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UNWIND BEFORE YOU UNWRAP



Boston Pizza



FRUITCAKE OR FISHBOWLS?

LIFE'S BATTER WITH PANCAKES!

Virden Collegiate Institute Santa pancake breakfast



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY KYLIE KUFFLICK

The Virden Collegiate graduating class of 2026 served up a great pancake breakfast on Saturday Nov. 29, and still had time to meet with Santa! Back row: Kylie Kufflick, Grace Moray, Abigail Archambault, Megan Dryden, Brenna Stewart-Barre, Isaac Tinant, Tristan Plaisier, Scott Alexander, Presley Hodson, Tyra Wilkinson, Jacob Graves. Middle row sitting with Santa: Nova Leigh Pirie, Carly Bird, Becca Collier. Front row: Ariannah Kerr, Haiden Wilson, Krysian Dupra, Kristyn Andrew, Claire Armandico, Jaelyn McMaster (front), Emily Mead, Alexa Banga, Kenna Bryant, Shae Paton, Sarah Lindsay.



Serving up a ton of food! The pancake fundraiser brought in \$2400 for Grad 2026.



Mixing up the batter, pancakes on the griddle and cleaning up the mess, this kitchen is hopping.



VIRIDEN OIL CAPITALS

HOME GAME FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19
VS. SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDERS
PUCK DROPS AT 7:30PM


Inside...



SOMETHING ROTTEN REVIEW *P2*



VIRIDEN SANTA PARADE *P9*



Ho-Ho-Hope You Know How Much We Appreciate Your Business

We will be closed from Dec 20 - Jan 4 for the holidays.

No newspapers on Dec 26 or Jan 2.

Empire-Advance
serving virden & area since 1885

virdenempireadvance@outlook.com

www.empireadvance.ca

204-748-3931



PHOTO BY KEYWEST PHOTO

Something Rotten, cast members with (front centre) Jordan Elliott in lead role as Nick Bottom and Darrell Corbell support role as Nostradamus.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

By any measure, Something Rotten by Virden Theatre Productions, directed by Michelle Chyzik and Dean Munchinsky was a huge hit last week.

Saturday evening’s crowd cheered scenes throughout the show and stood to applaud the final curtain call as the large cast and ensemble took a final bow before exiting the stage and through the AUD Theatre audience to line the foyer where flowers were presented, and cast warmly congratulated.

Empire-Advance publishers Ken and Christine Waddell were among the Thursday evening audience.

Ken said, “Something Rotten was an amazing show that included literally dozens of cast members and crew... utilizing every square inch of the Virden AUD stage. Very clever sets were moved frequently and with precision.

“The production appeared to be flawless. If there were flaws, the impromptu skills of the cast never betrayed them.” He added, “The live orchestra was amazing.”

Empire-Advance general manager Jessica Coulter said that this show was a lot of fun, noting the large musical made clever references to Broadway musicals, Chicago, Cats, Annie etc....

As cleverly written as it was, the cast’s stop-notch performances were key to Rotten’s success.

What began with Michelle Chyzik’s genius direction some 30 years ago has grown to include the expertise of others as she brought Virden business man and actor, Dean Munchinsky, from the stage to become a co-director. These seasoned ‘pros’ included Jaysalee Davies (in onstage ensemble), as assistant producer ensuring a new generation’s talent in Virden Theatre Productions.

Davies helped behind the scenes with the props and sets



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Olivia Hayward as Saturday evening’s Portia, a Puritan daughter and love interest of Nigel Bottom.

crew, found sponsors, and worked with Shauna Dunning on publicity/advertising needs. “It truly is a team effort and I have been lucky enough to be included in their brainstorming sessions,” she said of the directors.

Thanks to choreographer Katey Rogowsky, the AUD stage accommodated fantastic song and dance numbers, sometimes climbing to heights. Rogowsky is Brandon’s Steppin’ Time Dance Studio instructor known for multiple choreographed works at the University of Calgary.

Dozens of local people made this a show rivaling professional productions and these people led the way: Technical Director - Paul Archambault; Stage Manager - Deb Peters; Costume Coordinator - Joyce Davies; Props and Sets Coordinators - Kathy Welsh & Jodi Krieser.

Something Rotten enjoyed strong backing of Westman’s business community.

Pickleball club wins approval for outdoor courts

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Pickleball Club, a core group of a dozen players, has been looking for an outdoor venue for three-season play in Virden.

Initially pickleball players hoped to use the newly renovated tennis court at Victoria Park, but the Town felt that court needed to continue to be available on a first-come first-serve basis for tennis players.

Disappointed but undeterred the Virden club came back to the Town, seeking a site of their own that would be available from sun-up to sundown.

Their recent presentation to Town of Virden council and staff met with success and the club has been offered an area in the sports grounds near the ball diamonds, splash park and recreation complex.

The plan includes four public courts surrounded by exterior fencing with lower fencing between the courts. Preparing the surface and surfacing will be the largest expenses.

Phase 2 of the project could involve upgrades such as exterior lighting, a shed for storing equipment, benches with shade, signage, and a rack outside each court to aid in order of play.

The Town will continue to own the property; however, the group will be responsible for funding and construction. Their goal is to raise between \$150,000 and \$200,000 to build the courts properly.

Kerri McFazdean-Main has been playing pickleball for about four years. She says her husband Murray was skeptical at first. Now they’re both keen, and for the past three winters, played during their Arizona winter stay.

At present, Mike Sanders is one of the younger players with other Virden members, some in their late 70s. Age matters not.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Virden Pickleball Club makes a road trip to the Miniota Community Centre on Nov. 27.

A local businessman, Sanders likes to hit the court first thing on summer mornings. Smiling, he talks of the sport. “It’s a lot of fun when you can go and play against different people.” Competition is keen but there’s more. He says, “If you’re not having fun, then you’re not doing it right.”

Kerri sees an outdoor court as a boost for tourism as summer campers stop in. For pickleball addicts, it’s a draw to the area. Placement of the court on the sports grounds could also draw traffic while kids swim or practice baseball.

Kerri hopes youth will use it. “I just think, for kids around here, and... hopefully, the schools will use that facility too.”

During the winter months Virden Pickleball Club plays at Virden Junior High twice per week and twice weekly in Miniota Community Centre Hall where there’s already a strong core of pickleball players.



St Mary’s Anglican Church Christmas Supper,

December 25, 2025
at St Mary’s Anglican Parish Hall
633 9th Avenue S.

Dinner at 5:30.
Transportation available upon request.
Reservations accepted till December 19th,
Please call Caroline to reserve seat
204-748-2015.
Delivery of meal upon request.

THEATRICK PLAYERS PRESENTS

The Night Before Christmas

Fundraiser for Virden & Area Food Cupboard

Tickets \$5 Kids under 5 FREE
Tickets available at
463 Seventh Ave (Farley Kempthorne)

St. Paul’s United Church

December 13, 2025 3pm and 7pm

Refreshments and cookies served after each performance,
sponsored by Black Gold Trucking Ltd.

Meeting with Deep Sky coming up on Monday

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Quebec company with plans to suck air into a carbon capturing system and bury it in southwest Manitoba will revisit the village of Pipestone on Dec. 8 for what will be a third public meeting regarding their direct air capture (DAC) business.

The meeting is advertised on Two Borders website: "Come meet the Deep Sky team to learn what the project will mean for the community. Ask questions. Share

your Voice." The RM of Pipestone confirmed the meeting time and place: Pipestone Hall at 7-8:30pm.

Over a year ago, October 2024, the company made contact with the rural municipalities of Two Borders and Pipestone. Since then, Deep Sky made known their desire to set up a direct air capture plant in the area.

Almost a year after that, on Sept. 4 Deep Sky introduced themselves to the public in Pipestone Community Hall.

While the company has plans in place to locate

in the region, it's early days. At this time there's been no public hearing for ratepayers pertaining to zoning, nor any known land sale for Deep Sky's 80-acre project; however, they have lobbied the province to provide the parameters of how a storage facility must operate. The legislation that allows for carbon storage in Manitoba was passed last year and Deep Sky is waiting for government to develop the regulations that will apply.

A citizen's group, Grounded in Truth – Deep Sky Awareness came

together seeking to bring forth more information. One of the organizers of Grounded in Truth, Kim MacKenzie explained how this diverse group began: "Through social media we discovered we all had the same concerns and were willing to put our voices out there."

With no word from either municipality about the project, the Grounded in Truth organization hosted a public meeting on Nov. 12 where they had hoped municipal councils would attend. (See Virden paper, Nov. 21 edition: empireadvance.ca)

It's a complex subject. MacKenzie said, "The community understands council cannot answer the technical questions that will be asked (of) Deep Sky. In turn, Deep Sky will not be able to answer the questions the public will have for council in regards to what they foresee the benefits or downside of such large industry to the area."

Indeed, at November's meeting a host of questions were submitted in writing, and some were asked within the public forum that evening.

Montreal-based Deep

Sky calls themselves the "world's first tech-agnostic carbon removal project developer aiming to remove gigatons of carbon from the atmosphere and permanently store it underground."

It's new technology and whether tech-agnostic or not, (terminology can be baffling), you can find more information at <https://www.deepskyclimate.com/manitoba> and on Facebook: Grounded in Truth – Deep Sky Awareness (Southwest Manitoba).

Plaques unveiled in tribute to Drs. Fitzgerald and Roux



After visiting with members of the public crowded into the Virden hospital hallway, retired doctors Roux (front right) and Fitzgerald (third right) listen as Dr. Jennifer Hammell introduces the plaque presentation. At least 50 people including the health auxiliary, doctor recruitment group and members of Town of Virden council attended the event.



PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

Drs. Michael Fitzgerald and Don Roux with commemorative plaques.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Jennifer Hammell unveiled the most recently installed plaques

Dr. Roux served from 2000-2022. During a shortage of medical seats, Don's son Jan Roux sought medical education abroad and has become a physician with Brandon's medical team.

Dr. Fitzgerald began his work in Virden in 1987 and retired on 2025, although he declared his retirement several years earlier. In her address, Dr. Hammell thanked him for staying on several more years as Virden awaited more medical doctors.

On behalf of the Town of Virden and area, Deputy Mayor Marc Savy thanked these two physicians for their service to the public.

Virden hospital administrator Stacy Wessing invited everyone to a reception in the board room.

These new plaques take their place among a history of Virden's medical doctors that line the hospital entrance: George Clingan 1898-1944; J.R. Monteith (chief of staff) 1930-1964; Irvin Fryer 1915-1930; Oscar Ross 1915-1946; R.S. Harris 1946-1975; D.E. Yates 1957-1991; and I. F. Elliott 1968-1996

Town water a work in progress



PHOTO BY DALE DAVISON

A crew working at the Town of Virden water supply site on Nov. 26.

