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OCTOBER 3, 2025 | EMPIRE: VOL 121 NO 7 / ADVANCE: VOL 140 NO 9 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS



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RM of Wallace-Woodworth marks CAO Garth Mitchell's retirement after 45 years of service



Recently retired CAO Mitchell receives tokens of appreciation from the Rural Municipality of Wallace-Woodworth: (l-r) Couns. Denis Lachapelle and Diana MacDonald, Garth Mitchell, Reeve Clayton Canart, and Coun. Val Caldwell.

Submitted
By RM OF WALLACE-WOODWORTH

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth and the Village of Elkhorn celebrated the retirement of Garth Mitchell, whose municipal career spanned 45 years, including decades as Chief Administrative Officer.

The celebration was held in two parts: an afternoon come-and-go reception, and in the evening, a small gathering with municipal staff, Council, and family.

During the evening, presentations were made and countless stories were shared along with a video highlighting Mitchell's remarkable career beginning in 1980 as Secretary-Treasurer for Elkhorn at age 19. He went on to guide the community through amalgamation, major infrastructure projects, and evolving governance needs.

Colleagues credit him with providing continuity across dozens of councils, thousands of meetings, and countless service calls from residents.

"Serving as CAO for 45 years is more than a career, it's a lifetime of dedication to community," said Reeve Clayton Canart. "Garth's steadiness and fairness helped our municipality navigate difficult decisions while keeping residents at the centre."

Mitchell expressed gratitude to residents, councillors, and staff. "I was fortunate to work in a community I love, serving people I respect, and for councils who trusted me," he said. "That made all the difference."



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Manitoba Municipal Administrators District 1 Director, Allison Volk makes a presentation to long-serving CAO Garth Mitchell.

His 45-year tenure is believed to be among the longest continuous careers in municipal administration in Manitoba's history. Read more about Garth's retirement on page 3.



VIRIDEN
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HOME GAME
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4
VS. SWAN VALLEY
STAMPEDERS
PUCK DROPS AT 7:30PM

Inside...



MEET 2025-26
OIL CAPS *P9-12*



MOTHER MABEL
DINNER THEATRE
P2

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Was: \$65,135
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Now: \$58,621



Was: \$71,975
Savings: -\$9,000
Now: \$62,975

2025
Dodge
Durango GT Plus

Victory Church hosts Long Live the King



Youth respond to a photo invitation onstage at Long Live the King concert in Virden Victory Church.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virden Victory Church at the corner of Wellington St. and 9th Ave. was rocking to Long Live the King on Sept 25. Guiller Contreras drew a younger crowd to his high energy Thursday evening performance, comfortably filling the sanctuary.

Contreras has received Canadian Christian Music awards in recent years and has travelled the world for eight years with his previous musical project All Above Me, before launching Long Live the King in 2023. Contreras lyrical content carries a positive and personal message about love, faith and freedom. He's also authored a book: Extraordinary Christian: For Those Not Willing To Settle

Night of mystery, mayhem and so much pie!



PHOTO BY JEN GLENDINNING

Actors (Rear, L to R) Alix Potrebka (Minaret Towers - local representative of the town of Mynute, Alaska), Jennifer Glendinning (Phoebe Muffet local Mynute Weekly editor), Donnie Mead (Rex Roberts/Robert Rex an undercover detective disguised as an actor), Evan Terin (Guy Templeton - pie connoisseur and judge), Nathan Archambault (Roger Marble - big name pie baker contestant), Samantha Andrew (Eve Simone another big-name pie baker), Dylan Southam (Mark Tucker- Felicity Hubbard's high-strung assistant), Jill Radwanski (Felicity Hubbard - pie baking contest coordinator); (Front L-R) Schuylar Glendinning-Barre (pie server), Krista Pederson (pie baking legend Julia Lyle) and Mia Radwanski (a pie server).

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

'Mother Mabel's Pie-Baking Contest & Auction' was a hit.
Dinner guests enjoyed all

kinds of shenanigans along with Shepherds' Pie, Mynute Mosaic Pie and Chicken Pot Pie; with mini pies for dessert: Cherry Crumble, KeyLime, BlackForestSwirl and Blueberry. All created by Barry and Jackie Tough.
The dinner theatre held at Virden Legion Hall sold out weeks ago. The event, was fun for attendees and with sponsorship by Patersons and by Farley Kempthorne, Arts Mosaic manager Alix Portrebka said it was a profitable event for Arts Mosaic.
She said, "The 12 pies auctioned (three live during the play) raised \$1300! Over 150 people packed into the legion to support Arts Mosaic and we couldn't be happier."
The funds raised will go

towards Arts Mosaic's operating costs.
"As a small non-profit, community support like this fundraiser and donations are what allow us to maintain programs such as our art gallery, workshops, The Costume Closet and free craftstudio. We strive to keep arts of all kinds as accessible as possible for those in Virden and surrounding areas."
Dinner theatres are so engaging because, along with enjoying dinner out, the patrons become part of theatre action. Saturday evening's Mother Mabel was no different and the photos published here were taken during the action by Jen Glendinning, or rather, Phoebe Muffet the local newspaper reporter.



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Mitchell's Legacy: building community from Village office to the RM

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On Thursday afternoon, Sept. 25, at a come and go in Elkhorn Elks Hall, Garth Mitchell visited with community members. Former councillors and friends in municipal circles such as retired CAO of RM of Pipestone June Gregg shared well wishes.

Former McAuley farmer and RM of Archie councillor Terry Johnson, had a word of praise for Mitchell's administrative role: "I personally thought he played a pivotal role along with the late mayor Bill Bartley in acquiring the land and working with the health authority for the Elkhorn Manor. (Mayor Bartley's mandate concluded just prior to Mitchell joining the Village office.) Johnson continued, "I chaired health district #10 at the time. The service that the Manor continues to provide is incredible, plus the very good jobs."

In a Q & A the Empire-Advance shares a snapshot of this personality who has played a backstage role in shaping the community of Elkhorn and the larger municipal area.

Q: You said it was a bittersweet day at the retirement celebration. Why?

Bittersweet to have to leave as I was always hoping to be able to leave my career on my own terms but had to leave the position early due to some medical issues.

Who are the heads of council you've worked with?

During my time with the Village of Elkhorn I dealt with Ron Heritage, Ron Lund, Ken Rowan, Keith Orr and Roland Gagnon as mayors. I worked for the Village of Elkhorn from 1980 to 2014 and the RM of Wallace-Woodworth after amalgamation 2015 – 2025. The Reeves with the RM were Denis Carter and Clayton Canart.

There have probably been some really positive times and some difficult times that you've worked through. Got any mentions?

I have been very fortunate over my years to not have many what I would call bad times - some challenges for

sure as that is the nature of the position of CAO. There have been many good times as well that I can certainly attribute to working with great staff and having supportive Councils.

The community come and go and then an evening celebration must have been satisfying.

I am not much for worrying about recognition... but I certainly appreciated the opportunity to see and visit with many ratepayers and past members of Council. Some of the attendees I had not seen for many years.

We've seen you shine a light on rural issues as council dealt with mandates or by-laws that threaten rural decision making and rural progress. What's your perspective of rural (local) versus top-down provincial and maybe even federal pressures on municipalities?

I really feel that a healthy Municipality - Province relationship is critical. Municipalities have limited revenue sources and an ever-increasing financial responsibility to maintain a suitable level of service for the public. Unfortunately, we have over the past decade had a trend of "downloading" from the Province [along with] freezes on provincial funding. Not a healthy scenario.

Do you have concerns for municipalities in Manitoba?

That trend of reduced funding and escalating expenses is a major concern. The RM of Wallace-Woodworth is no different than any other Manitoba /Canadian municipality as we have huge and growing infrastructure deficits - water, sewer, roads, bridges



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Former ratepayer Barb Hodson, now of Brandon, speaks with Mitchell at his community retirement held in Elkhorn Elks Hall, Thursday, Sept. 25.

and recreation facilities.

What are the highlights of your years as CAO?

Looking back there are many highlights but those were accomplished with the teamwork of awesome staff and supportive Councils. The most important positive memories are definitely the people. I have had the privilege to work along side, and serve, a lot of very special people and for that I am grateful.

Sports has been important to you. What teams have you worked with?

I have had the pleasure to coach probably around 50 different hockey teams over the years (sometimes two per season) that ranged from 10-year-olds through all the minor age groups and AAA U18, Jr A and Senior hockey teams.

What does retirement look like?

My life in retirement will definitely focus on my amazing family. Kim and I have been blessed with three great children and six grandchildren. I'm looking forward to following them through life and sports and doing whatever we can to support them.

Elkhorn Pop-Up Market ends for the season

By Ed James
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Last week, on Sept. 24, Elkhorn Agricultural Society held its last pop-up summer market for the season. The once-a-month event featured live music, arts and crafts, home baking and farm produce.

Five events were held this year with the opportunity of local clubs to run the canteen as a fund raiser for their group or projects. Groups this year were Elkhorn Seniors Manor, Elkhorn Agricultural Society, Royal Canadian Legion, the Health Auxiliary and the Elkhorn Auto Museum.

Over the summer the market vendors came to sell from all over the area including several from Saskatchewan border communities.

This last event of the season was on a beautiful fall evening with the Ag Society grounds covered with thick green grass and filled with lots of children running around as their parents shopped.

An extra event this evening was the set up of a fall themed photo backdrop for seasonal photo opportunities.

During the evening the Ag Society made a financial presentation to the Elkhorn Early Childhood Learning Centre for their operation of a free and very popular face painting booth.

Sandy Heaman, a member of the Ag Society said, "This monthly event brought out a great variety of area vendors and offered local people a monthly special community event without driving a long distance. We hope it will grow next year both in vendors and local community support."



Presenting a cheque to Elkhorn Early Learning Centre (L to R): Ed Clayton for the Elkhorn Agricultural Society, to staff of Elkhorn Early Learning Centre Jessica Hay and Emily Bajus.



PHOTOS BY ED JAMES

These young musicians (L to R) Lucas and Josh Baer of Elkhorn entertain at the pop-up market.

