

Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald

VOL. 112 NO. 4 PMR #40007604

Thursday, January 25, 2024

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Sask. teachers hold second one-day strike



Teachers with the Prince Albert and Area Teachers' Association demonstrated outside the office of MLA Alanna Ross during their second one-day strike on Monday. Photos courtesy of Prince Albert and Area Teachers' Association

By JORDAN TWISS
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. That's the approach being taken by Saskatchewan's educators, who on Monday, Jan. 22, hit the picket lines for a second one-day strike to push the provincial government to negotiate on their concerns over class size and complexity and safety in schools.

Once again, local teachers took part in the job action, with Shellbrook and area teachers joining their Prince Albert and Area Teachers' Association colleagues at the Cornerstone Plaza and MLA Alanna Ross' office in Prince Albert, and Spiritwood and area teachers joining their Tri-West Teachers' Association colleagues at Education Minister Jeremy Cockrill's office in North Battleford.

The teachers' first one-day strike, the first job action taken amidst a prolonged impasse with the province over a new collective bargaining agreement, was held on Tuesday, Jan. 16, with the aim of persuading the province to come back to the bargaining table.

However, Cockrill has held firm in the government's offer of a 7 per cent wage increase over the next three years, and says issues like class size and complexity shouldn't be part of the bargaining process, and should instead be addressed by school divisions.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, Jan. 18, after the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) announced its second one-day strike, Finance Minister Donna Harpauer reiterated Cockrill's points, stating that the government has acknowledged the issues of class size and complexity through \$53.1 million in additional education funding and a pair of new pilot programs.

The first, a \$3.6 million specialized support pilot program, is aimed at helping staff manage and de-escalate behavioural incidents in classrooms. Beginning in February, it will be available in eight school divisions, exclusively in urban areas, and will run until the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

The second, a \$2.5 million teacher innovation and support fund, is aimed at fostering local, teacher-led solutions while addressing classroom and student needs.

Open to applications immediately, the provincial funding will allow teachers to work with their school administration to apply for \$10,000 to \$75,000 to put toward their ideas to enhance classrooms in such areas as student achievement, student and teacher wellness, and school safety.

Like the specialized support pilot program, the teacher innovation and support fund pilot will run until the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

"The whole purpose of having a pilot project is to find something that works. Do I think it's going to be perfect right off the start? Probably not. There's probably going to be some tweaking, some things to be learned going forward," Harpauer said.

As wages dominated the discussion around the negotiations between teachers and the province once more last week, Harpauer also took issue with teachers' request for a 2 per cent annual salary increase over the next four years, along with a top up tied to the consumer pricing index (CPI), calling it "challenging" to implement.

"One year of the teachers' contract we can determine, but we have to depend on forecasters as to what CPI would be in the future," Harpauer said.

In addition to salary increases and measures to address class size and complexity and violence in

schools, the province's teachers are also asking for things like greater autonomy for educators, and rights for supply teachers, including minimum salary, paid sick leave, and the freedom to unionize.

Thus far, however, STF president Samantha Becotte says the government's negotiators have refused to bargain on 9 out of 10 of the STF's demands.

"We are giving this government every opportunity to return to the table and engage with us to find solutions," Becotte said in a statement Monday morning.

"If they continue to flat-out refuse to bargain on class size and complexity, which are the learning conditions for Saskatchewan's students, we will have no choice but to continue to exercise the only options we have left to bring them back into discussions. I strongly encourage everyone in the province to reach out to their elected officials and urge our government to send their bargaining committee back to the table and stop further disruptions to the school year."



Teachers weren't alone during their second one-day strike, as students and parents came out with signs to show their support.

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RCMP investigating Home Hardware break-in

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The Ahtahkakoop-Shellbrook RCMP detachment is seeking the public's assistance in identifying two suspects and a vehicle involved in a pair of break-and-enters at Shellbrook Home Hardware in the early hours of Tuesday, Jan. 16.

According to Cst. Courtney Merner, the first incident occurred some time between 2 a.m. and 3 a.m. The suspects then returned around 6 a.m. and stayed for only 10 minutes, suggesting to Cst. Merner that they were there to pick up specific items.

While police are still waiting on Shellbrook Home Hardware to provide a full list of items taken from the store, some of the items known to have been stolen include two generators, Dewalt power tools, and boxes of ammunition.

Though he was wearing a hat, hoodie, and mask, police have determined the first suspect they are looking for is male. He is approximately 170-178 centimetres tall (5'6" to 5'10"), with a slim build and longer darker hair (front pieces go past the eye, Cst. Merner said).

The second suspect, who waited in the vehicle, is

female. She is described as 155 to 160 centimetres tall (5'1" to 5'3"), and was wearing a puffy white jacket.

Meanwhile, police have identified the vehicle as a grey or silver Nissan Murano, mid-to-late 2000s model, with partial plate *** **W.

The suspects were last seen heading towards Main Street in Shellbrook.



Police are looking for a grey or silver Nissan Murano, with partial plate *** **W.

Anyone with information about these incidents is encouraged to call the Shellbrook RCMP detachment at 306-747-2606.



The male suspect involved in a break-in at Shellbrook Home Hardware on Tuesday, Jan. 16.

Spiritwood issues school zone safety reminder

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

With a new year in full swing and classes back in session, the Town of Spiritwood is reminding residents to obey the community's long-standing School Traffic Zone Bylaw.

"We have had numerous concerns recently regarding the recurring

issue of vehicles driving between the elementary schools during the times when such access is explicitly prohibited and when buses are dropping off students," said Town of Spiritwood administrator Rhonda Saam.

"This unauthorized activity poses a significant safety risk to our students, staff, and the overall school community."

The School Traffic Zone Bylaw has been in place since at least 2010. The current version of the bylaw, Bylaw 502/16, prohibits anyone from operating a motor vehicle, with the exception of school buses, on the 200 block of 2nd Street West in the morning from 8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m., and in the afternoon from 3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Both Rivier Elementary School and Hartley Clark Elementary School are located on the 200 block of 2nd Street West, across

the street from one another.

"The existing restrictions are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone within the school environment," Saam said, adding in a Jan. 15 post on the Town of Spiritwood's Facebook page, "Please be mindful of this signage for the safety of the children being dropped off at the elementary schools."

The penalty for violating the School Traffic Zone Bylaw is a \$50 fine.

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Bid Documents: Copies of plans can be obtained by contacting Michelle: memorial.admin@sasktel.net or 306.841.7724

Approx. Start Date: April 1st, 2024

Bid Instructions:

- » Pricing is to be provided as per plans and specification
- » Bid is to include all labour and materials
- » Contractor must have insurance

Submit Bids to memorial.admin@sasktel.net

OR

Memorial Lake Regional Park
Box 10
Shell Lake, SK
S0J 2G0

TOP NOTCH FARMING

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For more information, please visit the Sask Lotteries website www.sasklotteries.ca

Application Deadline is March 15, 2024

For projects/programs from April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025

For any questions, please contact Lydia McQuillan, at the Town Office: 306.747.4900 or townoffice@townofshellbrook.ca



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Contact Tara at 306.427.2272

R.M. OF MEDSTEAD NO. 497

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE/EQUIPMENT OPERATOR POSITION

The R.M. of Medstead No. 497 invites applications for an experienced full time Seasonal Maintenance/Equipment Operator. The Seasonal Maintenance/Equipment Operator will be responsible for mowing this municipality's ditches, rock picking, mulching in conjunction with the grader operators, installing and repairing signs and other jobs as directed by the Reeve. Opportunity may be present in the future to move into a grader operator position. Pay rates depending on experience.

The R.M. of Medstead No. 497 is located in central Saskatchewan located approximately forty five minutes north of North Battleford.

Applicants must possess a valid Class 5 driver's license and have skill and experience in maintenance and operation of equipment including tractor, mower, rock picker and mulcher.

Submit written resumes stating experience, expected wage, two references and a current driver's abstract. Deadline closes once the position is filled. All resumes shall be marked "Seasonal Maintenance/Equipment Operator Position" and dropped off at the RM Office, mailed to the address below or emailed to rm497@sasktel.net.

R.M. of Medstead No. 497

Box 12

Medstead, SK S0M 1W0

Council thanks all applicants for their interest in this position but only persons selected for interviews will be contacted.

The R.M. of Medstead No. 497 reserves the right to reject and refuse any or all expressions of interest.

Senior Elks go 3-0 over weekend

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle
Reporter

In their final push for the Twin Rivers Hockey League's postseason, the Shellbrook Elks senior hockey club had a busy weekend full of hockey and winning.

The team travelled to Birch Hills to play the Blackhawks on Friday night, took a trip to Hague to face off against the Royals on Saturday night, then closed out the weekend by hosting the Hanley Huskies at the Richardson Pioneer Recreation Centre on Sunday afternoon.

The Elks scored wins in all three games, ending the regular season on a high note with a 10-5-0-1 record.