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Work is continuing on the wells that will supply water to the Town of Virden. On Wednesday Nov. 26 a crew was on location at the site near PR 259. CAO Rhonda Stewart said, "Friesen Drillers had one of their subcontractors out to do some preliminary investigative work on the condition of production well number two, one of the two old wells at that location. That well was originally put into production in 1993...so it was critical to inspect it and do required maintenance on it. It was found that the pitless adaptor, which connects the well to the pipeline bringing the water into the plant, was in very poor shape, so it was replaced along with some other necessary repairs."

Stewart also said, "The newly drilled well number three was put into production on Nov. 10. It is the one currently being used, then it will cycle with well number two when all required works are completed."

While this work is being done adjustments are being made at the water treatment plant to ensure that the treatment of arsenic occurs as required by the Canadian Drinking Water Standards, Office of Drinking Water (ODO), and Public Health.

Samples from both wells have been submitted to ODO and the Town is waiting on results.

CORRECTION:

CORRECTION: Christmas Cheer begins hamper season

As families fill the Lions Hall for pictures with Santa, Virden Christmas Cheer representatives Kathy Heaman and Lisa (Williams) are accepting strictly cash donations. On Dec. 15 the Cheer Board will move into the Catholic Parish Hall where the hampers will be assembled to be delivered on Dec. 18th and 19th.

NOTE: Food is not distributed; the cheer board provides a grocery voucher.

VIRDEN LIONS HALL



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

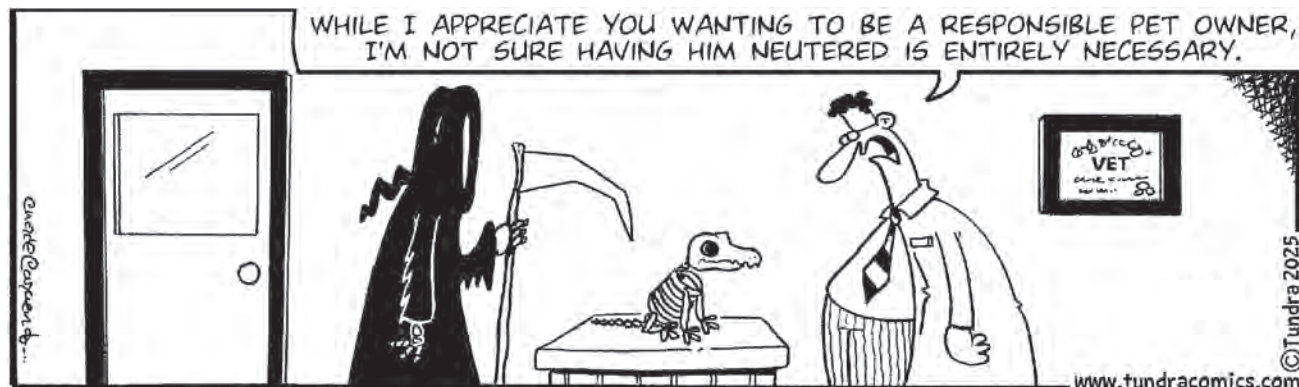
Hall capacity is limited based on current Manitoba Public Health restrictions/guidelines; renters and attendees must comply with up-to-date Manitoba Public Health Orders.

Greg NESBITT
MLA for Riding Mountain

204.759.3313
Toll Free 844.877.7767
gregnesbittmla@mymts.net
#7 - 515 4th Avenue
Burlington Place, Shoal Lake, MB

Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



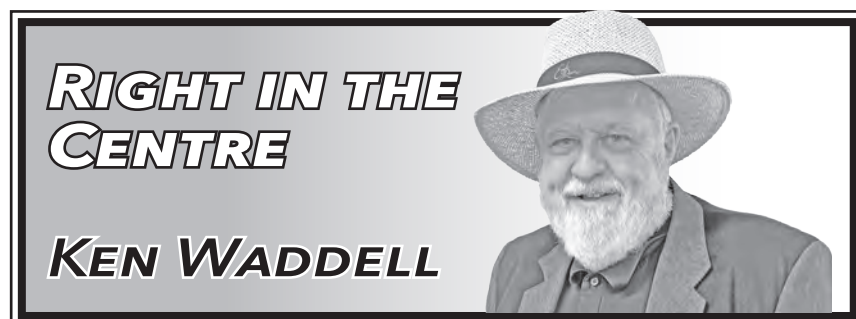
Disgraceful behaviour continues

As anyone who knows me well or who has read some of my columns, knows I try to keep close track of political matters. There are good reasons for that. My parents liked to stay informed about local, provincial and national politics. My father came to Canada in 1913 and was a fan of Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier, if for no other reason than the family benefited from Laurier's immigration policies. Both my parents followed politics, always voted as soon as they were old enough and taught us the importance of being involved.

My wife Christine and I have long been involved in politics, have run for office a few times. I have known about or been somewhat acquainted with every Manitoba premier since Douglas Campbell in the 1950s. I have been in the gallery many times at the Manitoba legislature and have seen some good debates and momentous occasions. With all that background, it was very disturbing to hear about the vicious name calling that took place last week in the Manitoba legislature. I won't repeat what was said, but I abhor the attitudes, the slurs and the sheer ignorance of the discourse.

For me, it goes even a bit deeper than that. In 2006, the leadership of the PC Party of Manitoba became vacant when then leader Stewart Murray lost a confidence vote at a PC Party Annual General Meeting. A leadership race was called. I entered that race and came in third out of three candidates. It was a great experience. Through that leadership process, I became more familiar with the house and its workings. I met with the winner of that race, Hugh McFadyen, many times, and we talked about a wide range of topics and policies.

After all those years of political involvement, it had become evident to me that even then the level of discourse and decorum in the legislature had



“It's a mistake, a huge mistake for the legislature to carry on the way they have done for years now and with no relief in site.”

badly deteriorated. I strongly suggested that he gather his Members of the Legislature (MLAs) together and set a new course of action, discourse and decorum. I suggested that he not participate in the heckling and that he direct his MLAs to do the same. I predicted he would get a lot of attention, even adoration from the media and greater respect from voters. Even then, things were pretty bad in the house, a disgrace to the MLAs and an abuse of people in the gallery and especially to the delegations of school children.

McFadyen didn't apparently take my advice.

From that day forward, through the reign of now several premiers, the name calling, cat-calling and the general level of nastiness has accelerated.

It's a mistake, a huge mistake for the legislature to carry on the way they have done for years now and with no relief in site. No sensible Manitoban should say they like the situation.

The problem is that, although politicians may not realize it, most voters don't hold them in very high esteem. About 40 per cent don't even vote, let alone think that politicians can be taken seriously.

At all levels of politics in Canada, school board, municipal, provincial and federal, it should be incumbent upon politicians to behave in a cordial and respectable fashion. Added onto that is the amount of sad divisions that crop up in US politics and it's no wonder that people don't hold politicians in high esteem.

I am not about to quit preaching, but it's getting disheartening to see the level of disrespect that comes out of politicians' mouths.

The bottom line seems to be that the worse the politicians behave, the more sour and dismissive the voters (and non-voters) become, the less politicians are held accountable. Maybe that's the way they want it to be. With nobody caring and nobody paying attention, the politicians can do whatever they like without accountability. I hope I am wrong but the evidence is building up that politicians render themselves irreverent and irrelevant with the result that they can do whatever they want. That's a sad prospect isn't it?

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.

Homebodies

RITA FRIESEN



Go make a diff'rence

One of the 'going forth' hymns in the newer United Church song book encourages everyone to go out and make a difference in their world.

"Go make a diff'rence, you can make a diff'rence..." It's an upbeat, off beat song, to be sung with enthusiasm. Singing it with enthusiasm is much easier than making a difference with enthusiasm!

It is easy to fall into the pattern of thinking that the something we do is big, splashy and noteworthy. They certainly can be, but they don't have to be grandiose actions that make a difference.

Two of my recent projects have possibly been totally unnoticed by everyone but me. And that's ok. In late spring I was distressed over the multitude of empty pop cans scattered down Railway Street. Twisted Tea cans to be exact. So, one day I grabbed a garbage bag as I left the house, and before I reached the stop sign a few blocks away I had almost 50 empties off the sides of the street, out of sight and into the recycling bin at home. I had not started out with a large enough bag so I stockpiled a few for my next trip out. And then I started spotting them on the grounds of the Yellowhead, down Hurrell Road, beside the old highway— everywhere!!! But I did what I could picking up after a prolific litterer...

This fall the plastic bags tumbling around the compost site have been annoying me to no end. And then one day—go make a difference was our closing song at service. When Arie and I headed out for our Sunday afternoon walk, I decided to start making a difference where I could see a need. I started gathering up bags, big bags, of old, of new, of rotted and whole plastic bags at the compost station. I chased them across the open field, I clambered through the ditch, I braved the tree line and I tugged them out of the dirt in which they were half buried. And I felt darn proud of myself for making a difference in my world. I did wonder if there is still a juvenile offender program in our community and if I could possibly get some assistance from a young offender. I did/do wonder why folks can not simply follow the instructions!!! There are bins provided for the bags. Oh, and I emptied other peoples bags of leaves, cause leaving your leaves in the bag is not the way to do it. And I wondered, every time I emptied one, what else might be in there! I collected a whole bunch of perfectly intact bags and stashed them away for the next time I go out gathering. That whole concept of a dedicated space to drop off trees and branches— NOT pieces of furniture—leaves and garden compost— NOT mattresses and light fixtures— is a wonderful addition to the community, my community, your community.

Perhaps not quite the spiritual intent of the song writer when sending me forth, but it's a start. I challenge each of us to make a positive difference in our world.

Empire Advance
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204- 748-3931
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Yearly Subscription Rates (excluding taxes): \$76 in Manitoba, \$85 elsewhere in Canada
Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement #40069240

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

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PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY
AD DEADLINE: TUESDAY 12
PM PRIOR TO ISSUE DATE

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REF MEMORIES

REF TO
WRITER

GERRY NOLAN



In the late 1980's and early 1990's the Sioux Valley Dakota had a great senior hockey team. They could play the game anyway you wanted to and they were very successful at winning. Most nights they were easy to officiate, but on other nights they could be more than a handful. You just never knew what you were going to get when you went to the rink. There were occasions when they could beat you based on talent alone. On other nights they would spend most of the game in the penalty box! I guess it was one way they could get in your head, so you never knew what was coming.

I was involved in two

games in particular where it just didn't matter what you called or how many you called; they just kept taking penalties. They used this method, especially in the playoffs, to mess with the other team's mindset. The funny part of it as an official is the players never complained to me. I never remember handing out a misconduct to anyone for verbal abuse of an official, they just took their penalty without much fuss or bother.

When the team decided, they were going to beat you where it counts, on the scoreboard, they could do it on a nightly basis if they wanted to.

