

Shellbrook hosts first pickleball tournament



The tournament's first place winners, from left to right: Geoff Gay and Theresa Nimegeers (Pool C), Carol Link and Peter Simpson (Pool B), and Sally Jacobson and Danny Leon (Pool A).

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The game with the funny name continues to grow in Shellbrook, as the Shellbrook Pickleball Club played host to the inaugural Bring on the New Year Pickleball Tournament, its first-ever mixed tournament, on Saturday, Jan. 10.

"I played in a tournament with this format last year and really enjoyed the competition and decided to host a tournament in Shellbrook," said club founder and tournament organizer Sally Jacobson.

"We typically have to travel to play in tournaments and I thought it would be a good opportunity for local players to play close to home."

The inaugural tournament saw 24

players sign up to compete, with 20 of them being local pickleball club members. Others came from as far afield as Prince Albert, Warman, and North Battleford to spend the day playing and socializing.

Played in a doubles format and designed for players with a competitive ranking of 3.0 to 4.0, the tournament was a mixed tournament in every sense of the word, as players were paired with a different player in each game. Players played four games with different partners, and based on their records through those first four games, were sorted into three pools of eight players each.

Once in their respective pools, players played another four games, switching partners with each game, to decide who would advance to the final playoff

games, and be crowned the winner in each pool and take home the corresponding cash prize.

At the top in Pool A, Jacobson was paired with Danny Leon against Mya Sommerfeld and Sackda Samatchai. In a back-and-forth match that went to extra points, Jacobson and Leon emerged victorious.

In Pool B, Peter Simpson and Carol Link were paired against Laurie Rude and Steve Yan, and came out on top.

And finally, in Pool C, Theresa Nimegeers and Geoff Gay faced off against Chris Pidwerbeski and Kelly Stewart and won out in the end.

With the success of the Shellbrook Pickleball Club's first tournament, Jacobson says the club is already planning to host more tournaments in the future.

Jacobson introduced pickleball to

Shellbrook in 2019, after she was first introduced to the sport in Prince Albert in the winter of 2018 by a friend who had played it in Arizona. Finding it to be a fun, social experience as well as a great exercise, she and her friend thought it would be a perfect activity to bring to an active community like Shellbrook.

Though the growth of the sport was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, it has steadily gained popularity in the community since public safety measures were lifted.

As of this year, the Shellbrook Pickleball Club boasts 32 members, and offers regular weekly play for both youth and adults, as well as development sessions and clinics taught by certified level 1 and 2 NCCP instructors.

Additional photo on page 3



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Raiders climb to 10-0 with two more wins

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The Blaine Lake Raiders kept their strong momentum alive over the weekend, hosting the Meota Combines and the Battleford Beaver Blues for back-to-back games on home ice and skating away with two more wins to hold on to their flawless record.

Raiders (6) vs Combines (2)

Kicking off the weekend against the Combines on Friday night, the Raiders fell behind early when Meota’s Zane Florence drew first blood on assists from Kade Lehman and Dario Tabacu.

It took some time after this for the Raiders to get organized, but a power play gave the team exactly what it needed, allowing Brandon Lesko to tie things up at 1-1 on assists from Kyle Schmidt and Kelly Friesen. Lesko then made it 2-1 Raiders

just 18 seconds later, with assists from Tysen Smith and Friesen.

Later in the frame, Thomas Jean made the most of another Raiders power play, pushing the score to 3-1 on assists from Lesko and

Patrick Gauthier.

As the action moved to the second period, the power play continued to pay dividends for the Raiders early on, with Braiden Onishenko building the lead to 4-1 on assists from Les-

ko and Friesen.

Near the midway point of the period, Schmidt put the Raiders up 5-1, with assists from Lesko and Friesen again, on the team’s only even strength goal of the game. And just a few minutes later, Jean scored his second goal of the night, unassisted.

Facing a five-goal deficit heading into the third period, the Combines narrowed the gap to four on a goal from Quinn Cubbon, assisted by Tyson Tuck and Landon Buziak. The Raiders held on for the remainder of the period, taking a 6-2 win.

Raiders (7) vs Blues (5)

Returning to action the following night, the Raiders found themselves outmatched in the early going against the always tough Battleford Beaver Blues.

The Blues got started right away, with Ryan Scheafer scoring 45 seconds in on an assist from Tyler Payne, then

scoring again closer to the midway point of the period. Kevin Bendall and Tyler Wasmuth assisted on the goal.

The Raiders were able to stem the bleeding and get back in the game, closing the gap to 2-1 on a goal from Tysen Smith, assisted by Brandon Lesko and Colin Buban. But the Blues had an answer, going up 3-1 on a goal from Matthew Johnson, assisted by Cody Kalyn and Tyler Payne.

In a second period that mirrored the first, the Blues’ Wasmuth scored back-to-back goals, extending his team’s lead to 5-1. Scheafer assisted on the first, while Bendall assisted on the second.

Now down by five goals, the Raiders got to work on mounting a comeback. Kelly Friesen got things started, scoring two goals to cut the Blues’ lead back to two goals. Smith assisted on both goals, with Lesko earning an assist on the sec-

ond.

With the action flipping over to the third period, the Raiders leveraged two power plays to knot things up at 5-5. First Friesen earned himself a hat trick on assists from Kyle Schmidt and Lesko, and then Thomas Jean scored with assists from Schmidt and Lesko again.

Pouring on the pressure, Lesko netted the Raiders’ go-ahead goal less than a minute later, with assists from Clay Casavant and Smith. Then, with a late power play, Schmidt added an insurance goal, assisted by Friesen and Lesko, to give the Raiders a 7-5 win.

With the pair of victories, the Raiders climb to 10-0 on the season.

This weekend brings a pair of road games for the team, as it travels to Glaslyn to meet the Glaslyn North Stars on Friday night, then heads to Radisson to meet the Radisson Wheatkings on Sunday.



Brandon Lesko (middle) earned player of the game honours for the team’s win over the Battleford Beaver Blues on Saturday night.

SHA to boost security at Shellbrook’s PIHC

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) is looking to strengthen protective services levels and improve security at Shellbrook’s Parkland Integrated Health Centre, as well as healthcare facilities in La Loche, Swift Current, Moose Jaw, Weyburn, Nipawin, Melfort, and Kamsack.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for the security contract opened Dec. 12 and closes on Jan. 23, and according to the terms on Sask Tenders, the focus is “to conduct a province-wide procurement

to identify cost-effective, flexible, and responsive security service delivery for deployment across Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) facilities” and “ensure the SHA can meet increasing safety and critical security demands for patients, staff, physicians, and visitors.”

The SHA says the process is part of a commitment from the provincial government in the 2025-2026 budget.

“The SHA delivers protective services through a hybrid model that includes SHA protective services staff and third-party contractors,” The SHA said in an emailed statement.

“SHA Protective Services is committed to fostering a culturally safe, inclusive and representative environment that reflects the communities we serve. The SHA values the role protective

services teams and contracted providers play in managing the complex security challenges within the healthcare environment and is committed to leveraging these collective strengths to respond to security needs.”

Due to “escalating risks,” the SHA says enhanced security services are urgently required at the facilities listed, and that there is also the option to expand services to additional sites as future needs arise.

The RFP states that the SHA uses contracted security providers across several locations, with varying levels of 24-hour coverage, with contracted services operating in adult and youth mental health, triage emergency, front entrance/dispatch, parking, and addictions/access areas. However, it was noted that those services generally follow an “observe and report” model that avoids engagement during serious criminal activity.

The SHA was unable to comment on the specific security concerns at Parkland Integrated Health Centre.

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The **RM of Leask No. 464** is proactively seeking **future gravel deposits** on the East side of the municipality.

If you are a landowner with a gravel deposit, please contact the **RM of Leask No. 464** at 1-306-466-2000 or email **rmleask.464@sasktel.net**.

RM OF SHELLBROOK NO. 493
Seeking Residential Snow Plowing Providers

The RM is creating a list of individuals and companies offering residential snow plowing within the municipality.

To be included, please provide:

- Name / Company
- Phone Number
- Services (e.g., plowing, blowing, skid steer work, sanding, salting)
- Area(s) Served

Email: **rm493@sasktel.net**
Phone: **306-747-2178**
Office: 71 Main Street, Shellbrook

New phone scam making rounds in Shellbrook

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

Lynne Henry was minding her own business when she got an unexpected call from what appeared to be a local number. When she answered it, the caller claimed to be one of her sons, who had broken his nose in an accident and was now at the court house and in need of assistance.

“It did sound like one of my sons, which is the freaky thing,” Henry said.

Having experienced her 90-year-old mother-in-law being scammed out of money just four years ago, Henry’s instincts kicked in and told her something wasn’t right about the phone call. Henry continued to ask questions to glean more information from the caller, who couldn’t name the court house he was at but claimed he was in Shellbrook (which, of course, doesn’t have an actual court house).

Eventually realizing Henry wasn’t going to be duped, the caller hung up. Immediately, Henry reported the

incident to the RCMP and is now encouraging others to be careful and ask questions when they receive calls from unknown numbers.

“I hope nobody else falls for it,” she said. “I just don’t want anybody to get scammed. I hate these scammers.”

