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Buns of Anarchy, burger week takes over

By Beth McConnell
EMPIRE ADVANCE

Across the Prairie Gateway region local restaurants once again participated in one of the most anticipated culinary events of the year: Burger Week. Hosted by Prairie Gateway Tourism, this ten day-long celebration, starting on July 18, and winding up on July 26, invites restaurants to craft a signature burger that showcases their creativity, ingredients, and community spirit. This year's lineup was the most diverse and imaginative yet, with each establishment bringing its own personality to the plate.

Here's a look at the standout creations featured throughout the week:



T's Dining & Lounge took home Most Ordered Burger.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

MJ's Coffee Bar & Bistro was this year's Favourite Burger.

T's Dining & Lounge – T's Aloha Burger

A tropical-inspired creation layered with Angus chuck, Havarti, grilled pineapple, ham, arugula, crispy onions, Parmesan garlic aioli, and ginger teriyaki sauce.

K&T's Kitchen – Bacon Jammer

A comfort-food classic elevated with homemade bacon jam, crispy onions, melted cheese, and signature burger sauce.

Traci's Place –

The Ultimate Sweet & Spicy Smash Burger

A double patty smash burger loaded with caramelized onions, mushrooms, bacon, jalapeños, cheese, sweet & spicy BBQ sauce, and chipotle mayo.

Elkhorn Motor Hotel – Western Sautéed Burger

A hearty, open-faced burger featuring sautéed mushrooms and onions, mozzarella, bacon, crispy onion rings, relish, mustard, and sweet tangy BBQ sauce.

MJ's Coffee Bar & Bistro – Prairie Pickle Chicken Burger

A chicken based entry topped with cheddar, bacon, dill pickles, crisp lettuce, and house-made Prairie Pickle Ranch, served with kettle chips.

Brierwood Creek Cafe –

Brierwood Smokehouse Burger

A towering double-patty burger with melted cheddar, whisky bacon jam, crispy onion straws, and signature Brierwood sauce on a sesame brioche bun.

Read more on Burger Week on page 2...

Inside...



HEAVY HORSE SHOW *P2*



FARMERS' ADVOCATE *P9, 10, 11*

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Now: \$75,280
plus fees and taxes

Virden Draft Horse Show continues a long-standing tradition



PHOTO BY KACEE GEE

In the Manitoba Chore Team competition, eight teamsters did an obstacle course, log skid and cultivating.



PHOTO BY KACEE GEE

Nic Gee, winning overall supreme horse on Grounds.

By Charlotte Artyshko
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Draft Horse Show returned July 25 and 26, welcoming competitors from across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta for a weekend celebrating the tradition, teamwork, and dedication behind draft horses.

Around 45 horses competed over the two-day event, with exhibitors travelling from Olds, Alberta, Lestock and Carnduff, SK, as well as Dauphin, Minnedosa, Steinbach, Birtle, and Virden. Despite being a slightly smaller show this year, organizer Kacee Gee said the weekend was a success, with approximately 150 spectators taking in the free event.

The Virden Draft Horse Show has been part of the com-



PHOTO BY LAUREN HALOWATY

Cloud 9 Ranch from Steinbach.

munity for as long as Gee can remember. While it was once held in conjunction with the Virden Agricultural Society, it has operated as its own event for the past 10 to 15 years. “We have fantastic grounds to use,” said Gee. “People really enjoy coming here.”

The show featured halter classes, hitch classes, the Manitoba Percheron Belgian Club Four-Horse Hitch Series, and the Chore Team Series Competition. Junior classes for exhibitors between the ages of 10 and 17 also gave young horse enthusiasts the opportunity to compete.

One of the highlights of the weekend was the friendly competition between sibling operations West Spring Percherons and N-ER-GEE Belgians.

West Spring Percherons earned Supreme Open Horse honours while also winning the Six-Horse Hitch, Ladies Cart and Team, Open Champion Draft Team, and the Unicorn class.

N-ER-GEE Belgians captured Supreme Belgian Horse, the Four-Horse Hitch, Men’s Cart, Belgian Champion Team, and Overall Champion Team.

Wallace Clydesdales claimed top honours in the Tandem class.

For Gee, keeping the show alive is about more than the competition.

“I’d like to keep this show going because there aren’t a lot of volunteers at shows around the circuit anymore, and that scares me that there won’t be many fairs in the future,” she said. “It’s been a staple in Virden for many years. For me, it’s in my blood and my family.”

Gee has been fully involved in organizing the show for at least five years, although her family has always played a role in the event.

She said encouraging young people to become involved remains an important part of the show’s future.

“We’re always trying to get young people involved in showing,” she said. “It’s a lot of hard work and dedication throughout the year.”

The show was organized by Kacee Gee, Grant and Kim Gee, Darcy Strain, and Robert Berry, along with four additional volunteers. The organizing committee thanked the competitors, volunteers, and sponsors for another successful event and looks forward to welcoming everyone back next year.

Burger Week was a ton of fun



T’s Dining & Lounge, T’s Aloha Burger.

Continued from page 1.

Elkhorn Esso Restaurant – Bacon Jam Cheeseburger

A savoury combination of bacon jam, garlic mayo, crispy onions, and a juicy beef patty.

Chicken Chef –

Ranchers Deluxe Burger

A classic Prairie-style burger topped with mozzarella, sautéed mushrooms, hickory-smoked BBQ sauce, and all the traditional fixings.

Ice Cream Island –

Maple Memphis Burger

A sweet-and-smoky creation featuring bacon, cheese, a crispy onion ring, and their signature Memphis Maple Sauce.

Together, these restaurants created a mouthwatering tour of Prairie Gateway’s culinary landscape. Diners traveled from town to town, sampling burgers, sharing photos, and debating favorites. The event brought



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

MJ’s Coffee Bar & Bistro, Prairie Pickle Chicken Burger.

new customers to local establishments, strengthened community ties, and highlighted the region’s growing food scene.

Prairie Gateway Tourism continues to grow the event each year, helping shine a spotlight on the chefs and small businesses that make the region vibrant.

Burger Week Winners

When the grills finally cooled and the votes were counted, Burger Week delivered a pair of standout champions. Diners crowned MJ’s Coffee Bar & Bistro as this year’s Favourite Burger, while T’s Dining & Lounge took home Most Ordered Burger, serving up an impressive share of 88 burgers to the week’s diners. The second and third most ordered burgers went to Ice Cream Island with 83 and MJ’s Coffee Bar & Bistro with 74.

All told, the community devoured 463 burgers, a new record for the event that speaks to both the creativity of our local restaurants and the enthusiasm of everyone who came out to taste, vote, and celebrate.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Virden Pioneer Home Museum
Museum Day & BBQ

Fundraising Event
~ 390 King St. ~
Friday, August 7
BBQ
11:00 am to 1:00 pm
BBQ – burgers, hot dogs, drinks for sale, Kid’s Activities, Raffle Draws Find the Joker Toonie Tours

Celebration of Life

Clare and Joyce Cawston

Please join with friends and family from 2-5pm on August 5th 2026 at the Virden Legion Hall Clubroom for this “Come and Go” event celebrating the lives of Clare and Joyce. All are welcome with sandwiches and hot beverages to be served. Beer and cocktails will also be available in the clubroom.

We look forward to seeing everyone on August 5th!!

Customer Appreciation Dodge BBQ



PHOTO BY BETH MCCONNELL

From left to right: Breena Davies, Ava Merkley, Marcy Moorehead, Mackenzie Trower, and Debra Plaisier serve up some free burgers at the 5th annual Virden Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram Customer Appreciation free BBQ which was held on Thursday, July 23 at their parking lot on Frontage Road West.

100 Years Apart: Is Life More Expensive Today Than in 1926?

Mid-Summer Grocery Sale

Busy Harvest days are just around the corner.—Crop prospects seem better than ever. STOCK UP NOW with Harvest Grocery Supplies at Mid-Summer Sale Prices.

JAMS at the Lowest Prices for years BUY NOW

How's This? Pure Strawberry Jam: new 1926 pack. Sale price, 69¢	Here's Another! Pure Raspberry Jam in 4 lb pails: Mid-summer sale price 63¢
Pure Stoneless Plum Jam, Per pail 49¢	Mixed Jam, Per pail 45¢
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Clark Bros., representative at Fort William makes remarkable buy from REDPATH'S. CARLOAD OF SUGAR ARRIVES JUST IN TIME FOR OUR SALE.

A Carload on Sale	Redpath Sugar 100 pound bags \$7.35	Sale of a Carload
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Pure Raspberry Jam in jars, Per jar **57¢**
Evaporated Peas (reg. 10¢, 15¢, 20¢) sale price 2 7¢ for **45¢**

Quick Quaker Oats with aluminum premiums: reg. 40¢, value, Mid-summer sale price, Per pail **25¢**
Bulk Lard: guaranteed pure. Special: 2 lb for **45¢**

FILE PHOTO

A Grocery store ad by Clark Bros. Wholesale and Retail Grocers in Virden, from the week of July 28- August 7, 1926 lists some prices of items on sale for that week.

By Lauren Halowaty
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

A look at this week a century ago...

From \$4,500 homes to 17-cent canned beans, a look at Clark Bros.' 1926 Mid-Summer Sale flyer in Virden vs. 2026 household budgets.

How does life today compare to a century ago? Looking back at official Dominion Bureau of Statistics (now Statistics Canada) figures alongside local archival records, such as Clark Bros. Wholesale and Retail Grocers' "Mid-Summer Grocery Sale" flyer in the Virden Empire Advance (July 28 – August 7, 1926), reveals a dramatic shift in

what it costs to live in Canada.

Housing

In 1926, the average cost of a home in Canada was approximately \$4,500. With an average industrial worker making between \$1,500 and \$2,000 per year, buying a house cost roughly 2 to 3 times an annual salary.

