

Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba
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Plewes has need for speed

BY DEVON SHEWCHUK
Hayden Plewes may be from the prairies, but he's a man of the mountains at heart.

Plewes, who grew up in Moosomin and now lives with his family in Brandon, is making his mark on the ski slopes.

Clipping in skis, whizzing down slopes, tackling jumps and training for competitive alpine skiing is where the Brandon teen feels his best.

The trails come naturally to Plewes. "I was probably about three the first time I skied ... my whole entire family skis and we always used to take trips out to the mountains," he said.

The 17-year-old started taking the sport seriously around the age of 14. He was semi-committed before that, racing in a few competitions, but wasn't really training for them.

Now, he's one of the best skiers in Manitoba.

Training for race skiing has given Plewes a whole new outlook on the sport he grew up enjoying at leisure.

"In race skiing, you have to be as aerodynamic as you can but also be in a stable enough position to go around turns going 80 kilometres an hour, preparing yourself for the next turn at the same time too," he said.

"In leisure skiing, you don't really have to do that. You can just stop on the hill whenever and slow down, but in race skiing, you can't really slow down too much or else you'll lose."

Travelling at rates faster than an average speed limit is often exhilarating for Plewes, but it hasn't come without fear. The teen's love for the sport also hasn't come without cost.

"I've hurt myself quite a few times from skiing, so I'm scared about hurting myself again all the time," he said.

A concussion and broken thumb are some of Plewes's more notable injuries. He also snapped his humerus—the upper-arm bone—while leisure skiing.

Despite that, he looks forward to hitting the hills whenever he can.

Plewes' fondest skiing memory, although he's made many, is being part of the 2019 Canada Winter Games in Red



Hayden Plewes, pictured in an alpine racing event, has had his training season derailed because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Deer, Alta. Earning a spot at the national event was no easy task.

Plewes needed to secure a place on the provincial team first, which meant his race results from the 2018 season were a lot more important than those the year of the Games.

The teen placed high enough at the 2018 Manitoba Winter Games in Thompson to

earn an invitation to the national event, which welcomed Canada's top athletes in over 20 sports.

It took a lot of training and attention to detail for Plewes to place as well as he did at Nakiska Ski Resort, a two-hour drive southwest of Red Deer, where alpine events were held.

"It was crazy (at the Canada Winter Games) because I was racing against kids

who train every single day of their life and train on these massive mountains and get really good training opportunities all the time," Plewes said.

"It was hard to race against them but also a great experience."

Plewes was 15 at the time and facing a field of 160 skiers, many of whom can train year-round.

Continued on page 5

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Mike Silvernagle, President of SECON Group of Companies, left, and Cole Raiwet, Vice-President of SECON Group of Companies, right.

Secon Group donates \$50,000 to Wiggles and Giggles Childcare Center

Secon Group of Companies recently made a \$50,000 donation to the Wiggles and Giggles Childcare Centre in Whitewood. "As we usher in the new year, it's certainly worth taking a moment to pause and look back. The year 2020 truly was an unprecedented period for the world. Yet, despite all the trials and uncertainties that we faced, there were still many positive things as well," says Kate Leepart with the Wiggles and Giggles fundraising committee.

"As a committee dedicated to bringing a licensed daycare to Whitewood, we were faced with the loss of our main fundraiser, Oktoberfest. Additionally, we lost the opportunity to consider many other alternative fundraisers due to pandemic related constraints. Even so, our community's need for a licensed daycare has not decreased. "In the midst of everything, we have been so fortunate for the support

that we've received from the surrounding area. As a committee, we wish to extend a big thank you to a business in our community that has stepped up in a big way. "Secon Group, a multi-trade industrial construction company that operates based out of the surrounding area, has supported our endeavours from the start, as well as consistently since then. We are extremely thankful for everything, and so pleased to share that they

have partnered with the Whitewood Wiggles and Giggles Childcare Center with a generous donation of \$50,000. "This amount has moved the process along greatly, and will allow us to plan seriously for starting into the construction phase earlier than originally anticipated. "Words are not enough to express how thankful we are to Secon Group for this gift, and everything they do to support their surrounding community."

Steven Bonk, MLA
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High risk areas prioritized in Sask vaccine plan

BY ROB PAUL
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Phase one of Saskatchewan's vaccine rollout plan began December 22, with the hopes of administering 10,725 doses per week—every individual needs two doses. With this plan, they're aiming to administer an estimated 202,052 doses of the Pfizer vaccination in the first quarter of 2021 (March 31).

Since phase one began, Saskatchewan has administered over 35,000 doses of the vaccine—over 30,000 first doses and over 4,500 second doses—in over 40 days. At the current vaccination rate in Saskatchewan, just under 6,000 doses are being administered per week.

Saskatchewan and Canada are falling short of their vaccination goals due to delays on receiving the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, though Prime Minister Justin Trudeau recently announced plans to begin producing a vaccine domestically as early as this summer.

As part of Saskatchewan's phase one vaccine rollout, immunization is targeted towards priority populations. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) issued guidance to provinces on the distribution of the vaccine and Saskatchewan's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Saqib Shahab modified those guidelines for the

Vaccine Delivery Update

As of February 1, 2021

Zone	1 st Doses Given	2 nd Doses Given	Total Doses Given
Far North West	1,396	0	1,396
Far North Central	470	0	470
Far North East	1,801	0	1,801
North West	2,265	0	2,265
North Central	4,327	0	4,327
North East	1,444	0	1,444
Saskatoon	6,894	2,793	9,687
Regina	6,122	2,016	8,138
Central West	0	0	0
Central East	2,626	1	2,627
South West	0	0	0
South Central	0	0	0
South East	3,292	0	3,292
Totals:	30,637	4,810	35,447

Saskatchewan is prioritizing areas with higher Covid-19 outbreak rates and effective distribution methods.

provinces demographics and logistical requirements. Saskatchewan's phase one framework for immunization prioritization:

- Long-term care and personal care home residents and staff (total number estimate-30,584).
- Health care workers in emergency

departments, intensive care units, Covid-19 wards and Covid testing and assessment staff (total number estimate-10,000-15,000).

- Residents 70 years and older in all communities (total number estimate-131,119).

- Residents over the age of 50 living in remote/northern Saskatchewan (total number estimate-8,921).

wastage." For now, it's difficult for the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health to look too far into the future when it

comes to vaccinating the general population because of the shortages with the Pfizer vaccine.

Continued on Page 21

The immunization prioritization in the province remains focused on the demographics outlined by Dr. Shahab in phase one despite the current vaccination shortage right now.

"The priority groups for phase one vaccination includes long-term and personal care home residents and staff, health care workers—including those in emergency rooms, ICU, Covid units, and testing assessment centres—residents over 70 living in the community, and residents over 50 in northern and remote communities," a spokesperson for the Ministry of Health told the World-Spectator. "We will continue with efforts to vaccinate phase one priority groups, as supply becomes available."

There are disparities in doses administered by area in Saskatchewan. The Ministry of Health says that's because they're going to more crucial areas first that have effective distribution methods.