When it comes to what to look for when you think you’re being scammed and ways to protect yourself from scammers, the Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan offers the following:

Scam red flags (email, phone and text)

- Emails coming from a domain that does not match the company.
- Unsolicited calls or texts from unknown numbers.
- Messages with spelling or grammar errors.
- Requests for personal or banking information.
- Pressure to act quickly.
- Too-good-to-be-true offers.
- Suspicious links and attachments.
- If you are unable to confirm the

organization’s registration or licence.

Tips to protect yourself from scams

- Do not answer or engage with unsolicited messages.
- Do not click on any links or attachments.
- Never share personal informa-

tion (SIN, bank account, credit card) through email, phone or text.

- If you suspect you have received a scam email, phone call or text, contact your local police or the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre immediately.

Shellbrook hosts first pickleball tournament



The tournament’s second place winners, from left to right: Steve Yan (Pool B), Kelly Stewart (Pool C), Laurie Rude (Pool B), Chris Pidwerbeski (Pool C), and Sackda Samatchai and Mya Sommerfeld (Pool A).

Highlights of a Shellbrook Town Council special meeting

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

(The following council highlights are not the approved minutes of council for Jan. 5.)

Shellbrook’s Town Council held a special meeting in person and via teleconference on Monday, Jan. 5.

In attendance were Mayor Amund Otterson, Councillors Pam Boettcher, Cheryl Ledding, Brent Miller, Kathleen Nording, Arlette Segberg, and Tim Settee, and the town’s CAO, Sigourney O’Halligan.

Mayor Otterson called the meeting to order just after 4 p.m., and began the proceedings with the customary Treaty 6 land acknowledgement in recognition of Truth and Reconciliation, before giving the floor to Kevin Madden from SUMAssure.

Madden was in attendance to outline SUMAssure’s offerings for municipal insurance, risk management, and more. Noting that 261 municipalities are currently covered by SUMAssure, Madden said this means that it’s very experienced in working with commu-

nities and meeting their needs.

With the town’s municipal insurance policy set to expire on Jan. 13 and a decision needing to be made, CAO O’Halligan noted that she had reached out multiple times since last October to get a clear picture of what the town’s current provider, SGI, would offer in terms of rates.

Having heard nothing back, she could only provide an overall cost comparison between the prospective SGI and SUMAssure policies, with SGI’s priced at around \$73,500, and SUMAssure’s slightly higher at around \$89,000.

Despite this, O’Halligan said she believed SUMAssure’s extensive experience with municipal insurance would be a great benefit to the town. Meanwhile, Councillor Miller noted the town has often had issues making claims through SGI, and suggested it might be time to find another insurer.

In the end, council made and passed a motion to seek insurance through SUMAssure, with the added condition that it request an appraisal to ensure the

town’s assets (properties and contents) are properly valued and covered.

Closing out the meeting, council had a lengthy discussion about the lease for the skate sharpener at the Richardson Pioneer Recreation Centre.

In recent years, there have been complaints about the lack of consistent service from the lease holder, and the Recreation Committee is recommending that the rental agreement be terminated.

Though they said they’d like to maintain the agreement, recent pledges from the lease holder to improve service and post hours have yet to be fulfilled.

Councillor Ledding noted that skate sharpening services need to be available for large events and tournaments, and that the town needs to be more forceful about enforcing its policies. Meanwhile, Councillor Segberg said efforts to improve service have been ongoing since September, but have yet to yield any improvement.

In the end, council voted to allow the lease to expire at the end of the current rink season.

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Trump sets stage for second Cold War

If ever there was even a sliver of hope that 2026 would be the year in which the Christmastime sentiment of “Peace on earth and good will to all” carried over into the new year, that hope has been utterly obliterated.

On Saturday, Jan. 3, after months of blowing up alleged drug smuggling boats in the Caribbean Sea without presenting a shred of evidence of their occupants’ guilt, U.S. President Donald Trump made good on threats

to launch a land strike against Venezuela, authorizing a military operation to capture the country’s president, Nicolás Maduro, in the dead of night.

As of the end of last week, the reported death toll of the operation had climbed to 100 people, including some civilians. Meanwhile, Maduro and his wife, Cilia, were extradited to the U.S., where the former head of state faces a litany of charges, including narco-terrorism, corruption, and drug trafficking.

Though the United States’ arrest of a foreign head of state in his own country shocked the world and has been criticized as a violation of international law, few were genuinely upset to see Maduro removed from power.

In the eyes of the global community (and Venezuelans), Maduro’s rule was illegitimate. And indeed, credible evidence exists to prove he lost the country’s 2024 election to then-opposition leader Edmundo González, but clung to power through threats and intimidation.

In short, Maduro was not a good man, and his ouster shouldn’t be the cause for our moral outrage. Instead, we should concern ourselves with the brazen recklessness of Mr. Trump’s actions and the patently obvious self-interest driving them.

What’s become abundantly clear in the days since Maduro’s capture is that Mr. Trump and his administration don’t really have a plan for Venezuela beyond removing Maduro from power and serving up the country up as an all-you-can-eat buffet for American oil companies (and other American business interests, no doubt).



JORDAN
TWISS

~
News Editor

Mr. Trump has no genuine care for the ethical rationale for removing Maduro from power; If he did, Maduro’s equally illegitimate right-hand woman, Delcy Rodríguez, wouldn’t have been installed as Venezuela’s acting president (though, Mr. Trump has since taken to calling himself the country’s “acting president”).

Facing questions from reporters the day after Maduro’s arrest, Mr. Trump stated that the U.S. is now

“running Venezuela,” and threatened a second strike on the country if Rodríguez doesn’t “behave.” Mr. Trump also dismissed the idea of demanding the release of political prisoners (though some were released without prompting) and holding free and fair elections in the country in the short term.

“Right now, what we want to do is fix up the oil, fix up the country,” he said. “Bring the country back and then have elections. Otherwise you’re just going to have a mess that’s so bad.”

Marco Rubio, Mr. Trump’s Secretary of State, was even more unequivocal about what the next steps for Venezuela would look like.

“We have a quarantine on their oil,” he said. “That means their economy won’t be able to move forward until the conditions that are in the national interest of the United States and the Venezuelan people are met.”

In other words, it’s not just Maduro the U.S. detained, it’s also effectively holding all Venezuelans hostage until it gets what it wants – anywhere between 30 million and 50 million barrels of oil, for a start, according to Mr. Trump.

The reality is that there’s nothing new or shocking about this. Since the Cold War, America’s foreign policy has centered around coercing weaker nations to act in its best interest, and it’s never shied away from toppling democracies and propping up American-friendly dictators to accomplish its goals.

The only difference is that presidents prior to Mr. Trump made at least a token effort to put some lipstick on the pig before trotting it out for the public.



But Mr. Trump and his cabal of sycophants see no need to frame their actions as serving the greater good. And to make matters worse, they’ve signalled that they’re nowhere near finished. Cuba, Colombia, Nicaragua, Greenland, and Mexico are all in the crosshairs of Mr. Trump’s administration, as it pursues its goal of establishing American domination over what it is now calling “our hemisphere.”

“Colombia’s run by a sick man who likes making cocaine and selling it to the United States. He’s not going to be doing it very long,” Mr. Trump said of Colombian President Gustavo Petro in the same interview the day after the operation in Venezuela.

Yet, despite Mr. Trump’s threats toward Mr. Petro, it was his fixation on taking over Greenland that dominated the discussion last week.

Greenland is an autonomous territory in the kingdom of Denmark, which is a U.S. ally through NATO. Despite this, and despite the fact that the U.S. already operates the only military base on Greenland, Mr. Trump hasn’t ruled out using military force to seize it for “national security” purposes (with its natural resources being an added bonus to which Mr. Trump believes he is entitled).

All this flies in the face of U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth’s declaration just over a month ago that the

U.S. would no longer be distracted by “democracy building, interventionism, undefined wars, regime change, climate change, woke moralizing, and feckless nation building,” and would instead put “American interests first.”

True, Mr. Trump’s administration couldn’t care less about democracy building (or in building up other nations beyond what is necessary for the U.S. to exploit their wealth).

But this is actually worse than what Mr. Hegseth was condemning.

As America’s misadventures in the Middle East and Afghanistan have shown us repeatedly, forcefully removing individuals from power doesn’t make anyone safer. It creates power vacuums and breeds contempt and misery for other bad actors to weaponize. Osama bin Laden did this, and the end result was 9/11.

Moreover, normalizing this approach to international relations risks emboldening other nations to follow suit. In fact, just days before the Venezuela mission, China conducted “war games” around Taiwan, a country it has long sought to seize control of.

Mr. Trump is, in many ways, setting the global stage for a second Cold War, with the U.S., Russia, and China as the competing global superpowers. Much like in the first Cold War, it will be the rest of the world that pays the ultimate price for his ambitions.

Shellbrook Chronicle

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Phone 306-747-2442 or Fax 306-747-3000

Editorial: chnews@sbchron.com
Advertising: chads@sbchron.com

Jordan Twiss & Meghan Penney, Co-Publishers

Jordan Twiss, Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter
jordan@sbchron.com/chnews@sbchron.com

Bevra Fee, Spiritwood Herald Reporter
(306) 883-7058 or bevrafee@yahoo.ca

Meghan Penney, Advertising Sales & Composition/Pagination chads@sbchron.com

Bookkeeping/Reception
306-747-2442 or accounting@sbchron.com

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Banquet to support care for local child

By KENNEDI QUIST
Submitted

Throughout the years, I’ve come to appreciate the rural lifestyle. It’s not for the faint of heart, because let’s be honest, it’s not always easy. However, I believe we all have had the chance to fully understand what it means to be someone’s neighbour.

