9	17.4 / 5
JH POLE BENDING			
1 - 3	Dally Brown, Virden	21.615 / 10	21.176 / 8
2 - 6	Emily Warkentin, Virden	22.511 / 9	22.439 / 5
10	Finley Ross, Virden	29.155 / 1	
4 - 7	Jemma Day, Virden	23.09 / 7	22.984 / 4
10	Jo-Hannah Logan, Lenore		30.15 / 1
9	Xylia Plaisier, Virden		26.612 / 2
JH RIBBON ROPING			
1	Garrett Gompf, Oak Lake (HD)		15.25 / 10
4	Jo-Hannah Logan, Lenore (HL)		17.68 / 9
1	Kesler Brown, Virden (HD)	12.55 / 10	
3	Slone Brown, Virden (HD)		17.68 / 9
JH TEAM ROPING			
1	Kesler Brown, Virden (HD)	24.29 / 10	
2	Slone Brown, Virden (HL)	24.29 / 10	

## NEW CROP OF RODEO STARS SHINE AT SEASON OPENER

By AnneDavison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The 2025-26 season of Manitoba High School Rodeo (MHSRA) got off to a strong start in Virden on rodeo weekend. Last June graduates left the circle and this August a new crop of grades 5-8 juniors joined the ranks. Small kids sticking like glue on well-trained powerful mounts – youth who are just learning but looking like pros.

The high school rodeo ran in the Tundra arena early day on Thursday and Friday with 18 events for high school and junior high competitors.

Rough stock competitors, and bull riders in particular, are a breed unto themselves, specializing early on. For MHSRA, getting down in the ring with the bulls that plunge out of the chute, bullfighters Owen and Holden Weibe, Wyatt Mickler and Cassidy Cairns distracted the bucking bulls from riders who came off.

Riding full-sized bulls in MHSRA's Thursday event, Jett Lockie (Waskada) scored 74.5 and Hayden MacCarthy (Ochre River) a 72, while Joel Fisk of Moosomin scored 71 points. Friday, again six competitors with Joel Fisk scoring 69 points and Jett Lockie scoring 77 points.

"A High score requires a great ride on a great bull," said announcer Doug Young during VIR Shootout Sunday. Joel Fisk competed against adults in Sunday Shootout night in Virden Indoor Rodeo where just two cowboys out of six stayed on for the 8 seconds. With a ride of 81 points Fisk on 'Black List' was bested by Davis Young with a score of 84.5 on a 10-year-old veteran bucking bull, 'Mogley'. (It was the old bull's final competition before he's turned out with the cows to reproduce his greatness.)

In youth rodeo's JH bull riding with two competitors, Lennon Ameel (Oxbow) stayed on in both Thursday and Friday rounds.

In the timed events, juniors and high school competitors had some very fast finishes.

Top times in Friday's HS barrel racing came from local gals, Hudson Bond (13.513 seconds), Maddie Warkentin (13.808) and Amelia Crawford (18.895), and on Thursday Sadie Brown finished well (13.804) and from Deloraine Kelsey McGee raced to a winning 13.079 finish. For comparison, VIR Shootout Sunday in ladies barrels April Williams ran a 13.08 winning time.

In Thursday's MHSRA, HS team ropers Slade Hagan (header) and Carter Brown (heels) of Virden made their catch in 6.34 seconds.

In the VIR Sunday Shootout, the older generation - Thomas Hagan and Shane Brown – made the catch with a time of 7.09. (Sunday evening's huge crowd roared - of 10 entries, only two teams caught their calves and winners were hometown cowboys.)

Other great times in the HS team roping were captured by Boden Bond (Kenton) and Chase Spencer (Carnduff, Sask.) with 7.58 seconds; and Denver and Spencer Gompf caught in 11.87.

Thursday's Junior Boys breakaway roping saw Brock Brown catch in 4.82 seconds, Rory Hagan in 6.16. Friday - Garrett Gompf caught in 3.33, Brock Brown in 4.66 and Kesler Brown in 7.4 seconds. Great scores for local kids.

The best HS breakaway score Thursday was Ada Chartier (Birtle) in 3.51 seconds, and on Friday in first was Kelsey McGee (Deloraine) with 3.18 and local roper Hudson Bond in sixth with 4.910.

Following every MHSRA event, junior and high school scores can be found online at: mhsra.ca; rodeo info; draw & results.



PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

No catch today! Virden's Rally King has determination written all over him in JH Boys Breakaway Roping.



Emily Warkentin (Virden) with a huge smile, thanks her buckskin for a great ride, rounding barrels in 14.619 seconds.

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# SPORTS NOTES: OIL CAPS NEED BILLETs, OILDOME WINS WESTERNS, GOLD RUSH READY FOR TOURNEY

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The next Virden Oil Capitals hockey season is fast approaching.

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League team holds its Comfort Inn & Suites Fall Camp on Aug. 28-31. It is expecting 50-60 players, including returning talent.

"Camp is always exciting for a number of different reasons," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "It's nice to see our returning players back in town, we get to bring the players we have signed and get them settled in their billet homes and we get to check on the development of our younger prospects. Getting back in the rink and on the ice is something we all are looking forward to especially after a season where we didn't make the playoffs. We are building something special here and looking to challenge for a championship."

The Oil Caps will play the first of their six exhibition contests on Sept. 2 in Neepawa. Their first home exhibition tilt is a rematch with the Titans on Sept. 6.

The Virden junior team is looking for billet homes for the upcoming season. It needs spots on a permanent and temporary basis. In an email to newsletter subscribers, the Oil Caps listed 10 fun and heartwarming reasons to become a billet family. These included gaining a bonus family member, having a role model for younger children, and creating lifelong memories. Anyone interested can contact the team's office at (204) 748-4848.