"Locations are prioritized based on a number of factors, one being Covid-19 risk and outbreak rate," they said. "The other being vaccine distribution logistics from the vaccine hub to ensure there is no vaccine

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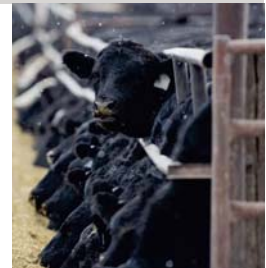
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Plewes has need for speed

Continued from front

He finished in the top 15 per cent of competitors in three of his races. He placed 21st in the slalom and 26th in giant slalom.

His best finish was 17th in ski cross, a physical event in which skiers race against three others and perform jumps on a timed run.

Slight nudging and contact with the others throughout a tight race is common, but competitors have to be careful not to block or interfere with others. Intentional pushing or holding of another competitor is grounds for immediate disqualification.

It's the same event Canadians have dominated in recent years at the Olympics. Canada medalled gold and silver in women's ski cross at Sochi's 2014 and PyeongChang's 2018 Winter Olympics. In the 2018 men's event, Canada claimed a gold medal and a fourth-place finish.

While Plewes isn't at that stage yet, going up against "insane" skiers from B.C. at the Canada Winter Games was a memorable experience.

It's been a long time and will probably be much longer, however, before he's able to do it again. The Covid-19 pandemic has thrown a huge wrench into his training plans.

Plewes hasn't been able to ski with his coaches or train gates yet this season, because of Covid-19 protocols in Manitoba.

So far, all he's been able to do is free-ski and work on his form.

Getting tickets to ski hills has been another challenge.

So far, Assesippi Ski Resort is the only hill open near Plewes. With a limited number of tickets available because of Covid-19 restrictions, he hasn't been able to hit the slopes every week.

Plewes is part of the Westman Ski Club and is looking forward to visiting his home base, Ski Valley in Minnedosa, once it opens up.

Opportunities to train both provincially and nationally have shrivelled up as well.

This past summer, Plewes was supposed to travel to the U.S. for training camps but had the opportunity derailed by the pandemic.

Camps and races with Team Manitoba were affected as well.

Usually, Team Manitoba has one or two events a month starting in November. But, the province was in code red—a level that bans all organized sport—since Nov. 12.

He hasn't been able to train with his team at all, while provinces with looser restrictions like British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario have been able to.

The tight restrictions have made it hard

for the 17-year-old to progress as a skier.

"I'm kind of forgetting how to race ski at this point, not being able to go and train on race skis and the gates," he said.

When it comes to his future in race skiing, Plewes is hopeful but taking it day-by-day.

He's eager for restrictions to loosen when the time is right, so he can hopefully still compete in a few races this season.

The Grade 12 Vincent Massey High School student plans to move to B.C. for school next year. If that happens and his current race season goes well, he wants to join a race team out there.

Although his future may be uncertain, one thing is guaranteed. Racing or not, Plewes will continue to keep on skiing.

"It's just so fast and you get an adrenalin rush from it," Plewes said. "It's really just so much fun."



Hayden Plewes started skiing with his family at the age of three. Now 17, he began competitive race skiing at the age of 14. Below, Plewes starting his giant slalom race at the Canada Winter Games in 2019



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As Canadians flee cities, rural living gets its mojo back

Starbucks will close 300 restaurants in Canada by March. Other chains will likely follow suit. But have no fear, chains will surely open other stores, but certainly not in city centres

It's no secret the Covid-19 pandemic has caused many Canadians to move from cities to the suburbs and even the countryside. According to Statistics Canada, the phenomenon led to a record loss of population in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver in 2020.

Vacancy rates are skyrocketing in many urban centres across the country. The same phenomenon is happening in most parts of the Western world. Some recent real estate reports suggest that 2021 will be more of the same.

Toronto recorded a record loss of 50,375 people between July 1, 2019 and July 1, 2020. The number for Montreal was around 35,000. The loss in Vancouver was measured at around 15,000.

It's far from new to see city dwellers leaving cities. But they're often replaced by new immigrants.

But the pandemic has accelerated the flow of people leaving cities, especially among young people. Almost a third of the increase in outflows of people were between 15 and 29 years old, and 82 per cent were under 45 years old. These people represent younger generations who are slowly and quietly abandoning city life.

Of course, the cost of city dwelling is a cruel barrier. Current interest rates—which are at historically low levels—are making borrowing almost cost less. But city real estate is now out of reach for many households with low incomes. CIBC's latest report on income gaps clearly demonstrates how Covid-19 has made the poor poorer. So leaving cities is more tempting than ever.

Telecommuting also offers an opportunity for many to escape from chaotic city traffic. The working-from-home phenomena brought on by the pandemic won't disappear anytime soon. Several surveys suggest that almost a quar-



Sylvain Charlebois

ter of employers in Canada plan to let their employees work most of the time from home after the pandemic is over.

While several companies are reviewing their ergonomic and workspace strategies, landlords struggle to find new tenants. Leases are being repurposed and renegotiated to reduce cost and accommodate part-time presence by employees, boutique style.

And Covid-19's legacy will be about getting more people to work from home more often.

A domesticated, more sedentary population will also consume food differently. Our culinary ambitions at home have changed since March 2020. With more cooking and gardening, Canadians are becoming food literate.

A smarter, more knowledgeable public when it comes to food systems will shop for food differently. Grocers will need to revise their real estate strategy.

And restaurants aren't immune to what's happening. The Starbucks chain just announced it will close 300 stores across Canada by the end of March. Most of these outlets are in shopping malls and, of course, in city centres. On average, a Starbucks generates approximately

\$600,000 in revenue annually. That basically means that \$150 million to \$180 million in business will need to find new homes as that money is spent elsewhere.

Most importantly, the shift also means less money is being spent in urban centres. Out of 98,000 restaurants in Canada, approximately 10,000 have closed since the start of the pandemic, according to Restaurants Canada. Some have closed permanently. Of the 10,000 closures, over 90 per cent are in urban centres with more than 200,000 people.

As with other food service chains, Starbucks will likely go where the money is. And, most importantly, this money is held by younger consumers whose economic influence can only increase over time. As we slowly leave a pandemic-preoccupied era, more food companies will need to adjust how they retail and service a transiting food marketplace.

This mass movement towards rural life in Canada, however, could also present an opportunity for some independent operators who have been working in the shadows of burgeoning downtowns across the country. Unique restaurants and retailers in more remote settings could see more customers, giving these outlets a second wind.

And rural Canada may be getting its mojo back, which is a good thing.

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois is senior director of the agri-food analytics lab and a professor in food distribution and policy at Dalhousie University.



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Farmers and Friends Bonspiel cancelled for second year

BY DONNA BEUTLER

The 5th Annual Farmers & Friends Bonspiel is on hold for yet another year, according to Whitewood Curling Club president and Farmers Committee chair Chad Kelly.

"The bonspiel was cancelled last year because of Covid-19 and is cancelled again this year," Kelly said. "We are hoping for bigger and better things for next year."

Last year, when the bonspiel was

cancelled at the 11th hour, sponsorship was already in place and many of the prizes had already been collected so the committee, in consultation with their supporters, held an online auction.

"This year," Kelly explained, "the committee felt that we would not put added stress on the businesses who support the bonspiel and so we won't be holding an online auction."