Elks (6) vs Hawks (2)

Heading out to Birch Hills with hopes of remaining in the win column, the Elks put themselves in a good position in the middle of the first period, when Parker Turner drew first blood on the power play with assists from Nathaniel Martin and Tyler Rock. And just two minutes later Rock put the Elks up 2-0, scoring an even-strength goal on an assist from Devin Dicus.

The Blackhawks weathered the Elks' offensive storm for the remainder of the first period but couldn't hold them back in the second period, as they dialed up

the pressure and Martin scored on a solo assist from Cole Duperreault.

Then, a minute later, Duperreault gave the Elks a 4-0 stranglehold on the game, scoring on a helper from Brooks Nyberg.

Finding their skates as the second period wore on, the Blackhawks finally managed to beat Elks netminder Todd Bazley, when Parker Foffonoff scored on assists from Connor Long and Hunter Schnell, and Kyle Njaa tallied with a helper from Riley Lajunesse, cutting the Elks' lead in half.

The Elks had a response, however, as Martin scored his second of the night on an assist from Dicus to put the Elks up 5-2 going into the third period.

After the flurry of goals in the second frame, a penalty-filled third period resulted in only one goal being scored. The goal came from the Elks' penalty kill late in the period, when Duperreault made the Blackhawks pay for their careless play on the power play. The goal was unassisted.

Elks (9) vs Royals (7)

Just 24 hours after they tamed the Blackhawks, the Elks trav-

elled to Hague to dethrone the Royals. In a game with a scoresheet that reads more like a summary of a barroom brawl, the Elks managed to skate away with a hard-fought 9-7 victory.

The penalties came early and often in Saturday night's game, and frequently proved costly for the team committing the infraction.

The Elks were the first to get themselves in trouble just over a minute into the game, allowing Matthew Bueckert to draw first blood for the Royals on assists from Conrad Hofstra and Jarrett Penner.

Approaching the midway point of the first period, it was the Elks' turn on the power play and Cole Duperreault made the most of it, scoring on assists from Matthew Flodell and Ethan Beaulac. But shortly after this, the Elks' power play got itself in some trouble, allowing Brayden Lockinger to put the Royals up 2-1 with helpers from Darius Sawatsky and Jayce Wensh.

The Elks wouldn't make the same mistake again, leveraging the power play to score three unanswered goals

to close out the first period.

Duperreault netted the first, with assists from Matthew Kutnikoff and Flodell, while Jody Blais scored the second, unassisted. Tyler Rock rounded out the score card, giving the Elks a 4-2 lead on helpers from Kutnikoff and Duperreault.

In a tamer second period (in terms of penalties, at least), the Royals got the scoring started early on a goal from Bradyn Wadham, assisted by Hofstra. But the Elks had an answer, as Duperreault scored his hat trick goal on assists from Flodell and Beaulac.

The lone power play goal of the period went to the Royals, scored by Hofstra on assists from Lessmeister and Bueckert. Then, following their pattern from the first period, the Elks rattled off three unanswered goals to take a commanding 8-4 lead.

Those goals came from Kutnikoff, assisted by Devin Dicus and Nathaniel Martin, Blais, assisted by Tavis Galloway and Dicus, and Flodell, assisted by Rylan Moe.

With tempers boiling over again in the third

period, it was the Royals' turn to score three goals in a row. The first two power play goals came just 20 seconds apart, with the first one being tallied by Wensh, assisted by Steven Wolfe, and the second from Damien Tough, unassisted.

On another power play past the midway point of the third period, Wensh tallied his second goal of the night, unassisted, bringing the Royals as close as they would get.

Closing out the scoresheet, Blais made the Royals pay on the power play, scoring a short-handed goal on assists from Brendon Beaulac and Devin Dicus to give the Elks a 9-7 win.

As of Monday afternoon, the score card for the Elks' Sunday afternoon game against the Hanley Huskies had yet to be posted. The Elks won the game 11-6.

SPHL Highlights

In an equally busy weekend over in the SPHL, the Redberry Raiders and the Glaslyn North Stars both played two games, and both walked away with a 1-1 record.

The Raiders' 5-3 win, against the formerly

league leading Meota Combines on Friday evening, came on the strength of a hat trick performance by Thomas Jean (who also earned an assist). Meanwhile, Simon Gentes scored a goal and an assist, Patrick Gauthier tallied a goal, Cole Brochu earned two assists, and Austin Shumanski earned one assist.

With the win and the loss, the Raiders climbed to 3-9-0-1 on the season.

Meanwhile, the Glaslyn North Stars scored a 5-4 victory over the Turtleford Tigers during a road game on Saturday night. Once again, relative newcomer Regan Yew was an offensive star, scoring two goals and two assists on the evening.

Also on the Stars' score card were William Desjarlais with a goal and an assist, and Wade Davies and Kyle Fiddler with a goal each. In the assists column, Calvin Koczka earned two, while Darren Delaine and Robin Yew had one apiece.

With the win and the loss, the Stars sit at 5-6 on the season.


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 SCAN ME

New year brings old renewable rhetoric

To be a serious player in the game of politics, it's important for one to never miss an opportunity to score points against one's opponents.

In recent years, few in the Canadian political sphere have embodied this notion better than Premier Scott Moe, whose combative rhetoric effectively made Saskatchewan, and his Sask. Party government, the official opposition to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's federal Liberal government.

Even after the selection of Pierre Poilievre as leader of the Conservative Party – the true official opposition to Mr. Trudeau – in 2022, Mr. Moe's constant jabbing and jibing at the federal government never slowed down.

If anything, Mr. Moe dug his heels in deeper and dialed the rhetoric to 11, emboldened, perhaps, by Mr. Poilievre's surging popularity and Mr. Trudeau's abysmal polling numbers.

And last week, as headlines told of a near-disaster for Alberta's power grid, Mr. Moe was waiting in the wings, rhetoric at the ready.

Amidst a record-setting cold snap, the Alberta Electric System Operator says the province came within "half an hour" of enacting rotating power outages to keep up with the increased demand on the grid.

Such a scenario never came to pass, however, as Alberta's neighbours, including Saskatchewan, came to its aid in its time of need.

"SaskPower is providing 153 MW of electricity to AB this evening to assist them through this shortage," Mr. Moe proudly tweeted on Saturday, Jan. 13.

Then, seeing his chance to launch a partisan salvo, he added, "That power will be coming from natural gas and coal-fired plants, the ones the Trudeau government is telling us to shut down (which we won't)."

What gained less attention and no headlines (because there was no grandstanding about it) was the fact that BC Hydro supplied 200 MW of hydroelectricity (cleaner, but not entirely unproblematic) to Alberta to help it through its near-crisis.

A couple days later, Mr. Moe went all in on the petty politicking, announcing that the province was restarting the coal-powered Boundary Dam 4 unit to "support the ongoing power demands



JORDAN TWISS
~
News Editor

across western Canada."

The move (made by SaskPower and not necessarily directed by Mr. Moe or his government) was completely unnecessary. During the height of the prairie cold snap on Jan. 13, Saskatchewan's demand was 3,810 MW, well shy of the province's total generating capacity of 5,353 MW.

Saskatchewan had more than enough to spare before cynically thumbing its nose at Ottawa – especially when forecasts pointed to the cold spell tapering off into unseasonably warm temperatures this week.

Not only was it unnecessary from a demand standpoint, it was also a needless waste of SaskPower's human resources. As SaskPower spokesperson Scott McGregor explained to CTV last week, restarting the Boundary Dam 4 unit is not a "simple or quick operation."

"The conditions have to be right for us to really build a case around it," he said. "It's a very long process, it's an older facility and there's a lot of manual processes that have to take place to get that unit back online."

True to form, Mr. Moe leveraged the firing up of the Boundary Dam 4 unit to score yet more political points, taking aim at the federal government's net-zero targets.

"Net zero by 2035 is not only impossible, it's irresponsible as it would leave Saskatchewan and Western Canadian families freezing and in the dark," he tweeted.

In leveraging Alberta's near-crisis for political gain, the broader point Mr. Moe, and those in his ideological camp, were trying to make was one about renewable energy and its unreliability in extreme weather conditions.