It’s hot cups of coffee and encouraging words during a drought — realizing we are all in it together.

It’s calling for a package of colostrum late at night, and it’s words better left unrepeatd when their cows get into your crop for the fifth time this summer. It’s two extra combines pulling into your field when you really just aren’t sure if you can pull it through this year.

It’s quick phone calls, and it’s long driveway visits.

Living rurally means you are there for your neighbours, and when we all live together, we all work together, and we all strive together.

From our great grandparents to the next generation of farmers, we’ve all had to, and will continue to, help each other. We all have to work together, because, their quarter is always going to be beside your quarter.

So, neighbour to neighbour, we want to come together and build something for the next generation.

As a community, our first Give Big Win Big Banquet will be raising funds for eleven-year-old Jayse Petten from Canwood, Sask. If you’ve ever met Jayse, you’d instantly become his friend because Jayse encapsulates just what being a good neighbour is all about.

Jayse is full of encouraging words, and we are all yet to see him without a smile across his face. Jayse has Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, a disease that causes his muscles to become progressively weaker. In our Give Big Win Big Banquet, we are striving to reach our goal of raising funds together for Jayse’s stem cell transplant.

We all want to see Jayse thrive, and we all need to come together to make this happen.

On Saturday, Jan. 31, our first annual Give Big Win Big Banquet will be taking place in Shellbrook, Saskatchewan at the Shellbrook Community Hall. Our next generation will be serving our community in a formal black tie event.

The doors open at 5:30 p.m., dinner is served at 6 p.m. We invite you to come enjoy a high-class dinner with evening entertainment, a live auction, and games with big ticket prizes.

Find us on Instagram or Facebook for more details and ticket purchase or scan the QR code on this page for ticket purchase and more information.

When we give big, we win big. And this year we all want to see Jayse win.

But we all need to do it together.



YOUR TWO CENTS

Accountability, privilege and the politics we fund

Dear editor,

I am writing as a citizen, business owner, and taxpayer who is increasingly concerned that our political system is no longer focused on problem-solving — and that the media is unintentionally enabling this shift.

Let me explain using a simple comparison.

If I ran my business the way our politics now operates, I would be bankrupt within months.

Imagine a company where leadership meetings are spent blaming other departments, never presenting plans, never showing budgets, and never measuring results. Promotions

would be based on how effectively people deflect responsibility, not on whether anything actually improves.

No competent organization would accept that. Yet this is now the daily model of our politics, broadcast as normal.

Or imagine a family facing serious financial pressure. Instead of sitting down to discuss real numbers, trade-offs, and priorities, each family member simply points at another and says, “This is your fault.” Nothing changes. The stress grows. The problems remain.

That is what Canadians are watching every

day.

What makes this even harder to accept is that politicians — of every party — and the donors who fund them do not live in the economic reality the rest of us face. They are insulated from affordability crises, healthcare delays, retirement insecurity, and housing precarity. Yet they speak about these issues while rarely experiencing them, and we are asked to trust their blame-based narratives instead of demanding accountable solutions.

How does it make sense to let people who are not personally affected by these pressures define the debate,

while the public bears the consequences?

Press conferences have become exercises in positioning rather than planning. We see emotional statements, social-media-style videos, and carefully written “heartfelt” posts — but rarely:

- A concrete solution
- A cost breakdown
- A funding source
- A realistic timeline
- A way to measure success

Without these, what is being reported is not governance — it is performance.

I do not believe journalists are doing this with harmful intent. But when attacks are aired without demanding substance, the media becomes the stage for division rather than the safeguard of the public interest.

Canadians are paying their leaders extremely well to fix real problems: cost of living, housing, healthcare access, and

wealth inequality. Instead, we are funding a system that rewards blame while those with the power to act remain insulated from the outcomes.

I am not asking the media to take sides. I am asking the media to raise the standard. Before political messaging is amplified, please ask:

What is the solution?
What does it cost?

Who pays?
What is the timeline?
How will success be measured?

If those answers do not exist, the public deserves to hear that clearly stated.

We cannot continue paying for division while the people who live outside its consequences define the narrative.

Brian Dennis,
Saskatoon, Sask.

MARTINS LAKE REGIONAL PARK
is accepting applications for ***two separate lease opportunities*** for the 2026 season:
1) Golf Clubhouse Restaurant Lease (May–September)
Seeking a leased operator for our fully equipped kitchen and restaurant facility.
Must hold valid Food Handler certification.
Operator will be responsible for all staffing and day-to-day operations of the restaurant and golf course.
2) Beach Concession Lease (June–September)
Seeking a leased operator for the beach concession.
Must hold valid Food Handler certification.
RV sites are available for interested operators.
For more information or to submit an expression of interest, please contact **Martins Lake Regional Park** at **306-497-7111**, or email to ***martinslake@sasktel.net***.

THE NORTHERN HAMLET OF DORE LAKE
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Big River man found guilty on drug charges

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle
Reporter

A Big River man who admitted to selling drugs to fund his addictions was found guilty of trafficking meth, cocaine, and LSD in Prince Albert Provincial Court on Monday, Jan. 5.

Wilson Coutts, 42, was arrested by officers with the Big River RCMP Detachment on Dec. 20, 2023, while the officers were performing a proactive traffic stop. Coutts initially tried to flee, before parking at a residence in the community.

The officers' immediate investigation determined Coutts had a suspended license and no vehicle registration. He also provided officers with a false name.

As a result of continued investigation and a search of the vehicle, officers located and seized approximately 495 grams of cocaine, ap-

proximately 306 grams of methamphetamine, 111 LSD blotters, approximately 63 grams of an unknown substance investigators suspected to contain fentanyl, and other drug paraphernalia in the vehicle, as well as \$2,400 in cash.

A passenger in the vehicle, 39-year-old Marcia McMahon, was also arrested at the scene and charged.

During the court proceedings a few months ago, Coutts testified that he turned to drugs to cope with depression during the pandemic, after his construction business went under. To fund his addiction, Coutts made regular trips to B.C., picking up drugs and then selling them in the Big River area.

Questioned by Crown Prosecutor Margaret Sproule about the LSD that was found, Coutts claimed he bought it from a friend who was planning to sell a larger supply at a music festi-

val and he wanted some around just in case he ever needed it.

The presiding judge, Thomas Healey, rejected much of Coutts' testimony, noting that Coutts had admitted to using a false name, possessing all the drugs he found, and trafficking meth and cocaine.

However, Coutts was successful in arguing that the fentanyl seized by police was for personal use rather than for trafficking.

Instead of trafficking fentanyl, Coutts was found guilty of a lesser charge of possession. Guilty verdicts were also delivered on charges of fraud, obstruction, and possession of the proceeds of crime under \$5,000.

Sentencing arguments are scheduled for Feb. 9.

Meanwhile, McMahon was sentenced last March after pleading guilty to possession for the purpose of trafficking cocaine and meth. She was sentenced to

one year (time served) plus six months of probation.

Wanted offender arrested

A woman who has been on the Saskatchewan RCMP's most wanted offenders list for the past three months has

been apprehended by police.

Wionna Katcheech, who was wanted for attempted murder, intimidation of a justice system participant, kidnapping, robbery with a firearm, and failure to comply with a release

order (2 counts), was arrested in Fort Kent, Alberta by RCMP's Warrant Enforcement Response Team on Dec. 16

Katcheech was scheduled to make her first court appearance on Jan. 13.

Relocatable classrooms support Blaine Lake students

By **MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**
Submitted

The Government of Saskatchewan's \$28.5 million investment in the 2025-26 Relocatable Classroom Program will help ensure students have the space they need to learn by providing 39 new relocatable classrooms and moving two existing classrooms.

Classrooms will go to schools in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Blaine Lake, Clavet, Corman Park, Humboldt, Lanigan, and Swift Current. Classrooms will be installed over the summer and ready for students for the 2026-27 school year.

"The Relocatable Classroom Pro-

gram helps us address space pressures by adding classrooms where they are needed most," Education Minister Everett Hindley said. "This helps us respond to enrolment growth and gives school divisions flexibility to manage local pressures."

School divisions apply annually for relocatable classrooms and requests are prioritized based on projected enrolments. Relocatable classrooms meet the same building standards as permanent structures and can be moved to other schools as needs change.

The government has committed \$234 million to the Relocatable Classroom Program since it began in 2013-14.

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Credit owed to all for Sask. bumper crop

It didn't exactly seem like everything was falling into place through 2025 to create the conditions needed for a 'bumper' crop, but in the end that is exactly what happened.

Based on estimates provided by Statistics Canada, Saskatchewan produced a record 41.9 million tonnes of grains and oilseeds in 2025, up 13.7 per cent from the previous year, Saskatchewan's agriculture ministry said on Dec. 19.

The record is also 24.1 per cent above the five-year average.

Such numbers are a

testament to the province's farmers, of course. But when one pauses to consider what goes into a record crop, it really illustrates how successful farming relies on a rather diverse network.