Fast forward 100 years to 2026: The national average home price exceeds \$700,000, while Manitoba home prices sit closer to \$350,000. With Manitoba's median household income at \$71,000, a home now costs 5 to 10 times a household's annual earnings. Shelter requires far more years of labour today than it did a century ago.

Wages & Earning Power

A century ago, top-paying industries like steel, paper mills, and smelting paid salaries over \$2,000 a year. Trades like printing and automotive paid wages between \$1,300 and \$1,700, while rural dairy factories and seasonal fish-packing averaged under \$1,000.

Today, a full-time minimum wage earner grosses roughly \$33,280 a year (about \$26,720 take-home after taxes, CPP, and EI), while Manitoba's median household income sits at \$71,000.

At the Store: Clark Bros. Grocery Sale (1926)

A peak into the July 1926 edition of the Virden Empire Advance shows local grocer Clark Bros. advertising harvest grocery supplies for their 10-day Mid-Summer Sale. Here is how some everyday staples priced out:

- Heinz Baked Beans: 2 tins for 35¢ (reg. 25¢ each). At 17.5¢ a tin, a worker earning \$0.75/hour worked about 14 minutes per can. Today, a \$2.00 can takes about 7.5 minutes of work at minimum wage.
- Redpath Sugar (100 lb bag): \$7.35 a bag (or 10 lbs for 78¢). Stocking up on sugar was

Music in the Park - Revival



PHOTO BY BETH MCCONNELL

Revival rocking the stage at Victoria Park

By Beth McConnell
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The summer soundtrack in Virden continues this week as Revival takes over the Victoria Park Jubilee Stage on July 23 at 7 p.m., bringing their signature blend of 1950s, '60s and '70s rock and roll to the Music in the Park series. Long before the first guitar riff rings out, the park will already be alive with activity thanks to a full lineup of community groups who helped set the tone for another busy Thursday evening.

The Legion kept the grill going throughout the early evening with a community BBQ, donating half the proceeds to the Scouts. Prairie Gateway drew steady crowds with their Plinko board,

adding a bit of friendly competition for families moving through the park. Hank Kyle also stepped forward to present last week's proceeds to Krista Pederson, as no one from the Fire Fighters was able to attend. Arts Mosaic brought a creative touch with bracelet making, while the Scouts rounded out the pre-show atmosphere by setting up games that kept children busy and laughing.

Revival's line-up features Bud Hay, Peter Morris, Brodie Hay, Ky Tough, and Dan Kristof, a crew whose chemistry comes from years of performing together across the region. Between them, they've played hundreds of rock classics and ballads, and for this show they're bring-

ing a curated set of crowd favourites designed to get audiences singing along. Their reputation for tight harmonies, energetic stage presence and a genuine love of vintage rock and roll has made them a reliable draw for Music in the Park, and this led to another strong turnout.

As the summer series continues, residents won't have to wait long for the next instalment. July 30 is Variety Night, promising a mix of performers and styles that highlight the range of talent found throughout the community. It's shaping up to be another evening worth marking on the calendar, and organizers encourage everyone to come out and check it out.

essential for harvest and summer preserves.

- Quick Quaker Oats: 25¢ per package (reg. 40¢ value, complete with aluminum premium gifts inside).

- Pure Raspberry Jam: 63¢ for a 4-pound pail (or Wagstaff's Black Currant Jam for 79¢/pail).

- Goldenloaf Cheese: 38¢ for 1 lb (or 25¢ for 1 1/2 lb).

- Household Supplies: Brooms for 39¢ each, 4 bars of Sunlight Soap for 19¢, and 3 boxes of matches (1,200 count) for 25¢.

In 1926, Canadian families spent upwards of 35% to 40% of their total income strictly on food and groceries. Today, despite inflation, groceries account for roughly 10% to 15% of the average family budget.

Local 1926 Prices vs. 2026

- Average Home: \$4,500 (1926) | \$350,000+ MB / \$700,000+ National (2026)

- Annual Income: \$1,000–\$2,000 (1926)

- \$33,280 Min Wage / \$71,000 MB Household (2026)

- Heinz Baked Beans: 17.5¢ / tin (Clark Bros. 1926 Sale) | \$2.00 / can (2026)

- Redpath Sugar (100 lb): \$7.35 (1926) | \$110.00+ equivalent (2026)

- Budget Share on Food: 35%–40% of earnings (1926) | 10%–15% of earnings (2026)

The Verdict

Is life more expensive now? It depends on what you are buying. 100 years ago, surviving day-to-day, buying food, soap, clothing, and heating fuel absorbed most of a family's paycheck. But buying a home or staying out of debt was far easier.

Today, basic groceries and goods are cheaper relative to hours worked, but major life expenses, housing, vehicles, utilities, and modern bills make financial independence feel more expensive than ever.

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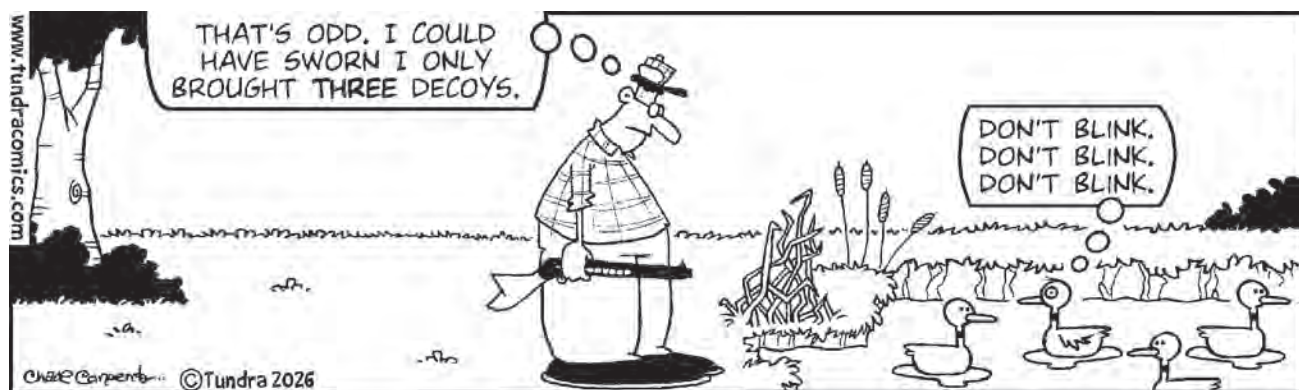
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Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



Bad behaviour has no excuses

An interesting story appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press over the weekend that outlined some of the kinds of problems that we have in our very liberal society today. The little story below is illustrative of problems that face schools and daycares across Manitoba. It's not just daycares and schools that have this kind of problem, its hospitals, workplaces and retail stores. It seems that every bad behaviour by children or adults has some kind of excuse behind it.

Please read the quote below.

"A Windsor Park child-care facility is weighing a five-year-old's right to care versus the safety of other children who have been choked. Little People's Place expelled a pre-schooler in the spring in response to his aggressive behaviour toward other children and staff. The child's family has appealed to the province for him to be reinstated. The case is raising concerns about inclusion support resources and measures to protect everyone at the Cottonwood Road daycare."

In days gone by, a child who acted up like that would've been taken over somebody's knee and given a paddling on the bum. Apparently you can't do that anymore although if I had been in the presence of this incident, there would have been an overwhelming urge to apply some sort of discipline and maybe there was. But I doubt it because you're not supposed to ever, ever speak sharply to a child or God forbid smack them on the bottom.

I am actually surprised that another child didn't walk over and punch the offending kid in the nose. I actually have heard of and seen that happening. I have not witnessed this type of response lately. I know this will offend all the liberals greatly but a punch in the nose by a peer, that is someone close in size and age, is a

time honoured tradition to bring about discipline within a group.

In the above quote, the word inclusion jumps off the page at me. It seems that everything today is framed around inclusion. I am a big supporter of inclusion. I don't like discrimination against people for faults or shortcomings or race or creed or age or sex, but I do draw the line at bad behaviour. There is no excuse for bad behaviour, I know that some people have had very traumatic experiences. I know that with some people including children, maybe especially children, how bad things can happen to them that have caused them a lot of grief. Sometimes, it's a learning disability, sometimes, it's bad parenting sometimes, the problem is unknown but for the life of me I can't see how the teachers, daycare workers or the daycare owners are responsible to include a child that is behaving in the way that the story describes. Trust me, I don't think my children would've gotten away with that kind of behaviour if it had been brought to our attention or to the teacher's attention. It seems that in today's world everything that turns out bad has an excuse.

Not every behaviour has an excuse or reason behind to make it OK. It's true, there are causes, but bad behaviour harmful, destructive, dangerous behaviour has no place anywhere in our society. In the adult world we often hear about people who rob, as-

sault or even murder and the excuse is that they had a tough childhood or they are of a certain ethnic or cultural background. I say nonsense! There is no excuse for bad behaviour and certainly no excuse for bad behaviour on a repetitive basis.

If the quoted account is accurate, then this child should not have been surprised, nor should the parents have been surprised if another child had punched the kid in the nose. According to the report, that didn't happen but the daycare, the staff and I'm sure that provincial lawmakers will be wading in on this issue to try and figure out what to do.

Without a demonstrated change in behaviour, that kid should not be in a day care. It will be interesting to see how all this turns out as the child's parents are asking for him to be reinstated. That would be great but only if the boy learns how to behave. Until he learns good behaviour, he belongs in his own home or in a facility that can deal with his issues, and the parents can deal with that however they need to do. It should not be the responsibility of the day care, the province or the taxpayers to solve the problem.

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 Banner & Press staff.

RIGHT IN THE CENTRE

KEN WADDELL



HOME BODIES

RITA FRIESEN



Vintage? Antique?

