

# Empire-Advance

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MAY 15, 2026 | EMPIRE: VOL 121 NO 39 / ADVANCE: VOL 140 NO 41 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS

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## Hadestown: Teen Edition drives students to higher level

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE ADVANCE

Until last weekend, Virden Collegiate Institute had not performed a tragedy. With a cast of wonderful vocalists, in a very demanding production, the school brought Hadestown to the AUD stage in performances from May 7 – 9.

This teen version of the recent musical received rave reviews in Virden. It was born out of Greek mythology involving a young man and woman, Orpheus and Eurydice, in a tragic love story where they contend with death. Hope, faith and fate struggle against Hades (King of the Underworld). Persephone (Goddess of Spring), bridges between Hades and humanity, ultimately representing resilience in the face of despair.

Orpheus and Eurydice become entangled in the underworld when Eurydice dies and Orpheus seeks to restore her to life on earth. With his beautiful music, he almost succeeds.

“Road to Hell (Reprise),” acts as a final narration of the tragedy, reinforcing the theme of repeating the story because it still matters.

Director Luke Munchinsky, VCI choir, drama and ELA teacher drew on a depth of family talent and experienced community volunteers to produce this large show.

“It was a big one, it’s our first full musical that I’ve done here. ... The entire show is set to music, that’s two hours and 10 minutes worth of songs to learn. So, it was a very big undertaking in that regard.”

Luke’s wife, Kate on piano / accordion led the onstage band. Dean Munchinsky as set architect and acting coach was heavily involved bringing strength to the characters.

The stage was full with a band (keys, trombone, guitar, bass, violin, percussion and bass clarinet) and required ingenuity on the part of stage managers Fiona White and Deb Peters.

Choreographer, Olivia Hayward, worked with a set that included a revolving platform (turntable). “Our choreographer did an excellent job of utilizing the turntable... despite there being over 40 on the stage....”

Jodi Krieser designed the set, Travis Krieser and Tom Whittle produced the turntable mechanism which was impressively made by Roger Branum Construction crew.

Jo Rossouw played Hades in all performances while two casts shared the other seven leading roles.

Krysian Dupra and Tristan Plaisier played Orpheus. Eu-

rydice was played by Charley Dunning and Avrin Krieser.

Persephone (Goddess of Spring) was played by Ariannah Kerr and Amelia Alphonso.

The roles of Fates 1, 2 and 3 were shared by Joelle Barkley and Elise Fehr, Leah Mytopher and Tianna Fehr, Jasmyne Andries and Aurora White.

Ensembles included 25 singers.

The music was the story. “It’s the hardest music that we’ve ever done,” said the teacher/director. “And it’s much harder to work on the staging in a song,” Munchinsky compared it to traditional musicals. “Rather than the staging in a given scene... it’s all got to be structured, set to the beat.”

He said, “It required a lot more prep and figuring on my part beforehand.”

A show for this juncture in history, and because it was by nature a serious show, the stakes were higher than in previous comedies he’s directed.

“It’s one with a lot of heart, incredibly impactful, timely and important... this tale of Orpheus and Eurydice trying to set the world right against the unassailable power of Hades,

the man running Hadestown who preaches that the enemy is poverty, and we build a wall to keep out the enemy - so talking to the oppressed [and stirring hatred against] the other people so that he can keep them under him.”

While the professional quality of this staging brought students to a level of excellence that they can be proud of, Munchinsky said, “The most important thing is not how professional the show is. But at the same time, it makes a difference for [the students] to hold themselves to a high standard, like - that is hugely beneficial and impactful on these kids.”

He worked with a double cast to ensure that their voices held out through the many rehearsals and all four performances, “because the show is so vocally demanding it’s not just that there’s lots of music, they’re also difficult vocal parts.”

This school production was indeed a learning experience with many of the cast also choir members. As a teacher Luke Munchinsky said “All the cast has greatly improved musicianship through being in it.”



Hadestown on Virden AUD Theatre stage.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

## Viriden’s water woes continue

By Ken Waddell  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Just as the Virden Empire-Advance was going to print this week, our office became aware that the consulting company that provided the report for a proposed solution to Virden’s ongoing water supply problems is planning to vigorously defend against a lawsuit brought by the town.

A CTV News report says, “A consulting firm hired to find the Town of Virden an alternate groundwater source is denying wrongdoing in a water supply lawsuit, saying any losses the town suffered resulted from its own failure to follow the firm’s recommendations.”

The Virden Empire Advance plans to have updated coverage on this issue as soon as possible.

Inside...



GORD  
BAMFORD  
WOWS THE  
CROWD IN  
VIRDEN P2

# Gord Bamford Wows the Crowd in Virden

By Nancy Jo Moller  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Friday, May 8, the Sunrise Banquet Hall located in the Tundra Oil & Gas Place saw an excited crowd waiting for an incredible concert. An opportunity to watch musicians of this caliber rarely comes to a town this size. Amanda Brooks from the Virden Community Chamber of Commerce welcomed everyone and thanked local sponsors for their generous donations. Representatives of the YWCA Westman were on hand to discuss the fundraising efforts for the Women's Campus Project. There wasn't a bad seat in the house, thanks to the organizers' efforts. It was a night of pure enjoyment.

Duncan Toombs, who's singing talent was discovered in 2024 on an Australian Voice show was the start of this unbelievable night. Duncan is a country storyteller who reached out to the audience with a sense of humour and his down-home way. His opening rendition of 'Help Me Make It Through the Night' was a crowd favourite and broke the ice. He then sang both familiar songs and then a couple of his own compositions that reflected his background. After his set, Duncan continued to play with the band for the remainder of the evening.

Alberta born Dallas Alexander followed up with his unique Outlaw Country style. Dallas is a Metis Canadian, former Tier 1 Elite Sniper with over 16 years of experience in the Canadian Armed Forces. His stage presence pulled his combat and military background front and centre. 'Country Boy Dream' had members of the audience realizing that dreams don't have to be elaborate to make you happy. His songs expressed some hard values that were backed up by his confident manner both on and off the stage. While previously unknown to some of the crowd, his performance will be remembered for his straightforward approach to life.

The wait for Gord Bamford was well worth it. He followed up with an array of songs that had the crowd toe tapping and swaying to the music. 'Blame it on That Red Dress', 'Farm Girl Strong' and 'Cowboys

Were Kings' were just a few of the songs the crowd was entertained by. The dance floor, in front of the stage, started to fill with 'Is It Friday Yet' and interaction with the crowd made this night seem like a small town social. At one point Gord referred to the evening being like a house party. 'Drinkin' Buddy' is one song that the crowd demands at almost every venue and it was met with raised glasses. There was no intermission and the band kept us on the edge of our seats wanting more of Gord Bamford's familiar lyrics. Gord Bamford is an artist who doesn't disappoint and one I strongly recommend going to see when given the chance.

He described his last birthday party, where his wife had arranged a party bus to take them to the festivities at Ponoka Stampede Grounds. While enroute, Gord received a call from Terri Clark that told him his Bucket list wish had come true and he will be performing at the Grande Ole Opry in October 2026. Congratulations to a well deserving artist.

When interviewed after the show, Gord removed any doubt that he was anything but a country boy who has an exceptional talent that he shares with his audience. When asked about band members performing with him, Gord explained "the way to keep the same band together is continuous bookings, keep them busy and paid". By performing across the country in a number of different locales the band members stay together instead of seeking other work. The newest member of Gord's band is Brendan Lyons who has been with him over 5 years. Brendan had a fan club of local relatives and friends from the Virden area attend. Gord recognized for their hard work. On show days, they start setup about 8 hours before the event and tear down may not be completed for another 3 hours after. Then it is load up and his bus driver delivers them to the next location while they rest for the next show.

The Gord Bamford Foundation is passionate about supporting youth. The foundation provides funds for initiatives that include or involve music, education, health care, sports, and multi-use facilities that benefit youth across Canada.



Gord Bamford captivated the Virden crowd with his Country Boy Charm.



Duncan Toombs opened the show with his Australian storyteller manner.



PHOTOS BY NANCY JO MOLLER

Dallas Alexander entertained us with outlaw renditions.

# Enjoy retirement your way



Harvey Campbell and Krista Pederson rehearse Carol Burnett's "Bonnie and Clod"

SUBMITTED PHOTO

By Krista Pederson

COMMUNITY RESOURCE COORDINATOR, VIRDEN S.A.I.L.

What do you have in mind for your retirement? My suggestion is do the things that you enjoy! Harvey Campbell is one of several "55+" doing just that.

"I enjoy being a part of the group", Harvey says. It is an intergenerational group. Having "seniors" in the group adds so much talent and experience.

After spending years growing up, working and volunteering in Pierson, Harvey and Diane moved up to Virden. Theatre is a natural fit for Harvey, who was with a Pierson acting group for about 20 years, doing

shows and dinner theatre.

Theatrick Players is practicing for the "Fireside Follies Pub Night", a 1970's themed fundraiser for the Wallace District Fire Department. Just add makeup, costumes, maybe a wig here and there...and you will have a hoot watching Carol Burnett & company serve up some laughs.

Having been a first responder with the Melita Fire Department, as well as Volunteer Fire Chief in Pierson, Harvey knows all about building community. "Small towns are built with volunteers", he says. He would like to see young people keep getting involved, whether it is with the Fire Department, or with another organization.

Now, SAIL offers all kinds of activities, but sometimes you have to go out on your own to find something to fit your talents and personality. This group is a community group, putting on a third show, in order to spread some laughs, and raise some money for a local group. (Arts Mosaic and The Virden and Area Food Cupboard were the recipients of the funds raised at "The Murder at the Pie Auction" dinner theater, and "The Night Before Christmas", respectively.)

This collection of Carol Burnett comedy skits is for the adults...and a fundraiser for our local Fire Department.

Some of you caught a preview at the SAIL Wellness Day a few weeks ago. You'll want to come and enjoy the performance May 29 and 30.

Harvey and Diane have been living in Virden just over a year, and are both finding their niche in the community. We are blessed to have them in our community.

DIG This...

Visit our greenhouse  
Opening May 12 for the  
2026 Season  
Hours Mon-Fri 10-5  
Saturdays 10-4

All About Flowers

Greenhouse

West end of Main St.  
Kenton, MB  
204.851.1542



# Clean up gives town vibrant refreshed look



PHOTOS BY NANCY JO MOLLER

Long road ahead to pick up for vibrant clean look.



Working together with community spirit.

**By Nancy Jo Moller**  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On Saturday May 9, a sunny day was the background for the Vibrant Virden Community Garbage Clean Up. Approximately fifty volunteers gathered at Victoria Park at 9 am and dispersed throughout the community. With garbage bags in hand, they could be seen removing trash giving areas a clean

fresh look. After the work was done, volunteers gathered back at Victoria Park to enjoy refreshments provided by Sunrise Credit Union and Tim Hortons. A Summer Fun Pack donated by the Town of Virden was awarded to one energetic volunteer. As you travel by the areas of town, it was apparent what a difference a group of volunteers working together can make.

# Oak Lake Mother's Day brunch fundraiser



PHOTO BY OLIVER NOLAN

On Sunday, May 10, the United Church Oak Lake / Griswold held a wonderful Mother's Day brunch. The volunteers were pleased with the turn out. They had no idea how'd they make out since it was Mother's Day. Volunteers are thinking of doing it again next year, and hoping to have more people come in the future. All proceeds are to be split between the two churches. There were about 120 people for the brunch.

# Fine china tea cups and money



PHOTO BY ED JAMES

Corrine Nesbitt accepts a cheque for \$2,900 from Sam Cluett.

**By Ed James**  
EMPIRE ADVANCE

The residents and guests at the Elkwood Manor Senior Home had special baked treats and tea and coffee served in fine china cups as part of its annual Florence Nightingale Tea.

The event recognized the work of the turn-of-the-century nurse, who did much to improve patient health and recovery. However, during the First World War she was shot as a spy by the Germans.

At the event there was a special presentation by Samantha Cluett, owner of Sam's Boutique in Elkhorn.

Recently Sam had a fashion show and part of the profits from the fundraiser and in-hall events were given to the Manor's recreation department.

On behalf of the Manor residents, Corrine Nesbitt accepted a cheque for \$2,900 from Sam and her children.

Manor staff were very happy with the donation that can pay for extras to make the residents' lives more fun, with outside entertainment, road trips and special meals.

The staff was very happy to learn that the Manor will have a full-time summer recreation student.

Sam said, "I was very thankful for the community support of the fashion show and this cheque is a small way of me and my children giving back to the community and to our senior residents."




Public Notice is hereby given that Enbridge Pipelines Inc. (Enbridge) intends to conduct the following Pesticide Program from June 1, 2026 – November 15, 2026, to control noxious weeds on Enbridge ROW's, temporary workspaces, stations, and various facilities along the Enbridge Mainline and Bakken corridors. The herbicide active ingredients to be used include:

- MCPA Ester
- Saflufenacil
- Carfentrazone-ethyl
- Pyraflufen-ethyl
- Bromoxynil
- Clopyralid
- Glyphosate
- Dicamba
- 2, 4-D
- 2, 4-DB
- Aminopyralid
- Propyzamide
- Indaziflam
- Chlorsulfuron
- Fluroxypyr
- Aminocyclopyrachlor
- Aminopyralid
- Diflufenopyr
- Metsulfuron-methyl
- Picloram
- Mecoprop-P
- Adjuvant

Any person may, within 15 days after the notice is published, send a written/email submission to the department below, regarding the control program or register with the department their written objection to the use of pesticide next to their property.

