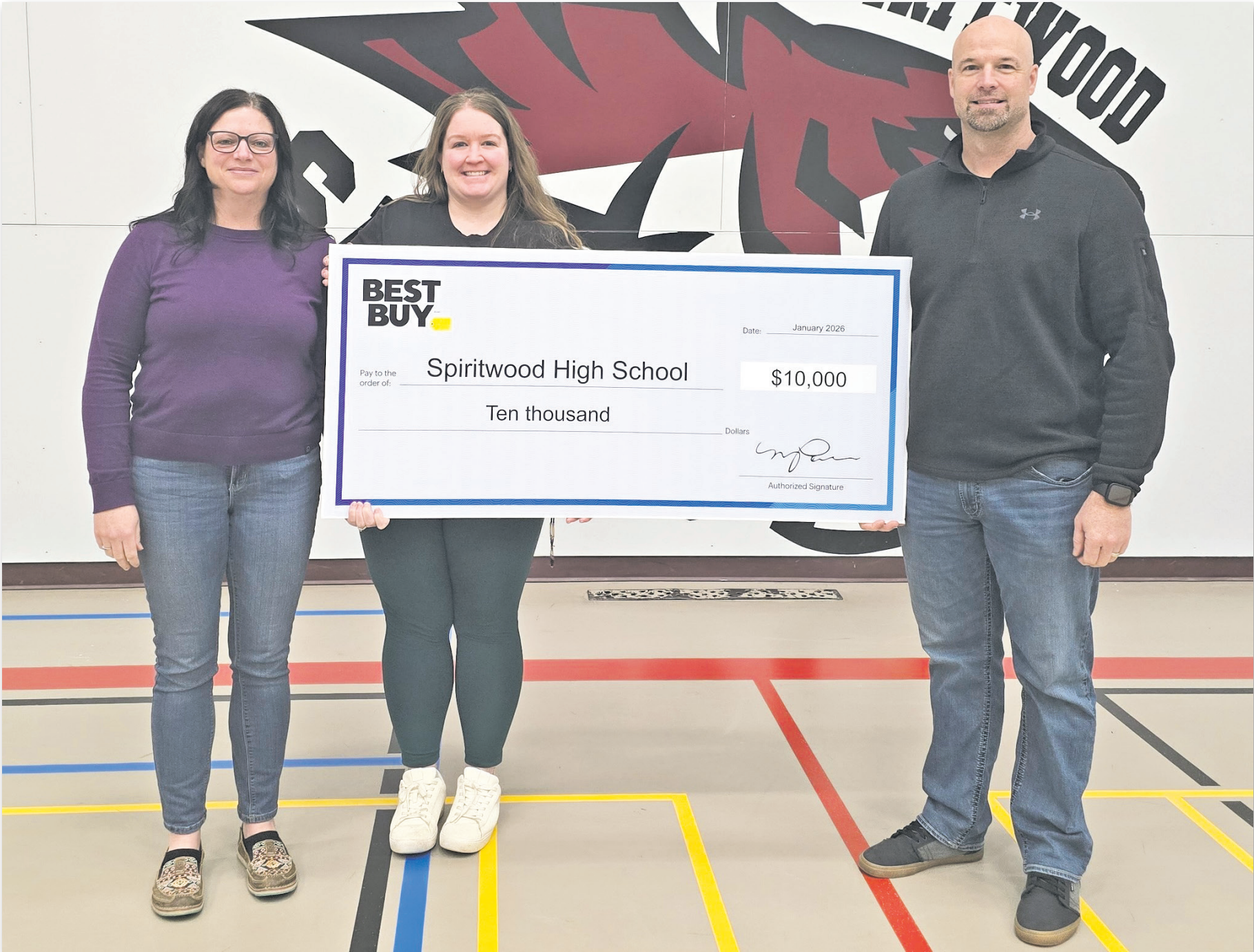




Spiritwood High School receives Best Buy grant



Spiritwood High School recently received a \$10,000 Best Buy grant. Accepting the grant on behalf of the school, from left to right: counsellor Kendra Sanders, librarian Ricki Corfield, and vice principal Scott Haggarty.

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

In schools across Saskatchewan, funding limitations often mean teachers and students have to do the best they can with the resources they have available.

For Spiritwood High School, this has long been true where technology is concerned.

As school counsellor Kendra Sanders explains, much of the school curriculum is delivered primarily through Google Classroom and Edsby, both of which require depend-

able technology access. However, the school currently operates with an approximate 3:1 student to computer ratio. In addition, many of its existing devices are between two and five years old and increasingly require repairs, further impacting their reliability and usability.

“These challenges make it difficult to fully support digital learning and instructional delivery,” Sanders said. “As a result, students are often unable to independently complete technology based assignments during class time.”

The need to improve student ac-

cess to essential technology led Sandra to research potential sources of external funding to support the school, which, in turn, led her to Best Buy’s Teen Tech Grant, a program that provides \$10,000 to secondary schools to provide essential educational technology for students in Grades 8 through 12.

Seeing it as a worthwhile opportunity, Sanders applied for the grant, and recently learned that Spiritwood High School was among 12 grant recipients nationwide. Sanders says the grant funding will be used to purchase 21 Chromebooks for the

school.

“High quality devices support daily classroom instruction, accommodations for diverse learners, and preparation for post secondary education and the workforce,” she said, noting that the school was both grateful and excited to receive the grant.

“The funding represents a significant investment in our students and affirms the importance of equitable access to technology in education. The positive impact of this support will be felt across our entire student body.”

Continued on page 2



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Senior Elks top Lakers in Provincials

By JORDAN TWISS
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The Shellbrook Elks Senior Hockey Club continued its run through the Senior D provincial tournament on Saturday, Feb. 7, welcoming the Lucky Lake/Beechy Lakers to Shellbrook for game one of their second round series.

Once the opening face off was dropped, both teams came out evenly matched, setting a fast, hard-hitting pace for the game. Gifted an early power play, the Elks looked solid but weren't able to cash in on any of their scoring attempts. However, the power play was enough to shift the momentum in the Elks' favour, as they pounced on a turnover in the Lakers end and drew first blood on a goal from Matthew Flodell, assisted by Rylan Moe.

The Elks kept the pressure on the Lakers in the dying minutes of the first period, but were unable to build on their 1-0 lead.

Picking up where they left off in the second period, the Elks kept the Lakers on their toes through the second period, even when they were on the penalty kill. Finally, after a near miss, the Elks extended their lead on a defensive turnover by the Lakers, which opened the door for Jody Blais to score on assists from Rylan Moe and Sam Miller.

Mere seconds later it was 3-0 Elks,

as Blais located the puck amidst a sea of chaos in front of the Lakers goal and scored, unassisted.

As the period wore on, the Elks committed their first major error by taking a penalty that allowed the Lakers to setup and score on a top shelf shot from the point by Tage Fawns. Cohen Smith and Nolan McDonald earned assists on the goal.

The game opened up after this goal, with both teams trading off good opportunities. The Lakers eventually got the better of these exchanges, closing the gap to 3-2 after the Elks left McDonald undefended on their own doorstep and let him tap a cross-ice pass into a wide-open goal. Josh Rediron and Will Campbell assisted on the goal.

With both teams jumping out to a fast-paced start again in the third period, it was the Elks who got the better of the early exchanges, as Dallas Galloway corralled a rebound into the Lakers' goal on assist from

Sam Miller and Tyler Rock.

The Lakers fired right back, however, finishing off an offensive rush with a goal from Jake Spak, assisted by Levi Kimble.

Going on a power play shortly after this, the Elks made the most of the opportunity, as Galloway found the back of the net again on a shot from the point. Rock and Kaiden Couture assisted on the goal.

Down 5-3 with time quickly counting down, the Lakers pulled their goalie in a last-ditch effort to even up the score and force overtime. Tightening their defences, the Elks were able to withstand the storm, thanks in no small part to some clutch saves from netminder Alex Bell.

Game two of the series will be played in Lucky Lake this Friday, Feb. 13. If the Elks win or tie, they will advance to round three of Provincials.

Traveling out to Cudworth on Sunday afternoon, the Elks opened up the Twin Rivers Hockey League playoffs against the Cudworth Tricky Maroons. Though no game sheet was available prior to publication, the Elks were able to secure a 9-8 overtime win to take a 1-0 lead in the best-of-three series.

Game two of the series was scheduled to be played in Shellbrook on Tuesday night (Feb. 10). If necessary, game three will be played in Shellbrook on Tuesday, Feb. 17.



Elks forward Rylan Moe tips a shot on goal but can't get it past Lakers goalie Steven Duchsher.

Spiritwood High School receives Best Buy grant

Continued from 1

In addition to increasing access to technology at school, Sanders says the grant funding will support the school's most vulnerable students, including those who don't have personal devices at home.

