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Town to develop airport property



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

June 2025, Minister for Rural and Northern Affairs Glen Simard landed at Virden Regional Airport bringing a funding announcement for airport expansion. To meet him, (L-R): Coun. Travis Penner, Clayton Canart (Reeve Wallace-Woodworth), Brock Andrew (Air Andrew), Coun. Marc Savy, Scott Andrew (Air Andrew), Mayor Tina Williams, Scott Phillips (Sifton), Rhonda Stewart (Virden CAO at that time) and Coun. Bruce Dunning (Airport Commission Chair).

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE ADVANCE

There are a few hoops to jump through before a subdivision to create eight new lots can become a reality at Virden Regional Airport - RJ (Bob) Andrew Field. But the creation of those eight new lots is in the works and it's an exciting project for the town.

Town of Virden Councillor, Airport Commission Chairperson Bruce Dunning said, "It's very good news in that it demonstrates the potential growth of airport activity." He added, "There is a waiting list of persons interested in acquiring lots."

At the Town of Virden council meeting of Oct. 20, a conditional use hearing was held as the next step to create the airport subdivision for the east side of the airport.

The recent airport runway expansion project made a subdivision necessary, forcing the airport to move existing hangars due to runway proximity.

Private plane owners are currently looking for hangars and Dunning envisions businesses such as plane repairs and aviation related sales and rentals coming to the subdivision in the future.

The matter came to Town Council for conditional use approval. Although the area is already zoned for industrial use, Town of Virden development officer and building inspector Cory Nixon explained, "Airport related facilities are listed as a conditional use in the industrial zoning."

Nixon further stated, "It's a condition of subdivision to have the conditional use for each lot applied to them to ensure that in the future they're used for airport and airport-related activities."

Historical 'treasures' revealed

As well as the subdivision legislation, the province had several other requests which included a Heritage Impact study for two reasons. Nixon referred to pre-settlement history: "It's because of the creek nearby. There could have been travelers back when."

A more recent historical treasure included the airport training facility in the war years. Nixon disclosed that a coin (nickel or a dime) was discovered as well another metal item. "A base plate for a flare," he said. "I don't know what that looks like, but that's the two items that they noted."

There's been a traffic study requested by the province but it may be determined to be unnecessary until further development takes place.

A map of the area shows a proposed public road that would bring traffic from the existing Government Road that borders the airport and fire department training site near the creek. It would adjoin another proposed east-west road to additional future development lots.

Dunning did not say what airport lots would cost. "Final pricing has not been determined at this time. That will be a decision for the new council," he said.

Airport fees

From the Oct. 5 Airport Commission's draft minutes, two recommendations were brought to Council that included fees for use.

Dunning made a motion for the creation of a dedicated airport operational and capital reserve, funded in part by operational surplus, to be explored by the Town Administration.

Councillor Travis Penner, also a member of the Airport Commission, seconded that motion and council voted in favour.

Dunning's second motion: "That the Town implement the charging of landing fees for at least Medivac's fees and revenues to be determined and be drafted as a proposed schedule in the Municipal Fees and Rates Bylaw. Seconded by Penner, that motion was also approved.

This will go back to the Airport Commission where the minutes will be ratified, before returning to council. The Commission expects to have these fees in place by the end of 2026.

VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

HOME GAME
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30
VS. SWAN VALLEY
STAMPEDE
PUCK DROPS AT 7:30PM

Inside...



TOWN OF VIRDEN DEBATE

P2



TWO HALLOWEEN EVENTS

P12 & 16

Candidates' debate tackles growth, and red tape



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

At the podium for the sponsor, the Virден Empire-Advance, Beth McConnell, her father Jeff McConnell (moderator), Candidates for Virден Town Council, two mayoral candidates, are Bruce Dunning and Tina Williams (incumbent). For council: Lomar Girardin (new), Lynette Grumpelt (incumbent), Gord Halowaty (new), Alfred Hunt (new), Tom Makarchuk (new), and incumbents Tara Maxwell, Travis Penner and Marc Savy.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Ballots have been cast and Virден's mayor is elected - itself a story. A new council of six out of eight candidates will soon be sworn into office. Here's a sampling of how the debate went. For your interest, the full debate is available for viewing on empireadvance.ca home page.

On Oct. 22, over 100 people attended to hear the candidates in Sunrise Banquet Hall (TOGP), with former mayor Jeff McConnell presenting questions.

McConnell commended the candidates for running and said, "I was reminded of the very first time I ever did one of these debates or forums myself. And that was way back in the Aud Theatre. Doug McClellan, I think, was a moderator for that."

Candidates had three minutes to introduce themselves, one minute to respond to each question and three minutes to wrap up.

A question that could affect any residents and potential developers: If you could change one thing in the town's zoning bylaws, what would it be and why?

Marc Savy said the bylaw document is complex. He deferred to development officer Cory Nixon and said, "You know, I'm really glad that we have the capable staff to be able to interpret that."

Savy would like to see a simplified booklet of the rules and regulations that home and business owners have to abide by in building and renovating. He added that response time to permits could be improved.

Travis Penner stated, "I think our bylaws are fairly standard, comparable to other towns. We have conditional uses... if I could change one thing, I think it might be the enforcement," which he said is slow and difficult at present.

Tara Maxwell advocated for a simpler process and said, "There are a lot of things that we cannot control as a town. But said, "I'm going to make it my mission to help cut red tape in this zoning bylaw when I can, if I can."

Tom Makarchuk said, "Any change to the zoning bylaws needs to be looked at on a project-by-project basis. It can't be just a blanket change to bylaws."

Alfred Hunt deferred to others' comments.

Gord Halowaty also did not have anything to add saying, "I'm

as green as green coming in here. So I'll agree with the other councillors here beside me here."

Lynette Grumpelt said of a recent housing study with Dennis County Development Partnership, "Anything we can do to reduce the obstacles in the development of starter homes, including modular homes, multi-unit complexes, secondary suites, and tiny homes would be incredibly beneficial to the town." She added, "Reviewing zoning of current vacant lots around town to maximize their development readiness could be of great value."

Lomar Girardin concurred with simplifying regulations for homebuilding.

Tina Williams agreed with enforcement of town bylaws. "I'm thrilled that we changed things with fencing so you don't have to go through permits," she said referred to a guidance pamphlet available in the town office.

"We have too many things in the zoning bylaw that have to come to us for conditional (hearings)... if you're a new business or person moving to town and what you want to accomplish needs to come to a conditional hearing, that may put you off on coming or doing new things in town."

Regarding simplification Bruce Dunning noted the town's zoning bylaw amendments fall under the Manitoba Planning Act and the TransCanada West Development Plan. "Combined, there's over 500 pages of directives and requirements that the town residents and developers have to be aware of and abide by." He said a simplified and town-specific zoning summary would help streamline the approval process.

Candidates addressed issues around streets/sidewalk conditions, e-scooter safety, transparency with ratepayers, evaluation of proposed projects, personal involvement

in town organizations, a curling rink addition to TOGP, what would you change in Virден and, is a amalgamation with Wallace-Woodworth a good idea.

At the close of the evening moderator McConnell noted the choice of Williams and Dunning for the mayoral election.

Having served on council and as mayor he said, "In those five times I served, every time the mayor was appointed... we're very fortunate in this community to have so many people prepared to give us choice for our council."

He handed the microphone to the evening's sponsors, the publishers of Virден Empire-Advance. Ken Waddell, having served as Neepawa mayor, said to the candidates, "You're in an enviable position, but you're also in a tough position. And after you're elected, it might even be a tougher position."

Christine Waddell said, "I've been a candidate, more than once, at more than one level. Just running, you're winning." Christine urged the candidates to remain involved no matter if they won or lost. "Help build the community better by staying involved with those who are fortunate enough to be elected."

She extended thanks to the community of Virден for the support of the newspaper and said to the audience, "You do have vibrant, privately owned businesses. And that is impressive."

Rhonda Stewart Retirement



PHOTO BY JOHN DAVIDSON

The Town of Virден hosted a celebration in honor of Rhonda Stewart on her retirement after 35 years of service with the Town, on October 23, 2026. Joining her in the celebration are, Front Row: June Gregor, retired CAO of RM of Pipestone, Rhonda Stewart, Jackie Clayton, CAO Norfolk Treherne, Charlotte Parham, retired CAO Municipality of Souris-Glenwood, Back row: Garth Mitchell, retired CAO RM of Wallace-Woodworth, Chad Davies, CAO Harrison Park, Grant McMillan, retired General Manager of Corporate Services City of Brandon, Ivan Bruneau, CAO RM of Victoria.