**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

**SOUTHWEST ASSINIBOINE CHAPTER OF RETIRED TEACHERS (RTAM) JUNE DAY TRIP**

June 4th 2026 Sign up by May 27th 2026  
Bus Tour leaves Virden Legion 8am  
Brandon Smitty's, Shilo Base, Royal Canadian Artillery Museum, Shady Lane Tea House, Doll Museum, Commonwealth Air Plan Museum  
Back to Virden 6-7pm

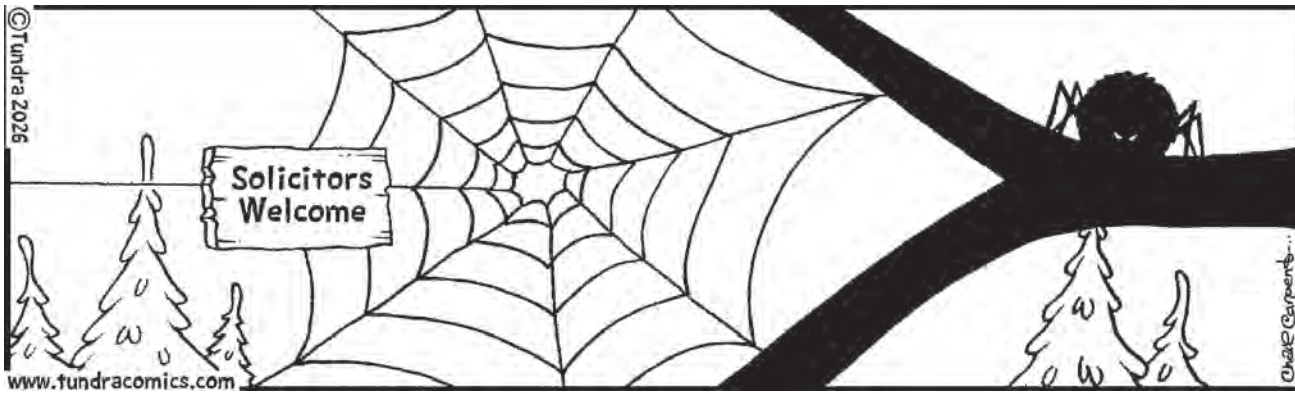
RTAM members - \$100.00  
Non-members - \$160.00  
Brandon - \$135.00




**Environment and Climate Change  
Environmental Approvals Branch**  
14 Fultz Boulevard (Box 35)  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3Y 0L6  
pesticideusepermit@gov.mb.ca

# Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



## Too many irons in the fire...

Travel time allows for contemplation if one is alone, and time for conversation if one has company. There were two of us in the vehicle and an abundance of travel time. Conversation it was. One of us used the expression 'too many irons in the fire' and we wondered where this saying originated. My quick guess, and it was wrong, was from branding time. The correct answer, and known by my companion, is that it comes from the blacksmith shop, when the forge would have too many irons in the fire. We use the phrase now to indicate when we, or someone, is overcommitted. More projects on the go than they can manage well. Too many irons in a forge can cool down and spoil, efficiency drops and quality suffers. Or a project fails. There was, and is, a danger with having too many irons in a fire!

Way back in the 1500's there was a saying 'a pig in a poke'. There are some differing opinions on the origin but overall it is a warning not to purchase an item without seeing it first. Poke can mean a pocket or a sack or bag. I'm hoping it's a wee pig if you're carrying it in your pocket, or a really big pocket! There was a possibility of a merchant buying what he thought was a pig, probably by the size and the movement of the object in the poke. An old farm cat rather than a piglet? The caution still stands today, see what it is you're willing to put your money down for.

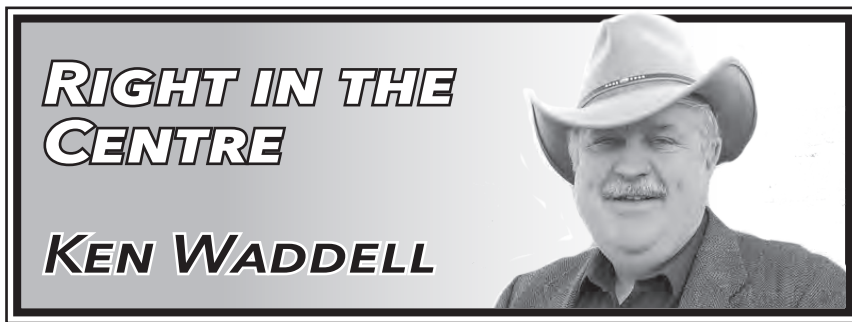
Some sayings are home grown, hand me downs. My younger son, Mark William, came inside one winter day and said that it was as cold as forty bear out there. Wind could blow at forty bear. One could be as tired as forty bear. I still have forty bear days! There was no explanation for the term; it accurately assessed the severity of a condition.

I tried google to help me with this next one; 'menschen und schrilcratin und dreieckige feile', describing human nature. My father used this one to explain that we live among people, annoying pests, and three cornered files. There are the good folks all around us, some that are not unlike mosquitoes, blackflies or gnats, and then there are those that simply rub us the wrong way — those three cornered files that grind and grate at us!

For most of us our conversations are peppered with colloquialisms, phrases that have been passed down to us through the generations. Some make sense and some not so much. Rather like what you find when you research the origin of the nursery rhymes we sang when we were children! Was 'ring around a rosie' indicative of the Great Plague, and 'everybody fall down' means they die? Hope that's a fallacy! Or 'London Bridge is falling down' the story of the frequent structural failures and repairs of the historic London Bridge- always with a loss of life...

These conversations certainly make travel time pass quickly. They can be educational, usually entertaining. Time goes like forty bear when you are having fun!

## Truth seeking



Having just attended the Rotary Club District Convention, I had the opportunity to read and re-read the Rotary Four Way Test. As much as possible, Rotarians around the world apply the Four Way Test to everything they say or do. Here's the Four Way Test.

- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it build good will and better friendships?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

I have attended many Rotary meetings as a guest back to 1971. It was a few times as a guest speaker and nowadays more often that my wife is a member. I am an associate member. In my experience as a newspaperman, that dates back to 1968, I have tried to make sure we only print the truth. If I have failed to do that, it was never been intentionally or knowingly.

The Bible says in John 8:32. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

That verse applies initially to knowing Jesus, whereby a person is set free from the bonds of sin. I believe it spreads out even further. If you know the truth, you don't have to strain your mind to remember what you said. I have heard hundreds of speeches and lectures, read numerous books and listened to more political promises and claims than I can possibly count. I believe I have developed a fairly strong filter to strain out the truth from half truths and the lies. I truly wish that people would apply the Four Way Test to all they say and write. The exception can be excused when you are making a joke or poking fun

at a friend or a family member but I am talking about stating facts about political events, news and product descriptions and various scenarios. Tell the truth and only the truth. We have heard some whoppers over the years.

Here's some of my favourites. In the 1970s, we were told the world would run out of oil in 20 years. It didn't happen, but it might. In the meantime, we have more oil being discovered all the time. We were told the world is getting warmer. Yes, the world has gotten warmer at various times but it also has cooled down at times. There are those who argue that the world is actually in a cooling phase. Again back in the 70s, we were told the world was going to go into an ice age. Currently, we are being told that we are running out of electrical power in Manitoba. A few years back Manitoba Hydro and the Manitoba government were grieving that we couldn't pay down Hydro's debt as we couldn't sell all the power brought to southern Manitoba by the infamous Bi-Pole III power line.

We are being told that we need to capture CO2 and pump it into the ground to save the environment. I may be wrong but I think we are to pump CO2 into the ground to make some people rich. And besides CO2

is good for plants. We are told that agriculture or farming isn't good for the environment but in my lifetime in the area of Manitoba I am familiar with has more Canada and Snow geese than when I was a kid. There are more bald eagles, grackles, moose, deer, elk and coyotes. Farmers are doing something right. We are told that poverty breeds crime. That is only partly true. If poverty were a cause of crime, my two older brothers who were born in the Dirty Thirties, would have been criminals. Far from it, as they and I have never been unemployed for more than a couple of days in our whole lives.

We are told that Mother Nature is kind and loving. Try telling that to the mother birds after the grackles, blue jays and crows have torn their babies apart. We are told that various people groups are kind and loving but that too is only partly true. There are some groups who are very cruel and heartless and that can include Muslims, Jews and Christians. I think we need a lot more truth and a lot more setting free

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

**Empire Advance**  
Serving Virden and area since 1885

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Tundra Oil &amp; Gas Place: 204-748-2736



Animal Control: 204-851-5881

Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440

Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540

## Public Notice: Spring Clean Up

**April 28 – May 19**

- Town crews will pick up refuse excluding industrial waste
- Leaves and grass must be bagged or boxed
- Occasional branch trimming pickup only
- All material must be placed on the boulevard or lane
- To ensure pick up or for more information, please call the Town Office at 204-748-2440.

## Tax Prepayment Discounts

The Town of Virden offers tax prepayment discounts as outlined below to taxpayers wishing to pay an installment or installments on their 2026 property taxes.

Those wishing to prepay may pay an amount or a series of amounts that in total does not exceed the amount of their 2025 property taxes. The discount rate is equivalent to an effective annual interest rate of 3%.

Month of Payment	Discount Rate	Savings on \$1000.00
May	1.25%	\$ 12.50
June	1.00%	\$ 10.00
July	0.75%	\$ 7.50

Tax prepayments made in the months of August, September or October will be accepted at par and can be made via Online Banking, Telephone Banking, E-Transfer, or through our Drop Box located at the main doors of our office at 236 Wellington Street West.

## Notice of Public Hearing

On the date and time and location shown below, a Public Hearing will be held to receive representations from any persons who wish to make them in respect of the following matter:

Application for Variation Order under the Town of Virden Zoning By-Law No. 2769, as amended.

Place: Council Chambers, at 232 Wellington St W, Virden MB

Date & Time: May 21, 2026 at 07:30 PM

Application No: VO-02/2026

Applicant: BRIAN COLLIER

Owner: BRIAN COLLIER

Proposal: To decrease the side yard setback requirement for a car port within a "RT" Residential Two Zone.

From 4 feet To 2 feet

Area Affected: 563 Lacross St W (Lot 7 Block 148 Plan 67 BLTO)

For more information contact Cory Nixon, Development Officer, Town of Virden, at 204-851-0028.

A copy of the above proposal and supporting materials may be inspected at the Town of Virden office located at 236 Wellington St W Virden MB, during normal office hours, Monday to Friday.

Cory Nixon  
Development Officer  
Town of Virden

## Victoria Day Weekend

**Closed May 18**

- Virден Landfill
- Town Office
- Tundra Oil and Gas Place

## Summer Day Camp registration open 2026 Swimming lesson registration open

Email Tara Davies should you have any questions at: [events.program@virden.ca](mailto:events.program@virden.ca)

### Upcoming Council Meetings

May 21 & June 2

Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

## Planter Soil Available

Starting on May 15, Soil will be available for public use next to the Farmer's Market building. Please bring your own containers.

Please note: this soil is intended for small pots and planters – it is not intended for larger landscaping projects.

Soil will be available for public pickup for approximately two weeks, starting on Friday, May 15.

## Employment Opportunity

### Manager of Utilities

The Town of Virden is accepting applications for the full-time position of Manager of Utilities.

Under the general direction of the Operations and Facilities Manager, the position oversees and manages the full spectrum of utility services (water and wastewater) and supervises Operations staff with certifications in any of the four water and wastewater operator disciplines. They will assist the Operations and Facilities Manager with the direction and work planning for Utilities. They will be expected to communicate professionally with both residents and contractors. The position will provide administrative support and assistance to the Operations and Facilities Manager in this area.

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

Please forward resume with cover letter to:

Neil Smith, Chief Administrative Officer  
Town of Virden  
Box 310, Virden, MB, ROM 2C0  
Email: [cao@virden.ca](mailto:cao@virden.ca)

### Municipal Clerk/RCMP Detachment

The Town of Virden is accepting applications for a full-time, permanent position for a Municipal Clerk at the Westman RCMP Detachment, Virden.

The successful applicant will report to the Staff Sergeant. The applicant will be required to perform all clerical duties as well as learn all aspects of the computer systems utilized by policing.

Detailed Job descriptions are available at the Virden Town office or the Westman RCMP Detachment.

The hiring panel will accept and review applications as received, and interview as early as June 15, 2026, with applications continuing to be accepted until the right candidate is found.

Detailed resumes marked "Municipal Clerk/RCMP" will be accepted by:

Faye Pope, Office Manager  
Town of Virden  
236 Wellington Street West  
Box 310, Virden, Manitoba, ROM 2C0  
Ph: (204)748-2440 Fax: (204)748-2501  
Email: [office.manager@virden.ca](mailto:office.manager@virden.ca)

## HELEN DRYSDALE

### OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

Our old cookbook today comes from the Oberon United Church W.A. Oberon was first named McKenzieville as it was built up by Adam McKenzie who owned and worked about 14,000 acres. About 10 sections were at Oberon. In 1905 the name was changed to Oberon. In 1903 a brick Presbyterian Church was built. It later became the United Church. A church auxiliary was formed in order to have funds to carry on their work for their church, community and beyond. They sewed quilts, had concerts, teas, bake sales, whist drives, and published two cookbooks. The first cookbook was published in 1953 and the second in 1962. The church closed in 1963 and the congregation moved to Brookdale where the ladies joined the Brookdale UCW. Today's recipes come from the 1953 cookbook.