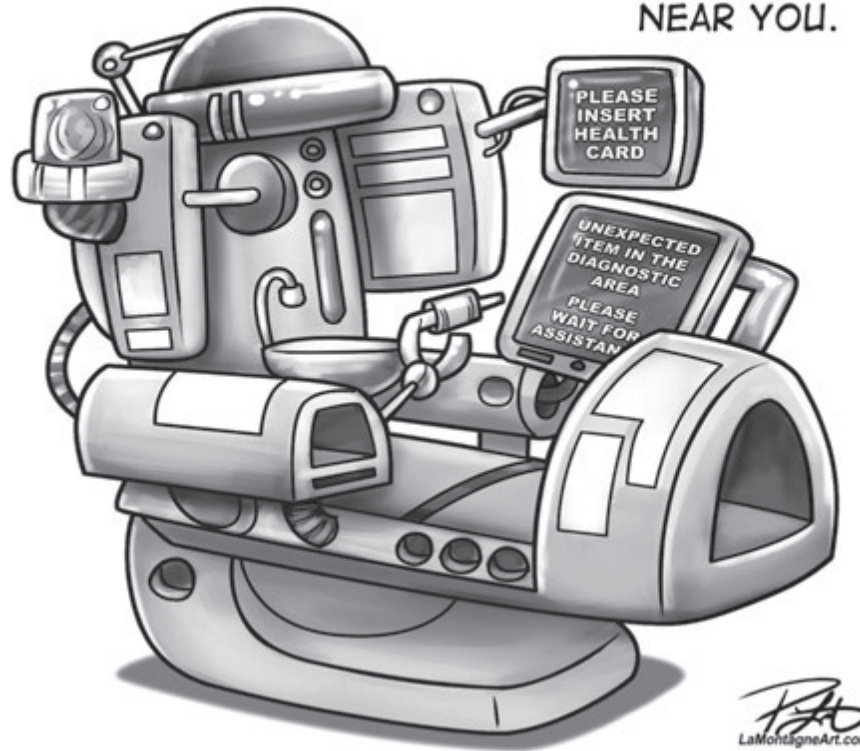
The lack of wind and solar generation during Alberta's hour of need, they say, is proof that the technologies aren't ready to do the heavy lifting to keep prairie power grids running.

Alberta Premiere Danielle Smith, who last year infamously imposed a six-month moratorium on renewable energy development in the province, also made this point (albeit, with less smug satisfaction)

In a Jan. 13 tweet, she simply said, "When renewables are unreliable, as they are now, natural gas plants must increase capacity to keep Albertans

self-checkup machines

COMING SOON TO AN EMERGENCY ROOM NEAR YOU.



warm and safe."

Though perhaps a fair argument to make, those who seem to revel in making it often conveniently leave out a few vital points that add context to Alberta's energy situation.

For starters, the near-crisis was not caused only by the lack of wind and solar generation (though, this was undeniably a factor). Exacerbating the matter were four natural gas generators, which were offline or operating at reduced capacity (some unexpectedly, others due to planned maintenance).

Moreover, rather than solely looking at Alberta's near-crisis as proof of the unreliability of wind and solar, we should be asking questions about energy storage.

For all intents and purposes, Alberta's wind and solar installations worked mostly as intended throughout the near-crisis. When temperatures dip below -30°C, windmills shutdown to avoid potential damage. And when the sun isn't shining, solar panels won't actively generate electricity.

A way to mitigate this is electricity storage, which Alberta does have in a very limited capacity.

As of 10:19 a.m. last Thursday, a day when temperatures were closer to seasonal averages, Alberta was generating 11,986 MW of power. Meanwhile, its energy storage capacity is a mere 210 MW, not enough to backstop even two per cent of the province's generation.

Last but not least, we should be examining the deregulation of Alberta's

electricity market in 2001.

Over more than two decades of deregulation, Albertans have gone from paying some of the lowest power rates in the country to among the highest. All the while, the private competitors in the provincial electricity market have failed to add to the grid to keep pace with the province's growth and maintain adequate standby generation capacity, because it's only in their interest to build capacity when it's profitable to do so.

A private, deregulated system also discourages interprovincial connections, which could help prevent energy shortfalls, as they undercut corporate profit margins.

The end result of all these contributing factors was not only the recent near-crisis, but a similar event this past summer, when Albertans were similarly asked to conserve energy to avoid rotating blackouts.

The state of Texas, Alberta's closest analogue in many ways, learned the dangers of an independent, deregulated system the hard way in 2021, when a severe winter storm crippled the state, killing hundreds.

Alberta's energy woes are serious. Too serious to be tossed around like a football by cynical politicians seeking to score cheap political points.

Canadians need governments that will work together to solve the very real challenges facing the country's power grid, before they are left in the cold and the dark.

Shellbrook Chronicle

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A Division of Pepperfram Limited Publications
Mail Registration #07621

Published Every Thursday Morning

P.O. Box 10, Shellbrook, Sask. S0J 2E0
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Friday, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. & 1 to 4 p.m.;

Advertising Deadline: Fridays at 4:00 p.m.

Websites: www.shellbrookchronicle.com
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Report from the Legislature

Saskatchewan is off to a strong start in 2024. Our growing economy continues to fuel investments in the programs and services that matter most to Saskatchewan people. With these investments in place, Saskatchewan continues to be one of the best places to live, work and raise a family.

Saskatchewan stood out for economic growth in 2023, and experts predict our province will continue to lead this year with growth expected to be pushed to more than double the national average. A major contributor to this year's economic growth will be BHP's \$6.4 billion Stage 2 expansion of the Jansen potash project. Once this project is complete, it will be the largest potash mine in the world and will provide more jobs and opportunities while continuing to drive economic growth in our province.

Economic growth from 2023 continues



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~
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to give momentum to 2024. Saskatchewan led the nation in growth in building permits in November 2023, up 83.9 per cent year-over-year. Housing starts are up too; December 2023 saw an increase of 86.4 per cent from the year before.

As our economy grows, so does our labour market. The latest numbers from Statistics Canada indicate that Saskatchewan has reached another record for job growth with 22,100 full time jobs added year-over-

year, ranking second in the nation. Our government is committed to continuing to make investments and decisions to help grow our economy, resulting in more opportunities and a higher quality of life for Saskatchewan people.

Saskatchewan's strong and growing economy means we can invest more in the areas that matter most. This February, a new specialized support classroom pilot project will be launched that focuses on helping manage and de-escalate behavioural incidents. This project will help address classroom complexity by assisting students who need targeted interventions in the short-term. Our government is providing a \$3.6 million investment to fund the pilot in eight school divisions across the province which will run until the end of the 2024-25 school year.

Also new this year is the Teacher Innovation and Support Fund,

which will foster local, teacher-led solutions while addressing classroom and student needs. Applications are now being accepted for Saskatchewan teachers to access funding for projects that assist in providing better student and teacher experiences within today's classrooms. This \$2.5 million pilot project will allow teachers to work with their school administration to apply for up to \$75,000 to put toward their ideas.

The goal of this fund is to have local, innovative ideas be brought forward to continue to enhance our classrooms in such areas as student achievement, student and teacher wellness, and school safety. Our government is listening to teachers and is engaged in finding practical solutions to improve the classroom environment for teachers and students.

We are also committed to investing in health-



HON. JEREMY HARRISON
MLA

~
Meadow
Lake
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people can receive the care they need when they need it. The Health Human Resources Action Plan introduced in the fall of 2022 to recruit, train, incentivize and retain healthcare workers continues to show strong results. A total of 131 nurses from the Philippines have arrived in Saskatchewan, 21 of which have begun working in communities across the province.

Since December 2022, 964 nursing graduates have been hired from across Saskatchewan

and Canada. Since September 2021, 259 physicians have been recruited to Saskatchewan, including 105 family physicians and 154 specialists.

To further support healthcare in our province, our government is committed to investing healthcare training programs. An additional investment of \$850,000 will add 25 seats to the Mental Health and Wellness Diploma program at the Saskatchewan Institute of Technologies. This funding helps to not only meet labour demands in our growing healthcare sector, but also ensures our communities receive the care and support they need.

As Saskatchewan continues to experience growth, our government is committed to building and protecting our province for generations to come. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact my constituency office.

Sask. takes new approach to helping drug users

Under the new Action Plan for Mental Health and Addictions, the Government of Saskatchewan is focused on getting more people the treatment they need to overcome addictions and live healthy, safe lives in recovery. As part of the transition to a Recovery-Oriented System of Care, changes are being made to how the healthcare system responds to illicit drug use issues.

The provision of pipes for smoking methamphetamine, crack cocaine and other illicit drugs will be discontinued. The practice of providing materials with instructions on how to use illicit drugs will also be discontinued. No third-party organization will be permitted to use funding provided by the Ministry of Health or the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) for these purposes.

"Providing taxpayer-funded pipes for smoking illicit drugs and instructions for how to use them sends the wrong message to people who we want to help," Mental Health and Addictions Minister Tim McLeod said in a statement. "Instead, the message coming from the healthcare system should be that there is hope for recovery, and there is help available through treatment."

Announced in Fall 2023, Saskatchewan's new Action Plan for Mental Health and Addictions will add at least 500 more addictions treatment spaces to the publicly funded healthcare system to double capacity for treatment. A total of 168 treatment spaces have been announced so far, including 26 post-treatment spaces at St. Joseph's Addiction Recovery Centre in Estevan, 32 intensive outpatient treatment spaces through Possibilities Recovery Cen-

tre in Saskatoon, 36 virtual treatment spaces through EHN Canada, 14 inpatient treatment spaces at the former Drumming Hill Youth Centre facility in North Battleford, and 60 inpatient treatment spaces through EHN Canada near Lumsden, close to Regina. Work is also underway to implement a central intake system to make treatment more easily accessible to people when they need it.