"The consensus of the committee,"

Kelly added, "is to let things go this year." The curling club had already decided to cancel the season and the ice on the curling side of the Whitewood Community Centre has already been taken out.

"Many of the teams that had paid their fee for the Farmers & Friends Bonspiel chose to leave their entry fees on hold with us and that option will be available to them again this year," Kelly said.

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USask's VIDO COVID-19 vaccine undergoing clinical trials

BY SPENCER KEMP

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The first set of volunteers have been selected for the trial of COVAC-2, a new COVID-19 vaccine developed by the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO) at the University of Saskatchewan.

VIDO is an internationally recognized organization that is recognized for its role in vaccine development and is one of Canada's national science facilities. It has been in operation for 45 years and has had eight of its vaccines sold commercially.

"I think everyone in this facility is elated. It's been a long trunch to get here with hard work by everyone in the team." Explained Dr Paul Hodgson with VIDO. "I think this is really a feather in our cap when it comes to ending the pandemic."

The Saskatchewan-made vaccine will see 108 healthy volunteers vaccinated in a controlled study at the Canadian Center for Vaccinology in Halifax. Two doses will be administered to the volunteers 28 days apart. VIDO has worked with the Canadian Center for Vaccinology in Halifax for more than a decade and considers them the most recognized site in the country for vaccine clinical trials.

COVAC-2 is the first of two subunit vaccines set to enter clinical testing. Subunit vaccines contain purified viral proteins that are not infectious alongside the technology used in several commercially available vaccines.

"Ours is a subunit-based vaccine, so that is much more of the traditional childhood vaccine," Hodgson added. "Those are purified pieces of the virus that are not infectious."

Unlike the Pfizer vaccine, COVAC-2 will not require ultra-cold storage temperatures, meaning it can be distributed easier and can be stored in rural hospitals, much like the current Moderna vaccine.



The COVAC-2 vaccine is being distributed to 108 volunteers at the Canadian Center for Vaccinology in Halifax.

"Ultimately some of the mRNA vaccines, mRNA is much more degradable, and much more susceptible to temperatures that require ultra-cold storage."

Successful data from Phase 1 of the trial as well as Phase 3 will be necessary to receive authorization for public use. If the data from Phase 1 is acceptable, VIDO will be able to move forward into Phase

2 which involves hundreds of volunteers across Canada receiving doses. This will allow for VIDO to examine the vaccines safety and the immune response that it develops in people.

The vaccine antigen, a molecule that triggers an immune response, that was developed by VIDO, was produced under good manufacturing practices at Quebec-

based Biodelix using a cell line from the National Research Council of Canada.

Thanks to provincial and federal funding, VIDO is building a manufacturing facility that could produce up to 40 million vaccine doses per year depending on the production efficiencies of specific vaccines. Construction of these facilities are expected to be completed in late 2021 with vaccine production for facility certification planned for 2022.

"As we continue the fight against COVID-19, domestic vaccine development and production has never been more important," said Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe in a news release. "VIDO is a world class organization and our government is proud to continue to support their work as they mark this significant milestone."

Hodgson explained that it was not just those at VIDO that worked to create this vaccine. Thanks to several minds across Canada, they were able to create the COVAC-2 vaccine. But it was not just limited to Canada, there was help from other medical professionals across the world as well.

Assuming there are no hiccups along the way, Hodgson hopes they will be able to begin widespread distribution of the COVAC-2 vaccine across Canada by the end of the year. While normally the development of a vaccine would see small steps and many additional phases taken, Hodgson explained that they are putting some of the smaller steps together in order to expedite the process of creating the vaccine. He says this process does not affect the quality of the vaccine.

He thanks the staff and everyone involved for their efforts in getting this far with the current stage of the Vaccine and looks forward to moving into the additional phases as they continue to work towards the completion of the COVAC-2 vaccine.

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Local senior loses \$27,000 in gift card scam

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

A local senior has lost \$27,000 in a gift card scam.

According to Moosomin RCMP, a local 81-year-old provided a fraudulent tech company access to his computer in order to try and fix an issue.

Once the tech company gained access to the senior's computer, they convinced the senior they had accidentally transferred \$30,000 into his bank account, and it appeared to the senior this had happened.

The senior ended up transferring \$27,000 to the fraudster to "reimburse" him for the money he believed was deposited in his account by purchasing gift cards and sending the activation codes.

No local businesses would sell gift cards to the senior, recognizing it as a scam and urging the senior not to send the money, but the senior went to the city and bought the gift cards.

"What happened is this elder granted access to his computer to a fraudster to fix issues he was having with his computer. So then he (the fraudster) went into his computer and moved \$30,000 from a savings account into an everyday chequing account," says Moosomin RCMP Cpl Dallyn Holmstrom.

"Then he told the 81-year-old, 'I'm extremely sorry I created a huge error here, I accidentally transferred \$30,000 of our

company's money into your account and because of your bank I can't take it back out."

"What I need you to do is go buy these gift cards and send me copies of the gift cards and the activation codes."

"Then the 81-year-old went to a few local places looking for large amounts in gift cards and they told him, 'There's no way we can do this. This is a scam, don't do it,'" Holmstrom said.

"He went back to the fraudster and said 'they won't sell me these gift cards, can I give you the money some other way?'"

"The scammer said, 'You know what, I'll pay for the gas or whatever, go to Brandon, go to a big box store and if they question you about why you're getting all these cards, just say I have a lot of family members and I'm sending them all a bunch of money.' So he went to Brandon and purchased all these gift cards and sent the fraudster pictures of all the gift cards with the activation codes."

The senior still didn't realize anything was amiss until his family became involved, according to Moosomin RCMP.

"His son came over and basically said, 'dad, oh my god, you've sent \$27,000 of your savings.'"

Holmstrom said it's good that local stores refused to sell gift cards to the victim of this scam, but he urges them to

phone RCMP in any future cases.

"It's good that the local stores recognized this as a scam and wouldn't sell him the cards, but he just went out of town," he said. "We talked to some of the local stores and they said 'yeah we know the exact guy you're talking about, we told him it was a scam and we wouldn't sell them.' I hope in the future the stores take that one step further and phone us and say, 'this guy came in and wanted to buy \$10,000 in gift cards, I think there's a scam going on here,' because we could potentially prevent this from happening, because at the end of the day, there's no way to track those gift cards. The guy is just out that money. There's no way to solve it, there's no way to trace gift cards, they're all sent to a burner cell phone. Once it's gone, it's gone."

Holmstrom said there is no way to trace the scammer and lay charges in this case.

"If he used a certain IP address, sometimes we can track IP addresses. But if he didn't, in this case the remote access was gained, and we can't track it."

"Internet fraud is extremely difficult to solve because you can hide your tracks so well."

"If he would have sent an e-transfer to the guy, we can track that. With an e-transfer we know exactly where that money is going, we know what path it's taking, but in the case of this he sent a picture of

a gift card with an activation code to a cell phone.

"There's no way of knowing who that cell phone belongs to, because that cell phone number is untraceable. You can make the number show up as anything, it can be a burner phone, it can be registered to Batman. There's no way to track that."

Holmstrom said he has been trying to emphasize the importance of being aware of scams through his weekly RCMP report.