Greg NESBITT
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Tundra
By Chad Carpenter



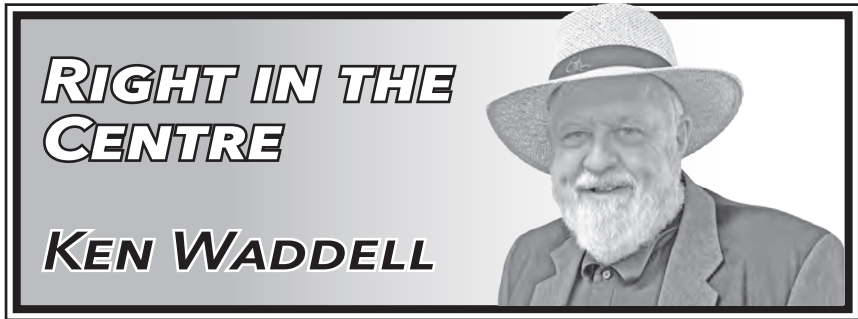
Seeking reliability

It seems that neither Canada Post nor the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) can find enough daggers to plunge into the heart of the Crown Corporation. Canada Post has been on a death spiral for years now and is technically bankrupt. Last fall there was a postal strike, the seventh we have experienced in our newspaper career. The 2024 strike was not settled and it has erupted again in a work stoppage whereby Canada Post is delivering no mail. Just prior to last week's work stoppage, CP and CUPW were refusing to carry unaddressed newspapers and flyers. As of Sunday, Sept. 28, there was no mail moving. In fact, companies that had delivered newspapers or flyers to Canada Post would be disappointed that their flyers sat on the shelves in the local post offices undelivered. In fact, there were flyers and newspapers in local post offices, on their shelves or in warehouses that staff were not allowed to carry across the room and place the flyers or all-box newspapers in the mail boxes.

The situation has become unbearable for flyer distributors and newspapers that are dependent on Canada Post. We are so thankful that over 99 per cent of our three newspapers' distribution is not reliant on Canada Post.

I don't think I have ever dealt with a company (or union) where the upper level management was so intent on committing suicide. As I have said many times, the local postal staff are amazing and I can assure you that the work stoppages and insane rules are driving them crazy. Older postal workers are anxiously waiting for their retirement date and that is so sad.

As far as newspapers are con-



cerned, there is an often repeated idea that print is dying and that the internet is the way to go. The internet has some real advantages for sure; we use it every day for lots of things. But if print is dying, why are major companies like Home Hardware, Canadian Tire and Princess Auto printing and distributing hundreds of thousands of flyers every week? Why does every grocery store chain have flyers every week? Because it works!

Print certainly works for these companies that want to tell the world what they have for sale. If print was ineffective, they wouldn't be spending huge money printing and distributing flyers.

The reason is simple. Some people like printed products such as newspapers and flyers. They like to have a hard copy. You can set it down and pick it up again for later reference or double checking. Print doesn't disappear on you, it doesn't have loud, annoying ads in your face or in your ears. It doesn't have pop-ups that ambush your internet reading or listening.

Print is still strong, and I predict it will be even stronger in the future, if for no other reason than that information that comes from a regular print source such as a newspaper is usually both accurate and reliable.

Let me just share another story

about print advertising. A few years ago, a major automaker decided to stop doing newspaper ads. In 2020, their sales dropped over seven per cent. In 2023, over eight and a half per cent and in 2024, over 17 per cent.

That correlation is more than coincidence, it's a sales disaster that could be partly remedied by recognizing the value of print. Printed news and advertising is effective.

In contrast, Canadian Tire does print advertising. Their flyers are often stuffed in newspapers. Their sales have gone up almost 10 per cent per year in recent years.

I guess there's a summary conclusion here. The people who say the value of print is diminishing are the very ones who wish it were so. They are the academic geniuses who have pledged their soul to the internet. I believe those people, and even more people in general, are realizing that we can't get truth, accuracy, accountability and reliability from the internet with the same assurance quality as we can from print. As the old saying goes, "Words aren't worth the air they are written on, get it in writing".

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



Jetsam and flotsam...

Flotsam is defined as debris in the water that was not deliberately thrown overboard, often as a result from a shipwreck or accident. Jetsam describes debris that was deliberately thrown overboard by a crew of a ship in distress, most often to lighten the ship's load. Under maritime law the distinction is important. I use the term for random thoughts, and I leave it to your discretion as to the value of today's musings!

A random evening chat— I was walking home from a meeting when I noticed two folks admiring the community garden at the corner of Mountain and Elizabeth. They had paused near the portion of the beds that I try to keep weed free and somewhat attractive. (It's a work in progress!) It was a brother and sister, very much in my age range, and the conversation became animated when it turned out that they had attended school in Graysville, the brother being in my older sister's grade and the sister a bit younger than I. The sister lives here in Neepawa and the brother was visiting. In moments we were remembering; that his wife had been my closest school chum, that my husband of forty years was respected for his musical abilities and was my brother-in-law. The time we spent together wasn't long, but it was refreshing and I couldn't wait to call my brother-in-law (94 on October 31!) how his life had impacted others. We all need to know that we make a difference. It was also wonderful to speak to someone who knew the young me, and sees the difference!

Living in town has been easier than I would have imagined. It helps that my home is really at the outskirts of our town, one house away from the tracks, large lot, many trees. In seasons that allow for open windows it is not unusual to hear the call of the coyotes, the steady cry of the geese as they gather in preparation for migration. The sound of the train is a non sound, a white noise that I don't really hear anymore. A few steps down the street and I get to be blessed by sunsets, northern lights, fireflies— the very best night lights! I have raised garden beds, fruit trees, and outdoor wash line and two garages. Going for a walk is a delight and a pleasure, with groomed trails and safe streets. I don't know what I expected, but living in town really isn't all that bad!

It's accumulating! When we went into shut down during Covid, I sewed many quilts of varying sizes and colours. I basically depleted my stash. And I thought I was ok with that, my sewing days slowing or ending. Nope. My sister gifted me a box, a good size box, of lovely poly cottons and cottons. Then I spotted a yard sale deal, and I mean a deal! Two substantial bags of flannel, all sizes and themes. And then, walking through our thrift store, fabric that needed me. I have plans, so many plans! And now I have found out that my grands value homemade items.

Random thoughts that I trust will trigger positive memories of your own!

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Lions Club Donations - Part 8



PHOTO BY CASSY HUME

Virden Lions Club member Alex Sundell presenting a donation to Virden Auditorium, accepted by Rick Kristjonson on May 28. Over the next few weeks we will be showing all the wonderful donations made by the Virden Lions Club to different organizations.

Virden RCMP arrest youth after arson

Submitted

By MB RCMP

On September 23, 2025, at approximately 7:30 pm, Virden RCMP received a report of a possible fire at the new school in Sioux Valley First Nation.

When officers arrived, damage was noted to the school, but there was no longer a fire.

A male in the area approached police and advised it was his 17-year-old son that had started the fire along with a 16-year-old male relative, both from Sioux Valley First Nation.

Further investigation revealed the 17-year-old had also caused significant damage to a windshield of a vehicle that was parked at the school.

Both teens were arrested and charged with arson – damage to property, and mischief equal to or under \$5,000, they were released and will appear in court at a later date.

The investigation continues.

Town Office: 204-748-2440

Tundra Oil & Gas Place: 204-748-2736

Waste Disposal Grounds: 204-748-6033



Animal Control: 204-851-5881

Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440

Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540

2025 Citizen of the Year Nominations now open!

Nominate a deserving citizen or community group for Citizen of the Year.

Deadline to submit your nomination is November 14, 2025.

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

Cemetery Cleanup

The Town of Virden asks that items that have been left on plots be cleaned up by October 13, 2025.

All items must be removed from each grave in the cemetery - artificial flowers, ornaments, solar lights, plant hooks, stuffed animals, etc. must be picked up. Only headstones should remain in order to prevent damage to personal items throughout the winter months.

Following spring thaw, families are welcome to replace items to their loved ones' gravesites.

Items that remain after the date above will be removed by Cemetery Maintenance Staff.

Fall Cleanup September 22 to October 6, 2025

During the cleanup period, crews will pick up miscellaneous refuse (excluding industrial waste such as building demolition) not deemed to be normal household waste.

Leaves and grass must be in bags or boxed – pick-up of branches is meant for trimmings, not major cuttings.

To ensure pick-up, please call the Town Office or email info@virden.ca with a description of the items and pick-up location (boulevard or lane and pickup address).



Notice of Board of Revision Town of Virden

Pursuant to Section 41 of the Municipal Assessment Act, public notice is hereby given that the Assessment Rolls for the Town of Virden for 2026 have been deposited in the Town Office, 236 Wellington Street West, and are open for public inspection during normal business hours.

The public is also advised that the Board of Revision will sit at the Town of Virden Council Chambers at 232 Wellington Street West on Thursday, November 6th, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. to hear applications for revision of assessments.

Application for Revision

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

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

Application Requirements

An application for revision must:

- Be made in writing;
- Set out the roll number and legal description of the property for which a revision is sought;
- State the grounds on which the application is based; and
- Be filed with the Secretary of the Board of Revision, 236 Wellington Street West, P.O. Box 310, Virden MB R0M 2C0 at least 15 days before the sitting of the Board (by **October 21, 2025**).

Dated this 26th day of September, 2025.

Rhonda Stewart, CMMA
Chief Administrative Officer

Upcoming Council Meetings
October 7 and 21
Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

I have just picked my butternut squash and onions and have zucchini waiting to be taken care of. Potatoes are picked and beets are ready to make pickles. There are so many different types of vegetables to enjoy throughout the fall season. So celebrate the delicious flavors of autumn and try these two recipes.

Spaghetti squash

Baked spaghetti squash casserole is an easy, low carb, pasta-like dish that everyone will love. You can swap the chicken for cooked lean ground beef, diced ham or a can of black beans. Your choice. All taste delicious with the cheese and pasta sauce. You can roast the spaghetti squash 1-2 days in advance. Just shred, squeeze out excess moisture, and store in the fridge until ready to use.

- 1 medium spaghetti squash
 - 1/2 tsp. each salt and pepper

For the sauce:

 - 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
 - 1/2 red pepper diced (or more)
 - 2 cup spaghetti sauce or marinara sauce
 - 3 cups cooked, diced rotisserie chicken
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
 - 1/2 cup chopped onions
 - 2 garlic cloves, minced
 - 1 tsp. Italian seasoning
 - 1 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella

Preheat oven to 400F. Halve the spaghetti squash with a sharp knife and using a spoon, remove seeds. Rub the oil on the inside of the spaghetti squash and season with salt and pepper. Place spaghetti squash cut-side down on the baking sheet and roast in oven on middle rack for about 40-50 minutes. The time will depend on the size of the spaghetti squash. Remove from oven and let cool slightly. Using a fork, gently remove spaghetti squash strands from the squash and set aside.

For the Sauce: In a frying pan, heat oil over medium heat. Add onions, red pepper and garlic and cook for several minutes. Add pasta sauce, Italian seasoning and chicken to the skillet, mix everything together to combine and cook for several more minute. Add the spaghetti squash strands and mix all to combine. In a lightly greased casserole dish, place the spaghetti squash/chicken/pasta sauce mixture and top with mozzarella cheese. Bake at 350 F for 20-25 minutes or until golden and bubbly.