"The ability to take Chromebooks home will allow students to complete assignments and stay engaged with their learning outside of school hours," she said. "This grant therefore

plays a vital role in promoting equity, academic participation, and student success."

Launched in 2018, Best Buy's Teen Tech Grants have provided \$4 million in funding to secondary schools across Canada. Kirsten Dickson, a Best Buy external communications specialist, says the company saw it as a way to build brighter futures for students through technology, motivate their learning, and set them up for success.

"We were inspired by Spiritwood's application and their commitment to creating equitable opportunities for their students," Dickson said.

"Spiritwood High School will use their grant to fund 21 Chromebooks for students who may not have access to their own de-

vices, improving the student to device ratio and moving the school closer to 1:1 access. This support helps remove barriers for youth and help level the playing field for their students, so they have a better chance to reach their full potential."

In addition to the \$10,000 provided by the grant, recipients also join the Best Buy Teen Tech Network, a national community of youth who collaborate on projects and compete for prizes, all while boosting critical thinking skills and getting hands on experience.

Currently, says Dickson, Best Buy is partnered with Microsoft on a project that is exploring and promoting the responsible use of AI tools. Schools who participate will have an opportunity to win grants up to \$10,000 and prizes donated by Lenovo.

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NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF ASSESSMENT ROLL

VILLAGE OF MARCELIN

Notice is hereby given that the assessment roll for the Village of Marcelin for the year of 2026 has been prepared and is open to inspection in the office of the assessor on the following days: Tuesday & Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. from February 12th, 2026 to March 12th, 2026.

A bylaw pursuant to section 214 of *The Municipalities Act* has been passed and the assessment notices have been sent as required.

Any person who wishes to appeal against his or her assessment is required to file his or her notice of appeal, along with a fee of \$200.00, refundable upon success of appeal, to: The Assessor, Village of Marcelin, Box 39, Marcelin, SK, S0J 1R0, by the 12th day of March, 2026. Contact for the Secretary for the Board of Revision Nicolle Hoskins, secretary@westernmunicipal.ca, 1-306-441-2674.

Dated this 12th day of February, 2026.

Leanne McCormick, Assessor

VILLAGE OF CANWOOD NOTICE OF ASSESSMENT ROLL

Notice is hereby given that the assessment roll for the Village of Canwood for the year 2026 has been prepared and is open to inspection in the office of the Assessor from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tuesday to Thursday from February 10, 2026, until April 12, 2026.

A bylaw pursuant to section 214 of *The Municipalities Act* has been passed and the assessment notices have been sent as required.

Any person wishing to discuss the notice of assessment or potential appeal may contact the Assessor at 306-468-2016 (Village of Canwood) or 1-306-446-7660 (SAMA).

Any person who wishes to appeal against his or her assessment is required to file a notice of appeal to the Board of Revision, by March 12, 2026 with Mike Ligtermoet, Secretary to the Board of Revision, 642 Agnew Street, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan S6V 2P1 with the applicable fee of \$100.00, made payable to the Village of Canwood, which will be returned if the appeal is successful.

Dated at Canwood, Saskatchewan this 6th day of February, 2026.

Heather Sten, Assessor
Village of Canwood
Box 172, 571 Main Street
Canwood, SK

NOTICE OF CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

TOWN OF SPIRITWOOD

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that nominations of candidates for the office of:

Councillor: Town of Spiritwood
Number to be elected: One

will be received by the undersigned on the 18th day of March, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Spiritwood Town Office;

and during regular business hours on February 12th to March 18th, 2026 at the Spiritwood Town Office.

Nomination forms may be obtained at the following location:

www.townofspiritwood.ca
Spiritwood Town Office, 212 Main Street

Public Disclosure Statements are required to be submitted with all nomination forms.

Dated this 12th day of February, 2026.

Rhonda Saam
Returning Officer

Spiritwood hosts Spirit of the North Bonspiel

By BEVRA FEE
Spiritwood Herald
Reporter

The annual Spirit of the North bonspiel was held at Spiritwood’s curling rink on Feb. 6 and 7, bringing junior and senior high school curlers from Spiritwood, Edam, Medstead, St. Walburg, Leoville, North Battleford, and Prince Albert to the community.

All gathered to square off in the well-attended match-ups organized by Spiritwood curling coach and teacher, Shannon Caffet. Along with support from the Spiritwood Curling Club, Caffet was assisted by colleague Tom Jesney and volunteer Danica Laventure.

“Danica has helped out with the younger curlers all year, and she will be missed when she graduates this year,” noted Caffet.

In fact, (spoiler alert) Laventure has been part of the winning squad at the Spirit of the North Classic for the past three years. Three of the members of the three-peat team curled their last end ever in this particular event, once again coming up against the same rival in this year’s final as they did in 2024.

Comprising the Spiritwood Girls team in the senior category, Laventure and her teammates Aleah Beaulac and Avarie Conacher will be leaving

Jessie Allchurch as the lone remaining member of the team when the former three all graduate, guaranteeing that the 2027 event will see a (mostly) new seniors champ.

Fans were treated to a well-played and competitive A-side final when the Senior Girls and Senior Boys from Spiritwood battled to a 7-6 final score — unintentionally fitting with the event’s “theme” of 6 - 7 (if you know, you know). The senior B-side final was a cakewalk for the St. Mary Marauders over the Royals out of Edam. The winning teams were awarded gift cards, while the second-place teams scored big with giant medals made of chocolate!

The Junior category over the two-day bonspiel saw thrilling action with many new curlers holding their own and entertaining the curling enthusiasts in the gallery with promise of up and coming new stars.

Medstead fielded a team in the Junior age group for the first time at the Spirit of the North, with a strong showing that landed them in the B-side final on Saturday, where they were defeated by the Spiritwood team.

“I thought we would get trashed, but we won all our games yesterday and then we tied one game and had to have a draw to the button to

decide the winner,” reported the team’s Skip, Corsin Raess.

Curling as a team in their hometown, the squad has gelled during the weekly league play at Medstead’s curling rink. The crew will be taking their show on the road to school Division playoffs this year, so the bonspiel was a good trial run for them (and for their team curling pants, which they all made in home ec class — it’s Medstead, of course they did.)

The Junior A-side final was a thrilling contest between the young rink from Leoville and a worthy bunch from St. Mary’s. Coming down to the last rock, Leoville’s skip pulled off the clutch shot for the win.

Daxon Christopherson, who curls in league play in Leoville and in Spiritwood, is a seasoned vet compared to his teammates. Drayden Laventure, the team’s lead, curls part-time with his grandpa, Leoville’s legendary curling coach by the name of Craz (Coach Craz, to the kids, or Ron Craswell outside the curling rink).

“I’m pretty happy with our outing this weekend, and I think our coach did a pretty good job with strategy,” Drayden said.

In the Junior C-side final, the other Spiritwood team pulled off a runaway win to capture the banner (and some of those chocolate medals). Winning teams of each event were also given Spiritwood Curling Club t-shirts, donated by the Club.



Senior teams from Spiritwood High School faced off in the final, with the girls finishing on top. From left to right: Wyatt Youst, Rory Booth, Van Slater, Liam Simonar, Jessie Allchurch, Avarie Conacher, Danica Laventure, and Aleah Beaulac.



Junior A Event winners from Leoville Central School, from left to right: Wriley Rasay, Drayden Laventure, Elyse Menke, Daxon Christopherson, and Coach Ron Craswell.



C Event winners in the Junior category from Spiritwood, from left to right: Assistant Coach Danica Laventure, Mikayla Jewitt, Liv Slater, Sierra Strate, Ariel Smolinski, and Coach Shannon Caffet.



Skip Jessie Allchurch keeps an eye on the opponent’s rock in the A-final.

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Submit your resume to the Town Office in person at 71 Main Street, or by

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email: cao@townofshellbrook.ca

Competition closes when suitable candidate is found.

Pipeline prospects look increasingly murky

A little more than two months have passed since Prime Minister Mark Carney and Alberta Premier Danielle Smith sat down and signed an MOU that could result in the construction of a new pipeline to Canada's west coast, and, for all the incessant talk about the prospective project, very little has changed.

As a refresher, the MOU doesn't guarantee a pipeline will be built tomorrow, or even 10 years from now.

Instead, it outlines the emission and other climate conditions and timelines that need to be met in order for a new oil pipeline to the Pacific to be approved under the federal major projects law.

These conditions include Alberta signing on to an industrial carbon pricing agreement to lower methane emissions by 75 per cent over the next 10 years, and the federal government axing the Trudeau era oil and gas emissions cap and making adjustments or exemptions to the federal oil tanker ban off the coast of B.C.

The MOU also includes commitments from both governments to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, and to engage with the government of British Columbia and B.C. First Nations to "ensure they share in the financial benefits" of any pipeline project.