"A case like this is so sad. That's why I've been putting this fraud of the week in the RCMP report every week to prevent this stuff from happening."

"We had a lady get taken for \$120,000 up in Preeceville when I was posted in Canora and it was very sad. She thought this person was real and she was helping him out and she just kept sending more money and more money."

He says it's important for retailers to contact police in cases like this.

"If stores see anyone trying to purchase a large amount in gift cards they should call the RCMP immediately and maybe we can stop this from happening."

"Let the police know. A phone call might have stopped this from happening."

"This case is very sad because this guy is devastated now. Basically \$30,000 of his savings is gone. That's a large amount of money."

Unique preschool program in Esterhazy

BY ROB PAUL
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

In Esterhazy there's a preschool program that's a little different than the norm, not only are children invited to attend, but their parents can come along with them. It's the Preschool and Parent Education Program (PPEP) and it's unlike any other preschool program around.

PPEP has existed for over 25 years and each year it receives up to 64 applications from students and families wanting to enrol in the unique preschool program. One of the plusses is the inclusivity it invites by being a free program funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada through the Community Action Plan for Children and the Saskatchewan Community Initiatives Fund.

The parent program is what makes PPEP notable because it allows the parents of the students the opportunity to get involved and be in the classroom too. With guidance from a school facilitator, parents can attend classes to learn

about parenting strategies, self-care, and preventative measures parents can take to help their children.

Another aspect of the parent program is to give those young families in the community a chance to connect and network with one another to help support each other.

PPEP also offers an alternative program for families where the parents are unable to attend class—it's the same experience for the children without the parent component.

"It's so different because it's a preschool, but it's meant for the parents as well," said Jasmin Kerr, a teacher with PPEP. "When the kids are here for school, the parents get to go to school too and they can learn so much as well. The idea is because there's lots of new parents coming in and new families that aren't from Canada and so it's a great way for them to network and learn."

"It's also for parents to realize that they're not alone and we can form a sense of community and come together. It's really

unique in that way, because the parents are very involved too. We also do a lot of parent engagement days—although this year with Covid it's been tricky, but we've still done all that we can to get the parents involved."

Culture and inclusiveness are an important detail of PPEP and recognition of all culture is something they feel brings understanding to the community. With it being so community oriented, as part of the program there's a focus on using the local environment as a way to teach the children.

They visit different places in the community to provide new learning environments, such as:

- Grocery store.
- Vet clinic.
- RCMP.
- EMT.
- Fire hall.
- SARCAN.
- Senior home and care home visits with senior buddies.
- Greenhouse.
- Farm tour.

The program is run with

the sponsorship of the Good Spirit School Division and has three main individuals as frontline workers for the program. The three individuals running the program are a teacher with a Bachelor of Education degree and early childhood diploma with 20 years experience working in early childhood settings, an educational assistant with 20-plus years of

experience working with children ages three to 18, and a family and a support mentor trained with the Canadian Cancer Society for group support facilitation and specially trained in Yoga Kids.

Being unique is something the PPEP prides itself on and it's not just with the parent program it offers, but with the child program as well. It provides a play-

based learning environment that centres around each child's individual needs.

To help keep the children engaged and energized, the program doesn't only focus on in-the-classroom learning, but implements physical activity to help promote healthy living and build relationships between students.

Continued on page 11

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Key to growth within a community is positivity says Sask Chamber of Commerce CEO

BY ROB PAUL

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Southeast Saskatchewan is growing, according to Sask Health numbers, particularly Moosomin and its surrounding areas. Over the last 10 years Moosomin has grown by 14.6 per cent and by 32 per cent over the last 15 years—surrounding municipalities have also either stayed about the same or grown.

This isn't the case outside the region, with other rural communities seeing a decrease in size in the last decade. Moosomin and its surrounding area have the benefit of the mining industry playing an important role in growth, but Sask Chamber of Commerce CEO Steve McLellan says there's more to it than that.

"There are some certain natural assets that have been capitalized on—like the oil sector, like the potash sector—but even within Moosomin's geographic area, not every community has grown," he said. "My assessment would be quite simple, Moosomin looks like a great place to live, and it is a great place to live, and that's drawn people who will drive outside of the community to work elsewhere. It's got those basic amenities, it's got a hospital, it's got a nice downtown, it's got restaurants, it's got hotels out on the highway, and it's got a positive attitude. It looks like a winner and that's what people want, so if it looks like a community that's going backwards with how it looks and how it feels, then people won't want to live there and they won't stay there.

"Moosomin has got those amenities that will keep people in the neighbourhood, rather than driving all the way to Yorkton and commuting to the mines, or driving from Carlyle to the oil sector. Moosomin has people who say, 'I want to live in this town, it's got everything I need and looks like a winner, I'd be wise to live here.' All of amenities make a difference. There are different things to look for in a town—younger people want to make sure there's things to do, places for their kids to skate, good schools that aren't falling apart and at risk of closing, and as they get older they want to make sure there's a healthcare facility that will look after them. Everybody wants to know that there's decent retail that will give me all the products that I need and at easy access.

"I think we're going to see places like Moosomin become even bigger and grow even faster as smaller towns who can't fit that bill start to decrease in population," he said. "The only exception will be smaller communities that are near a lake or something that has a draw like that, but I think Moosomin will always be a very popular and lively growing community."

McLellan also thinks publicizing the assets a town has plays a key role in attracting people from surrounding areas and building buzz about the community.

"The reality of it is, not only do you have to have those things, but you have to tell people that you have them," he said. "For example, the skate way that Moosomin has in town, I saw in an issue of the paper. Those things make a difference, that's good exposure. Everyone that is relatively new to town and even those who have been around a while, when they're on the phone or on a Zoom with someone living elsewhere and they say, 'what did you do this week?' and one person from another community says, 'I'm bored as can be,' and the Moosomin person says, 'we went skate,' or even if they didn't go on it, they know about it because it's been covered so well and they've got plans to use it.

"Not every town has someone out there to let everybody know that they have these things. That's a part of the responsibility, but also the opportunity of a community newspaper to make sure people know all these assets and keep remind them because you might not be a skater today, but in two weeks when you're as bored as can be and want to get outside you'll go downtown buy a pair of skates and figure out you love skating because you haven't done it in thirty years. All those things are part of what keeps communities vibrant and keeps people in those communities."

Continuity in the community between the town council, economic development officer, rec department, business leaders, and everybody in-between is paramount for promoting growth and ensuring strong involvement says McLellan.

"They need to get active," he said. "Growth is not accidental and very seldom is it totally organic. It's intentional, Moosomin's economic development folks have been active to invite companies like Canalta to come to town.



Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce CEO Steve McLellan.

The town has worked very closely with the mines and the oil company to make sure what they need is available and that they feel welcome in the community. It's absolutely an intentional outcome and if you're not intentional, strategic, and co-ordinated in how you do that.

"Whether it's the rec board working with the economic development board or local chamber helping to identify new opportunities and celebrate new businesses, but it has to be a co-ordinated effort without it being overly organized. It's got to be intentional and communities that are sitting on their heels saying, 'jeez, poor us,' they'll continue to go down because nobody wants to be part of that attitude and it's a long way often from a negative attitude to a positive growth rate—there's a direct link between the two."