"Our billet families are a huge part of our hockey club," Ramsey said. "We are so fortunate to have as many families as we do in a small community, and they all take our guys in and treat them so well. It makes the transition to Virden so much easier, especially for our younger players. We are extremely grateful to all of our billet families past and present."

## Oildome Wins Western Canadians

The Oildome 13U AAA team won the Western Canadian AA Championship in St. Albert, Alta. The event ran Aug. 15-17. The winning team included Virden Minor Ball's Tyler Warkentin and Wyatt Cochrane and Reston Minor Ball's Jake Sterling and Asher Gray.

The team was 4-0 after round robin play. In the championship contest against the Richmond (B.C.) Chuckers, Oildome rallied from a four-run deficit at the start of the seventh inning to win. Look for more on the team in an upcoming issue of the Empire-Advance.

## Gold Rush Ready For Tournament

After a successful regular season, the Virden Gold Rush are



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Virden Gold Rush are set for the league tournament following a regular season that included a double header under the lights in Moosomin on Aug. 7.

excited for the Westman Ladies Fastball League's year-end tournament. The event will be held in Carberry on Aug. 23.

"It looks like the weather is going to be perfect, and this is our only tournament of the year, so it's always a highlight for the team," the Gold Rush's Adelle Gervin said.

The Gold Rush are the defending champs. Gervin noted that "While we do have a really good team this year, there are a lot of really good teams in the league." She emphasized that incoming young talent has made the 10-team league even more competitive.

Look for more on the Gold Rush in an upcoming issue.

## Canada Summer Games

The area was well represented at the first week of the Canada Summer Games in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. Virden's Kendall Charles helped the Team Manitoba women's softball team to a fifth-place finish. The province's baseball team placed sixth. Reston was represented on the team by player Jamie Williamson and assistant coach John Patmore. Alexander's Sarah-Jane Speers was an assistant coach on the women's sevens rugby team that finished ninth. Robinson Diaz Rengifo of Alexander was an alternate for the men's soccer team. He did not attend the Summer Games,

but will be competing with his club in the upcoming U15 national championships.

The Empire-Advance will have more coverage in the future.

## Coach Speers Develops

Speers was part of the Women in Coaching Canada Games Apprenticeship Program. Each province and territory can send two female coaches to the Summer Games in apprenticeship roles. They receive training in the National Coaching Certification Program and valuable experience. With Speers helping coach, the Team Manitoba women's rugby team won its last two games to earn its placing.

"SJ has a very positive attitude and wants to better her coaching skills," Team Manitoba head coach Kathleen Muirhead said. "She believes in using her positive style to help a player rise to any challenge or to calm them down when they feel overwhelmed."

## Robson Earns Scholarship

Former Virden Oil Capitals forward Luke Robson has been named one of three recipients of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League Scholarship Fund. Robson is headed to Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo, B.C.

# LEWIS STEPS UP TO U SPORTS LEVEL

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virden's Braeden Lewis will likely never forget his first goal for the Brock University Badgers.

The son of Dale and Tracy Lewis lit the lamp on Nov. 16, 2024, against McGill University. The Badgers compete at the U Sports level, the highest in Canadian university athletics.

"It was a very special moment," Lewis said. "It was a broken play in the neutral zone that turned into a two-on-one. I didn't have to do too much as my linemate gave me a back door tap in. All I had to worry about was not missing the open net. It was definitely a spotlight moment for me from my first season of university level hockey."

In addition to that goal, the 6-foot, 180-pound forward collected five assists in 23 regular season contests. Lewis certainly impressed in his first season.

"Braeden is a diligent, hardworking person who operates with humility," Brock head men's hockey coach Timothy Manastersky said. "On the ice, he brings great effort, habits, and determination alongside good skating, playmaking, and a nose for the net."

"In his first season, it is apparent that he has leadership qualities and will be an important person on our team for years to come."

Lewis moved onto the post-secondary ranks after four junior seasons. In all four of those campaigns, he spent time with the Swift Current (Sask.) Broncos of the Western Hockey League. In his first and last junior seasons, Lewis played for his hometown Virden Oil Capitals of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League. Moving to the U Sports level required him

to make some adjustments.

"The strength and physicality was a jump from what I was used to in junior," Lewis said. "It was something that took some getting used to. Learning to manage school and hockey was also a big adjustment. Time management and discipline between the two took some time to get used to."

He said he felt more comfortable on the ice as the season went on. Lewis recorded three of his six points after Jan. 25.

"The first few weeks were a bit of a learning curve, but as I got used to the strength and pace I began to settle in as time went on," he said. "The support and teaching from my coaches and teammates made it a lot easier to settle in and play my game."

Lewis, who is studying business administration, liked various aspects of hockey and life at his St. Catharines, Ont. school.

"I really enjoyed the overall atmosphere of the school and having the opportunity to be part of a tightly knit community," he said. "The staff and my teammates at Brock made the transition back into a student-athlete lifestyle seem very seamless."



PHOTO BY MACKENZIE GERRY

Braeden Lewis looks to make a play.

Lewis' family played roles in helping him get to the U Sports level. They supported him in his first season.

"My family has been everything in my hockey journey," Lewis said. "From early morning practices to long road trips, they've always been there. Their support, whether it was my mom and sister (Jordyn) cheering from the stands, my dad and brother (Tanner) coaching me, or all of them encouraging me along the way, they've all helped develop me into the player and person I am today."

# Letter to the Editor

**RE: The Town of Virden ‘s Second Hydrogeological study**

The following letter was sent to Agnes Wittman – Director, EAB (Environmental Approvals Branch) by Mike Reid and John Hipwell on the 24 March 2025. We believe that this letter is partially, or even wholly responsible, for causing the MWSB (Manitoba Water Services Board) with some participation from the Town of Virden in initiating a new Hydrogeological study of the “new” Town well site. I believe everyone is aware that the aquifer these wells are drawing from is being depleted faster that it is recharging.