Fall vegetable pasta

Who says pasta salad is just a summertime dish? Flavors like butternut squash, Brussel sprouts, cheese and pasta coated in a tangy dressing brimming with all the best flavors of autumn.

- 1/2 butternut squash, cut into 3/4 inch cubes
 - 2 cups Brussel sprouts, halved
 - 1/2 tsp salt
 - 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
 - 3-4 cups uncooked rotini pasta
 - 1 small apple, cubed
 - 1/4 cup dried cranberries

Garnish if desired:

 - 1/4 cup pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds
- 1 red onion, sliced
 - 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
 - 1/4 tsp. pepper
 - 1/4 tsp. nutmeg
 - 1 cup cubed cheddar cheese
 - 1 stick celery, finely diced
 - 2-3 Tbsp. fresh chopped parsley

- Dressing:
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
 - 1/4 apple cider vinegar
 - 1 clove garlic, minced
 - salt and pepper, to taste
 - 3 Tbsp. maple syrup or honey
 - 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
 - 1/2 tsp. of paprika

Preheat the oven to 400 F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside. Toss the cubed butternut squash, sliced red onion and Brussel sprouts with 1 tablespoon oil, salt, pepper, cinnamon and nutmeg. Spread out into one even layer on the prepared baking sheet and bake 25 to 35 minutes, stirring half way through, until tender.

Meanwhile, boil the pasta in salted water according to the directions on the package to al dente. Drain and rinse with cold water to stop the cooking process. Whisk together all dressing ingredients in a small bowl until well combined. In a large bowl, toss pasta, cooked veggies, cheese, apple, celery, cranberries, parsley and dressing until well combined. Garnish if desired. Taste, and adjust for salt and pepper. Serve immediately, or cover with cling wrap and refrigerate until ready to use.

Miniota News

Submitted
BY LINDA CLARK

Devin Bajus and Tamra Fenty and their children Ryder, Maci and Bohdi enjoyed a trip to Alberta and into British Columbia. Devin and Tamra were married at Camrose Alta. on Sept. 26 with a beautiful background, celebrated with family and friends. Congratulations on your marriage Devin and Tamra from your Miniota friends!

Linda Clark and brother Harold Reid of Brandon, enjoyed a trip to Edmonton Alta. this past weekend to visit with cousins; enjoying beautiful fall scenery along the way, with lots harvesting and lots still to go.

As September ends and we greet October, much to be thankful for in this part of the country, with the beautiful harvest weather we are enjoying. Great to see the combines running in every direction!

“My wish for you is that you continue. Continue to be who and how you are, to astonish a mean world with your acts of kindness.” -Maya Angelou

Strong bones, strong life

My take on skeleton care

***PUBLISHED AUTHOR, HOLISTIC
WELLNESS CERTIFIED HYPNOTIST
(C.H.)***

MARIE EVELYNE GINGRAS

I do not usually think about my bones until something creaks. You know that sound when you get up from the couch after sitting too long? That “snap, crackle, pop” makes me wonder if my skeleton is auditioning for a breakfast cereal commercial. It is in those moments I remind myself that bones are not just background props. They are the quiet heroes holding everything together, and they deserve way more love than they usually get.

I have learned that bones are not static, they are alive, constantly rebuilding. Picture little construction workers inside your body, breaking down old material and putting up fresh beams every single day. If you want them to do an excellent job, you must give them the right tools. Calcium is a big one, of course, but without vitamin D, that calcium is like money locked in a bank where you can see it, but you cannot use it. I try to get my dose of sunshine when I can, but on cloudy weeks, I reach for fortified foods or supplements to keep those construction workers happy.

Protein is another piece of the puzzle that surprised me. I used to think protein was all about muscles, but bones rely on it too. It helps build the collagen that keeps them flexible. Without collagen, bones would be brittle and break like a cracker at a picnic. So, I make sure I am balancing my diet with protein, leafy greens, nuts, and seeds (foods that sneak in magnesium, zinc, and vitamin K for extra support). It feels less like “being healthy” and more like giving my skeleton a little gourmet buffet.

Exercise is where the fun comes in. Bones respond to movement, and they like to be challenged a bit. For me, that means a mix of walks, light weights, and the occasional attempt at yoga (though my downward dog

usually looks more like a confused coyote). Even simple things like squats or stretches while waiting for the Keurig to boil help. The way I see it, every bit of movement is a love note to my bones, telling them to stay strong.

Of course, there are habits I have had to rein in. Too much caffeine and soft drinks? Guilty. But I have learned they can block calcium from doing its work. And posture—oh, posture! The hours I spend at my desk or scrolling my phone can turn my spine into a question mark. So, I check in with myself, sit up straighter, and stretch. My body

thanks me every time. I make a point of standing and moving around on the hour. Quite simple to set alarms on your phone!

I also cannot ignore the reality that hormones and age play a crucial role in bone health. Women after menopause and men with low testosterone are more prone to bone loss, and that makes regular check-ups and bone scans worth it. Prevention is always easier than healing a fracture.

At the end of the day, taking care of my bones is not just about avoiding breaks. It is about keeping the freedom to garden without wincing, dance at weddings, or play with dogs and bunnies without worrying that one wrong twist will land me on the couch for weeks. My bones have carried me through life, and the least I can do is carry them with a bit of care in return.



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Kinnaird family reunion



PHOTO BY JULIE MASON

On the weekend of July 26, Rea and Linda Kinnaird of Hargrave along with close family and friends celebrated the designation of a Century Farm at 1-11-27W in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth. Four generations of the descendants of W.F. (Frank) and Frances Kinnaird (Milne) were present. Frank purchased the farm in 1925 from James Lane. A pancake breakfast, photo and memorabilia display, scavenger hunt and bouncy castle for the kids, a car rally and delicious supper under the big tent were enjoyed by all.

MB steamboat history comes to Virden

By Ed James
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Recently one of Virden's active community supporters, Captain Kel Smith (ret.) unveiled a George Baker painting of the historic SS Marquette that ran on the Assiniboine between 1879 until 1882.

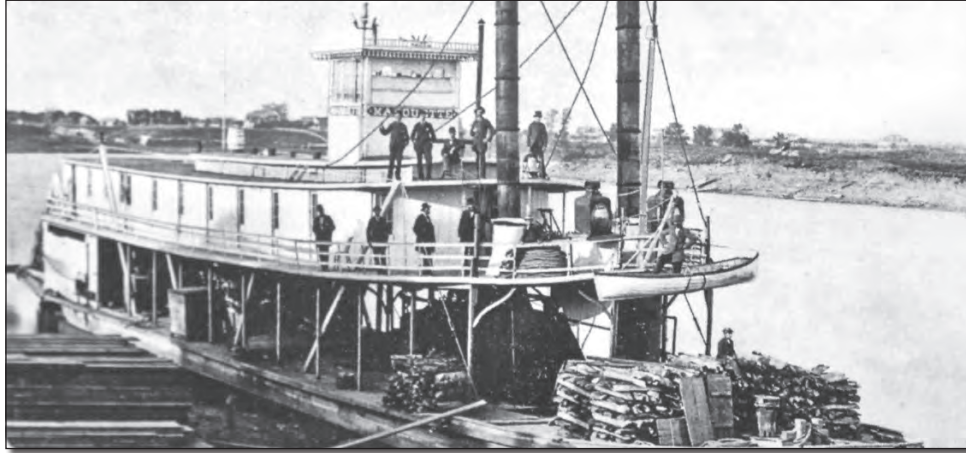
Mr. Smith is well known for his years of work and involvement in the Fort La Bosse school system, local army cadet unit, local tourist promotion and as a Red Cross volunteer.

Steamship days fascinated him. "The Marquette in my mind is historical and special. I wished that I lived in those days and could experience a voyage to Fort Ellice from Upper Fort Garry. Think of Westman before the coming of most of the settlers. It would almost be in its natural state."

Smith said, "I chose George Baker for his talent and his care for detail. George wants it right."

The unveiling event brought out a good crowd as he gave a general history of the steam powered river boat that once sailed from the Hudson Bay Post at Upper Fort Garry to Fort Ellis, now known as St. Lazare, along the Assiniboine River.

With his history talk he had also had a display of area items that told more of the riverboat journeys of yesteryear.



PHOTOS BY ED JAMES

A photo of SS Marquette on display at Virden Legion Clubroom along with other historic documents, at the evening unveiling event on Sept. 23.

Mr. Smith's display and presentation style was a throw-back to his unique classroom teaching style that kept the attention of his former students; and the evening audience.

In presenting the history of the steam paddle boat, "SS Marquette" Smith told how it moved people and goods along the river with a few stops along the way to Fort Ellice.

The ship could only make safe passage during the spring and summer months when the river was high enough as it only had an operating draft of 15 to 18 inches depending on its cargo and fuel load.

During the low water period goods and people were moved by canoe and Red River carts of the area Metis people.

The painting detail shows that the ship had three decks and 12 state rooms. It was recorded that the trip up the river took nine days, but only six days coming back, with the help of the river's current. The journey either way was always filled with twists and turns along with sand bars and deadhead logs.

The official unveiling of this painting was done by Joanne Baker, the wife of noted Virden artist George Baker who was unable to attend the event due to other artistic projects.

After the unveiling, the rest of the evening was devoted to close viewing of the painting, light refreshments, conversations and some great musical entertainment by Moosomin's own Ryan Bender, who showcased a variety of musical selections.

It was an informative and entertaining evening for all who came out to the private showing and Mr. Smith said about the evening, "I was very pleased with the evening and the entertainment by Ryan Bender. I was surprised by how many people turned up from Elkhorn, Brandon, and our own town."



Ryan Bender entertains at the unveiling of the SS Marquette.

Paddlewheelers' history

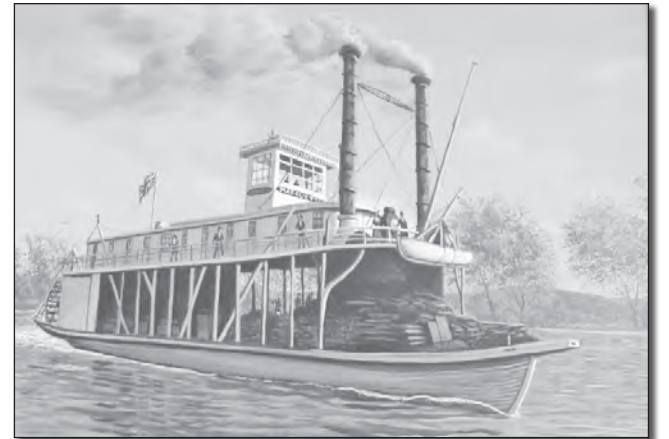


PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Sternwheeler steam ship - SS Marquette, a painting by George Baker commissioned by Kelvon Smith.