HALLOWEEN

Map



FIND THE BEST DECORATED HOUSES THIS HALLOWEEN

- 263 OXFORD ST
- 260 OXFORD ST W
- 356 OXFORD ST W
- 364 BRIDGE ST W
- 308 BRIDGE ST W
- CLEMENTS PLACE BAY
- 371 KING ST WEST
- 376 KING ST WEST
- 242 KING ST EAST
- 170 HARGRAVE ST EAST
- 333 SCARTH DR
- 421 SCARTH DR
- 520 SCARTH DR
- 571 SCARTH DR
- WALLACE DISTRICT FIRE STATION
- 330 11 AVE S
- 275 RAGLAN ST EAST
- 225 RAGLAN ST EAST - THE SCARE AWAY HUNGER LOCATION.

- 272 LYONS ST W
- 331 LYONS ST W
- 364 LYONS ST W
- 444 LYONS ST W
- 864 EIGHTH AVE S
- 998 GALT ST W
- 309 GALT ST W
- 632 GOVERNMENT RD
- 659 THOMAS DR
- 150 THOMAS DR
- 13 GARDNER DR

- 323 BENNETT CRES
- 317 BENNETT CRES
- 311 BENNETT CRES
- 269 BENNETT CRES
- 723 NINTH AVE. S
- 473 QUEEN ST W
- 265 NELSON ST E
- 296 NELSON ST E
- 635 NELSON ST W
- AND MANY MORE SPOOKTACULAR HOMES

SCARE AWAY HUNGER THIS HALLOWEEN

BE SURE TO BRING YOUR NON-PARISHABLE FOOD ITEM TO 225 RAGLAN FOR DONATIONS

In My Opinion: Do we even know who the EU is?

By Anne Davison
RIVERS BANNER

I cannot rhyme off the countries who became the EU. Who are these 20+ countries? Why would Canada want to become an "associate member"? And what does that even mean?

I have family and friends in the country with which we have shared the longest international border. You probably do too. Sorry Prime Minister Carney, but friendship with America could and should outlast you.

RM of Pipestone candidates were asked, during their forum, how and when municipal council should involve ratepayers in decisions.

Pipestone candidate Dan Ducharme said, "If a decision affects a large number of residents, involves significant spending, changes service levels, or otherwise shapes the community for years to come, public input should be part of the process."

The Canadian prime minister could take a lesson. The prime minister has taken it upon himself to hook us up, in one form or another, with the European Union.

The European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen said (reported in The Guardian), "I would like to work with you on opening the door for Canada to be the first associate member of the EU."

Since that public declaration of love mid-September, PM Carney has called for a "unique

alliance" with the EU.

Michelle Rempel Garner, Conservative Shadow Minister for Immigration, is calling on the prime minister to tell Canadians what his proposed deal with the European Union means for immigration. And she wants to know before the Canada-EU Summit on Thursday and Friday.

She said, "In September, the Prime Minister told the European Parliament that people from the EU should be able to live, work and study in Canada. He made that commitment before saying anything to our Parliament or directly to Canadians, and Monday (Oct. 26) in Question Period, the immigration minister refused to provide any details."

Europe is a romantic Canadian tourist destination and visa versa. But keep in mind, the UK left the union in 2020 – Brexit. And France is heating up, actually on fire.

So, just who is the EU? According to Rockwool Foundation – Berlin, by 2024 the European Union had over 63 million foreign-born residents, representing 14.1 per cent of the total population and most of them, 71.4 per cent originated from non-EU countries.

Remple Garner says, "A leaked document suggests the government could remove safeguards in the existing Canada-EU trade agreement, CETA. Under the existing agreement labour mobility is limited to specific categories of EU citizens for short, defined periods and does not grant access to the general labour market or permanent

residence."

For several years all of Canada heard the ins and outs of why Alberta should or should not secede. What's the rush to make an agreement with the EU?

Canadians deserve more information. I would like to hear answers to the Immigration Critic's questions:

How many more non-citizens will this deal bring to Canada, and will they count in the immigration levels plan?

Does greater mobility apply only to EU citizens, or to anyone with EU residency?

Will CETA's migration safeguards remain in place?

What will the impact be on Canadian housing, hospitals, jobs and social services?

Fundamentally – a changing relationship with the EU should be considered a major item requiring a referendum or better yet, make it an election issue.

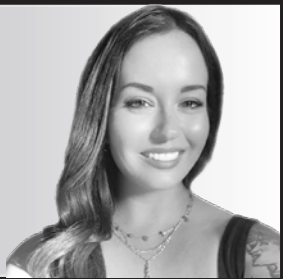
Acclaimed reeve, Ross Tycoles answered: "I would like to see more opportunities for residents to become involved before major decisions are finalized. Sometimes it seems that an issue only receives widespread attention once it has become controversial.... I think it's important to explain the issue, outline the options and financial implications, and give people a reasonable opportunity to provide input."

I agree.

Trick-Or-Sleet, a look back at some spooky weather and what's lingering around the corner this Halloween

TALES FROM
THE ARCHIVE

LAUREN
HALOWATY



On October 30, 1971, a record snowfall, 11 inches in Winnipeg, up to 21 inches in Gimli, and 15 inches in other rural areas, turned roads and highways into a motorist's nightmare during that weekend. It was especially tough for the children who did not get to go trick-or-treating due to the weather as Halloween was observed on the 30th that year, presumably cause' actual Halloween fell on a Sunday, yet I was unable to find the exact reasoning why.

Mother Nature is not one to be fooled with, and in 1971 she played the biggest Halloween trick that year, bringing the storm which took nearly everybody by surprise. Roads in Winnipeg were

covered with a thin layer of ice when the storm began early Saturday, Oct. 30, 1971, and were topped with 11 inches of snow during the day and night. The most snowfall for Oct. 30 previously recorded before that was 3.3 inches in 1884. A spokesman for the Winnipeg Police Department at the time said, "there were lots of minor accidents, but not as many as we had expected."

Motorists, pedestrians, and the ghosts and goblins of Halloween bore the brunt of the storm. Cab drivers, and anybody who owned a tow truck or a tractor with a shovel, literally cleaned up. Police departments, which usually keep a close watch as trick-or-treaters make their rounds, said most



Sometimes there is snow on the pumpkin. FILE PHOTO

children must have taken a look outside Saturday evening (October 30) and decided it just wasn't worth it. Most departments reported seeing only half the number usually out that night.

The Provincial Highways Department reported some trouble getting equipment to work because some was still in shops being readied for the winter. A spokesman for the highways department at that time said highways in the Interlake region were worst hit, and added driving throughout southeastern Manitoba

was hazardous. A spokesman for the weather office in 1971 said it wasn't the storm that took them by surprise, just the fact that it passed over Manitoba. He said it originated in the Dakotas, south of the Canadian-U.S. border, and appeared to be heading northeast toward Lake Superior. Instead, it veered north, caught the southeastern part of Manitoba, and headed for Hudson Bay.

The Virden Empire-Advance stated in their 1971 paper post-Halloween that "Hallowe'en is quiet", which was of-

ficially observed on Saturday, October 30. "The weather conditions for trick-or-treaters, as the first snowfall spread across the whole province, was far from ideal and any sort of travelling was very treacherous."

Looking back over the years in Manitoba, the highest temperature was 17.8 C in 1903, the lowest temperature was -15.6 C in 1884, the lowest daily high was -8.3 C in 1879 and the highest daily low was 7.7 C in 2000. This

week on Halloween, trick-or-treat temperatures will be falling towards the freezing mark while milder temperatures could be present across southern Manitoba. Precipitation odds will increase as you work your way east, but this disturbance may bring showers and some gusty winds. Costume verdict: Bundled-up goblins across the western Prairies and maybe a lighter princess costume farther east, but a jacket or waterproof layer could be the play.

JOIN US!

Lisa Erixon, a local author from Lyleton area, will be doing a reading on Tuesday, November 3, 2026 at 7pm at the Reston District Library.

We are excited to host Lisa Erixon in our library.