**Environmental Approvals Branch MB Conservation and Climate**

**Attention: Agnes Wittman – Director, EAB**

**R.E: Request for Regulatory Amendment to Impose Withdrawal Limits on Town of Virden’s Water System Due to Aquifer Depletion: Environmental Act License No. 3348**

Dear Agnes,  
We are submitting this formal request for an urgent amendment to Environmental Act License No. 3348 and the Town of Virden’s Water Rights License to introduce withdrawal limits and reduction conditions if groundwater monitoring data proves aquifer depletion and private well interference.

The Class 2 Development Application included groundwater drawdown modeling but did not propose any restrictions on withdrawals based on real-time monitoring. The Environmental Act License No. 3348 (Clauses 32-33) requires a groundwater monitoring program, but it does not specify corrective actions if depletion occurs. No conditions were put in place to require reductions in Town water withdrawals even if evidence of declining aquifer levels emerged. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) review did not include recommendations for contingency plans or restrictions on Town pumping. No agency expressed concerns about long-term aquifer sustainability, and no safeguards were imposed to protect private well users from excessive drawdown.

Private well owners are now facing the consequences of this regulatory gap. Landowners have already experienced significantly declining well yields, forcing them to incur costs for deepening or replacing wells. Despite the requirement for monitoring, it is our understanding that the Town of Virden is not obligated to adjust its withdrawals if depletion is detected.

This places the entire burden on landowners to report impacts and seek enforcement rather than on the Town to proactively mitigate harm.

We herewith formally request that Manitoba Conservation and Climate amend Environmental Act License No. 3348 to include defined withdrawal limits if groundwater monitoring data shows a sustained decline in aquifer levels exceeding a safe threshold determined by an independent subject matter expert or a documented increase in private well failures or draw-down complaints. A contingency plan should be required under the Water Rights License for reducing water withdrawals if depletion occurs, including a tiered reduction strategy where pumping rates are adjusted based on aquifer conditions, a defined trigger point at which the Town’s withdrawals must be reduced to preserve long-term aquifer sustainability, and a clear enforcement mechanism to ensure compliance.

Additionally, the Town of Virden must be required to publicly release groundwater monitoring reports on a quarterly basis, with private well users notified immediately if monitoring results indicate a depletion trend. If landowner wells are impacted, the Town should provide mitigation, including assistance with well modifications or deepening, alternative water supply solutions, or compensation for well failures directly linked to the Town withdrawals.

Clause C of Environmental Act License No. 3348 allows for modifications if new evidence of harm emerges, and private well users have senior water rights that must be protected from the Town over-extraction. The current lack of regulatory safeguards leaves landowners vulnerable, forcing them to bear the cost of aquifer depletion caused by the Town’s pumping. Given the serious financial and operational consequences of well depletion on landowners, we urge your office to immediately review and amend the Town of Virden’s water use approvals to prevent further harm.

We are available to provide supporting documentation, well reports, and impact statements upon request.

Please confirm receipt of this request and outline the next steps in the regulatory amendment process.

Sincerely, John Hipwell & Mike Reid

*Editors note: Part of this letter last week was omitted so it’s reprinted here. My apology. Ken*

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# Councillors consider bridge, road work

By Dale Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

## RM of Wallace-Woodworth Council Meeting Highlights Transportation Superintendent Presents on Equipment RFPs

On Aug. 12 Nicolas Zuck, the transportation superintendent attended the council meeting to discuss recent requests for proposals (RFPs) regarding the specifications and tendering process for new machinery, particularly graders. A technical feature called "X-Slope," primarily a control system for grader blade operation, was explained. This system helps grader operators manage cross slopes with less manual adjustment to improve precision and efficiency.

Council emphasized the need for all-wheel drive, especially for jobs like snow removal. Caterpillar graders have superior traction with more weight and all wheel drive. After discussion, a resolution was moved to accept the proposal from Toromont Cat for two 2025 Caterpillar 150 all-wheel-drive graders. The deal includes a seven-year, 7,000-hour premier warranty and totals \$1,486,372, taxes

included. The motion was carried.

### Cemetery road bridge

Council raised concerns that the RFP for replacement of the Cemetery Road bridge appeared to cover only the bridge replacement without associated dirt work or adjustments to elevation. The existing bridge's height has an impact on flood risks and ensuring that water flows over the road rather than the bridge is essential. Council members noted the critical importance of completing the hydrology study before finalizing and issuing the RFP for the bridge project to ensure accurate engineering and precise cost estimates. Council agreed to table the matter until more information could be gathered.

Council approved an application to provide an approach to access a rural property. Costs for the approach is the responsibility of the applicant.

Council authorized a service agreement with InfoMetrics for cyber and network security monitoring of the municipal IT network. The contract will cost \$1,500 per month over 12 months.

Council discussed a 5-acre parcel to be used for potential residential development. The

parcel is currently only accessible by a trail and council will communicate clearly to any future owner that there would be no obligation for the RM to maintain or upgrade this trail.

### Trans Canada West Planning District

A public hearing was convened to deal with several planning applications. A variation order was requested by Mark Humphries to reduce his dwelling parcel size requirement from 80 acres to 22 acres, the property line setback for buildings housing livestock from 200 feet to 20 feet and the residual land size from 80 acres to 73.14 acres to allow subdivision of the land and its attachment to another property.

An application was considered for a conditional use order from Stephen Brannigan and landowner Evan Chrisp to place a mobile home in a Residential Service zone. Council agreed that any mobile home must be a sealed factory-built unit or possess necessary approvals for fire and electrical safety.