Offensively they were led

by Stacy Pratt, who was a really gifted athlete. I got to know Stacy when he and his uncle Brian Pratt played fastball with us in Kenton. Stacy played Major Junior hockey with the Brandon Wheat Kings and was on his way to a professional career. It was cut short as he had both of his knees injured on two separate occasions by the same player from the Saskatoon Blades. Stacy was also Ray Ferraro's left winger when Ray scored 108 goals in the Western Hockey League, which is still a record today!

One thing the Sioux Valley Dakota team did was use the short passing game better than any other team I ever saw. Here are some of the names you may remember from those teams. I am sorry for the ones I missed. Stacy Pratt, Stu Chalmers, Robbie Chalmers, Derek Chalmers, Joe Halfa, Kenny Essie, Fraser Taylor, Eli Tacan and one of my favourites Billy McKay. On defense, they had Harold Blacksmith, Rod Tacan, Tim Whitecloud, and Frank Sioux. The rink

in Rivers would be packed as their fans really supported this team.

As an official, another thing you had to pay attention to was their jersey numbers. They would use that short passing game and there could be four or all five guys on the ice that had touched the puck. Most of these players could beat you one on one at any time. They could all dippy-doodle with the puck, this is not something I see in kids' practises, and I wonder why not? This was what won them a lot of games because they had multiple players doing it.

One night in a game in Rivers, Sioux Valley had a four man breakaway. They all passed the puck from one to the other from center ice right to the opposition goal. I wonder what that goalie thought. Stacy pulled the trigger with a slapshot to the top corner of the net. I never saw a four-man breakaway at any other time in any other hockey games! Thanks to the boys from Sioux Valley Dakota hockey team, for the entertainment!

Virden realty business welcomes staff addition



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Kit Harrison and Kelsey Gerrand welcome Aevry Hayward (centre) to Sutton-Harrison Realty office in Virden.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Kelsey Gerrand of Sutton-Harrison Realty held an open house to introduce a new staff member in the Virden office.

Aevry Hayward, a Gr. 11 math teacher at Virden Collegiate Institute, recently completed her training to become a realtor. She's ready to help sellers get their property on the market and to show potential clients what the area has to offer.

Later summer saw a busy housing market said Gerrand. A combination of the holiday season and the drop in temperatures means a slower time, giving Hayward a chance to grow into her new role. Hayward says she's excited to get going.

Friends, family and staff from Virden's financial business community visited at the open house where snacks were on offer.

Town Office: 204-748-2440

Virden Landfill: 204-748-6033

Tundra Oil & Gas Place: 204-748-2736



Animal Control: 204-851-5881

Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440

Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540

Happy Holidays!

The Town Office will be accepting:

- toy donations for **Virden Christmas Cheer**, and
- non-perishable food items for the **Virden Food Cupboard**

Donations will be accepted December 12.



Town of Virden Public Water System

For updates on the Town of Virden Public Water System, please visit www.virden.ca or contact the Town Office at 204-748-2440

2026 Garbage and Recycle Schedules

Available online at www.virden.ca/p/garbage-recycle or at the Town Office

Employment Opportunity Detention Guard – RCMP Detachment

For more information please visit www.virden.ca/p/employment-opportunities

Upcoming Council Meeting

December 16

Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

Employment Opportunity Executive Assistant

The Town of Virden is currently recruiting for the position of **Executive Assistant**.

This position entails a number of duties, including but not limited to:

- Providing administrative and clerical support to the Chief Administrative Officer and Council
- Policy research and preparation
- Preparation of all Council packages, including agendas
- Website and Facebook maintenance

The successful applicant must possess:

- A grade twelve diploma with relevant post secondary education, or experience
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Working knowledge of computer software systems
- The ability to respect and promote confidentiality
- Experience in a municipal environment is an asset
- A minimum of two years experience in a general office environment

A detailed job description is available at the Town Office or online at www.virden.ca/p/employment-opportunities.

Resumes, addressed to the following, will be accepted at the Town Office:

Rhonda Stewart
Chief Administrative Officer
236 Wellington Street West
Email: cao@virden.ca

Thank you to all who are applying for this position but only those who are selected for the interview process will be contacted. This position will remain open until filled.

HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN’S KITCHEN

Parties are so much more relaxing when the food load is shared. Potlucks have been bringing people together for generations to enjoy fun, food and fellowship. Make these two recipes to share at your next gathering.

Vegetable and apple casserole

This vegetable side is irresistibly good and will be a welcome addition to any potluck gathering.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 small turnip | 1 medium sweet potato | 2 Tbsp. brown sugar |
| 6 carrots | 2 Tbsp. butter | 1 tsp. cinnamon |
| 1 tsp. salt | 1/2 tsp. pepper | 4 med apples peeled & sliced |
| Topping: | 1/2 cup brown sugar | |
| 1/2 cup flour | 2 Tbsp. butter | |

This recipe calls for the vegetables to be cooked together. I do not do that. Turnips take longer to cook than the other two so I cook the turnips separately so the sweet potatoes do not go mushy when cooked with the turnips.

Peel the vegetables and cut them into chunks. Place them in a large pot with salted water and boil until tender. Drain, mash and add the butter and salt and pepper. In a greased 2 liter casserole dish layer half the mashed vegetables. Arrange the apple pieces on top. Mix the brown sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle on top of the apples. Cover with the remaining mashed vegetables. Combine the topping ingredients and sprinkle on top of the casserole. Bake uncovered in a preheated oven at 350 F (180C) for 45 minutes.

Cranberry orange coffee cake

The cake is nice and tender, and the cranberries add a nice tart flavor, perfect for bringing to potlucks!

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1/2 cup butter, room temperature | 1 cup white sugar |
| 1 Tbsp. orange zest | 1 tsp. orange or vanilla flavoring |
| 2 eggs | 1/4 cup fresh orange juice |
| 1 cup sour cream | 2 cups flour |
| 1 tsp. baking soda | 1 tsp. baking powder |
| 1/2 tsp. salt | 1 /2 tsp. cinnamon |
| 1/2 tsp. allspice | 1/2 tsp. cloves |
| 2 cups fresh cranberries (or frozen cranberries thawed) | |
| Cinnamon Sugar Topping: | 1/2 cup finely chopped walnuts |
| 1 tsp. cinnamon | 1/4 cup sugar |

Preheat the oven to 350 F (180 C). Grease a Bundt pan or angel cake pan with spray or butter and set aside. Make the cinnamon sugar topping by mixing the granulated sugar, cinnamon and walnuts in a small bowl and set aside. In a large mixing bowl, beat together the butter, sugar and orange zest until creamy. Add in the flavoring, eggs and orange juice and mix well. Mix in the sour cream. In a small bowl combine the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt and spices. Stir into the remaining batter. Fold in the cranberries until evenly distributed.

Sprinkle one half of the sugar/nut mix on the bottom of the greased pan. Slowly pour in half of the cake batter. Then carefully sprinkle the remaining nut/sugar mix on top. Top with the rest of the cake mix. Bake for 45-55 minutes until toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Let the coffee cake cool for at least a half hour before transferring to a plate. Enjoy while warm or cold.

Miniota News

Submitted

BY LINDA CLARK

Congratulations to Dan and Mariah Bryant and their

boys on the arrival of their new home on the farm. Looks great! Also this week Gardham Brothers Construction moved a new home they had built in Arrow River to its new home in Rivers.

Trent and Sandra Peel, with family members Danny and Jaylene, Brantley, Peyton, Hannah and Colson flew to Florida for two weeks, renting a house in Kissimmee. Tracy McTavish joined them for 10 days, and everyone enjoyed Disney World as well as other sights.

Deepest sympathy is extended to Ron and Cindy Chartier, Ron’s siblings and their families on the death of their sister and aunt, Pat Edgerton at Russell. Pat attended school here at Miniota.

Darcy Oliver, Linda Clark, Delbert Cole, Trent Peel and CAO Charlene Bonchuk attended the Association of Manitoba Municipalities convention in Winnipeg this past week. Pat and Sandra accompanied their husbands to the city.

Brian and Candice Armitage and family have just returned from a holiday at Kissimmee, Orlando, Florida, with Don and Sandra

Armitage, Lyle and Loni Armitage and family of Calgary, plus Kerilee and Dustin Fouillard and family of Melfort, Sask.

Saturday a two on two bonspiel was held at the curling rink, and as well two hockey games, U13 and U15 were played. Our rink is a busy spot these days! As well many families are on the road for both hockey and curling.

Congratulations to the U11 Miniota Night-hawks team and their coaches for bringing home the A Side banner from the Minnedosa tournament this past weekend!

The Miniota Community ended the month of November with a big bang as they welcomed in the Christmas season. Nov. 30 began with brunch and pictures with Santa, followed by crafts and decorating cookies, story time with Mrs. Claus, and then bingo for all ages. Despite the cool temp, about 60 people joined the Miniota CDC staff for roasted hot dogs and marshmallows at the Memory Garden, prior to the Santa parade. As well the Miniota Anglican United Shared Ministry began the Advent season, lighting the first Advent candle for HOPE.

Memorial Bulbs may be purchased in memory of your loved one at Fusion Credit Union.

“Christmas is coming! I pray December brings love, peace, warmth and happiness to each of you,” and “Be the light in a world of darkness.” -Facebook

Police Report

Westman RCMP Service Report for Nov. 23 to Nov. 29

Submitted

BY WESTMAN RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 88 calls for service. Some of these calls for service include 40 traffic offences, 3 Theft, 6 Mischief, 1 Well-being Checks, 1 Sexual Interference, 2 Break and Enter, 1 Assist General Public, 3 Disobey Order of Court, and 1 Operation while Impaired files.

On Nov. 23, Westman RCMP conducted a traffic stop in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth. RCMP completed a sobriety check with a 29-year-old female. Driver was prohibited from driving Canada Wide. Driver blew FAIL on ASD and was placed under arrest and brought to Virden detachment where she blew 210mg% and 190mg%. She was charged with Operation while impaired (alcohol) of a motor vehicle operation while over 80mg% and Operation while Prohibited. The driver was released on an Appearance notice, and the vehicle was impounded. She will appear in court in January.

On Nov. 23, during routine traffic patrols within the RM of Pipestone and Wallace-Woodworth, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 117km/hr in a 90 km/hr zone. RCMP initiated a traffic stop and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$403. RCMP also observed a second vehicle in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 131km/hr in a 110 km/hr zone. RCMP initiated a traffic stop and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$325.

On Nov. 24, during routine traffic patrols within the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 138km/hr in a 110 km/hr zone. RCMP initiated a traffic stop and the driver

was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$416. RCMP also observed a second vehicle in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 91km/hr in a 60 km/hr zone. RCMP initiated a traffic stop and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$456.

On Nov. 25, RCMP received a report of a hit and run in the Town of Virden. The complainant advised that he had slid through a stop sign, hitting an oncoming vehicle. The driver of the oncoming vehicle told the complainant that he did not have a license and drove away. Through investigation, police located the driver who admitted to police that he had driven away after hitting the vehicle. The

driver was issued Traffic Offence Notices for Drive Without Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance, Failure to Give Required Information to the Driver of Another Involved Vehicle, and Drive a Vehicle Without a Supervising Driver, carrying a total of \$1,078 worth of fines.