A monument, now stands in Oberon, featuring four plaques commemorating the Oberon United Church, Auburn School, Oberon Hall, and Oberon Rink to honor the enduring spirit of the pioneers. I understand that this community were avid sports fans who played and excelled in many sports including base ball and curling.

### Baked eggs

Mrs. Wm. Bee

Six eggs broken separately in greased muffin tins. Sprinkle each with grated cheese, crushed corn flakes, salt and pepper and one teaspoon of cream. Bake in a moderate oven for 15 minutes.

### Sour cream spice cake

Mrs. W.S. Byram

1 cup sour cream	1 cup brown sugar
1 egg, slightly beaten	1 1/2 cups flour
1/4 tsp. cream of tartar	1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. nutmeg	1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 cup nuts	1/2 cup raisins

Add dry ingredients to the first three named. (I would mix the first three named well before adding the dry mix.) Bake at 350°F for 45 minutes.

### Frosting

Mrs. Frank May

If I was going to ice the spice cake, I would use this delicious icing recipe.

1 cup brown sugar	3 Tbsp. milk
1 Tbsp. butter	

Bring to a boil. Remove from fire and when cool add icing sugar and maple or vanilla flavouring.

### Frosted pineapple cookies

Mrs. H. Mikkelsen

1 1/2 cups flour	1/8 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. baking soda	1/2 cup undrained canned crushed pineapple
1/2 cup Crisco	1/2 cup white sugar
1 egg, unbeaten	1/3 cup finely chopped almonds
3 Tbsp. soft butter or margarine	1/4 cup and 2 Tbsp. brown sugar, packed
3/4 cup shredded coconut	

Sift flour with salt; dissolve soda in pineapple; cream thoroughly Crisco, sugar and egg until very light and fluffy; blend in alternately flour, pineapple and almonds until mixed. Drop teaspoonfuls on a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 375°F for 10-12 minutes until done. Meanwhile mix butter with brown sugar until creamy, mix in coconut, spread a bit on each cookie and broil until lightly browned.

### Snowberry cookies

Mrs. Roy Baker

2 cups flour	1/2 tsp. soda
1 tsp. salt	1 cup brown sugar
3/4 cup shortening	1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla	2 Tbsp. milk
1/2 cup chopped walnuts	1/2 cup chopped cherries
1/2 cup coconut	

Mix and drop by spoonfuls on a greased cookie sheet. Bake 12-15 minutes in 375°F oven.

### Hot water pastry

Gladys Thorn

Place 1 cup (1/2) lb. shortening or lard in a mixing bowl, add 1/2 cup boiling water and stir until smooth and creamy. Then mix in 3 cups flour which has been sifted, 1 tsp. salt and 1/2 tsp. baking powder. This can be rolled immediately but more easily if thoroughly chilled.

# Police Report

## Westman RCMP Service Report for May 3 to May 9

### Submitted

BY WESTMAN RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 95 calls for service. Some of these calls for service include 34 traffic offences, 4 False Alarms, 4 Assault, 4 Wellbeing Checks, 6 Mental Health, 8 Fire Prevention Act, 4 Mischief, and 4 Uttering Threats Against a Person.

On May 4, RCMP received a report of a disturbance at a residence in the Settlement of Sioux Valley. Members attended the residence and spoke with two separate parties who both had visible injuries. Members obtained statements and learnt that both parties had physically assaulted each other. Members arrested a 24-year male and a 23-year-old female for one count of Assault. Both were released on conditions and are scheduled to appear in court later.

On May 5, during routine patrols in Settlement of Sioux Valley, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed the driving speed of 86 km/hr in a 60km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$391.

On May 8, RCMP received a report from a female victim who report she was physically assaulted by her ex-partner in Elkhorn. Members attended the residence and spoke with the victim who advised the accused male had left prior to police

arrival. Members obtained statement and located the accused male who was arrested and charged with one count of Assault. The accused was released on conditions and is scheduled to appear in court later.

On May 8, RCMP received a report of a female who had sent a text messages to students advising them that she was going to shoot up local high school in the Town of Virden. Members immediately attended the school and proceeded with lockdown procedure. With the assistance of additional resources, members were able to locate the female accused around Headingley. The female accused was arrested and charged with two counts of Utter Threats. The accused was remanded into custody.

On May 8, RCMP received a report of an impaired driver in the Settlement of Sioux Valley. Members attended the area and located the suspect vehicle. Members conducted a traffic stop with the vehicle and upon arrival the driver showed signs of impairment. The driver had no driver's license and blew FAIL on the ASD. The female driver was arrested and transported to Virden detachment where she blew 200mg% and 190mg% which is considered over twice the legal limit. The driver was charged with Operation While Impaired and Operation While Impaired over 80 mg% and Driver Without a Driver's License. Once sober, the driver was released on conditions to appear in court later.

## Miniota News

### Submitted

BY LINDA CLARK

The Miniota Golf Course and Clubhouse opened on Friday, May 8. This will be the place to be in the coming days for golfing, camping, meals, coffee, happy hour and more.

The Miniota United Church was pleased to welcome Katie Gwen for the sacrament of baptism on May 10. Katie is the daughter of Owen and Jodie Thomas, and sister to Emma and Sarah. The Hodgins and Thomas family and friends were in attendance for this celebration and enjoyed a family dinner following the service at the church.

Wayne and Dorothy Brown and John and Noreen Stowe are excited to welcome a new great granddaughter. Ember Faye was born to Tyler and Dana Stowe and big sister Bailee of Moosomin. Congratulations also to Grandma Erin Stowe and family who welcome Ember to their family.

We send our get well

wishes to Andrew Walker in Winnipeg. We are very happy to hear you are making progress in healing.

Our community is saddened with the news of the death of Craig Peel of Winnipeg. Our deepest sympathy to his children and grandchildren, to his parents Bob and Catherine Peel of Deloraine, to his siblings Brian (Joan) Peel of Virden, and Laurie (Rod) Kliever of Deloraine and their families. Our thoughts are also with his sister-in-law and brother-in-law Jana and Terry Joseph and their family and Jana's Mom, Fay Brown of Brandon.

Spring is arriving very slowly, but our farmers are hard at it. Our Miniota Fire

Department is on alert during this very dry spring and asks that everyone be very careful when setting fires. We are relieved to know that a pasture fire ignited by lightning on the Bob McLeod and Baylie Gabrielle farm was fought with success, with no harm to their buildings or cattle. Stay safe folks! A warm spring rain would be most welcome to combat the dry ground.

Already it is Victoria Day weekend! Enjoy this long weekend, whether working or relaxing.

"If we could look into each others' hearts and understand the unique challenges that each of us faces, I think we would treat each other much more gently, with more love, patience, tolerance and care."  
- Mariun J. Ashton

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# Life in the slow lane

By Gerry Nolan  
RIVERS BANNER

I was raised 3 miles south of Harding, Manitoba on a mixed farm of grain and livestock. We did not go to town very often, usually once a week to get the mail. Harding, back in my youth had a garage owned and operated by Fred McCahon. There was a general store which also served as a post office. Charlie Howell and Terry Shurville had shops to fix agricultural machinery. There was also another general store in town but it had closed. The building was there but no business was run out of it and one day it burned down. There was also a blacksmith shop and Cliff Blackwell had a repair shop. Russell Beal had a construction outfit, along with Jack Bridge, who had a caterpillar to move bush etc.

The old general store still stands on main street in Harding.

Harding also has a community hall and a church. The church closed many years ago, then was moved to the Harding fairgrounds and serves as a community centre to the town and surrounding area.

Harding State fair is held the third Friday of July each year and is part of the milk run! I will have more on the fair as we get closer to the date.

At one time, on the fairgrounds stood a structure that served for multiple events. On fair day it housed the cattle and both heavy and light horses. They also used it for the pig show in the fall as Harding had a beef and swine club. In the winter, it turned into a skating rink and had 2 sheets of curling ice. When you went skating you always went the same direction, round and round. I was so used to stopping just one way that, in later years, I had to learn to stop both ways. The old barn, or rink, had an old wood stove in it and benches around the inside for the skaters and the curlers to come in to

warm up. There was no insulation so it was cold, but we did not care, we thought this was great!

Harding also, at one time, had railroad tracks and grain elevators. Mr. Stewart King was the manager when I was a lad. It also had a blacksmith shop and Mr. Maitland worked there. He always had a pipe in his mouth. He would puff away on it between jobs. I always enjoyed the smell of pipe tobacco smoke! There were a number of houses in the town but many of them are gone now.

Milas McGregor had a semi truck business and would pick up livestock to go to market or to a summer pasture.

Harding had a huge brick school where many scholars learned their education, out behind the barn. Just ask Phil Corney!

Harding is located halfway between Kenton and Bradwardine, so we knew many people in those districts as well. At one time the town was busy and was a meeting place for neighbours to visit.

I believe there are 7 or 8 houses still in town, occupied by Harding residents.

As I mentioned earlier, one Friday in July, the town fills up again with many visitors for the Harding Fair day. On fair day you can have pancake breakfast, dinner and supper in the hall all served by the Harding ladies. It is always a great meal! Kurt Schall still lives in a bungalow beside the Harding store. Kurt told me it is one day a year he does not have to make meals and then can go to the beer garden and doesn't have to worry about drinking and driving home, it's just across the street.

Harding used to have a slow pitch team. I think age played a factor in its eventual demise. I forgot to mention that there were 2 places you could get gas. You could purchase it at McCahon's or the grocery store. Prices that I remember back then were 27 to 29 cents a gallon! Let that sink in, not a litre but a Gallon.

simply because of the need for income to hold the family together financially and you can thank the government for that! Moms work with what they have at hand and make the best of it.

For some moms it is coping with grief, trying to survive another day as they deal with the loss of their child, grandchild, spouse or close family member.

For other moms it is the worry about how to make ends meet. Some moms carry guilt, a painful end to a marriage, moms who do not get to hold their babies. Many moms are trying to raise their kids in the tough world in which we live. With so much violence in the world, are your kids safe at school or on the playground?

There are moms who struggle putting food on the table, and many times moms go without, putting their family ahead of themselves. Top all that with the moms who are missing! This column is a tribute to moms! Don't take them for granted! They are the most wonderful, precious people in the world. Be kind to them, love them and protect them but most of all listen to what they say. Bless all the moms everyday!

My mom left us a number of years ago. She was just the greatest! Miss you MOM!



## REF MEMORIES



Just this past Saturday at work, an old friend dropped in to look for a spark plug and for a visit. Mr. Wally Essie from Sioux Valley stopped in and we had a brief visit. Wally and I go way back, connected by sports and we have known each other for years. He is truly a great friend and is a well respected man.

Wally is an uncle to Zack Whitecloud of the Calgary Flames so of course we are talking hockey and of Zack in particular. We also had some stories about a mutual old friend, Brian Pratt who we both miss. Brian could light up a room and I think everybody in our area knew Brian. Brian was a great fastball pitcher and I think he taught all Sioux Valley

fastball pitchers how to throw the up-shoot pitch.

I asked Wally how Zack felt about being traded from Vegas to Calgary and what may have been behind it. Wally shared that the head coach of the Vegas Golden Knights at that time was Bruce Cassidy who has since been fired. I have heard this a number of times in the past and again that he did not treat Zack and other players very well at times. If you follow professional hockey at all, this was one of the reasons Bruce Cassidy was fired by the Boston Bruins.

Zack Whitecloud is now a member of the Calgary Flames and since the trade he has become huge among the aboriginal nations

around Calgary. I follow Zack through social media and I must say he is so popular and they have embraced each other. This may be one of the most important moments in the life of Zack Whitecloud. He goes to schools and community halls wherever to speak and brings hope to the aboriginal nations in Alberta. Zack is such a humble man and with that million dollar smile which we always seem to see, he has become such a tremendous role model. One man may not change the world but I know Zack Whitecloud whose presence and impact on the city of Calgary and surrounding areas is having a profound impact in the communities in Alberta. I personally wished he would have been traded to the Winnipeg Jets.

To know that Zack Whitecloud is breathing life into the aboriginal nation is tremendous! What a role model you are! Congratulations and thank you Zack for all the sacrifices and you are generous with your time. Best wishes in the future!

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# Elkhorn & Area Foundation grants community groups over \$100K



PHOTO BY ED JAMES

Pictured at the May 2026 Grant Night, are Elkhorn and Area Foundation grant recipients: (Back L-R): Garth Mitchell-Elkhorn Legion, Tyler Wood and Cory Nolan-Elkhorn Curling Club, Murray Main-Virden Pickleball Club, Riley Brennand and Kevin Tutthill-Elkhorn New Facility Phase 1; and Darren Johnson- Elkhorn Ag Society; (Front L-R): grant recipients include Ron Cannart-AWWD, Miniota Community Centre-Traci McKean, Elkhorn School Youth in Philanthropy-Stephanie Malcom and Avery Fratinger, Border Regional Library (Elkhorn)-Tamara Bajus and Laranda Bailey, Elkhorn Early Learning Centre-Sydney Mitchell and Jessica Hay.