Council received a conditional use order application from Geo Vera Inc. and the landowner, Kola Mennonite Church. The application proposed subdividing a portion of land and attaching it to an existing church property within a Rural General (RG) zone.

A development agreement was proposed between the municipality and Robert Chapman concerning con-

struction of a road extension along a municipal road allowance adjacent to the property in order to provide access to a yard site.

The public hearing was closed, and after discussion these four applications were approved.

### Councillor reports

Councillor McDonald reported on recent fire department activity, noting only one call in the past month. Many scheduled training sessions had been canceled due to widespread northern fires, but members conducted their own regular training. The department had acquired a new small firefighting skid unit, which had been used effectively in northern regions.

Councillor Stambuski toured the new vet clinic building and reported that walls have been removed to create more open space, with a smooth transition between the old and new sections. The upstairs area features a boardroom, a lounge and a bedroom and bathroom for any vets who might need to stay overnight.

An alarm system installation by Protelec Alarms was approved, costing \$4,500 upfront with a monthly fee of \$36.

The grand opening is scheduled for Sept. 24, from 1 to 4 p.m. Currently, the facility hosts seven vets with the possibility of an eighth starting mid-September.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### NOTICE



### PUBLIC NOTICE BOARD OF REVISION

Public Notice is hereby given that the assessment roll for the R.M. of Sifton for the year 2026 will be available mid-August at the R.M. of Sifton and will be open for public inspection during regular business hours. The Board of Revision will sit to hear applications for revision of assessment on **Thursday, October 09, 2025**, commencing at 10:00 a.m. at the **Oak Lake Community Hall (474 Cameron St, Oak Lake, MB)**.

Applications for revision may be made in accordance with Sections 42 and 43 of the Municipal Assessment Act which in part, are as follows:

#### APPLICATION FOR REVISION

**42 (1)** A person in whose name property has been assessed, a mortgagee in possession of property under subsection 114 (1) of the Real Property Act, an occupier of premises who is required under the terms of a lease to pay the taxes on the property, the authorized agent of the person, mortgagee or occupier, or the Assessor may make application for the revision of an assessment roll with respect to the following matters:

- Liability to taxation;
- Amount of an assessed value;
- Classification of property; or
- Refusal by an Assessor to amend the assessment roll under subsection 13 (2).

#### APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

**43 (1)** An application for revision must:

- Be made in writing;
- Set out the roll number and legal description of the assessable property for which a revision is sought;
- Set out which of the matters referred to in subsection 42 (1) are at issue, and the grounds for each of those matters; and
- Be filed by:
  - Delivering it or causing it to be delivered to the office indicated in the public notice given under subsection 41 (2); or
  - Serving it upon the secretary, at least 15 days before the scheduled sitting date of the Board as indicated in the public notice.

The board shall not consider applications which do not comply with the above.

**The deadline for filing completed applications is 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, September 23, 2025.**

Dated the 19th day of August 2025.

R.M. of Sifton Board of Revision  
Box 100, Oak Lake, MB R0M 1P0 | 204-855-2423 | admin@rmofsifton.com

## Town of Virden council meeting brief

continued from page 5...

### Other business

Council approved up to \$170,000 for low-pressure sewer line installation on Chester Street, to be completed by Castle Construction Limited. Any amount over the approved limit will require a special meeting.

Coun. Lynette Grumpelt attended a vet board meeting that included a tour of the nearly completed clinic expansion. She said, "It's fabulous and I'm very much looking forward to that work being completed. I do believe it was to be fully completed last week." The upgraded facility is already attracting interest from veterinarians and graduating students. A grand opening date will be announced once finalized.

Mayor Tina Williams and CAO Rhonda Stewart met with Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI) to discuss the fluctuating speed limits on Highway 257, where drivers find multiple speed changes within a short distance, including a school zone. Semi-truck parking along the service road and intersection safety at Highway 83 and Highway 1 were also identified as concerns. Stewart said that past requests to reduce speed limits had not been addressed, despite studies that recommended changes.

The airport project has seen significant grading work completed, with lighting installation underway. Sixth Avenue construction is nearly finished, although wet conditions will delay paving of the tennis courts and the intersection at Fifth and Lyons until after the Rodeo.

Work has also begun on Ninth Avenue, but there are concerns about premature cracking on the newly completed sections of Sixth Avenue near Government Road, possibly due to heavy truck use.

At the conclusion of the meeting CAO Rhonda Stewart confirmed that she plans to retire. (see the press release in last week's Empire-Advance). Stewart said, "I shared that news with... office staff and managers this morning."

**Town Office: 204-748-2440**

**Tundra Oil & Gas Place: 204-748-2736**

**Waste Disposal Grounds: 204-748-6033**

**VIRDEN**



CENTRE OF IT ALL

**Animal Control: 204-851-5881**

**Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440**

**Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540**

## Free Special Waste Recycling Event

**Virden Farmer's Market**  
505 Sixth Ave.  
August 23, 2025  
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

#### Accepted Products



**Paint**  
(Household paint and all paint aerosols)



**Household Hazardous Waste**  
Flammables, Gasoline, Toxics, Pesticides, corrosives, and single use fuel cylinders



**Lights**  
(Fluorescent tubes and CFLs)

Find a recycling location near you at [productcare.org](http://productcare.org)



For more information about our recycling services, please contact Product Care by email at [manitoba@productcare.org](mailto:manitoba@productcare.org) or call 1-877-592-2972, extension 366

## Upcoming Council Dates September 2025

**Thursday, Sept 4 and Tuesday, Sept 16**

Council meetings start at 7:00 PM

## Labour Day Long Weekend Closures

Virden Landfill ..... August 30  
Virden Town Office ..... September 1  
Tundra Oil and Gas Place ..... September 1

## Employment Opportunities

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Economic Development Manager

## Summer Office Hours

The Town of Virden Office will close at 4:00 PM on Fridays until August 29.

info@virden.ca

www.virden.ca



Town of Virden



@virdentown



@virdentown

CLASSIFIEDS

Obituary

IN LOVING MEMORY  
LESLEY MARGARET NOREK (NEE BERTHIAUME)  
MAY 8, 1942 – AUGUST 8, 2025



With heavy hearts, the family of Lesley announces her passing on August 8, 2025, at the age of 83, at Brandon Regional Health Centre.