If a rural area is to thrive, McLellan believes it has everything to do with the collective positivity of the townspeople and he says that starts at the top with community leaders and it trickles down.

"Even to the young person that works at the gas station, when someone drives through and they say, 'welcome to Moosomin!' or something that just shows the positive attitude, that matters," he said. "If they're driving across the country and they stop at 20 gas stations, which is the one they remember? Those sorts of goodwill assets are certainly useful and again, when you drive through it, it looks like a town you want to live in and that's the attitude Moosomin projects.

"It has potential with surrounding industries—there's a lot of work that has made it so successful—but I think it will continue because of the collective will. Moosomin's local chamber is very active, the economic development folks work well, and there's good leadership at the municipal level and certainly the MLA, Steven Bonk, is a champion for the Moosomin area and the province. All of those things combined, like I say, there's a direct line

between a negative attitude and negative growth."

Something McLellan sees as a quick fix is help from the provincial and federal government. He believes if the change doesn't start from within the community then assistance from outside of it won't have a lasting impact.

"It has to start with the communities," he said. "The worst thing and the shortest term success would be a government grant that helped the community do something. It has to start internally and the only way for it to be sustainable is for it to be done that way. If the municipality puts money into it, then that's great because it's your own community. The province can't give you a grant that creates a positive environment, they can give you a grant to help strategy, but it's much better done if it's done at the municipal level.

"They can assist things, like making sure there's a program to have a senior centre built where there's community shared ownership or fundraising, they can make sure they're very careful on determination of healthcare services and how those facilities are funded, and they can certainly have a bigger stake—as can the private sector—in things like infrastructure for internet. Those types of things make life in a smaller community different, not more challenging, but different if indeed things like access to internet or business or kids learning are harder to access in rural Saskatchewan—the province has a role in helping there, but I don't think they have a direct role in making people more positive.

"You need to want to come together as a community and when you do that, you don't need a grant, you just need a group of committed individuals and great things will happen. All the provincial or federal government can give you is a temporary high," he said. "It needs to be sustainable because otherwise you become a one hit wonder and people may say, 'oh my gosh this is good, I'm going to move there,' and then they get there and there's no positivity. Even elected leadership can be ambassadors for it, but you need people who aren't on council to help produce events and celebrate great things that are happening in the community.

"Delegates can do that, they should recognize the good things Moosomin is doing and congratulate the town and expansion, and they do that through people like Steven Bonk. But other than that, I'd argue, it has got to be at the grassroots level for it to be sustainable because it's not a short-term high you're looking for."

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Unique preschool program in Esterhazy



The Preschool and Parent Education Program (PPEP) in Esterhazy gives parents a chance to learn and make connections within the community as well as give their children an opportunity to prepare for school.



Continued from page 9

"We really promote literacy and reading, as well as social engagement because that's really important in preschool," Kerr said. "We're always making sure we can form connections with all of our peers and we sit down at the carpet every day and we do a lot of our learning through play and we do lots of crafts every day. Even this year during this crazy pandemic we try to get outside and moving as much as we can with the kids wearing masks. It's definitely been a challenge, but we're always trying to get them outside and get them active. We also focus on mindfulness and awareness of one another. It's really good training to get them ready and get into a routine of

how school works."

The focus is on the social, physical, language, intellectual, creative, and emotional needs of each child. This is achieved in a calm, loving, and consistent environment. There's a strong focus on mindfulness, emotions, and how to regulate them through breathing techniques and a better understanding of how bodies and minds work in relation to one another.

"For people that are interested in the program, we have information all over Esterhazy or people can call us and we can give them information on the program," she said. "We also have a Facebook page that people can go on to see what we do as well. The program being free is really

nice too because we think that everyone deserves this program and it's very handy for people who are lower income and we also work with the community a lot too so we can get a lot of stuff donated. It's really a beneficial and positive program that welcomes everyone."

For those interested in the program can contact 306-745-2893 or email ppep@gssd.ca, they can also be found on Facebook at Preschool Ppep Esterhazy.

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The two largest potash mines in the world, Nutrien Rocanville, left, and Mosaic Esterhazy right.

Best jurisdiction in the world in which to invest Mining Journal names Sask. top location

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK
The 2020 edition of the Mining Journal's World Risk Report ranks Saskatchewan among the very top jurisdictions globally for doing business in the mining sector.

Saskatchewan is ranked as the number one jurisdiction in the world for mining investment opportunity in the Mining Journal's 2020 World Risk Report Opportunity Index.

"This report confirms that Saskatchewan, through stable policies and regulation, has created among the strongest mining investment climates in the world," Saskatchewan Energy and Resources Minister Bronwyn Eyre said.

"The mining sector plays a critical role in our economic recovery, and we will continue to ensure that Saskatchewan is among the top international jurisdictions for investment in the exploration and development of minerals."

Mining is one of Saskatchewan's major industries, and the two largest potash mines in the world—Nutrien Rocanville and Mosaic Esterhazy—are in the local area.

Saskatchewan achieved the highest rating in the report's Opportunity Index, a combination of perceived mineral potential and investment risk.

With respect to overall

investment, Saskatchewan was one of only two jurisdictions that achieved the highest AAA rating.

The report looked at five major areas, including legal, governance, social, fiscal, and infrastructure performance metrics.

The report, which is published in London, UK by an Australian-owned company, is based on survey responses from more than

900 mining sector professionals, combined with ten metrics from established, risk-related indices in determining the rankings.

The report ranks 111 jurisdictions across 83 countries.

Saskatchewan's 10-year Growth Plan, released in November 2019, aims to attract further investment in the province's world-class mining sector.

Its targets include increasing the annual value of uranium sales to \$2 billion, potash sales to \$9 billion, and encouraging the exploration and development of strategic metals and minerals in Saskatchewan.

Turn to page 15 for an interview with Saskatchewan's Energy and Resources Minister Bronwyn Eyre on the ranking.

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Grad looks for him and for her

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With countless boutiques overflowing with lavish gowns, ladies, rest assured that your dream dress is out there — it's just a matter of finding it. For the perfect fairy tale look, make sure to choose a gown that suits your body type. For example, if you have an hourglass shape (shoulders and hips wider than your waist), opt for a flared dress to flatter your delicate waistline. On the other hand, if you have a pyramidal shape (smaller bust and wider hips), consider a dress that's adjusted up top and looser down below. Moreover, select a colour that complements your skin tone. For the fair-skinned, vibrant hues like red or purple are recommended over pastels, while lighter shades, like pink, white and metallic hues look marvelous on darker skin tones.



HIM

Young men, Graduation is your opportunity to come out looking like James Bond, so forget those second-hand suits — they're always either too big or too small — and opt for something a little more clean cut. When shopping for your suit, make sure the jacket and pants fit you to a T. If you aren't sure of the proper fit, ask a sales associate to measure your inseams and suggest styles appropriate for your build. In terms of colour, you can never go wrong with a classic black or navy blue suit. For the bold at heart, show off your personality with a brightly patterned shirt instead of that shiny polyester ensemble you've been eyeballing. Finally, will you sport a necktie or bowtie? The choice is yours!