FOR THE LOVE OF CATS



Reston District Library

220 4th Street, Reston • 204-877-3673

Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



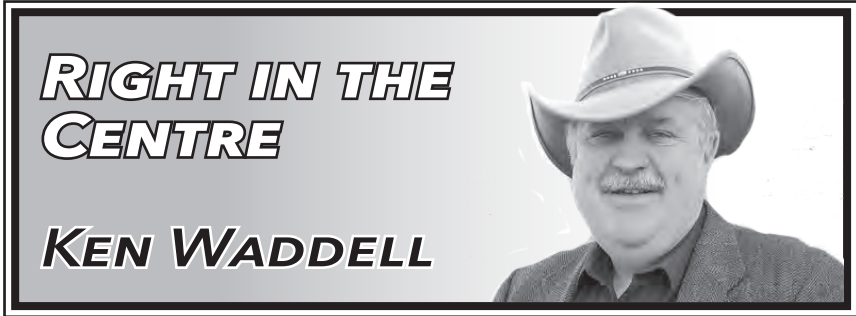
B.C. election shows promise

Last weekend, a political earthquake took place in British Columbia. The now former premier of B.C., David Eby, threw an ill-fated set of dice and called a snap election. It was a bit weird as Eby, a well-rooted NDP premier, had a majority and two years left in his mandate. He thought the Progressive Conservative Party was in disarray and they were. He also thought that somehow people would rally to his cause which he somewhat based on the effects of President Trump and his tariff wars against Canada. What the people of B.C. knew and I don't think Mr. Eby did know, is that while the Trump tariffs are damaging and annoying, there are a lot of other factors in our economy. Unnecessary government regulations are a big drag down, bad attitude is another and lack of capital is a constant obstacle.

For example, we produce a lot of very good beef in Canada and our meat inspection system is so cluttered that beef and beef products move with great difficulty from province to province. I am told there are also huge problems in the trades, trucking and many other areas of the economy.

The people of B.C. have pitched their tent with a plain speaking little known PC premier, Lorne Doerksen, rather than an NDP premier who always looked like he has a headache. That and Eby had a staunch refusal to tell the left wing socialist agenda people to grow up, face reality and understand that some of their policies actually hinder, rather than help people.

Everybody in British Columbia also knows that the various drug injection sites are not really working. Just in Eby's nine years there was 1,000s of drug overdose deaths in B.C.



“ Smart politics would suggest that if a government has a strong mandate, they should implement as many promised changes as they can and do it early. ”

Not directly Eby's fault, but he was the leader and didn't bring about the needed changes. Where else except in the drug trade would you keep believing that soft-on-crime works.

Premier-elect Lorne Doerksen has laid out some of his government's early priorities, such as an independent review of provincial finances and an expert commission to keep hospital emergency rooms open and cut down wait times. Doerksen has promised extensive changes in resource production, not the least of which is tripling of natural gas production by 2035.

He has one of the strongest mandates in B.C. history, if not Canadian history. He is making wise use of that mandate so far. Smart politics would suggest that if a government has a strong mandate, they should implement as many promised changes as they can and do it early. Bureaucracies love to drag out progress but

with a strong mandate, that is not wise nor necessary.

One of Doerksen's biggest challenges will be dealing with the legitimate First Nations concerns and getting past the frivolous ones. There seems to be a mixture of both kinds. And First Nations need to decide if they want the advantages of modern day life or if they want to live in a natural history museum. It's tough to have both.

British Columbia and Canada can make great progress but a lot of negative and silly policies have to be set aside. It's hard not to be optimistic when listening to Doerksen but I am sure his detractors will do their best to drag him down.

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.



It could happen to anyone, right?

I was running errands, trying to find the correct smoke/carbon dioxide alarm, feeling a tad frustrated, had Arie along because she loves car rides....so a fair bit going on in my thoughts. As I approached a dark coloured SUV, ready to place my hand on the handle, a quiet voice stated 'this one's mine'. And it was! My vehicle was parked right next to hers. A dark coloured SUV. Not the same brand, with two big dogs not one little black dog, there were tell tale signs. The young woman was gracious enough to say she had made the same mistake once. And it has happened to me before as well. You would think one could/would learn!

The most dramatic wrong car story happened many years ago. I was at work, like at a workplace, and a woman who had been shopping returned to the store, very indigent. She assumed that while she had been shopping someone had used her vehicle, parked right there in broad daylight on a public street, as a garbage can! She asked if we would dispose of an empty coffee cup, some fast food wrappers and odd papers. Of course we could, so sorry this happened while you were supporting our local business. And then, just moments later, she slunk back in. Could she have all the garbage back? There had to be a story there! Our customer had diligently cleaned someone else's car. Same colour as hers, parked right next to hers. Both with unlocked doors. We commiserated with her dilemma, carefully returned all the garbage and we never saw her again.

I do know that this most recent incident with me blithely thinking your car is mine is not the first or only time. I would wager any money that it won't be the last time either. So far I never, well there is a faint memory of maybe once- entered and sat in a vehicle that was not mine. That driver was gracious enough to ask where I wanted to go!

The reality is that autos do get stolen. Off the street or right off your yard. The reality is that cars have been stolen with passengers already inside, sometimes children. I want to believe that a confused old lady would not be seen as a thief, but times are changing!

There was a time when I left my vehicle unlocked when I was out and about. These key fob things are so much easier to use than actually keying in. With the fob in my hand, or pocket, I simply point and lock or depress the dot and all four doors lock. Marvelous!

There are possible solutions to the car mix up situation. Have one in such a distinct colour that you will never see another like it, or remember your license plate and check before boldly placing your hand on someone else's handle! Thinking about a distinct colour for an easy find — I should do that with my phone case! I can't count the times I lose that rascal. Basic black for the phone case and the car....hmmm

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Costly upgrade prompts suspension of bulk water sales

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

At their Oct. 20 meeting, council considered a request from CAO Neil Smith for a decision on the future of the Town's bulk water supply service.

Virden currently offers bulk water service from an outlet at the water treatment plant. Payment for the water is made using tokens that can be purchased at the Town office. This payment system can not be repaired, and a new system would be a \$50,000 to \$100,000 project.

Recent sales of bulk water have declined from 207,000 gallons in 2024 to 153,000 gallons in 2026, so at \$6 for 500 gallons it would take years to pay for a new system.

Coun. Marc Savy expressed concern about the potential problems for rural residents outside Virden who depend on the town's bulk water supply. He said, "The folks who I spoke to, they said, we use Virden water not to drink, but to use for all our appliances. Using raw water does not work and it would ruin their appliances. So, they come in every three weeks or whatever, fill up

and they thank us for that convenience."

Coun. Tara Maxwell said, "I'm surprised Wallace-Woodworth doesn't offer something with their system currently... They have water going to a lot of communities. Even the RM of Pipestone is getting Wallace-Woodworth water so why aren't they offering it to their residents?" Maxwell added, "Maybe we can actually talk to them at a joint meeting about that because maybe they'd want to upgrade."

Mayor Tina Williams said, "They (the residents) still live in the RM (and are) paying their taxes in the RM...so maybe their table is a good place to go as well."

Maxwell replied, "Maybe we could have administration reach out and talk to Wallace-Woodworth about those ratepayers coming to our table and, just see what they said. Just open that line of communication. Because there's nothing wrong with that. We're partners in a lot of things."

Maxwell suggested that Town administration should contact the RM of Wallace-Woodworth to see if an agreement could be

reached to co-operate on supplying bulk water to residents near the Town of Virden.

After this discussion the motion to suspend bulk water services until a new payment system could be installed was approved.

CAO bylaw

Council next considered a proposed Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) by-law, which will replace an older version that has not undergone a comprehensive review for many years. The new bylaw describes the responsibilities of the CAO to advise and inform council about the operation, administration, finances, programs and services of the Town.

CAO Smith recommended that council review the by-law at least once during each four-year council term. Council passed first and second readings of the by-law.

Water tower removal

In his report to council Smith provided a brief capital projects update where he noted that the removal of the decommissioned water tower would cost up to \$350,000 and suggested that council should include an allowance for

the demolition in future capital planning.

Geographic information system

An update on the Town's geographic information system (GIS) will eventually provide mapping and infrastructure information for administration, operational staff, planners and the public. Smith said that available mapping layers included trees, water lines, valves, fire hydrants, portions of the fibre network and the heritage district. He added that updated aerial imagery is one of the final elements needed to make the GIS platform more useful.

International Medical Graduate recruitment

Coun. Savy provided an update on the physician recruitment committee that is supported by Virden

and the RMs of Wallace-Woodworth, Sifton and Pipestone. He said that Dr Zoya Aslam, an international medical graduate is currently working at Virden Health Centre and is staying at the apartment the committee makes available to health workers.

Savy said the availability of a furnished apartment has become an important recruitment incentive, as health-care professionals often struggle to find rental housing.