Lesley was born in Winnipeg to Gaetan (Bert) and Margaret (Rita) Berthiaume, the eldest of three children. As a family, they cherished simple joys—Sunday picnics at the beach, the excitement of their first family car when Lesley was 13, and weekly Sunday school.

In her youth and teen years, Lesley was an active and adventurous spirit. She was a member of the Explorers and CGIT, the Winnipeg Canoe Club, the Badminton Club, and, for a time, the Winnipeg Ski Club. She graduated from Daniel McIntyre Collegiate in 1960.

Lesley's working life began in her teens as a glove model at Eaton's. After high school, she joined The Greater Winnipeg Gas Company as a switchboard operator, later advancing to Executive Secretary. She eventually moved into the Construction and Maintenance Department at GWGC, continuing in her secretarial role. It was there that she met Howard. The two married on November 10, 1966. At the time, company policy allowed only one family member to work at the gas company, so Lesley left GWGC, continuing part-time work at Eaton's while building her life with Howard.

In 1972, on the day she turned thirty, Lesley traded skyscrapers for silos, leaving behind city lights for the quiet rhythm of farm life. Farm life had its challenges. In 1975, they managed to overcome a housefire, the well running dry, and losing an entire herd of cattle to brucellosis. With the help of Howard's parents, family, and the community, they were able to rebuild and continue their life on the farm until they moved to Brandon, Manitoba in 2016.

Lesley had a huge heart. She loved meeting new people and involved herself in the community. She drove the school bus, she was active in Lenore W.I., Kentones Barbershop of Kenton, Royal Purple of Virden, and she sang in St. Paul's United Church choir. She was also a part of The Wool Gatherers which started as a few ladies getting together to spin wool, weave, and knit. This led into competing in international Sheep to Shawl competitions.

Her priority in life was her family. She loved gardening, cooking, entertaining, dancing, camping in her little house on wheels, and surprise visits. Almost every morning after breakfast, she would call someone just to check in to see how they were doing. She was nourished by the connections she made with family and friends.

She is survived by her loving husband Howard, her three daughters, Jennifer (Ben), Jaclyn (Pheobe the cat), and Julie (John-Henry), grandchildren Duncan, Stephen (Tammy), Jeffrey, Sidney, and Jackson, great-grandchildren, Malakai and Maxwell. Also, left to mourn are Lesley's brothers Bill (Vera) and Ken (Heather), brother-in-law Ralph (Shirley), sister-in-law Maggie, nieces, nephews, and extended family.

A Come and go Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, September 13., 2025 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at Monterey Estates Hall, 40 Mockingbird Drive, Brandon, MB.

Cremation has taken place. A private family interment will be held at a later date.

Donations may be made to a charity of your choice  
Arrangements are in care of Brockie Donovan Funeral & Cremation Services, (204)-727-0694.

In Memory

In Memory of  
Jaden Wollny

Words cannot describe the sadness this brings , or how dearly  
you have been missed these past 5 years  
Knowing you are no longer here is very painful indeed  
An emptiness that exists which only you once filled  
You were such a wonderful son, you gave me such joy  
You would make any mother proud  
I couldn't ask for more  
Why is life so cruel ? Why did you have to go ?  
How I wish I could bring you back  
My heart aches for you so much  
I miss our times together, your smile,  
Your zest for life , your laugh  
Life has never been the same without you  
I cherish the memories of you  
Nothing can take that away from me  
I hold you closely to my heart  
Each day  
And always will.  
Love, mom



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Public Notice



PUBLIC NOTICE  
BOARD OF REVISION

Notice is hereby given that the assessment roll for the R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth for the year 2026 is available at the R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth. It will be open for public inspection during regular business hours. The Board of Revision will sit to hear applications for revision of assessment on **Thursday, October 16, 2025**, commencing at **10:00 a.m.** at the **R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth Council Chambers**, 154023 P.R. 257, Virden, Manitoba (corner of 83 Hwy & PR257).

Applications for revision may be made in accordance with Sections 42 and 43 of the Municipal Assessment Act which in part, are as follows:

APPLICATION FOR REVISION

**42 (1)** A person in whose name property has been assessed, a mortgagee in possession of property under subsection 114 (1) of the Real Property Act, an occupier of premises who is required under the terms of a lease to pay the taxes on the property, the authorized agent of the person, mortgagee or occupier, or the Assessor may make application for the revision of an assessment roll with respect to the following matters:

- Liability to taxation;
- Amount of an assessed value;
- Classification of property; or
- Refusal by an Assessor to amend the assessment roll under subsection 13 (2).

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

**43 (1)** An application for revision must

- Be made in writing;
- Set out the roll number and legal description of the assessable property for which a revision is sought;
- Set out which of the matters referred to in subsection 42 (1) are at issue, and the grounds for each of those matters; and
- Be filed by:
  - Delivering it or causing it to be delivered to the office indicated in the public notice given under subsection 41 (2) or
  - Serving it upon the secretary, at least 15 days before the scheduled sitting date of the Board as indicated in the public notice.

The board shall not consider applications which do not comply with the above.

**The deadline for filing applications is 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, October 1, 2025.**

Dated the 18th day of August, 2025.