This being over eighty is cause for even more introspection and reflection. So many items that are now museum worthy were staples in my early years. Cream separators, butter churns, galvanized wash tubs, wooden egg crates—fifteen and thirty dozen sizes... that's just the daily or weekly tasks that had already been made easier with advanced technology.

Take the cream separator. No longer was the milk poured into pans and the cream skimmed off the top. This gift to the farm wife was a relatively large item - the milk poured into a large bowl, flowed down through a series of discs, and with the correct speed of a turning crank, the cream ran out one spout and the skim milk down the other. That disc system! There were fifteen to twenty of these depending on the model, and they needed to be washed and sterilised after each use. We actually had a wire hanger for them to dry properly. I acknowledge that this method of gleaning the cream was more time effective than waiting for the milk to cool and the cream to rise. It was a step up for any one milking several cows.

The early butter churn was often a half gallon glass jar. And you shook it, and shook it, and watched and waited for the curds to form and then the butter. Our farm progressed to a squat wooden churn, once again a device with a handle. This time the handle spun a paddle system that agitated the cream. You turned and turned until the sound changed, no longer a splash but an irregular thumping sound. Again, one could process so much more in a given time and the quality was better. This could create a batch large enough to use the wooden butter press whereas the jar usually created a hand formed mound of butter.

That galvanized wash tub, circular or square, was so multi purpose. It could be the laundry tub or the bath tub. In our home the bath sequence was youngest to oldest, the tub often centered on the kitchen floor, the water heated on the range. For me it was already an electric stove not a wood burner.

For many years the farm income relied on, and then was supplemented by, eggs. Many chickens, many eggs. They were collected in wire baskets which were then submerged in a bucket that was set atop a spinning device—a gently spinning device—and the swishing movement removed the major dirt from the eggs before they were dried and placed on layers that filled a shipping crate.

Got to wondering: are me and my memory makers vintage or antiques? By definition, vintage generally refers to something from the past that is of high quality, lasting value, and representative of a specific era. It primarily denotes an item's period of origin and often implies nostalgic, classic, or enduring appeal.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, an antique is defined as a relic, object, or work of art from an earlier period. Specifically, it highlights that manufactured items or decorative pieces must typically be at least 100 years old to qualify. One of each, me being the vintage?

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Kin place hosted a get together on Saturday



PHOTO BY KRISTA PEDERSON

Our residents celebrated this month's July birthdays with hot dogs, a delicious birthday cake, and a full afternoon of fun! Everyone had a blast getting outside to play ladder ball, beanbag toss, and bocce ball.

OLD SAYINGS

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

As I continue this little series on old sayings for this week there are some old sayings and then some from the 70s when I was in my early twenties. Man that makes me feel old! Here we go.

"Too big for his britches" really means someone who is acting conceited or arrogant. You see a lot of this from some professional athletes.

"Not the sharpest tool in the shed", refers to lacking common sense. The world is full of these types of people;

in fact you are not even allowed to say this anymore. Well, I will say it again, there is much LACK of common sense!

"Knee high to a grasshopper", refers to someone who is short and young.

"Barking up the wrong tree", simply means someone pursuing the wrong course of action.

Now from the seventies some things you do not hear of a lot anymore. "Can you dig it?" Do you understand something or are you cool about it?

"Far out", means some-

thing that is awesome and incredible.

"Catch you on the flip side". Burt Reynolds used this line in Smokey and the Bandit, really just means see you later.

"Out of sight", means amazing or unbelievable. "A pad" is where someone lives.

"Groovy" means being cool in a hip sort of way. The last one for this week is Shaggin' Wagon. This is a 70s van with a bed in the back, I see one of those on the highway every now and then, yep that's a Shaggin' Wagon!

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Tundra Oil & Gas Place: 204-748-2736

VIRDEN



CENTRE OF IT ALL

Animal Control: 204-851-5881

Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440

Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540

Check your mailbox!

2026 property tax notices have been sent out.

If you haven't received yours, please contact the Town Office at 204-748-2440.

2026 property taxes are due by October 31, 2026.

Well Water Testing

Assiniboine West Watershed District will be coordinating well water testing

Drop-off will be at the Viriden Town Office on August 10, 2026 from 9:00-11:30 AM.

Testing kits are available for pickup in advance at the Town Office.

August Long Weekend

Closed August 3, 2026

- Viriden Town Office
- Tundra Oil and Gas Place

Closed August 1 - 3, 2026

- Viriden Landfill

Employment Opportunity Sanitation II Position

This is the senior position in the garbage collection division of the Public Works Department.

This position requires an individual that is in good health and capable of carrying out the physical requirements of the job and able to pass a medical examination. A high school diploma or equivalent is required as well as a Class 3 with Air driver's license.

Full job description is available on the Town of Viriden website.

Please forward resume with cover letter to:

Faye Pope, Office/HR Manager
Town of Viriden
Box 310, Viriden, MB, R0M 2C0
Email: office.manager@viriden.ca

REGISTRATION PERIOD NOW OPEN!



MAYOR & COUNCILLOR MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Please be advised that a general municipal election will be held on October 28, 2026.

Prospective municipal election candidates must register with the Senior Election Official (SEO) during the registration period before they may begin to accept contributions, incur expenses, fundraise or borrow money for their campaign.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I will be receiving candidate registrations:

For the office of head of council: Between May 1, 2026 and September 22, 2026
For the office of councillor: Between June 30, 2026 and September 22, 2026

at the Town of Viriden office, 236 Wellington Street West, Viriden, MB, during the regular hours of business.

To obtain a registration form contact the SEO at the email or telephone number listed below.

Registration forms are available for pickup at the Town of Viriden office.

Rhonda Stewart, SEO
Phone: 204-851-0769,
Email: rlstewart64@outlook.com
Dated at Town of Viriden,
Viriden, MB on April 14, 2025

Upcoming Council Meetings

August 11 & September 1
Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

Cucumbers have a mild, slightly sweet, and refreshing taste with a high-water content, around 95 percent making them incredibly hydrating. This summer my cucumbers have been very prolific. I love this recipe for a frozen cucumber salad. It is an awesome addition to my winter menu. Today's recipes will include this recipe as well as a Raita and fried cucumbers. A raita is a traditional Indian side dish often served with spicy dishes to help cool the palate. A blend of plain yogurt, herbs and vegetables make this raita a nice addition to any meal. Enjoy!

Frozen cucumber salad

2 cups sugar (I used only 1 1/4 cups)	1 cup white vinegar
2 tsp. pickling salt	2 tsp. celery seed
7 cups sliced peeled cucumbers	1 cup sliced onions
1 red pepper, thinly sliced	

In a large bowl combine sugar, vinegar, salt and celery seed. Stir in the vegetables. Let stand overnight. Put the vegetables and brine in freezer containers and freeze. Thaw in the fridge for several hours or overnight before serving.

Cucumber tomato raita

1 English cucumber, cubed into small pieces	1 large tomato, diced
1/4 cup diced sweet onion	1 tsp. salt
1 cup plain yogurt	1/2 tsp. cumin
1 dash of pepper	
3 Tbsp. chopped cilantro or parsley	

In a colander mix the cucumber, tomato and onion with the teaspoon of salt. Allow to sit and drain for 20 minutes. When ready to use give the colander a few good shakes to remove any excess moisture. Mix the remaining ingredients together and gently stir in the drained vegetables and serve.

Butter fried cucumbers

2 Tbsp. butter
2 medium sized cucumbers
1/4 cup flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. curry powder
4 Tbsp. chopped parsley
Sour cream

Peel the cucumbers and slice them 1/2 inch. Dry the slices in paper towel for a few minutes. Then shake them in a bag containing the flour, salt and curry. Place the butter in a frying pan and melt it. Add the floured cucumbers, fry about 3 minutes on each side for a golden colour. Do not overcook. Serve as soon as ready, sprinkle with parsley. Serve sour cream on the side. Serves 4.

Police Report

Westman RCMP Service Report for July 19 to 25

Submitted
BY WESTMAN RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 89 calls for service. Some of these calls for service include 10 traffic offences, 9 assaults, 5 assistances to general public/other agencies, 5 - 911 Calls, 3 mental health acts, 5 mischief, 3 false alarms, 4 wellbeing checks and 4 utter threats.

On July 19, during a routine patrol in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed the driving speed of 165km/hr in a 110km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver was issued a traffic offence notice for speeding, which carries a fine of \$770 along with a serious offence notice.

On July 19, RCMP responded to a report of a disturbance in the town of Virden. Members attended and located a victim who reported she was assaulted by two male suspects who had left the residence prior to police arrival. The victim had visible significant bruising on her face and a large laceration to the back of her head. After receiving medical attention, members obtained a victim statement which revealed that both suspects were 19-year-old males who had grabbed her throat and choked her to the ground. RCMP members attended the accused residence and arrested both males who were charged with assault in causing bodily harm and assault by choking. Both accused were remanded into custody and are scheduled to appear in court.

On July 20, during a routine patrol in the

Town of Virden, RCMP conducted a traffic stop with a vehicle to ensure the vehicle had an active registration and that the driver had a valid drivers license. Upon arrival, the police check on the vehicle confirmed it was not active. The driver was issued a traffic offence notice for driving an unregistered vehicle, which carries a fine of \$298.

On July 23, during a routine patrol in the Town of Virden, RCMP conducted a traffic stop with a vehicle to ensure the driver had a valid drivers license and to do a sobriety check. Upon arrival the police check on the driver confirmed he only had a learners' stage drivers license. The driver blew on the ASD and was issued a traffic offence notice for operating a motor vehicle in a learners' stage license without a supervising driver, which carries a fine of \$203. The driver was also fined for operating a motor vehicle on a learners' stage license while having alcohol in the blood system which carries costs \$113. The vehicle was towed.