Treat yourself to an at-home honeymoon

Restrictions put in place during the pandemic make it challenging, if not impossible, to travel to most prime honeymoon destinations. And once you arrive, who knows what restaurants and attractions will be open. So while white sandy beaches and European cafés may be out of reach, a romantic staycation should hardly be considered settling for second best.



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First and foremost, you don't have to worry about contracting the coronavirus if you choose to honeymoon from the comfort of your home. Additionally, you'll avoid the hassle of preparing for a trip — no need to renew your passport, get vaccinated, convert your cash or buy travel insurance. Plus, you won't have to pack, and you can be sure that the bedding hasn't been used by strangers.

may be able to afford one or more indulgences. For example, you could:

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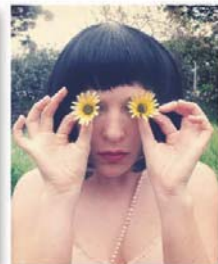


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Manitoba author releasing her fourth murder mystery book

BY SPENCER KEMP
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

All it took was a golfing trip for a Manitoba woman to begin her career as a mystery writer. While out golfing, Joan Havelange from Russell, Manitoba asked the question of ‘what if’. This came after drawing inspiration from a murder mystery movie. What if things changed? If things happened different than they did in the movie?

“All fiction is ‘what if’, ‘what if this happens’, then you go off on a tangent from there.” Havelange said. “I was golfing and thought what if a golf ball flew off and hit someone in the forehead and they died? But what if they were already dead? And then the mystery begins.”

With that bout of inspiration, Havelange kicked off her writing career. She began writing her first book, *Wayward Shot*, about five years ago. She wrote the book on her iPad, something that her editors quickly asked her to remedy in order to properly format her stories.

The book was published to GoodReads and received an onslaught of reviews with overwhelmingly positive comments, commending Havelange for her humor, mystery, and the climax of the story.

“I didn’t realize how lucky I was to get picked up by somebody,” she says.

This success inspired Havelange to go on to publish her next book, *Death and Denial*, that followed the protagonists from the first, but this time on a cruise ship with a murderer aboard. The book follows the duo as they evade danger and sniff out the culprit with a balance of mystery and humor.

Havelange explained that this book was quite a bit harder to write than the first, trying to keep the characters in-character and describing the setting without it becoming too bland. She said that with the success of her first book, she wanted to continue the series and settled on the idea of utilizing a cruise ship as a setting after being on a cruise ship herself.

“It came out very well and I was really pleased, but it was tougher to write,” Havelange explained.

The books didn’t stop there, as Havelange pushed for a third book, *The Trouble with Funerals*. This latest installment to her series was released in December, 2020 and follows the duo as they investigate a string of deaths at a manor, unsure if it’s the work of a killer or if there is something more than that going on.

“When they were put out and people liked them I was shocked,” Havelange said.

Havelange explained that there was some concern with the title as the book was released in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, concerned it may draw the ire of some due to the current state of the world. But after a discussion with her editor, Havelange elected to keep the books title and send it off to publish.

Once again, this book was successful much like the other two released before it. And with the wind in her sails, Havelange is now set to release her fourth book in the series, *The Suspects*.

This addition to the series is set to be released in November 2021 and follows the duo once more, but this time in Russia. Havelange drew inspiration for this addition to her series after a visit to Russia years back.

In this book, the duo are on a trip to Russia when one of them are accused of murder. Due to language barriers and other international complications, they must find a way to clear their names and make their way home to Saskatchewan.

She explained that she is currently on the second draft of her latest book, *The Suspects*, and plans to have the third draft done up soon. After that, there will be one more draft before the book can be published.

“You do have a sort of deadline, but it’s not a harsh deadline.” Havelange added. “I write better in the winter than I do in summer because I like to golf.”

Havelange explained that it has been a learning experience for her as she continues her series of books. She says that she never really paid attention in English class in school and has had to since take a course on writing to help with her formatting. She claims this has eased up the stress on her editor.

“It’s like putting your kid out there and they want to be on stage.” She added. “I’m never going to be a J.K Rowling and make a ton of money. I want people to read my story and I want them to enjoy it. I get a lot of feedback and people are enjoying it. It’s not a thriller, it’s not a slasher, it’s a mystery. There’s puzzles and there’s humor. And people have given a lot of good feedback for that as well.”

The books can be found on GoodReads.com.



Joan Havelange is preparing to publish her fourth book, *The Suspects*, in November 2021.

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Eyre says ranking confirms Sask's competitiveness

\$10 billion in investment expected in Sask. mining in next decade

Ranking by the Mining Journal recently placed Saskatchewan as the number one jurisdiction in the world for mining investment opportunity in the publication's World Risk Report Opportunity Index.

Plain & Valley editor Kevin Weedmark spoke with Saskatchewan Energy and Resources Minister Bronwyn Eyre about the ranking and what it says about Saskatchewan's mining industry.

From your viewpoint, how important is the perception of Saskatchewan's competitiveness around the world to the future of the mining industry in this province?

That's a great question. And of course it's not just perception, although that's very important, but it's reality, because we were competitive on a global scale and that's why we're proud of this report.

But report or no report, the facts remain that Saskatchewan is a world leader in potash and in uranium and we have incredible potential when it comes to diamonds and base metals and precious metals, which is why we put in place the targeted mineral incentive, for example, which focuses on hot spots for those and encourages new companies to come to Saskatchewan.

But like any sector, the mining sector wants to invest and they want to operate in jurisdictions that are stable where royalty and taxes are transparent and governance and integrity are strong and where they can receive favorable returns.

And this report confirms what we already know—and I'm happy to be biased in that regard—that that's all available here in Saskatchewan.

Are rankings like this useful in attracting investment to Saskatchewan?

To be one of the only jurisdictions in the world to receive an AAA, a triple A rating, for investment risk, is significant. You hope that attracts investment, because that's what companies are looking for and it's a well respected report. The metrics are very solid.

It's been published since 2017, it does these jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction ratings across five core areas—40 per cent legal, 25 per cent governance, 15 per cent social, 12.5 per cent fiscal and 7.5 per cent infrastructure. And that's how they get their investment risk index. So again, well respected, solid metrics and widely read which are all good things for investment.

Does the government have its own internal process to determine its competitiveness? Is it always evaluating where it stands compared to other jurisdictions to ensure that it remains competitive?

Absolutely, we're always doing that and as a government we're always reviewing mining regulations and policies from Canadian and international jurisdictions and of course industry and third-party sources to make sure that we're always being competitive.

And as a result of course we help Canada look good too. The federal government has said they want to brand Canada as a place to invest for mining and I would think that reports such as this one would help them do that. And certainly Saskatchewan helps them do that.

Is there anything the provincial government needs to



Saskatchewan Energy and Resources Minister Bronwyn Eyre

do to ensure that Saskatchewan remains competitive in the future?

Well I think we have to make sure that the permitting processes, that's one example, are as smooth and free of red tape as they can be, from the ministries of environments perspective.

For example—because you often have several ministries that have a bearing on these things and we all have to work together when it comes to competitiveness—we have to continue to get the word out about some of the challenges that the mining sector faces from a federal perspective.