R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth  
Board of Revision  
Box 2200, Virden, MB R0M 2C0

www.wallace-woodworth.com | 204-748-1239 | info@wallace-woodworth.com

Help Wanted

It Starts Here.

MNP

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

MNP is looking for an enthusiastic individual to join our team in our Virden office as a full-time Administrative Assistant.

Responsibilities include:

- Perform variety of administrative/clerical tasks
- Coordinate & schedule meetings, appointments, travel, reservations, and events
- Review, modify and prepare general templates, letters, reports, PowerPoint presentations, Word documents, Excel workbooks and other correspondence materials; research, compile and summarize information/data, as applicable

The ideal candidate:

- Post-secondary education in administration is considered an asset
- Administrative experience in a professional working environment is considered an asset
- Excellent organizational and time management skills, with the ability to manage multiple tasks simultaneously

We thank all candidates for applying. Only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

To apply, please visit our website at [www.mnp.ca](http://www.mnp.ca)



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Wanted

Private collector looking to buy firearms.

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Call or text Rob at 204-297-9223

Thank-you

Thank-you

A big Thank You to the Dr.'s, especially Dr. Farag, and the healthcare providers for the excellent care I received while I was in the Virden Hospital June 12-23. Also, special thank you to the many friends and acquaintances who brought food and treats to the house and sent get well wishes while I was both in the hospital and convalescing at home!

I am confident all your positive thoughts and actions have helped me in my getting back to some degree of normal activity!

Thank you all so much!  
K.Kristjanson



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Help Wanted



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PUBLIC WORKS STAFF POSITION

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking applications for full-time **Public Works Staff** to support the maintenance and upkeep of municipal roads, infrastructure, and equipment.

Description and Qualifications:

- Grade or plow all roads within the designated area in a safe and timely manner
- Operate graders in evenings, early mornings, and occasional weekends as per weather, road conditions, and on short notice when required.
- Operate and maintain the graders including regular servicing and logging of records.
- Complete repairs of culverts, bridges and work with drainage projects as required.
- Complete maintenance jobs such as fencing, signage, stone picking, staking, and brush clearing as required.
- Operator must keep work area clean and safe
- Able to work from any R.M. shop location as needed (Elkhorn, Hargrave or Kenton)
- Must have a valid Class 5 Driver's License – Class 3A License preferred; and Class 1A License an asset
- Must have an experience in the operation of a grader or heavy equipment
- Mechanical aptitude with experience in equipment maintenance
- Be able to receive direction and follow instructions; strong communication skills
- Positive and professional attitude to keep building a strong team.
- Respect, support for others and the goals that are set out from management.
- Perform other duties as required

UTILITY OPERATOR

Job Description

The Rural Municipality of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a motivated individual for the permanent full-time position of **Utility Operator** at the Virden Municipal Office.

The Utility Operator reports to the Utility Manager and will be responsible for providing support for the water treatment; distribution operations; and wastewater systems within the Municipality, until they are certified to manage the systems on their own. This is a unionized position.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Support Distribution Operators and Water Treatment Plant Managers
- Perform general maintenance tasks on a regular basis
- Do daily checks on the booster stations (distribution systems) and Water Treatment Plants (WTP), when trained to do so
- Read and record data from the booster stations, WTP and supply wells
- Complete reports on Word, Excel and other computer software
- Operate flush outs on distribution system
- Assist during water breaks and line locates, as needed
- All other duties as assigned

Skills and Qualifications

- High school graduate at minimum
- A Class I or II Certification in one or all the Water and Wastewater Facility Operators Certification Program from the Province of Manitoba is an asset OR be willing to complete the courses and certification necessary to work on the water & wastewater system through the Manitoba Environment and Climate Change Certification Program
- Holds a valid Class 5.0 Driver's License
- Able to work shifts and on call weekends
- Proficient with computer applications – Microsoft Office products including Excel, Word, Outlook, etc.
- Computer experience in GPS equipment, ArcMap software, GIS data collection, and Google earth is an asset
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Attention to detail, thoroughness, and organizational skills are required
- Any mechanical trades experience or mechanical work experience would be considered an asset
- Physically capable of walking through rough terrain

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RECREATION MANAGER

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a dynamic and community-oriented professional to join our team as the **Community Economic Development & Recreation Manager**. This full-time management position plays a key role in implementing the R.M.'s 2025–2030 Strategic Plan by fostering economic growth, supporting business development, leading communications strategies, and enhancing recreational services. The successful candidate will oversee the development of a Recreation Plan, expand municipal programming, support local organizations and community committees, and improve engagement through strategic marketing and communication efforts.

Key Responsibilities

- Develop and implement an Economic Development Strategy aligned with the Strategic Plan
- Support Council-appointed Community Development Steering Committees
- Promote business investment readiness and support local business retention
- Lead the development of a municipal Recreation Plan and expand community programming
- Assist in tourism initiatives, land-use planning, and infrastructure readiness
- Research, apply for, and manage grants to support municipal initiatives
- Provide regular updates and strategic recommendations to Council

Qualifications

- Post-secondary education in Economic Development, Business, Recreation Management or related field
- Familiarity with rural economic development and recreation planning
- Experience in a similar role with grant writing, project coordination, and stakeholder engagement
- Completion of (or commitment to complete) the EDAM Community Edge program
- Valid driver's license and willingness to travel regionally

LANDFILL SITE ATTENDANT ~ HARGRAVE & KOLA

Job Description

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a motivated individual for the position of **Landfill Site Attendant** for the Hargrave and Kola Nuisance Grounds location. The Landfill Site Attendant assists the Public Works 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. Certificate in Landfill Operations is an asset (applicant must be willing to take the necessary certification courses). This is a unionized position.