By Ed James  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Elkhorn & Area Foundation (EAF) granted almost \$101 Thousand to community projects at a recent RM of Wallace Woodworth/Elkhorn LUD Gala.

EAF is made up of nine board members: Chairperson Marcy Rowan, Lana Bajus, Jill Canart, Tyler Mitchell, Bill Bickerton, Rhonda Hansen, Steve Malcolm, Alanna Martin, and Brent Brennand.

Rowan spoke of EAF history and ongoing growth saying, "Through your generous contributions and the success of the Memory Tree fundraiser, the Foundation's fund has grown to over \$2 million.

"Our first grant in 1999 was \$185 to the EDCC. Since then, we've awarded nearly \$656,063.16 in grants for community projects and \$43,750 in scholarships to Elkhorn students pursuing post-secondary education. Many of those students have returned to contribute to our community, which is a wonderful full-circle moment."

This year EAF received just over \$120,000 in grant

requests. Rowan said, "With careful consideration and much discussion, we've made our selections..."

EAF also oversees designated funds to a specific cause such as the Manitoba Museum Fund and the recently established Elkhorn Cemetery Fund. This year the Manitoba Auto Museum received \$1353 and Elkhorn Cemetery received \$449.

Rowan invited representatives from the Border Regional Library to come forward as she provided the background for the grant to the town's library.

"The Thomas Sill Foundation was established in 1987 through Thomas Sill's will. He was a Manitoba resident and chartered accountant with offices across the province. For decades, the Thomas Sill Foundation supported charitable activities in Manitoba.

At the end of 2023, the Thomas Sill Foundation wound down operations. With some remaining resources the Thomas Sill Manitoba Fund was established through the Winnipeg Foundation to benefit Endow Manitoba community foundation member communities.

"This year the Elkhorn and Area Foundation received \$22,

264.10 to be handed out in conjunction with our grants."

Rowan called up Laranda Bailey and Tamara Bajus and said, "Tonight the Border Regional Library-Elkhorn Branch is receiving \$22,264.10 for renovations and refresh project."

## Other EAF grant recipients

Assiniboine West Watershed District received \$683.50 to purchase apple trees for the Gr. 5 students at Elkhorn School.

Elkhorn School Youth in Philanthropy Program received \$2500 to be used by the student committee with some teacher assistance. They follow a process similar to EAF and grant out money each year. They also received \$356, the proceeds from their designated Youth in Philanthropy fund established in memory of Gavin Krieser.

Virden Pickleball Club received \$5,000 for their Outdoor Pickleball Courts project.

Miniota Community Centre received \$5,000 toward Phase III Facility Enhancement and Expansion project.

Elkhorn Early Learning Centre received \$6000 towards their Shed and Outdoor space enhancement project.

Elkhorn Curling Club received \$6797.35 for the Ice Surface Lighting Project.

Elkhorn Ag Society received \$10,000 for improvements to the race track.

Elkhorn Legion Branch #58 received \$7500 for their furnace replacement project.

Elkhorn New Facility Committee received \$15,000 toward Phase 1 Concept Design.

Elkhorn District Community Center received \$20,000 towards a new hot water heater and roof repairs.

Having concluded this year's grant presentations of \$100,744.95, Rowan invited those interested in the Elkhorn and Area Foundation, and in possibly becoming board members, to attend the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday June 3rd, 7:30 pm at the Elkhorn Leisure Centre.

In closing, to the evening's organizers and to community volunteers Rowan said, "Thank you to all our volunteers for these great projects that continue to make Elkhorn and area a great place to live, work and play!"

## A Busy Night in Elkhorn!

By Ed James  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Elkhorn Citizen of the Year event has been going on for 23 years, give or take a few due to COVID cancellations, while the Elkhorn and Area Foundation group has been around for 27 years. Both events were recently held at the Elkhorn Elks Hall. It was an evening to recognize those in our community and area groups that are working publicly or quietly to make our community a better place.

The evening began with cocktails and appetizers prepared by Kliever Katering of Elkhorn. The MC for the evening was Kevin Tutthill, who welcomed a smaller crowd to the event this year, with a special thank you to community LUD manager Tawna McLean for all her efforts in preparing the evening event.

The Elkhorn and Area Foundation was the first presenter, with chairperson Marcy Rowan and board member Lana Bajus. They gave a brief history of their organization, and pointed out that when making any donations, don't forget the extra child, "Your Community."

The second part of the evening was a community acknowledgement of the 45 years of service of former CAO Garth Mitchell.

Mr. Mitchell, over the years, did his job by building trust, relationships and always had an open-door policy at his office. The public record shows that he had some important roles in area development and some rough times in personal health issues. However, with all of it, he was always constant in his efforts in a changing community and a changing world.

He loved and valued his community and took pride in serving it however he could. Even in his retirement he continues to offer his support, guidance and time. Mitchell was presented with a vintage map of Elkhorn that hung in the village office for many years, which he always admired, and he was given a standing ovation by the audience.

The third part of the gala evening was the Elkhorn Citizen of the Year Award. This award is in recognition

of community people who, through their actions, have been a positive influence on the community in social, cultural and/or economic matters.

This year there were three nominees, the first being Wenda Paton, a long-time successful community businesswoman and active in so many community groups and organizations. Over the years she has been a vital part of community development and growth. Her work at the Elkhorn

Antique Auto Museum provided some needed improvements. She was nominated by the E.C.A.R. (Elkhorn Community Action Report Steering) Committee.

The second nominee of the evening was local resident and NHL hockey player Travis Sanheim. Travis took part in the 2026 Winter Olympic Games. It was in the local hockey rink that he developed his hockey skills and was always willing to help and encourage hockey players.

With his NHL success, he has been active in supporting community hockey with donations of new hockey equipment to younger players and providing autographed hockey memorabilia from his teammates for Elkhorn community fundraising events.

Travis was nominated by the Elkhorn Elks Lodge #381.

The final candidate for the Elkhorn Citizen of the Year was Garth Mitchell, nominated by the Elkhorn Gospel Fellowship Church.

Garth, besides his 45 years as a local civil servant in the community, has been very involved with the Elkhorn sports scene as a player, coach, team talent scout or sports venue worker.



PHOTO BY ED JAMES

Riley Brennand (L) and Kevin Tutthill present Garth Mitchell the Citizen of the Year award.

His lifelong commitment to community service, and always being willing to find solutions and a compromise to any and all issues, made him the choice for the Elkhorn 2026 Citizen of the Year award.

With humility and grace, he accepted the award and thanked the other nominees for their community work efforts to make our community better.

However, there was one more item for the evening. It was the "Great Garden Raid" news story.

In a facsimile of the one-time Elkhorn newspaper, "The Mercury," photos, clues and descriptions were given of the likely thief. They included Kevin Tutthill, Garth Mitchell Keith Orr and local newspaper reporter Ed James.

The missing tomatoes in question were the prize-winning tomatoes of Bill and Angel Glover.

Through a series of clues in the bio of each person, people made their choice and placed the name of the guilty person in a draw drum.

As it would turn out, all the clues pointed to paper reporter Ed James as the "Great Garden Raid" thief.

Busted!

# VCI STUDENT PRESS RELEASES

## ~ FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ~

### Reach for the Top Goes to Provincials

By Fin Craig  
VCI STUDENT

Viriden, MB; May 5, 2026

Later this month, the grade 9/10 team of Viriden

Collegiate will combat other intermediate teams in a provincial competition. The team consists of Julie Blackshaw, Bruno Gibbert, Georgia Grieve, Sherlock Mariano and Lily West.

Mrs. Carrie Tapp, who has organized VCI's Reach for the Top since 2018, is very excited about the prospects for the team. "They will have a chance to play other teams [from Manitoba] and even win."

According to the Reach for the Top website, thousands of students have played in this trivia competition since 1966. Over 400 schools participate in Schoolreach which helps Reach for the Top tournaments. Winners of each province will go to Moncton, NB for the national playdowns on May 30 and 31.

Go Bears Go!

For more information, contact Carrie Tapp at ctapp@flbsd.ca or (204) 748-2205.

### Sports And Citizenship Award Ceremony

By Chloe Williment  
VCI STUDENT

Viriden, Manitoba,

June 11, 2026

Viriden Collegiate

Institute

Viriden Collegiate has always encouraged its students to do their best in both athletics and character development. They are proud to continue that by hosting their annual Sports and Citizenship Awards Ceremony on June 11 from 6:30-8:00 PM. This special event recognizes the accomplishments of student-athletes who have demonstrated strong athletic performance, leadership, teamwork, commitment, and positive behaviour in both the school and the community. These awards don't just highlight athletic skills but also the importance of a good attitude and of treating others with kindness and respect.

Students, families, and staff are all invited to come and support their athletes and their hard work. This gives the community a chance to see how much effort these students have put into both their sports and everyday lives. This ceremony demonstrates the positive impact students are making in the world around them. This event has provided the opportunity to highlight student-athletes who excel in their sports and citizenship.

Contact:

Viriden Collegiate Institute

538 Government Road S.

Viriden, MB R0M 2C0

: 204-748-2205

Mr. Keown (Principal) mkeown@flbsd.mb.ca

### Viriden Collegiate Brings their Production of Hadestown Teen Edition to the Stage

By Sara Taylor  
VCI STUDENT

Viriden, Manitoba May

7-9, 2026

Viriden Auditorium Theatre

atre

Viriden Collegiate is proud to present Hadestown Teen Edition, a powerful edition of the award winning musical that intertwines ancient Greek mythology with modern edge. This student production captures the haunting beauty of love, hope, and resistance through striking visuals and unforgettable music.

Set in a world where the line between the living and the dead blurs, Hadestown follows the journeys of Orpheus (played by Tristan Plaiser and Krysiyan Dupra), and Eurydice (played by Avrin Krieser and Charley Dunning). Alongside Hades (played by Joa Rossouw), Persephone (played by Amelia Alphonso and Arianah Kerr), and Hermes (played by Owen Gray and Sarah Lindsay). As their stories collide in a gripping tale of sacrifice and defiance. With folk and jazz inspired music played by the live band, the show invites audiences to reflect on the cost of power and the strength it takes to challenge it. Audiences can expect a visually captivating performance, driven by a talented cast and crew dedicated to bringing this mythic journey to life.

The cast and crew have been working hard for months to put on the best show they can in honour of such an amazing musical choice. "We have a show! It truly looks amazing, and I hope the audience can tell how much work has gone into the show." says Luke Munchinsky, director of the musical.

Tickets are being sold at the door, \$15 for students and \$20 for adults. Advance ticket sales are being held at Viriden Collegiate on April 22, 24, 28, 30, and May 1. Shows will take place at the auditorium at 7:00 PM on May 7, 12:30 and 7:00 PM on May 8, and 1:30 PM on May 9.

Contact:

Viriden Auditorium Theatre

228 Wellington St W

Viriden, MB R0M 2C0

(204) 748-1982

Viriden Collegiate Institute

538 Government Rd S

Viriden, MB R0M 2C0

(204) 748-2205

## Viriden and Area Food Cupboard Thanks the Community



PHOTO BY NANCY JO MOLLER

Volunteers and donors enjoying a chat and indulging in a sweet treat.

By Nancy Jo Moller  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The volunteers of the Viriden & Area Food Cupboard invited everyone to an afternoon coffee and dessert party at Sacred Heart Catholic Hall on May 8. The array of mouthwatering desserts

was pure temptation.

The group wanted to show appreciation to the people and businesses of Viriden and surrounding area who have supported them for the last 25 years, enabling them to provide food to those in need in their communities. The donations, fund-

raising and assistance in gathering, sorting and packaging is testament to the devotion of this community to provide. It is admirable that two student classes help with the handling of donations.

The Food Cupboard can be contacted at (204) 512-2321 before 4pm on

the 2nd and 4th Monday to register for a hamper. Hampers are available for pick up on the 2nd and 4th Thursday between 4 and 6 pm. This deadline allows the volunteers to gather perishable items included in their hampers.



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# Herb and Zelda "Adventures in Camping"

## Let's Try It One More Time

By Nancy Jo Moller  
RIVERS BANNER

"Fictional names Herb and Zelda have been used to protect the innocent from laughter"

Okay, so they have realized that camping down south is no longer an option and they are land-lubbers. Herb had a great thought, buy a semi, convert the deck to haul the camper and then have abundance of power to haul the camper and comfort while they travel. They'll have a bed in the sleeper if drydocking. Zelda questioned if this arrangement would work as mobility deteriorated. But a couple of months later, this process was underway, fabricating the deck with his son was an enjoyable part of the plan. So now they have a deck on semi that will hold a small car, and the fifth wheel camper will hook at the back of deck. One thing Zelda was thinking about was how many tires Herb would have to pressure check. Zelda can foresee delays on departure days unless they have regular tire checks, rotations, wheel balancing and replacements done at their local tire shop.