Savy explained that the program currently operates without requiring additional contributions from the participating municipalities. He said, "The four communities gave someone \$70,000 and the agreement was that physician would come back and work in our com-

munity, but that physician didn't, so they're paying back that money. So, every month there's money going into our account, the doctor recruitment account, which is paying for the apartment."

Savy cautioned that the repayments would likely end within a year so the participating municipalities would need to resume financial contributions of around \$4000 yearly.

Prairie Gateway Tourism

The board has agreed to renew its contract with Taylor Wegener allowing her to continue working with Prairie Gateway Tourism until December 31.

VIRDEN LIONS HALL



CALL TO BOOK YOUR SPECIAL EVENT
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230 Nelson St W • Virden, MB

Hall capacity is limited based on current Manitoba Public Health restrictions/guidelines; renters and attendees must comply with up-to-date Manitoba Public Health Orders.

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Virden Landfill: 204-748-6033

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

George Canyon and Aaron Pritchett at the AUD Theatre

Children Believe are proud to present CCMA winners, and beloved Canadian Country superstars George Canyon and Aaron Pritchett as they unite for their coast to coast Cowboy Christmas Tour.

- December 7, 2026
- VIP Doors Open at 6:30pm, General Admission Doors Open at 7:00pm, Concert Starts at 8:00 PM
- Tickets available at the Town Office and Online
- For more information and to purchase your tickets please visit: Showpass / George Canyon and Aaron Pritchett 2026 / Virden

Upcoming Council Meetings November 3 & 17

Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

Property Tax Notices

Reminder – Property taxes are due by October 31.

If you have not received your 2026 tax statement, please email info@virden.ca or call the Town Office at 204-748-2440.

2026 Citizen of the Year Nominations now open!

Nominate a deserving citizen for Citizen of the Year.

Deadline to submit your nomination is November 13, 2026.

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

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 Virden website.

Please forward resume with cover letter to:

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

RCMP Report highlights gaps in Mental Health Services

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

RCMP Staff Sgt. Scott McAuley attended the meeting of Town of Virden council on Oct. 20 to present the monthly RCMP report. The report showed a total of seven calls for service under the Mental Health Act. McAuley said that the role of police in responding to mental health situations is a concern because these calls are not the best use of police

resources. He said, “We’ve had some discussions about our roles and responsibilities with mental health and how it impacts the town. It’s a work in progress.” He added that gaps in other services left police acting as the final safety net for people experiencing a mental health crisis. McAuley stated that the detachment was working to re-establish a stronger presence in local schools and arrangements were being made for officers to resume school visits.

McAuley also reported that the detachment had distributed information through Facebook about the growing use of electric bicycles and electric scooters, and concerns about safety for riders and pedestrians. He stated that until the upcoming changes to provincial laws are fully enacted police are limited in what they can do regarding these vehicles. The Government of Manitoba website states that Bill 43 amending the Manitoba Highway Traffic Act will

take full effect in 2027 and states that riders must be at least 16 years old, or 14 years old for power-assisted bicycles. The maximum operating speed is capped at 25 km/h and helmets are mandatory. The devices can be operated on roads with posted speed limits of 50 km/h or lower, bicycle lanes, pathways, and designated cycling facilities. They will be prohibited on sidewalks and on roads with speed limits higher than 50 km/h. All traffic rules must be followed.

HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN’S KITCHEN

Cabbage has a history that dates back more than 4,000 years. From ancient Rome to modern kitchens, cabbage has been a part of healthy diets worldwide. Originating in the Mediterranean region, over time cabbage spread throughout Europe and Asia, becoming a staple in various cultures: in Ethiopia cabbage is in a dish called “Atakilt Wat,” which is a mixture of vegetables simmered together, Colcannon is an Irish dish that combines potatoes and cabbage, Ukraine has their Holubtsi (cabbage rolls), the Germans are known for their sauerkraut, Korea’s answer to cabbage is kimchi and the North Americans have their Corned Beef and Cabbage. No matter how you prepare it, cabbage is a nutritional powerhouse, offering a wealth of vitamins and minerals. In earlier centuries, when ships made long voyages to explore new lands, most sailors suffered from Scurvy, a Vitamin C deficiency disease. It was difficult to combat because any fresh source of this vitamin they’d carry aboard wouldn’t last as long as their journeys. They discovered that cabbage survived the long trips and sailors used it to prevent scurvy during long sea voyages. In many countries such as France, the folk lore was babies were found under cabbage leaves. When we were little, my mother would say to we children, “mon petit chou,” a term of endearment that translates to “my little cabbage.” Perhaps that was where we were found, under the cabbage leaves. Enjoy the cabbage recipes today.

Cabbage Casserole

This side dish is perfect with ham or roast pork. The recipe does not specify what kind of cheese, however the shredded pizza cheese with its mixed varieties works really well.

- 8 cups coarsely chopped cabbage
- Sauce:
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- Topping:
- 1 cup dry breadcrumbs
- 1 Tbsp. melted butter
- 3 Tbsp. flour
- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. Dash or dried dill
- 2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan

In a large pot of lightly salted boiling water cook cabbage for 3-4 minutes. It should be still lightly crisp. Drain well immediately. Sauce: In a frying pan melt butter. Add the flour and cook for a few minutes until bubbly. Stir in the milk, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, salt, pepper and Dash. Cook over medium heat, stirring until sauce comes to a boil and thickens. Stir in cheese and pour over cabbage and stir. Spoon into a lightly greased 2 L casserole dish. Topping: Mix the ingredients together and sprinkle over cabbage. Bake in a preheated 350°F oven for 20-25 minutes or until lightly browned and bubbly.

Italian Cabbage Side Dish

A cabbage and tomato skillet is one of the simplest ways to turn these two vegetables into a flavourful side dish. This dish goes well with sausages.

2 Tbsp. butter

1 clove of garlic, minced

1 small can diced tomatoes w/liquid

1/2 tsp. pepper

2 Tbsp. red-wine vinegar

1 cup thinly sliced onions

6 cups coarsely shredded cabbage

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. dried oregano

1 Tbsp. brown sugar

In a large skillet, melt butter over medium-high. Add the onion and garlic and cook for a few minutes. Stir in cabbage, tomatoes, salt, pepper, oregano and cook, stirring occasionally for 15-20 minutes until cabbage is tender. You may need to add a little bit of water if needed. Stir in vinegar and sugar. Makes 6 servings.

— A haunting we will go —



One of our most popular costumes, my family as the Addams Family on October 31, 2024.

Every year on Halloween, my family dresses in our family costume for the year, one of our longest running traditions, one that started long before we even had kids. Back when it was just my husband and me, we spent our first Halloween together dressed as Robin Hood, followed later by the Mad Hatter and Alice. It was silly and fun and creative, and we didn’t know then that we were building the foundation for something our kids would one day look forward to all year. Now, with two children, who get excited for me to announce our family costume every October. We’ve tackled Star Wars, superheroes, pirates, and even the Addams family.

Some years the costumes come together easily; other years involve last minute scrambling, last minute Amazon panic, and at least one child declaring they “don’t want to be that anymore.” But somehow, every October 31st, we pull it off. Halloween has always been one of my favourite holidays. I love carving pumpkins and pretending I’m better at it than I am. I love scary movies. I watch through my fingers. I love the candy, especially the candy I definitely don’t steal from my kids’ bags when they’re asleep. And I love fall itself: the crisp air, the crunch of leaves, the way the whole season feels like a warm hug wrapped in a spooky soundtrack.

But one of the things I love most is how much our community embraces the holiday. Growing up in Virden, Halloween always felt special. There are very few houses that don’t leave their porch lights on. People hand out candy with genuine enthusiasm. Neighbours decorate their yards, carve pumpkins, and greet kids like they’ve been waiting all evening just to see their costumes. It’s one of those small town traditions that makes you feel like you’re part of something bigger, a shared celebration that stretches across streets and generations. As a parent, I see Halloween differently now. It’s not just about the costumes or the candy or the spooky fun. It’s about watching my kids experience the same community warmth I grew up with. It’s about seeing them run up familiar driveways, laughing with friends, proudly showing off their outfits. It’s about knowing that these nights, these simple, joy filled nights, are becoming part of their childhood memories. Family costumes might seem like a small thing, but they’ve become a thread that ties our Octobers together. They remind us to be playful. They give us something to look forward to. They create stories we’ll tell for years, like the time our pirate hats kept blowing off in the wind. And every Halloween night, when we’re walking through Virden with our kids, surrounded by porch lights and laughter and the smell of fallen leaves, I’m reminded why this tradition matters. It’s not just about dressing up. It’s about making magic for my children that they will remember for years to come. Just like I do.