On Nov. 28, RCMP received a report from a local business in the Town of Virden that a man had attempted to scam them by trying to confuse the employee, asking them to exchange money into different bills while quickly flipping through the bills and mixing them up. When the employee caught on to what the man was doing and refused to exchange any other money, the man left without taking the item he had attempted to purchase.

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From the prairies to the highland tour 204 - Part 14

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Last week, Celia shared her story about the ladies having tea, while the men were walking the St. Andrews Golf Course. This is a very prestigious golf course, one where professional golfers compete. Yes, it is that kind of golf course!

St. Andrews Golf Course hosts the British Open professional golfer's association every five years, so it is truly professional. We didn't walk the complete course, but we saw some amazing things.

WOW! What a course! It costs \$300 for eighteen holes. There are narrow fairways, tall fescue, and sand traps that can be 6 or 7 feet deep. Sand traps surround most greens and also are strategically placed along the fairways. This course is not a hack and

whack course, club size is of huge importance when playing here.

We walked some of the course and watched some golfers playing. All of the golfers had caddies, who helped the players out with club selection, distance to the pin as well as reading the greens, which were anything but straight in putts. The Caddies make a living doing this service, and if a caddie does two, eighteen hole rounds he would make around \$500.00 for the day. Probably tax free, I am thinking. What a great career. The caddies play the course a number of times so they can pass this information to their selected golfer.

James then took us to the equipment shed. I worked at the Wellview Golf Club in Virden for five years back in the 1990's, so I was of course very interested in what the professionals

use for equipment. Well, it was awesome! St. Andrews actually has three different eighteen-hole golf courses and they are actually building a fourth golf course. There are so many people who want to play golf.

Their equipment had 8 greens mowers, plus multiple tractors and front-end loaders. They had several side by sides and a storage shed where they mixed sand and grass seed as well as fertilizer and black dirt. Obviously, there is a lot of maintenance. One man spends 6-7 hours a day just raking the sand traps on one of the eighteen-hole golf courses.

The course is immaculate! The professional player can struggle on this golf course, imagine the run of the mill golfer, it must be difficult.

The greens are built so they have ups and downs and curves and any other



PHOTO BY DEVON CALDWELL

Enjoying a round of golf at St. Andrews Golf Course.

way to make them difficult. They are anything but flat and straight, but there is a knack of doing it. Just off of the side of the greens are putting holes to practise on. These are just flat surfaces.

We were there on a Sunday. People are allowed to

walk some of the course and take their pets as well. It is family day. What a way to introduce your children to golf. We were told the golf course has so much money, they just keep investing it back into the course.

After the tour, we went to the clubhouse for lunch.

What a clubhouse! You can only imagine what a professional golfer's clubhouse would look like!

I think we were all a little drained after this day, but we had to get rested because next week you will learn about the (Tattoo) in Edinburgh!

Manitobans encouraged to be educated and vigilant when shopping online



By Michelle Lissel
RCMP MEDIA RELATIONS OFFICER

Shoppers looking online for great deals this holiday season are strongly encouraged by Manitoba RCMP to be on the lookout for scams designed to empty their bank accounts and steal their personal information.

"Most Manitobans look forward to the holiday season, with many shopping online to find the perfect gift for loved ones. Unfortunately, there are criminals lurking online who are using increasingly sophisticated methods to take advantage of that good will and steal people's money and personal information," said Staff Sgt. Kevin Cavanagh, of the Manitoba RCMP's cyber and financial crime unit.

"We strongly encourage Manitobans to be educated about the dangers lurking online, so they can be vigilant in protecting themselves."

Online scams can be basic and straightforward, such as phishing texts that claim package deliveries are delayed or that payment information needs to be verified. They can also be sophisticated, with ads placed on social media that direct people to fake websites that mimic legitimate retailers and travel agencies offering incredible deals. Even charities can be impersonated, with people encouraged to give money to charities that don't actually exist.

There are things Manitobans should look out for to avoid being scammed. The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre recommends you look carefully for spelling errors in texts or on websites, references to a product as "the item," overseas buyers who are looking to buy without seeing the product first and sellers with recently created social media profiles. Shoppers should also be cautious about supposed "blowout" sales or greatly reduced prices posted online – the product you receive may be a counterfeit, if you receive it at all.

Further steps Manitobans can take include:

- Knowing the market value of the product they're looking for;
- Locating and verifying the sellers' contact information before purchasing;
- Looking for customer reviews and ratings from third-party sources;
- Using a payment method with fraud protection, such as credit cards;

- Providing the payment in person whenever possible;
- Reviewing all email information to ensure it's coming from a legitimate source; and
- Not clicking on ads that sound too good to be true – use a trusted search engine instead to locate the seller and research if they are a vendor you should trust.

If you or someone you know has been defrauded, report it to the RCMP or your local police service. Your report can help identify links, catch criminals and prevent further frauds.

Please also report it to the National Cybercrime and Fraud Reporting System, which serves as a central repository of fraud and cybercrime reports from across the country. Reports can be filed here: Report Cybercrime and Fraud | National Cybercrime and Fraud Reporting System.

Reston Pipestone Pastoral Charge Christmas Cheer Program

"Give, and it shall be given unto you." Luke 6:38

No item donations can be accepted
but monetary donations to this project are welcome.

By cheque payable to (Reston Pipestone Pastoral Charge

Mail to: Box 148, Reston, MB R0M 1X0

Or

By e-transfer to: rucpuc@mymts.net

To apply for a voucher or submit a name of someone you think would qualify for one, please call 204-877-3632

or by email to rucpuc@mymts.net by Dec. 11.

(All information will be kept strictly confidential)

THE 30TH ANNUAL SANTA BRUNCH IN OAK LAKE



The Oak Lake Lions Club cooked up a delicious Christmas brunch.

By Jessica Coulter
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Santa was spotted in Oak Lake on Sunday, Nov. 30. The Oak Lake Community School Parent Advisory Council (OLCA PAC) was excited to partner with the Oak Lake and Area Lions Club in hosting the 30th Annual Santa Brunch in Oak Lake at the community hall.

They had approximately 30 volunteers working various shifts and stations during the event and many other community members pitched in when needed without being asked.

Fluffy scrambled eggs and pancakes, tasty pork sausage, cheesy hash browns, a variety of muffins and delicious Christmas oranges was served to over 400 people during the four-hour brunch by the Oak Lake and Area Lions Club.

There was this amazing idea that the Council started



PHOTOS BY JESSICA COULTER

A toonie to shop for a perfect present for every kid to get something for their favourite adult.

a few years ago where kids get to shop for a toonie. Before the event, the council puts a shout out to the community inviting people to donated items to Christmas Store. The items donated included kitchenware, books, ties and more. This store is for children 12 and under. Each child brings a toonie to the store, which was in a separate room from the brunch, and buys a gift from the donations table. They then wrap it with the donated wrapping paper and save this gift to give to a parent on Christmas day.

They had 38 silent raffle prizes that people could bid on and they had 30 rainbow ticket raffle prizes.

There were too many sponsors to list them all. The group was able to get approximately 100 sponsors to donate to this great day. Donations were in the form of prizes, items for the kids store and some monetary donations.



The tables were packed with people from all around enjoying the 30th Annual Santa brunch.

“This year saw the OLCS PAC and OL and area Lions club host the 30th Annual Santa Brunch. This event is an anticipated annual event for our community. For many it feels like the official kick off to Christmas where community members gather to visit, eat a delicious brunch while children visit Santa, do crafts and secretly shop for family members in the kids store. The support for this event is so wonderful,” says Jodie Gompf, lead organizer.

Profits from this event were split between two active groups in the community. OLCS PAC is focusing fundraising on new playground equipment. They also support the school swim program and various school activities. The Lions Club returns profits to the community and support many initiatives with in the Oak Lake community.

A Very Virden Christmas

Holiday Events ★ Dec 5 - Christmas

- DECEMBER 5 DAINTY TRAY & BAKE SALE @ Arts Mosaic *Hosted by Virden & District Health Auxiliary
- DECEMBER 6 FILL THE SLEIGH @ Red Apple *Stop by to donate
- DECEMBER 6 WING DING TURKEY BINGO @ Virden Legion *Hosted by Wallace District Fire Department 12-4pm
- DECEMBER 9 S.A.I.L CHRISTMAS SING ALONG *Musicians The Senior Serenaders
- DECEMBER 10 - 13 CHRISTMAS LIGHT VILLAGE @ Virden Lions Campground *Hosted by A Very Virden Christmas
- DECEMBER 11 MARY MONTGOMERY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS CONCERT @ AUD Theatre *Theme is The Jingle Book
- DECEMBER 13 THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS @ St. Paul's United Church *Presented by Theatrick Players
- DECEMBER 19 OIL CAPITALS GAME vs Swan Valley Stampeders
- DECEMBER 20 NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION @ Derrick Theatre 2pm *Presented by Chamber of Commerce
- DECEMBER 21 VIRDEN MUSIC JAM @ Virden Legion 1pm
- DECEMBER 21 SKATE WITH SANTA @ Tundra Oil & Gas Place 4pm

Decorating Contest

OVER \$1200 IN PRIZES TO BE WON!

Visit the website for full details and to submit your entries.

THURSDAY NIGHT SHOPPING

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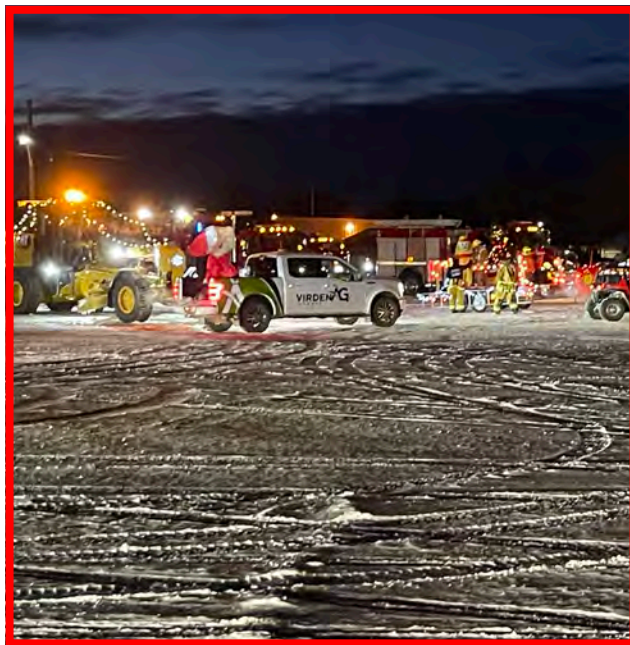
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A Very Virden Christmas is proudly sponsored by

VIRDEN SANTA PARADE WAS ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL



Very Virden Christmas float built on Wednesday Nov. 26. Committee members, Norm Murray, Jessica Coulter, Clayton Murray, Cassandra Noonan-Robinson and Tara Davies (Krista Pederson missing from photo).