To report a complaint or non-emergency incident to RCMP please call 204-748-2135. For general inquiries or administrative requests including criminal record checks please call the administration line at 204-748-2046 Ext. 3, during regular office hours. If you are reporting an emergency, please call 911. If you witness a crime and wish to remain anonymous, please contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477. Crime Stoppers is entirely confidential and completely anonymous. The tip line is not traceable, and they do not subscribe to caller ID or call display.

An Ode to Broccoli



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Broccoli is a great source of vitamin C.

Submitted
BY PRAIRIE MOUNTAIN HEALTH

If there's a green vegetable worthy of a love letter, it's broccoli. With the appearance of little green trees, broccoli belongs to the brassica family, alongside cabbage and cauliflower. In Manitoba, broccoli is often planted in the early spring and is ready for harvesting from early to mid-July. Harvesting is done by cutting the flowerhead from the central stalk. It is best to harvest broccoli before the yellow buds' bloom,

which can indicate that the vegetable has turned bitter (But still edible!).

In addition to the fun appearance, broccoli is chock full of nutrients! It is a great source of vitamin C and contains other nutrients such as iron, potassium and vitamin K. In general, our bodies need vitamins and minerals (like the ones in broccoli) to maintain good health. Broccoli is also full of fibre, making it a satiating addition to meals and snacks.

Fresh or frozen, broccoli is a nourishing addition to meals. Fresh broccoli is best stored in the fridge for up to 5 days. As it spoils, broccoli can become discoloured with brown or yellow spots. It can also appear wilted or less firm. The presence of mold or slimy spots are definite signs of spoiling. Frozen broccoli has similar nutrients to fresh crowns and is often a more affordable option. Excess fresh broccoli can also be frozen for future use. For the best quality, blanch your broccoli prior to freezing.

Using a new vegetable can be intimidating! It is a good thing that broccoli is a versatile vegetable that can be enjoyed in many different dishes. Raw broccoli is a crunchy addition to salads (make sure to chop finely) and pairs well with many dips. When cooked, the possibilities are endless! Broccoli is a yummy addition to soups, stir fries, or, in mac n' cheese. Alternatively, try to add broccoli to already known and loved recipes!

NOTICE

Under the Oil and Gas Act

Manson Oil Field

.....

Tundra Oil & Gas Limited has made application under The Oil and Gas Act for approval to form East Manson Unit No. 11 and within implement a waterflood Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) operations, within the Bakken-Torquay formation. The map below shows the proposed boundaries.

If no valid objection or intervention is received in writing by Manitoba Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation, Petroleum Branch, at Suite 360 - 1395 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 3P2 before **August 21, 2026**, the Minister may approve the application.

Copies of the application can be obtained from:

Brett Duncan
Tundra Oil & Gas Limited
900 - One Lombard Place
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0X3
(204) 934-5825
brett.duncan@tundraoilandgas.com

The application may be viewed in full at: manitoba.ca/iem/petroleum/applications/index.html

Proposed East Manson Unit No. 11

Legend:
● Producer
X Horizontal Surface Location
— Horizontal Well
□ Proposed Unit Boundary

Miniota News

Submitted
By LINDA CLARK

Congratulations to Laura Poppel and Travis Peters who were married on July 16 at Parksville, B.C. Travelling west to join the happy couple and their children Banks and Kit, were Wayne Poppel and Val Carton, Jeff, Ashleigh, Mason, Noah and Emmett Poppel from Miniota. Also attending were Kathryn and Brandon Pollard, Quinn and Cassidy (Black Falls, Alta.) and Sean and April McKean. Laura and Travis make their home in Calgary.

Great grandparents Stan and Bonnie Bryant and grandparents Dean and Denise Bryant welcomed a new grandson, Leo Wesley Venance,

born to Alex and Sophie Bryant and big brother Jonah on July 21 in Brandon. Welcome Leo and congratulations to all.

The Prairie View Summer Day Camps have completed their first two weeks at the Miniota Rink averaging anywhere from 10-18 children a day. Trisha Gardham has been in charge of the day programs with leadership by Raegan Miller and Alisha O'Hara. Who wouldn't want to attend day camp with all the exciting activities that they have enjoyed, from a car rally, to 'Around the World', Junior Scientist Day, touring the museum, an Amazing Race day, visiting with the seniors, building bird houses, a pirate day, a

space day and more. Two more weeks of day camp will be held in August.

Greta Bryant and family members from Hinton, Alta. were here to attend the wedding of Terri-Lynn Bryant and Chase Williamson on July 25. They were married on the hill at Dan and Mariah Bryants. Terri-Lynn is the daughter of Wayne and Tracey Bryant. Also travelling from Hinton were Kendra and Colton Bryant, Lori and Kim Frattinger and their family Charlsie and Jed Nielson, Cooper and Millie. Other family travelling a distance were Gina, Chuck and Aiden Hachkowski (Hinton); Travis and Arron Bryant (Winnipeg); Stephanie and Jevon Weisensel, Reign and Aden (Win-

nipeg); Chantal and Brad Lesy, Tucker and Briggs (Brandon); Tyler Bryant and Autum North (Brandon), and Claudia Bryant, Scarlett, Ivy and Koen (McAuley). Congratulations to Chase and Terri-Lyn!

The Miniota Ladies Golf Tournament was held on July 25 with 17 teams participating in the 18-hole best ball twosome. The winners were as follows: Championship Flight 1st Karen Powell and Sharon Ellerington; 2nd Paula Pengelly and Bev Sparks; 3rd Kale Nolan and Courtney Wood; First Flight: 1st Colleen Immerkar and Denise Brown; 2nd Anna McGonigal and Noreen Stowe; 3rd Sheila Sheane and Shawnda Krieser;

Second Flight: 1st Karol McKay and Fran Little; 2nd Darlene McArthur and Jan Fleury; 3rd Gwen Clark and Maxine Routledge. Closest to pin - Sharon McKenzie; In the Pond - Fran Little; Longest Putt-Bev Sparks; and Most Honest Golfers - Sarah Curtis and Kathy Routledge. The day ended with a delicious supper prepared by Clubhouse manager Noreen Oliver and her staff.

The Miniota MDR (Manitoba Dirtbike Racing) was held July 25 and 26. This interesting ride takes place on the Luke Lelond land with trails from the top of the south hill of the Assiniboine Valley down to the river. A great turnout of riders and spectators

was reported.

Arrow River is home to Windy Acres, a local produce stand owned and operated by Dimitri and Erin, on the former site of the Arrow River School. Check out this rural country gem of local fresh garden produce.

A private family funeral service was held for Jack Reynolds on July 25, at the Miniota United Church. Jack was the son of the late Lawrence and Verna Reynolds who farmed north of Miniota. Jack's wife, Mary and daughter Jackie Reynolds came from Kelowna, B.C. and his brother Ken Reynolds from Halifax, N.S. as well as nieces, nephews and extended family.

"Treat others as if they already are the shining light they are capable of becoming." - Mary Davis



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Four Seasons isn't just an RV dealership - it's a driving force in the local economy and a proud community partner. Its impact goes well beyond RV sales - from funding youth sports and charitable initiatives to sponsoring beloved events like the Virden Indoor Rodeo, Four Seasons is committed to helping its communities thrive.

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Fox Tail Hauling Ltd. was founded in 2011, and we started out with 3 trucks and trailers and 2 drivers, a part time mechanic and 1 office staff. We operated out of a rental shop in Kenton, MB and our work was in southwest Manitoba and southeastern Saskatchewan hauling fresh and salt water, emulsion and crude oil.

In 2016 land became available in the Virden Industrial Park, so we moved our headquarters and built a new shop and office building. A second shop was built in the following years.

In 2023 we purchased a shop in Estevan, Saskatchewan to increase our exposure to the southeastern Saskatchewan oilfield and serve our customers better.

Over the years Fox Tail has continued to expand our fleet to meet the demands of our customers. We currently have over 45 employees and 12 lease Operators. Our fleet consists of over 35 semi-trucks and trailers, winch trucks, bed trucks, body job tank trucks, boiler trucks, super heaters and vac trucks. Fox Tail also operates a tank rental fleet of approximately 150 insulated tanks.

Our Mission is to provide safe, exceptional service to our customers while striving to support an exceptional community for our people to drive in.

Our Values at Fox Tail Hauling Ltd. are:

- F for Family - At Fox Tail we treat everyone like family. This means supporting our own personal families, our coworkers, and our community. Every interaction should reflect care, respect, and a sense of belonging.
- T for Teamwork - We believe in the power of teamwork to achieve our goals. Working together efficiently ensures success for everyone.
- H for Honesty - Honesty is our foundation. We are truthful and transparent with ourselves, our teammates, our managers, and our customers.
- L for Leadership - Leadership at Fox Tail Hauling means setting a positive example, whether at work or in the community.

Fox Tail is proud to be sharing the road with the local communities for over 14 years. Fox Tail strives to be the most respectful oilfield trucking company operating in the local communities. We take pride in giving back to these same communities through many donations and sponsorships to support various groups, sports teams and events.

BE SEEN



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The History of the Hay Knife

Virden Pioneer Home Museum

By Krysian Dupra
VPHM

The hay knife was an important farming tool from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. The blade measured 81 cm or 32 inches with an off-set handle that made it easier to use. Before the widespread shift to round and square baling that we use today, farmers used the hay knife in place of modern technology.

Farm families cut and dried enough grass each summer to feed their animals over the winter. Before the introduction of baling, hay was usually stored in the barn loft or in specially made hay barracks where it would naturally settle and compact into dense masses. If there was no room in any buildings, the surplus of hay

would be stored outside. The hay left outside had to be domed and capped to keep the rain and snow from ruining the stack, but this became a problem when farmers had to feed their animals. If they removed the top layer, the protective covering would also be removed which could damage the rest of the stack. The hay was also incredibly difficult to pull apart with a pitchfork due to the settling and how dense the hay was. All these problems inspired the creation of the hay knife. The tool was used to cut through the densely compacted hay into square blocks that could be used for animal feed in the winter. They'd cut along the sides of the hay before pitchforking it as feed for the animals.