Last, but certainly not least, the MOU identifies four projects for the federal government to work on with the western provinces:

- Construction of one or more private sector constructed and financed pipelines, with Indigenous Peoples co-ownership and economic benefits, in addition to the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline;
- Constructing and financing Pathways, the world's largest carbon capture, utilization, and storage project;
- Construction of thousands of megawatts of AI computing power, with a large portion dedicated



JORDAN
TWISS

~
News Editor

to sovereign cloud for Canada and its allies; and

- Construction of large transmission connections with B.C. and Saskatchewan to strengthen the ability of the western power markets to supply low carbon power to oil, LNG, critical minerals, agricultural, data centres, and CCUS industries in support of their sustainability goals.

Since these terms were set and agreed to at the end of November (and unanimous-

ly approved in the Alberta Legislature), there's been plenty of theatrics.

When they haven't been criticizing Mr. Carney's failure to magically manifest a pipeline, the Conservative opposition has turned to legislative stunts, cherry picking parts of the MOU it agrees with, packaging them as a bill, then acting outraged when the bill fails to pass.

The political theatre intensified early in the new year, when the United States removed Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro from power.

The move was a wholly transparent attempt by U.S. President Donald Trump to open up Venezuela's vast oil reserves to American interests. Almost immediately, it spawned panic that Venezuela's political and economic climate would stabilize overnight, and that, once the oil started flowing, the U.S. would no longer need Alberta's product (even though large oil companies have called Venezuela "un-investable").

In the midst of all this sound and fury (signifying nothing), no private sector proponent has stepped forward, no route for the pipeline has been proposed, and no plans have been presented.

The only real change is that Premier Smith has ruled out routing the pipeline through Kitimat to B.C.'s northern coast. Instead, during a meeting with Prime Minister Carney and B.C. Premier David Eby last week, she says alternatives are being considered, including an expansion of Enbridge's main line and exploring ways to bet-



ter utilize old Keystone assets, among other ideas.

"We are doing our work to put the project together by June, and we are hoping that the federal government can move swiftly on making a decision so we can get down to technical details on that," Smith said following the meeting.

"I'm very confident that once approved, we will have one or more strong proponents in the private sector willing to work with us to build it."

For his part, Mr. Eby has abandoned his default position of opposing the idea, and says he looks forward receiving updates on the prospective project.

Despite this new spirit of collaboration between Ms. Smith and Mr. Eby, there's still one major obstacle standing in the way of a new pipeline being built: the lack of a business case for it.

Like any major capital project, an oil pipeline is a significant long-term investment, and investors are a notoriously skittish group, prone to running away unless conditions are ideal to maximize their profits.

Currently, OPEC, which is headed by Saudi Arabia and has a stranglehold on global oil markets, is pushing oil prices down by overproducing. Analysts suggest this could persist well into 2026, with JP Morgan projecting that prices could drop into the \$30 per

barrel range by 2027.

Given these market conditions, and ongoing trade uncertainty between Canada and the U.S., Canadian energy sector firm Enserva is forecasting that upstream oil and gas capital spending will decline by 2.2 per cent in 2026, and production will see no dramatic increases.

What's more, there are clear options for companies to boost their exports without risking billions of dollars on a new pipeline.

According to the Canada Energy Regulator, the Trans Mountain pipeline was, on average, 82 per cent full between June 2024 and June 2025. Meanwhile, the Alberta Energy Regulator says the province currently produces 4 million barrels of oil per day, but existing pipeline systems have capacity for 5.4 million barrels per day.

In short, there's still pipeline capacity for companies to leverage, and no economic rationale for them to risk undertaking a new capital project.

This, however, is not a reality that will be accepted by Alberta (particularly its separatist cohort).

So, if a project is going to proceed "no matter what," who's going to pay for this new pipeline for oil companies that, in recent years, have continuously set new production and profit records,?

Well, just take a look in the mirror.

Shellbrook Chronicle

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Spiritwood Herald

Serving the Communities of Spiritwood, Shell Lake, Leoville, Chitek Lake, Mildred, Rabbit Lake, Medstead, Mayfair, Bapaume, Belbutte, Glaslyn

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Raiders pick up OT win in playoff opener

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

After ending a strong regular season with back-to-back losses, the Blaine Lake Raiders were looking to get back in the win column when they kicked off their playoff run in the Saskatchewan Prairie Hockey League by travelling to Langham to face off against the Langham Vikings on Friday, Feb. 6.

Though the game would go on to be a high-scoring affair, both teams played to a 0-0 draw through the opening period of Friday night's match. The first goal came early in the second period from the Vikings, and started a back and forth that was continued by Raiders' Cole Brochu, on assists from Braidan Onishenko and Patrick Gauthier.

Keeping the game essentially deadlocked, the Vikings struck again just after the midway point of the second period, only for the Raiders' Thomas Jean to tie the score at 2-2 on assists from Gage Helm and Clay Casavant.

In a third period that saw the Raiders' and Vikings' offenses come alive, the Vikings got the scoring started early on a power play goal. A couple minutes later, Thomas Jean tied the game right back up on his second goal of the night, assisted by Helm, only for the Vikings to quickly reclaim the lead.

The Raiders struck back just as quickly, scoring three unanswered goals in just over two minutes to surge ahead 6-4. Cole Brochu started the scoring,

with an assist from Patrick Gauthier, and Helm followed up on an assist from Kyle Schmidt. Capping off the scoring streak, Jean netted his hat trick goal, on assists Adam Horner and Helm.

After regrouping, the Vikings cut the Raiders' lead in half. But, following a lull in the scoring, the Raiders restored their two-goal lead on Helm's second goal of the night, assisted by Ryan Smith and



Cole Brochu (middle) was named player of the game in the Raiders' OT win against the Langham Vikings in their playoff opener.

Jean. Now up 7-5, with just over three minutes left on the clock, the Raiders only needed to hold on for the win. But the Vikings weren't ready to go down without a fight, and scored twice in 21 seconds to force overtime.

There, Raiders leading scorer Kelly Friesen found the back of the net for the first time in the game, scoring on assists from Helm and Clay Casavant, to give the Raiders the game one win.

The action returns to Blaine Lake (or possibly Waldheim) this Friday, Feb. 13, for game two of the best-of-three series. If necessary, game three will be played in Blaine Lake (or Waldheim) on Saturday, Feb. 14.

80 guests fed at “Mystery Supper”

By **DAVE HYNDMAN**
Submitted

The Resolute School Community Club came up with a unique fundraising project, held at the Pioneer Centre on Feb 7. It was called a “Mystery Country Supper”, and some 80 people snapped up the tickets for this odd meal.

Oh, the food was typical fare, as delicious

as one would expect, consisting of meatballs in gravy, mashed potatoes, and steamed veggies. What was different was the manner in which they were served, leading to such oddities as eating mashed potatoes with a dill pickle, or a bowl of jell-o with a celery stick.

Guests themselves determined the order in which they were to be served. Prior to the

meal, everyone picked out their items from a list, with four items per serving. However, none of the things on the list were remotely connected to a food item, so it was, then, that one person at the table may have been given a cookie, a toothpick, a fork and a glass of water, and the tablemate received a bowl of mashed potatoes, a knife, a dill pickle and a napkin.

And before the next of the four courses was brought out, everything was removed. Such it was, then, that those fortunate to receive a fork or spoon saw them taken away.

Members of the Resolute School Community Club were kept hopping, making up four separate “orders” per table for each of the four “courses,” and each of them looking after at least two tables.

The Mystery Supper was a fundraising project by the club, which has been involved in a renovation project at Resolute School.

The instruction on the menu was to “laugh, giggle, and have fun.” It's a safe bet that all 80 guests did just that.



Daniela Varela, Joyce Willick, Dave Hyndman, and Diane Wingerter enjoy their mystery meal. For this course, Daniela had beans, Joyce had veggies and a bun, Dave had mashed potatoes, and Diane spooned her jell-o with a celery stick.

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**Shellbrook Chronicle
& Spiritwood Herald**



Sask. RCMP reports lower homicide rate for 2025

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

After 2024 saw the highest number of homicide files on record in Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan RCMP says officers continued to face a high volume of cases across the province in 2025.

In a detailed breakdown, released last week, the Saskatchewan RCMP said its Major Crimes Branch investigated 33 manslaughter and murder files with 39 victims in 2025, compared to 41 files with 43 victims in 2024.

Of those files, 31 manslaughter and murder files, with 34 victims,

occurred in Saskatchewan RCMP jurisdiction. RCMP teams also investigated two murders, with five victims, in File Hills First Nations Police Service (FHFNPS) jurisdiction.

In addition to investigating the homicides that occurred in 2025, the RCMP says investigators continued work on at least 30 unsolved homicide or suspicious death files from previous years.

The slightly lower number of cases and victims in 2025, is more in line with homicide figures from 2021 to 2023. Meanwhile, there's been only one homicide file with one victim in 2026 so far.