To start with, you have to tip your hat to Mother Nature. While 2025 may not have been ideal in terms of weather across the province, it was obviously good enough to grow a record crop.

No crop is a success without sufficient moisture, and temperatures that are not too extreme. One hard frost at the wrong time and



CALVIN DANIELS

crops can be greatly impacted.

Next comes the science behind the varieties farmers grow today. Plant breeders continue to make progress in terms of the yield potential of crops. That is important.

But plant breeders are also responsible for greater disease tolerance, or in creating varieties which allow broader herbicide use, or that do better in less than ideal field conditions.

Such incremental steps in production potential are a key to setting overall yield numbers.

Science and technology is also contributing in developing better farm techniques.

Science is continually adding to the knowledge base in terms of the fertilizer nutrients crops need and how they are best applied.

Technology, such as

global positioning systems (GPS), dovetail neatly with the science in terms of fertilizer applications.

And GPS also contributes in terms of the application of crop protection products — products which are continually being developed to do a better job of dealing with weeds, fungus, and diseases, all of which impact yields.

One must also recognize the funding groups behind new variety development, or new chemicals, or innovative technology.

Without producer, public, and corporate investment develop-

ment would quickly stagnate.

And finally, of course, all the elements are brought together by the producers who are extremely good at their job of producing grains and oilseeds, much of which flows into the food chain to feed the world. It is what Canadian Prairie farmers have been known for, essentially since they first turned the soil to create farms more than a century ago.

The record crop just shows all the elements are still meshing to allow Saskatchewan farmers to do their jobs very well.

Farmers advocate for seed saving rights

By NFU
Submitted

Fourteen farmer and seed advocacy organizations have written to Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Heath MacDonald urging him to listen to Canadian farmers — not multinational seed companies — and abandon proposed restrictions to farmers' seed saving rights.

Thousands of Canadians signed an e-petition opposing proposed changes making it illegal for farmers to save seed from Plant Breeders' Rights-protected fruit, vegetable, ornamental, and hybrid crop varieties — even after paying royalties.

This change would remove these crops from the "Farmers' Privilege" clause of the Plant Breeders' Rights (PBR) Act, the seed-saving provision Parliament deliberately preserved after rigorous debate in 2015. At that time, lawmakers recognized the importance of seed saving for farm sustainability and food security.

"Parliament made a clear decision to ensure the PBR Act's farmers' privilege clause would work for farmers," said Jenn Pfenning, National Farmers Union President. "The Minister's response to the e-petition supports the regulatory change, claiming the Act's seed-saving clause should never have applied to horticultural crops and hybrid varieties. This raises concerns that farmers' rights are intentionally being narrowed over time. Reinterpreting the law now contradicts Parliament's decision, takes money out of Canadian farmers' pockets, enriches the world's largest seed companies, and ultimately weakens our national food sovereignty."

Farm organizations warn that the change would force farmers who use

these varieties to buy seed or plants every year, increasing costs, weakening autonomy and preventing adaptation to local growing conditions — at a time when farm profitability is already under pressure.

"Since most vegetable seed is bred and sold by foreign corporations, grown abroad, and imported, this change would also make Canada more dependent on other countries for its food supply," said Katie Fettes, Director of Policy and Research with the Canadian Organic Growers.

The big winners would be the world's largest seed companies. Six multinational seed companies control 64% of the global commercial seed market: Bayer (23%), Corteva (19%), Syngenta (10%); and BASF, Vilmorin & Cie (Groupe Limagrain) and KWS each with 4%. While they are often associated with field crops like canola, corn and soy, these companies also dominate the vegetable seed market. If the Farmers' Privilege is removed, these corporations would gain even greater control over Canada's seed supply.

Ending the Farmers' Privilege will not compensate for years of government cutbacks that have weakened Canada's public plant breeding. Farmers are urging the federal government to reinvest in public plant breeding and maintain seed-saving rights.

"We need varieties developed for Canada that are regionally adapted and climate-resilient, helping farmers build stronger, more sustainable farms" said Jessica Wood, Seed-Change Executive Director.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPIRITWOOD: Wapiti Regional Library - Tuesday 10am - 5pm; Wednesday 10am - 5pm; Thursday 1pm to 5pm; Friday 10am - 5pm

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

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

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 the Wapiti Regional Library Hours: Tuesday 9:30am - 4pm; Wednesday 10:30am - 5pm; Phone: 306-468-2501

DEBDEN: Wapiti Library hours: Tuesday 10am - 4pm; Wednesday 12pm - 6pm. Librarian: Aline Hannon

LEASK: Wapiti Library & Legacy Gallery Hours - Tuesday 9am - 2pm; Wednesday 2pm - 8pm; Friday 9am - 12pm

MARCELIN: Wapiti Library - Saturday 10am - 2pm; Thursday 2pm - 8pm. 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.

BIG RIVER: Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting — Every Wednesday, 7:30 pm @ Train Station in Big River (Railway Avenue)

SPIRITWOOD: Witchehan Wildlife Federation Annual Awards & Banquet Night — Saturday, January 31, 2026, Spiritwood Civic Centre. Cocktails - 5pm; Supper - 6pm; Adults \$30; 12 & Under \$15; Preschool Free. Tickets available until January 28 — please call: Lyla 306-841-8284; Pearl & Eric 306-883-2835; Darcy 306-883-8641. Photo Contest — Categories include: Scenery, Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife. Pictures must be printed on 8x10 Kodak paper & can be submitted the day of banquet. Bring any unused 2025 hunting tags to be entered into a draw!

SHELLBROOK: The Give Big Win Big Banquet — Formal Black Tie Fundraiser Event, Shellbrook Community Hall — January 31, 2026, Doors Open 5:30pm. Find us on Instagram or Facebook for more details and ticket purchase.

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U18 Elks pick up win at home

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle
Reporter

The U18 AA Parkland Elks had just one game on their schedule this past weekend — a home game against the North West Stars on Saturday evening.

In a quiet first period, the Elks were the only team to get on the board, when Boston Gagnon drew first blood on as assist from Davin Hart just after the midway point of the period.

In the second period, much like the first, the Elks were the first to find the back of the net, going up 2-0 on a

goal from Gabe Wadham, assisted by Camden Olsen and Cohen Ball. However, a late penalty proved costly for the Elks, allowing Calder Reiter to close the gap to 2-1 on assists from Tucker Mander-scheid and Lochlan Cheyne.

When the action jumped over to the third period, the Stars carried the momentum with them, tying up the game at 2-2 on a goal from Noah Bernier, assisted by Bram Jullion and Nic Burnett. But careless play on the power play got the Stars in trouble, and Hart made them pay with a shorthanded goal, assisted by Gagnon, to put the Elks up 3-2.

The return salvo from the Stars was almost immediate, with Ethan Amyotte tying the score on assists from Kaiden Benkendorf and Bernier.

As the back and forth continued, the Elks had the last laugh just past the midway point of the period, taking a 4-3 lead on a goal from Owen Hansen, assisted by Danec Wilson and Dalen Thiel.

With the win, the Elks' record stands a 4-14-0-1. The Elks are on the road this weekend, with games in Warman against the Warman Wildcats on Friday night and in Tisdale against the North East Wolfpack on Saturday.



The Elks welcomed young goalie Barrett Senger as their seventh skater on Saturday night. Here, he's pictured with goalie Matt Muller.

Hoya: a new houseplant for your home this winter

By **JACKIE BANTLE**
Sask. Perennial
Society

Winter is a good time for gardeners to focus more on their houseplants and perhaps even purchase a few new ones in celebration of a new year. One of my favorite houseplants over the last couple of years has been a hoya plant (*Hoya car-nosa*). Not only have I found this plant to be easy to grow but when it blooms, the flowers are beautiful.

Hoya refers to a genus of plants in the dogbane family (*Apocynaceae*) that has over 500 different species. Hoya plants are native to Southeast Asia, Japan and Taiwan. Often referred to as 'Porcelain flower' or 'wax plant', hoya plants are either epiphytic (growing on the surface of another

plant or plant-like substance) or lithophytic (growing on the surface of a rock) vines. In nature, hoya roots are rarely found in the soil, they derive their nutrients from the air and rain. Despite their natural growth habit, indoor hoyo plants are usually grown in containers with the roots buried in porous media. The leaves of hoyo plants are fleshy and leathery. The inflorescence is an umbel or raceme that is composed of waxy or succulent flowers that are both attractive, unique and lightly fragrant. The flowers are produced on a peduncle (or 'spur'). It is important not to prune off these peduncles when the plant is done flowering since more flowers will be produced on this same peduncle. Bloom-

ing will likely not occur until the plants are 2-3 years old.

Hoya flowers have a unique pollination strategy which involves having their pollen packed into 'pollinia' (sticky pollen sacks). These masses of pollen grains are bound together by a waxy substance and attached to a small, sticky disc called a 'corpusculum'. This corpusculum sticks to the pollinator (ie. a moth or bird) and only un-sticks when the pollinator reaches a compatible flower. The compatible flower and pollinia fit together in an intricate way in order to release the pollen or... the compatible flower emits a specific chemical signal that triggers the release of the pollen.