"The goal of the healthcare system should always be getting people the treatment they need to overcome addictions and live healthy, safe lives in recovery," McLeod said. "How the healthcare system responds to people who have yet to walk the path to recovery needs to strike a balance with public safety priorities."

Consistent with public safety priorities, naloxone will continue to be provided for free through the Take Home Naloxone program. Since it was introduced in 2015, over 40,000 people have been trained to use naloxone and nearly 10,000 overdoses have been reversed by members of the public with naloxone provided by the program. Take Home Naloxone kits are available free of charge at over 400 locations across Saskatchewan, with more locations to come.

To assist law enforcement and the healthcare system with monitoring the toxicity of illicit drugs, and to help users better understand the risks associated with illicit drugs, test strips for fentanyl and benzodiazepine contamination will also continue to be available. The use of drug checking infrared spectrometers will also continue for the same purpose. A new Provincial Drug Alert System was


recently launched to further enhance these efforts. The goal of drug alerts is to increase awareness of the dangers associated with illicit drugs and the presence of other toxic substances that further increase the risk of overdose and death.

To strike a balance with public safety priorities, needle exchanges will be required to operate on an exchange basis. Getting back used needles that can be littered in communities or otherwise improperly disposed of is a core purpose of needle exchanges. The other core purpose is to reduce the spread of bloodborne illnesses such as HIV and hepatitis C to avoid pressure on the healthcare


system that can result from the spread of bloodborne illnesses.

To support people struggling with addictions and other at-risk individuals in the community, new Community Wellness Buses are planned for 2024 with a mandate to provide primary healthcare services, assistance with accessing services and supports, and referrals for other services that they may need.

Changes throughout the healthcare system are effective immediately. Savings that result will be redirected to enhancing needle pickup services. Needle exchanges will be required to provide this service in the communities in which they operate.



JUNIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR



2024 JUNIOR
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Minutes of an RM of Spiritwood meeting

(Where necessary, the following minutes may have been edited for clarity or brevity)

The Regular Meeting of the Council of the Rural Municipality of Spiritwood No. 496 was held on Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023.

In attendance were, Reeve Shirley Dauvin, Division 1 Larry Vaagen, Division 2 Dale Wasden, Division 3 Terry Wingerter, Division 4 Dennis Laventure, Division 6 Bevra Fee, Administrator Colette Bussiere, and Foreman Darcy Laventure.

Absent was, Division 5 Heather Warkentin.

A quorum being present the meeting was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Reeve, Shirley Dauvin.

Fee: That the Foreman's report having been read now be filed. Carried

Wasden: That gravel royalty be increased to \$3.00 per cubic yard. Carried

Vaagen: That the minutes of the Oct. 10, 2023, Regular Meeting of Council be approved as presented. Carried

Laventure: That the Administrator's report having been read now be filed. Carried

11:00 am - Public Hearing (Bylaw No. 2023-4) Zoning Bylaw Map Amendment

The public hearing to hear comments on Bylaw No. 2023-4, being a Bylaw of the Rural Municipality of Spiritwood No. 496 to Amend the Zoning District Map of Bylaw No. 4-2015 also known as the Zoning Bylaw was called to order at 11 a.m. by Reeve, Shirley Dauvin.

Present: Reeve Shirley Dauvin, Councillor Larry Vaagen, Councillor Dale Wasden, Councillor Terry Wingerter, Councillor Dennis Laventure, Councillor Heather Warkentin, Councillor Bevra Fee, CAO Colette Bussiere, Developer Darren Ulmer, Adjacent Landowners, Mal & Delores Buckingham.

CAO Colette Bussiere provided information on the bylaw under consideration.

Darren Ulmer provided information regarding the proposed subdivision application and the benefits the subdivision will provide for the RM & the community.

Delores Buckingham spoke to their concerns regarding overdevelopment of Meeting Lake, and the disregard for their fence and private property by individuals quadding and boaters.

Councillor Terry Wingerter reiterated there is a lack of respect for ag lands by individu-

als.

Two written submissions received: RM of Meeting Lake No. 466, Shawn Gryba.

One verbal submission via phone call: Donna Allchurch.

Darren Ulmer provided closing remarks.

There were no further comments regarding the proposed amendment to the Zoning District Map.

Reeve, Shirley Dauvin declared the public hearing closed at 11:38 a.m.

The regular meeting of council was called back to order at 11:38 a.m.

Wingerter: That Bylaw No. 2023-4, being a Bylaw to Amend the Zoning District Map in Bylaw No. 4-2015, known as the Zoning Bylaw be read a second time. Carried

Fee: That Bylaw No. 2023-4, being a Bylaw to Amend the Zoning District Map in Bylaw No. 4-2015, known as the Zoning Bylaw be read a third time. Carried

Vaagen: That the bank reconciliation for the month ending Oct. 31, 2023, be accepted as presented. Carried

Laventure: That the "List of Accounts" as listed on the attached Schedule "A" forming part of these minutes be passed for payment: Cheque No. 14445-14481 (\$114,572.37), Payroll File No.435,437 & 438 (\$50,428.89), EFT No.2023-0068-0075 (\$114,169.55). Carried

Wasden: That the Statement of Financial Activities for the month ending Oct. 31, 2023, be approved as presented. Carried

Laventure: That we acknowledge the interim audit report and approve the adjusting journal entries provided by Sensus CPA Ltd. for the period ending Aug. 31, 2023.

Laventure: That the request to construct a heavy haul road from Hwy 24 to access a proposed BioEnergy Plant to be located on NW 22-54-12-W3 be approved under the condition the new road does not encroach into the Penn Cemetery. Carried

Wasden: That the snow clearing policy be revised as follows: The RM of Spiritwood No. 496 public works employees will only provide snow removal services on municipal roads that provide access to an assessed, occupied residence or commer-

cial operation. Carried

Vaagen: That the dust control policy be revised as follows: The maintenance of municipal infrastructure is necessary and shall take precedent. The RM reserves the right to gravel and/or grade roads where dust control products may have been applied. Carried

Wasden: That the Delegation Policy be approved as presented. Carried

Wasden: That the Ratepayer Snow Removal Policy be approved acknowledging the policy applies to non-maintained seasonal roads. Carried

Laventure: That the initial division boundary review recommendations be accepted as presented. Carried

Laventure: That Council for the Rural Municipality of Spiritwood hereby accepts the Regional Community Safety Officer Partnership Report prepared by Tantus Consulting and dated Oct. 23, 2023. Carried

Dauvin: The Council of Rural Municipality of Spiritwood No. 496 supports the application for a Targeted Sector Support (TSS) Initiative Cost-shared Grant for future capacity building, in partnership with the following municipalities: RM of Meota No. 468, RM of North Battleford No. 437, RM of Mervin No. 499, Village of Glaslyn, Resort Village of Cochin;

And, that we agree to meet the legislated standards, to meet the terms and conditions of the TSS Initiative Cost-shared Grant, to conduct any open tendering processes and to fund 23% of the municipal share of the project as outlined in the grant application;

And, that we approve the Rural Municipality of Meota No. 468 as the lead applicant to sign and submit the application to the TSS Steering Committee for review. Carried

Vaagen: That the discretionary use application for a Salvage Yard & Repair Shop located on NE 21-52-11-W3 be approved. Carried

Vaagen: That we have no objection to the transfer of NE 06-49-12-W3 to TLE status. Carried

Laventure: That Council for the Rural Municipality of Spiritwood No. 496 intends to pass a bylaw prohibiting the sale of

liquor in the municipality. Carried

Laventure: That we enter into road maintenance agreements with Tolko Industries Ltd. to haul timber from the following land locations:

- E 1/2 16, N 1/2 30, NE 17, NW 10, SE 20 & W 1/2 31 of 53-13-W3
- SE 26, NE 26, NW 26, SW 35 & SE 35 of 54-10-W3
- NW 25-54-11-W3, N 1/2 26 & SW 26-54-11-W3, NE 22-54-11-W3
- NW 27-53-12-W3
- SW 27, NE 28, SE 22, SW 23, SE 23 & NE 14 of 54-11-W3. Carried

Vaagen: That we approve the request to remove dead and dying woody vegetation (trees) within the Environmental Reserve (ER) fronting Lot 6/Blk 1 in The Cove. The applicant is solely responsible for all design, safety, and workmanship aspects associated with this approval and all work must be completed in accordance with the regulations of the Water Security Agency's Aquatic Habitat Protection Permit;

And, that the request to level the ER & haul in sand be declined. Carried

Wasden: That we abate the 2023 solid waste disposal fee for Roll No. 4150 000 as the residential dwelling is vacant. Carried

Laventure: That council wishes to have the NE 30-49-08-W3 reserved from sale until the lands can be explored for gravel resources. Carried

Wasden: That the request by the property owner to waive the \$100 RV site fee be declined. Carried

Wasden: That the council meeting be closed to the public at 2:39 pm under the authority of Part III of The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, to go in camera to discuss Human Resources. Carried

CAO Colette Bussiere left council chambers at 2:39 p.m.