"While 2024 marked

the highest number of homicide files we've investigated, the volume in 2025 remained elevated," said Superintendent Josh Graham, the officer in charge of Saskatchewan RCMP Major Crimes Branch. "The work doesn't stop for our teams, homicide files in our jurisdiction are at a rate that requires significant investigative capacity."

The Saskatchewan RCMP's Homicide Investigation Unit (HIU), part of the Major Crimes Branch, is responsible for investigating murders, manslaughters, and homicides within RCMP jurisdiction. HIU investigators also routinely support frontline RCMP offi-

cers at detachments by consulting on sudden or suspicious death investigations. These investigations are not just statistics, each one represents a loss felt in the community.

"Behind every homicide statistic is a person who has been taken from their loved ones, and a family living through an unimaginable loss," said Supt. Graham.

"Our investigators are always mindful that their job is to uncover the truth, give a voice to victims, provide answers to families. The cases we take on aren't easy, they stay with our officers, but our teams remain committed to investigating with professionalism and compassion."

Offering a look at the victims of homicides in 2025, the RCMP says 3 victims were children aged 12 and under, 3 were between 13 and

19, 12 were people in their 20s, 10 were in their 30s, 6 were in their 40s, 4 were in their 50s, and one person was over 60.

Geographically speaking, 5 victims (13 per cent) were in Saskatchewan RCMP's South District, 11 victims were in Central District, and 18 were in North District. There were also five victims (13 per cent) reported in FHFNPS jurisdiction.

As a result of investigations into 2025's homicides, the RCMP says 28 people were charged, with nearly 90 per cent of them being male, and 74 per cent being in their 20s or younger.

The RCMP also says officers solved 23 of 2025's 33 homicide files, with a little more than half of them being solved within 24 hours, and all of them being solved in less than six

months. There are still 10 homicide cases from 2025 left unsolved.

"In a calendar year, our investigators responded to single, double and triple homicides, and a quadruple murder scene. This shows just how unpredictable and complex our work is," said Supt. Graham.

"Periods of intense investigative activity test every part of our system. Our teams' demands escalate immediately. In November, our HIU leaned on the Serious Crimes Unit, another experienced unit in the Major Crimes Branch, to assist with an investigation. Despite the pressures, our teams remain focused on the important role these investigations play in public safety and ensuring every victim and family receives the thorough investigation they deserve."

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 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)

BIG RIVER: Ice Fishing Derby on Cowan Lake in Big River, SK – Saturday, March 21. \$18,000 in prizes! Entry fee: \$50/Hole; 2nd Hole \$20. Tickets available by phone 306-469-7990 or @ Timberlost Outfitters in Big River and @ The Fishin' Hole in Saskatoon.
CANWOOD: Canwood Regional Park Supper & Auction, Canwood Elks Community Hall - Saturday, March 7, 2026. Refreshments 5pm, Supper 6pm ~ Auction to follow (menu for supper is: roast beef, chicken breast, mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables, salads, dessert & all the fixin's). Adults \$25 / 6-12 yrs \$15 / 5 & Under Free. 50/50 Draw & Raffle Tables. Proceeds to Canwood Regional Park and Community Projects.
CAMEO: Cameo Community Snowmobile Rally – Saturday, February 21, Register 12 noon to 3 pm @ Cameo Hall (6 miles west of Shellbrook, then 2 miles north - on Cameo-Buckingham Road). Tickets \$10 each or 3/\$20 *every rider must purchase a \$10 ticket*. Call Keith at 306-714-8830 or Ralph at 306-747-3611.

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U18 Parkland Elks add loss, OT win over weekend

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The U18 AA Parkland Elks took a road trip down to Saskatoon over the weekend, where they met with the Saskatoon Sabercats on Friday, Feb. 6, and the Saskatoon Screaming Eagles the following evening.

In Friday night's game against the Sabercats, the Elks started off on the right foot, taking a 1-0 lead on an early goal from Camden Olsen, assisted by Brady Hujber and Aiden Tait. Then, with a power play advantage, Gabe Wadham made it 2-0 Elks on an assist from Logan Fisher.

The Elks' highlights ended here, as the Sabercats roared to life and scored four unanswered goals to end the first period with a 4-2 lead. The next two periods saw the Sabercats tack on five more unanswered goals to skate away with a 9-2 victory.

Elks (6) vs Eagles (5) OT

In the following night's game against the Screaming Eagles, the Elks got off to a good start once again, going up 1-0 early on a goal from Boston Gagnon, assisted by Davin Hart. Though the Eagles fired back almost immediately, the Elks didn't let the snowball become an avalanche, and the first period ended with a 1-1 draw.

On the penalty kill to start the second period, the Elks made the Eagles pay for careless play by taking a 2-1 lead on an unassisted shorthanded goal from Cohen Ball. The Eagles tied the game back up near the midway point of the period, but the

Elks made the most of a power play opportunity shortly after, going up 3-2 on an unassisted goal from Aiden Tait.

Facing another penalty kill late in the second period, the Elks once again caught the Eagles off guard, taking a 4-2 lead on a shorthanded goal from Logan Fisher, assisted by Davin Hart.

As the action kicked over to the third period, the Eagles were able to tie things back up with back-to-back goals less than a minute apart. But the Elks fired right back, with Fisher's second goal of the game, assisted by Merek Tait and Hart.

Once again, however, the Eagles were able to tie the game up and force an overtime period.

With the benefit of a power play leftover from the end of the third period, the Elks made quick work of the extra time, claiming victory on a goal from Gabe Wadham, assisted by Hart and Fisher.

With the loss and the overtime win, the Elks record improves to 7-15-1-1, allowing them to climb out of the bottom of the standings.

This Saturday, Feb. 14, the team plays a "home" game in Spiritwood against the North West Stars.

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Research cuts hurt ag sector, all Canadians

Efforts to reduce government spending are rarely seen as a bad thing.

That is especially true when staff is trimmed as there is a wide-held belief government is over-staffed.

But cuts need to be looked at beyond the broader scope of government largess to see what exactly is being trimmed.

When you do that in the case of the recent announcement by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) decision to close seven research sites, including key facilities in Saskatchewan located at Scott and Indian Head, and eliminate 665 positions across Canada, you have to throw up your hands and question the rationale.

Farming, at present, is under attack by tariffs — led by our once key trading partner and now the world's biggest trade wild card — the United States.

And at the same time, the sector remains critical in terms of feeding a world population that continues to grow nearly unabated.

To deal with both forces, farmers need the best crop varieties, agronomic systems, and developing technology and that means little in terms of the future of agriculture is more critical than good research.

And while big companies are involved in such research, there is most definitely a need for public involvement to ensure a level of affordable access to new developments.



CALVIN DANIELS

So it is no surprise that the response to the job cuts and site closures has been negative from many sector groups.

"To claim these cuts are aligned with a 'core mandate' of innovation misleads the agricultural sector," said APAS President Bill Prybylski in a release. "Closing these sites is the opposite of progress. You cannot claim global leadership in sustainable agriculture while

bulldozing the very farms and labs required for discovery and adaptation. It's like eating the goose that lays the golden eggs—sacrificing a steady, long-term benefit for a single, short-term gain."

It is a statement which pretty well nails the situation on the head.

It is a short-sighted money saver, which robs farmers of important research efforts moving forward.

An example is that among the losses is one which hits the organic sector directly — the termination of the Organic and Regenerative Research Program led by Dr. Myriam Fernandez at the Swift Current Research and Development Centre.

This decision represents a major setback

for the organic sector in Saskatchewan and across Canada, noted a SaskOrganics Association Inc. release.

"While the program was dedicated to organic production systems, much of the research was also highly relevant to low-input and regenerative producers," the release said. "Closing a program focused on these production approaches at a time of growing interest and adoption is short-sighted and counterproductive."

NDP agriculture shadow minister Trent Wotherspoon has chimed in on the announced cuts too.

"We are deeply concerned by the Federal Government's decision to cut valuable agricultural research pro-

grams and funding in Saskatchewan and to close two historic and valued agricultural research farms in Saskatchewan — the Scott Research Farm near North Battleford and the Indian Head Agricultural Research Farm which has been operating since 1887," he said via release.

"These cuts and closures will impact more than 70 research positions in Saskatchewan, eliminate skilled jobs and research, and harm the future and potential of Saskatchewan agriculture."

While one might applaud cuts on principle, when it effects research, it is ultimately an ill-conceived decision which really needs to be reconsidered in terms of agriculture's future.

Health Canada denies strychnine exemption for pests

By MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
Submitted

The Government of Saskatchewan is disappointed in the decision by Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) to deny Saskatchewan and Alberta's joint emergency use registration request for two per cent liquid strychnine to support Richardson's ground squirrel management for the 2026 growing season.