Submitted

By KELVON SMITH

There were many stern-wheelers, but my favourite is the Steam Ship Marquette that carried furs, supplies and passengers of all kinds.

The Marquette steamed on the Assiniboine River from the Hudson Bay forts of Upper Fort Garry (Winnipeg) to Fort Ellice (St. Lazare); sternwheelers had to contend with the Currie Rapids, five miles downstream from Brandon House (Brandon) once called the Grand Rapids of the Assiniboine.

I know of one riverboat landing in our area and that's by Miniota. If you wish to see it then go to the Silver Bend Hiking Trail and you will come across it. If I were younger, I'd go snorkeling there when the Assiniboine is lazy and slow. I'd look for treasures at the riverboat landing.

I've been told there is a landing near Virden (Gopher Creek), but I have never found it yet. Does anyone know where it is?

ABOUT the Marquette:

- 266 tons;
- 125 feet long;
- 30-foot beam (width);
- 4-foot hold;
- drew 15-18 inches in the water;
- 3 decks;
- 1 wheelhouse;
- flew the Union Jack;
- powered by 2 wood-burning steam engines
- 2 smokestacks;
- 1879-1882,
- The Alpha attempted last run, 1885
- ran late spring - early summer

A sidewheeler (paddle-wheel on either side) came from Fort Garry to Fort Ellice - The Cheyenne - but only made one trip.

I believe she was just too large to turn around with ease [to return] to Upper Fort Garry. A huge photograph of the Cheyenne hangs in the Grand Central Hotel in Virden.

The arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railroad at Virden meant the steamships' days were over. The Alpha met her doom in 1885 because of greed and a sandbar.

Sgt. Doan acting Staff Sergeant/Area Commander for Westman RCMP



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

RCMP Sgt. Amy Doan and Corp. Eduardo Gianico attend Town of Virden Council meeting, Sept. 23; Couns. Jessie Cruickshank (l-r), Travis Penner and Bruce Dunning listen to Doan’s report.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

In the absence of RCMP S.Sgt. Cooper, Sgt. Amy Doan has moved to Virden and taken on the responsibility as RCMP Area Commander.

Sgt. Doan was introduced to the RM of Wallace-Woodworth Council meeting and most recently to the Town of Virden Council. She brings

breadth and depth of experience to her role.

In Sgt. Doan’s words, “In 2009, I started my service with the RCMP in Surrey, British Columbia where I worked in general duty.

“After this, I completed my apprenticeship and became a Forensic Identification Specialist and worked in the Lower Mainland District of British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and

Nunavut in this capacity. This allowed me to travel extensively throughout both Territories assisting the Major Crime Unit in processing crime scenes involving serious persons offences.

After several years, I wanted a different challenge, and I moved to an isolated community in Igloolik, Nunavut where I was the Detachment Commander.

Through the Lens: VCI student pursues artistic vision

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Kestrel Tough is developing a keen eye. She’s one of the Virden Collegiate photographers tasked with recording happenings around the school for the yearbook which included the VCI Undergrad Awards several weeks ago.

She has a penchant for visual art which includes photography and it’s no surprise that she is in the graphic design class at VCI where there’s an opportunity to work on yearbook projects.

Kestrel explains, “Each person in [graphic design] class gets a separate role on what they do in the yearbook. I got the undergrad awards since that’s what I volunteered for.”

As an artist who creates using oils, acrylic paint, pencils and more, Kestrel says, “I’ve been drawing animals since I was really, really little. Mostly cats and dogs....”

Her smartphone is one of the better brands for photography and the broad range of photo subjects on her phone bears witness to this student’s keen interest in capturing



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Kestrel Tough captures the pie auction at VCI Undergrad Awards night, Sept. 18.

detail and perspective. At close range a good cell phone often takes a clearer image than a run of the mill SLR digital camera. But Kestrel hopes to someday buy herself a high-quality SLR camera to further her photography.

“I’ve always liked taking photos of, like random things. When I was younger (and even now) I used to go around taking photos of birds, my cats, anything I could find. Even if it was just, like a random object, I would

take a photo shoot of it.”

Her interest surpasses casual snaps. “I loved getting like different angles on the same thing. Seeing how lighting works....”

Kestrel is named for the smallest type of falcon, a kestrel, which pleases her as she has a real love for birds as well as for all wildlife.

At the awards night she was one of five students to receive the Gr. 10 Reading is Thinking award, a course that helps students develop critical reading/literacy.

“Following my time in Nunavut, I worked in Ottawa, Ont. for Federal Policing in National Security and then the National Missing Person Unit prior to transferring to Virden as the Operations NCO.”

Doan presented the department’s thrust to curb crime:

“Every year the RCMP engages in consultation with the communities we

serve to set our priorities for crime reduction initiatives. We are focussed on project-based initiatives to reduce incidents of crime and improve overall community safety. This can be achieved through offender management such as conducting curfew checks, outstanding warrant executions and through traffic enforcement to name a few.”



2025/2026 SCHEDULE

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Curling starts Tuesday, October 28th

Monday 4:00 pm • Junior Curling League

Get them started at a fun, inexpensive sport. Grades 4-8 only please. Starts November 4th.

Call Chris Warkentin at 204-851-2246

\$80/individual

Tuesday Mornings • 10:00 am • Senior Men’s

Recreational League

Do you miss your morning golf match? Give our club a try!

Come have a cup of joe, curl a fun, 8-end game with some friends and enjoy a soup and sandwich special from our canteen afterwards. Enter as individuals. Join us for the whole season or just half.

Call Greg Tough at 204-748-3136

\$230/individual

Tuesday Afternoons • 12:45 pm • Tuesday Afternoon Ladies’

Recreational League

Enjoy an afternoon out with the girls, with coffee and exercise included. Enter as a team or individuals.

Call Jeanette Logan 204-838-2397 or text 204-748-7422

\$920/team

Tuesday Evenings • 6:00 & 8:00 pm • Ladies’

Evening Fun League

Get out of the house and enjoy a night on the ice. Stay for a beverage and enjoy a chat with the gals.

A fun, social night for experienced or beginning curlers! Enter as teams.

Text Mandy Taylor at 204-764-0003

\$920/team

Wednesday Afternoons • 4:00 pm • High School Fun League

Get your team together and try something new.

Call Mark Robertson at 204-851-5851

\$120/individual

Men’s League - Wednesdays & Thursdays • 7:00 pm

Enjoy a guys night out on the ice for all skill levels. The lounge is open for a welcoming post game atmosphere * May require occasional 9 pm draws * Final scheduling dependant on entries

Call Jay Kinnaird at 204-851-1267

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Fridays • 10:00 am • Senior Mixed League

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OIL CAPITALS

BIG OIL CAPS CROWDS CHEER ON THEIR TEAM

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Oil Capitals know that at each home game, they will be well supported.

Last season - for the second straight campaign - the local team led the Manitoba Junior Hockey League in attendance. It averaged 781 fans per game at Tundra Oil & Gas Place.

"The fans in Virden show up," Oil Capitals defenceman Rhylan Baxter said. "When you're on the ice and you hear the crowd get behind a big hit, a key save, or a goal, it fires you up. Wearing the Oil Caps jersey in front of your home crowd makes you want to go the extra mile to block that shot, win that battle, finish that check."

Mavis Stephenson has been a season ticket holder since the Winnipeg Saints moved to Virden in 2012 and were renamed the Oil Capitals. She said, "I like the socialization, and I like watching hockey. I know some of the local kids (that have been on the team), parents and grandparents."

Stephenson knows how important support can be to junior players. Her son Rick played for the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League's Nipawin Hawks. Stephenson's grandson, Tyson Verhelst, suited up for Neepawa in the MJHL and for the Western Hockey League's Spokane Chiefs.

Last season, the Oil Caps were one of only four MJHL teams to average more than 500 fans per contest. The others were the Steinbach Pistons, Portage Terriers, and Dauphin Kings.

Baxter has experienced being both a visitor and a member of the home team at the TOGP. He started his rookie season, 2023-2024, as an Oil Cap before being traded to the Winnipeg Blues. Baxter returned to Virden before last season.

"It's definitely fair to say that most players would



Loyal fans show their support of the Oil Caps at as many games as they can. Go Caps Go!

PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPS

much rather play in the Virden rink as a home Oil Cap than as an opponent," he said. "The home ice advantage at Tundra Oil & Gas Place is real. The energy from the hometown fans, the comfort of the locker room, and the pride that comes with representing your community all come together to make home games something special. You just have a feel for everything around you, the boards, ice and size of the rink."

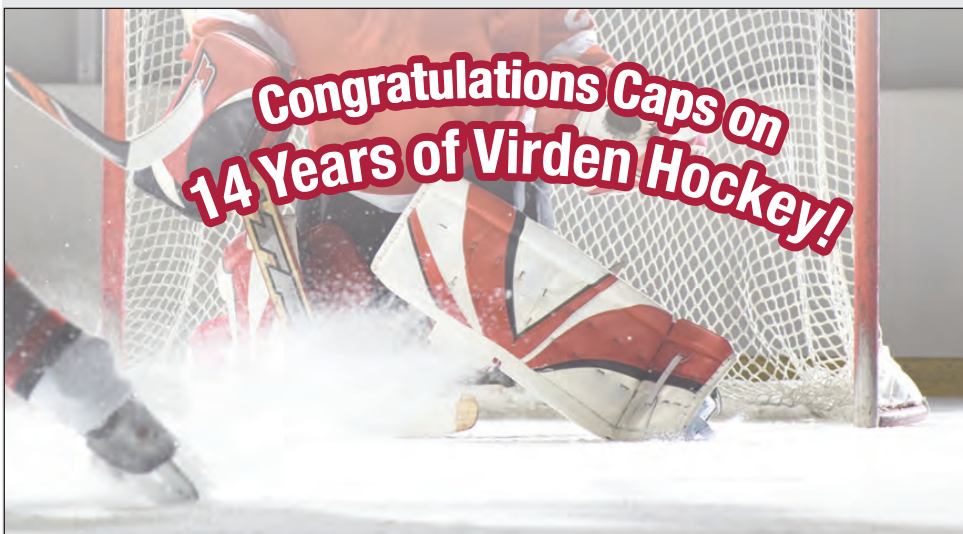
The Oil Capitals drew 1,102 fans to their 2025 home-opener victory over the Waywayseecappo Wolverines on Sept. 20. Veteran Oil Capitals forward Marshall Light of Moosomin said:

"It was a great atmosphere. It was awesome to get

going and see all the fans in the stands and cheering us on again for a fantastic season ahead."