Hay balers, disc mowers, and disc-bines



Two examples of a Hay Knife.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

were not created until the 1930s. The development in technology caused the hay knives to become obsolete, leaving them in the past. Fortunately,

people have kindly donated to the museum to preserve the memory of these tools, and the important work that they've done for farmers in the past.

Westman Communications Group brings live TV to subscribers' favourite streaming devices with connect TV app+

Submitted Westman Communications Group (WCG) is transforming the television experience for its subscribers. Starting today, customers can enjoy their favourite channels without the need for a traditional set-top box by downloading the new Connect TV App +.

This launch offers subscribers the flexibility to watch live local news, network television, sports broadcasts, and access over 300 free channels through TiVo+ and Plex, directly on the devices they already own. The app is compatible with a wide range of platforms, including Smart TVs, Amazon Fire TV Stick, Apple TV, Google Chromecast, and mobile devices. By integrating seamlessly into your existing home entertainment setup, WCG eliminates the need for additional hardware and reduces monthly equipment rental costs.

"Our goal is to make live television fit naturally into how our customers already watch content, and the Connect TV App+ delivers exactly that," said John Quail, WCG's Chief Operating Officer. "We aren't asking our subscribers to change their habits - we're simply bringing live TV into their existing streaming lineup. It's their TV, their way, with no box required."

The WCG Connect TV App+ features an intuitive interface, effortless self-installation, and comprehensive channel guide integration. The app is available for immediate download in all major app stores. For package options or registration details, visit Connect TV App | Westman.

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By Angela Lovell
MANITOBA FARMERS' VOICE

Editor's note: This article was originally published in the June edition of Manitoba Farmers' Voice and is reprinted here with permission.

On the face of it, a seed farm looks much like any other grain farm: they plant the seed, harvest it and store it in bins. But there is a lot more going on behind the scenes to ensure that producers get the best-quality seed varieties for their farms.

"The main difference is our focus on maintaining the seed purity and quality," said second-generation seed grower Tracy Court of Court Seeds near Plumas, Man. "That involves carefully planning our crop rotations, keeping track of what was planted on each field and making sure there are no crop contamination risks."

The Canadian seed industry contributes around six billion dollars to the economy annually, and in 2022/2023, it employed 63,622 people. Local Manitoba seed growers contribute to the rural economy, employ local people, support communities and have a vital role in delivering new seed genetics and technologies to producers.

The value of local knowledge

The process of bringing a new variety to market begins with variety registra-

tion. Once registered, the variety distributor makes breeder seed available to select seed growers (seed growers with the appropriate designation from the Canadian Seed Growers Association to produce high-generation seed lots) to multiply it in small plots on their farms. From there,

it moves to a network of seed growers who multiply it in larger field plots while maintaining purity and quality, testing its performance under actual local field conditions and helping develop agronomic recommendations on things like seeding rates.

Most of Court Seeds'

customers are within a 100-mile radius of their farm, so local knowledge of growing conditions, soil types, average moisture during the season and heat units is an important part of the selection process for which new seed varieties to grow, as is balancing the needs of producers in

the area.

"Varieties might perform well in the Red River Valley but do terribly here, or something that grows well in the Parkland region just doesn't work here at all, so we are testing all the new varieties that are coming out to try and find which ones fit for this grow-

ing region," said Court. "Our customers value the information that we can give them because we've tried it on our field on a large scale before we pass it on to them, so we can give them a lot of valuable knowledge."

Continued on next page

Beneath the surface



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Seed growers help build stronger crops from the ground up

Continued from previous page

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“Varieties might perform well in the Red River Valley but do terribly here, or something that grows well in the Parkland region just doesn’t work here at all, so we are testing all the new varieties that are coming out to try and find which ones fit for this growing region,” said Court. “Our customers value the information that we can give them because we’ve tried it on our field on a large scale before we pass it on to them, so we can give them a lot of valuable knowledge.”

A lot of extra work

New varieties are subject to scrutiny throughout their lifetime and for generations after the initial breeder seed release, including several in-field and post-harvest inspections by third-party agencies such as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Seeds Canada and the Canadian Seed Growers’ Association (CSGA).

Seed growers take multiple samples throughout the season to ensure that at every stage the seed remains pure, clean and of good quality. Every piece of equipment that goes into the field or handles grain

is thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before moving on to the next crop to prevent cross-contamination.

“It’s all very time-consuming,” Court said. “Sometimes we have to shut the combines down in the middle of the day because we’re switching varieties, so we have to stop and clean everything out, and we can waste three hours of a good combine day, so things like that all have a cost.”

Then there is the endless record-keeping.

“We have to be able to trace where every seed ... comes from right from beginning to end, every bin, every auger, and everything that it touches in the yard,” Court said. “We try to keep track of any potential areas of contamination, so if something ever does go wrong, we can trace it back.”

In the winter, the seed plant runs full-time, processing that season’s seed to stock the retail side of the business for the following spring.

The value of certified seed

According to CSGA, its members grew around 1.26 million acres of certified seed across Canada in 2025, with Manitoba members accounting for just over 315,000 of those acres.

Court Seeds grows and supplies a wide range of certified seed varieties, including cereals, oilseeds and pulses. Certified seed is an important Business Risk Management tool for Manitoba producers. The royalties embedded in the price of certified seed help

fund research to develop new and innovative genetics for their farms and help them stay ahead of potential new threats, whether from weather, pests, diseases or changing market requirements.

“When you buy certified seed, you’re guaranteeing that you’re getting a pure, uniform product, and that product has been tested to make sure it meets certain standards with respect to disease and germination,” Court said. “What you want to see in the field is for every plant to be uniform, because that’s going to maximize yield, and to mature evenly, because if everything is flowering at the same time, you can get your fungicide sprays on at the right time, and that’s definitely going to reduce your disease risk.”

The value of public and private research

Both public and private research are essential to Manitoba’s farms. Public research has public good as a core mandate, focus-

ing on crops such as forages, cereals and pulses. Private research focuses on higher-value crops, which are equally important to Manitoba producers.

“It’s important for the long-term viability of Manitoba’s farmers that we have robust public and private research capacities,” said Jennifer Seward, executive director of the Manitoba Seed Growers Association. “If both models are healthy, they compete with one another, making Manitoba’s farmers and the agriculture community the ultimate winners.”

The biggest trend in developing today’s new crop varieties is a focus on varieties that can withstand weather extremes and stay ahead of evolving disease and insect pressures as the climate changes.

Research funding cuts could have long-term impact

Recent cuts to public research funding have drawn criticism from the seed industry, which fears that reducing research and

development capacity may have long-term impacts on Canada’s competitiveness in global markets.

“Western Canadian grain has enjoyed a global reputation for quality, but other countries are catching up to us,” Seward said. “With rising food prices, if Manitoba’s farmers can’t hold that competitive edge globally, we could be relegated to the last choice by our trade partners.”

The effects of funding cuts to public research may not be felt immediately but will accumulate over time, posing risks to future generations.

“We rely on those plant breeders to develop hardy varieties that are suitable for our climate, and if we’re losing those plant breeders, then we’re going to be relying on varieties that weren’t developed here under our specific conditions with our specific diseases,” Court said. “We need to build a resilient agriculture system in Canada.”

Continued on next page

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Higher seed costs on the horizon

Continued from previous page

With recent cuts in public research funding, more seed growers may have to assume responsibility for increasingly rigorous testing of new varieties to ensure they will perform well in their local customers' fields, which could ultimately result in higher seed costs for producers. These added costs would offset federal funding cuts to Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada for variety development, which could impose an administrative burden on seed growers.

"I potentially see more variety use agreement [VUA] or trailing royalty models similar to those in some of our competitor countries like Australia and the European Union," Seward said. "It is definitely where the industry and the government are looking, so farmers could end up paying for a variety three times through the royalty, their checkoff and through a VUA or a



Jennifer Seward of the Manitoba Seed Growers Association and Tracy Court of Court Seeds Ltd, of Plumas, MB.

trailing royalty."

Seed growers are the final step in the chain of bringing a variety to market, and their experience and careful evaluation of new varieties make it easier for producers to choose which ones will be the best fit for their operation and

keep them profitable in the long term.

Despite challenges ahead, Court believes there is plenty of opportunity for growth in the seed industry, particularly for certified seed, which currently makes up only 25 to 30 per cent of seed



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New AgExpert feature turns years of data into next season's advantage

Submitted
FARM CREDIT CANADA

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) has launched CropPlan+, a new feature within AgExpert Field Premium, that helps producers compare crop plans and test different revenue scenarios using their own historical farm data.

Between unstable global markets, rising input costs and unpredictable weather, farm operators are navigating an increasingly complex environment. CropPlan+ gives producers a practical way to compare different crop plans before the season begins, helping them understand how changes in yields, prices and input costs could affect their operation.

"Canadian producers are among the best in the world at what they do and their tools should match that," said

Mohamad Yaghi, FCC Vice-President for Innovation Hub and AgExpert. "CropPlan+ puts world class planning in every operation's hands, turning a farm's own data into sharper, faster, more confident decisions. When producers plan with precision, they compete harder at home and abroad. That is how every producer's data, kept firmly in their own hands, build an advantage the whole sector shares."

Developed in close collaboration with producers, this feature is designed to ease planning while giving farmers greater confidence in the decisions that shape their operations.

To see the CropPlan+ feature in action, watch the product demonstration on YouTube at the FCC AgExpert TV channel. Look for 'How to use CropPlan+'.