"Saskatchewan producers have been clear about the challenges they face in managing Richardson's ground squirrels with the limited tools available," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "We are extremely disappointed by PMRA's decision and ask them to reconsider this decision. We need a federal regulatory system that considers economic impacts felt by producers and the realities on the ground."

Saskatchewan joined Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation to submit an emergency use request on October 1, 2025, following continued concerns

from producers and industry stakeholders regarding the on-farm efficacy of currently-registered alternatives. Throughout PMRA's scientific review process, Saskatchewan and Alberta officials met with PMRA to clarify the urgent need for access to strychnine and to respond to PMRA's technical and science-based questions.

PMRA's decision means producers will not have access to strychnine for the 2026 growing season.

Saskatchewan maintains that the emergency use request included robust, science-based and strengthened mitigation measures—such as narrower application windows, mandatory training, enhanced reporting requirements and improved stewardship—to reduce risks to nontarget species while preserving the product's practical value for producers.

While PMRA determined these measures were not sufficient to mitigate risk to an acceptable level, Saskatchewan remains adamant that all PMRA's requests were responded to. Saskatchewan will

need to pivot efforts in supporting producers with the management of this important pest through the implementation of a Richardson's ground squirrel management strategy. Efforts will focus on:

- Continued advocacy at Federal-Provincial-Territorial tables for a science-based system that considers economic impacts;
- Delivery of support programs through the Gopher Control Program, administered by the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities;
- Targeted extension efforts to improve the on-farm performance of registered alternatives; and
- Investments in research focused on best management practices, environmental risk mitigation, population monitoring and predictive modelling.

More information on Saskatchewan's Richardson's ground squirrel management programming is available at Saskatchewan.ca.

Sask. extends secondary suite incentive

By MINISTRY OF FINANCE
Submitted

Deputy Premier and Finance Minister Jim Reiter has announced a one-year extension to the Saskatchewan Secondary Suite Incentive (SSI).

Introduced in 2023, the SSI is designed to increase the availability of secondary suite rental units in the province by providing an incentive of up to 35 per cent of the total price to construct a new secondary suite at an owner's primary residence, to a maximum of \$35,000 for a qualifying suite.

"The SSI has been incredibly successful, with nearly 1000 new sec-

ondary suites being added since its inception," Reiter said. "I am pleased to extend this program for another year because we know the most effective way to address the rising cost of rent is to increase supply, and that is exactly what the SSI has been doing."

A qualifying secondary suite must be a new, separate dwelling unit located on the owner's primary residence property, such as a basement suite, garden suite, laneway home, or garage suite. It must include a full kitchen, a full bathroom and a separate entrance while meeting all applicable national, provincial and municipal codes and standards for rental use. Costs to renovate an existing suite are not eligible.

"The Secondary Suite Incentive has been one of the most effective tools we have seen to grow Saskatchewan's housing supply," Regina & Region Home Builders' Association President and CEO Stu Niebergall said. "It is helping homeowners build high quality suites, creating more rental options in established neighbourhoods and easing affordability pressures across the province. Extending this program is the right move because it gives families more choice and strengthens our housing market when it matters most."

"What makes the Secondary Suite Incentive such an effective program is that it's a made-in-Saskatchewan approach," Saskatoon & Region Home

Builders' Association CEO Nicole Burgess said. "Not only does it increase much-needed rental supply, it also supports homeownership by helping families invest in their homes and manage rising housing costs. SSI supports both sides of the housing equation and extending it will continue to deliver real results for Saskatchewan families."

Additionally, homeowners may also be eligible for support through the Home Renovation Tax Credit and the PST Rebate on New Home Construction.

The final date to incur eligible construction costs is being extended from March 31, 2026, to March 31, 2027.

District Seniors Olympics held in Blaine Lake

By **LORRAINE THIBEAULT**
Shellbrook Seniors' Association

On Saturday, Jan. 31, eight members of the Shellbrook Seniors Club, eight members of the Canwood Seniors Club, and one member of the Big River Seniors Club (all clubs within Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. (SSAI) District 4) travelled to Blaine Lake to join Blaine Lake and Krydor Seniors for the third SSAI District 4 Olympic event.

Olympic events had already been held in Shellbrook and Big River in the fall. The fourth Olympic event — a bowling tournament — will be hosted by Canwood at the end of February.

In Blaine Lake, seniors shared a delicious lunch of chili, buns and squares. The lunch was followed by a short presentation by SSAI Provincial President, Lorraine Thibeault. Then, began the Olympic games of pool, shuffleboard, darts, corn hole, and card games.

Much laughter ensued with some serious competition and lots of bloopers. In the darts competition, some participants were aiming for the bullseye while others were just hoping to hit the dart board.

Members played card games such as War and Go Fish — reminders of the childhood card games they used to play. You'll be pleased to know that Canada (played by Marilyn of Shellbrook)

won against the U.S.A. (played by Linda of Shellbrook) in the War card game.

Gold, silver, and bronze medals were distributed by Kitty Larson, Blaine Lake Senior Club President, to winners from all the Big River, Canwood, Shellbrook, and Blaine Lake clubs.

The SSAI is the voice of seniors in rural Saskatchewan with 85 clubs throughout the province.



Shuffleboard medal presentation, from left to right: Lila (Canwood), Diane (Shellbrook), Kitty (Blaine Lake), and Lorraine (Canwood).



Shellbrook's Pat and Linda play a game of War.




Pool medal presentation, from left to right: Bruce (Shellbrook), Kitty (Blaine Lake), and Tom (Blaine Lake).






Shellbrook's Diane Clements tries her luck at corn hole.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS



2026 Junior Citizen of the Year Scholarship



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

U18 Timberwolves ousted from Provincials

By **DAVE HYNDMAN**
Submitted

The Spiritwood Timberwolves came close to continuing the dream of a Provincial championship, but the dream crashed despite a tie in Game Two of their best-of-three U-18 "B" playoff series against the Humboldt Broncos.

The Wolves came from behind with a tying goal in the dying moments of the third period Sunday, but having been downed 5-2 in Game One in Humboldt Jan. 24, the 3-3 tie Sunday wasn't enough to force a deciding

Game Three.

The teams each scored once per period. The Wolves scored first, but the Broncos tied it midway through the first period. The Broncos then held leads of 2-1 and 3-2, before the Timberwolves tied it with just under two minutes remaining.

Justin Hetu scored twice for the Timberwolves, with Gage Beuker notching the other goal.

Humboldt moves on to play the winner of Melfort and La Ronge in their next round. Melfort took Game One 7-1 in Melfort.



Timberwolves goaltender Brock Fry slammed the door on this Broncos scramble.

Shellbrook Library January highlights

By **EDDIE HOEHN**
Branch Librarian

January was an interesting month for the library. The kids enjoyed making a cardstock party hat at New Year's Storytime and a toilet paper roll mermaid or merman at Mermaid Storytime in January. Volunteer and local library board member Samuel Schafer presented Dog Story-

time on Friday Jan. 9. Participants had fun pretending to wash toy dogs and making a toilet paper roll dog to take home. On Thursday, Jan. 29, the kids participated in some Family Literacy Day activities held back to back. The afternoon started with the Story Writing Program. The kids worked together to create a funny story about food by taking turns adding sentences.

They invented a humorous story about some people eating and feeding their dog chicken strips and mozzarella sticks dipped in honey mustard sauce. Participants made a construction paper bookmark at the Watermelon Book-mark Craft Program. They made a picture of choice by gluing Fruit Loops and uncooked macaroni onto construction paper at the

Cereal or Pasta Writing Program. The kids were excited to create cars and robots for Lego Club in January. They built slow cars during the first session and raced them down a ramp to see which car was slowest. Participants tried to create the fastest racing car and raced their cars down a ramp in two different sessions. Douglas Root, a man

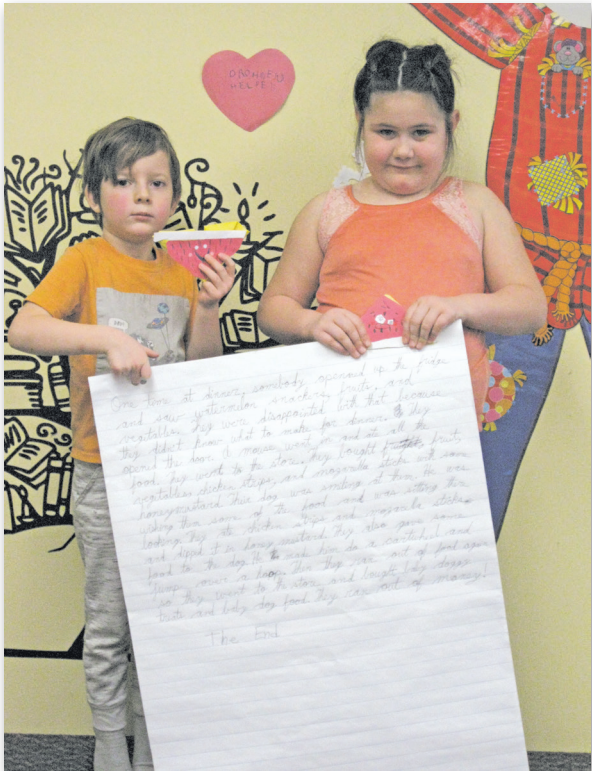
from the United States, donated old postcards and pictures from the Saskatchewan area for the library to display. The postcards and pictures were put on display in January and are currently on display at the library.