The Virden squad is not only supported by the fans in the seats on winter nights. Businesses and partners of various kinds are also important to the team's success.

"Our season ticket holders, business partners, and fans are the lifeline of our team," Virden head coach and general manager Tyson Ramsey said. "We are so proud of the support we receive in one of the smallest markets in junior hockey. They are passionate about our team, and we want to put a team on the ice that they can be proud of. We would not exist without these groups of people, we are very lucky."



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2006-08-13



#4 NATHAN SCHAEFER

D | HARPER WOODS, MI
2006-06-14



#5 MIGUEL BONIN

D | WINNIPEG, MB
2007-06-30



#6 TY PLAISIER

D | VIRDEN, MB
2005-04-23



#12 JETT DESCHAMPS

D | WINNIPEG, MB
2008-09-28



#13 TYSON ULMER

F | GRAND FORKS, ND
2007-03-13



#14 CARSON WRIGHT

F | CALGARY, AB
2006-01-29



#15 BRYAN LAING

F | BOISSEVAIN, MB
2007-09-25



#21 TYSON DRAPER

F | OAK LAKE BEACH, MB
2007-10-01



#22 DANIEL TOKARIWSKI

F | WINNIPEG, MB
2005-06-28



#24 LINCOLN BLACK-GREAVES

D | WINNIPEG, MB
2008-08-16



#26 COLTEN WORTHINGTON

F | BRANDON, MB
2007-08-24



#35 BRAXTON BURDENY

G | WINNIPEG, MB
2005-05-26



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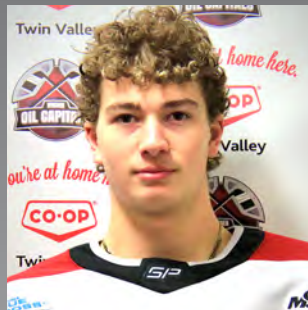
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#7 COHEN LEWKO

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2009-04-16



#9 BRYCE BRYANT

F | VIRDEN, MB
2006-07-29



#10 MADDOX SHINDLE

D | PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE, MB



#11 LONDON HOILETT

F | WINNIPEG, MB
2005-02-15



#16 BROOKS SIEMENS

F | BOTTINEAU, ND
2006-03-08



#17 DYSEN DRAKE

F | TRAVERSE CITY, MI
2007-06-19



#19 LUCAS LARAMEE

F | LA BROQUERIE, MB
2008-07-30



#20 BECKHAM GARCHINSKI

D | WINNIPEG, MB
2007-03-29



#27 LIAM GOERTZEN

F | HOMEWOOD, MB
2006-10-14



#28 NOEL ENGLT

F | CANDIAC, SK
2005-11-05



#29 MARSHALL LIGHT

F | MOOSOMIN, SK
2005-06-05



#31 MICKY GROSS

G | CORNWALLIS, MB
2007-06-28



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~ Billet Co-ordinator
GARY REMPLE
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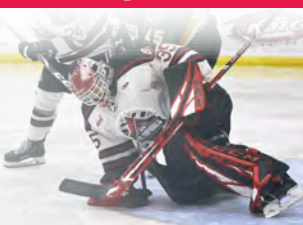


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OIL CAPITALS



BUILT IN VIRDEN: PLAISIER'S PATH TO JUNIOR HOCKEY CAPTAINCY

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

It was at the age of four or five that Ty Plaisier got his start in hockey in Virden. Now, about a decade and a half later, the son of Shawn and Debra Plaisier is still enjoying life on the ice in his hometown. The 20-year-old is a stalwart defenceman for the Virden Oil Capitals. This season, he became the first hometown captain of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League team.

When asked what it means to play for and captain the Virden team, Plaisier said, "It's an unreal feeling. I'm super confident in the group we have this year, and I'm pumped to help lead us to a championship."

For the Oil Capitals, the hometown product is the right man to lead. The blueliner is in his fourth junior season. Through four games this season, Plaisier was second on the team in points with three. He had a goal and two assists.

"Ty is a competitor," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "He thrives on competing against the best players, and his work ethic and determination are second to none. He is a leader on and off the ice. He is one of the best defenders in the league and likely the league's best shotblocker. He is in great shape, so he can log big minutes and he is extremely hard to play against."

With his defensive ability and shotblocking, the 6-foot-1, 201-pound Plaisier helps make things a little easier for goalies. Eric Reid, a former hometown Oil Capitals netminder, indicated Plaisier's attitude also makes him a big asset.

"The thing I enjoy about being on the ice/at the rink with Ty is how he comes to the rink each day with a good attitude and ready to work," Reid wrote in a text. "He's always been a natural leader, pushing himself as well as others to do what it takes to win. He's one of those guys that makes coming to the rink every day enjoyable."

Plaisier's love of hockey developed in his

hometown. With a two-year age gap, Reid and Plaisier were not on the same team for a full season until the defenceman's first U18 AAA campaign with the Southwest Cougars. However, Plaisier was called up to play on some of the minor hockey teams Reid was on. As well, Reid said the two hockey fanatics often saw each other around the rink. Plaisier has fond memories of his minor hockey days.

"Virden Minor Hockey was a great time," he said. "Some of my favourite memories are hockey tournaments as a little kid and team parties after winning."

After his time with the regional Cougars U18 AAA team, Plaisier split his first two seasons between the Oil Capitals and the Western Hockey League's Regina Pats. With the Saskatchewan squad, his teammates included current Chicago Blackhawks star Connor Bedard, as well as other future professionals. In 2023-2024, he helped the team make it to the MJHL semifinals. Last season he was a key player and leader on a young squad. Plaisier has enjoyed various aspects of junior hockey.

"I love the competitive aspect of junior hockey," he said. "Everyone at this level wants to win, and the energy is always exciting. I also love being around the guys every day, getting to hang out with 25 friends every single day is



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPS

Virden Oil Caps #6 Ty Plaisier is excited and confident in his team this year.

a really fun time."

In the future, Plaisier hopes to keep playing hockey while pursuing a post-secondary education. He is interested in studying education or finance. While that is in the future, right now, Plaisier is enjoying playing in his hometown and trying to help the Oil Capitals win a championship. He appreciates what his family has done to help get him to this point.

"Without my family, I wouldn't be anywhere near this level," Plaisier said. "They do everything they can for me and always are there watching my games."

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SPORTS

GROSS SOLID IN DEBUT AS OIL CAPS BEAT MONARCHS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Oil Capitals dethroned the Winnipeg Monarchs to claim their first road victory of the season.

On Sept. 27, the Oil Caps beat the Monarchs—formerly named the Freeze - 3-2 at the Hockey For All Centre. Rookie goalie Micky Gross made 21 saves to earn his first win in his Oil Capitals debut. Virden outshot the Monarchs, 44-23.

“I thought it was a good effort from our guys. We played quite a bit faster and had more structure to our game than on Friday night and we created a ton of offensive chances,” Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. “Their goaltender was very good. Micky was very good. He was calm in the net and very square to the puck. It was a great game for him to get his feet wet in the regular season. He will be very good for us.”

The night before the Winnipeg win, the Virden squad lost 4-1 at home to the Niverville Nighthawks. As of Sept. 29, the Oil Capitals were 2-2-0-0 on the season.

The Oil Capitals play a home-and-home series with the Swan Valley Stampede this weekend. The teams tangle in Swan River on Oct. 3. They meet at Tundra Oil & Gas Place on Oct. 4. The Oil Capitals play in Waywayseecappo on Oct. 8.

Oil Caps 3, Monarchs 2

The Oil Capitals had a strong start on the road. Defenceman Rhylan Baxter scored on the power play. Carson Wright lit the lamp in the final 30 seconds of the period to extend Virden’s lead to 2-0.

The Monarchs’ Cam Alt got his team on the scoreboard in the second period.

London Hoilett responded to make it 3-1 for Virden after two. Kade Stringer scored for Winnipeg, but the Monarchs were unable to tie things up.

Wright was named the first star. Colten Worthington had two assists and earned the second star. The Monarchs’ Maxx Hamelin, a former Oil Capital, recorded two assists and received the third star. Through four games, Hoilett led Virden with three goals and four points.

Nighthawks 4, Oil Caps 1

In front of 813 fans at home, Oil Capitals forward Noel Englot scored his first goal of the season in the opening frame. Virden led 1-0 after one. The Nighthawks scored two in the second and two more in the third. Both of Niverville’s goals in the second period came with the man advantage.

Virden goalie Braxton Burdeny stopped 17 of the 21 shots he faced. Nate Schaefer assisted on Englot’s goal. Englot was the second star. Defenceman Lincoln Black-Greaves was named Virden’s Hardest Working Player. The



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPS

Virden Oil caps vs Niverville Nighthawks.

Oil Caps’ Ty Plaisier and Luke Wagner of the Nighthawks received fighting majors late in the third period.

For Niverville, Austin Dubinsky made 28 saves. Scoring for the Nighthawks were Merik Boles (two), Loik Leduc, and John Scott. Boles was the first star. With three assists, Aaron Krestanowich was named the third star.

Davidson to Storm

Virden’s Hudson Davidson has signed with the Campbell River (B.C.) Storm of the Vancouver Island Junior Hockey League. He is the son of Craig and Karla Davidson. The defenceman played for the Oil Capitals last season. As of Sept. 28, he had one assist in three games for the Storm.

WALLACE LOOKS TO FLY WITH THE PURPLE EAGLES



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Hunter Wallace from Oak Lake.

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

New York State.

The son of Tod and Penny Wallace has transferred to Niagara University. The school is based in Lewiston, New York, near Niagara Falls. The Purple Eagles compete at the NCAA Division I level, the highest in U.S. university athletics.

“Two of my close friends (Noah Hackett and Ethan Lund) were already here that I played with in Brooks, and Coach (Jason) Lammers reached out when I entered the portal,” Wallace said. “After talking with the staff, they gave me an opportunity to play, and with those connections, it was an easy decision.”

Through tough and easy decisions, wins and losses, and everything in between, Wallace has been strongly backed in his hockey career by his family.

“I wouldn’t be here without them,” he said. “They’ve supported me through injuries and successes, and I’m really grateful for them and their support through this journey.”

The former Southwest Cougars U18 AAA player is in his second year of post-secondary hockey after a very suc-

cessful junior career where all he did was win. In Brooks, Alta., Wallace helped the Bandits win two Alberta Junior Hockey League championships and a pair of Centennial Cup national Junior A championships. During his final junior campaign, partway through the season, the Bandits joined the British Columbia Hockey League. Wallace and the Bandits kept winning. They won the Alberta division playoffs and then beat the Surrey (B.C.) Eagles in two games in the BCHL Rocky Mountain Challenge.