Farmers' Advocate

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More than just a harvest

Submitted

STRIDE CREDIT UNION

After weeks of wet weather, a stretch of sunshine during potato harvest meant there wasn't a minute to waste at Bailey Farms near Carberry. So when representatives from Stride Credit Union stopped by with more than 30 meals for the crew during one of their Meals in the Field visits, supper had to fit around the work — not the other way around.

Stride Account Manager BJ and Jaret, Vice-President of Ag and Commercial, also had an opportunity to see the operation firsthand. Lori took them into the fields to watch the potato harvesters in action, while Terry provided a look at the farm's unloading, processing and storage system back at the yard. Despite the challenging conditions leading up to harvest, the operation moved like a well-oiled machine.

But beyond the equipment, bins of potatoes, and pace of harvest, the visit was also a reminder of what a farm represents. Years of work. Decisions made season after season. It's



PHOTO COURTESY OF STRIDE CREDIT UNION
Jaret and BJ at Bailey Farms,
located near Carberry.

where conversations about money become conversations about much more.

For anyone who has spent years building a farm or a business, there eventually comes a point when the questions begin to change.

How much longer do you want to work? What would stepping back actually look like? Is there someone who wants to take over? And if there is, how do you make that transition work for everyone involved?

Maybe retirement is still decades away. Maybe it's starting to feel a lot closer. Maybe the goal is to grow before you ever think about slowing down. Or maybe you simply want to know that when the time comes, you'll have options.

Those are financial questions, but the answers aren't found in the numbers alone.

Understanding what someone wants to accomplish also means understanding what they've built, how their operation works, the challenges they face, and what matters to them and their family. That's particularly true in agriculture and business, where two operations that look similar on paper can have very different stories behind them.

It's why relationships have always been an important part of how Stride Credit Union works with its members. A financial statement can tell part of the story. A conversation

around the kitchen table, a visit to a business, or an afternoon spent seeing a farm in operation can tell much more.

Because behind most financial decisions is a more personal question: What do you actually want?

A farm your kids might want someday. A business that can carry on without you. The freedom to retire when you're ready. A home you finally own outright. Something to leave your family. Or simply enough breathing room to feel comfortable about what comes next.

Meals in the Field is one of the ways Stride goes beyond everyday banking to build meaningful relationships with its members. It's an opportunity to step outside the office, spend time with members, and better understand the farms, businesses, and lives they're working to build.

The numbers will always matter. But good financial advice takes more than knowing the numbers.

It takes knowing the people behind them.

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FARMERS' ADVOCATE

Manitoba Agriculture released its latest crop report on Friday, Oct. 20. Here are a few highlights:

- McCreary was listed as the wettest location in the Northwest region for the period of Oct. 12 to 18, having received 14.6 mm of precipitation.

Manitoba Crop Report highlights

- Much progress has been made at this point in the harvest of crops in the area. These results are up-to-date as of Oct. 20.

In the Northwest: Winter wheat, fall rye, and field pea crops were reported as 100 per cent completed. Meanwhile, spring wheat, barley, and oats were all listed at 95 per cent completion; and canola at 90 per cent, and soybeans at 60 per cent. Overall, a regional average of 77 per cent completion.

In the southwest, the regional average is slightly higher, at 78 per cent.

There, winter wheat, fall rye, barley, and oats are all at 100 per cent completion. The percentages for the remaining crops in the southwest are: spring wheat, 98 per cent; field peas, 99 per cent; canola, 85 per cent; soybeans, 60 per cent; dry beans, 60 per cent; and silage corn, 75 per cent.

- In the southwest, remaining spring wheat crops are reported to likely be feed grade, as yield is holding up but quality is declining. Most of the barley crop harvested in this region is also being graded as feed due to a variety of factors. Sunflowers are ready for desiccation.
- In the northwest, post-harvest operations are continuing across the region. This includes fall fertilizer and anhydrous applications.

Some areas in fields will also require attention due to weed growth caused by wet conditions throughout the season.

- Crop quality and yield in both regions were very mixed.

The full Crop Report for Oct. 20, 2026 can be found on the Government of Manitoba Website's agriculture category by clicking 'crops', 'seasonal report', and then 'crop report'.



The end of harvest approaching

PHOTO BY ANNE DAVIDSON

On the way to Oak River Fall Supper Sunday evening, Oct. 25, we see a canola crop being harvested. Crops enjoyed moisture during growth and then it became too much as downpours and then wind storms continued into fall. Since September, in Hamiota, harvesters could be heard running through the night as producers took advantage of every hour. The Harvest Moon was a month ago. Sunday night the Hunter's Moon was rising, temperatures were plummeting to bring single digit days, ice-cold nights and possibly snow this week.



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The Old School House



PHOTO FROM FACEBOOK

Ed James and Kel Smith hard at work installing winter window screens.

By Ed James
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Recently on one of the last warm fall days, two retired FLBSD teachers were back at school. However, this was a very special schoolhouse. It was the 100 years, plus one room schoolhouse, from the Mc-Auley area, that was saved and moved to the Elkhorn Antique Auto Museum. The school was put on a new foundation and filled with many of the old school artifacts from days gone by. The two teachers were Kel Smith of Virden and Ed James of Elkhorn, both former long-time FLBSD teachers, who taught in many of the division schools over the years. Both of the

teachers volunteered at the schoolhouse museum in June, when they dressed up as old time teachers and talk and demonstrate what it was like to be a teacher back in the old days. However, today they were on a different assignment. They were helping to install winter window screens over the long windows to help protect them from the winter storms and glass breakage. They were helped by a third, that being museum director emeritus, Lillian Jackson. The one room schoolhouse is a great place to learn about Manitoba's early school history, so why not come up for a visit when it opens in the spring and maybe learn how to write with a pen nib and a bottle of ink.

OCTOBER 1926

REF TO
WRITER
GERRY
NOLAN



The 1926 census of Canada was a special mid-decade population count conducted exclusively for the Prairie Provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta starting June 1, 1926. This covered the 3 provinces to track rapid population growth and re-adjust federal per-capita grants and political representation between National Census.

It included 25 questions marking the first prairie census to track time spent in school. It did not include questions on occupation or religion.

RCMP officers and Indian Agents enumerated Indigenous reserves and northern territories while standard local officials covered towns, rural districts and institutions. The count recorded over 2 million people in the prairies with an estimated population in all of Canada sitting roughly at 9.45 million.

Manitoba's first pulp and paper mill operated in Pine Falls. The Pas Winter Carnival and dog derby events continued to grow as a center piece of Northern Manitoba winter tradition.

On December

23, 1926, a massive fire destroyed the Historic Winnipeg theater. Four firefighters were killed in the blaze when one of the building's walls collapsed.

The Royal Canadian Legion was incorporated in Manitoba in 1926, thus they are celebrating 100 years.

Life in Kenton in 1926 included the new United Church. The center of rural education was at the 2 story brick Kenton Consolidated School building, which was designed by architect Eldred Tuttle.

The Manitoba Pool Elevator had been incorporated a year earlier and changed how farmers stored, pooled and marketed their grain crops.

In Kenton, we have no railroad tracks, no elevator and no school, but we are still the best town by a dam site!

Miniota News

Submitted
BY LINDA CLARK

A beautiful day this past Sunday brought out a wonderful crowd from many surrounding communities as well as our own people for the annual United Church Women's Turkey supper. Hardly a scrap of food remained!

U9 held their opening hockey game at the rink also on Sunday morning and other teams were off playing in various rinks around the area. Hockey season has begun!

The many families who honour the veterans from their families each year are pleased to see the veterans banners hung once again in our community for the upcoming Remembrance Day period, as we remem-

ber them and honour them each year. There have been some new banners added this year. Come take a drive around Miniota to observe the many names who WE REMEMBER. Thank you to the members of Birtle Branch #55 for taking on this project for our families and community.

"Doing good does not always receive recognition and often requires effort, but this is the daily courage of charity." -Pope Leo XIV
Isabella News

Our Isabella community is saddened with the news of the death of Bernice Still, our community matriarch. Bernice's death, at the age of 92 occurred on Oct. 25 at the Birtle Transitional Unit. Bernice lived her whole life at Isabella, raised on the Doran farm. Then to the farm she

and her late husband Ray established, and then in to the town of Isabella as store owner and postmistress. She served as our Isabella news correspondent to the newspapers for many years. Bernice was known widely for her work with the Women's Institute through the years, as well as the founding member of the Isabella Museums, and for forming our Isabella museum organization Preserving the Past for the Future. Bernice ensured that her work and the museums would carry on through this group following her death. We extend our deepest sympathy to her sons Rick and his family in Calgary, Rusty and Randy and also to her late son Ron's family, Anthony and Kaitlyn Still and their families. We also think of her sister Margaret Gregory and her family, and the family of Bernice's brother the late Ed Doran.