Now let's go buy a Smart car to haul on top of the deck. E-Brandon here they come, there's nowhere else to shop. As they looked at countless advertise-



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PHOTOS BY NANCY JO MOLLER

ments, the realization came that few Smart cars came up for sale. A month later, one is listed near Pilot Mound. So off they went to test drive, shifting was different and checking the engine meant lifting the back hatch. It was relatively roomy for the two of them, so out came the negotiation skills and cheque book. One week later, they went to pick up their car. It was almost dark when they headed home, so Herb

driving the 'Smartie' struggled to find all the lights and controls. Suggestion that 'new to you' equipment be picked up in daylight. They made it home in one piece and the adventure began. Just needed to find ramps to put on side of semi deck to load the car. Then once they arrived at a camping spot, they could drive on one side and off the other, ready to go sightseeing.

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<p>1. Activities You Enjoy (or Want to Try) Check any that apply.</p> <p><b>Indoor / Sport</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ice (hockey, figure skating, curling) <input type="checkbox"/> Court (basketball, pickleball, badminton) <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness centre / gym <input type="checkbox"/> Self led (walking tracks, stretching, yoga)</p> <p><b>Outdoor / Active</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Soccer <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball / Softball <input type="checkbox"/> Track &amp; field <input type="checkbox"/> Golf <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming</p> <p><b>Creative &amp; Skill Based</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Arts &amp; crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Woodworking / automotive <input type="checkbox"/> Lifestyle / home skills <input type="checkbox"/> Technology / science activities</p> <p><b>Other</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Motorized (boat, dirtbike, quad) <input type="checkbox"/> Clubs / Groups (4H, sport team, Ideas for Recreation: _____</p>	<p>2. Program Types You're Interested In Check all that apply.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing classes <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal programs <input type="checkbox"/> One time workshops <input type="checkbox"/> Drop in sessions <input type="checkbox"/> Family friendly events</p> <p>3. Preferred Age Categories Check all that apply.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Toddler <input type="checkbox"/> Kids <input type="checkbox"/> Youth <input type="checkbox"/> Teen <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Senior</p> <p>4. Preferred Locations <input type="checkbox"/> Elkhorn <input type="checkbox"/> Kenton <input type="checkbox"/> Kola <input type="checkbox"/> Willing to travel anywhere</p> <p>5. When Are You Most Available? <input type="checkbox"/> Weekdays - Daytime <input type="checkbox"/> Weekdays - Evenings <input type="checkbox"/> Weekends</p> <p>How often would you participate? <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonally</p>	<p>6. Cost &amp; Barriers What cost range works for you? <input type="checkbox"/> Free only <input type="checkbox"/> \$1-\$20 <input type="checkbox"/> \$20-\$50 <input type="checkbox"/> \$50+</p> <p>What affects your decision to participate? <input type="checkbox"/> Cost <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation / distance <input type="checkbox"/> Weather / driving conditions</p> <p>7. How Should We Share Program Info? <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> RM Website <input type="checkbox"/> Email newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Community posters <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth Optional email for updates: _____</p> <p>8. Volunteer / Instructor Interest <input type="checkbox"/> Help at events or programs <input type="checkbox"/> Host or lead an activity <input type="checkbox"/> Take coaching or leadership training <input type="checkbox"/> Not at this time</p> <p>Optional Contact (if you want to discuss ideas) - Name / Email / Phone: _____</p>
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Herb said, "Let's google what type of ramps are needed, order them and we'll be ready to go". Nope, not happening. Since ramps were specialized because of traction and weight requirements, only a few options to purchase were available. Internet searches showed they were sold out in the majority of USA, maybe Canada had somewhere. Yes, found a company but inventory sold out and none would be available for 3 months. Don't want to order sight unseen, so will wait until in stock and then travel to Calgary to look at them. Another camping season will be passed before this idea can be completed.

In the meantime, let's get used to driving "Smartie". Saturday night cruising took on a whole new meaning, load the dog on the engine area, crawl in, belt up and let's go. One thing, they could never pick up hitchhikers when driving this car. Surprisingly comfortable and once you put your foot down, up to speed quickly.

So, Herb and Zelda have a plan, they will travel through the mountains to British Columbia, find a good camping site and then use "Smartie" to tour. The semi will provide the power needed to tow their trailer through mountain passes. Once back from that trip, they can go to east coast and do the same style of touring.

While they waited for the loading ramps, Zelda had the chance to go travelling with a friend in a few larger cities. When she got back and started telling Herb about all the car parts she had seen on the road from accidents, he started thinking. Herb said, "even if we wear steel toed boots to double our safety, maybe we should sell 'Smartie' and come up with another idea." Luckily the demand was high for a Smart car, and it sold within the week. The semi towed the camper and an enclosed

trailer with their quads a few places, there was always some one stopping to talk to them asking about their setup. But few places could accommodate their rig size unless they booked a pull through lot. They also discovered that few campgrounds allowed quad riding. After checking google, a few campgrounds were found that had quad trails.

Always optimists, Herb and Zelda began visiting friends with their camper. It was great to be able to visit but have their own space at night. It was the best of both worlds. Quads could be taken with them, crop and cow checking done from the back of their bikes. Okay, this is what they envisioned retired life being. Maybe it was time to consider purchasing a side by side so they could ride together and no one was left in the dust.

Herb and Zelda have realized that there is no shame in asking professionals for advice. The knowledge they can provide is worth the conversation.

There was only one challenge that had remained throughout all their



Smartie ready to rove.

plans. Guaranteed, one thing that doesn't improve is the understanding of hand signals. A friend once said, "If bored go sit in an RV park on a Friday night and watch couples park their campers". But that could be another story, sure everyone has experienced this test of their marriage vows.



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# MHSRA Rodeo season has kicked off in Oak Lake for the full month of May



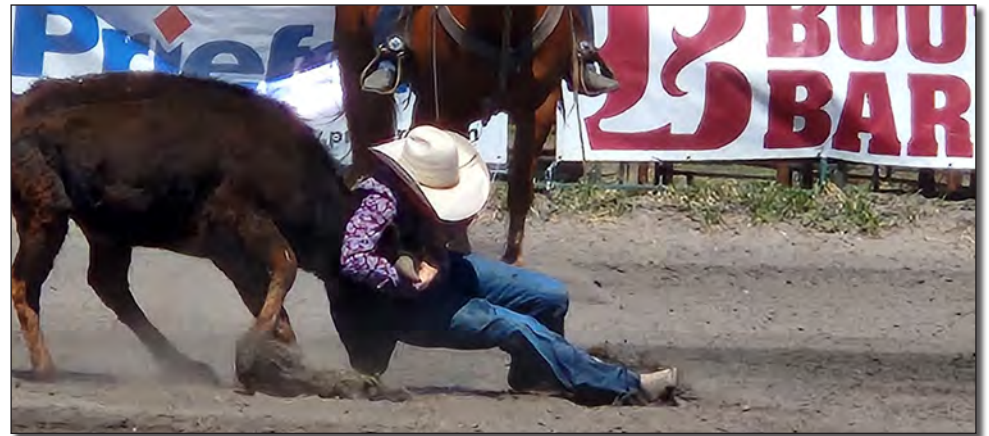
Keightley Stewart from Virden participating in High School Goat Tying.



Rory Hagan, Virden in Junior High Boy's Breakaway roping.



Leo King, Lenore Junior High Breakaway Roping.



Kesler Brown, Virden Junior High Chute Dogging. Got him and he's not letting go.

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## SPORTS

## ICE WOLVES ROOKIE HOEMSEN SHOWING PLENTY OF PROMISE

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

As a rookie, Virden's Connor Hoemsen was an important contributor for the La Ronge Ice Wolves.

The son of Erich Hoemsen and Keshia Stewart finished fourth on the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League squad in goals with 11 in 53 games. The 6-foot-2, 195-pound forward was seventh on the Ice Wolves in points with 21.

"Connor is a high-character kid who shows up to the rink every morning with a smile on his face, ready to put in work," said Kyle Graham, who served as an assistant coach and interim head coach for the Ice Wolves in 2025-26. "As the season progressed, Connor became more comfortable playing at the junior level... He's got a wicked shot and lots of potential. We're expecting Connor to take a big step forward this summer and be a key part of our success this upcoming season."

Hoemsen placed 15th among SJHL rookies in goals. He was also in the top 25 in points among first-year players. Hoemsen lit the lamp in his first game with the Ice Wolves. He twice scored two goals in a game. Hoemsen appreciates what his parents and others back home have done to help his hockey career.

"My family has always been there for me," he said. "Without them, I wouldn't be where I am today."

Before heading to the junior ranks, Hoemsen spent time honing his game with the U15 and U18 AAA Southwest Cougars and the U17 AAA Westman (now known as Canadian) Ice Bandits. In 2025, he was a

Manitoba U18 AAA Hockey League Second Team All-Star. After moving up to the SJHL, Hoemsen said the difference between that league and the U18 AAA level is "your time with the puck."

"You can't just do whatever you want out there," he said. "You really have to emphasize your teammates and use them to your advantage. The SJHL is known for its tough, fast, hard-hitting hockey, and there's no other junior hockey like it."

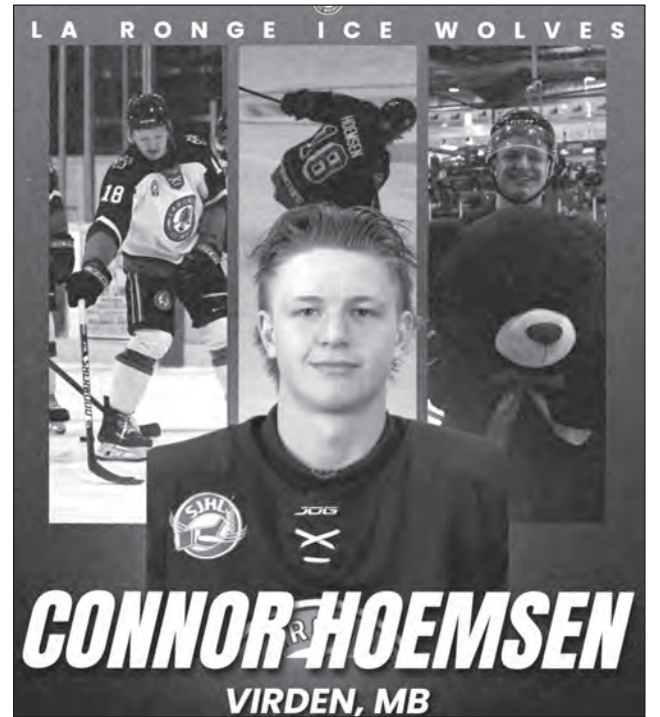
When asked what he enjoyed about his first junior season, Hoemsen said, "The atmosphere the fans bring and, more importantly, the men you're constantly doing it with, creating memories of a lifetime most people don't have the privilege of experiencing."

Another aspect he appreciated was being coached for part of the campaign by Kevin Kaminski. Kaminski played in 139 National Hockey League contests. Nicknamed "Killer," his hard-nosed style of play and willingness to drop the gloves made him a fan favourite at both the NHL and minor pro levels. Late in the SJHL season, Kaminski took a personal leave. The Ice Wolves later announced the two sides had mutually parted ways.

"It was an honour playing for Killer," Hoemsen said. "He and I truly connected, and he taught me so much about the game. I loved his coaching style... I will make sure his traditions in Ice Wolves hockey will be carried on for years to come."

Hoemsen, who was traded from the Flin Flon Bombers to the Ice Wolves before the season, enjoyed life in northern Saskatchewan.

"I fell in love with the North," he said. "In almost a



PHOTOS BY THE LA RONGE ICE WOLVES

Connor Hoemsen stepped in and helped the La Ronge Ice Wolves as a rookie.

remote place, it felt so magical watching the northern lights every night. Us boys up there would always go ice fishing as their lakes are gorgeous. There's truly no better place to connect with nature and get away from home."

## SPORTS NOTES: PLAISIER HEADED TO MSU, CHARLES TO NATIONALS

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

After a standout junior career, including captaining his hometown Virden Oil Capitals, Ty Plaisier is taking his game south.

Earlier this month, the defenceman announced his commitment to the Minot State University men's hockey team. The powerhouse North Dakota school squad is a perennial contender for the American Collegiate Hockey Association Division I men's championship.

"The phrase 'Beaver Hockey' is a saying that we use within our locker room in terms of buying into our culture, a relentless work ethic, and being the ultimate teammate. Ty embodies this through and through," MSU head coach Wyatt Waselenchuk said in a media release. "Every single person, whether it's an opposing coach, a teammate, or a member in the Virden community, has raved about Ty as a leader and as a young man."

The son of Shawn and Debra Plaisier played 178 regular-season games and 42 playoff tilts for the Oil Capitals. He twice helped the squad reach the Manitoba Junior Hockey League finals. Plaisier is arguably the most popular player in the team's history. The squad's first hometown captain won or shared the Fountain Tire Fan Choice Award in all four of his Oil Capitals' campaigns. He also spent time in the Western

Hockey League with the Regina Pats.

"He is a big, physical presence and a guy that will eat some big-time shut-down minutes for us," Waselenchuk said of Plaisier in a media release. "We, as a staff, made it our goal this season to get bigger and tougher, and he will certainly help in that regard."

Plaisier told the Empire-Advance he plans to study finance at MSU.

"I've heard nothing but great things about the schooling, hockey, and the coaches," he said in a media release. "I can't thank my former coaches, parents, and teammates enough for all the tremendous support throughout the years, and I am excited to take the next step in my academic and athletic journey."