From left to right: Raelynn, Elijah, Drohnen, and Claire with their robots for Lego Club.



Old photographs and postcards of Saskatchewan, donated by Douglas Root, are currently on display at the library.



Drohnen and Hazel showcase their story from the Story Writing Program.

Minutes of a Big River Town Council meeting

The regular meeting of the Council of the Town of Big River was held in the Community Centre Board Room, 606 1st Street North, on Dec. 16, 2025, at 8 a.m.

Present at the meeting were Mayor David Krawetz, Councillors Chad Dunn, Lana Meyers, and Shirley Schwab, and CAO Noreen Olsen. Absent was Councillor Greg Sundby.

A quorum being present, Mayor David Krawetz called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

Schwab: THAT the Dec. 16, 2025, Agenda be adopted with the power to add. Carried

Maintenance Foreman Terry Olsen attended the meeting from 8:10 a.m. to 9:16 a.m.

Meyers: THAT the Sewer and Water and Maintenance reports to Nov. 30, 2025, be accepted. Carried

Dunn: THAT the Waterworks Compliance Inspection Report dated Nov. 18, 2025, from the Government of Saskatchewan, Water Security Agency, Environmental Project Officer, Evan McLeod be acknowledged, such inspection be attached to these minutes. Carried

Meyers: THAT the Council of the Town of Big River acknowledge the Permit to Operate Waterworks renewal which takes effect on the 1st day of January 2026 and expires on the 31st day of March 2045; such permit be attached to these minutes. Carried

DELEGATION: Jeannette Bas-sendowski attended the meeting via Zoom from 10 a.m. to 10:24 a.m. to discuss a Childcare Needs Assessment Survey.

Dunn: THAT the minutes of Nov. 18, 2025, Regular Meeting be adopted as presented. Carried

Dunn: THAT the Statement of Financial Activities for the month of

November 2025 be acknowledged. Carried

Meyers: THAT the Bank Reconciliation for the month of November 2025 be acknowledged. Carried

Schwab: THAT the Journal Entries for the month of November 2025 be acknowledged. Carried

Krawetz: THAT accounts for approval to include EFT payments No. 87 to 109 and cheques No. 22177 through 22194 for a total of \$140,155.79 be approved for payment. Carried

Meyers: THAT Correspondence be filed as presented. Carried

Meyers: THAT those appointments made at this meeting be included in the document Council Members/Committee Appointments and such document be attached to these minutes. Carried

Dunn: THAT the "Town of Big River Employee Time Policy", be adopted as amended, such policy to be attached to these minutes. Carried

Krawetz: THAT the wages of the following Permanent Full-Time Town employees be increased by \$1.00 per hour, effective January 1, 2026: Maintenance Foreman, Administrator, and Assistant Administrator. Carried

Meyers: THAT Council of the Town of Big River approve the establishment of a payroll cut-off date of six (6) calendar days prior to each regular semi-monthly payday, being the 15th and the last day of each month; and THAT the revised payroll cut-off be implemented effective Jan. 1, 2026, to allow for appropriate employee notice; and THAT administration be authorized to notify employees in writing; and THAT pay frequency and regular paydays, shall remain unchanged. Carried

Meyers: THAT the Board/Committee Reports be filed as presented. Carried

Meyers: THAT the Council of the Town of Big River support the Country at the Creek Music Festival 2026 by sponsoring a Bronze Package for \$350. Carried

Schwab: THAT Council Remuneration remain status quo as:

- Mayor Indemnity: \$5,500 annually.
- Council Indemnity: \$300 per Council Meeting.
- Both Mayor and Council: \$300 per full day committee meeting.
- \$50 per committee meeting; and
- Mileage: \$0.65 per kilometre. Carried

Dunn: THAT Council approves engaging AirScapes to complete aerial photography of the Town of Big River in June 2026, weather permitting, under the Town package (Option B) at a cost of \$1,645, plus applicable taxes, and authorizes the Mayor and Administrator to sign all necessary documents. Carried

Meyers: THAT, pursuant to Section 369 of *The Municipalities Act*, any outstanding invoices owed to the Town of Big River as of Dec. 31, 2025, be added to the respective property tax accounts. Carried

Council: Council is authorized under *The Municipalities Act, 2005* to

approve expenditures and the payment of municipal accounts; and it is necessary to process year-end accounts payable prior to the January 2026 council meeting to ensure accurate financial reporting and timely payment;

THAT all invoices for goods and services received in 2025 and submitted by Dec. 31, 2025 be processed and paid prior to the January 2026 council meeting, as approved by the Administrator and Mayor or Deputy Mayor; and

THAT a report of all payments made under this authority be presented to council at the January 2026 meeting. Carried

Dunn: THAT Bylaw 2025-13, a Bylaw to Provide Council to Set a Fee for Issuing a Tax Certificate be introduced and read a first time. Carried (*Editor's note: the bylaw was unanimously given three readings and adopted.*)

Meyers: THAT Bylaw No. 2025-14, a Bylaw to Establish the Payments of Certain Accounts be introduced and read a first time. Carried (*Editor's note: the bylaw was unanimously given three readings and adopted.*)

Mayor David Krawetz adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

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NDP: Disability changes bring cuts

By **SASK NDP**
Submitted

Scott Moe is lining up to cut benefits for Saskatchewan people with disabilities while also continuing to jack up the taxes and fees he charges them — all while paying off his political allies.

In an Order in Council passed Jan. 23, significant changes were made to the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program. Since that date, the Official Opposition has heard from stakeholders and impacted residents concerned about the intent behind the changes.

Among the changes made are:

- Adding language that SAID is a program of “last resort,” betraying the original purpose of the program.
- Letting the Minister add debt to those who are unable to pay their utility or shelter costs,
- Reducing benefits if the recipient is receiving benefits from another program that the Minister believes meets the objectives of SAID.
- Repealing the maternity and infant clothing and child access supports.
- Putting an end to funding for respite care.

“Let’s be clear about what’s going on here — this is Scott Moe choosing, at a time when everyday costs are out of control, to punch down on Saskatchewan people with disabilities and their families,” said Carla Beck, Saskatchewan NDP Leader. “Without warning or consultation, he’s changing the intent of a program the Sask. Party itself introduced.

“This is cruel, it’s shortsighted and I’m sure the primary reason is to cover for the fiscal trainwreck he’s steered us into.”

The changes to cut off access to SAID came just days before Moe proceeded with a \$136-mil-

lion annual increase to power rates for families, farms and small businesses. Moe lied in the legislature in December, stating he wasn’t going to jack up power rates.

Rent has increased for 42-straight months in Saskatchewan and, despite this, the Sask. Party continues to pile tens of million in taxes on groceries and clothes. People in this province report the greatest financial anxiety in Canada — four-in-10 report borrowing money or taking on debt just to buy food.

“Telling people with disabilities that the supports they have relied on for years are a ‘last resort’, is insulting

and meant to vilify the very people who need the most help during this cost-of-living crisis,” said Brittney Senger, Saskatchewan NDP Shadow Minister for Disabilities and Community-Based Organizations.

“This is Saskatchewan — we help our neighbours, we take care of each other. The Sask. Party’s decision flies in the face of all of that. I am calling on them to reverse this callous decision right here and right now.”

The changes to SAID take effect April 1. Saskatchewan NDP Social Services Shadow Minister Erika Ritchie said if they proceed as planned

it will force more people out of their homes.

“There is record homelessness in Saskatoon, in Regina and right across this province — and we see a Premier in Scott Moe hellbent on making things that much worse,” Ritchie said. “Just last week, we learned the Premier signed his former political campaign director to a government salary of nearly \$200,000 annually at the very same time he’s making moves to cut off critical disability supports.

“This is disgusting and shows exactly what Scott Moe values at such a critical moment for our province. It really is time for change.”

CTF: Governor General receives massive pay raise

By **FRANCO TERRAZZANO**
CTF Director

Governor General Mary Simon’s pay is automatically increasing by \$1,317 per month even though her salary was already about five times more than the average Canadian’s annual wage.

“Can anyone in Ottawa explain how Canadians are getting more value from the governor general because her taxpayer-funded salary just increased by more than \$1,300 a month,” said Franco Terrazzano, CTF Federal Director. “The governor general was already costing taxpayers too much money and Simon’s latest pay raise is almost enough to cover a Canadian family’s entire grocery bill for a year.”