CAO Colette Bussiere returned to the council meeting at 2:42 p.m.

The regular meeting of council was out of camera and resumed at 2:42 p.m.

Wasden: That the correspondence, having been read, now be filed. Carried

Laventure: That the meeting be adjourned.

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MLA for Rosthern-Shellbrook
scottmoe.mla@sasktel.net



Public funding vital for ag research

It is that time of year when agriculture gets something of optimism for the future of the sector.

That boost in hope for farming's future comes from the series of research projects being supported with grants – many of those announcements come as a new year dawns.

If you were following all the announcements, you might think great advances will occur virtually overnight. But ultimately, research by its nature is a slow process, and there will often be unexpected bumps along the way to overcome.

That means develop-

ing just a single new variety of a cereal might take years, and if the research is attempting to do something beyond yield, better drought, or specific disease resistance as examples – it becomes trickier and trickier and will typically take more time.

So, research is time consuming, and that equates to generally being costly too.

A project requires staff effort and resources over a number of years, and that means annual costs that must be paid on the hope the research succeeds. Not every project started is going to result in something farmers will ever grow or use.



CALVIN DANIELS

So, when the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers (SPG) announces funding for a new pulse-specific research program through the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture's Strategic Research Initiative (SRI) under the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership (Sustainable CAP), SPG's invest-

ment of over \$670,000, leveraged for a total investment in pulse root rot research of over \$4.4 million, reads like a lot of money – and it sort of is.

But the project is a five-year one, and as noted, research does not guarantee success.

And, even when research delivers something new and positive, there may well be a protracted regulatory process to move through before farmers get to grow or use whatever researchers created.

While the regulatory process is merited in terms of consumer safety, even in terms of what impact something newly

developed might have on existing crops, the time element is a factor.

Investors like a positive return as quickly as possible, and research of any kind is simply not quick.

That means a lot of agriculture research is carried out by very large corporations, with very deep pockets financially. It's good that the work is being done, but such effort does come with a caveat regarding who will own the results of that research – and it most likely will never be farmers.

That's why government investment remains so important, because it means the

public have a role in research funding through federal and provincial government grants.

Seeing news recently that 29 crop science projects from researchers at the University of Saskatchewan (USask) have received a total of close to \$7.5 million from the Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan, and more than \$2.5 million in co-funding from industry partners, is a good thing.

Whether it's enough remains a question of course, but at least public dollars are being invested in the future of the sector that feeds us, and that's a generally positive thing.

Minutes of a Spiritwood Town Council meeting

(Where necessary, the following minutes may have been edited for clarity or brevity)

The regular meeting of the Council of the Town of Spiritwood was held in the Council Chambers at the Spiritwood Town Office, 212 Main Street, on Nov. 28, 2023, at 7 p.m.

In attendance were, Mayor Gary von Holwede, Councillor Jim Bedi, Councillor George Pretli, Councillor Bryan Wingerter, Councillor Mark Corfield, Councillor Ragnar Latus, Councillor Shane Colley, and CAO Rhonda Saam.

A quorum being present, Mayor Von Holwede called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Pretli: That the agenda be adopted as presented. Carried

Bedi: That the minutes of the regular meeting on Oct. 23, 2023, be approved as presented. Carried

Corfield: That the correspondence be filed as presented. Carried

Pretli: That the Accounts for Ratification, Cheque No. 32866 to 32868 and payments #1482 to 1502 in the amount of \$50,883.48 be approved as presented. Carried

Wingerter: That the Accounts for Approval, Cheque No. 32869 to 32909 & payments #1503 to 1515 in the amount of \$111,683.60 be approved as presented. Carried

Wingerter: That the Bank Reconciliation for the month of October 2023 be approved as presented. Carried

Wingerter: That the Financial Statement for the month of October 2023 be approved as presented. Carried

Wingerter: That the reports be filed as presented. Carried

Latus: That we provide municipal approval for Into the Weeds Cannabis to carry nicotine vapes for sale at their business located at 103 Main Street (Lot 33, Block 3) Spiritwood, Sask. Carried

Wingerter: That we approve forwarding the attached outstanding utility accounts past 90 days as of Nov. 2, 2023, to the Tax Roll. Carried

Wingerter: That Bylaw No. 551/23, a bylaw to provide waste & recycle collection, be read a first time. (Editor's note: the bylaw was unanimously given three readings and adopted.)

Colley: That we approve Policy 6-1 - Civic Centre as amended under section 5.2, as

attached to form part of the minutes. Carried

Colley: That we rescind Policy No 15 - Employee Evaluations and replace with Policy 2-9 - Employee Evaluations Policy, effective immediately, as attached to form part of the minutes. Carried

Bedi: That we approve Policy 2-10 Cell Phone Use & Allowance (option 3) as attached to form part of the minutes. Carried

Wingerter: That we approve Policy 2-11 Unpaid & Bereavement Leave, as attached to form part of the minutes. Carried

Wingerter: That we rescind Policy No 13 - Waste Management and replace with Policy 4-1 - Transfer Station Policy, effective immediately, as attached to form part of the minutes. Carried

Wingerter: The Council of the Town of Spiritwood confirms the municipality meets the eligibility requirements to receive the Municipal Revenue Sharing Grant;

And, that we authorize the Administrator to sign the Declaration of Eligibility and submit it to the Ministry of Government Relations. Carried

Wingerter: That we approve a partial tax abatement of the 2023 taxes in the amount of \$606.54, for the municipal portion on the improvement for the following property that had the house burn in May of 2023: Roll 620 000 - Blk/Par B-Plan 101783493;

And, that SAMA maintenance be adjusted for the following year. Carried

Wingerter: That for 2023 & 2024, we appoint Chris Gates with BuildTech Consulting & Inspections Inc. as a Designated Officer under the Nuisance Bylaw No. 419/05, which provides for the Abatement of Nuisances in the Town of Spiritwood. Carried

Wingerter: That we approve Kaeli Cross request to work from home one day a week due to childcare shortages and re-evaluate this again in three months during the first council meeting on April 9, 2024;

And, that the Economic Development Officer, Sue Kahl, will work at the Spiritwood Recreation Facility to assist with operations on the days that Kaeli not able to work in the Events & Recreation Coordinator office. Carried

Wingerter: That we write a letter to the RM of Spiritwood asking them to waive the

interest charges on invoice #2023-00112, as well as settle with cutting the invoice in half. Carried

Latus: That we send a letter to town property owners to notify them to purchase adequate property insurance for fire services and liability insurance, as we will be entering into an agreement with the RM of Spiritwood to provide fire suppression services;

And, that we also send Spiritwood and surrounding area insurance providers a letter as well. Carried

Bedi: That we approve work order #ORD465443 from Clark's Supply & Service Ltd. to repair the Hotsy Steamer Unit. Carried

Latus: That this meeting be adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPIRITWOOD: Wapiti Regional Library - Tuesday 9am - 5pm; Wednesday 9am - 5pm; Friday 9am - 5pm

LEOVILLE: Wapiti Regional Library - Wednesday 10am - 4pm; Thursday 10am - 3pm

SHELL LAKE: Wapiti Regional Library - Tuesday 11am - 4pm; Wednesday 12pm - 5pm

BLAINE LAKE: Wapiti Library - Wednesday 1pm - 6pm; Thursday 1pm - 6pm; Friday 1pm - 6pm; Saturday 10am - 3pm. Contact us for more info 306-497-3130, www.wapitilibrary.ca.

BIG RIVER: Wapiti Library - Tuesday 11:30am - 4:30pm; Wednesday 11:30am - 4:30pm; Thursday 11:30am - 4:30pm. Phone # 306-469-2152

CANWOOD: Canwood Branch of Wapiti Regional Library. Tuesday 10am - 3:30pm; Thursday 2pm - 6pm; Friday 1:30pm - 5pm. Kids Club is Fridays 3:30pm - 4:30pm, Crafter's Choice is the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month.

DEBDEN: Wapiti Library hours: Tuesday 10am - 4pm; Wednesday 1pm - 7pm. Librarian: Aline Hannon

LEASK: Wapiti Library & Legacy Gallery Hours - Tuesday 9am - 2pm; Wednesday 3pm - 6pm; Friday 1pm - 5pm

MARCELIN: Wapiti Library - Thursday 2pm - 7pm; Saturday 9am - 2pm. For information on all your library needs, please contact 306-226-2110.