PHOTOS BY JESSICA COULTER

All the floats started to gather in the Fair Grounds parking lot.



Float all lite up with the new signs ready to head out.

By Jessica Coulter
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

This year was my first year riding in the Virden Santa Parade which took place on Saturday, November 29. I am not a fan of the cold, but it was a ton of fun. I joined the Very Virden Christmas Committee in the summer of this year and since then it has been a whirlwind of excitement and planning. It has been nice to see all the planning come together.

Before getting to ride in the parade, the Very Virden Christmas Committee had to get together to make the float. We got all set on the Wednesday before the parade in the nice warm shop at Virden Recreation. Thank-you Norm Murray! The bales were dropped off

the day before by my husband, Kent Coulter. Everyone in the group brought some decorations to help light up the float and make it stand out. We had very little direction on how things would look when we started, but with so many creative minds on this committee, the float turned out absolutely amazing. It only took an hour and a half and we were ready for the parade!

Our float arrived at the Fair Grounds just before 5:30pm on Saturday, pulled by a Virden Recreation truck, driven by Murray and Dustin Clayton running shotgun. Committee member, Cassandra Noonan-Robinson and her husband, Nicholas sat on the bales on one side. Mayor Tina Williams and I rode on the other side. Our new signs that were made by NRG signs were looking great on both sides of the float. Everything was lite up and shining. We watched as many more floats arrived

with a ton of lights and Christmas music coming from all directions. There were horse drawn wagons decorated with lights and bells. Trucks, trailers and even road graders all covered in the spirit of Christmas. The Very Virden Christmas Committee members put on our elf hats and got ready to ride.

The parade got started at 6pm. Even with the cold, -10C weather, there were people lined up along the streets waiting and watching as all the floats drove by. Some stayed in their vehicles, and some waved from their homes. I was surprised at how many were outside braving the cold and waving. By the end, my face was frozen in a smile from waving and wishing as many people as I could, Merry Christmas. It was nice to be next to Mayor Williams on the float, many people and kids from the daycare recognized her and it was great to see them happy when they saw her in her Santa hat.

We were back at the Fair Grounds by 6:30pm. It may have taken a while to gain feeling back in my toes from the cold, but it was worth it.



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2025 HOLIDAY HOURS
December 24 8:00 - 12:00 | December 25 - 26 Closed
December 31 8:00 - 12:00 | January 1 - 2 Closed

2025 VIRDEN CHRISTMAS CHEER

We appreciate all the support we have received from our community and the surrounding area in the past years. Because of you Virden Christmas Cheer is a success! 140 Hampers were given out in 2024.

Monetary Donations can be mailed to Box 2282 Virden, MB R0M 2C0, e-transferred to virdenchristmascheer@gmail.com or dropped off at Custom Creations. Located at 479 Seventh Ave S in Virden, MB.

We are NOT accepting food donations for the 2025 campaign. However, donations of toys (approximate value \$25) ARE accepted for this campaign and can be dropped off at Sunrise Credit Union in Virden as well as at the Town of Virden office in the Christmas Cheer box in the foyer until December 12.

If you are aware of someone needing to receive a hamper, please call Carol at 204-851-2972 between November 17 - December 8, 2025. Please direct any questions to: Kathy 204-851-0506 or Lisa 204-748-5440



SPORTS

THE KENTON CUP

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

What is the Kenton Cup? Well, back in 2014 a group of men got together and decided we would try to be like National Hockey League General Managers. The rules are fairly simple, so this is how it works.

Initially we started I believe with 8 teams, and we now have expanded to 14 teams. We have had teams drop out but have been able to replace those teams by taking on new owners.

The first season we drafted a total of 30 players. Your roster included team goalies, six defensemen and 12 forwards in your lineup. The remaining players go into your player pool. From the pool you are allowed 12 changes per season. In case of injury, you can put in a player from your pool to replace him, but you have to remain under the cap. The salary cap that we have is the same as the NHL.

If you trade a player, that player's salary is prorated, so making trades can help you make changes in your lineup.

Todd Hunter is our President because in the winter-time he is looking for something to do as farming slows down. Todd also keeps track of the points and sends us weekly updates. He also keeps track of trades and lineup changes, so as you can see he has another full-time job! We the members of the league award a Gold Star to Todd for all his work!

Teams that are in the league are, Todd Hunter, Blair Fordyce, Chris Sutherland, Jason McTavish, Kevin Kirk, Sheldon Rapley, Lane Routledge, Grady Routledge, Matt Pugh, Lynn Madsen, Mark Madsen who teams with Les Sutherland, Ryan Todd teams with Kyle Brown and James and Connor Ramsey and yours truly.

Lynn (Stumper) Madsen keeps track of the trades and of the many draft picks that are traded each season. We meet in early October for our draft meeting.

Important to note you cannot draft a player who has already been taken, we have to remind Blair of this each fall.

We also have a free agency night where you can drop a player from your roster and pick up another player who has not been drafted and put into your lineup or pool. After this night, you can not make any more trades until the end of the season. The top 8 teams make the playoffs while the other 6 try to figure out where they went wrong.

The way to get points is goals and assists and the dreaded plus/minus. The team with the best plus / minus is usually the winner. Lane Routledge currently is a plus 92. He has a 41-point lead in that department. If you are a Minus, that comes off your point total. We find that NHL teams are not concerned about this as they will pull their goalie multiple times to try and come back in a game.

Blair Fordyce was our initial winner in 2014 and has not been close since.

Grady Routledge leads the league in trades and no one else is close to him in that department.

Lynn Madsen is the most difficult team to make a trade with as it is always all about him! Jason McTavish is the one liner specialist and keeps our meetings real loose!

At the end of each season we must submit a roster of 15 players that you want to protect. Of these 15 players, 3 must be in your pool. You can use those pool players to put into your lineup in case of injury.

All in all it is a lot of fun and for \$40.00 it is cheap entertainment. Oh yes I forgot to mention that the weekly top team receives \$5.00. Not a get rich thing that's for sure.

Obviously we have a lot of fun with it and it is a great way to pass the winter!

GOERTZEN'S HOT NOVEMBER FUELS OIL CAPS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

While the temperatures dipped in November, Virden Oil Capitals forward Liam

Goertzen heated up.

The 19-year-old from Homewood had four goals and seven points over eight games in the 11th month of the year. As of Dec. 1, Goertzen had recorded five goals and seven assists for 12 points in 18 Manitoba Junior Hockey League games this season.

"Liam has played very well as of late," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "He is a great skater, he can be physical and strong, and he has the ability to score. The pace to his game has improved in his time here, and he has grasped a role on our penalty kill this season. Liam is an intelligent player and is an important guy in our lineup that can play multiple roles."

From Nov. 7 to Nov. 22, Goertzen had a five-game point streak. The 5-foot-10, 174-pounder lit the lamp twice and recorded an assist for three points on Nov. 15 in a win over Portage. What allowed Goertzen to put up points in November?

"I think just working hard and building chemistry with our lines has helped me get back to producing and helping our team in that aspect," he said.

Goertzen was picked in the fourth round of the 2022 MJHL Draft by the Niverville Nighthawks. He played one contest, as an affiliated player, with the team in 2022-2023. His rights ended up with the Winnipeg Freeze (now known as the Monarchs). Goertzen played a game for them as an AP in 2023-2024. He started his rookie campaign in Winnipeg last season before being swapped to Virden. Goertzen tallied nine goals and 13 points in 23 games in 2024-2025 with the Oil Capitals. He was named the team's Rookie of the Year.

"We are very happy to have added Liam to our organization last season, and we look forward to what he can



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

Liam Goertzen had a strong scoring November for the Virden Oil Capitals while also earning a role on the penalty kill.

accomplish this season and next," Ramsey said.

Since coming to Virden, Goertzen said, "I have really enjoyed being part of the community and the support they bring back to us at our games."

He has enjoyed billeting with Kurt, Lacey, Blake, Bentley, Braxton, and Brogan Goulden. Goertzen said, "They have been great to me and very supportive."

Since the Winnipeg Saints moved to Virden in 2012 and became the Oil Capitals, the organization has emphasized community involvement. Goertzen has embraced this.

"I enjoyed helping out around the schools playing soccer and I also enjoyed helping during the Christmas event in downtown Virden," he said. "I think it's important for me and the team to be involved with the town as it helps the families and community to get to know us, which helps them to come support us this season."

The Virden Community Chamber of Commerce Presents

FREE MOVIE

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation





Virden Community
**CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**

20 DEC

2:00pm

Derrick Theatre | Free Admission

Free Popcorn & Drink provided by:



OIL CAPS DOWN MONARCHS, FALL TO NIGHTHAWKS



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

Virden Oil Caps collected approx. 200 teddy bears and 24 mitts, toques, and socks at the teddy bear toss.

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Rookie Dysen Drake's two-goal night helped the Virden Oil Capitals beat the Winnipeg Monarchs last week.

The local Manitoba Junior Hockey League team defeated the visiting Monarchs, 4-1, in front of 713 fans on Nov. 29. Earlier in the week, at home, the Oil Capitals fell 7-1 to the league-leading Niverville Nighthawks in the team's annual Teddy Bear Toss game.

"I thought we did a good job of bouncing back after a tough loss against Niverville," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said of the contest against the Monarchs. "We didn't start the game particularly well, but I thought we showed some maturity in sticking with our game plan, and that allowed us to eventually find our footing. I also thought our goaltender (Micky Gross) was very good."

The Oil Capitals have four games this week. They were slated to host the Selkirk Steelers on Dec. 2 and play in Dauphin on Dec. 3. Both contests were after the Empire-Advance deadline. The Virden team plays in Portage on Dec. 6 and Niverville on Dec. 7.

The Monarchs and Oil Capitals were deadlocked at 0-0 after

one period of play. Drake scored with 5:52 gone in the second period to open the scoring. About five minutes later, former Oil Cap Maxx Hamelin tied things up for the Monarchs. With 17:52 gone by in the period, veteran forward Noel Englot scored on the power play to give Virden a 2-1 lead.

Just over five minutes into the third period, Drake scored his second of the night. Virden's own Bryce Bryant added an empty-net goal.

Gross made 14 saves for Virden. The Oil Capitals sent 26 shots at Dylan McFadyen, who stopped 23 of them.

Drake was the game's First Star. Englot was the Second Star and Marshall Light, who had an assist, was the Third Star. Rookie defenceman Miguel Bonin, who recorded an assist, was named Virden's Hardest Working Player.

Teddy Bear Toss

In front of 657 fans on Nov. 27, rookie forward Tyson Ulmer scored the Teddy Bear Toss goal, which was also his first MJHL marker. According to the Oil Capitals, approximately 200 teddy bears and 24 mitts, toques, and socks were collected for local charities.