In 2024-2025, Wallace’s first university season was affected by a knee injury. He displayed resilience and talent as he returned to play six games for Merrimack College. A trio of contests into competing for the North Andover, Mass. school, Wallace lit the lamp.

“It came in my third game back after tearing my MCL, in an away game at (University of New Hampshire),” he said. “My good friend, Trevor Griebel, gave me a cross-ice pass. I threw it on net, and it trickled in low blocker. A simple goal, but a big moment for me.”

Then, later in the contest, Wallace scored again. He said, “It felt great, especially coming off injury. I was just trying to build confidence, and scoring twice in one night really helped with that.”

That offensive outburst earned Wallace Hockey East Rookie of Week honours. It was certainly a highlight of

a first university season that involved him battling back from injury and adjusting to post-secondary life.

“The biggest difference is the schedule—college has far fewer games, so every one matters more,” Wallace said. “Plus, balancing school with hockey is a big adjustment.”

Off the ice, he is studying business. Wallace said he enjoys it and sees it “as a good foundation for life after hockey.”

VIRDEN

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION SALE OF LANDS FOR ARREARS OF TAXES TOWN OF VIRDEN

Pursuant to subsection 367(7) of The Municipal Act, notice is hereby given that unless the tax arrears for the designated year and costs in respect of the hereinafter described properties are paid in full to the Municipality prior to the commencement of the auction, the Municipality will on the **21st day of October, 2025**, at the hour of **06:30 PM**, at Town of Virden, 236 Wellington Street West, Virden, MB, proceed to sell by public auction the following described properties:

Roll Number	Description	Assessed Value	Amount of Arrears & Costs for Which Property May be Offered for Sale
38700	LOTS 8 AND 9 PLAN 941 BLTO EXC FIRSTLY: OUT OF SAID LOT 8 SWLY 45 FEET SECONDLY: OUT OF SAID LOT 9 NWLY 36 FEET THIRDLY: OUT OF SAID LOTS 8 AND 9 NWLY 16 FEET IN SE 1/4 22-10-26 WPM - 252 CHESTER ST W	L - \$35,100 B - \$110,900	\$ 6,462.67
88700	LOT 2 BLOCK 138 PLAN 67 BLTO EXC FIRSTLY: THE SWLY 38 FEET AND SECONDLY: THE NWLY 125 FEET IN NW 1/4 22-10-26 WPM - 440 CARLTON STREET W	L - \$78,200 B - \$0	\$ 10,572.55

The tax sale is subject to the following terms and conditions with respect to each property:

- The purchaser of the property will be responsible for any unpaid municipal utilities and any property taxes not yet due.
- The Municipality may exercise its right to set a reserve bid in the amount of the arrears and costs.
- If the purchaser intends to bid by proxy, a letter of authorization form must be presented prior to the start of the auction.
- The Municipality makes no representations or warranties whatsoever concerning the properties being sold.
- The successful purchaser must, at the time of the sale, make payment in **cash, certified cheque or bank draft** to the TOWN OF VIRDEN as follows:
 - i) The full purchase price if it is \$10,000 or less; OR
 - ii) If the purchase price is greater than \$10,000, the purchaser must provide a non-refundable deposit in the amount of \$10,000 and the balance of the purchase price must be paid within 20 days of the sale; AND
 - iii) A fee in the amount \$500.85 (\$477 + GST) for preparation of the transfer of title documents. The purchaser will be responsible for registering the transfer of title documents in the land titles office, including the registration costs.
- The risk for the property lies with the purchaser immediately following the auction.
- The purchaser is responsible for obtaining vacant possession.
- If the property is non-residential property, the purchaser must pay GST to the Municipality or, if a GST registrant, provide a GST Declaration.

Dated this 12 day of September, 2025.

Managed by:



Rhonda Stewart
Chief Administrative Officer
TOWN OF VIRDEN
Phone: (204) 748-2440
Fax: (204) 748-2501

SPORTS

JOSEPH SCORES, LEADS AT MINOT STATE



PHOTO BY SEAN ARBAUT

Colby Joseph fires a puck towards the net during a Minot State University men's hockey game last season.

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Elkhorn's Colby Joseph is succeeding and leading in Minot, N.D.

The son of Dawn and Gord Joseph is now in his third season with the Minot State University men's hockey team. Last season, the 6-foot-1, 185-pound forward led the Beavers in goals and was second in points. He helped them reach the semifinals of the American Collegiate Hockey Association national tournament in Missouri.

Before this season, Joseph was named an assistant captain for the Beavers.

"It means more than I can explain," he said. "It is a huge honour to be able to wear a letter for this program and team. We have the type of team where anyone can be a leader, and being able to be alongside the current captains is a huge honour. That being said, I know it is going to push me to be a better teammate and player, and I can't thank Wyatt (Waselenchuk, head coach) enough for giving me this opportunity."

Joseph joins a veteran Beavers leadership group. One of the other players wearing a letter is former Virden Oil Capitals standout defenceman Logan Rands, who is in his fourth season at MSU.

In his second campaign with the Beavers, Joseph increased his goal production from 14 as a rookie to a team-high 28 in 39 games last season. He boosted his points from 22 to 43. Regarding 2024-2025, Waselenchuk stated on the team's website that Joseph "took a big step forward this season for us both on and off the ice." What allowed him to increase his production?

"Honestly, I think the only thing that changed was from the mental standpoint," Joseph said. "I gained more confidence, and I was put into roles that I would succeed in, and things went well. I would not have been able to do

what I did on the ice without my two linemates, Logan Cyca and Walker Jerome, and coach Wyatt trusting me and letting me play my style of hockey."

Against Illinois State University in the Midwest College Hockey conference tournament semifinals, Joseph found the back of the net four times. He said he remembers "how well we played going into a conference final game the next day. One thing I remember was a guy trying to fight me, and me eating punches for lunch and not retaliating, which I was pretty proud of." In the MCH finals, the Beavers beat Jamestown (N.D.) University, 2-1, in overtime.

Off the ice, Joseph is also an important part of Beavers hockey. Waselenchuk said on the team's website, "He is great in the community and is a model student. Colby is a great ambassador for our program."

Joseph is a double major in marketing and business administration. Every semester he has been at MSU, Joseph has earned a spot on the President's List or Vice President of Academic Affairs Honour Roll. What has allowed Joseph to succeed in the classroom?

"Juggling school and hockey just takes time management and commitment," he said. "I try to plan my weeks for homework and studying so that I can focus on my hockey, but be able to enjoy time with my brothers on the team."

He also appreciates his family back home. Joseph said: "My family is my everything. I would not be playing hockey for this great Minot State program without them, but also wouldn't be the person I am today without them. They are my biggest supporters and try to make as many games as they can. Without them, I honestly don't know where I would be. When I go on my phone after a game, I have texts from them saying good game, regardless of the outcome."

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Kenton Professional ~ Tess Stevenson

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Tess started kindergarten at Kenton Collegiate. She was one of only four students in her class. In grade six she went to Hamiota and completed her high school education program in 2013 at Hamiota Collegiate. Tess said she really loved her time there, making lifelong friends and playing all kinds of sports and joined most of the extra-curricular activities that the school offered.

Tess then attended Brandon University and completed a science degree with a major in Mathematics and minors in Biology and Psychology. At that time, she was not sure if she wanted to be a teacher or an occupational therapist. She has always had a heart for youth with disabilities. Even though

Math was hard she sort of fell in love with it and eventually realized that teaching was the right place to be.

Along the way, she worked as a tutor and lab assistant in different Math courses which confirmed she wanted to be a Math teacher.

After completing her science degree, she stayed at Brandon University to finish her educational degree in the high school stream. Tess first taught at Crocus Plains in Brandon before moving to Rivers Collegiate Institute where she has been ever since teaching grade 10-12 Math.

Tess teaches a variety of Math courses and works closely with students with disabilities, which is a passion of hers. Tess is focusing on inclusive education which involves creating learning environments

and experiences that are accessible and supportive for all students, regardless of their needs or abilities. She is on track to complete the program in 2026.

Tess has also had the opportunity to work as a test developer for the grade 12 Mathematics Provincial exam.

The biggest influences in choosing her career were her parents and her brother Adam, also a high school Math teacher who made math fun and made sense to her. Her brother Adam was also a major influence in her life. Adam passed away in 2012. He had a disability that made every day unique and exciting and really deepened her love for being around people with disabilities. Adam inspired so many people who worked with him. Wanting to work with people like Adam played

a big part in why Tess wanted to become a teacher.

Her family and especially her Mom played a big part in her life as she was the biggest cheerleader and is one of the greatest role models!

Apart from teaching, Tess just got married to her husband Tyler and they are excited to be expecting their first child in January.

In her free time, Tess plays hockey, volleyball and just recently loves playing golf. She also loves the mountains and snowboarding. She likes to travel as well, but more than anything she enjoys spending time with people, be it at a Jets game, concerts, camping or heading to the cabin.

Her future goals include continuing teaching and once she completes her Master of Education is to move into a role that would allow her work more directly with students that have disabilities, as



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Tess Stevenson with her husband Tyler and their puppy, Lady.

well some day teaching at the University level. Tess is in her seventh year of teaching and currently teaches pre-calculus for grades 10-12.

Tess has some advice for graduates today. Take any opportunity you can, try things, participate in anything you can and do not be afraid if your path does not look exactly how you first imagined how it would look. One lesson she learned was

to be resilient in the unknown stages. You can feel uncomfortable, but it is actually one of the most important places to be. That is where you grow the most. Surround yourself with good people, work hard and find something you are passionate about, that will keep you motivated.

Really solid advice from a remarkable young lady!

PCs file Election Financing Act complaint against NDP in Court of King's Bench

Submitted
BY PC MANITOBA

WINNIPEG — Official Opposition Leader Obby Khan took the unprecedented step today of filing an application in the Court of King's Bench against Premier Wab Kinew and his NDP for their illegal actions in the Spruce Woods byelection. The complaint stems from a new infrastructure promise made by the premier, which came during the byelection blackout period.

"Announcing a new highway project during an election campaign is a direct breach of Section 92 of the Election Financing Act," said Khan. "Governing parties are prohibited from making such promises because it tilts the playing field in their favour. Yet again, the premier seems to believe that the rules don't apply to him—rolling out an infrastructure pledge just days before the byelection, clearly aimed at swaying voters."

The recent action stems from a social media post made by the premier on Aug. 21 in which he promises to "fix" a section of Highway 2 in the Spruce Woods constituency, in response to a commitment made by the NDP candidate a day earlier during a debate. Immediately following the violation, PCs filed a complaint

with the Commissioner of Elections.

PCs have now taken the unprecedented step of filing the complaint in the Court of King's Bench because of how egregious the violation of the Election Financing Act is. And it might not be the only violation.