SHELLBROOK: Shellbrook Branch of the Wapiti Library located at 105 Railway Ave., West (Provincial building). Library Hours: Monday 2pm - 6pm; Tuesday 2pm - 8pm; Wednesday 2pm - 8pm; Thursday 12pm - 6pm; Friday 10 am - 5pm (Story Time 10:30am - 11:30am); Saturday 10am - 4pm.

SPIRITWOOD: SaskCanola is bringing a Top Notch Farming meeting to Spiritwood on February 6th. Agenda includes canola, barley, and flax agronomy updates plus grain contracts and grain marketing. Visit saskcanola.com to register. Lunch will be provided.

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A Guide to POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Sask Polytech welding apprentice crowned first Miss Rodeo Agribition

By SASKATCHEWAN
POLYTECHNIC

“As long as dedication is there, it can take you anywhere. I have so much passion and dedication for welding and rodeo,” says Arianna Dyck, who was crowned the first Miss Rodeo Agribition in November.

Currently studying welding at Saskatchewan Polytechnic Moose Jaw campus for her level one technical training, Dyck is taking apprenticeship training through an agreement with her employer and the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission.

“When I’m not training at Sask Polytech, I’m out in the field working and getting experience,” Dyck explains.

Ready to add Miss Rodeo Agribition duties to her schedule, the new official brand ambassador of the Canadian Western Agribition (CWA) says she’s received great support from her peers and instructors at Sask Polytech.

“With the title I currently have of Miss Rodeo Agribition, I want to show people to follow their heart and do what they want to do because in the end, they will live a more fulfilling life,” she notes.

As part of the competition, Dyck had to do rodeo challenges, present

a speech and complete an interview. Highlighting life in a skilled trade where women are underrepresented was a key element in her platform.

“I talked about women in the trades because it’s a topic that’s important to me. For me, it means a lot being a minority in such a male dominated industry. With my journey in welding, I want to show women that we can do it just the same as anybody else. No matter who you are, you can do anything,” she says.

Her interview also stood out to the panel of judges, recalls Shaun Kindopp, CWA CEO.

“Arianna’s interview was fantastic. By the end of it, people wanted to jump up on the table. She’s a great speaker and a wonderful first Miss Rodeo Agribition,” he explains, noting she was among three finalists vying for the crown.

Dyck’s passion for rodeo and barrel racing flourished in high school, which is also when she discovered welding. As she explored her post-secondary options, she knew Sask Polytech was the right fit to achieve her career goals.

“Sask Polytech has resources like short course options. I had the opportunity to try Metalworking Madness,” she says. The Continuing Education course geared to underrepresented



Photo submitted by Saskatchewan Polytechnic

groups including females, Indigenous people, newcomers, people with disabilities and youth enabled Dyck to further solidify her career choice. “It was very insightful and helped guide me towards being a welder.”

For the next year, Dyck will travel to various communities and schools to represent the CWA as Miss Rodeo Agribition.

With her future as bright as welding sparks, Dyck plans on advancing her

career and continuing to be a competitor in rodeos. In three years, she sees herself as having completed the welder journey person certification and continuing to be a voice for women in the field.

“Trades are an awesome place to work. I want to be an advocate for women in trades, and I want to keep pursuing my love of barrel racing and improve my horsemanship.”

Learn more at saskpolytech.ca.

Finding purpose in supporting others

By MEDICINE HAT
COLLEGE

Ernest Torniado always knew he wanted to help others.

Trained as a massage therapist, Ernest enjoyed the ability to work closely with his patients to discover suitable treatment plans but due to the repetitive nature of the work, he found himself in a state of burnout, considering other opportunities. When the COVID-19 pandemic forced him out of work for three months, he was ready to find a new career in the healthcare industry.

A path to physiotherapy

With an interest in physiotherapy, Ernest moved from Saskatchewan to enroll in the Occupational Therapist Assistant/Physical Therapist Assistant (OTA/PTA) diploma at Medicine Hat College (MHC). This two-year program trains students to work

under the direction of occupational therapists and physiotherapists, helping clients to successfully perform daily activities and mobilize after illness or injury.

“Becoming a therapy assistant allowed me to continue working within the healthcare scope, but more so on the rehab side,” explains Ernest, who began the OTA/PTA program in Fall 2020 with an initial plan to pursue physiotherapy. He chose MHC for its ability to transfer the diploma to institutions like Athabasca University, Thompson Rivers University and University of Calgary for degree completion.

Upon finishing the program in 2022, he returned to Saskatchewan and took a role as an OTA at St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon. His role focuses on helping patients perform daily activities independently, such as getting dressed, feeding,

and cleaning themselves.

“Working in a hospital, I’m able to see patients under different types of conditions and levels of abilities and I’m able to create a relationship with them. I like seeing their progress to recovery and getting them out of the hospital.”

As the main point-of-contact throughout their treatment, Ernest enjoys being an advocate for his patients and working closely with occupational therapists to find and adjust recovery plans, based on patient needs.

Supporting student success

Now, still closely linked to his educational roots, Ernest supports current MHC students during their practicum placements. Seeing an ongoing demand for OTA/PTAs in Saskatchewan, he hopes graduates will return to support hospitals and rehabilitation centers in need of staff.

Continued on page 9




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A Guide to POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Finding purpose in supporting others

Continued from 8

“When I started my job at St. Paul’s, one of four hospitals here in Saskatoon, I was only the second or third therapy assistant ever to be hired. Currently, I am the only therapy assistant working in the whole hospital, covering eight wards, so there is definitely a need for therapy assistants.”

Ernest believes empathetic

individuals with a passion for helping others and making a difference in their patients’ recovery journeys would be most successful in an occupational therapy assistant role.

To learn more about becoming an OTA/PTA, or other rewarding careers, visit www.mhc.ab.ca/SKStudents and find your path with us.



Photo submitted by Medicine Hat College

USask College of Nursing expands nursing education in Saskatchewan

By **KYLIE KELSO**
Senior Marketing and Communications Specialist, University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing

Since 2012, the University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing has been offering the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program at various locations throughout Saskatchewan. At the end of 2023, USask Nursing announced the addition of two distributed nursing sites – Lloydminster and North Battleford.

Beginning September 2024, students interested in taking the BSN program will be able to complete their entire degree at USask campuses in Saskatoon and Prince Albert or at nursing sites in La Ronge, Île-à-la-Crosse, Yorkton, Lloydminster, and North Battleford.

“We have listened to the residents of Saskatchewan and expanded to locations in the

province where students previously could not access our BSN program,” said USask College of Nursing dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur). “It is important our program offering is inclusive of rural areas of the province that have been previously underserved.”

The College of Nursing Learn Where You Live model has proven to be successful at distributed sites in La Ronge, Île-à-la-Crosse, and Yorkton. Since the first students entered the BSN program in La Ronge and Île-à-la-Crosse in September 2012, 66 nursing students have completed their degree in northern Saskatchewan. Since starting the program in Yorkton in 2014, 81 students have graduated.

When nursing students complete their degree in their community, the majority of graduates stay and practice there. Our northern communities need northern nurses, who are familiar with the culture and people. Saskatch-

ewan has a large Indigenous population, particularly in northern Saskatchewan.

“In order to provide quality nursing care, we must actively contribute to a representative nursing workforce that is responsive to the needs of the province,” said Dr. Richter.

“We have a long history of Indigenous student success and are recognized as having the highest number of self-declared Indigenous nursing students in the country. 16.6% of seats in the BSN program are reserved for Indigenous applicants.”

By expanding to Lloydminster and North Battleford, the College of Nursing aims to ensure all students in Saskatchewan have access to registered nursing education. When these students complete their nursing degree, they will help to fill unmet registered nursing workforce needs in northwest Saskatchewan.

Continued on page 10



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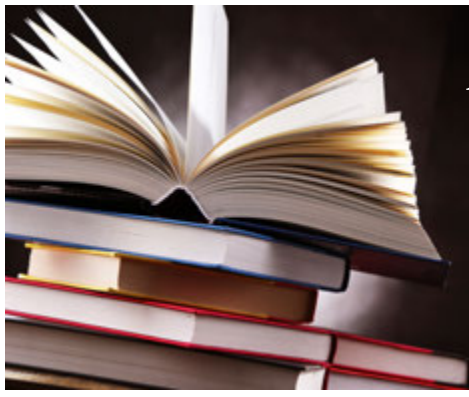
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A Guide to POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

USask College of Nursing expands nursing education in Saskatchewan

Continued from 9
“By offering the BSN program at our distributed nursing sites, we are giving students the opportunity to learn where they live in La

Ronge, Île-à-la-Crosse, Yorkton, Lloydminster, and North Battleford,” adds Dr. Richter. “We are decreasing the likelihood of these rural and remote com-

munities experiencing a registered nursing shortage, as the students who complete their nursing education in these communities, will likely practice in

the community once licensed.”