"I think we were all very excited to see Ulms score not only the Teddy Bears Toss goal, but also his first of the season," Oil Capitals forward London Hoilett said. "Kid works so

hard day in and day out. He's a huge part of the culture we're striving towards here. Couldn't think of a more deserving player and person to pot the big goal this year."

Hoilett, who is in his first season in Virden, scored two Teddy Bear Toss goals while playing for the Western Hockey League's Calgary Hitmen. He said, "It was definitely a really special experience and event to be a part of."

"Those games are always so much fun," Hoilett said. "The energy and excitement in the dressing rooms are high in anticipation for those teddy bears to be thrown. It's also really cool to see all the kids in the stands throw their teddy bears in support of other children that may be going through a rough time during the holiday season."

Ulmer's goal was the opening marker of the contest. The Nighthawks tied things up at 1-1 before the end of the first period. Niverville scored twice in the second session to take a 3-1 lead. The Nighthawks added four in the third. Three of those came on the power play.

Virden goalie Braxton Burdeny made 34 saves on 41 shots. Hoilett was named the Oil Capitals' Hardest Working Player.

Niverville netminder Austin Dubinsky made 28 saves. Scoring for the Nighthawks were

Calyb Moore (2), Evan Panzer, Adam Vigfusson, Aaron Krestanowich, Thomas Phillips, and Loik Leduc.

Worthington Headed to Challenge

Oil Capitals forward Colten Worthington will compete for Team Canada West at the Junior A World Challenge in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, from Dec. 7-13. The 18-year-old forward from Brandon said:

"I'm really looking forward to the experience of the whole tournament, playing with new guys and getting to experiment with the different playing styles and abilities of all these highly talented products from western Canada. I am so honoured and excited to be able to represent not only Canada, but Virden as well. As well, as it being my first time going to Quebec, I am looking forward to seeing all the new landmarks and adventuring around."

Plaisier Player of the Month

The Oil Capitals' hometown captain, Ty Plaisier was named the team's CD Oilwell Player of the Month for November. The defenceman tallied seven points, including a goal, in seven games. On the team's website, Ramsey said, "Ty logs a lot of minutes in all situations and plays mostly against the opposition's best players."

SPORTS NOTES: BROWNING-LOZINSKI HELPING OIL KINGS IN ROOKIE SEASON

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

In his first season with his hometown Virden Oil Kings, Jaden Browning-Lozinski has already made an impression.

The son of Ryan Lozinski and Amber Browning has three assists over his first seven games for the local senior hockey team. Last season, the forward suited up for the Virden Collegiate Institute hockey league team.

"Jaden has helped us immensely," Oil Kings coach Tyler Campbell said. "To have a local kid come out of high school and be as good as he has been, it's been an awesome couple weeks watching him in his first year of senior. He looks like he belongs already."

Last week, the Oil Kings' Tiger Hills Hockey League game against Deloraine was postponed. On Dec. 6, the Virden squad, which entered the week with a 5-3-0-0 record, plays in Melita.

Browning-Lozinski was a key player for the Golden Bears in the high school ranks last winter. At the Provincial AA Tournament, he was VCI's Player of the Game for one of his team's contests.

"I enjoyed representing VCI and playing alongside all of my childhood friends," Browning-Lozinski said of high school hockey.

Now he has made the leap to the THHL. Browning-Lozinski said, "Senior hockey has been quite a big step from

high school. Senior hockey has been a lot faster and a lot more physical."

Browning-Lozinski works for Diversified Oilfield Services. He said he is enjoying his time with the Oil Kings as, "I wanted to keep playing competitive hockey and stay around Virden."

Varsity Girls Volleyball Provincials

The Virden Collegiate Institute Varsity girls volleyball team competed at the AAA provincial tournament in Winnipeg last weekend. The Golden Bears were 1-2 in pool play. In the playoff round, they fell to the Westgate Warriors. Westgate went on to win the championship.

The Reston Varsity girls volleyball squad was at the A provincials in Rivers. The Tigers were 2-2 in pool play. They lost to Miami in the playoffs.

Look for more on the local teams in an upcoming issue of the Empire-Advance.

Masters Curling

On home ice last week, the Virden Curling Club's Barry Lowes earned a berth into the Manitoba Credit Union Masters Men's Provincials. The event will be at the Brandon Curling Club on Feb. 24-March 1.

At the Masters Men's West 2 Regionals, the Lowes rink stole the last end versus Team Renwick in the B side berth game. Lowes' rink includes Brent Duncan, Randy O'Greysik, and Darrell Elliott.

NOTICE

Under the Oil and Gas Act Virden Oil Field

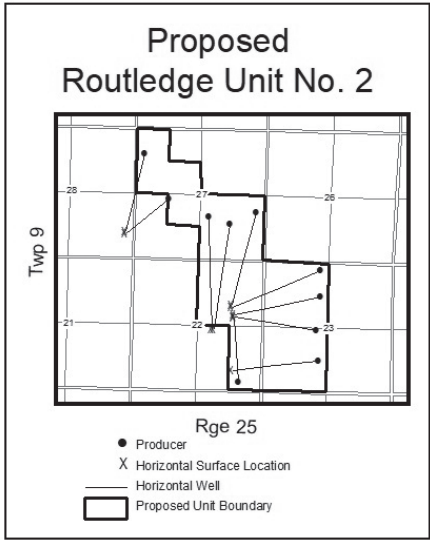
Corex Resources Ltd. has made application under The Oil and Gas Act for approval to form Routledge Unit No. 2 and within implement a Waterflood enhanced oil recovery (EOR) operations, within the Lodgepole formation. The map below shows the proposed boundaries.

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 **December 26, 2025**, the Minister may approve the application.

Copies of the application can be obtained from:

Peter Parkinson
Corex Resources Ltd.
Suite 3400, 700 2nd Street SW
Calgary, AB T2P 2W3
(403) 718-6371
PeterP@corexresources.ca

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



CLASSIFIEDS

Help Wanted



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

BUILDING, PLANNING AND MUNICIPAL BY-LAW INSPECTOR

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a qualified individual for the position of **Building, Planning & Municipal By-Law Inspector**. This role is responsible for ensuring compliance with Manitoba's building codes, planning regulations, and all municipal by-laws (including zoning, property standards, nuisance) while administering development agreements and planning documentation for Trans Canada West Planning District on behalf of the Municipality.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Conduct building, plumbing, mechanical, zoning, and property standards inspections
- Review and issue building, plumbing, occupancy, and development permits
- Ensure permits and documents are uploaded to the Manitoba Municipal Reporting Online (MMO) system
- Enforce all municipal by-laws – property standards, signage, nuisance, noise, etc.
- Investigate complaints and issue warnings, orders, and violations as required
- Administer and monitor development agreements and planning documentation
- Assist with conditional use, variance, and subdivision applications
- Maintain accurate digital and paper records, inspection notes, and reports
- Provide information and guidance to residents, developers, and contractors
- Coordinate with RCMP, Peace Officers or Provincial agencies for joint enforcement
- Perform other duties as assigned by the CAO or Council

Skills and Qualifications

- Experience in building inspection, by-law enforcement, or municipal planning as asset
- Ability to read building plans and interpret zoning regulations
- Strong communication and customer service skills
- Manitoba Class 5 driver's license (clean abstract)
- Inspector certification (Parts 3 & 9) or trade background an asset

The R.M. Wallace-Woodworth offers a competitive salary based upon the applicant's experience and qualifications. A complete job description is available upon request. The successful candidate can expect a salary reflective of their experience and qualifications.

LANDFILL SITE ATTENDANT – KENTON

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

Certificate in Landfill Operations is an asset. Applicant must be willing to take the necessary certification courses.

Description and Qualifications

- Permanent, part-time position (currently at 14 hours/week winter, 17 hours/week summer).
- Must be willing to work Saturdays, and one evening per week during the summer months.
- Direct all users to appropriate disposal or storage locations for all items being disposed.
- Ensure source separation of garbage and recyclables.
- Accept tires, general scrap iron, and spray containers; store at proper locations and keep area tidy.
- Assist in transferring or disposing of waste, as required.
- Maintain daily records of waste entering the disposal site.
- Keep all buildings and areas of the landfill site clean and well maintained.
- Ensure that fires are not set and all controlled burns are supervised and recorded.
- Report all concerns to the Transportation Superintendent and Chief Administrative Officer.
- Other duties, as required.
- Must be punctual, motivated, self-starter, and able to work without supervision.
- Good interpersonal skills to deal politely and effectively with the general public.
- Ability to meet physical demands of the position and have an excellent safety record.
- Class 5 Driver's License required.

Interested candidates should submit a resume with 3 references by:

E-mail: info@wallace-woodworth.com

Mail/Drop-off: R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth Municipal Office
154023 PR 257 Box 2200 (Corner of 83 Hwy & PR 257) Virden, MB R0M 2C0

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.

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

Tender

FOR LEASE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders to lease the pastured land situate in the Municipality of Pipestone and more particularly described below will be received by:

MEIGHEN, HADDAD LLP
110-11th Street
Brandon, MB R7A 4J4
Attention: Warren G. Barber, K.C.

LAND:

Approximately 98.4 acres of pasture adjacent to Pipestone Creek in E 1/2 22-8-26WPM in the Municipality of Pipestone

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

1. Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on the above or any other particulars or representations made by or on behalf of the landowner. The land is tendered for rent on an "as is" basis. All mines and minerals are reserved from the Lease Agreement.
2. Tenders must be received on or before 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 31, 2025
3. The lease term will be three (3) years commencing January 1, 2026. The Tender must specify the rent per acre payable for year one (1). Rent will be increased by two (\$2.00) dollars per acre in each of the two (2) subsequent years of the term.
4. Rent plus GST is payable on April 1st annually.
5. The party whose tender is accepted will be required to enter into a written Lease Agreement to be prepared by the solicitors for the landowners, a copy of which is available by contacting Warren G. Barber, K.C. at wbarber@mhlaw.ca or (204) 725-8461.
6. The successful bidder shall be responsible for one half the costs associated with the preparation of the lease.
7. Entry onto the land will not be authorized until the Lease Agreement is executed.
8. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

For further information contact Giovanni Colangelo at (204) 851-2101.

Help Wanted



To apply for this position please drop off a resume at the Virden RCMP Detachment.