Description and Qualifications

- Full-time position
- Must be willing to work Saturdays, and one evening per week during the summer months.
- Direct all users to appropriate disposal or storage locations for all items being disposed.
- Ensure source separation of garbage and recyclables.
- Accept tires, general scrap iron, and spray containers; store at proper locations and keep area tidy.
- Assist in transferring or disposing of waste, as required.
- Maintain daily records of waste entering the disposal site.
- Keep all buildings and areas of the landfill site clean and well maintained.
- Ensure that fires are not set and all controlled burns are supervised and recorded.
- Report all concerns to the Transportation Superintendent and Chief Administrative Officer.
- Other duties, as required.
- Must be punctual, motivated, self-starter, and able to work without supervision.
- Good interpersonal skills to deal politely and effectively with the general public.
- Ability to meet physical demands of the position and have an excellent safety record.
- Class 5 Driver's License required.

Interested candidates should submit a resume with 3 references by:  
E-mail: [info@wallace-woodworth.com](mailto:info@wallace-woodworth.com)  
Mail/Drop-off: R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth Municipal Office  
154023 PR 257 Box 2200 (Corner of 83 Hwy & PR 257) Virden, MB R0M 2C0

Any questions regarding this employment opportunity, please call at (204) 748-1239.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.  
We appreciate your interest in this position.  
However, only those applicants chosen for an interview will be contacted.

# Disco Skate



SUBMITTED PHOTO  
Jill and daughter Mia Radwanski enjoy Disco Skate on Friday evening, Aug. 8 in TOGP arena.

# Council backs Virden airport upgrades

By Dale Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Flying Club will replace two aviation fuel dispensers. Using existing filters and hose reels the system will be upgraded to include a new Petrovend PV300 card processing system and necessary piping. Council approved the \$168,542.82 contract to Yvon's Pump Service Limited. Coun. Travis Penner noted that funding for this project was included in the existing budget, and no new funds would be required. Coun. Bruce Dunning added that the flying club has made a \$50,000 contribution.

CAO Rhonda Stewart reported that a freezing rain sensor for the AWOS (Automated Weather Observation System) at the airport has increased by nearly \$20,000. The supplier, Approach Navigation Systems imports the equipment from a U.S. firm that primarily sells to military clients and there are no alternative sources.

The supplier has looked for other ways to reduce expenses. For example, the inspection of the existing AWOS components typically costs \$4,000 to \$5,000 but it was completed at no extra cost when the thunderstorm sensor installation took place. The AWOS system budget rose from an initial estimate of approximately \$48,000 to \$66,396.

As of the latest update, \$2.3 million was budgeted for the overall airport project, with \$1.944 million already spent or committed. This leaves remaining funds available for upcoming costs such as fencing and roadworks.

After discussion council approved the additional work based on the remaining budget and the airport commission's recommendation.

Stewart also attended a meeting in Souris with provincial Municipal Relations staff to discuss the needs and challenges of small rural airports. She said, "They're trying to find out more about what municipalities need, how small rural airports are operated, how they're governed and how they're funded."

# Corrections:

## RE: Sports Notes: Wright Helps Outlaws Win Championship

In our Sports Notes article (page 14, August 15), the headline misidentified the subject of the first part of the article. It should have read: "Sports Notes: Wright Helps Outlaws Win Championship. We apologize for the error.

## RE: Kristjanson heads up Virden's museum

We wish to correct two errors in names in the August 8, pg.7, Where history lives: Kristjanson heads up Virden's museum

Rick Kristjanson's name is spelled incorrectly in one place within the body of the story: Kristjansen said, "We try to promote..." The correct spelling of Rick Kristjanson's name is Kristjanson.

Also within that story: Characters like Helen Bolton-Elliott, a former chairperson... should read: Helen Boulton-Elliott, a former chairperson... Boulton with a 'u' is the correct spelling.

ElectionsXManitoba

# SPRUCE WOODS BYELECTION

## Advance Voting Begins August 16

## Election Day is August 26



You can vote at any advance poll.

Hours of voting: 8:00 am to 8:00 pm daily, Sundays noon to 6:00 pm

### Advance voting at the Local Election Office:

August 16 to 25: Corral Centre, 811 18th St N, Brandon

### Other advance locations and dates:

- August 16 to 23: Glenboro Raystone Memorial Center, 214 Broadway St, Glenboro
- August 19 to 20: Souris Glenwood Memorial Complex, 32 Third Ave W, Souris
- August 19: Holland Community Centre, 136 Broadway St, Holland
- August 19: Kemnay Recreational Centre, 6 Irving Pl, Kemnay
- August 19: Royal Canadian Legion - Oak Lake, 291 Assiniboine St, Oak Lake
- August 19: Royal Canadian Legion - Rivers, 633 2nd Ave, Rivers
- August 19: Sprucewoods Community Club, 5 Woods Ave, Shilo
- August 19: Wawanesa Community Hall, 202 4th St, Wawanesa



### Bring your ID to vote:

- Either one piece of government-issued photo ID with your address or two other pieces of ID.
- If you download your Voter Information Card from electionsmb.ca, you can print it or save it to your phone. Your voter information card will count as one piece of ID.
- Not registered? If you're an eligible voter living in Spruce Woods, you can register to vote at your polling place.



### Work for Us:

- Apply to work for Elections Manitoba at a polling place in your community.

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REID, Stephen	Manitoba Liberal Party	Strong, Shandi
ROBBINS, Colleen	PC Manitoba	Barker, D'Arcy

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[electionsmb.ca](https://electionsmb.ca)

# LOCALS BRING HOME WESTERN SOFTBALL GOLD

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The summer ended up golden for five local softball players.