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For more information on the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing, please visit nursing.usask.ca.



The University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing offers the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at seven locations throughout Saskatchewan. Photo submitted by Medicine Hat College

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By **SUNCREST COLLEGE**

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Photo submitted by Suncrest College

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Online fun with Ohtani free-agent saga

Twitter, or X, as owner Elon Musk has renamed it, can be wonderful, or it can be an annoyance. A plethora of crap is displayed on the social media site, but there's also a lot of valuable information that can be fulfilling. Or useless.

But X really came to life a couple of weeks before Christmas, before Shohei Ohtani had made his decision where to sign his free-agent contract. And when the hottest rumour in baseball had Ohtani perhaps inking a pact with the Toronto Blue Jays, sports fans in Canada couldn't get enough from Twitter.

Someone in California on that day, Dec. 8, spotted an aviation note from the John Wayne Airport in Anaheim, whereby a private jet was taking off, destined for Toronto. That's all it took for the Ohtani-to-the-Blue Jays hype to surge into overdrive.

Hookah Doncic tried to put water on the rumour fire, saying: "He lives in Seattle in the off-season."

Talkin Baseball weighed in: "Shohei

Ohtani is travelling to Toronto today. He has not signed a contract with any team at this time, per @jonmorosi."

Said Ben Verlander: "The plane from Anaheim to Toronto is currently the most tracked airplane in the world. And not a single soul tracking it has any idea if it's Shohei or not."

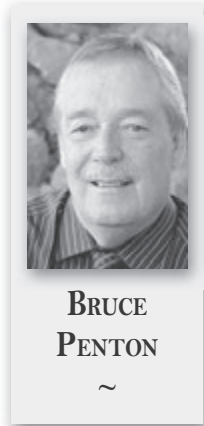
Alden Gonzales had a submission: "Source: Shohei Ohtani has not made a decision yet. That's not to say it won't ultimately be the Blue Jays; my understanding is that, at this point, that decision has not been made."

Said Matt: "We all know where he's going to end up," as he posted a picture of Ohtani in a Rays' uniform.

Said John: "He's going to the Cubs. I talked to him the other day."

Now it was Etherfuse's turn: "He's just trying to decide which Dodger hat he likes the best."

Some humour from Mike Petriello: "A direct flight from LA- to London is about to arrive, indicating Ohtani is about



BRUCE
PENTON

to sign with Arsenal."

More humour, from Joseph Garino: "Source: Shohei Ohtani will be making his decision at Four Seasons Landscaping later today."

Clarence Fraser added fuel: "Yusei Kikuchi (Jays' Japanese pitcher) reserves entire upscale sushi restaurant near Rogers Centre for tonight. Reservation for 50-plus people. Make of it what you will."

Countered Spencer: "That was a surprise party for his wife. Thanks a lot."

And then Vancouver humourist Steve Burgess did what he does best; "When out in right field there arose such a clat-

ter; I ran to home base to see what was the matter; When what to my wondering eyes did appear; But Shohei Ohtani in full Blue Jays gear!"

Of course, we now know Ohtani signed a 10-year contract the next day with the Dodgers for \$700 million US (almost \$1 billion Canadian) and Twitter will be quieter from here on in. (The plane, by the way, was carrying Canadian millionaire Robert Herjavec, a regular on the TV show, Shark Tank.)

Jack Finarelli at his sportscurmudgeon.com site, on a TV commercial where Peyton Manning tosses cans of Bud Light to patrons throughout the bar: "Can you imagine the clean-up mess in that bar as about 50 people open cans of Bud Light that have been thrown to them that they caught — presumably on the fly? That establishment will smell of stale beer for a month after that event."

Late night funnyman Jimmy Kimmel, carrying on the public feud with NFL quarterback Aar-

on Rodgers: "Rodgers got two A's on his report card, and they were both in his first name."

Jason Gay of the Wall Street Journal, on former Patriots' coach Bill Belichick's sideline demeanour: "Belichick looked like a grumpy lobster boat captain, grimacing on the New England sideline like he's miles from shore in a storm."

Mike Bianchi of the Orlando Sentinel: "Is it time for Jacksonville Jaguars fans to come to the realization that Trevor Lawrence is much closer to being Jon Kitna than John Elway?"

Another one from Bianchi, on Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh and allegations of wrongdoing: "If you believe Harbaugh and his coaching staff are innocent, you probably also believe there are a bunch of crime fighting Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles living in the sewers beneath New York City."

Headline at fark.com: "NCAA president: 'Because we told you Michigan was cheating, that means that they won fair

and square."

RJ Currie of sportsdeke.com: "While watching team USA win the World Junior Hockey championship at a friend's, nobody noticed his Labrador eating the Christmas tree trimmings. Now the vet says the dog has tin-selitis."

Headline at the onion.com: "Bob Kraft: We're Already Searching Through Insane Asylums For A Possible Belichick Replacement"

Headline at fark.com, after New England owner Robert Kraft promoted linebackers' coach Jerold Mayo to head coach, replacing Bill Belichick: "Kraft holds the Mayo."

Bob Molinaro of pilotonline.com (Hampton, Va.): "While cranky, conspiracy-minded Aaron Rodgers should be fit for a tinfoil helmet, his Jets teammates voted him their 'most inspirational player for 2023.' Rodgers, you may recall, was on the field for four plays. We're not expected to understand."

Care to comment? Email brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca

Parkland U18 AA Elks' hot streak ends

By JORDAN TWISS

Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

After a month without recording a loss, the Parkland U18 AA Elks' hot streak came to an end over the weekend, as the team hosted the Warman Wildcats on Friday night, before travelling to Saskatoon to face the Screaming Eagles on Saturday evening.

Elks (2) vs Wildcats (3)

In Friday night's game at the Richardson Pioneer Recreation Centre, the power play proved to be the main factor in deciding the Elks' fate. The

Wildcats made the Elks pay for taking penalties by scoring all their goals on the man advantage, starting with their first goal around the middle of the first period, scored by Logan Normand and assisted by Devon Johannesson.

Though they surrendered the first goal, the Elks controlled much of the opening period, outshooting the Wildcats by a wide margin and spending most of their time in the offensive end. Despite some strong pressure and a power play to close out the first frame, the Elks just couldn't find the back of the net.



Elks forwards Aiden Tait and Jake Boettcher crash the net looking for a loose puck in action against the Warman Wildcats on Friday night.

This all changed just 20 seconds in the second period, however, when the Elks leveraged the remainder of a power play to pull even at 1-1. Brody Anderson netted the goal, with assists from Jake Boettcher and Cohen Tait.

As the period wore on, sloppy play and another penalty proved costly for the Elks, allowing the Wildcats to reclaim their lead on a goal by Jared Vannesta, assisted by Landyn Bueckert.

But the Elks went right back on the offensive just over a minute later, tying the game on a blast of a shot by Jesse Nyberg. Lane Keyowski and Boettcher assisted on the play.

Taking a 2-2 tie in the third period, the Elks once again created trouble for themselves by taking penalties, allowing Markus Thompson to score what would become the game winner for the Wildcats. Carson Rinas assisted on the goal.

The Elks had one last golden opportunity near the end of the game, when the Wildcats took a penalty. Pulling their goalie for an extra man advantage, the Elks squandered the power play opportunity with tentative, disorganized play, failing to record even a single shot on goal.

Elks (1) vs Eagles (7)

Travelling to Saskatoon after their tough loss to the Wildcats, the Elks found themselves pitted against a more challenging opponent in the second place Saskatoon Screaming Eagles.

From the opening puck drop to the closing buzzer, not much went right for the Elks, as they fell behind 3-0 after the first 20 minutes.

Drew Walters drew first blood for the Eagles, scoring on assists from Aidan Joyce and Jacob Ball, Tyson Carter followed up on assists from Liam Barzeele and Reece Woods, and Thomas Ballantyne rounded out the score card with helpers from Tanner Clezy and Ball.

In a quieter second period, the Eagles once again supplied the only offensive highlights, as Joyce scored his second of the night on an assist from Jacob Durdle.

Finally, nearly 45 minutes into the game, the Elks found the back of the net to open the scoring in the third period. Jesse Nyberg scored the goal, on assists from Tyson Gagnon and Kaden Shewchuk.

But this was all the Eagles would give up, and they responded by scoring three back-to-back goals in the span of a minute to claim a decisive 7-1 win.

Ballantyne opened the scoring, tallying on an assist from Barzeele, and Ball followed up with two goals just 14 seconds apart. The first was unassisted, and the second was assisted by Kaden Prosofsky and Durdle.

With the pair of losses, the Elks now sit at 9-12-2-1 on the season.

The team's next home ice action will be on Friday, Feb. 9 against the Saskatoon Sabercats. Puck drop is at 7:30 p.m.