Position: Detention Guard
Status: On Call schedule
Site Schedule: Casual / Shift hours: 0800-1600, 1600-2400, 2400-0800
Location: 541 King Street, Virden, MB
Security Clearance: Reliability (5yrs residency)
Pay: \$ 21.10 / hr

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Observe and check prisoners frequently and irregularly, this may include the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV).
- Assist RCMP member(s) when required to search prisoners (training provided) Note: Physical handling of prisoners is not a job requirement for Detention Guards; any movement of prisoners will be conducted by the RCMP.
- Organize meals, record prisoner activity, and maintain a prisoner activity logbook.
- Maintain cleanliness and tidiness of cells when vacated or arrange janitor assistance.
- Record and report any damages or repairs to cells.
- Conduct search of cells prior to occupation and when cells are vacated.
- Maintain cellblock security by ensuring cell doors are locked at all times.
- Ensure all personal effects removed from prisoners are properly secured.
- Monitor fire safety and be fully conversant with fire orders.
- Handle and dispense laundry items.
- Under the supervision of the RCMP Officer, dispense approved prescription medications to persons in custody.
- As per the RCMP Unit Supplemental Orders, monitoring prisoners to have or suspected of having suicidal tendencies.
- Perform other duties particular to that detachment as laid out in the Unit Supplemental Orders.

Qualifications:

- Valid First Aid Basic level or willingness to complete the course prior to being hired. Once hired, Commissionaires will maintain your certification.
- Able to obtain RCMP Reliability Clearance
- Demonstrated ability to read, write and speak in English.
- Able to bend at the waist and climb stairs without restrictions or the use of assistive devices.
- Mobility Standards: Able to use both hands, occasionally manipulate/lift up to 20 kilograms, bend at the waist and climb stairs without restrictions or the use of assistance devices.
- Basic level computer skills.
- Ability to remain in control under trying conditions.
- Ability to be discrete.
- Work effectively with other people.
- Willingness to undergo detention guard training as required, including Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHMIS) training and refresher on a semi-annual basis.
- Ability to work independently.
- Conscientious, enthusiastic, and reliable.

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Help Wanted



Work for Us

The Virden Empire-Advance has been the voice of Virden and area since 1885. For the past 18 months the paper has been converting away from many years of ill-fated Corporate ownership to a private family owned business. Owner-publishers are Ken and Christine Waddell (Christine was born and raised at Scarth (Virden area), daughter of the late Henry and Jean Lobel. The VEA needs another staff person to work with the current team performing the general duties as an on-site Publisher's Assistant.

Job Title: Publisher's Assistant

Job Location: Virden and area based out of VEA office

This staff person will provide assistance to the Publisher/Editor Ken Waddell and General Manager Jessica Coulter.

Duties to include some local writing and photo coverage, working with sales person to assist with ad and print job sales. This position will be a mixture of in-office and on-site business calls and event coverage.

Remuneration to commensurate with experience and salary may include some commission.

Good friendly working conditions. Health plan available.

Please submit a resume with references to Ken Waddell, Publisher by email to: kwaddell@neepawabanner.com

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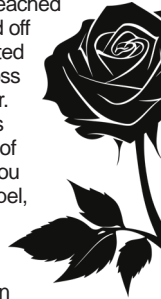
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Thank-you

Thank-you

Thank you to the those who reached out and called, texted, dropped off food, flowers, cards and supported us with care after the sudden loss of our beloved wife and mother. Your thoughtfulness helped us through the very tough days of shock and sadness. Thank you to Carscadden's Funeral Chapel, Chapel Lawn Funeral Chapel, Stars Ambulance, Deloraine EMS and Health Centre, RES Centre, Brenda Ellis-Anderson Catering, the Mennonite Choir Singers, the Pallbearers and all who attended the funerals. Thank you too, to those who donated to Heart and Stroke in mum's name.

-The Family of Jane Hunter Pringle.



Notice

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the estate of David Garth Harrison Castle (also known as Dave Garth Castle), late of Virden, Manitoba, Deceased.

ALL claims against the above estate, supported by Statutory Declaration, must be sent to the attention of: Prachi Goel, Acting Estates Officer, at 155 Carlton St Suite 500, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 5R9 on or before the 27th day of November, 2025.

DATED at Winnipeg, Manitoba, this 25th day of September, 2025

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Suite range from 405 – 445 sq.ft. Price ranges from \$1758.95 to \$1921.33 for single occupancy.

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RM of Pipestone: 204 877 3327

For Sale

Farmland for Sale in RM of Pipestone

	2025 Assessment	2025 Taxes
NW 13-8-27W	187,200	\$586.92

Land is located on Road 45N
2 separate 80A titles

North Title - 65 acres broke
South Title - 80 acres pasture

Mineral and oil rights are exempt.
Interested parties should rely on their own inspection. Highest or any offer not necessarily accepted. 2025 taxes are paid.
2026 taxes will be paid by purchaser.
Deadline for offers is Monday December 22, 2025.

For more information, call 204-748-1366.

Offers to be sent to:
Jack Welsh
Box 1714
Virden, MB
R0M 2C0

Farmland for Sale in RM of Pipestone

	2025 Assessment	2025 Taxes
SW 14-8-27W	231,700	726.47
SE 14-8-27W	262,100	821.86
NE 10-8-27W	275,400	863.46

Land is located on Road 44N and 157 - 158 W. Land is classified as "E" soil on Crop Ins. All Land is presently pasture, meadow brome, -Brome fenced & dugouts.

Offering the S 1/2 of 14-8-27W as one unit.
NE 10-8-27W as a separate unit.

Mineral and oil rights are exempt. Interested parties should rely on their own inspection. Highest or any offer, not necessarily accepted. 2025 taxes are paid, 2026 taxes will be paid by purchaser. S 1/2 14-8-27W has a MTS and a capped oil well site Caveat. Deadline for offers is Monday December 22, 2025.

For more information, call or text 204-748-5178.

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Cooking safely through the holidays

National home fire safety week

By Lewis Smith
CANADA SAFETY COUNCIL

As the holiday season approaches, kitchens across Canada will heat up with family feasts, late-night baking sessions, and the occasional “experimental” recipe. Unfortunately, this is also when cooking-related fires spike, often turning celebration into catastrophe within seconds.

During National Home Fire Safety Week, November 24 to 30, the Canada Safety Council is reminding Canadians that the most common cause of home fires isn’t candles or Christmas trees — it’s unattended cooking.

The fix isn’t complicated. It’s awareness, attention, and a little bit of common sense.

“The kitchen should be the heart of the home, not the hazard,” said Gareth Jones, President and CEO of the Canada Safety Council. “The holidays bring joy and togetherness, but also distraction. Staying alert and taking a few simple precautions can make all the difference between a memorable meal and a dangerous accident.”

Stats

In Canada, from 2011 to 2020 an average of 220 people died due to fires every year, according to Firefighting in Canada.

We also know through Statistics Canada that almost a third of fires from 2015 to 2021 were related to cooking. During that time period it was the leading cause of fire incidents and injuries at 32 per cent and 43 per cent, respectively.

Read on for tips on how to stay safe proactively:
Stay with your station

Most kitchen fires start when cooks step away “just for a minute.” Grease can ignite faster than you can unwrap a stick of butter. If you must leave the room, even briefly, turn off the stove or ask someone to keep watch. Multitasking and open flames are an awful pairing.

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Melita- 204-522-3543
 155 Summit St, Melita
 Tues and Thurs 8:30a - 4:30p

Control your chaos
 Clutter is a quiet saboteur. Keep oven mitts, utensils, packaging, and towels well clear of heat sources. Wipe up oil splatter as it happens; residue buildup can ignite later, long after the meal’s over. And if you’re deep-frying, use a thermometer and stay below 175 C (350 F). After all, hot oil doesn’t need an invitation to explode.

Dress for the task
 Flowing sleeves, scarves, and polyester blends make fine holiday fashion but poor fire-resistant gear. Opt for fitted clothing or roll sleeves snugly. It takes just one brush of fabric across a burner to start a chain reaction you’ll remember for all the wrong reasons.

Watch the kids and pets
 Keep children away from stoves and ovens. Children often want to feel included in this element of the holidays, so give them age-appropriate tasks like washing, stirring, and setting the table. Regardless of what those tasks may be, stove-related activities are generally not recommended for children, especially in potentially hectic or high-traffic situations like the holidays.

House pets, too, are known to take advantage of the chaos and try to scoop up any food that might be dropped. This in turn creates a tripping hazard, as a busy kitchen may not afford room to notice or react to the pet. Because

1 204-748-6823

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Meighen Haddad

LLP

LAW FIRM

Ashley T. Joyce

ajoyce@mhlaw.ca

Virden
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SUBMITTED PHOTO

of this, it’s always a good idea to maintain constant supervision of our furry friends and keep them out of the way.

Know how to react
 If a pan ignites, never move it. Smother it with a metal lid or baking sheet and kill the heat. Baking soda can help with small grease fires; water will only make things worse. Make sure every adult in the household knows where the fire extinguisher is and how to use it — and, of course, that it actually works.

A little prevention goes a long way. But should these preparations still lead to the worst-case scenario, be sure to have an exit plan.

The holidays are about warmth, not flames. A little caution keeps the focus where it belongs: on friends, family, and food that stays safely on the plate.

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WILLIAMSON SIGNS TO PLAY AT VCSU

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Reston's Jamie Williamson will soon be playing on post-secondary diamonds.

The son of Dallas and Terri Williamson has committed to play baseball and study at Valley City (N.D.) State University. Williamson, who is currently in Grade 12 at Reston School, plans to major in education.

"VCSU, I felt, was the best choice for me because I felt that I could fit into the program really well, and I felt that we had a lot in common on the baseball side," he said. "Their education program is also one of the best, which made the decision that much easier for me to choose them as my final choice."

The VCSU Vikings compete at the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics level. Head coach Alec DeMaria said the team is thrilled to have Williamson, who is listed as an infielder and right-handed pitcher, sign his letter of intent with VCSU earlier this year.

"We place a strong emphasis on bringing in talented, high-character student-athletes to play in our baseball program," the coach said. "Jamie is the perfect fit. We expect him to contribute to our team early on in his career, and we believe that he can develop into one of the best players in our conference. He will also undoubtedly help us to continue to strengthen the culture in our program."

Last summer, Williamson was part of Team Manitoba and competed at the Canada Summer Games in St. John's, Nfld. He was the squad's starting first baseman and hit in the middle of the order. Earlier this year, Team Manitoba head coach Cody Benson praised him for being "consistently a tough out at the plate" and "the anchor of

our infield defence."

In 2025, Team Manitoba was just one of the baseball squads Williamson suited up for as he pursued his passion for baseball, while also staying active in other athletic endeavours. He appreciates all that his family has done to make that happen.

"My parents' support has been tremendous. They have been there since day one with me - from when I first started throwing socks around our living room, to them coaching me all throughout my minor baseball, and still coaching me to this day," Williamson said. "Even when they are not coaching, they are there supporting me every game. They mean the world to me and can't say I love them enough because I wouldn't be where I am without them."

John Patmore has witnessed Williamson's development as a player and a person. He has coached him on the Team Manitoba baseball squad and in the high school ranks in baseball, basketball, and track and field. Patmore and Williamson were teammates in senior baseball with the Reston Rockets.