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Elkhorn Elks Western Weekend ready to mark 12 years of community celebration



PHOTO BY ED JAMES

Chuckwagon racing from a past Western Weekend.

By Beth McConnell
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Elkhorn Elks are preparing to welcome visitors from across Westman and beyond as the community gears up for the 12th Anniversary Western Weekend, running July 31 to August 2 in Elkhorn. What began as a small gathering more

than a decade ago has grown into one of the region's most anticipated summer events, offering three days of racing, music, food, and family friendly entertainment. A major draw again this year will be the Manitoba Pro Chariot and Chuckwagon Races, which anchor the weekend's schedule

and consistently pack the stands. Racing begins Friday evening with shows at 7:00 and 8:30, continues Saturday at 4:00 and 7:00, and wraps up Sunday afternoon with races at 1:00 and 4:00. The fast paced action, skilled drivers, and energetic atmosphere have made these races a signature attraction for specta-

tors of all ages. Music will also play a central role throughout the weekend. The Beer Gardens open Friday with entertainment from Travis Barre, followed by a full day of 80s pop and party rock on Saturday courtesy of Clubbing Fraggles. Sunday shifts into a more classic tone with Lyle Baldwin

performing "Country Classic Sunday," giving visitors a chance to wind down the weekend with familiar favourites. The beer gardens have become a popular gathering place for both locals and visitors, offering a relaxed setting to enjoy live music between events. Families will find plenty to do as well, with children's entertainment scheduled for both Saturday and Sunday. The weekend also features several community competitions, including a cornhole tournament with cash prizes and a trophy for the winning team. Slo-pitch teams will take to the field in a tournament sponsored by EDCC, while barrel racers compete Sunday afternoon with a minimum of \$500 added money. Each event brings its own loyal following and adds to the sense of friendly rivalry that has long defined the Western Weekend. Saturday's program includes a live Calcutta at 2:30 in the beer gardens, a highlight for many attendees. The traditional silent Calcutta will also be held, continuing a format

familiar to longtime participants. Another major moment comes with the \$1,500 Dash for Cash, sponsored by Third Dimension Industries, which promises high energy and plenty of excitement. Food remains a staple of the weekend, with home-made cooking available at the concession booth throughout all three days. The Wallace District Fire Department will once again serve breakfast on Saturday and Sunday, a tradition that has become a favourite for early morning visitors and volunteers. Admission is \$15 per day or \$20 for a weekend pass, making the event accessible for families and individuals looking to take in multiple days of activities. With its blend of racing, entertainment, community spirit, and longstanding traditions, the Elkhorn Elks Western Weekend continues to stand out as a summer highlight in south-west Manitoba. Organizers expect strong attendance and encourage visitors to arrive early, settle in, and enjoy a full weekend of western themed fun.

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Weekend
August 1 - 3



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SPORTS

BASEBALL DREAMS BECOME REALITY FOR MAHMUTOVIC

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Oak Lake's Luka Mahmutovic has a passion for the diamond. "I love baseball because it's always been a part of my life, and I have been able to change my life by just playing baseball," the Oak Lake product said.

That love of the game, combined with his talent and plenty of hard work, has earned the son of Dino Mahmutovic and Cara Taylor the opportunity to play at the next level. He has committed to compete for the B.C.-based Victoria Collegiate Cats.

"I'm looking forward to playing with them so I can learn new things and meet new people while being able to further my baseball career," the outfielder said.

The Vancouver Island-based team competes in the Canadian College Baseball Conference. A February media release touted that players in the program can "play in a great stadium ... in a tremendous city, with the best weather in Canada, and get a world-class degree." Mahmutovic will attend Camosun College, while some of his teammates will study at the University of Victoria.

Of his academic plans, Mahmutovic said, "I'm taking sports management so I can become a scout in the future like my uncle."

His uncle is Jason Taylor, a professional scout for the National Hockey League's Toronto Maple Leafs. While his uncle has provided inspiration for Mahmutovic's future, his mother has been instrumental in helping him pursue his baseball dreams.

"My mom has supported me the most throughout my career," he said.

Over the years, Mahmutovic has played for a variety of teams. In the last 12 months, he has suited up for the Virden Collegiate Institute high school team, Brandon's Triple Crown Sports Bulldogs, and the 18U AAA Hamiota Midwest squad.

Midwest head coach Andy Drake said Mahmutovic has several strengths as an outfielder.

"His speed helps him cover ground, but he also has good judgment on reading fly balls and is very aware of the game situation," Drake said. "Offensively, he is a solid hitter and uses his speed to challenge defenders constantly. Luka is also an upbeat teammate, thus helping everyone stay invested in the games."

Dustin Asham, Triple Crown Sports' director of baseball operations, said that Mahmutovic joined the Bulldogs as a relatively unknown player.

"He quickly showed his raw skills and, through his commitment and hard work, quickly became one of the best outfielders in our program. He's fast with gap-to-gap power and can track down any ball in the outfield. His work ethic is unmatched and we are super excited to see him continue to develop in B.C. at the next level," said Asham, who called Mahmutovic "a great kid."



PHOTO BY CARA TAYLOR

Luka Mahmutovic has excelled on the baseball diamond.

Rodeo Weekend in Virden Backed by Tundra Oil & Gas



Tundra is proud to support one of Manitoba's most celebrated summer traditions as a Diamond Plus Sponsor of the Virden Indoor Rodeo. With deep roots in the Virden community and across the province, the company is honoured to be a part of this special weekend.

The rodeo draws top competitors from across Canada to the rural community of Virden each year. Generations come together for three days of thrilling competition, entertainment, and the chance to connect with family and friends at Tundra Oil & Gas Place.

As a major oil producer in Manitoba, Tundra understands that energy is essential to daily life—powering everything from farm operations to transportation and industry. The company remains focused on advancing innovation and strengthening environmental practices to develop natural resources in a safe, responsible and sustainable way for the future.

Community investment remains a cornerstone of their approach. Through ongoing partnerships and support for local initiatives, Tundra contributes to programs and organizations that enhance quality of life across the region. From education grants to funding for environmental initiatives, or helping maintain important community spaces, the company is committed to making a positive and lasting impact.

Rodeo doesn't just celebrate western heritage; it provides important economic and social benefits for the community and brings people together to showcase everything Virden has to offer.

"At its heart, the rodeo community reflects the same values we strive for in our industry—hard work, respect, integrity and looking out for one another," Avery Brigden, Surface Land Representative, Tundra Oil & Gas said. "Tundra is proud to support the Virden Indoor Rodeo and shares pride in this uniquely great community."

As anticipation builds for another worldclass rodeo that punches above its weight class, Tundra extends its best wishes to organizers, volunteers, competitors, and fans and looks forward to another safe, successful, and unforgettable Virden Indoor Rodeo.

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A photograph of the exterior of a Ford dealership in Virden. The building features a modern design with large glass windows and doors. The Ford logo is prominently displayed on the left side of the facade, and the word "VIRDEN" is written in large, blue, outlined letters on the right side. The building is set against a clear blue sky.

BULL RIDING SCORING

REF TO
WRITER

GERRY
NOLAN



Have you ever wondered how a bull rider gets his score for the bull he just rode? Well,

here is how it is done.

Bull riding is scored out of a maximum of 100 points,

split evenly with 50 points for the rider and 50 points for the bull. A rider must stay on the bull for a full 8 seconds to qualify for a score. Touching the bull or themselves with their free hand results in immediate disqualification and no score.

The 8 second rule. The clock starts when the bull's shoulder or hip crosses the

plane of the chute. The clock stops at the 8 second buzzer or when the rider gets bucked off, or if his free hand touches the bull or his body or the ground.

No score is if the rider falls off before the 8 seconds.

Judging the rider. Two to four judges watch from the arena, giving the rider up to 50 points each in control and balance. The judge looks for how well the rider stays centred, balanced and in rhythm with the bull's movements. Additional points can be earned if

the rider actively and smoothly matches the movement of the bull or pulls their toes and legs away to show extreme control.

Judging the bull. The bull is scored out of 50 points by the judges regardless of how long a rider stays on the bull.

Difficulty. Judges reward the bulls that display high power, speed, agility and aggressive bucking. Factors include how high the bull bucked and kicking his hind legs, drops its front end and spins or switches direction

abruptly.

Understanding the scores. Most average scores are 80-85 points. Exceptional scores would be 90 percent, which is rare. The maximum score is 100 percent of course. This has only been accomplished once in official bull riding history.

Wade Leslie rode the bull Wolfman, for the perfect score on October 26, 1991.

Hopefully this helps you understand the concept of bull riding scores.

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SPORTS

DIAMOND NOTES: WESTMAN SOFTBALL PLAYERS STORM TO PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Regional softball team featuring local players had great success at the Softball Manitoba AA Provincial Championships last weekend.

The U11 Westman Storm was 6-0 and won gold at the 11U AA provincials in Brandon. Also in Brandon, the Westman Storm beat the Westman Heat 19-12 for gold at the 13U AA provincial championships.

At the Baseball Manitoba 11U AA Tier 1 Provincial Championships in Winkler, the Reston/Hartney team beat North Winnipeg 10-3 in its last game to finish with a 1-3 record.

Regional teams also competed at various championships. WestBran was 2-2 at the Baseball Manitoba 18U AAA Tier 2 Provincial Championships in Winnipeg. Midwest finished second.

The Oildome team made it to the semifinals of the Baseball Manitoba 15U AA Tier 2 Provincial Championships in Seine River.

The Oildome compiled a 3-2 record at the Baseball Manitoba 13U AA Tier 1 Provincial Championships in Portage.

Look for more on these provincial championships in upcoming issues of the Empire-Advance.

Alexa Banga

Virden's Alexa Banga was a key player for a revived U19 Westman Magic softball team.