The Privy Council Office confirmed to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation that “the governor general’s salary for 2026 is \$393,800, which is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Governor General’s Act.”

What that means is the governor general is entitled to an automatic pay raise every year by law. This is Simon’s fifth automatic pay raise since taking office.

Simon’s salary increased by

\$15,800 in 2026. The salary for the role of the governor general ballooned by \$91,000 since 2019.

Meanwhile, the average Canadian makes about \$75,000 a year, according to Statistics Canada data.

But it’s not just the governor general that takes an automatic pay raise each year. Virtually everyone in government gets one.

MPs from all parties take automatic pay hikes every year. Senators also take automatic pay hikes every year.

In fact, government union bosses pointed to “the yearly salary increases of senators and members of Parliament,” as a reason bureaucrats should take more money from taxpayers too, according to a report obtained by the CTF.

The federal bureaucracy cost taxpayers \$71.4 billion in 2024-25, according to the Public Accounts. The cost of the federal bureaucracy increased 80 per cent in 10 years.

These automatic, government-wide pay hikes are continuing despite rapidly worsening federal finances.

The government’s spending continues to rise and its debt will reach \$1.35 trillion this year. The government will waste more money paying interest charges on the debt this year than it

sends to the provinces in health-care transfers or collects through the GST.

“The entitlement culture in Ottawa is an insult to taxpayers and politicians and bureaucrats shouldn’t expect more money every year just because they’re on the taxpayer payroll,” Terrazzano said. “Taxpayers demand a culture change in Ottawa and that means the government needs to stop rubberstamping pay raises for the governor general, politicians and bureaucrats.”

On top of the \$393,800 annual salary, the governor general takes advantage of a range of lucrative perks, including a taxpayer-funded mansion, a clothing budget, paid dry cleaning services and lavish travel expenses.

The governor general has a \$130,000 clothing allowance during their five-year mandates.

That means the governor general can spend more on shopping sprees than an average Canadians spends on rent in five years.

Simon billed taxpayers \$2,510 for luxury wool suits, \$1,500 for a “seal-skin chest piece,” \$1,117 on six pairs of shoes and thousands more on a blazer, coat, dress and other clothing items. She even billed taxpayers \$330 for two silk camisoles, which are un-

dergarments.

Simon has also sparked multiple controversies for spending millions on travel. Her extravagant trips include a \$100,000 bill for in-flight catering during a weeklong trip to the Middle East and a \$71,000 bill for limo services during a four-day trip to Iceland.

Governors general also get a platinum pension and a lifetime expense account, even if they fail to serve a full term in office.

Governors general are eligible for a full pension of about \$150,000 a year. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation estimates that five former governors general will receive more than \$18 million if they collect their pensions until the age of 90.

Even after leaving office, former governors general can expense taxpayers for up to \$206,000 annually for the rest of their lives, continuing up to six months after their deaths.

“The governor general’s platinum pay and perks should’ve been reined in a long time ago,” Terrazzano said. “If politicians want to prove they understand the struggles facing normal Canadians, then they must put an end to the automatic pay raise culture in Ottawa.”

Sask. starts 2026 strong with 15,000 new jobs

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

Statistics Canada’s latest labour force numbers show that the labour market in Saskatchewan remains strong with the second lowest unemployment rate amongst provinces at 5.3 per cent, well below the national average of 6.5 per cent. 15,000 jobs were added year-over-year in January, an increase of 2.5 per cent, the second highest amongst provinces.

“Saskatchewan is starting 2026 off with 15,000 jobs added to our economy,” Immigration and Career Training Minister Eric Schmalz said. “Our government is working with industry and employers to

ensure that they have access to the workforce they need to fill the jobs they are creating.”

Year-over-year, full-time employment in Saskatchewan increased by 19,600, an increase of 4 per cent.

Saskatchewan’s two biggest cities also saw year-over-year growth. Compared to January 2025, Regina’s employment was up 7,900 jobs, an increase of 5.5 per cent and Saskatoon’s employment was up 3,200, an increase of 1.6 per cent.

Major year-over-year gains were reported for healthcare and social assistance, up 11,200, an increase of 11.6 per cent. Other services such as personal and repair services were up 5,000, an increase of 20.6 per cent and accommodation and food services, were up 2,900, an increase of 9.8 per cent.

Saskatchewan continues to show economic strength in other areas. In 2025 Saskatchewan ranked first amongst provinces for growth in urban housing starts, second for year-to-date new motor vehicle sales and third for the value of building permits.

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.

Lousy prognosticator picks U.S. to win hockey gold

Canada's men's Olympic hockey team begins its quest for gold Feb. 12 vs. Czechia and, of course, this calls for a bold prediction: Canada will not win gold.

Now, before you go talking to government officials to get me kicked out of the country or to have my citizenship revoked, an explanation is required: In my career as a prognosticator of sporting events, my record is horrendous. I believe it's 3-672 over the years, which means I'm wrong 99.555 per cent of the time. If I were to be so bold as to pick Canada to win, and they lost, the blame would fall square-

ly on my shoulders and, deep down, I want nothing more than for Canada's best to stick it to the rest of world, especially those loud-mouth Americans who were vanquished in last winter's 4 Nations Face Off.

If things go as Vegas oddsmakers would have you believe, it will be Canada vs. the U.S. in the gold medal game at the Milano Santagiulia Ice Hockey Arena on Sunday, Feb. 22.

The U.S. team is favoured in many quarters primarily because its three goalies — Connor Hellebuyck, Jake Oettinger and Jeremy Swayman — are consid-



BRUCE
PENTON

ered vastly superior to Canada's troika of Jordan Binnington, Logan Thompson and Darcy Kuemper. But Binnington, whose stats this season with the woeful St. Louis Blues are enough to scare any Canadian

hockey fan, pushed his 'sensational' button and combined it with his 'spectacular' switch last year and stopped the U.S. cold in the 4 Nations clinching game. Connor McDavid, the best player in the world, did the rest, potting the overtime goal on a pretty setup by Mitch Marner.

Those two will be back, along with Nathan MacKinnon and Sidney Crosby, two Tim Hortons commercial stars who also play a little hockey.

It's not a stretch to say the two North American hockey powers are fairly equal in strength. But Canada has history on its side — three out of the last four gold medals when NHL players were involved in the 21st century.

The Mario Lemieux-Steve Yzerman-Jarome Iginla-led team won in Salt Lake City in 2002; Crosby's golden goal in 2010 in Vancouver will never be forgotten; and the 2014 gold-medal game victory over Sweden confirmed Canada's power in the game of ice hockey.

But while players from Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Germany and other European countries dot NHL rosters, the main hockey powers remain Canada and the U.S. Most of the players on the American roster are from northern U.S. states — Minnesota, Michigan, Montana — where the winters are so similar to Canada's that those players are de facto

Canucks. Jack Hughes, Auston Matthews, Jack Eichel, the Tkachuks and Clayton Keller, for instance, are players Canada would love to have on its roster. They can play, but will they have that Canadian-like je ne sais quoi it takes to win gold?

Probably. The Americans will win. (Wink, wink).

• Steve Simmons of the Toronto Sun: "The CFL, as a league, produced record revenues in 2025, \$10 million more than ever before. The Blue Jays, as a team, did about \$100 million more than budgeted for in the 2025 season."

• Cathal Kelly of the Globe and Mail, on the Leafs' playoff chancers: "Turn off the oven. Pull the Leafs out, put them on a countertop and tent them with tin foil. This team is cooked."

• Comedy writer Torben Rolfson of Vancouver: "Quinn Hughes said the Minnesota Wild are a better hockey team than the Canucks. The Wild then put a 'CO' on his jersey — Captain Obvious."

• Rolfson again: "Bills' owner Terry Pegula threw wide receiver Keon Coleman under the bus at a recent press conference. Fortunately for Coleman, the Bills' bus is currently stuck in a snowdrift."

• Norman Chad again, after Denver bypassed a field-goal opportunity to go up by 10 in the AFC title game and failed on its fourth-down attempt:

"What's wrong with a 10-0 lead in what is going to be a defensive game in deteriorating weather conditions playing with a quarterback who has not thrown a pass since Kirk Cousins had hair."

• Greg Cote of the Miami Herald: "Bill Belichick is not perfect. Spygate happened. But when six Super Bowl wins isn't enough for the Hall of Fame, the shame is on the voters and the Hall."

• Super 70s Sports: "Cooper Flagg sets a new record by scoring 49 points in an NBA game as a 19-year-old. If you liked that, just wait till next week when some dude will probably set a new record by becoming the first 49-year-old to score 19 in an NCAA game."

• Super 70s Sports again, alongside a photo of O.J. Simpson at his trial, on Bill Belichick's Hall of Fame snub: "I'm just glad this man doesn't have to share the Hall of Fame with Spygate guy."