Virden's Hadley Robertson and Georgia Koop, Zaree Routledge of the Rural Municipality of Wallace-Woodworth, and Oak Lake's McKenzie Masson and Rose Cochrane helped the Westman Magic win the U15 AAA Western Canadian Championships. At the Aug. 1-4 event in Calgary, the regional team dropped only one game on its way to the finals. The Magic were ahead when an intense storm hit and they were named the champions.

"Winning the Western Canadian Championships was more than just claiming a title. It was the result of hard work, determination, and a bond that grew stronger with every inning we played," Koop said. "From the beginning, we leaned on each other, pushed each other, and believed in one another. Our incredible coaches Jill Twordik, Brad Twordik, and Brooklyn Franklin guided us not just as players, but as people. They believed in us when we doubted ourselves and held us accountable when we needed it.

"Facing teams from British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, we competed against some of the best talent in Western Canada. Every pitch, every swing, every play mattered. The level of competition pushed us and showed us what we were capable of when we played as a team.

"This championship weekend was a memory that will live with us forever. A weekend full of grit, joy, pride and unforgettable moments. It was an experience that shaped us, connected us, and gave us something we'll carry into the future. Not just as champions, but as a team of lifelong friends who shared something truly special."

After a strong regular season, the Magic placed fourth at

the provincial tournament. With the top three teams from that event heading to nationals, the Westman squad received a spot in the Western Canadian Championships. The Magic's lone loss was to the Camrose Crossfire in the round robin portion. That gave them a 5-1 record. In the No. 1 versus the No. 2 game, Westman avenged its loss to the Crossfire, 6-4. After waiting for that team to beat the winner of the three versus four contest, the two squads met again in the finals. Weather caused delays during parts of the tournament and caused the final game to not be played completely. Westman was leading when the game was called.

"I liked the hard competition at Westerns and playing new teams that we hadn't played before," Routledge said. "To stay focused during the rain delay we all stayed together as a team and talked about the game. Westerns was such a fun tournament, and we did lots of team bonding and made many memories, I will never forget bringing home gold."

The team definitely made many memories. Masson enjoyed traveling with her team, seeing the mountains, and winning the tournament.

Routledge played right field for the Magic. Head coach Jill Twordik said she was a "consistent batter with a good on-base percentage, a hard worker, and a pleasure to coach."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The U15 AAA Westman Magic won the Western Canadian Championship.

fensively and that her "bat came alive at Westerns with some clutch hits."

Robertson is a right-handed pitcher and centerfielder. Twordik said she "had a very strong year as a pitcher" and is "known for her speed on the mound." Robertson was picked up by Central Energy for the national tournament in Winkler and Morden. The team earned the silver medals. Look for more on Robertson in an upcoming issue of the Empire-Advance.

Cochrane is one of the team's many versatile athletes. She was recently featured in the Empire-Advance for her hockey ability. Cochrane played third base and catcher for the Magic. Twordik said she "had an excellent tournament at Westerns" and throughout the season had "strong, consistent and steady play at third base."

The coach said that Koop had a "very strong season as a middle infielder." She praised her regular second baseman for having a "great glove and strong arm." The coach noted that Koop had "many clutch hits throughout the year and at provincials and Westerns".

## CURLING CLUB GETS NEW ROCKS FROM SCOTLAND

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Curling Club will definitely be rocking this coming season.

The club recently announced the delivery of a new set of curling stones. The hardly used rocks were purchased from a curling club near Glasgow, Scotland. They made a 28-day journey to Virden. The local club is pleased to have the new rocks.

"I think the opportunity to continue to try to enhance or improve the on ice experience for our members and guests is what we are most excited for," the club's Cory Barkley said. "The rocks that were purchased should provide an opportunity for more curl and more consistent curl, speed, and most importantly, livelier rocks in the house when they are hit. They are a blue Trefor granite with blue hone granite inserts, which are highly sought after stones and should provide an improved product compared to the common green granite stones we have currently."

The rocks were paid for by funds from past bonspiel earnings that "have been earmarked for required purchases for the club and this fit into that need," Barkley said. This year's extremely successful 125th Bonspiel, which drew more than 130 rinks, factored into that.



PHOTO BY VIRDEN CURLING CLUB.

The Virden Curling Club's new rocks featuring blue Trefor granite with blue hone granite inserts are shown on the left with their old common green granite stones on the right.

The new rocks replace stones that the club estimates were about 50 years old. Over the years the rocks had been sent away to have work done. This was last done in 2007 when they were sent to London, Ont. to be resurfaced and have the striking band - the contact surface on the side of the rock - redone, Barkley said.

"They were due to have this completed again, but unfortunately due to the condition of the rocks and current weight of the stones, this repair was not only costly but possibly not going to be effective long term," he said. "After that was determined, the board determined the best course of action was to consider purchasing new stones."

The Virden Curling Club received a tip that the organization in Scotland had next to new stones that they were looking to sell. The local club did its due diligence and then were able to strike a deal.

Barkley said it was "very fortunate as new stones are very hard to come by cur-

rently. Canada Curling Stone, which has exclusive rights to 'Trefor' granite off an island in Northern Wales, hasn't produced new stones since before COVID and Kays of Scotland, which has the sole rights to harvest the blue hone/common green granite off the island of Ailsa Craig, has their new rocks priced extremely high due to the supply and demand in the market."

The new rocks' blue Trefor granite is known for its durability and performance. The club's old rocks weighed about 38-39 pounds each. The new rocks are 41-42. Barkley explained that repair and maintenance in the future, such as reshaping and repairing striking bands, "can occur as there is enough stone available."

The Virden Curling Club runs various leagues through the winter. Anyone looking to become involved is invited to follow the group's Facebook page, visit [virdencurlingclub.com](http://virdencurlingclub.com) or email [virdenccl@outlook.com](mailto:virdenccl@outlook.com).

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