Hoya houseplants are recommended for

beginner indoor gardening enthusiasts, since they are easy to grow. Seasoned gardeners will enjoy growing hoyas because of the plant's uniqueness and beauty. In nature, hoyas grow in high humidity areas however, their thick, succulent leaves makes them good survivors in the drier humidity of the Prairie home. Hoyas can dry out significantly between watering and still survive. In fact, healthy hoyas prefer to have the soil dry out between waterings: too much water and the roots will rot. An application of fertilizer once/ month is adequate. Compost tea or diluted fish emulsion will provide adequate fertility.

Hoya plants prefer 2-6 hours of bright indirect light each day, however, since they dwell in rain forests, they will survive in dappled light. Because of their vine-like growth pattern, hoyo plants do well in hanging baskets, as trailing plants or growing on a trellis. The preference for high humidity conditions makes them excellent plants for terrariums.

leavesthan *Hoya car-nosa*. *Hoya pubicalyx* has narrower, attractive green leaves with white flecks. *Hoya kentiana* has narrow bean-shaped hoyo leaves that are rimmed it dark green and maroon. *Hoya kentianais* a more rare hoyo to be found in the houseplant market.

Hoya kerrii is often referred to as a Valentine hoyo due to its thick heart-shaped leaves. *Hoya retusa* is a unique type in that it has thin, stick-like foliage. *Hoya retusais* low maintenance, easy to grow and really shows off its beauty in a hanging pot. *Hoya fitchii* is worth mentioning for its large attractive green leaves with delicate white veining. When *Hoya fitchii* blooms, the flowers are coral, pink and yellow with a sweet aroma.

Hoya fitchii prefers more bright light than some of the other hoyo types.

There are many more hoyo species available as houseplant than are mentioned in this article. Research has shown that hoyo plants are useful in improving indoor air quality and cleansing the air. Hoyas are not toxic to pets although they may cause some stomach upset and diarrhea to your pet if ingested. Some hoyo plants secrete a latex substance when damaged: this latex can be a skin irritant to humans. In the past, hoyas have been used medicinally in Polynesian culture.

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



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Umbel inflorescence of the *Hoya australis* plant.
Photo credit: Jackie Bantle



Hoya kentiana leaves are bean shaped with dark green and maroon leaf margins.

Shellbrook Library December activity highlights

By **EDDIE HOEHN**
Branch Librarian

December was a festive time for the library. Participants enjoyed making a reindeer from candy canes, construction paper, googly eyes, and glitter at the Candy Cane Reindeer Craft Program on Thursday Dec. 4. Next, the kids made a snowman from clothespins, yarn, cotton pom-poms, and magnets at the Clothes-

pin Snowman Craft Program on Thursday Dec. 11.

On Monday Dec. 15, participants were able to exercise their creativity at the Felt Stocking Ornaments Craft Program. They cut out and glued felt designs of their choice onto pre-glued felt stocking decorations. And on Monday Dec. 29, participants made a mouse with pre-cut felt, googly eyes, a cotton pom-

pom, and a candy cane at the Felt Christmas Mouse Craft Program.

The kids were excited to make shoes, faces, a Christmas decoration or scene, and a New Year's scene from Legos at Lego Club on Tuesdays. Volunteers Sam-

uel Schafer and Marj Bradley helped with some of the Lego Club sessions.

On Tuesday Dec. 16, volunteer and local library board member Samuel Schafer presented Christmas-themed Trivia

Night at the library. Participants named all of the birds from the Twelve Days of Christmas, named Santa's reindeer, helped the elves pick a new favorite NHL team, named the children who appeared in classic Christmas movies, and played "Name that Tune" with some humorous Christmas songs.

Seven people participated in Trivia Night and were in two sep-

arate teams. The winning team was called "The Missile Toes".

Participants had fun attending Christmas Storytime on Friday Dec. 19. They listened to some stories about Christmas trees or Santa Claus as well as a couple of children's Christmas songs. The Baby Shark puppet interacted with participants and asked them to help him find his missing Christmas tree.



Elijah, Raelynn, Theodore, Lizzie, Claire, and Jordan with their shoes made at Lego Club.



Drohnen with the tree that he decorated for Christmas Storytime.



Kristin, Naomi, Ana, and Marlene (front) participating at Trivia Night.

Minutes of an RM of Canwood meeting

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

A regular meeting of the Council of the Rural Municipality of Canwood No. 494 was held in the Municipal Council Chambers, at 641 Main Street, Canwood, Sask., on Nov. 18, 2025, commencing at 9:10 a.m.

Present were Reeve Levi Schutte, Chief Administrative Officer Lorna Benson, and the following Councillors for their respective divisions: #1 Kenneth Stene, #2 Gerald Muller, #3, Rick Jensen, #4 Mario Boisvert, #5 Kevin Olson, and #6 Cody Lockhart.

Delegations:

9:15 a.m. Dwight Diehl, Public Works Supervisor, Municipal Operations Update

Jensen: That the minutes of the Oct. 21, Regular Council Meeting be approved as presented. Carried

Public Works Supervisor Dwight Diehl attended the meeting at 9:20 a.m.

Muller: That the Statement of Financial Activities for the month of October 2025 for the R.M. General Account be approved as presented. Carried

Boisvert: That we approve the payments as listed on the attached account listing for a total of \$348,165.44, Council Direct Deposits for November and Payroll Direct Deposits for 2025 Pay Period 22 & 23. Carried

Stene: That the regular meeting of Council be suspended at 9:40 a.m. for an in-camera session to discuss legal matters. Carried

Lockhart: That the regular meeting of Council reconvene at 9:55 a.m. Carried

Muller: That we authorize Peszko Legal to send the draft letter presented in the in-camera session. Carried

Muller: That in the matter of Ahtahkakoop File 838.43 for the unsurveyed access to Mont Nebo on the SW 05-50-06 W3 Ext 55, the Rural Municipality does not require additional right-of-way. Carried

Councillor Muller declared a pecuniary interest and left the meeting at 10:28 a.m.

Stene: That in the matter of Bylaw 2025-06, we consent to the parcel tie between Surface Parcel 204063241 of the SW 36-49-07 W3 and Surface Parcel 204030706 of the SW 36-49-07 W3 Plan 85B04443 Ext 2, which is to be changed from Parcel Class "Road" to Parcel Class "Generic" by a parcel

class code change. Carried

Jensen: That in the matter of Bylaw 2025-06, we consent to the parcel tie between Surface Parcel 204063252 of the SE 36-49-07 W3 and Surface Parcel 204029287 of the SE 36-49-07 W3 Plan 85B04443 Ext 2, which is to be changed from Parcel Class "Road" to Parcel Class "Generic" by a parcel class code change. Carried

Councillor Muller returned to the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Public Works Supervisor Dwight Diehl left the meeting at 10:39 a.m.

Muller: That we reimburse Dave O'Bertos the tax levy for Block A Plan 102107843 Ext 0 from 2014 to 2024 in the amount of \$1,541.68 because of an assessment oversight. Carried

Boisvert: That we reimburse Dave O'Bertos the tax levy for Block A Plan 102107843 Ext 0 in the amount of \$259.53 for the 2024 assessment year because of an assessment oversight. The reimbursement is as follows: 4302, Block A Plan 102107843 Ext 0, \$250.00 (municipal) \$9.53 (school) \$259.53 (total). Carried

Boisvert: That we agree to write off \$573.50 from Invoice 2025-00154 issued to B.N. Farms Ltd. in the amount of \$1,147 related to a fire call of July 20, 2025. Carried

Lockhart: That we instruct the Chief Administrative Officer to develop a fire policy that includes details pertaining to the process and responsibility of property owners and outlines the municipal responsibility of fire calls not recorded at the control burn office. Carried

Muller: That we acknowledge the Permit Extension Application of Cody Lockhart. Carried

Jensen: That we acknowledge the Development and Building Permit Applications of Michelle Boisvert and Christopher Whiting to move in a cabin, with approval pursuant to Section 9.1.1(1)(b) of the Municipal Bylaw 2003-7. Carried

Boisvert: That we approve the Development and Building Permit Applications of Wesley Smith to construct an addition on an agricultural structure, with approval pursuant to Section 5.1.3(1) of the Municipal Zoning Bylaw 2003-7. Carried

Schutte: That we approve the Council's Indemnity

as presented. Carried

Olson: That we agree to purchase a Lake Country Co-op Gift Card in the amount of \$100 for each employee. Carried

Olson: That we agree to the donation of \$1,000 to the Canwood and District Bus Association. Carried

Lockhart: That we agree to the donation of \$1,000 to the Highway 55N Search and Rescue, a division of Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers (SARSAV), a citizen-based search and rescue organization. Carried

Muller: That we now adjourn at 11:59 a.m.

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Province approves local playground projects

By **MINISTRY OF PARKS,
CULTURE & SPORT**
Submitted

More than 40 projects have already been approved through the Province’s School Playground Equipment Grant. The new program launched in fall 2025 to help parents build new play facilities for their children on school grounds.

A number of local projects are among those on the list of funding recipients, including Sturgeon Lake First Nation (\$50,000), Wild Rose School (\$27,602), Muskeg Lake Cree Nation (\$50,000), Blaine Lake Composite School (\$50,000), and Canwood Public School (\$25,000).