BOBBLEHEADS?

By Gerry Nolan
RIVERS BANNER

Oversized "bobblehead" looking helmets in the National Football League are actually called "Guardian Caps", which are soft-shelled padded covers that attach to the outside of a standard helmet to absorb impact and reduce concussions.

In 2022, the first made Guardian Caps were made mandatory for select positions including lineman, tight ends and running backs during training camp practices.

In 2024, the National Football League officially permitted players to wear Guardian Caps during preseason games and during the regular season.

James Daniels, an offensive lineman for the Pittsburgh Steelers was the first NFL player to wear a Guardian Cap during an official game. He made history by wearing it during a preseason game against the Houston Texans on August 9, 2024.

When the 2024 regular season kicked off a few weeks later, a handful of players became the first to wear them in a regular season live action, including James Daniels of the Pittsburgh Steelers, Jubril Peppers of the New England Patriots, Jonathan Taylor Indianapolis Colts and Josh Whyte from the Tennessee Titans.

If you were to look back in NFL history, Buffalo Bills safety Mark Kelso was the first player to wear a predecessor to the Guardian Cap called the "ProCap" during a regular season game from 1989-1992.

The NFL typically records between 130 to 220 concussions in a single year. Note, these are the reported ones. There are many not recorded! Because of aggressive safety changes such as advanced helmet designs, mandatory Guardian Caps in practice and revised

kickoff structures the actual number of concussions fluctuates from year to year.

In 2025 the total number of recorded concussions was 168. An average of 23 players per week wear a Guardian Cap during live NFL games. In total, roughly 25 players opted to wear the cap at various points of the season.

Many players explicitly state they dislike the "Bobblehead" look of the cap and prefer wearing traditional helmets.

The National Football League laboratory testing shows that several of the newest position specific helmets provide just as much protection on their own as an older helmet paired with the Guardian Cap. As a result, many players chose to upgrade their core helmet rather than strapping on the outer padding.

The Guardian Cap NXT 2.0 made its official live game debut for the 2026 season.

Jalen Pitre, safety, Houston Texans has become the face of the movement as first-ever official Guardian Cap signature athlete. Others who wear the helmet are Chris Olave, wide receiver from the New Orleans Saints, Rashawn Slater, offensive tackle Los Angeles Chargers, Germie Bernard, wide receiver Pittsburgh Steelers plus many more.

Will the "Guardian Cap" become mandatory? Not likely, as the helmet technology is catching up to make the game safer. There are new high tech helmets each year and custom made models optimize just for specific positions. These helmets are built to advance impact absorption directly into the hard outer shell.

Hopefully the technology that is on the horizon will someday be so good that concussions will drop significantly so we the fans can enjoy watching our favourite players, play longer and are concussion free!

Elkhorn Halloween Howl Party



PHOTO BY ED JAMES

An adorable donut box Halloween costume worn by an adorable young girl at the Halloween Howl Party.

By Ed James
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The ghosts and goblins in the Elkhorn area got an extra night of Halloween fun at the annual

Elkhorn Elks #381 'Halloween Howl' on Oct. 25. The event featured spooky music by Marcy Rowan, a costume judging contest, canteen treats, raffle tickets and a pumpkin carving

contest. Some of the food treats and decorations were donated by area businesses and individuals.

There were many children, of all ages, in a variety of colourful costumes, with a large number of parents to help celebrate the evening. In fact, many of the parents came dressed in costumes to make the night a success.

When you first entered the hall, you were met with two things, one was the very loud and happy noise of children having fun. The other, was the amazing job the organizers did in decorating the hall from front to back. On each of the tables were Halloween decorations that featured a large vegetable gourd that was all bumpy and looked like a scary brain. At the very front of the hall, with a spooky backdrop, was a

fantastic display of carved competition pumpkins.

Another part of the hall had a contest to guess the weight of a large pumpkin and a table with prizes to place tickets. One of the unique and large costume characters at the event was a very large green dinosaur with a long tail. Most of the evening, many small children would have fun by sneaking up on the dinosaur and touching its tail and running away before the dino monster could catch them.

Early in the evening, I thought I was seeing a lot of colourful sparklers on the hall floor. However, it turned out to be that many of the children were wearing runners that gave off sparkling lights when they moved in the dark hall. It was very colourful!

There were a variety of costumes, from the funny, cute and scary, but the most popular seemed to be fairy tale princesses. But the two that got my attention were a young child dressed up as a package of donuts, while the other was a very creative costume of a severed head on a plate, walking around the hall.

This year the costume judging took a different approach, it was broken down into various costume

themes and age groups. This way it gave out more prizes for the costume contest efforts. One of the event organizers told me that they were very pleased with the turnout of both children and their parents, plus the great support of community business, community members and groups. "The event this evening was everything a child and family Halloween party should be," said Samantha Cluett.

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- Process all approved invoices into the municipal accounting software, Muniware ensuring accurate coding and description entry
- Produce various financial statements and verify vendor accounts by reconciling monthly statements and related transactions
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- Cross training to provide other financial and administrative support ie. semi-monthly payroll; grant applications; position coverage for LUD offices and reception, as needed
- Active role in the Municipal Safety Program
- Uphold a strict level of confidentiality
- All other duties as assigned

Skills and Qualifications

- Attention to detail, thoroughness, and organizational skills are required
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- Demonstrated proficiency with computer applications – Microsoft Office products including Excel, Word, Outlook, etc.
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Interested candidates should submit a resume with three professional references by:

E-mail: 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 ROM 2C0

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SPORTS

MAGIC WIN SILVER AT WESTERN CANADIANS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The U15 AAA Westman Magic finished second at the Western Canadian Softball Championships.

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Last summer, a strong contingent of local talent helped the U15 AAA Westman Magic earn silver medals at the Western Canadian Softball Championships.

In August, the squad fell to the Red Deer Rage in a close game in the final of that prestigious tourna-

ment, which was held in Winkler. The local players on the Magic roster included Hadley Robertson, Georgia Koop and Hayley Barkley of Virden, Meredith Masson of Oak Lake, Evie McAdam of the Rural Municipality of Sifton and Zaree Routledge of the Rural Municipality of Wallace-Woodworth.

"Winning silver at Westerns meant so much to me,"

Barkley said. "Our team had many young and new girls to this year's Magic program. Us young and new didn't have much glory to our name, but with this win, we showed that with everyone's hard work and dedication, we now have something to show and, now going ahead, we can do it again."

The Magic earned a berth at Westerns by winning

bronze at the provincial AAA championships. In Winkler, they dominated their first two games, defeating Central Vancouver Island 12-2 and the Ridge Meadows Pride 9-1. The Magic fell to the Rage 7-0 before beating the Calgary Kaizen 9-7, White Butte Storm 20-4 and Central Energy 5-1 to finish the round robin with a 5-1 rec-

ord. That put them into the two-vs-one game, where they beat the Rage 4-2 to advance to the gold medal game. The Rage also advanced to the final and won 7-5.

"Playing in Westerns gives me the opportunity to play against teams from all over Western Canada that I don't normally get to play," Robertson said. "I enjoy playing these different teams and the challenge of playing some of the best teams in Western Canada. I also enjoy the banquet and all the time I get to spend with my teammates at tournaments like this."

The event wrapped up a successful season for the Magic. Later, the squad presented its team honours, with Koop receiving the Most Valuable Player award, Barkley winning the Slugger Award and Robertson receiving the Ultimate Teammate Award.

"To me, what I have enjoyed the most is being

able to play against some amazing athletes, and the challenges that come from playing this level of ball," Barkley said of playing for the Magic. "I believe that being around people with that amount of talent makes you strive to learn from them and better yourself. Westman Magic isn't just a group of strong athletes, it's a family who is always looking to help and support each other."

Competing at that level requires commitment and family support.

"My family is very supportive and helps a ton with getting me to games and practices, helping to get sponsorship money and volunteering at the ball diamonds when needed," Robertson said. "I appreciate all the support from all of my family members, from the extra practice we do at home to both sets of my grandparents driving long distances to watch me play."