#### Charles Headed to Nationals

Virden's Kendall Charles is bound for the National Junior College Athletic Association DIII World Series in DeWitt, New York, which will be held May 20-23. In her first post-secondary season, she helped the North Dakota State College of Science women's softball team win its sixth straight Region XIII Championship to earn a national berth. Charles is the daughter of Joel and Dori Charles.

#### Hockey Championship Battles



PHOTO BY MINOT STATE MEN'S HOCKEY

Virden's Ty Plaisier has committed to study and play at Minot State University.

At the Centennial Cup national Junior A hockey championship, Oak Lake's Chase Cochrane and the Thunder Bay North Stars were 0-3 as of May 11. The prestigious event is being held in Summerside, P.E.I.

Former Oil Caps forward Nolan Chastko helped the Everett Silvertips make it to the WHL Championship Series. As of May 11, the Washington state-based Silvertips and the Prince Albert Raiders were tied at 1-1. Chastko played in Virden in 2022-24.

#### Rands Wraps Up at MSU

Former Oil Capitals captain Logan Rands has concluded his playing and academic career at Minot State. The finance major, who was a frequent

member of the President's List, graduated this year.

"You can't replace a young man like that... He just meant everything for us," Waselenchuk said.

After playing parts of four seasons with the Oil Capitals, the defenceman from Portage suited up for the senior Virden Oil Kings. He then joined the Beavers for the second semester of the 2022-23 campaign and helped the team win an ACHA title. Rands went on to serve as an assistant captain for two years. He was named to the 2025 ACHA Division I All-Athletic First Team.

"He has been such a rock for us back there," Waselenchuk said.

#### Prettie Signs With Oil Caps

The Oil Capitals recently announced the signing of forward Dylan Prettie for next season. The 2009-born Winnipegger had eight goals and 22 points in 47 games for the U18 AAA Winnipeg Wild last season. He recorded three assists over seven playoff contests.

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# Council reports include fire board, school visits

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

## Councillor reports

At the close of the April 28 Town of Virden council meeting, the mayor, councillors and staff brought their activity reports.

Coun. Bruce Dunning reported on a Pioneer Home Museum board meeting. "We're transitioning financing over to town staff, and I think it's progressing well."

Councillors attended the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) conference held in Brandon, April 21-23. Several expressed disappointments in the breakout sessions, complaining that they were not as described.

Coun. Penner said the keynote speakers at AMM were very good. They were Michael Landsberg, mental health advocate and founder of SickNotWeak, and Dr. Shawna Pandya, a physician

and scientist, focusing on themes of resilience and leadership. Penner noted that there's a lack of mental health services in the area.

Coun. Lynette Grumpelt reported on the Midwest Planning District, saying it is "wildly" behind with the completion of the plan. She said they're pushing the consultant for a "more firm deadline," with pressure to present the plan to the public, to the government and to have it completed before the new council takes office following this fall's elections.

Coun. Tara Maxwell reported that the Fire Board meeting 2026 budget was approved. "Things are going really well there. This has been, I'm going to say, the smoothest it's ever ran in the 12 years I've been on council. Thank you to our chiefs and our board for that."

She added, "We did have a small discussion about the Fire

Board agreement... there's some things that need to be resolved before the end of the term."

Coun. Savy also attended the Fire Board meeting and presented the calls for service report for Station 1 since Jan. 1st: 26 calls for service; 13 in Virden, 12 in Woodworth and 1 in Pipestone.

Calls included: 1 hazmat call, 8 motor vehicle collisions, 1 gas leak, 1 vehicle fire, 6 alarms sounding, 2 utility incidents, 4 EMS lift assists, 1 winter rescue, 1 wildland fire, Station 2 (Elkhorn) 2026 Chief Lewis reported 6 calls: 4 motor vehicles, 1 vehicle fire, and one lift assist.

"I want to commend the whole fire department, Station 1 and 2, for the job they do, and how well they do it," said Savy. "The awards night is May 23rd, so I think some of us will be invited... It's our only way of recognizing our firefighters."

He also reported at the April

27 The Westman Emergency Group (TWEG) meeting, the budget was discussed, the emergency audit and the emergency coordinators' plan for the summer were presented. TWEG will pay visits to the seniors' residences. They will also attend the Indoor Rodeo.

Mayor Tina Williams hosted teacher Avery Hayward and two classes of Gr. 9 social studies students on April 20. Students plied the mayor with good questions and she said, "One of the things they did ask is how students could become involved in town council."

Mayor Williams said a student rep sat on council a number of years ago and suggested the school may wish to do that again.

Gr. 2s, Gr. 4s and Gr. 9s have also engaged with the mayor to learn about Town governance.

Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Jared Jaffray and Mayor Williams attended the

landfill operator and has issued a RFP (request for proposals). An RFP is also out for the WDFD fire hall extension.

"Internet bandwidth at all municipal sites was a serious problem a couple of weeks ago," stated CAO Smith. He continued, "We have been working with RF now and 3C Tech to resolve it. It's better than it was, which is good, but we were quite concerned for a while there."

Along with his report to council, he is providing a capital plan monitoring table.

"This was something I used to do for my previous council, which was basically to keep track of capital items in the budget and just provide some updates and comments on those. If we know they're going to be deferred or cancelled, you hear about it more or less at the same time the administration does, give or take a few days," said Smith.

Councillors thanked the CAO for including this ongoing report on the condition of capital assets.

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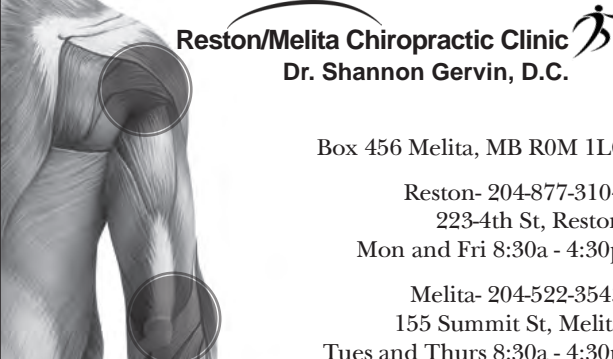
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# SPORTS

## LESLIE RETURNS TO THE ICE WITH STEELHAWKS

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

After a couple of years away from the game, Elkhorn's Jayden Leslie made a successful return to the ice this past season.

The son of Todd and Wendy was a trailblazer as a member of the inaugural Moosomin Steelhawks roster. The defenceman played a key role on the blue line, helping the Steelhawks secure a berth in the Prairie Junior Hockey League postseason.

"Being a part of the Steelhawks was great," Leslie said. "It was a great opportunity for me, especially being so close to home. It was only a 25-minute drive from my front door to the arena. Also having the opportunity to meet the boys coming from different provinces across Canada and even other countries was pretty special. You don't get opportunities to make those friendships very often."

A 2023 Elkhorn School graduate, Leslie suited up for the REMP Renegades in the Westman High School Hockey League. After high school, he raced indoor motocross in the United States and did not play hockey.

Leslie said he "was fortunate enough to come back and play another year of good hockey after a short break." The Steelhawks were pleased to have the 2005-born blueliner.

"Jayden was one of our oldest players, so naturally he had younger players looking up to him," Steelhawks general manager and head coach Blake Martyniuk said. "We asked him to play a simple, but also a physical game and he met that challenge. The result was a reliable, veteran presence on our back end."

Leslie recorded four assists and 51 penalty minutes in 37 games. He has long embraced playing a defensive role.

"I've played defence pretty much my entire life, so to me, it feels like it comes naturally," Leslie said. "As far as I can remember, back to my minor hockey days, there weren't many occasions where I didn't start on the blue line. My dad was also a defenceman when he played too, so growing up he would always teach and give me pointers. The best thing I can say I like about playing defence is being physical in your own end and being your goalie's best friend, clearing the

front of the net in the defensive zone."

Leslie found in the Junior B PJHL some things were different than the levels he played at before.

"The speed of the game is just so much faster and every guy on the ice is bigger and stronger than what I was really used to," he said. "It definitely took a few games to adjust to the more technical style of play too—lots of communication on the ice with my teammates, working with each other every shift."

Leslie worked full-time while playing for the Steelhawks. He said, "it was nice still being able to work and play hockey all winter. No matter if we had to make a trip all the way up to Prince Albert or Carrot River, I'd still make it up there with the team, maybe sacrificing a few hours here and there but thankfully, it was able to work out."

At Steelhawks' home games, Leslie's family were in



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Elkhorn's Jayden Leslie.

the stands—like they were in his minor hockey days.

"Growing up, they drove me to every single game and practice," he said of his parents. "As well as, even after I grew up and moved out they still showed up to home games in Moosomin. It was always nice seeing them in the stands."

## SWBL: OILERS, ROCKETS READY FOR SEASON

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

With a bit of a youth movement, the Virden Oilers are looking for success and exciting games this South West Baseball League season.

"We are going to be a fun team to watch who will put their best foot forward every night," said Oilers player/organizer Jeff Peel. "We hope fans will come out to watch the young guys play."

The Oilers opened the 2026 campaign at home on May 14 against the Hamiota Red Sox, after the Empire-Advance deadline. On May 19, they are on the road against the Brandon Young Guns. The Oilers host the Reston Rockets on May 22.

Versatile veteran Danny Cochrane has left the team after several senior baseball seasons. The Oilers have

added young athletes in Grady Lane, Dexter Whittle, Brayden Rowan, and Nick Hsu.

"We are progressively getting younger, and I believe this will help us," Peel said. "We have a lot of guys who will have a scrappy approach at the plate and will be looking to put the ball in play. Some quick runners on the team will help us pester other teams. We will also be looking for our defence to help us at all times. With a bunch of athletic gentlemen on the field, it should work out."

Last season, among regulars, Tyson Draper batted a team-best .433. Braeden Lewis led the Oilers with nine runs batted in. Toby Troughton had five stolen bases and eight RBIs. Peel paced Virden with three wins and 26 innings pitched.

The Oilers are hard at work improving the ballpark. These efforts include

a new scorer's tower with equipment storage underneath and a new bench for the visitors' dugout.

"We continue to maintain and look after the diamond ourselves," Peel said. "Any improvements and maintenance done is done by a representative of our team."

### Reston Rockets

The Reston Rockets' first game of the season is on May 22 in Virden. Their home opener is on May 29 against the Hamiota Red Sox. Player/organizer John Patmore said the team has a lot of youth this season and is looking for reliable pitching.

"Our bats are always a strength of the team, and we are a dangerous club when we are playing well on both sides of the ball. We look to build off of a strong showing at 'A' provincials last year."

The Rockets made it to the semi-

finals of the Baseball Manitoba Senior A Provincial Tournament in Carberry last year. Gone from that team are Bryce Kyle, Jayce Soder, and Nairn Cooper. The Rockets have added Rory Tycoles, Karlin Desautels, and Ty Vandenberghe, as well as high school players Kaden Revet and Cooper McColl. Patmore said the team's strengths will be its versatility and buy-in.

"We are going to have lots of guys playing different positions and getting out of their comfort zone this year," Patmore said. "Everyone tries to be the best they can at whatever position they find themselves in."

Reagan Bertholet led Reston in innings pitched last season with 27.66. Patmore struck out 28. Billy Patmore drove in a team-high 19 runs and batted .500.

# Rural Municipality of Pipestone 2026 Financial Plan

Submitted  
RM OF PIPESTONE

The R.M of Pipestone presented its 2026 Financial Plan during a public hearing on April 16 at the Reston Memorial Theatre, outlining modest tax increases, a \$5.11 million operating budget, and continued infrastructure investment. Reeve Henuset opened the meeting, introducing Chief Administrative Officer Douglas Jay, acknowledging former Reeve McPherson, and noting upcoming changes within the municipality, including Stephen Awudi, Director of Finance who is expected to join the Municipality the end of April. Charlotte Parham delivered the financial overview, outlining operating costs, capital projects, and long-term planning.

The general municipal rate will rise from 4.44 to 4.50 mills, while transportation rates increase to 4.07 mills for rural properties and 3.79 mills in the Reston L.U.D. The Pipestone special service levy remains at 1.86 mills. School levies include 7.58 mills for the Fort La Bosse School Division and 7.41 mills for the provincial education levy. As 2026 is not a reassessment year, tax changes reflect new construction and improvements, with a full reassessment scheduled for 2026 and applied to 2027 assessment. The Municipality's operating budget totals \$5,114,615, an increase of 5.5 percent over 2025. Transportation remains the largest area of spending, followed by general government and recreation services. Total revenue is projected at \$13.59 million, including approximately \$2.5 million in royalty revenues, which Council noted are used primarily to fund capital projects and reduce reliance on property taxes. The 2026 capital budget totals approximately \$2.15 million. The largest project is the \$1.31 million Landfill development.

Additional projects include equipment replacement, facility upgrades such as spray park improvements and municipal office land-

scape, and engineering work for the Reston Rec Plex. Land acquisition within Reston and continued investment in asset management systems are also included. Fire services updates include a new training site and the introduction of a Medical First Responder program. Following the presentation, residents raised a number of questions and comments related to municipal operations, planning, and service delivery.

Discussion included questions on financial planning and asset management, including the purpose of land acquisitions, how municipal assets are tracked, and whether additional resources may be required to support long-term planning. Clarification was also sought on administrative costs, including the Director of Finance position and Council indemnities. Recreation facilities were discussed, with questions related to spray park maintenance, responsibility for repairs, and whether user fees should be considered to offset operating costs, along with the cost and status of the Reston Golf Course irrigation project.