Recently, as you know, we've had the clean fuel standards, we've had Bill C-69, we've had federal policies on everything from protected lands to caribou—all of these have been of concern to the mining sector and we just have to remain vigilant about the changes at the federal level that are affecting or could affect competitiveness.

In this area we've had a lot of investment in the last decade at Nutrien and Mosaic. What kind of new investment, is the government expecting in Saskatchewan's mining industry over the next decade?

We're always hoping to, of course, attract investment and there are a number of mining projects that are currently under development or planned in the province that could be constructed before 2030 and they involve potential investment of over \$10 billion.

That is very exciting and is partly why in our growth plan we were pretty bullish about mining and the prospects for increased production in potash and uranium and other areas.

Is the government anticipating a lot of new investments from new players in mining or a lot of expansion from current players? How do you expect that to break down?

There's some potential for expansion of facilities from existing producers but the majority of new mining projects that are being considered for construction would be new players in Saskatchewan. So again, it's very exciting in that regard.

What minerals would you expect to attract the most new investment over the next few years?

There are projects being evaluated in potash and uranium, where, of course, we've been a longtime global leader.

But there are other minerals where we see significant potential and where there is significant movement, including diamonds, base metals, rare earth elements, lithium—these are all attracting quite a bit of attention.

I've said before that we're making our way through the periodic table in Saskatchewan and certainly rare earth elements and lithium would be two examples of that.

So, there is definitely room for diversification and for building on the things we already do very, very well in the province.

How does it feel to have this acknowledgement from the Mining Journal of Saskatchewan's competitive position?

It feels great. Because of the struggles of the last year, everything has seemed more delicate.

And mining has weathered things comparatively better than oil and gas, but that's not to say that there hasn't been challenges, so to have this come out after a difficult year is really a boost and is helpful.

Most of all, we want to focus on recovery of our economy now, and mining is a huge part of that, and so important for the province.

It's important for everyone in the province in terms of the opportunities it can create.

It's great to have this acknowledgement. We just have to keep building on what we're doing and making sure we are doing it as well as we can.



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Support for small businesses extended in Saskatchewan

BY SPENCER KEMP

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Businesses that want to apply for provincial business should apply soon, as deadlines are coming up for some programs.

SMALL BUSINESS EMERGENCY PAYMENT

The Government of Saskatchewan has extended the Saskatchewan Small Business Emergency Payment (SSBEP) program.

The program was established to provide financial assistance to eligible small businesses in Saskatchewan that have been ordered to temporarily close or substantially curtail operations due to a public health order in effect between December 1 and 31, 2020, and/or between January 1 and 31, 2021, to help control transmission of COVID-19.

Financial assistance includes a payment of up to \$5,000 for December 2020 and/or January 2021 that can be used for any purpose.

The program was initially offered April through June of 2020. An amended Phase 2 of the program has been established for December 1-31, 2020, and January 1-31, 2021, with the program opening for applications until Tuesday March 2, 2021.

Due to the pandemic continuing to impact businesses in Saskatchewan, Trade and Export Development Minister, Jeremy Harrison, says the extension of the program is vital to allow them to continue operating as the global pandemic is ongoing.

However, as additional business restrictions have gone into place since the last renewal, the Government of Saskatchewan is encouraging businesses to reassess their eligibility for both the December and January payments.

As of the December payment, there have been 1,521 applicants and \$5.9 million in assistance distributed to businesses.

Despite millions of dollars circulating into small businesses, Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce CEO Scott McLellan believes that more businesses should be accessing the funding that is available.

Between Federal and Provincial programs, McLellan says there are plenty of

different programs available for small businesses to utilize in order to help take some of the stress off their shoulders.

Businesses that qualified for the SSBEP in December will not have to re-apply for January, though businesses will be contacted to attest that they remain eligible for the January payment.

To take part in this program, businesses can go to saskatchewan.ca/small-business-emergency-payment or call 1-800-667-6102. Additionally, emails can be sent to ssbep@gov.sk.ca.

STRONG RECOVERY ADAPTATION REBATE

In addition to the SSBEP program, there are also additional programs the Government of Saskatchewan is offering to small businesses who have been impacted by COVID-19.

The Strong Recovery Adaptation Rebate (SRAR) is a program that reimburses small businesses for investments made to help protect staff and make adjustments to continue operations through the COVID-19 pandemic.

These adaptations can include barriers used to protect workers, the reconfiguring of space to help social distancing, providing additional services through digital tools, providing different services or products, and the transition to delivery or curb-side pick-up services.

The assistance includes payments of up to \$5,000 or 50 per cent of total eligible investments made by the applicant prior to February 28, 2021.

To apply for this program, businesses are asked to visit saskatchewan.ca/strong-recovery-adaptation-rebate or call 1-844-800-8688. Email inquiries can be sent to srar@gov.sk.ca.

The application deadline for the SRAR program is March 31, 2021.

RE-OPEN SASKATCHEWAN TRAINING SUBSIDY

An additional program is available for small businesses as well in Saskatchewan. The Re-Open Saskatchewan Training Subsidy (RSTS) is accepting applications. This program aims at helping assist with the costs of training employees to adjust to the constantly changing atmosphere of the

COVID-19 pandemic.

The RSTS program reimburses private-sector employers 100 per cent of the costs of training employees up to a maximum of \$10,000.

This program was put in place to assist small businesses who need to adapt their employees and their services to the ongoing pandemic. In a release from the Government of Saskatchewan, this program is outlined as being put in place to help open the economy in Saskatchewan.

The application deadline for the RSTS program has been extended to March 31, 2021 in order to give businesses additional time to apply and see if they are eligible for the program.

For those who wish to take part in the program, you are asked to visit their website at saskatchewan.ca/training-subsidy or call 306-964-1005 or email further inquiries to cansaskjobgrant@gov.sk.ca.

The Government of Saskatchewan adds that businesses that have been fined for non-compliance with the current public

health orders will not be eligible to receive support through these programs.

You can find all the contact info to take part in these programs below.

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Talented photographer Kim Poole captured these images of past Living Skies fireworks competitions.

Living Skies Come Alive in doubt for second straight year due to Covid

BY ROB PAUL
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Usually every summer people come from across southeast Saskatchewan and southwest Manitoba for a fireworks spectacle at Moosomin Regional Park. There's tens of thousands of people, food and drink, bands performing, and of course, the fireworks.

The Living Skies Come Alive International Fireworks Competition is a beloved event in Canada and draws competitors from all over the globe, as far as China and the Philippines—it's the largest event in southeast Saskatchewan.

It's a world-class competition that's on the same level as some of the best international fireworks competitions. Thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours are invested into the competition each year with it all coming together as the fireworks mesmerize over Moosomin Lake.

From the competitors to the planners to the performers to the vendors to all the spectators it draws, it's one of the most important weekends of the year for the local economy.

In 2020, the event had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic restricting gathering sizes and international travel—it would have been the 11th year of the fireworks in Moosomin.

For the second straight summer, the competition looks unlikely to go forward.

Although August is still months away, preparation for such a large event begins early and Karen Hebert, head of the fireworks committee, says that without knowing what will be allowed down the road, there's just no way of planning such a substantial gathering.