The regional program, based in Brandon, had a team in 2023. The next two summers it combined with other regions to field a squad in the age group. Banga was important to the 2026 team in many ways.

"Alexa was an integral part of our team this season as our starting catcher and clean-up hitter," said Hailey Clark, who coached the team with Landon Desjardin. "She is a natural leader. She brought a maturity and understanding of the game well beyond her years, helping guide and support her teammates both on and off the field. Her positive attitude, steady presence, and dedication to the sport made her someone we could always count on. Alexa's impact reached far beyond her performance on the field. She was an absolute pleasure to coach and I look forward to seeing what her future brings."

Banga has committed to study and play at Vermont State University Castleton.

SWBL Awards

The South West Baseball League announced last week that the Rivers Comets' Scott Beever won the SWBL Most Valuable Player award by one vote over the Reston Rockets' John Patmore and Ty Paddock of the Oak River Dodgers.

As previously noted in the Empire-Advance, the Rockets' Jamie Williamson won the league batting title with a .579 average.

The Comets' Hayden Mackadenski was named the SWBL's Rookie of the Year and Top Pitcher. He led the league with a 0.29 earned-run average.

The Wawanesa Brewers' Brock Fisher won the Mark Minor Award. The prestigious award recognizes "a player or team official that shows dedication to the team and

community, and is named to honour the memory of former Lyleton Leaf Mark Minor." Fisher has been part of the Brewers for 22 years.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The U11 Westman Storm won gold at the Softball Manitoba 11U AA Provincial Championship.

WELL WATER TESTING

Assiniboine West Watershed District will be coordinating well water testing days. Shipping will be covered by AWWD

Consent forms will need to be signed in order to allow AWWD to receive individual test results for the purpose of enhancing and protecting drinking water

SAMPLING KIT PICK UP/DROP OFF LOCATIONS

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Use one (1) sterilized 100ml bottle.

TEST 2: \$62

- Includes test 1, plus Nitrogen-Nitrates & Nitrogen-Nitrites
Use one (1) sterilized 100ml bottle
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TEST 3: \$200

- Includes test 1, test 2, plus Calcium, Magnesium, Sodium, Potassium, Manganese, Zinc, Iron, Chloride, Sulphate, pH, Hardness, Conductivity, Arsenic, Barium, Barium, Fluoride, Uranium & Copper
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TEST 4: \$229

- Includes test 1, test 2, test 3 plus Lead
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Use one (1) sterilized 1L bottle

SAMPLING KITS CAN BE PICKED UP A WEEK BEFORE DROP OFF DATE
DROP OFF SAMPLES BETWEEN 9:00 - 11:30AM

WEDNESDAY, August 5th

ERICKSON - Municipality of Clanwilliam-Erickson office
RAPID CITY - R.M. of Oakview satellite office
MINNEDOSA - R.M. of Minto-Odanah office
OAK RIVER - AWWD office
ONANOLE - Municipality of Harrison Park office
RIVERS - Riverdale Municipality office
SANDY LAKE - Pickup: Heritage Co-op &
Drop off: Fire Hall

STRATHCLAIR - Community Centre
NEWDAL - Pickup: Post office &
Drop off: Drop-in centre

MONDAY, August 10th

MINIOTA - AWWD Office
BIRTLE - Prairieview Municipality office
MCAULEY - R.M. of Ellice-Archie office
SHOAL LAKE - R.M. of Yellowhead office
HAMIOTA - Hamiota Municipality office
KENTON - R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth satellite office
ELKHORN - Pickup: Municipal Office
Drop off: Leisure Centre
VIRDEN - Town of Virden office
ST. LAZARE - Town Office

TUESDAY, August 11th

ROSSBURN - Rossburn Municipality office
ROBLIN - Municipality of Roblin office
INGLIS - AWWD office
RUSSELL - Municipality of Russell-Binscarth office

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= CLASSIFIEDS =

For Sale

MORTGAGE SALE

The land and building known as 11 Lennox Street, Goodlands, Manitoba, as described in Certificate of Title No. 2781544/2 will be sold by public auction by a Licensed Auctioneer on August 19th, 2026, at 10:30 a.m.

The auction sale will be held by way of video or teleconference.

There will be no in-person attendees at the auction.

In order to participate you must pre-register at least 24 hours prior to the auction by contacting Matthew Underwood at either (204) 954-6455 or auctions@fillmoreriley.com.

The Vendor is informed that the property consists of a one storey dwelling approximately 792 square feet with kitchen, living room, two bedrooms, 1 1/2 bathrooms, office and recreation room in partially finished basement on a lot with frontage of 100 feet.

Realty taxes (excluding any accruing water charges) are paid to December 31st, 2025.

Prior Charges: Nil

TERMS OF SALE

A deposit of \$12,000.00 by way of certified cheque or bank draft payable to Fillmore Riley LLP, or cash (the cash component of the deposit not to exceed \$7,500.00), and the balance according to conditions which will be available electronically by contacting the individual below prior to the auction. The property will be sold subject to a Reserve Bid of \$70,000.00 plus such other additional and incidental costs which may be incurred by the Vendor from the 24th day of July, 2026 to the date of auction and which costs will be announced prior to the commencement of the sale.

The auction sale will be conducted pursuant to an Order for Sale issued by the District Registrar. Certain parties may be prohibited from purchasing the property, including but not limited to, parties who by virtue of their employment or relationship to a person involved in the sale process would have special knowledge of the circumstances pertaining to the sale. For more information and a list of prohibited purchasers please visit: www.teranetmanitoba.ca

Should the successful bidder have attended by teleconference and/or video conference, the bidder will have 24 hours to execute the Auction Sale Conditions and to provide them together with the deposit to our office as set out below.

Further information may be obtained from:

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

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Notice

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APPLICATION TO
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Rural Municipality of Ellice - Archie

Election Date: October 28, 2026

If you cannot attend the election in person and wish to vote by sealed envelope, please mail or fax this request (fax will be the quickest method) to:

Constance Tanguay, Senior Election Official
Rural Municipality of Ellice-Archie
Box 100,
Saint-Lazare, MB. R0M 1Y0
Telephone: (204) 683-2241
Fax: (204) 683-2317

THE REQUEST TO VOTE BY SEALED ENVELOPE MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE ELECTION OFFICIAL BEFORE OCTOBER 27, 2026.

- A ballot package will be mailed to you with instructions. If your application is received less than 12 days before the election, you may make arrangements to have the ballot delivered to you.
- If you apply in person, a ballot package will be given to you at that time.
- Please mark your ballot and return it promptly to ensure the deadline is met.
- Ballots received after 8:00 p.m. on Election Day will not be accepted.

To qualify to vote, you must be:

1. A Canadian citizen
2. 18 years of age on Election Day.
3. A resident or owner of land in the municipality for at least six months on Election Day.

***Important: If applying in writing, you must enclose photocopies of ID** (an official document issued by the federal, provincial or municipal government that contains your name, address and photograph).

I am unable to attend the regular advance voting to cast my ballot(s) for the 2026 Election. I therefore request that a ballot package be sent to the address below.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone No: _____

Declaration: I am qualified to vote in this election but unable to go in person to a voting station on the Election Day or on advance voting days. I have not otherwise already voted in this election.

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Government programs available to help with water damage

By Greg Nesbitt

MLA FOR RIDING MOUNTAIN

Excessive rainfall and overland flooding caused extensive damage to many areas of Manitoba last month.

To speed up payments for individuals with basement flooding between June 6 and July 1, the Manitoba government is using a Rapid Residential Assessment Model (RRAM).

The model calculates an initial assistance payment based on factors such as water depth, basement size, room type, level of finishing and restoration needs. It also includes emergency work costs such as water extraction, removal of damaged materials and disposal.

The RRAM covers building restoration costs only. Damaged household contents are assessed separately. Assistance for household contents reflects the average replacement cost of basic and essential items rather than the original purchase price or the cost of premium replacements. Appliances are reimbursed based on invoices up to program maximums.

Assistance may also be available for eligible building components such as furnaces, hot water tanks and water treatment systems, as well as structural and site repairs caused by flooding.

For eligible individual claims, assistance is capped at \$3 million, less a deductible, up to the cost of repairs or the assessed value of the property, whichever is lower.

Most eligible Manitobans have already received the initial \$500 payment. Applicants are encouraged to submit photos, receipts, invoices and estimates as soon as possible. For more information go to www.gov.mb.ca/mfrp.

Manitoba Agriculture has eliminated 2025 late-filing penalties for impacted agricultural producers in municipalities and First Nation communities that declared a state of emergency due to flooding. Producers outside these areas who missed the June 30 filing deadline due to flooding may appeal for a waiver of late-filing penalties.

The maximum interim payment available to producers enrolled in the 2026 AgriStability program year is being increased to 75 per cent from 50 per cent of the estimated final payment. This change will improve cash flow for producers by allowing them to receive a larger interim payment within weeks of submitting a completed application. Producers who have already received an interim payment will automatically receive a top-up to the 75 per cent level.

Manitoba Agriculture has also implemented late participation for the 2026 AgriStability program year, allowing producers who did not enrol by the April 30 deadline to still participate in the program, albeit with a reduced benefit. Producers who wish to participate through late participation must pay the required fee before submitting their 2026 AgriStability enrolment.

There is special recognition available for Manitoba farms that have been in families for 100, 125 and 150 years.

The Century Farm Program was introduced in 1981 to recognize families who have maintained continuous family ownership for 100 years or more. To date, 1919 farms have been recognized in our province.

Many fascinating stories have been written by century farm families in recounting the early days and years of the pioneers establishing farms in Manitoba. Families who arrived in Manitoba, without any of the conveniences we take for granted today, often walked many miles to stake claims and build temporary housing in order to survive their first winter. It is because of the foresight and determination of these early pioneers that we have fully developed agricultural communities today.