Waste management and landfill operations were also a key focus, including questions on the timeline of the landfill project and opportunities to improve access and efficiency at the Sinclair dump. Economic development was raised in relation to attracting business and supporting growth within the municipality. Deep Sky and Bill C-31 were referenced, with questions regarding Council's level of involvement, communication with provincial officials, and the availability of information to the public. Water supply, environmental planning, equipment uses, and staffing were also noted. Council indicated that input received during the hearing will be considered as part of ongoing planning. Council extends its thanks to everyone who attended, noting that public participation and feedback play an important role in supporting informed decision-making.

**Livestock For Sale**  
For Sale  
Purebred yearling Charolais bulls, born in March. Good disposition, easy calving. Worth taking a look! will be semen tested and guaranteed breeders. 50 years in the Charolais business. Call Keith Hagan at 204-748-1024, Virden.

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Celebrating over 40 years of building quality RTMs.  
Check out our website for floorplans.  
Custom builds also available.  
Taking orders for delivery Summer 2026.  
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www.wgiesbrechthomes.ca

**Coming Events**



Join the fight against Prostate Cancer  
**RIDE DAY Saturday May 30, 2026**  
10am  
Earls Polo Park (Winnipeg)  
Visit [ridefordad.ca/manitoba](http://ridefordad.ca/manitoba) to register or make a pledge

**Announcement**



**Response Builder Advertising WORKS!**  
• GET SEEN by over 360,000 Manitoba Homes!  
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• Very cost effective means of getting your message out to the widest possible audience  
Contact this newspaper NOW or MCNA at 204.947.1691 or email [classified@mcna.com](mailto:classified@mcna.com)  
www.mcna.com

## = CLASSIFIEDS =

**Coming Events**

**VIRDEN AND DISTRICT HEALTH AUXILIARY**  
invites you to help celebrate 120 years of service to the community by attending its annual Spring Luncheon, Friday, May 22, 2026, at Sacred Heart Parish Centre from 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Lunch includes salads, variety of sandwiches, dessert and a beverage for \$15.  
Takeout orders are available by calling Glenda at (204)748- 8682 by May 21.  
Display of artwork from Virden Art Club.  
All proceeds used to support health care facilities, nursing homes and emergency services.

**Help Wanted**

**EMPLOYMENT**  
• CHEF and COOK  
• COOK'S HELPER  
• CASHIER  
• BARTENDER  
• MANAGER  
- Full-time Seasonal Positions  
- Living Quarters  
**Contact Irv**  
office@narrowsunsetlodge.com  
204-981-2831  
or 204-467-8507  


**For Sale**

**Cash 4 Coin Collections!**  
  
Also BUYING Old Jewelry, Nuggets, Bullion, Gold, Silver, Platinum, Sterling Silverware, Franklin Mint sets, Royal Canadian Mint Coins, pre 1937 Paper Money, old coins, numismatists, Rare Coins, Silver Coins, Gold coins, etc.  
Covering Winnipeg & Rural Manitoba. I drive to you!  
**CALL ME NOW!!**  
TODD:  
1-204-904-9705

**Help Wanted**



**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ACCOUNTS PAYABLE CLERK**

**Job Description**  
The Rural Municipality of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a motivated individual for the permanent full-time position of **Accounts Payable Clerk** at the Virden Municipal Office. This position may be offered as a full-time role or as a term appointment, depending on the successful candidate. The Accounts Payable Clerk reports to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and will be responsible for providing financial support to the CAO and the CFO.

- Description and Qualifications**
- Receive, process, verify, and reconcile invoices, statements, and refund requisitions, etc. - in compliance with the existing financial policies and procedures of the Municipality
  - Process all approved invoices into the municipal accounting software, Muniware ensuring accurate coding and description entry
  - Produce various financial statements and verify vendor accounts by reconciling monthly statements and related transactions
  - Compile files for inventory and Asset Management purposes
  - Ensure positive vendor relationships acting as a representative of the Municipality
  - Cross training to provide other financial and administrative support ie. semi-monthly payroll; grant applications; position coverage for LUD offices and reception, as needed
  - Active role in the Municipal Safety Program
  - Uphold a strict level of confidentiality
  - All other duties as assigned

- Skills and Qualifications**
- Attention to detail, thoroughness, and organizational skills are required
  - Minimum 1-year previous experience as an Accounts Payable Clerk is preferred
  - High school graduate at minimum; post-secondary education in a related field, would be considered an asset
  - Demonstrated proficiency with computer applications – Microsoft Office products including Excel, Word, Outlook, etc.
  - Experience with the Muniware Accounting Program – would be considered an asset
  - Must be self-motivated who is able to complete data entry independently
  - Customer service and negotiation skills
  - Completion of the Certificate in Manitoba Municipal Administration will be considered an asset

**We are Hiring for Summer 2026 Employment!**

Kenton Green Team	1 Position
Wallace-Woodworth	1 Position

- Duties may include:**
- Assisting Transportation, Utility, and GIS Staff
  - Operating lawn mower and grass trimmer
  - Maintaining Green Space on RM Grounds
  - Assist in recycling programs

- Program requirements:**
- Work outdoors with minimal supervision
  - Able to work as a member of a team
  - Hold a valid driver's license and SIN
  - Physically able to perform manual tasks (lift 50 lbs)
  - Follow all standards of Workplace Health and Safety
  - Between the ages of 16 and 29

We thank all applicants for their interest: however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The start date is as early as May 25. The end date will be on the last week of August. Subject to the successful applicants availability.

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

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.

**Help Wanted**

**MCNEILL  
HARASYMCHUK  
MCCONNELL**



**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/LEGAL SECRETARY**

Our law firm has an opening for a full-time position for an Administrative Assistant/Legal Secretary. The duties of this position include:

- Preparation of legal documents including, reports, invoices, affidavits, land titles and court applications
- Organize and maintain client files
- Take messages from clients and schedule appointments
- Perform data entry for client database and accounting system
- Respond to phone enquiries, messages and emails
- Maintain records and confidential files electronically and manually
- Review documents for completeness and accuracy
- Make photocopies of correspondence, documents, and other printed matter
- Organize envelopes, postage and mail for clients
- Perform other related office duties as assigned

The successful applicant will have experience with Microsoft Office programs, excellent communication skills, a strong work ethic, be detail oriented and efficient at multi-tasking. The ability to maintain client confidentiality is essential.

Our firm is a busy general law practice serving our client base in southwest Manitoba. We invite interested applicants to submit a resume by mail or email to our office in confidence by Friday, May 29, 2026 to:

McNeill Harasymchuk McConnell  
Box 520  
Virden, MB R0M 2C0  
Attention: Anique Timmerman  
or by Email to: anique@mhmlaw.ca

While we thank each applicant for their interest, only selected candidates will be contacted for an interview.

**TANDEM DRIVER**

**Mar-Dee Enterprises –  
Virden is looking for an  
experienced Tandem driver.**

- Full – time employment
- Class 1A or 3A required
- Driver abstract needed
- Positive attitude, reliable and punctual, highly motivated.
- Problem solving and time management skills
- Work well in a team environment, ability to work alone.
- Good communication skills.

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

Transport petroleum products to designated locations in a safe and timely manner, load and unload product according to site specifications, complete daily equipment inspections and E-logs, report to supervisor, maintain and clean equipment accordingly.

Must be willing to work weekends  
Immediate start date

Benefit Plan and Competitive wage  
For more information call Darcy 204-522-3202  
Send resumes to melita@mardee.ca

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**Help Wanted**

**CLASS 1  
TRUCK DRIVER**

**To run Canada - must  
have experience**

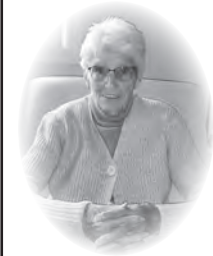
- Paid pick, drops, layovers and stat pay
- Multi drop runs
- Benefit package
- Dedicated truck
- Sign On & Annual bonus
- BC Experience an Asset
- Reset at home
- Weekend home time
- Paid training
- Referral program

**Derek (204) 793-7465**

CENTENNIAL TRANSPORT  
& LEASING LTD.

**Notice of Passing**

**IN LOVING MEMORY  
90 YEARS OF AGE  
DEVONA GERTRUDE HENDERSON (SLATER)  
JANUARY 12, 1936 – APRIL 30, 2026**



Devona Gertrude Henderson (Slater) formerly of Virden Passed away April 30th in Lacombe Alberta.

Celebration of life to be held in Ponoka Alberta May 29th.

**Proposal Request**



**KIRKELLA COMMUNITY  
PASTURE COMMITTEE  
is Requesting Proposals for  
Scrubbing at the Kirkella Pasture**

Deadline for submissions is  
May 22, 2026 at 12 noon.

For package and further information,  
Please contact Ruth Mitchell, Kirkella Pasture  
Secretary

Submit RFP's to RM of Wallace-Woodworth  
PO Box 2200, Virden, Manitoba, R0M 2C0,  
drop off at Virden Office 154023 PR 257  
Email: mitchell.ruth3450@gmail.com  
Phone: (204) 512-0287

**Manitoba Community  
Newspaper Association  
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people know about your **business, item for sale or event, by placing an ad with us!** Your ad will be seen in the MCNA Member Newspapers, in over 368,000+ homes in Manitoba. Please **Call THIS NEWSPAPER NOW** to book, or call MCNA at (204) 947-1691 for more details or to book ads. Take advantage of our great pricing! MCNA - Manitoba Community Newspapers Association. [www.mcna.com](http://www.mcna.com)  
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**Help Wanted**



**EMPLOYMENT  
OPPORTUNITY  
VOTING OFFICIALS**

The Municipality of Two Borders is accepting applications for Voting Officials for the Municipal Election to be held on October 28, 2026.

**Duties include:**

Setting up voting stations, verifying voter eligibility, issuing ballots, maintaining records, counting ballots, ensuring a fair and confidential voting process in accordance with the Municipal Councils and School Board Elections Act.

**Qualifications:**

Strong organizational and communication skills, attention to detail, ability to follow procedures, and maintain impartiality and confidentiality. Election experience or familiarity with election procedures is an asset. **Must be available for all advanced voting dates and Elections Day.**

**Terms & Compensation:**

Temporary position; training required. Compensation dependent on experience.

**Apply to:**

Grace Carr, Chief Administrative Officer  
Municipality of Two Borders  
Box 429, 138 Main Street,  
Melita, MB R0M 1L0  
Ph: 204-522-3263  
Email: [info@twoborders.ca](mailto:info@twoborders.ca)

**Notice**

**NOTICE TO  
CREDITORS**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE  
OF DIANNE LYNN ALEXANDER,  
late of the Postal District of Lenore, in  
the Province of Manitoba, deceased;**

**ALL claims against the above estate,  
duly verified by Statutory Declaration,  
must be filed with the undersigned  
at their office, 243 Raglan Street W.,  
Box 520, Virden, MB, R0M 2C0, on or  
before the 26th day of June, 2026.**

**DATED at Virden, Manitoba, this  
11th day of May, 2026**

**ANIQUE TIMMERMAN –  
MCNEILL HARASYMCHUK  
MCCONNELL SOLICITOR  
FOR THE EXECUTOR**

**Manitoba Government  
Job Opportunities**

**Electrician**

Regular/Full-Time  
Manitoba Public Service Delivery, Brandon, MB  
Advertisement Number: 45154  
Closing Date: May 24, 2026  
Salary Range: \$72,981 – \$86,633 per year

**Conditions of Employment:**

- Valid interprovincial Class H Journeyman Electrician license
- Must be a certified fire alarm technician or able to acquire the certification within two years.
- Must be physically capable of performing the duties of the position.
- Must have a valid Class 5 Drivers License and be capable of travel with overnight stays as needed.
- Must be able to provide satisfactory security checks.

Please see the website at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/govjobs/> for a full listing of all qualifications and conditions of employment.

**Duties:**

The electrician is responsible for the inspection, servicing, repair and installation of electrical equipment and related systems including fire alarm systems at owned or leased facilities within the province to provide a safety environment.

**Apply to:**

Advertisement No. 45154  
Talent Acquisition  
Human Resource Services  
600-259 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB, R3B 2A9  
Phone: 204-945-7518  
Fax: 204-945-0601  
Email: [govjobs@gov.mb.ca](mailto:govjobs@gov.mb.ca)

Your cover letter, resumé and/or application must clearly indicate how you meet the qualifications.

We thank all who apply and advise that only those selected for further consideration will be contacted.

Employment Equity is a factor in selection. Applicants are requested to indicate in their covering letter, resumé and/or application if they are from any of the following groups: women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities and persons with a disability.

Find out about other current job opportunities — click on the Jobs button at [manitoba.ca](http://manitoba.ca).

**People. Purpose. Progress.**  
[manitoba.ca/govjobs](http://manitoba.ca/govjobs)



Any personal information provided including employment equity declarations will be used for employment and/or statistical purposes and is protected by The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Alternate formats available upon request

# Virден Council Addresses Truck Parking

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

## Town of Virден May 5 council meeting

Manitoba Minister of Transportation Lisa Naylor toured Virден with members of council. The discussion on the tour focused particularly on semi-truck parking along a service road. Council members explained that they had intended to drive Minister Naylor through the area to demonstrate the extent of the problem, but when they arrived there was only a single semi parked there. Councillors later returned and found the road filled with trucks as usual.