“Playgrounds play such an important role in the early development and formative years for children,” Parks, Culture, and Sport Minister Alana Ross said. “That is why we are proud to support the efforts of parent and school community groups to ensure every child has a place to play.”

Since the program launched, more than \$2.3 million in funding has already been approved to reinforce the incredible work done by school community councils and parent groups.

Projects can receive up to \$50,000, matching what has been raised by parents and volunteer school councils through fundraisers and other efforts. Funds can be used to build a new playground. They can also go to-

wards adding or replacing equipment on an existing school playground.

The program is open to all parent and community groups affiliated with publicly funded schools for projects built on school grounds.

The Playground Equipment Grant is part of the Government of Saskatchewan’s broader commitment to building strong, vibrant communities while supporting opportunities for children and families to thrive.

The program is delivered in partnership with the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA). With its core operations funded by Sask Lotteries, the SPRA is a provincial non-profit dedicated to creating a Saskatchewan where all people expe-

rience a better quality of life through parks and recreation.

“The early interest in the School Playground Equipment Grant demonstrates the value and importance of recreation across our province,” SPRA President Darcy McLeod said. “The volunteer community councils and parent groups are the true catalysts behind these projects, all for the betterment and wellbeing of their schools, neighbourhoods and communities.”

The current application period runs until February 25, 2026, on a first-come, first served basis. The province will invest \$3.75 million annually over the next four years in the program.

Sask. releases 2025 job numbers

By **MINISTRY OF IMMIGRATION &
CAREER TRAINING**
Submitted

Statistics Canada recently released their annual labour force numbers which demonstrate that Saskatchewan’s labour market experienced another strong year with continued low unemployment and consistent job growth.

In 2025, Saskatchewan’s economy created 15,200 jobs. The province also had the lowest annual unemployment rate among provinces at 5.2 per cent, well below the national average of 6.8 per cent. Saskatchewan was the only province to record a decline in unemployment rate compared to 2024.

“In 2025, Saskatchewan continued to experience strong job growth and low unemployment rates, this is the direct result of the strength of industry and employers, and the increasing oppor-

tunities available in Saskatchewan,” Immigration and Career Training Minister Eric Schmalz said. “Our government is committed to ensuring this growth continues into 2026 and that Saskatchewan remains the best province in Canada to live, work, and raise a family.”

In 2025 Saskatchewan saw all time historical highs with:

- 510,600 people in full-time employment;
- 617,400 people employed; and
- 651,200 people in the labour force.

Saskatchewan had the highest employment rate at 63.9 per cent and the second highest labour force participation amongst provinces at 67.4 per cent. Saskatchewan’s two biggest cities also saw growth this year. Compared to 2024, Saskatoon’s employment was up 4,000, an increase of 2.0 per cent, and Regina’s employment was up 6,500, an increase of 4.5 per cent.

Industries that saw the largest job gains from

2024 were health care and social assistance up 9,000, construction which increased by 5,000, and agriculture increased by 1,600.

The province continues to see economic growth in other areas. In 2025 Saskatchewan ranked first amongst provinces for growth in urban housing starts (January to November) and second in the value of building permits and new motor vehicle sales (January to October).

This economic growth is backed by the Government of Saskatchewan’s Building the Workforce for a Growing Economy: The Saskatchewan Labour Market Strategy, a roadmap to build the workforce needed to support Saskatchewan’s strong and growing economy, and Securing the Next Decade of Growth: Saskatchewan’s Investment Attraction Strategy, a plan to increase investment in the province and to further advancing Saskatchewan’s Growth plan goal of \$16 billion in private capital investment annually.

Op-ed: Sask wants Moe to keep province carbon tax free

By **GAGE HAUBRICH**
CTF Prairie Director

From Swift Current to Melville to La Ronge and everywhere in between, Saskatchewanians want the province to stay carbon tax-free.

New polling from Insightrix shows that 69 per cent of Saskatchewanians support Premier Scott Moe cancelling the provincial government’s industrial carbon tax.

That’s a level of support usually reserved for the Roughriders in this province. And it’s a level of support that transcends partisan politics. Moe’s Saskatchewan Party garnered about 52 per cent of the vote in the last provincial election. The support for cancelling the industrial carbon tax is 17 per cent higher than that.

The numbers are clear: Moe needs to do everything he can to keep Saskatchewan carbon tax-free.

It’s what Saskatchewanians want, it makes life more affordable, and it helps grow the economy.

Moe cancelled Saskatchewan’s hidden industrial carbon tax on April 1, 2025. That made Saskatchewan Canada’s first, and only, carbon tax-free jurisdiction.

“We are leading again as the first province in Canada to remove the industrial carbon tax on electricity generation, delivering further savings for Saskatchewan families, businesses and industries on their SaskPower bills,” said Minister of Crown Investments Corporation Jeremy Harrison.

“What we are doing as a

province is taking very decisive steps to ensure that our industries in Saskatchewan are more competitive and to protect the jobs today in those industries and protect the jobs that we want to attract in those industries into the future,” said Moe.

Scrapping the industrial carbon tax is saving the average Saskatchewan family about \$112 per year on their power bills, according to SaskPower. Farms will save about \$330 per year.

Those savings are important for Saskatchewanians trying to make ends meet as surveys show that the cost of living is the biggest issue facing families in the province.

But taxpayers are saving without the carbon tax even if they didn’t see a direct bill for it on their receipts. That’s

because when governments force businesses to pay the tax, they have no choice but to pass those costs on to ordinary Canadians when they buy their products.

Carbon taxes on refineries that make gas more expensive, carbon taxes on utilities make home heating more expensive and carbon taxes on fertilizer plants increase costs for Saskatchewan farmers.

Industrial carbon taxes also cost Saskatchewan jobs.

Companies that can’t afford to pay the costs of an industrial carbon tax can just pack up and shift production south to the United States where they don’t have to pay the tax and take all their jobs with them.

Moe did the right thing when he scrapped Saskatchewan’s industrial carbon tax. What Moe can’t do now is fall prey to Prime Minister Mark Carney’s pressure to make a deal that would slap an expensive industrial carbon tax back on Saskatchewanians. That’s because Ottawa continues to put pressure on provinces to impose an industrial carbon tax.

A recent memorandum of understanding between the

federal and Alberta governments includes an industrial carbon tax increase in Alberta in exchange for the federal government supporting a future pipeline. “It means more than a six times increase in the industrial price on carbon,” Carney said.

It’s likely the federal government is pressuring the government of Saskatchewan with a similar deal. But Moe must stand strong and continue to say no to Ottawa imposing a hidden industrial carbon tax in the province.

Saskatchewanians can’t afford to pay any level of carbon tax, no matter what kind of political goodies Ottawa offers up in exchange.

The Saskatchewan government has been fighting the carbon tax since the beginning. That fight got the consumer carbon tax scrapped, saving Saskatchewanians hundreds of dollars per year. The same can happen with the hidden industrial carbon tax. Moe can’t give up now.

Saskatchewanians want to stay carbon tax-free. Moe needs to make sure that happens.

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Olympic hockey team solid, but hardly perfect

When Team Canada announced last summer its six locked-in player selections for this country's entry in the Olympic Games, one of the choices today stands out as a pretty big mistake.

Why is Brayden Point on the team? And why wouldn't Team Canada have gone instead for a stronger forward, such as Winnipeg's Mark Scheifele?

Hockey fans in Canada can only hope last June's mistake is the end of the errors.

The first six names were selected last June and five of them are of the slam-dunk can't-miss variety: Connor McDavid, Nathan MacKinnon, Sidney Crosby, Sam Reinhart and Cale Makar. Point is the other one and, at the time, it looked like a decent choice. He was a two-time Stanley Cup champion, a key figure on the Tampa Bay powerplay and coming off a strong 4 Nations Face Off tournament.

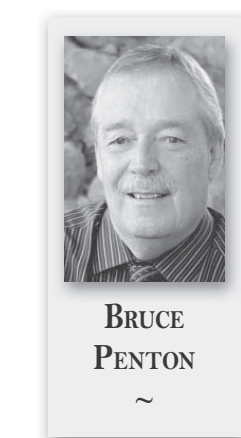
But that was then. This is now. And, unfortu-

nately, Canada is stuck with him. Point is having a horrible season while an obvious omission like Scheifele is enjoying another banner campaign with the Jets, even though his team stunk in the first half of the National Hockey League season.

Was Point named as one of the locked-in six because the coach of Canada's Olympic team is also his coach with the Lightning, Jon Cooper?

Check out the stats: On New Year's Eve, when Canada's 25-man roster was unveiled, Scheifele stood 10th in the NHL scoring race with 45 points in 37 games and had a plus-8 rating on a team that overall, was minus seven in goals for/against. Point was 155th with 21 points in 31 games and had a minus-5 rating on a team that was a plus-25 in for/against.

Something is rotten somewhere, and it could be in Tampa, where two other iffy Team Canada selections — Anthony Cirelli and Brandon



BRUCE
PENTON

Hagel — ply their trade. Cooper obviously went to bat for his three Lightning players when roster discussions were taking place, but it seems the most egregious error happened last June with the Point selection.

It's safe to assume that Cirelli and Hagel were selected for their all-around offensive and defensive play, with their plus-18 and plus-16 figures respectively telling the tale.