THHL SPOTLIGHT: OIL KINGS, ICEMEN TAKE TO THE ICE

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Tiger Hills Hockey League season is underway.

Last weekend, the Oak Lake Icemen played their first senior contest in 14 seasons. They fell on the road 7-2 to Wawanesa. The Virden Oil Kings lost 6-5 to the host Boissevain Border Kings.

The Oil Kings and Icemen were to play in Virden on Oct. 29 after the Empire-Advance deadline. The Virden squad heads to Hartney on Nov. 1. The Icemen's home opener is Nov. 7 against Pilot Mound, while the Oil Kings are in Melita that day.

Oil Kings

On Oct. 24, the Oil Kings battled back but lost to the Border Kings. Boissevain led 4-0 after the first period. One of its goals came on the power play.

In the second period, Virden used three goals,

including two coming with the man advantage, to pull to within one, 4-3. Both teams scored twice in the final frame, with both of Virden's coming on the power play.

"We did not have a good start giving up four goals in the first period," general manager Ryan Mathieson said. "But we were able to battle back with the next three goals in the second and pushed hard to tie it up all game. I liked our resolve and belief that we could come back in the game and battle through adversity."

Newcomer Tyson Zimmer netted a hat trick for the Oil Kings, while his brother Rylee Zimmer recorded a goal and an assist. Sage Price had Virden's other goal and picked up an assist. Oil Kings goalie Duncan Paddock stopped 17 of the 23 shots he faced.

For Boissevain, Matt Stephens made 28 saves. Ryan Patterson had two

goals, while he and Tanner Clyne each recorded three points.

Icemen

Before Oct. 23, the last time an Icemen team competed in a senior hockey league was in the North Central Hockey League in 2011-12. After the host Wawanesa Jets took a 3-0 first-period lead last weekend, Tucker Lawrence scored the first goal for the revived Icemen. Trent North also lit the lamp for Oak Lake in that period. The Jets led 5-2 heading into the third and added two goals in the final frame.

Greg Higgins, Ryan Vandeponseele and Bo Bootsman recorded assists for Oak Lake. Icemen goaltender Greg Higgins turned away 55 shots. Oak Lake players Bryson McNish and Terrence Crampain were both involved in fights.

Jets goalie Tyson Gregory made 19 saves. Jeff Neufeld led Wawanesa with two goals.

GOLDEN BEARS FOOTBALL TEAM HOSTS SATURDAY PLAYOFF CONTEST

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

There will be no treats waiting for the Interlake Thunder if the Virden Collegiate Institute football team has its way when the squads meet in a Halloween playoff showdown Saturday afternoon in Virden.

On Oct. 31 at 2 p.m., the Golden Bears and Thunder will clash in a semifinal of the Rural Manitoba Football League's Doug Steeves playoff bracket. The game pits RMFL West Division winner Virden (5-1) against Interlake (5-1), the East Division's No. 2 seed.

"It's going to be a great game with some playoff football weather," Virden head coach Marc Talbot said. "Come on out and support the players who have worked so hard this year and managed to get a home playoff game."

The Golden Bears had their last regular season game, slated for Oct. 25, cancelled. Due to low numbers, Swan Valley was forced to forfeit.

The RMFL postseason features the Doug Steeves bracket for the league's top teams, and the Murray Black bracket for the other four playoff-bound squads. In the other Steeves semifinal, East No. 1 St. Vital, the only team to beat VCI this year, takes on West No. 2 Moosomin Generals. The Golden Bears are looking forward to tangling with the Thunder.

"The boys are really excited to be playing some playoff football," Talbot said. "It is a grind, with practices starting mid-August. Finishing first makes all those hard, sweaty days worth it."

"With the weather turning, the run game will play a huge role in the game. It looks like it could be a wet/snowy game, which makes throwing the ball tricky. Good thing for us we have two capable players who can run the ball very well with Ryder Kotylak and Dixon Tough. Ryder is averaging 6.5 yards a carry this year and Dixon has an average of 8.1 yards a carry. Some

players are actually looking forward to a 'snow game.' We will still have to throw the ball on occasion to keep the defence honest and not keying on our running backs. We will have to pick our spots.

"The Thunder have a pretty good offence themselves. Isaiah Barrate, Shane Blackshaw, John Lindsay and the rest of the defence will have to be on their toes and make sure tackles. We can't be giving a good team like the Thunder any free or easy yards."

A successful par-three fundraising golf tournament was recently held for the team at the Virden Wellview Golf Club. There was a strong turnout for an event that plays an important role in equipping the VCI players. Talbot expressed his appreciation for "Mark Wakely and his crew for getting it all organized, the local businesses who donated or sponsored the holes and all the volunteers who sat out and watched for any holes in one and measured the closest ball."

SPORTS

OIL CAPITALS' DUPUIS LOOKS TO CONTINUE HIS WINNING WAYS



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

Virden Oil Capitals rookie Cole Dupuis has proven he can score at the junior level.

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Although listed as a rookie on the roster, Cole Dupuis brings Junior A experience and a winning pedigree to the Virden

Oil Capitals.

Last season, the forward from Brandon scored twice and collected two assists in 13 games for the Estevan Bruins of the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League. He also racked

up 40 points, including 14 goals, in 33 games for his hometown U18 AAA Wheat Kings. In 2024-25, Dupuis played two games for the Northern Manitoba Blizzard as an affiliated player.

"I would say having that junior experience already under my belt helps the process of adjusting to the junior level full time much easier and has allowed me to feel comfortable with the junior process a lot quicker," said Dupuis, who was born in 2008.

This season, the 5-foot-11, 175-pound forward had four goals and an assist for five points in 12 Manitoba Junior Hockey League games as of Oct. 26. He lit the lamp twice in a win against Niverville on Oct. 16, earning the Second Star. Between Oct. 10 and Oct. 18, Dupuis scored in three of the four games he played.

"Cole has had a good start to this season," Virden

head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "His strengths are his offensive instincts. He has good puck skills and an excellent shot. He has the ability to score and he certainly has shown that recently. When he gets himself engaged in the game early and works hard with his feet he generates chances for himself and his linemates. We are looking forward to witnessing his development as the season progresses."

Dupuis is accustomed to winning. In 2023, he helped his Brandon Wheat Kings squad win the Winnipeg AAA Hockey League U15 championship. The next season, Dupuis helped the U18 AAA Wheat Kings earn a Manitoba U18 AAA Hockey League championship and win the Telus Cup West Regional, which was played in Winnipeg.

"Growing up on competitive teams and winning teams has taught me

what it takes to capture that ultimate goal of winning a championship, with the lessons on how important it is for the team to play as a whole and to focus on doing your role and doing it well and, from there, it's a lot of effort to finish it out... Come playoff time, everyone is tired, sore, and hurt, but to win you have to fight through all of that and give it everything you have."

Dupuis and the U18 AAA Wheat Kings competed in the 2024 Telus Cup, Canada's U18 AAA national championship, in Membertou, N.S. They earned the silver medals after making it to the finals.

"I enjoyed the entire experience at the Telus Cup, but the biggest takeaway I had was just being able to compete against the top teams in the country," Dupuis said. "Being from a smaller town of Brandon, Manitoba, it was a

pretty cool experience to make it that far and prove ourselves as one of the best."

He is pleased that his hockey journey has brought him to the Oil Capitals. Dupuis billets with Jamie Hodson, a former professional hockey goaltender and father of four. Hodson's oldest daughter, Presley, currently plays hockey for the University of Jamestown (N.D.).

Dupuis said living with Hodson "has been a great setup for me, especially the more I get to know him along with his kids Demi, Willow, and Colby. They are all super nice and have helped me settle in and be comfortable while away from home."

He also appreciates several aspects of being with the Oil Capitals.

"I've enjoyed how close our group is and the bond we have together, along with all the support from the community, with both factors contributing to how well our team is doing right now," Dupuis said.

PITZ'S OVERTIME GOAL GETS OIL CAPITALS BACK TO WINNING

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

After the Virden Oil Capitals' 10-game winning streak came to an end, the team hopes it has started another one with a dramatic victory.

On Oct. 23, Virden lost 4-2 at home to the defending national champions from Niverville. The next night, Virden's own Christian Pitz, a rookie defenceman, scored 1:56 into overtime to lift the Oil Capitals to a 7-6 victory over the host Selkirk Steelers.