"When it comes to development, I think Jamie is a good blueprint for many young athletes," Patmore said. "I have known Jamie since he could barely walk, and for as long as I have known him, he has kept busy by play-



GRAPHIC BY VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

ing, coaching, and refereeing multiple sports. Jamie has chosen to further his athletic career playing baseball, but he has played very high levels in hockey (captain of the Southwest 18U AAA Cougars), basketball (leading scorer in points and rebounds), track and field (multiple zone titles), and badminton (multiple provincial berths) at Reston School. Jamie has also noticeably improved his overall strength and stature through strength and training programs, but I would say the very nature of his drastic development comes from being a multi-sport athlete. Jamie also gives time to grassroot programs in Reston, coaching both minor hockey and baseball, and, here at the school, where he has both helped coach and refereed junior high basketball. He always tries to find time in his busy schedule to give back to the programs that he started with, which shows a very high level of maturity and communication."

GOLDEN BEARS WRAP UP DOMINANT SEASON WITH PROVINCIAL JV TITLE

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

With mental toughness, a focus on defence, and a strong offence, the Virden Collegiate Institute JV girls volleyball team captured a provincial championship.

In 2024, the Golden Bears were silver medallists at the AAA JV girls provincials. That championship loss spurred them on during this campaign. Head coach Curtis Plett said the players put countless hours into practicing and refining their games.

"We lost in the finals last year, so we had one goal this year—to win provincials," Plett said. "My two main focuses all year, from assessing our loss last year, was (firstly) to make the focus defence. I'm a firm believer that defence wins championships, and they took pride in their defence-first approach. Secondly, mental toughness. The nerves definitely played a part in our loss last year so our second main focus was to treat each point the same and don't change your style of play in relation to the score."

The provincial championship capped an impressive season for the Golden Bears. The team compiled a 47-3 record. The only squad it lost to all season was Winnipeg's Oak Park High School. That team went undefeated and won the AAAA provincial title, Plett said.

This season the dominant Golden Bears were 106-18 in 124 sets. Plett said the team travelled 4,315 kilometres to play games and compete in tournaments. The team won four tournament titles as well as the interzone and provincial events. It placed second at one AAAA tournament and third at another.

"This team makes it fun because they are so passionate and love the sport of volleyball more than any group I've had," Plett said. "They work hard in practice and drive themselves and each other to get better as a team. They also have a good mix of fun energy that they consistently bring, that makes it enjoyable. A fun group who are always smiling and happy to be there."

At the 2025 AAA JV provincial tournament in Swan River, the VCI team was 3-0 in pool play. It defeated Neelin, 25-20, 25-11; Dauphin, 25-16, 25-23; and Linden Christian, 25-15, 25-18. The Golden Bears' Players of the Game for those matches, respectively, were Abby Murray, Kassidy Hoemsen, and Michelle Watters.

In the provincial quarterfinals, VCI beat Centre scolaire Léo-Rémillard, 25-18 and 25-7. Hanna Paton was the Golden Bears' Player of the Game. They defeated W.C. Miller in the semifinals. Aiden Gonty was VCI's Player of the Game in the

25-22, 25-22 win.

The Golden Bears defeated Linden Christian in three sets to win the provincial championship. VCI took the first set 25-11. Linden Christian won the second 27-25. The Golden Bears prevailed 17-15 in the final set.

"The focus after the second set was to just clean up our mistakes—missed serves mostly, keep the defence first approach. Mental toughness was the key to winning the third set. We were down 13-10 and the girls didn't seem fazed or worried at all. We kept playing tough, making serves and swinging hard at balls."

Mackenzie Hayden was VCI's Player of the Game for the finals. Hoemsen was named the Provincials MVP. Of the left side player, Plett said:

"Kasidy Hoemsen is a complete powerhouse and stepped up and took charge of the team defensively and offensively. She's always helping her team on the court whether it's strategy or a confidence boost and pick me up. She keeps everyone pushing when things get tough. When we need a point, we get the ball to her and more often than not she gets a kill."

Murray and Watters were named to the tournament All-Star Team. Murray is a setter, while Watters played left side.

"Abby Murray works her ass off as a setter, the hardest job by far," Plett said. "She makes smart decisions and keeps everyone on the same page with our offensive attack."

"Michelle Watters is a little ball of energy who brings the fun side to the team. She is a



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Virden Collegiate Institute JV girls volleyball team won the AAA provincial championship.

rock defensively, passing is spot on, always seems to find a way to score being undersized, and will pick a team apart with her serving. Best server in the province."

The VCI roster included Aiden Gonty, Mackenzie Hayden, Carrie Hodgins, Kasidy Hoemsen, Mya Irvine, Abby Murray, Hanna Paton, Zaree Routledge, Keightly Stewart, Michelle Watters, and Luca Wooldridge.

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Surviving Winter Inside...

Submitted
BY PATRICIA HANBIDGE

So far, winter has been what winter seems to be - cold! I guess that is what we expect but with that cold and cars not starting also comes less comfort for us even being inside. Winter is infinitely more liveable with a higher rate of humidity! Our homes are adversely affected by the dry air we are living with. Our furniture cracks, our hair stands on end and our houseplants are crying for just a little bit of humidity in the air that surrounds us.

This dryness in the winter is more prevalent in our climate. Warm air as we have in the summer will hold more water thus raising the relative humidity rate. Relative humidity is the amount of water that is held in the air relative to the maximum amount of moisture the air could be holding if saturated. Even in the summer, our air is kind of dry - but in the winter, it is even drier! Winter is dry but when it gets very cold, the relative humidity is less - which makes the cold weather even worse and when the temperature plummets to minus stupid the humidity is almost non-existent!

On the prairies, our homes are so much drier in winter as there is a very large temperature differential between the great outdoors and inside our homes. The very cold air contains very little moisture and when that air is warmed it feels extremely dry. The air will actually "grab" moisture from any available surface like our skin and our houseplants. The battle against desiccation is endless.

A couple of years ago, I made an investment that cost around \$100. I purchased a middle of the road cold air humidifier that would hydrate our living space. The water reservoir is easy to fill and takes about 3 minutes of time each day to fill it up. What it has done for us is provide a much more hospitable atmosphere in which to live. It is amazing that none of our clothing has static electricity while we are at home. Once we leave to go to school and work, the static takes no time to invade! The solution is not endless cans of static guard but simply to walk back into the house and miraculously, our clothes become less clingy! Our skin becomes almost dewy and our hair begins to naturally curl. Our houseplants are happier and exhibit many fewer problems with pests and diseases.

Sometimes an investment like a humidifier is delayed due to other techniques that we hope will hydrate our space. For example, misting plants is a task that is often enjoyed by many. However, misting has a beneficial effect for a minute or two. As the air is so dry, that little bit of moisture is quickly slurped up and really is a waste of time.... except for the fact that it makes us feel better!

If you would like to help your plants feel more hydrated, try grouping them together on trays that are filled with pebbles covered in water. This will raise the humidity directly around the plants and will make them much more comfortable.

Another effective way to help raise the humidity in your home without investing in a humidifier is to simply lower the temperature in the home. For every 1 degree F of decreased temperature, the relative humidity increases by 4 per cent. So if you can reduce the temperature each night in your home and when you are away at work or at play, the humid-



Bright lights swiss chard.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

ity will increase to a level that will make both you and your plants smile!

Hanbridge is the Lead Horticulturist with Orchid Horticulture. Find us at www.orchidhort.com; by email at growyourfuture@gmail.com on facebook @orchidhort and on instagram at #orchidhort.

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MJHL SEASON UPDATE

MJHL HOCKEY DEREK HOLTOM

Tell me if you've heard this one before - the Selkirk Steelers roar out of the gate thanks to an easy schedule, holding down first place a month into the season, only to miss the playoffs after playing more difficult teams as the season wears on.

That's what happened last season, and it looks as though it could happen again. A month ago I felt the Steelers could avoid that fate again this year. Now it looks as though history is repeating itself.

The Steelers are on a putrid 2-8-0-0 stretch heading into December. Meanwhile, the Winkler Flyers - currently in fifth place in the MJHL's East Division - had picked up points in eight of their last 10 games heading into a clash Sunday in Dauphin.

As a result the Flyers entered action Sunday just two points back of the Steelers with two games in hand.

The Steelers still hold their fate in their own hands. The Steelers are 2-0 against the Flyers this year and have three more games against them - two

on home ice. It's not a done deal, but the Steelers need to pull the nose up on their current trajectory, or they risk blowing a hot start two seasons in a row.

The MJHL will be well represented on Team Canada West at the Junior A World Challenge, which takes place in Trois-Rivières, Que., Dec. 7-13.

Brody Green (Steinbach Pistons), Remy Hlady (Selkirk Steelers), Ethan Stewart (Dauphin Kings), and Colten Worthington (Virden Oil Capitals) were named to the 22-man roster. The team will also feature Winnipeg Blues Head Coach and General Manager Josh Gratton, who will serve as an assistant coach. Additionally, Niverville Nighthawks General Manager Mike McAulay was named Director of Operations for Team Canada West.

The four teams taking part in this year's event are Canada East, Canada West, Sweden and the United States.

The MJHL's East Division once again dominated the Manitoba Liquor

and Lotteries Players of the Week.

Adam Vigfusson from the Niverville Nighthawks is the first winner thanks to his two goals and five assists week in just two games.

Portage Terriers goaltender Mitchel Kathler is next up. He won three of three starts, posting a 0.950 GAA, a .971 save percentage and one shutout to earn his honour.

The final winner is Carson White from the Winnipeg Blues. In two games White scored twice and added three helpers to join the list of honorees.

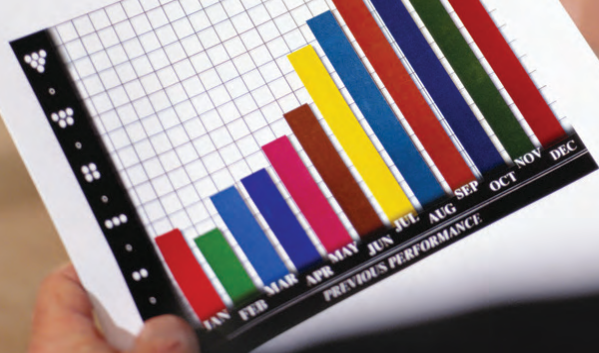
From the trade front, the Steinbach Pistons have shipped defenseman Kasen Mateychuk to the Winnipeg Blues for a player development fee (PDF). Mateychuk, who played five games in the WHL last season, had two assists in seven games with the Pistons this year.

In other moves, the Winnipeg Monarchs shipped goaltender Matthew Spencer-Dahl to the Melville Millionaires of the SJHL for a PDF. Spencer-Dahl was 0-4 on a bad Monarchs team, but won his first after moving west to Melville.

To fill the hole in net, the Monarchs acquired goaltender Dylan McFadyen from the Northern Manitoba Blizzard for a PDF.

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