So while the likes of Scheifele, Wyatt Johnston of Dallas, Conn Smythe trophy winner Sam Bennett of Florida, Seth Jarvis of Carolina and Connor Bedard

of Chicago are players left off the team, Point, with his dismal 2025-26 campaign figure in black and white for all to see, will be proudly wearing Canada's red and white in Milan.

Canada is such a strong hockey nation, however, that having a Scheifele or Bennett in the lineup rather than Point wouldn't make much of a difference. This country has dozens of world-class players who would easily fit the bill.

Because of injuries or sickness between now and when Canada's team leaves for Italy in early February, a number of players who were last-minute exclusions could still wind up skating for Canada.

Hockey fans across the country are just hoping it's the best 25-player combination.

Vancouver comedy guy Torben Rolfson: "There's all this talk about a retool with the Canucks. It feels like re-run. Haven't we seen this over and over?"

Another one from

Rolfson: "Charlie Woods' dad has been guiding him along his golf career, including trying to pick up Chuck E. Cheese waitresses."

Jeff Ritter of SI.com, on Tiger Woods' influence on the PGA Tour: "Woods may not be driving the bus, but his hands are firmly on the wheel."

Golf writer Gary Van Sickle, wondering whether PGA Tour players would sign up to play in a USGA Parent-Child championship: "Or would it just be more golf for a pro golfer, the equivalent of a mail carrier taking vacation to go hiking?"

Janice Hough of leftcoastsportsbabe.com: "Japanese star slugger Munetaka Murakami has signed with the Chicago White Sox. Well, at least with the switch to MLB from the Nippon Professional League he won't have to deal with immediate playoff pressure."

Headline at theonion.com: "Travis Kelce Worried Patrick Mahomes' ACL Tear Will Derail

'Harlem Shake' Grooms-men Entrance"

Cathal Kelly of the Globe and Mail, on Team Canada's regular excellence in international hockey competitions: "It is Canada's strongly held belief that you could walk into a Tim Hortons in Brandon and start pointing — 'You, you, you, you and you' — and walk out with a pretty good hockey team."

Another one from Kelly, whose column discussed his 2025 predictions: "Wrong about everything, but still delusionally positive about future outcomes. I think I'm ready to apply for Toronto Maple Leafs' general manager."

Vancouver comedy guy Torben Rolfson, after the American military foray into Venezuela: "FIFA is revoking Donald Trump's peace prize."

Rolfson again: "California and Hawaii met on Christmas Eve. Unfortunately it was college football and not surfing."

Care to comment? Email brucepen-ton2003@yahoo.ca

Senior Elks extend 2026 win streak to four games

By JORDAN TWISS

Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The Shellbrook Elks Senior Hockey Club took to the ice for a home game against the Waldheim Warriors and a road game against the Cudworth Tricky Maroons this past weekend, looking to keep their winning ways alive in 2026.

With a strong showing in both games, they were able to do just that.

Elks (11) vs Warriors (3)

The Elks wasted no time against the Warriors on Friday night, going up 2-0 in the first two minutes on back-to-back goals from Cole Duperreault. The first goal was unassisted, while Brendon Beaulac and Ashton Miller earned assists on the second.

The early storm weathered, the Warriors fired back on a goal from Liam Krikau, assisted by Christian Albertson and Emmett Lehmann. However, the Elks were quick to dispel any notions that a comeback would be easy, as Jody Blais scored on an assist from Dallas Galloway, and Duperreault netted a first period hat trick on assists from Matthew Kutnikoff and Beaulac, to put the Elks up 4-1 after 20 minutes.

In a calmer second period, the Warriors made the most of an early power play and closed the gap to 4-2 on

a goal from Thien Gamble, assisted by Lehmann and Albertson. The only other goal came from the Elks' Ashton Miller, with assists from Tavis Galloway and Nathan Flodell.

Not content with a three-goal lead, the Elks doubled it in the span of three minutes in the third period. Blais started things off with an unassisted goal, then Duperreault scored his fourth of the night with an assist from Matthew Flodell, and Ashton Miller scored on assists from Nathan Flodell and Galloway.

A Warriors goal from Connor Neufeldt, assisted by Nate Daku and Cooper Linton, briefly disrupted the Elks' scoring streak. But they would go on to score three more goals to claim a dominant 11-3 victory.

Levi Logan kicked off the scoring with an assist from Payton Kachur, and Matthew Flodell followed up on assists from Duperreault and Beaulac, before Blais scored his hat trick goal on assists from Sam Miller and Dallas Galloway.

Elks (4) vs Maroons (3) OT

Taking off for Cudworth on Sunday afternoon, the Elks found themselves in a hard-fought, lower-scoring affair against the Tricky Maroons. While the Elks were kept off the board through the first period, the Maroons jumped out to a 1-0 lead on a goal

from Tanner Hendriks, assisted by Dawson Boehm and Tanner Medernach.

As the Elks struggled to find the back of the net through the second period as well, Graehme Fiolleau made it 2-0 Maroons on assists from Mackenzie Medernach and Adam McCannell. This, it seems, woke up the Elks, allowing Sam Miller to narrow the gap to 2-1 on assists from Jody Blais and Brendon Beaulac, and Rylan Moe to tie the game with assists from Cole Duperreault and Payton Kachur.

With the score effectively reset, both teams found goals difficult to

come by and overtime looked imminent, until Duperreault struck unassisted to put the Elks up 3-2. The game wasn't done yet, though, as Hendriks scored his second of the game, with assists from Ty Albrecht and Tanner Brockman, forcing overtime after all.

In the abbreviated extra period, Duperreault was able to secure a last-second 4-3 win for the Elks, scoring on assists from Beaulac and Blais.

With the pair of wins, the Elks now sit at 8-5 on the season. This Saturday, the team hosts the Allan Flames. Puck drop is set for 7:30 p.m.

What happens when you don't advertise?

Very little.

Sask. NDP demands hospital safety plan

By SASK NDP
Submitted

The Saskatchewan NDP is again demanding an emergency safety plan to support patients and workers at hospitals in Saskatoon and across the province after the tragic death of a patient during an altercation Friday and a letter that surfaced late Sunday signed by hundreds of frontline health-

care workers fearing for their safety.

Trevor Dubois was killed during the incident at Royal University Hospital, according to media reports and social media posts — a full investigation has been launched.

“On behalf of the Saskatchewan NDP, we want to express our sincere condolences to family and friends of Trevor Dubois,” said Saskatchewan

NDP Deputy Leader Vicki Mowa.

“Safety and security has become a major issue at hospitals — especially here in Saskatoon — and we need emergency action before someone else gets hurt.”

Over the course of the Saskatchewan NDP’s ongoing healthcare consultations, frontline workers have identified safety as a major and emerging issue.

Patients have also reported avoiding emergency rooms due to chaos and fear for their own well-being. On Sunday, a letter signed by more than 200 healthcare workers to the CEO of the Saskatchewan Health Authority was made public and calls for an immediate response and safety plan at St. Paul’s Hospital.

On Nov. 27, a patient at St Paul’s Hospital was found to be in possession

of a firearm and three knives — a frontline worker was directly threatened with one of the knives. When the incident was raised in the Legislature, the Saskatchewan NDP demanded an emergency safety plan.

“From what we can tell, the Sask. Party hasn’t done a thing since that horrifying incident,” Mowat said.

“Let’s be clear — there are many causes of the

mounting chaos we see in our emergency rooms — lack of social supports in the community, staffing shortages and burnout, and a lack of primary care, to name a few — and all must be addressed.

“Today, we are again demanding Scott Moe and his Health Minister step forward today to spell out clearly what steps they will take to protect patients and healthcare workers.”

Sask. RCMP shares worst 911 calls of 2025

By SASK RCMP
Submitted

Saskatchewan RCMP Operational Communication Centre employees provide a critical service within the RCMP by supporting both public and officer safety. In 2025, calls ranged from misdials and false alarms to serious incidents regarding matters of public safety.

“We release our annual list to remind people that misusing 911 can delay emergency responders from reaching someone in a life-threatening situation,” says Jocelyn James, manager of the Saskatchewan RCMP OCC. “Saskatchewan RCMP 911 call-takers and dispatchers answered 422,378 calls

this year – an increase of 15 per cent compared to 2024. Every moment that we’re spending speaking with someone who is complaining about their family member’s loud snoring is a moment that could have been used helping someone in

a serious emergency.”

Here are the top 10 calls that “missed the mark” in 2025:

10. End of the roll: A frustrated individual called to complain that they were out of toilet paper.

9. Rocky road: 911 dispatchers received a call from an individual that was upset because they had to drive their expensive vehicle through a construction zone.

8. Are you there? A caller advised that they called 911 because the TV show they were watching inadvertently triggered their phone to place the call.

7. This isn’t an aisle: An individual called to complain that someone left a shopping cart in their driveway.

6. Where to next: A frustrated individual called looking for a phone number for a taxi service.

5. Don’t get into a spin: 911 dispatchers received a call from a concerned individual about their neighbours not follow-

ing the rules of laundry day.

4. Order up: An individual called to complain that a restaurant was taking too long to make their lunch.

3. Zzzzzz’s: 911 dispatchers received a call from an individual because their family member’s loud snoring was keeping them awake.