"I would like to know whether government resources were used to produce the social media post," said Khan. "You cannot use Executive Council staff or government resources to produce the video. That also violates the Elections Act by using taxpayers' money in the midst of a byelection to promote a partisan agenda. Who shot that video and how was it produced?"

PCs are seeking a Justice's declaration that Premier Wab Kinew and the NDP breached and violated the Act.

"I will always stand up for Manitobans," said Khan. "Wab Kinew and his NDP think election laws don't apply to them. They think they're above the law and can do whatever they want. Announcing new spending programs near the end of a byelection is a clear

violation, and we're asking the Court of King's Bench for a declaration that Wab Kinew and the NDP are in violation of the Election Financing Act."

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RCMP, tree costs before council

Council receives RCMP update on local crime, reviews tree removal costs, and considers funding applications for community projects.

By Empire-Advance staff
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

RCMP report

Sgt. Amy Doan attended the meeting and reported that the detachment had 14 regular members in August and dealt with 77 calls in Virden, bringing the year-to-date total to 722. This marked an increase from 638 calls in 2024. She clarified that many of the additional calls were related to proactive policing activities, such as traffic enforcement, which generate file numbers. Doan added, "We did a check stop just in the RM of Sifton... For a two-hour period, we generated 10 traffic offenses." She emphasized that the numbers would be more concerning if there had been a sharp increase in assaults or other serious crimes. The call breakdown included 16 traffic offences, four mental health-related calls, six disturbance files, and several offences against people, such as criminal harassment and assault. Three prisoners were held in Virden during the month.

The RCMP is actively engaged in school safety initiatives, with members assigned to every school in the Westman area.

Council raised concerns about public safety, citing a provincial survey showing that nine out of 10 Manitobans view crime and security as major issues. Sgt. Doan said, "In the Westman area...we're dealing with the same prolific and repeat offenders...I think that's a problem across the country." She explained that RCMP strategies include curfew checks and offender management programs to bring those who break the conditions of their bail back before the courts, though ultimate decisions rest with the justice system.

Coun. Savy inquired about electronic ankle monitors for offenders. Doan explained that in Virden compliance with curfews is monitored directly by RCMP members through physical checks. She said, "We also are do-

ing offender management initiatives as another one of our crime priorities. So that means that we're generating a police file to monitor people who are on bail conditions in the community."

Finance

Council reviewed payments to G&M Tree Service, totaling more than \$100,000 for the removal of trees infected with Dutch elm disease in 2023 and 2024. Although some funding is received from the province for Dutch elm disease management, it does not cover the full cost. CAO Rhonda Stewart explained that the province is responsible for doing the inventory and tagging trees for removal. A provincial crew removes the diseased trees, a town crew does the stump grinding.

AMM business

The Town's resolution for the fall convention has already been submitted. The resolution concerns how often they are required to update their plan with the Mid-West Planning District a process they felt was unnecessarily frequent and expensive. Mayor Tina Williams said, "We did it for five years and spent \$70,000 for no good reason."

Funding applications

The Town will reapply for the Manitoba Growth, Renewal and Opportunities for Municipalities grant (Manitoba GRO). This is the same fund they applied to the previous year for airport construction and fire station projects, though they were unsuccessful. The deadline for the new application is Oct. 6, and council passed a motion of support.

Council reviewed a request for a letter of support for an age-friendly grant connected to the Toonie Transportation program, which had proven successful and was being proposed for renewal next year. The program had recorded 452 passenger trips, including six special trips to events outside of town. Since a sponsoring municipality was required, council agreed to act in that role again.

Councillor reports

Coun. Marc Savy reported on multiple meetings and events in September attended by councillors. At the Western Caucus meeting a presentation from Western Financial Management about risk management emphasized the importance of documenting staff activities. Savy said, "Keep reports about everything that you do. If you clear a parking lot, write that down. If something happens the next day, we can show that we did clear the parking lot."

At the Westman Emergency Group meeting a new Emergency Social Services (ESS) coordinator was introduced and approved to attend a January disaster management conference.

Coun. Jessie Cruickshank visited the newly renovated library, and said, "It was fantastic. Very white, very clean." She also attended the Virden Employment Skills Centre meeting where it was determined that the AGM is set for Nov. 12.

Mayor Tina Williams reported on the opening of the new Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) building that will provide resources for the surrounding area.

CAO Rhonda Stewart and ACAO Jared Jaffray attended the Manitoba Municipal Administrators Conference. Stewart said, "I'd like to thank council and staff for the coffee party that we had when I returned, in recognition of my lifetime membership. It was a pretty big honour for me to receive that."

Valleyview Co-op GM Dave Wowk confirmed that demolition of the Co-op C Store will begin around October 6th, with access closures and sidewalk repairs included in the plan.

Stewart reported on progress with airport renovations. Lighting work is progressing and AWOS is nearly installed (except for a freezing rain sensor that may take up to two years to deliver). Inspections and approvals have been passed for other system components.

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

Key Responsibilities

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

Qualifications

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

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- LANDFILL ATTENDANT (HARGRAVE/KOLA)
- PUBLIC WORKS

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

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

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

Tender

LAND FOR SALE BY TENDER

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) has the following land for sale by tender:

RM of Two Borders SW 36-05-29 WPM 159.72 acres

There are approximately 84.70 acres in tame hay with another 50.22 acres of native/natural grass. The remaining 24.8 acres are comprised of small wetland basins, scattered throughout the property. Tame forage stand was sown/established in 2025. One existing dugout is present within native pasture area. Property being sold subject to the registration of a 'No Break, No Drain' Conservation Easement Agreement. Cultivation of tame forage will be permitted once every 10 years for rejuvenation purposes. No restrictions with respect to haying or grazing. One five-acre parcel will be excluded from the Conservation Agreement to allow for future building/yard site development.

Written sealed tenders are to be mailed or dropped off to the address below. Please indicate 'Land Tender – RM of Two Borders' on envelope. Bids may also be emailed to Ducks Unlimited at du_brandon@ducks.ca. Be sure to place "Manitoba Land Tender Bid" in the email's subject line. Interested parties should rely on their own inspection of the property. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted. **Property information packages, including a sample copy of the Conservation Agreement are available – call Scott Henowitch at 204-761-5106 to have one emailed or mailed.**

Tender Close on Friday October 27, 2025 at 4:00 PM.



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Public Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE REGARDING THE INTENTION TO GIVE THIRD READING TO A BY-LAW TO ESTABLISH A NEW WARD SYSTEM

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to subsection 87(4) of The Municipal Act that the Council of the Municipality of Two Borders intends to give third reading to a by-law establishing a new ward system for the purpose of holding a municipal election.

The third reading of the by-law to establish a new ward system for the purpose of holding a municipal election is scheduled to be given at the next regular meeting of Council to be held in the Council Chambers of the Municipality of Two Borders, at 138 Main Street, Melita, Manitoba on October 16, 2025, at 7:15 p.m.

Copies of the by-law to establish a new ward system for the purpose of holding a municipal election are available for review and may be examined by any person on our website at www.twoborders.ca or upon request at the municipal office, at 138 Main Street, Melita, Manitoba during regular business hours.

Grace Carr
Chief Administrative Officer
Municipality of Two Borders

October 3, 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE REGARDING THE INTENTION TO GIVE THIRD READING TO A BY-LAW TO SET THE NUMBER OF MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to subsection 79(4) of The Municipal Act that the Council of the Municipality of Two Borders intends to give third reading to a by-law to set the number of municipal councillors.

The third reading of the by-law to set the number of municipal councillors is scheduled to be given at the next regular meeting of Council to be held in the Council Chambers of the Municipality of Two Borders, at 138 Main Street, Melita, Manitoba on October 16, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Copies of the by-law to set the number of municipal councillors are available for review and may be examined by any person on our website at www.twoborders.ca or upon request at the municipal office, at 138 Main Street, Melita, Manitoba during regular business hours.

Grace Carr
Chief Administrative Officer
Municipality of Two Borders

October 3, 2025

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RM Council reviews LUD projects, physician recruitment

Council approves \$1.27M in expenses, sells generator for \$10K

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

At their Sept. 23 meeting Wallace-Woodworth council discussed disposal of an old generator motor from water system booster station one. The open tender process only received one offer of \$10,000. The sale was approved. Accounts were ap-

proved totaling \$1,271,090.70, including checks, direct deposits, and electronic fund transfers. Financial statements for the eight-month period ending Aug. 31 included seasonal expenses such as gravel hauling, roadside mowing, water treatment plant repairs, water line work, and sewer repairs.

A one-year warranty walkthrough for the Elkhorn RTM childcare facility took place on Sept. 18. Representatives from the builder and from council compiled a list of issues, and Reeve Clayton Canart said, "Certainly if something goes wrong between now and the one-year warranty period they will cover it."

The main concern identified was drainage, which council intends to address with the builder. Overall, no major problems were reported.

Jack Lewis has been hired for the caretaker position at the Elkhorn Post Office building and Municipal Office.

LUD update

In Kenton, the sidewalk project on Cornwall St. was expected to be completed by month's end. New community signs have been installed along Highway 21, receiving positive feedback. The new play structure is nearly finished, with photos circulating online. The Kenton Museum fundraiser has been successful, and the board expressed appreciation to the RM for its support.

The Elkhorn LUD manager is seeking quotes for installing an automatic accessibility

door at the post office, following a resident's request. Other discussions covered gopher control documentation to be submitted to the province, potential relocation of the municipal shed and progress on installing new security cameras. Future LUD meetings will be moved to evenings, with sessions scheduled for the third Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

Committee reports

Councillor MacDonald reported on physician recruitment and retention. She said, "Currently there are six doctors with one away on holidays right now at the clinic. We have six doctors, but we are funded for nine spots." A medical student was also scheduled for a one-month placement. The recent doctor recruitment and retention retreat held in Brandon

was well-organized and had strong representation from Pipestone, Sifton, Wallace-Woodworth, and Virden. A local display booth was set up with prizes and a slideshow presentation.

Councillor Barb Stambuski attended the Trans Canada West Planning meeting and said, "We talked about having an AMM resolution about the province forcing us to have a review every five years, and not an internal review, which costs us big money and achieves nothing."

Councillor Lachapelle reported that plans are underway to organize Handi-Van trips for seniors to Oil Caps games at a reasonable cost. He said, "The van's been running 100 percent. We may have a possible volunteer spare driver now."

MJHL SEASON UPDATE

MJHL HOCKEY DEREK HOLTOM

A lot of talk has occurred since the courts opened a path for WHL and other major junior hockey players to make the jump to the NCAA hockey level – a path previously denied to them.

This decision has caused no end of reassessments on how junior hockey works, and how junior A hockey will be affected.