OBITUARY

Mervin Wayne Sundby



SUNDBY – Mervin

It is with great sadness the family announce the passing of their dad, Mervin, 94 years old. Mervin Wayne Sundby passed away December 13, 2023, at the Big River

Health Centre with his family by his side.

Mervin was born on May 4, 1929, in Govan, SK to Andrew and Mayme Sundby. The family then moved to Big River. He attended all his school years in Big River. When he finished school, he started his career as a truck driver which became his lifelong career. He married Ladonna Olson in 1951, and they had three children.

Mervin was an avid baseball fan and hockey fan and watched many local hockey and curling games as well as followed the MLB and

the NHL. Mervin and Ladonna enjoyed their cabin on Zig Zag Island on Delaronde Lake, their store at Nesslin Lake and spent many summer days at both with family and friends.

A celebration of life will be announced later in the spring.

The family would like to express their thanks to the Lakewood Lodge in Big River for the excellent care over the past three years for DAD!

Donations can be made to Lakewood Lodge Auxiliary, Big River, SK or the Big River and District Recreation Improvement Association,

Big River, SK.

Mervin is lovingly remembered by his family:

Daughter: Linda Kohlruess (Mark) of Lloydminster and their children: Shelley Simpson (Kent) and daughter Sophie, Melissa Evans (Mitch) and their sons Liam and Quinn, Jerin Lorenz (Shawn).

Daughter: Brenda Sundby (Dave Elliott) of Prince Albert and their children: Blaine Sundby, Cody Elliott.

Son: Greg Sundby (Stephanie Bone) of Big River and their children: Chelsey Anderson (Levi) and their daughters

Logan and Jasper, Karli Sundby (Brian Moyer), Brett Sundby (Serenity Hatake), Jessamy Sundby, and Stephanie's children, Cohen, Finn, Max and Asher.

Brother: Lorne Sundby (Joan) and family, Sicamous, BC.

Sister-in-law: Pauline Sundby and family, Vernon, BC.

Special Family Friend: Maisie Krienke, Big River, SK and her two sons Leslie (Erin) and Randy (Michelle) and their families.

And many Sundby and Olson nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Mervin was

predeceased by his parents Andrew and Mayme Sundby, his wife Ladonna Sundby, three brothers: Donald, Kenny and Delbert and two sisters: Jean Ireton and Edna McNabb plus Ladonna's siblings and MANY other relatives and friends.

Family and friends wishing to send online condolences are welcome to visit www.beaulacfuneralhome.com. Arrangements have been entrusted to the care of Beau "Lac" Funeral Home and Crematorium, Delores Beaulac Funeral Director, Big River, SK (306) 469 - 2277.

GOOD NEWS

A SCARLET LETTER!

By RANDALL MCLEOD

Immanuel Lutheran, Parkside

Just what is a scarlet letter? "a scarlet letter 'A,' formerly worn by one convicted of adultery." (Collins Dictionary). So, someone publicly identified as a sinner!

Perhaps you may think that you have a scarlet letter on you somewhere. You may think that because of your past. You have been judged inadequate, unacceptable, unwanted, wicked. That is simply not true! That is a lie from the pit of hell! It is true you are wicked, we then all are. But you are wanted, you are loved. You have an offer of friendship,

no matter what your past is. Jesus loves you. Jesus is offering you His friendship. He said this: "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you." Okay, so there is a bit of a catch there, but not so much as you might think.

He did say to his disciples: "Come and follow me." And He said: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." And He also said to a religious leader; "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be

born again.'" This may seem like a lot, but the very ability to do these things is actually given to us, by Him. You don't have to strive to be received by Him, He says come with me and I will equip you to follow me. I will see to it you are born again.

The essence of the true church is that it is a hospital for sinners. We are all broken, we all have some type of scarlet letter. Granted there are some "churches" and some "church people" that have failed to grasp that concept. They are only too quick to label others as capital "S" sinners, while excusing themselves. We do have a word for that, it's hypocrite! The fact of the matter is this: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." That would be you! That would be me! That would be all of us, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." And even more so, "If we

say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

The very good news is the prophet Isaiah told us this, "Though your sins are as scarlet they shall be white as snow." Jesus wants to wash away all that sin, to make your past of no account whatsoever. Gone, forgotten.

Jesus wants you as His friend, Jesus wants you in His family, He wants to give you a new life, a better life. He wants to rip away your scarlet letter and give you a whole new identity, that being a "Child of God" and dressed in a clean white robe.

What a great way to start your new year, with a whole new identity, a whole new life. Find a church that embraces sinners, even as Jesus embraced sinners. Not so you can continue to sin, heavens no, so you can be delivered from sin.

Some trees are for the birds

By SARA WILLIAMS

Gardeners with trees or shrubs that retain their fruit through the long prairie winter have a wonderful opportunity not only to enjoy the often bright red splash of the fruits' colour against the snow, but to also enjoy the over-wintering birds who come to feast on them.

Following are some of the hardy, fruit-bearing trees that can provide a mini smorgasbord for wintering birds. Consider adding these to your landscape this spring.

Showy mountain ash
(*Sorbus decora*)

Although several species of mountain ash will survive prairie winters, the best choice in terms of hardiness and disease resistance is the showy mountain ash, native to Manitoba. A tree long associated with magic, sorbus means stop, possibly a reference to warding off witchcraft. The species name, decora, means decorated or showy.

It is indeed showy, with four-season landscape value: flat clusters of showy white flowers in the spring;

orange-red fruit in summer that persist through winter; and brilliant red fall foliage. And a size (an oval to rounded form about 20 ft / 6 m in height) that makes it suitable to both small and expansive landscapes.

The fruit persists through winter (until consumed by flocks of waxwings), offering a sharp contrast to our otherwise white landscape.

Plant mountain ash in full sun on well drained soil. Water until established after which it is very drought-tolerant.

Amur or ginnala maple
(*Acer ginnala*)

Here is a small, tough tree of about 15 ft (4.5 m) with amazing fall colour, varying from yellow to orange to red to brilliant scarlet. It is native to China, Siberia, Japan and Manchuria including the Amur River Valley from which it gets its common name. The paired winged seed pods, known as samaras, are a brilliant red, ripening to a straw colour. The seeds, retained through winter, are a treat for grosbeaks and other birds. Among the improved varieties are: 'Atomic', 'Bailey's Compact',

'Durone', 'Flame' and 'Royal Crown.'

Plant them in well-drained soil in full sunlight. It is excellent for smaller urban yards or massed in larger spaces.

Flowering crabapple
(*Malus spp.*)

We usually think of flowering crabapples in terms of their lovely white to pinkish-red spring bloom. Small, dense, low headed trees of up to 25 ft (7.5 m), they are ideally suited to smaller urban landscapes or planted as groupings in larger rural settings. Relatively fast growing, their lifespan is about forty years or more. Plant them in full sunlight on well-drained soil. Among those with fruit that is retained through the winter until consumed by birds are:

- 'Rudolph' is a symmetrical upright tree of about 12 ft (3.5 m) with red flowers, bronze foliage and persistent red fruit.

- 'Pink Spires' has pink flowers and a narrow columnar form to 20 ft (6 m). The purple-red leaves turn a greenish-bronze and become orange-yellow in the fall. The dark red fruit persist over the winter.

- 'Kelsey' is an upright, rounded tree to 18 ft (5.5 m) with double pink flowers in the spring, bronzy-green foliage which becomes orangish-yellow in the fall, and small purple fruit that persist into winter.

- 'Makamik' has an upright rounded form to about 20 ft (6 m), reddish-purple spring bloom, and dark purple leaves (turning orange in the fall). The small dark red fruit persist through the winter.

- 'Prairiefire' has rich pink flowers in the spring, purple leaves, and dark purple-red fruit that persists through winter. It has a height and spread of 15-20 ft (4.5-6 m).

- 'Radiant' is compact, symmetrical and rounded, with a height and spread of about 15 ft (4.5 m). Single pink flowers are followed by bright red persistent fruit.

- 'Red Splendor' has a large open form with a height and spread of 15 ft (4.5 m). It has deep rose-pink flowers, green foliage and retained red fruit.

- 'Selkirk' is vase-shaped, with a 20 ft (6 m) height and spread, with burgundy spring foliage. Single pink flowers

are followed by persistent red fruit.

- 'Starlite' has a height of 25 ft (7.5 m) and a spread of 15 ft (4.5 m). A profusion of white spring flowers is followed by tiny red fruit which are retained through winter.

Sara Williams is the author of many books including *Gardening Naturally with Hugh Skinner*, *Creating the Prairie Xeriscape*, and with Bob Bors, *Growing Fruit in Northern Gardens*. She gives workshops on a wide range of gardening topics throughout the prairies.

This column is provided courtesy of the Saskatchewan Perennial Society (SPS; saskperennial@hotmail.com).



Bohemian waxwing feasting on retained fruit in winter.
Photo Credit: Randen Pederson

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