• RJ Currie of sports-deke.com: "With the Jets losing 4-1 to the Lightning, I'll spare them the electrical puns — like lacking a spark, feeling re-volted or Tampa being amped up. I will say this: Watt happened?"

• Headline at fark.com: "Todd Monken loses game of hot potato, forced to coach Cleveland Browns next season."

Care to comment? Email brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca

U18 Elks shot down by Lazars in Provincials

By JORDAN TWISS

Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The U18 Shellbrook Elks received a harsh welcome to the Provincial C tournament on Friday, Feb. 6. when they welcomed the Unity Lazars to the Richardson Pioneer Recreation Centre for game one of their first round series.

The Elks were outgunned by the sharpshooting Lazars from the opening faceoff, playing most of the opening minutes in their own end, until the Lazars were able to wear them down and draw first blood on a top-shelf shot from Bennett Bretzer.

The Elks continued to struggle to find their footing as the period wore on, recording just one shot on goal in the first 10 minutes of play, despite having help from a power play. Meanwhile, the Lazars made quick work of their first power play, as Dawson Grant took a cross-crease feed and tapped it into the Elks goal.

Down 2-0 as the action moved to the second period, the Elks showed

their first signs of life in the game, but derailed their own momentum by taking a four-minute penalty. Though the Elks were able to kill off the penalty, the Lazars scored shortly after, going up 3-0 on a goal from Dane Rewerts.

The Lazars maintained control of the action through the remainder of the second period, going up 4-0 on Bretzer's second goal of the game, then up 5-0 on a last-second power play goal (the scorer for the goal wasn't announced).

In a relatively quiet third period, the Lazars continued to fire on all cylinders and stymied any efforts by the Elks to get back into the game. However, they only managed to score once in the period, on a late goal from Brady Loran.

As the final buzzer sounded, the Lazars skated away with a 6-0 win, having outshot the Elks 61 to 18.

Game two of the series will be played in Unity this Friday, Feb. 13. The Elks need to win the game in order to force a third and deciding mini game.



Unity's Brady Loran races in on the Elks goal, while Brody Fraser tries to catch up and stop him.

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OBITUARIES

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Louise Gale



GALE – Louise
March 6, 1930 – February 4, 2026

The family of Louise Gale would like to announce her peaceful passing at Good Shepherd Villa on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, a month short of her 96th birthday.

Louise Georgina Gale (née Fisher) was born on March 6, 1930 along with her twin brother Louis to George and Jessie Fisher. Louise was 9th/10th of 14 children.

Louise attended school in Brightholm and completed her grade 10 before starting a short career with the Singer Sewing Company where she learned to be an excellent seamstress.

She loved dancing which is where she met the love of her life Cc Gale. They were the best double

step polka dancers in the country!

Cc and Louise married on October 24, 1950 and moved to Edmonton. They lived there for 3 years before moving back to the Wild Rose district to make their fortune in farming!

They were blessed with four children – Bev, Linda, Gary and Sandra.

Louise was an avid gardener and kept her flowers and yard in perfect shape. She was wonderful with people and shared her kindness with the residents she cared for at Parkland Terrace in Shellbrook for 10 years.

Louise was an amazing baker and cook and hosted Christmas dinners till she was in her 80s. She enjoyed picking blueberries which she transformed into the most amazing pies.

In 2001 Cc and Louise moved into Prince Albert where she continued to maintain a garden and her home until she was 90 years old. She lost Cc in January 2017 and moved into a care home in 2020.

She will be remembered for her feistiness, love of curling and the Riders and for savouring good food. She delighted in having her family

visit and enjoyed making miles around Good Shepherd with her walker until days before she passed. She was fortunate to have good health and an attentive mind till the end.

Louise was predeceased by her husband Cc in 2017.

Louise was the last surviving child of George and Jessie Fisher and is survived by her children Beverly Spence (Butch), Linda Edington (Philip), Gary Gale (Cathy), Sandra Fountas (Fotios) as well as her grandchildren Tyler Spence (Amber) and Sienna and Avery, Jodie Fiddler (Ritchie) and Thomas, Rilee and Zaylee, Afton Keys (Adam) and Malia, Kylie Forrester (Brett) and Bryce and Noah, Corey Edington (Kennedy), Sierra Gale (Owen), Cassidy Gale (Francois), Yiannis Fountas, Nico Fountas (Lanna) and Louizo Fountas and his daughter Blakney.

The family would like to thank the staff of Good Shepherd Villa for the kindness and attentive care of our mom and their caring support of our family.

As per her wishes, interment will be a family graveside service later in the spring.

Care of Valentine’s Day flowers

By **PATRICIA HANBIDGE**
Orchid Horticulture

Valentine’s Day is a celebration full of interesting history and customs. From its pagan roots to its Christianization and modern-day celebrations, Valentine’s Day has evolved into a day dedicated to expressing love and affection to those we care about. The language of flowers, or floriography, adds an extra layer of meaning and beauty to this special day. Next time you give or receive flowers on Valentine’s Day, take a moment to appreciate the rich history and symbolism behind this timeless tradition.

During Victorian times, flowers were given special meanings and small bouquets would be given to sweethearts to demonstrate love. The rose has been forever a symbol of love, beauty and peace and evidence of cultivation of roses dates back to over 5,000 years ago. Over Valentines over 250 million roses will be harvested and bring in over two billion dollars in sales!

If you received cut flowers from your valentine, then here are a few tips to prolong their life and beauty. Begin with a clean vase. If your container was previously used, then wash it with hot, soapy water to remove any debris and destroy bacteria and fungi that might shorten the life of your cut flowers. Cut off the bottom half inch of your flowers to aid in water uptake. Ensure all foliage is removed beneath the water line. When your flowers begin to wilt, just give them a quick recut to ensure the stems are able to take water up to the blooms and rewash and refill the vase with clean water as well as more of the floral preservative if you have some.

Those who received or purchased a potted plant usually can enjoy these for a longer period of time. Miniature roses

are a popular choice as a planted gift for this special day. They need bright light so place them in a south or west facing window. Miniature roses need a consistent moisture supply so ensure you water them when the surface of the media is dry to the touch. Fertilize weekly with a high phosphorus fertilizer to keep them blooming. Watch them closely as they tend to get spider mites very easily.

One other popular plant at this time of year is the azalea. They are beautiful plants and tend to bloom for long periods of time. They prefer bright light but a cool location with temperatures around 60 F (15 C) being just about perfect. Water azaleas thoroughly whenever the service of the media feels dry. When they have finished blooming they are usually discarded.

Pots of spring flowering bulbs, primroses and other spring plants are plentiful at this time of year. These are cheery little pots bringing sunshine into our homes when the nights are still quite long. A bonus with primroses is once we truly get spring these can be planted out in the garden in a partial shade area. Ensure that the soil is rich in organic matter!

Remember that our homes are not really welcoming to plants that would normally live in areas with brighter light and higher humidity. Our plants in our houses are stressed during our long winter months so ensure you are giving them the care they deserve for brightening up our lives!

Hope your February is going well and your heart is full with all of what gives us joy during our winter!

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



George Russell “Jack” Johnston



JOHNSTON – George Russell “Jack”
October 20, 1947 – December 28, 2025

George Russell “Jack” Johnston (Russ), passed away in the early morning of his home in Mistawasis on December 28th, 2025. He was born to Frank and Margaret Johnston on October 20, 1947, in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

Russell was a heavy equipment operator for many years and genuinely loved to work, he

wasn’t afraid of long days or tough jobs and often worked away from home on many occasions. Russ took pride in everything he did. Although he was somewhat rough-around-the-edges, he loved to dance, had a goofy sense of humour and was a natural storyteller known for spinning stories that were as entertaining as they were unforgettable. He’ll be remembered by many, co-workers, friends and family. He was an unforgettable man and made friends wherever he went, his kindness and generosity were unmistakable. He truly was a man who lived life to the fullest and his own way.

Russell was predeceased by his loving wife, Shirley Johnston, his parents, Frank and Margaret Johnston, his brothers Irvin Johnston and Ivan Johnston, and his brother-in-law Henry Daniels.

Russ will be remembered by his children, Joanne Poirier, Paulette (Orrin) Johnson and Dayna Johnston. His Goddaughter Megan (Aubrey) Randall. His three grandchildren Matthew Poirier, Titus Johnson and Colby Johnson and his sisters, Arlene (Barry) Longjohn and Marlene Daniels, as well as numerous aunts, nieces, nephews, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

In accordance with his wishes, there will be no funeral or memorial service. Those who wish to honour him may share stories or quietly remember him in their own way.

In lieu of flowers, the family would like you to donate to your local Veterans, as every Christmas Russ would make a significant contribution to the Salvation Army Kettles for those who fought for our Country.

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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)
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Service & Sunday School
Pastor Michael Kluthe
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