"Christian has had a good start to the season for us," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "He skates extremely well, has a real good hockey brain and his puck skills are very good. He is a great teammate and works very hard off the ice. He has been one of our most consistent players to start the season and we really look forward

to seeing his game grow. "The overtime goal was a great goal and very much needed as we didn't have a great weekend. A real good pass and Christian was able to get a great shot away quickly. Just a great example of the puck skills he possesses. It was very exciting."

As of Oct. 26, the Oil Capitals had an 11-2-0-0 record. They topped the Manitoba Junior Hockey League's MGEU West Division and were slotted at No. 5 in the Canadian Junior Hockey League Top 20 Rankings.

The Virden Oil Capitals face a busy stretch this week, with their Oct. 27 road game against Waywayseecappo taking place after the Empire-Advance deadline. The Oil Capitals return home Oct. 30 to host Swan Valley before heading back on the road Oct. 31 to face the Winkler Flyers.

Oil Caps Selected for

All-Star Challenge

Pitz and teammates Ahmad Fayad and Spencer Kuntz have been selected to play for Team MJHL at the Western All-Star Challenge. Oil Capitals certified athletic therapist Dana Warrenner has also been selected to work with Team MJHL at the event.

The Western All-Star Challenge, which pits a team of the MJHL's top players against one from the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League, takes place Nov. 2-4 in Martensville, Sask.

It was previously announced that Waywayseecappo Wolverines head coach and general manager Landyn Cochrane will be part of the MJHL coaching staff. Cochrane played for the Oil Caps in 2017-18.

Oil Caps 7, Steelers 6 OT

Pitz scored on the power play in the overtime

session after Selkirk's Logan Barnes scored the lone goal of the third period to knot things up at 6-6. The Steelers scored the first two goals of the game before Virden stormed back with a goal from Tyson Draper and two by Peyton Getzlaff, one of which came on the power play, to take a 3-2 lead. Both teams scored three times in the second period and Virden held a 6-5 lead going into the final frame. Shane Elder, Draper and captain Nate Schaefer scored for the Oil Caps, with Schaefer's goal coming on the power play. Carson Wright recorded four assists, while Ahmad Fayad had three.

Micky Gross started in net for Virden and made seven saves on 11 shots. Kasey Fuson took over partway through the second period and made 17 saves on 19 shots the rest of the way. Hudson Hunnie had 61 saves for the Steelers.

Nighthawks 4, Oil Caps 2

The Nighthawks took a 2-0 first-period lead on Oct. 23. In the first minute of the second period, Wright scored to cut the Niverville lead to one, 2-1. However, the Nighthawks scored on a power play before the period was over and shorthanded in the third period to take a 4-1 lead. Fayad scored on the power play to make the final score 4-2.

Wright was the Second Star of the game. Fuson made 13 saves.

The Nighthawks' Ben Chornomydz had 26 saves on 28 shots. Tyler Bernier and Max Dowse both scored for Niverville and were named First and Third Star, respectively. Cole Bies and Owen Murray also had goals for the Nighthawks.

The Oil Capitals' Miguel Bonin and Niverville's Fenton Mann dropped the gloves in the third period.



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SPORTS

SPORTS NOTES: FREEMAN RINK OFF TO STRONG START



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Team Freeman, led by skip Jace Freeman of Virden and coached by Graham Freeman, has had a strong start to its season.

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virden's Jace Freeman and his curling rink has had success early on this season.

As of last week, the men's rink had a 17-5 record over four events. It was ranked 40th in the World Team Rankings.

"They have been very consistent on the ice this year and are definitely trending upwards in the early stages of their second season as a team," coach Graham Freeman said.

The rink competed in two Manitoba Curling Tour events. It got to the semifinals in one and the quarterfinals in the other.

The Freeman rink also played in two Grand Slam Satellite events, where the winner earned a berth in an upcoming Grand Slam of Curling event. At the Dale's St. Paul Cashspiel in Minnesota, the Freeman rink was 6-1, beating some highly regarded teams. In the final, it lost to five-time Olympian John Shuster, who won Olympic gold in 2018 and bronze in 2006.

The Freeman rink competed at the Saville U25 Challenge in Edmonton in a field of top teams from Canada, the U.S., Japan and Switzerland. The rink was 5-0 heading into the semifinal. The contest against a familiar Alberta foe came "down to last rock in an extra end, but we came up an inch short on an attempted game winning draw to the button," Graham

Freeman said.

"Although they narrowly missed out on a couple Grand Slam opportunities for this season, the focus now will be to qualify for the Manitoba men's provincial championship and compete for a chance to get to the Brier," he said. "The team will continue to play a busy schedule right up until Christmas including a trip out to a Calgary WCT Cashspiel."

Former Oil King Files Suit

A former Virden Oil Kings player is suing a competitor and two hockey organizations over injuries he alleges he suffered during a senior game in 2024.

Devon LeBlanc filed a statement of claim in the Court of King's Bench on Oct. 15, alleging that Killarney Shamrocks player Bryce Enns bodychecked him from behind on Nov. 28, 2024, then repeatedly punched him while he was down on the ice.

LeBlanc claims he suffered a broken collarbone that required surgery, cuts, bruising and other head, neck and shoulder injuries. He also alleges difficulty sleeping, hardship and lost income.

The lawsuit names Enns, the Tiger Hills Hockey League, two league officials and Hockey Manitoba as defendants. LeBlanc alleges that Enns had a history of disciplinary penalties and suspensions. He also claims the organizations failed to adequately discipline Enns or

oversee the league's disciplinary process.

Reston Cross Country

Two Reston School athletes had strong runs at the Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association Provincial Cross Country Championship in St. Malo on Oct. 14.

In the Junior Varsity girls 3-kilometre girls race, Harley Cook clocked a time of 13:06 to place 99th out of 237 runners. Apollo Zarn, a JV boys runner, finished his four-kilometres race in 17:41 to place 154th in a field of 282.

"Both students ran hard and we are extremely proud of them. September is always such a busy month for students, so we didn't get as many team runs in as we would have liked, but the students trained on their own too.

"I was most pleased that they put all they had into the run, and gave it their all," said Reston School teacher Joane Lockhart, who worked with the team along with community member Amanda Gray.

Brezden Headed to Estonia

Breken Brezden has been chosen to represent Canada at the Tallinn Trophy in Estonia, Nov. 16-22. The event is part of the International Skating Union's Challenger Series, a circuit of senior-level competitions featuring skaters from around the world. Now training in Ontario, Brezden is from Dauphin and trained for years with Skate Virden under the guidance of Patty Hole.

Oak Lake CARE Centre hosts Second Annual Halloween Family Fun Fair and Dance



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The parents and children enjoyed a Halloween Monster Mash at the Oak Lake Hall.

By Tammy Hall, ECE III
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Oak Lake CARE Centre Inc. hosted its second annual Halloween Family Fun Fair and Dance on Saturday, October 17, 2026, bringing families and community members together for an evening of Halloween fun and fundraising. The event was organized by the Oak Lake CARE Centre Board of Directors and spearheaded by Shae Baily and Alayna Bailey.

The children were excited to arrive in their Halloween costumes and see the decorations and games set up for the event. Seven games were available for children to enjoy, and the popular cake walk was once again a highlight of the evening, featuring more than 30 delicious cakes and desserts to be won.

Children purchased tickets to participate in the games and cake walk. For each game they played, they received a sticker on their game card. Once their cards were full, they could exchange them for a prize, with different prizes requiring different numbers of stickers.

A raffle table featuring more than 25 prizes gave attendees even more chances to win, while one lucky 50/50 winner took home \$105. The evening also featured a best-dressed costume contest, with prizes awarded to the first-, second-, and third-place winners, adding to the excitement and Halloween spirit.

The canteen kept everyone well fed, offering hot dogs, burgers, chips, chocolate bars, and drinks throughout the event.

Oak Lake CARE Centre Inc. extends a heartfelt thank-you to the businesses and community members who generously supported the fundraiser.

Special thanks go to the RFN employees who volunteered a shift in the canteen and the Oak Lake Icemen Senior Hockey Team players who assisted at the door and with the games. Their time, enthusiasm, and willingness to help were greatly appreciated. Community members are encouraged to come out and support the Oak Lake Icemen at their home opener on November 7.

Oak Lake CARE Centre Inc. is grateful to everyone who sponsored the event, donated prizes and desserts, volunteered their time, and attended the fundraiser. The generosity and community spirit shown helped make the second annual Halloween Family Fun Fair and Dance a success. We raised \$4250.

The centre looks forward to continuing this fun-filled tradition, bringing families together and strengthening the community support that helps Oak Lake CARE Centre provide quality care and programming for children and families.

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