One of the farms recognized this year was the Les and Donna Odell family farm near Hargrave. I had the honour of being on hand on Saturday, July 11 to present a gate sign and a certificate on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture to the family and the many friends gathered on their farm. Their farm is actually 124 years old so they will be eligible to apply for another honour in 2027.

The Heritage Farm Program was introduced in 2010 to recognize families who have maintained continuous family ownership for 125 years or more. To date, 161 farms have been recognized in our province.

The Legacy Farm Program was introduced in 2020 to recognize families who have maintained continuous family ownership for 150 years or more. To date, eight farms have been recognized in our province.

To apply for Century, Heritage or Legacy Farm recognition apply online at <https://forms.gov.mb.ca/family-farm-recognition-program/> for submission, or you can print the form and mail to Manitoba Agriculture, Box 160, Carberry, MB, R0K 0H0.

If your farm qualifies, you will receive a gate sign to proudly proclaim your pioneering roots.

Just a reminder that if you or anyone you know is celebrating a birthday or anniversary and is eligible for special greetings from elected officials, please contact our



MLA for Riding Mountain, Greg Nesbitt

FILE PHOTO

office or go to the website: www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/greeting/index.html

Birthdays from age 65 and up in five-year increments are recognized, as are anniversaries from 25 years and up in five-year increments.

For special greetings from the Governor General of Canada and the King, please visit: www.gg.ca/en/contact-us/birthday-anniversary-greetings. Their criteria for greetings, however, is more restricted than those being requested from the provincial Greetings Branch.

I was honoured to attend the 105th birthday celebration for Edith Edmundson at the Prairie Mountain Regional Museum near Shoal Lake on Saturday, June 13. This remarkable woman, who lived near or in Shoal Lake her entire life, is now residing with her daughter in Langley, BC.

Summer is slipping by and soon harvest will be underway.

By the end of the summer, I will have attended dozens of events throughout the constituency, including a number of community parades. It is wonderful to reconnect with the citizens of these communities as they celebrate at their community events. Thank you for the hospitality!

Greg Nesbitt is the Member of Legislative Assembly for the Riding Mountain constituency. He can be reached at 204-759-3313, toll-free 1-844-877-7767 or by email at gregnesbittmla@mymts.net. When emailing or leaving a message at our office, please include your name, address and a daytime phone number.

Updates from Assiniboine West Watershed District

Submitted

By ASSINIBOINE WEST WATERSHED DISTRICT

Assiniboine West Watershed District (AWWD) is set to receive record funding again in 2026. The recent announcement of 1.8 million dollars provided to AWWD by the Growing Outcomes in Watersheds (GROW) trust fund combined with other funding from other government and private-sector sources will total approximately 3.8 million dollars in funding from sources outside the watershed.

These resources fund many different programs, all aimed at building a more resilient watershed, protecting critical habitat and assisting landowners in their stewardship of the local environment. As it stands, for every \$1 provided by the Watershed District's member municipalities between \$7 and \$8 will be returned in the form of projects. These numbers don't account for the economic value attached to environmental benefits our projects achieve such as improved crop and livestock performance or harder-to-measure benefits, such as improved water quality. These investments allow AWWD to continue delivering practical, on-the-ground projects that benefit producers and the environment.

AWWD has worked with the Rural Municipality of

Minto-Odanah for well over a decade now, building small on-farm water retention projects designed in part to slow overland flows and protect infrastructure. These impacts became obvious as of late, when intense rains and flooding experienced at the end of June could have been much worse if not slowed by a series of small holding pond structures built across the Municipality.

“The small dams and water retention structures that Minto-Odanah have built over the years, many with help from the Watershed District, have reduced the recent flood impacts and protected infrastructure considerably”

- Doug Dowsett, Reeve of Minto-Odanah, noted.

This is but one example of how long-term watershed projects can provide measurable benefits when extreme weather occurs.

Our programs continue to receive increased uptake by landowners, which has presented some new challenges. We are increasingly seeing more project interest and applications than the current funding can support, a challenge we haven't had for 5 years or more.

As a result, AWWD's project approvals committee recently discussed making changes to some of our funding levels and criteria in an effort to spread funding further, support more projects, and increase our impact across more acres. Funding details and any program changes will be finalized later this month and shared through our website and other communications channels.



Medieval days reborn at Cooks Creek



PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

These noble 'knights' had it out, and at the end, embraced - they were brothers, after all.



Draft style steeds charge down the field, as 'knights' in full armour seek to lance each other.



Tinkerbell/Peter Pan duo - not exactly historically medieval but typical of many costumed attendees at Cooks Creek Medieval Festival.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

We were plunged into a medieval world where we witnessed the Society of Tilt and Lance Cavalry jousting aboard draft sized cavalry steeds.

Last weekend Dale and I headed for Winnipeg and points beyond, primarily to take in Cooks Creek Medieval Festival along with our family who are consummate fans of Lord of the Rings (By JRR Tolkien) and of sword fighting.

The festival was unbelievable - 'you had to be there'. However, I will share...

Setting the scene, it was a busy Friday evening around the 'Peg. The Blue Bombers were playing the Calgary Stampeders. Pembina Hwy and other central routes were jammed. The Bombers lost to the Calgary Stampeders with a score of 52-30, as football fans will know. And it was a record setting night for the Calgary Stampeders as running back Tyreik McAllister became the first player to have three different touchdown scores (rushing, receiving, returning) in a half,

in CFL history. And QB Vernon Adams Jr. made history Friday night, setting a new benchmark for most touchdown passes without throwing an interception since the season start.

On Saturday morning we met several of the Bombers drowning their sorrow with a Tim's. Dale said to a huge Bomber, 'next time' and he dourly replied, 'next time'.

Also in the Tim's lineup, stranger than usual customers sported medieval bloomers and blouses (no witches caps, that would come later) - getting their jo for the trek to Cooks Creek festival.

About an hour later, following a stream of traffic and signs we found parking attendants at the grassy lot and an extraordinary lineup of people on foot - several blocks long (should have got there earlier).

It was a 'huh?' moment, not seeing tank tops and shorts as you'd imagine on a 30-degree day, but women in gowns, men in tunics and hose; yes, hats, capes - nobles and peasantry. At least 50 per cent of attendees were costumed, although not all entirely

true to history.

I was told about 300 volunteers made the weekend happen. Food and drink were available, booths sold wares, provided historical information and a blacksmith was forging medieval weaponry.

The 2026 Cooks Creek Medieval Festival takes place on the grounds of Immaculate Conception Church, a Ukrainian Catholic Church designated a Manitoba Provincial Heritage Site in 1986 and a National Historic Site in 1997. In 1954, the construction of the Grotto, a replica of the Lady of Lourdes Grotto in France, began. It was a great place to cool off!

The cathedral continues as a place of worship, also used for cultural gatherings and the festival is a fundraiser for the cathedral.

Within the cathedral, people came and went as medieval minstrels played.

Historical Armoured Combat Sports Association and the Valour Historical European Martial Arts Academy & Winnipeg Knightly Arts were examples of the full day of activities.

Lemonade and Smiles



PHOTO BY LAUREN HALOWATY

Morgan Henry, a local Virden Fire Fighter stopped for a refreshment of lemonade served by his very own son, Mason, who attends Funshine Daycare. The lemonade was served and donations were accepted throughout the afternoon to put towards a 'special treat' day for the kids at Funshine Daycare.



August 13 & 14, 2026, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm
Exhibition Place at Red River Exhibition Park
3977 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB
FREE Admission & FREE Parking

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For a list of exhibitors and products, please visit the event web page at:

RREXHIBITIONPARK.COM

A blank canvas to a labour of love



The Burnette’s backyard Oasis is a beautiful sight to see.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

By Lauren Halowaty
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

When Caroline and William Burnette moved into their home

in December of 2018, the yard was a blank canvas waiting for a vision. The very next summer, that vision began to take root. They planted a single crab-apple tree alongside twenty-six rose bushes, laying the foundation for what would become one of the most vibrant corners of town. By May of 2020, they took their backyard oasis a step further by hiring Alternative Landscaping from Brandon to construct a tranquil centrepiece pond, turning the space into a true sanctuary.

Over the seven years since they first arrived at the property, the Burnettes have filled every corner of it with a breathtaking tapestry of colour, texture, and life. Astroll through their garden reveals an extraordinary mix of perennials, from lovely delphiniums, lush hydrangeas, and fragrant peonies to delicate clematis, arching irises, and endless varieties of lilies. Vibrant displays of hollyhocks, cornflowers, blanket flowers, and poppies dance in the breeze, while low-growing treasures like lamb’s ears, lady’s mantle, lungwort, and flowering ferns weave through the foliage. Vibrant patches of bee balm and coral bells draw a steady stream of happy butterflies and humming bees, keeping the yard alive with constant movement.

The magic of the Burnette Garden lies in the sheer dedication and careful touch behind it. Each season they nurture the petunias and geraniums from seed, coaxing them into lush, cascading blooms that spill over hanging baskets. A tip to keeping their garden so vibrant: collect and use rainwater as much as possible to give plants the natural hydration they crave, and feed hanging baskets regularly with Shake’n Feed to keep the blooms robust all summer long.

Through seven seasons of hard work, patience, and absolute passion, Caroline and William have cultivated more than just a backyard, they have created a vibrant oasis that brightens the entire community, making them one of the truly deserving winners of the 2026 Miracle-Gro Best Garden Selection.



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“ Having a great billet family completely took away the stress of sending our 17-year-old son away from home for the first time. For a young hockey player, navigating his first season away, they provided the exact safe, caring environment he needed. By fully including him in their everyday life, they gave us total peace of mind. It means the world to us that this experience has sparked a close relationship that will last for life. ”

C. Laramée
La Broquerie, MB