Minister Naylor stated that she expected there would be no-stopping

signs on the frontage road, and Coun. Marc Savy replied, "Well, there are no no-stopping signs at all. They've all been knocked over."

### Legion Crosswalk Proposal

The Virден branch of the Royal Canadian Legion proposes to install a commemorative Legion-themed crosswalk at the intersection of 8th Avenue and Wellington Street to mark their 100-year anniversary. Under the proposal, the Legion would assume full responsibility for costs, including templates, paint, and labour.

Council discussed the practical issues involved in maintaining decorative crosswalks, including concerns about how quickly the paint could

wear down and whether summer staff would be responsible for repainting it in future years. The proposal was approved.

### Purchasing Policy

CAO Smith told council the proposed purchasing policy is designed to better reflect how purchasing is actually handled within the municipality. He noted that the existing policy imposed artificial purchasing authority limits that no longer match how these decisions are currently being made. Smith added that maintaining those outdated limits would only add unnecessary bureaucracy to the purchasing process.

Although some councillors indicated they were impressed with the rewritten policy and agreed with its attempt to match

policy to current practice, others requested further review before adoption. A proposal was made to refer the matter back to committee so councillors could ask additional questions and potentially involve staff if necessary.

### Fire Hall Electrical Service Agreement

Council approved entering into an electrical service agreement with Manitoba Hydro regarding the fire hall expansion project.

Coun. Tara Maxwell explained the agreement was necessary to secure upgraded electrical service capacity for the new addition, and added, "We're not going to let this hold up this project."

### Procedural Bylaw Amendments

Council discussed changes to their policy regarding council members attending meetings electronically. They

agreed that remote attendance will require notice of twenty-four hours except in an emergency or due to unforeseen circumstances like illness, vehicle breakdowns, dentist appointments or injuries that would prevent physical attendance.

CAO Neil Smith noted meetings could proceed despite lost connections provided quorum remained intact.



# Deadline is near for Valleyview Co-op board nominations

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

If you have an interest in the Valleyview Co-op family of stores that serves you in Melita, Pierson, Kenton, Oak Lake, Reston, and Virден, you can plan to attend the yearly business meeting for Valleyview.

But first, nominations are open for the Valleyview Co-op Board of Directors. Three 3-year term positions are available.

Co-ops are community-based and members are owners.

The AGM is an opportunity to learn more about the Co-op and participate in the democracy of Valleyview Co-op. It is a public meeting and anyone can attend and all members are encouraged to attend and participate. One number means one vote.

Importantly, this retail is guided

by a board of directors. Currently, Vaughn Wilson of Kenton is president; Dylan Hoppe is vice president.

Directors are: Peter Vanderwiel, Jonothan Hodson, Dave Van Buuren, Curtis Gervin, Marnie McCutcheon, Shanda Rolfe, Tayona Johnas

Tayona Johnas, Jonothan Hodson, and Marnie McCutcheon are seeking re-election. If more nominations are submitted, there will be a vote.

The board of directors makes decisions for the Co-operative, however, certain bylaws and requirements also require member approval. Each Valleyview Co-op member number has one vote.

Agenda Items include a financial report, and reports from the GM, and from the board president as well as the election of directors.

The application deadline is 5pm, May 20 for the position of director. The AGM will take place on June 3.



Please join us in person at Tundra Oil Gas Place,

Sunrise Banquet Hall, 900 5th Ave S, Virден.

Virtual attendance is not available.

VALLEYVIEW CO-OP  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, June 3rd 2026

7:00 p.m. Call to Order

Advance registration is required. Scan the QR code or call 204-748-6700 ext 311 by June 3rd, 2026 at 12:00 p.m.



### MEMBERS WILL VOTE TO FILL:

#### 3 Director positions:

3 three-year terms

Current board members Jonothan Hodson, Tayona Johnas and Marnie McCutcheon are seeking re-election.

An election will be held if four or more eligible director applications are received.

Information is available at all Valleyview Co-op locations or on our website.

Those who submitted membership applications prior to **January 29th, 2026**, will be eligible to vote.

Please send any questions in advance to [member.relations@valleyview.crs](mailto:member.relations@valleyview.crs) no later than **June 2nd, 2026**.

[valleyviewco-op.crs](http://valleyviewco-op.crs)

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Correction: May 8 issue, Page 3 in the story about Gail Nykoliation, "Farm girl to fitness leader" the name of the award nominator was misspelled: "Organized by gym member Cherise Coleman, the nomination included input from more than two dozen people..." should read "Organized by gym member Sherise Kulman, the nomination included input from more than two dozen people..."

Visit our website  
[www.empireadvance.ca](http://www.empireadvance.ca)

# The Battle of the Atlantic and Canada's Involvement

By Nancy Jo Moller  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Ed James presented 'The Battle of the Atlantic and the part played by our very own Royal Canadian Navy.' It was the longest battle of the Second World War and was fought at sea from 1939 to 1945. Since this battle ended in the month of May, 1945, it was only fitting that the reenactment was this month. Over 30 people, including two students completing a history project, listened to Ed's engaging description of this battle. If you haven't had the opportunity to listen to his presentations, I strongly urge you to do so. While I went into this evening as a mediocre fan of war history, I left feeling that I had a good understanding and could imagine the hardships. This is just one of the special celebrations being hosted by the Legion in honour of their 100-year anniversary.

Captain Kelvon Smith acted as the Master of Ceremonies by introducing not only Ed James but greeting the audience. The evening was filmed by WCG Melita and audience members came from Carlyle, Russell, Birtle and many from our local municipalities gathered at the Virden Royal Canadian Legion on May 8 at 7 pm. Freehand Media sponsored the evening and supplied refreshments for the crowd.

Ed James is a noted Canadian Historian and educator who lives in Elkhorn and participates in several historic reenactments. Ed provided a vast array of uniforms and other memorabilia that helped the audience envision life as a Royal Canadian Navy member.

Ed portrayed himself as 'Chief Petty Officer Bill' for the duration of the evening. He had chosen to be this rank for a reason. Chief Petty Officers were enlisted men who started on the bottom rung and worked themselves up in the ranks. There were not

any 'officer school' shortcuts for this position.

To support Britain's war efforts the rest of the world shipped food and war supplies. The convoy ships that carried supplies required Navy protection. They sailed in the middle with their cargo of troops, ammunition and fuel while the Corvette ships surrounded them as a barrier. Corvettes were built in Canada and while Canadians didn't have the ability to manufacture large warships, they did build Corvette ships. The idea was that they were designed for hunting whales and submarines were similar in proportions. Germany's theory that they had up to twelve subs travel in a 'wolf pack' that could surround and attack convoy ships. Our Royal Canadian Navy became known as 'sheepdogs, good for watching the flock'.

The Navy's enlisted men came from a variety of backgrounds, and many couldn't swim. There was only sleeping quarters for the captain and chief engineer with the rest of men being given a bedroll that they used on a floor, while foot traffic passed by regularly. With a ration of canned tomatoes, bacon and corned beef, the lack of sleep and stress caused many disputes. Disagreements were commonly settled by boxing matches. Men were given cigarettes and a shot of rum daily. These helped curb their appetite and calm them.

Life was one of 'hurry up and wait', relying on the schedule of the convoys.

German submarines had to surface once a day to recharge batteries and it was then that torpedoes were released at them. The object was to aim for their ballast tanks (buoyancy chambers) to sink them. When a convoy or corvette ship was hit, there was no time to circle back looking for survivors. If they hadn't been killed by falling debris, or coated in fuel, hypothermia



Ed James, local historian.

PHOTO BY NANCY JO MOLLER

caused their demise.

It was a hard life with no glory, but we can be thankful that the Royal Canadian Navy saved us from Hitler. Where would we be without the men and wrens (female enlisted) that stepped up and risked their lives for this country?

## Hidden Treasures Donations



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Hidden Treasures in Reston, Judy Lochhead(L), presenting a donation to PMH - Willowview PCH, accepted by Amanda Isaac(R) on March 11, 2026 at the Annual General Meeting.

The \$5,000 will go towards the renovation of their Court Yard.

**MAHCP.**  
Manitoba Association of  
Health Care Professionals

Manitoba's Allied Health Professionals  
make treatments possible.




**BE ON  
TIME!**  
Advertising  
deadline:  
**12 noon  
Tuesday**

# SPORTS

## PITZ'S BASEBALL WARMUP TURNS INTO WHL DRAFT DAY CELEBRATION

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virden's Easton Pitz was warming up for his first high school baseball game of the season when he received exciting news that made the day even more memorable.

The son of Barry and Tara Pitz was chosen by the Swift Current Broncos in the second round, 27th overall, in the 2026 Western Hockey League Prospects Draft. The 2011-born centreman and his older brother, Christian, compete for Winnipeg's RINK Hockey Academy and play baseball for Shaftesbury High School.

"I was warming up with my high school baseball team for our first game of the season, and I was checking my phone every once in a while," Pitz said. "As soon as I was picked, I was jumping in excitement and was so happy to be a Bronco. The first person I told was my brother Christian. The whole team was so excited."

He was the first Manitoban selected. Pitz was also the only Westman player tabbed in the draft.

"I was really proud to be the first Manitoban selected," he said. "There are a lot of great players in the province. I know it doesn't make a difference being the first pick or the last guy selected — the work begins now."

Broncos head scout Chad Leslie, an Elkhorn product, has long known the Pitz family. In 1994, the Yellowhead Chiefs won the Manitoba U18 AAA Hockey League championship with Barry as an assistant coach and Leslie as a key player. Leslie later played hockey at Brandon University, while Tara starred on the basketball court in a career that earned her a place on the school's Wall of Fame. Leslie said he has been watching Easton for a long time and that the Broncos believe in his offensive upside.

"We like his sense and his individual skill," Leslie said. "He has the ability to score."

Easton is looking forward to attending camp with the Broncos.

"I'll be so pumped and excited about going to camp," he said. "I can't wait to meet everybody in the organization and all the players. I think my favourite moment will be stepping into the rink for the first time ever. I'll be excited to take it all in."

Last winter, Easton—listed at 5-foot-10 and 166 pounds by the WHL—scored 29 goals and recorded 56 points in 28 games for RHA's U15 prep squad, according to Elite Prospects. He also appeared in one game for the U17 prep team and recorded a goal and an assist in his lone game with the U18 prep squad.

"Easton's strengths are his hockey IQ, competitiveness and his scoring touch around the net," RINK U15 prep head coach Brad Purdie said. "He has the ability to make the players he is playing with better. He is a great kid with a bright future."

The head coach said Easton has been a pleasure to coach and that the all-around athlete "has made some huge gains in all areas of the game and has a really high ceiling."

"Over the last couple of seasons, everything about his game has improved," Purdie said. "His skating, his shot, his competitiveness have all improved, as well as his work ethic. He will be a great addition to Swift Current's roster."

Easton appreciates how his family has backed his hockey career.

"My family has been the best support and has made a lot of sacrifices for me," he said. "My mom and dad and grandparents always come to my games and cheer



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Easton Pitz celebrates a goal for the RINK Hockey Academy.

me on. It means a lot. I've been lucky to share so many hockey experiences with my brother Christian. I've really looked up to him growing up."

Christian, a 2009-born defenceman, recorded four goals and 22 points in 28 games for the RHA U18 team. Last October, he signed a letter of intent with the Virden Oil Capitals for next season. Christian played three regular-season contests with the Manitoba Junior Hockey League team and had a goal and two assists. Barry's hockey career included time in the WHL, MJHL and Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League.

## Making dreams come true investing in local communities to keep them vibrant

By VEA Staff  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Peter Kenyon left a lasting impact on community members in Oak Lake after his presentation

on how to build volunteerism and stay positive for your community longevity.

Rachelle Stannage recently toured Oak Lake and area with well-known speaker Peter Kenyon. He suggests ways to revitalize your community. She introduced him to the many important places in town including the beautiful daycare, community school, municipal buildings, churches, garden parks and the old high school.

They continued to Gregg and Jolene Thiessen's incredible building, which was once home to the old Town Hall, movie theatre, hardware store and so much more. The building holds generations of history in its walls. As you climb the staircase and glimpse upstairs, a feeling of nostalgia takes your breath away. Gregg and Jolene have opened their doors and share stories of the building, fostering everyone's dreams.

Peter loved seeing the interest that Gregg's young nephew, Indy displayed. He has historic photos playing on an old TV set, showcasing how items can be reused instead of discarded.

Fedora's Antique Store was the next stop, it truly is a treasure trove and some of the collectibles headed home with Peter. Next was a tour of RM of Sifton's backroads to view our local farms including the Deer Meadow Farmacy discussing the work ethic and dedication needed to be successful.

After a late lunch at Oak Island Resort where ideas continued to flow, they headed to the lake area and Cherry Point to tour. Stopping at the Oak Lake High School Rodeo ("Rodao", as Peter called it). Watching the Breakaway Roping, Peter was blown away by the volunteer support and opportunities available for young athletes in rodeo.

Peter went to settle in at Cherry Point Lodge which is a local Airbnb near Oak Lake Beach that offers luxury accommodation on the lakefront. After a short break, Peter gave one of his inspiring presentations at the Legion Hall.

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