In the past playing junior A hockey was the only true path in Canada to earning that coveted NCAA scholarship. Now, with the WHL being the truest path to the NCAA level, what road lies ahead to for junior A hockey players?

The answer appears to be, according to players, the CIS or Canadian University level.

Less prestigious and frankly older than the NCAA, the CIS path was previously a destination for two sorts of players – WHL or major junior players who opted not to or were not able to go pro, and high-end junior A players who didn't go the NCAA route.

The WHL previously prided themselves on offering their graduates one year of university for every year they played junior hockey. That list wasn't actually

that large – the best went professional, and from the rest, you had to find players who actually wanted to play university hockey (and not, for example, go get a trade, earn a bunch of money, and play senior hockey).

Now, with more WHL players likely jumping to the NCAA level, that should open up more spots for junior A hockey players. At least that's how the players themselves see it.

"I think with the changes, it will be harder for (junior A) players to get to the (NCAA) level," said Aidan Herring, captain for the Waywayseecappo Wolverines. "But I do think it opens up a lot more spots at Canadian universities, so that's a new way for players at this level to move up."

His thoughts were echoed by a fellow MJHL captain from Wayway's expansion cousins.

"I think with more guys going to the NCAA from (major junior), that's a better route for them," says Riley Fequet from the Swan Valley Stampede. "I think for guys like me who want to play in Canada for CIS (Canadian University), this clears the way a bit for guys like us."

So things are in flux, but junior A players still

see a path forward. A new alignment is taking place, but the MJHL is still a place for players to advance and make it to the next level. It remains to be seen if it plays out the way they see, but the math adds up.

The first MJHL Players of the Week were recently announced, with two of the three winners coming from the East Division.

The first winner is forward Griffin Krone from the Selkirk Steelers. In a pair of games Krone had three goals and four assists for seven points in two games against the lowly Winnipeg Monarchs.

The second winner is goaltender Chris Quizi from the Steinbach Pistons. Quizi won both of his starts, posting a 2.00 GAA and a .926 save percentage.

Finally, forward Logan Paquette from the Neepawa Titans was honoured thanks to his two goal, two assist effort in two games.

The first four suspensions of the year are out, headlined by Cole Babych from the Selkirk Steelers who earned an early three-game suspension for spearing.

The other three suspensions were all one game. Two were handed out for checking from behind – Nathan Forster from the Winnipeg Monarchs and Luke Mackenzie from the Niverville Nighthawks. The final suspension went to Sandro Dell'Acqua from the Winnipeg Monarchs for being the aggressor.



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Barbecue, brave stories, displays mark Orange Shirt Day



PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

Elders of Canupawakpa, survivors of residential school, prepare to speak to the crowd gathered in Victoria Park. Organizer, Trisha Hayward is at the podium.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The aroma of the barbecue was inviting as dried fall leaves fluttered from the trees in Victoria Park. Community folks and then students, many with orange shirts, attended the Orange Shirt Day commemoration there on Friday, Sept. 26.

The event included displays, speakers and dancers and was kicked off with a noon community barbecue made possible by sponsors including Tundra Oil & Gas, Valleyview Co-op, Old Dutch Chips, CD Oil Service and the Empire-Advance.

A taste of Indigenous cooking included Bannock, corn soup, and berries. Nearly a dozen cooks worked hard all morning creating these treats.

Schools of Fort La Bosse were all invited but mainly it was Virden schools in attendance.

A young mother, Kitania Flamand-Starr with her daughter Latisha in her arms attended Orange Shirt Day in the park. Members of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, they live in Brandon. Kitania says she knows the history behind her Dakota heritage including the hard parts.

"I mostly know the history of it. I mostly grew up in Sioux Valley for like 12 years. I know I have some family that are survivors."

The large photo board displays group shots of residential school students, kids of all ages with farm animals. It looks like an interesting part of their school experience; however, these children are separated from their parents, family, language and culture. It strikes a chord with Kitania and she responds saying, "I grew up without my parents for 21 years..." Her parents had addictions. She was taken into foster care at three months old.

Now, she's attending Orange Shirt Day in support of her family. She said, "I'm mostly close to my family because I want to learn more history about what happened."

Remembering and sharing the past

After students had an opportunity to see the displays, Trisha Hayward, Education Director for Canupawakpa Dakota Nation and Organizer of Orange Shirt Day, stepped to the stage and spoke about the origins of the Orange Shirt symbol, shared her

link to a painful past and introduced five elders who were residential school survivors.

Phyllis Webstad, founder of the Orange Shirt Society, was six in 1973. She was sent to her first day at the St. Joseph Mission residential school in Williams Lake, B.C. dressed in a bright orange shirt that her grandmother bought for her.

Upon arriving at the school, her new clothes (including the orange shirt) were taken away, and she never got them back.

Hayward explained to the student audience that she had met Phyllis and heard her story. "This experience left her feeling that her feelings didn't matter, and that she didn't matter. The orange shirt has since become a symbol of the loss, trauma, and resilience of residential school survivors."

Hayward went on to say, "My grandmother was a survivor. She attended the Elkhorn Residential School... just down the road from us."

Elkhorn's school was one of the first industrial schools in the province, operating from the late 1800s to 1949.

"Like many other schools, it was part of a system designed to remove Indigenous children from their families, language, and culture.... Survivors like my grandma carried those scars throughout their lives, and it's our responsibility to honor their resilience and ensure these truths are never forgotten."

Five survivors from Canupawakpa - Linda Eastman who works at Virden Junior High and at Goulter School, Gloria Eastman, Mervyn Demas, Reg Bell, and Wilson Brown - shared about their experiences. There were good times, like



Dancers conclude Orange Shirt Day in Victoria Park on Friday, Sept. 26. Here, the youngest dancers from Canupawakpa are wearing colourful outfits, stepping in rhythm with the drummers.

hockey games. And despite harsh mistreatment, even abuse, the desire to get an education was also instilled, several noted. Some lost their language. But not Linda Eastman. Linda attended Birtle Residential School for five years.

She's taught Dakota language for many years within Virden Junior High and Goulter schools. Part of her trauma led to a fear of principals. But several principals, starting with Michael Thiessen, then Don Nahachewsky helped her past that. They "showed interest in our culture and language, which made it really, really, really good - that someone is interested, like a principal. And then now today, Mrs. Ramsey, when I see her in the hallway, I just feel very comfortable..."

Linda doesn't want any student to go through the fear she experienced and her purpose in the school is to support Indigenous students. "I just want to instill pride in their language and their culture, and to be proud of who they are and where they come from."



4th annual Black Gold promises quality cattle show

By Empire-Advance staff
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On Saturday, Oct. 4, the 2025 version of the Black Gold cattle show comes to the Virden Ag grounds.

Dr. Everett More, a member of the show committee, described the event as, "an opportunity for a show and we have the facilities. The cattle coming here, by in large, are heading to big shows later this fall (Agribition and Ag-Ex)."

They expect just over 100 head from all over southwestern Manitoba and as far away as Edam, Sask. (north of Regina). The show has been moved a week later and More notes that may be for the best with the late harvest this year.

Most of these calves have never left the farm, but organizers have corral panels installed to prevent escapes.

The three show judges are Dr. Christine Ewert-Hill of Carnduff, Sask., Cole Oliver of Melita and Keith Overand of Virden.

The calves will be shown in groups of about eight head with the top two from each group going to the semi-finals, winning money as they move up. The final showdown will be a four-head contest with show champion winning \$750 and reserve \$500.

There will be classes for yearlings and a futurity class where calves shown last year return to compete.

The show committee includes: Cody Renz (chair), Everett More, Greg Tough, Amanda Scott, Trevor Nolan and Naomi Best.

There's no charge to come and see some great young cattle of all breeds this Saturday. The show gets going at 10:30am.

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From the prairies to the highlands 204 - part 5

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Now for the rest of the story of the Hunterston castle.

Madame Pauline Hunter is the current Laird of Hunterston castle. She is the fifth female to hold the title. It is a lifetime commitment, and she also has to name a successor who will succeed her upon her death, but the Lord Lion Doctor Josef Morrow has the final say.

The last piece of the Wallace Oak rests in the bottom floor of the castle. William Wallace was chained to this tree before being executed. In 1992 the tree blew down in a storm. And the Hunter Clan became the proud keeper, preserving this piece of history.

The roof trusses of the castle are interesting, as not a single nail was used, amazing!

We also encountered the youngest Hunter Knight while we were exploring the castle, Sir Bowen!

The craftsmanship of the time it was built is outstanding, this is a marvelous castle. To think it still stands today is mind boggling. Houses in Canada nowhere last the test of time like this castle.

One thing I observed was that Scotland preserves their history, unlike Canada who tear it down or destroy the work our forefathers did.

There is a garden just a few steps away

from the castle. As we approached the gate leading into the garden, our guide had to unlock the heavy gate, which opens into a beautiful, landscaped area. Such beauty! There were flowers, shrubs and fruit trees with several places to stop, sit and rest while appreciating the absolute stunning view. Surrounding the garden was a ten-foot-high stone wall to keep trouble out. Also in the garden were vegetables. In the early days food was scarce, so the people relied on the Hunters to bring in wild game to the table. Berries were also very common, but potatoes were not introduced to Scotland until the early 1700s, so they relied on meat.

It was time to say our goodbyes to Hunterston castle, so we loaded up our bus and had our roll call. We headed to our next stop, lunch at Piersland House hotel where we had a great lunch overlooking a garden of flowers and shrubs.

The memory of the Hunterston castle is still deeply entrenched in my mind. I was blown away to think that a structure built so long ago could remain so beautiful. Everything there was neat and tidy, so cared for. One other thing about the garden was that it was manicured to perfection. Our hosts were fantastic and shared their stories and answered all of our questions. This is one of the best memories of the trip. For me, leaving was bittersweet as I just loved it there. I



PHOTO BY CELIA NOLAN

Bowen Thornitt, great grandson of Donna Hunter, dressed as a strong Scotland warrior at Hunterston castle.

was excited to go on our trip, but I think a bit of me stayed at that castle. I still get a little choked up just thinking about it.

That evening back at the church we ordered pizza and just relaxed. With so much to see and take in each day, we just needed to unwind. This was the second evening of musical chairs.

The next day we were all excited to visit David Caldwell, Donald Caldwell's father.

David and his late wife Jean farmed in the Kenton area for a number of years, so I was happy to be able to visit with David. David used to come to poker night at the Kenton Legion and always entertained the folks there, be it a story or a joke, and of course with a pint!

Next week we will visit Port Patrick and hope we do not hear the bagpipes, because this may happen to you.

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Averly Brigden (Tundra), presenting to Virden Collegiate representatives Carly Kirkup and Mark Keown

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