2. How dare you: A frustrated individual called because their friend cooked their pork chop without permission.

1. Can you send a pin? 911 dispatchers received a call from an individual saying they had lost their phone and were wondering if an officer could give the phone a call

so they could hear it. (Read that again...)

Please remember: whether you’re out of toilet paper, upset about your late lunch, or you’ve lost your phone – these are not reasons to call 911. Doing so must be reserved for life-threatening emergencies and crimes in progress.

Saskatchewan RCMP would like to remind the public that there are ramifications for those who misuse 911. Not only is there a chance of preventing someone with a life-threatening emergency from getting help, there is also a summary offence charge under the Emergency 911 Systems Act with fines up to \$2,000.

Breast screening age lowered to 43

By NICOLE
TAYLOR
LJI Reporter,
The World-Spectator

As of Jan. 1, Saskatchewan women aged 43-plus are now eligible for screening mammograms without a doctor’s referral, as the Saskatchewan government continues to lower the age limit for screening mammograms.

The change is meant to support early detection of breast cancer, and is part of a broader plan to gradually lower the screening age to 40 within the next six months.

“By lowering the breast cancer screening age, more Saskatchewan women will be able to receive an earlier diagnosis, leading to more lives saved,” Health Minister Jeremy Cockrill said.

“Our government is putting patients first by supporting these investments ensuring women get the care they need closer to home.”

The eligibility change will increase the number of Saskatchewan women who can access early detection breast screening services, further supporting the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency’s BreastCheck screening pro-

gram.

According to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, approximately 75 per cent of breast cancers diagnosed in the province are detected in the early stages.

“We’re proud to again expand BreastCheck screening eligibility,” said Karen Efthimiou, Vice President of Population Health, Quality and Research at the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.

“This initiative emphasizes our commitment to early detection, which leads to more treatment options and improves outcomes. We’re excited to invite women aged 43 and up to schedule their first screening mammogram.”

“Expanding breast screening eligibility to include women 43 years and older will empower even more women to make proactive, informed decisions about the best ways to protect their health,” said Bryan Witt, Vice President of Provincial Clinical and Support Services, Saskatchewan Health Authority.

“The best protection is early detection.”

Women can book an appointment without a referral from a health-care provider, as long as they are

of the appropriate age at the time of booking and meet eligibility criteria:

- Have no breast symptoms, such as lumps, bloody nipple discharge or skin changes;
- Do not have breast implants;
- Are not in active follow-up for breast cancer; and
- Have been breast cancer-free for the last five years.


Most women are encouraged to undergo a screening mammogram every two years.

Eligible women can schedule their mammogram at one of the eight designated screening locations throughout Saskatchewan, or through the Mobile Mammography Unit, which will be at four communities in southeast Saskatchewan over the next four months.




Screening mammograms are routine examinations intended for women with no breast symptoms, while diagnostic mammograms are meant for those experiencing breast symptoms.

Women who have concerns about Breast Cancer or experience symptoms, regardless of their age, should seek medical advice.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS



2026 Junior Citizen of the Year Scholarship



JUNIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Over the past four decades, the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association, in partnership with SaskPower and the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, has recognized the youth of Saskatchewan through the Junior Citizen of the Year Award.

These prestigious awards are given to youths who:

- Have a positive lifestyle
- Volunteer within their community and school
- Has overcome a personal life challenge (physical, emotional or environmental)
- Have a strong sense of caring and responsibility
- Are between the ages of 8 and 18

This year, four deserving youths will receive a **\$3,000 bursary**, provided by SaskPower, to use towards their post-secondary education.

JUNIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR STEM AWARD

Introduced in 2025, The Junior Citizen of the Year STEM Award will recognize a Saskatchewan youth who contains all the same qualities of a Junior Citizen of the Year but **has an aptitude for science, technology, engineering, or mathematics**. This award is eligible for all students, including but not limited to, young women, and underrepresented communities.

This year, one deserving youth will receive a **\$3,000 bursary**, provided by Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan, to use towards their post-secondary education.

Building a Strong Saskatchewan through the Crown Sector

Visit www.swna.com for further information and nomination forms
Nominations close March 31, 2026

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2-03

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Zion - Canwood
Sunday School,
Worship Sunday, 9 a.m.
(in-person only)
St. John's - Shellbrook
Sunday School,
Worship Sunday, 11 a.m.
(in-person and online
via Facebook live)
Rev. Emmanuel Aristide

PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

Parkside
10:30 a.m. Worship
Pastor Lorne Valuck
306-747-3572
Shellbrook
Adult Study
9:30 a.m.
Sun., 10:30 a.m. - Worship
Rev. Jordan Clark
306-850-0429
Canwood
10 a.m. - Sunday School
11 a.m. - Worship
Pastor Lyndon Petten
587-973-2223
Leask Gospel Tabernacle
Sunday 11 a.m.
Pastor Josh
1-780-690-2100

UNITED CHURCH

Big River
Sundays
11 a.m. - Worship
at Anglican Church
Rev. Dave Whalley
306-747-2804

ANGLICAN CHURCH

Leask - All Saint's
Sunday Service - 9 am MP
St. Andrew's - Shellbrook
Sunday Service - 11 am MP
H.C. Service Nov. 30 with
Archdeacon Brody Albers
9 a.m. in Leask,
11 a.m. in Shellbrook
Minister's Warden:
306-922-5159

EVANGELICAL FREE

Big River
10:00 a.m. - Worship
Bible Classes resume
in the fall
306-469-2258
Youth Nite:
Fridays at 7 p.m.
Mont Nebo
Sun. Worship - 11:00 a.m.
(10:30 a.m. June - August)
306-468-2525

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN

Parkside
11 a.m. - Worship
(in-person and online
via Facebook Live)
10 a.m. - Sunday School

PRESBYTERIAN

Mistawasis
Sunday worship
11:00 a.m.
Rev. Stewart Folster

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Debden
Sun. Mass - 9:30 a.m.
Fr. Mariusz Zajac
Big River - Sacred Heart
Sun., 11:30 a.m. - Mass
Whitefish
Sun., 2:30 p.m. - Mass.
Victoire
Sat., 7:30 p.m. - Mass.
Fr. Mariusz Zajac
St. Agatha's - Shellbrook
Mass - Sunday 9 a.m.
St. Henry's - Leask
Mass - Sunday 11 a.m.
Mistawasis
1st & 3rd Sundays 1:30 p.m.
Fr. Tuan Doan

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407-2nd Ave E, Shellbrook
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Pastor Myshan Irving
306-747-3398

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Spiritwood
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Rev. Sarah Urano

UNITED /ANGLICAN

Worship Services
Glaslyn
Time is on the sign
Rev. Kun Kim
Rev. Don Skinner

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Medstead - 6:00 p.m.

SUNDAY

Leoville - 9:30 a.m.
Spiritwood - 11:15 a.m.
Shell Lake - 2:00 p.m.
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Pastor Rick Martin

FIELDS OF HOPE (HOFFNUNGSFELDER) MENNONITE CHURCH

Glenbush
11:00 am Worship

BETHEL

Medstead
2nd Sunday, 10 am -
Worship
Pastor David Jensen
4th Sunday, 10 am - Worship
Pastor David Jensen

MENNONITE BRETHREN

Glenbush
10:00 am - Sunday School
Worship 10:50 am

Gideons International of Canada

Battlefords Camp
Phone Art Martynes
(306) 389-4633

PARTNERS IN WORSHIP

Shell Lake
Worship Services
Sunday 11:00 a.m.
Pastor Sarah Urano
306-841-7333

LAKELAND

COMMUNITY CHURCH

(Corner of 1st Ave. and
4th St., Spiritwood)
Sun., 11 am - Worship
Service & Sunday School
Pastor Michael Kluthe
306-883-2380

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Blaine Lake, Canwood, Debden, Big River, Mont Nebo,
Shell Lake, Spiritwood, Spiritwood RR, Leoville, Chitek Lake,
Medstead, Rabbit Lake, Mayfair, Glenbush

Contact us for distribution quantities

Shellbrook Chronicle
& Spiritwood Herald

CONTACT US AT:
306-747-2442 or **chads@sbchron.com**

www.shellbrookchronicle.com
www.spiritwoodherald.com

blanket classifieds

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YOUR AD HERE

YOUR AD HERE

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For Details

Contact Your Local Newspaper or The Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association

P: 306-649-1405

E: classifieds@swna.com

W: www.swna.com

DON'T DRINK AND RIDE



The

Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald

are proud to serve as your trusted
local newspaper and advertiser!

*Let your community know about
the services you offer!*

2 x 2 (Bus. Card Size)	\$69.00
2 x 4	\$138.00
1/8 Page	\$189.75
1/4 Page	\$350.00
1/2 Page	\$650.00
Full Page	\$950.00
Colour is an additional \$90	

**All rates are subject to applicable taxes (5% GST)*

Is your community group or non-profit
organization holding an event?

Take advantage of our
COMMUNITY CALENDAR

With the purchase of a 2 column x 2 inch display ad,
we will advertise your community event in our
Community Calendar **FREE** for two weeks
prior to the event!

\$60 + GST - A savings of over 30%

*Don't miss out on letting your community
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We are also your local supplier for:

- Business Cards
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 - Brochures
 - Invoices & Forms
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