"Until we can gather a large amount of people it's just definitely not an option," she said. "Our crowds are in the thousands so whenever the guidelines open up, is when we'll be able to look at something like this, but until then, it's definitely not an option at all. For now it's off the table unless things open up, I can't see that happening."

Another factor working against the event right now is that it's an international competition and non-essential travel is not recommended, meaning any competition would need to be strictly Canadian.

dian. "With the parameters that are in place right now, I just can't see things being able to open up enough and then also even if we could gather people, would we have to have two Canadian companies? Because do you want to bring other countries in? And with the travel restrictions, at this point in time it's not an option."

Hebert doesn't believe any fireworks event will be able to happen this summer based on how things are looking in Canada with the slow rollout of the vaccine and says all they can do is sit and wait with no control over what's to come.

"There's really nothing we can do about it and at this point in time," she said. "I can't see the fireworks being able to happen in 2021 unless some major changes happen, but the way we're going right now and with the lack of vaccines, I just can't see things opening up very much."

Alternate options for the event are under consideration if things open up more, but it's a logistically tough situation to work with, says Hebert.

"Our main fireworks

contact with the Canadian company is Peter (Palmer of CanFire Pyrotechnics) and he called me last fall hoping we could do something smaller, but at that time people would have had to drive in and park somewhere to see it and we don't have a facility in order to handle that," she said.

The best chance of a fireworks show for this summer at Moosomin Lake would be if gathering restrictions open up and a smaller scale event is possible within the guidelines.

"If we can host something then we'd for sure look into that," she said. "We've discussed different options, but until we can actually gather people, none of those can be planned out."

In a normal situation, nearly a full year of planning goes into the competition to ensure entertainment, vendors, and competitions are set, but given the circumstances, the committee hasn't been able to do anything in preparation for the summer of 2021.

"We would have already started planning," she said. "Once we put the previous year's to bed, we'd maybe take the rest of the

month off and then we'd start again by September to get ready for the next year. We need to book our bands and entertainment and all of that stuff so we would have already had a lot of prep work done at this point in time."

At this point, Hebert

doesn't even think 2022 is a sure thing for the fireworks competition because of all the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic and nobody knowing what the "new normal" will look like as the world recovers from Covid-19. "This is just the reality

of our new Covid life," she said. "What are they going to do for large concerts and large gatherings of people? I don't know when that will return or what that could even look like in the future. Nobody can really say anything, we really know nothing."

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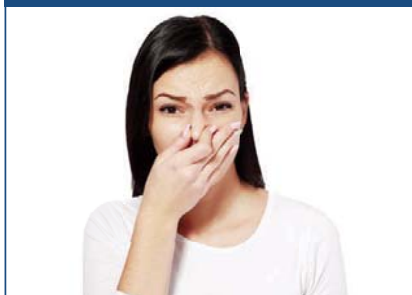
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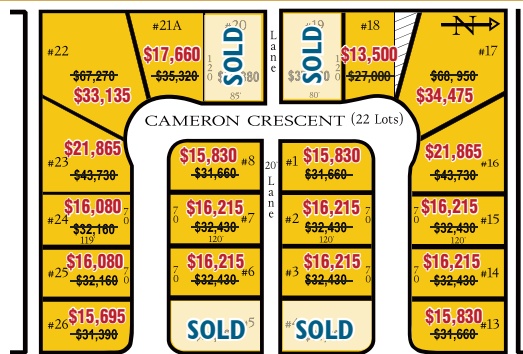
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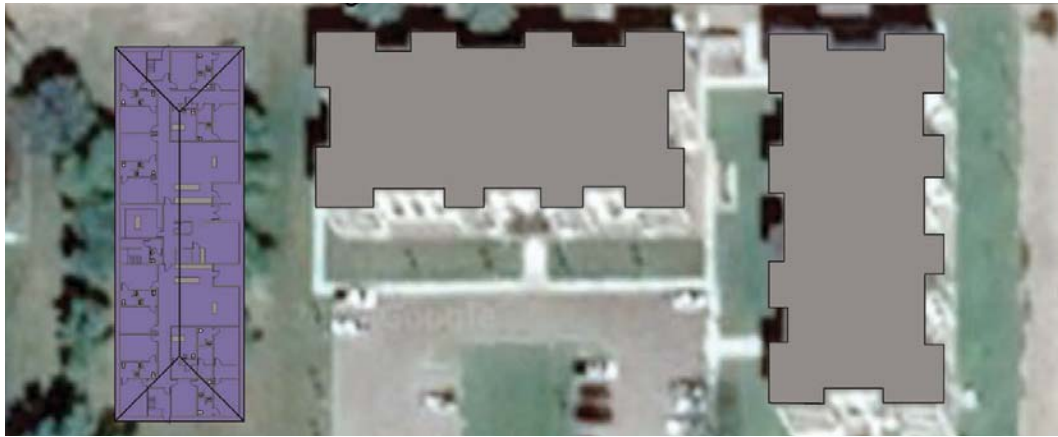
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Town of Rocanville – Cameron Crescent Residential Development

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The site plan for the new Long-Term Care/Assisted Living Facility planned for Moosomin. It will be located on Wright Road next to Pipestone Villas

Meetings on proposed assisted living facility:

Proponents happy with response from investors

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

The proponents behind the long-term care and assisted living facility proposed for Moosomin are happy with the results of a series of initial investor meetings in Moosomin on January 19, and are planning Zoom meetings and in-person meetings in February to speak with more potential investors.

About 70 potential investors came out to a series of meetings to hear about a proposal for a long-term care and assisted living facility in Moosomin. The 42-unit building would include 14 Level 3-4 long-term care units, 14 Level 1-2 long-term care units, and 14 Assisted Living suites.

The cost to build the three-storey facility, which would be located next to Pipestone

“Across all of the communities that we are going to be going into, I would say Moosomin as a community has absolutely set the bar extremely high in terms of engagement and support. And I’d be surprised, if not shocked, to see if other communities can respond to the level that Moosomin has.”

—Larry Scammell, Kohr Capital

Villas, will be about \$7.5 million. Some of that will be financed, and \$3 million will be raised from investors.

Larry Scammell of Kohr Capital said he is optimistic about raising the \$3 million.

“I have no doubt that we can raise that from investors,” he said. “Further to that, I would not be surprised if 100 per cent of required capital comes from the community, from the people we saw in and around Moosomin the last couple of days.

“I would not be surprised, and I think it’s everybody’s goal, or wish, or dream for that to be the case, but I’m very confident that it will. But even if it doesn’t, I would be shocked if it’s any more than five or ten per cent that doesn’t come directly from the community. We do have investors outside the community who would be looking at an opportunity like this, but I think they will play a minor role if any.”

Scammell said he is very impressed by

the way the community has responded to the proposal.

“Across all of the communities that we are going to be going into, I would say Moosomin as a community has absolutely set the bar extremely high in terms of engagement and support,” he said. “And I’d be surprised, if not shocked, to see other communities respond to the level that Moosomin has.”

Continued on page 21

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<p>2021 Forest River Rockwood 2887MB</p> <p>Mid bunkhouse, Loaded, Larger 15,000 BTU A/C, LED Bedroom TV, Bicycle Carrier, Power Stabilizer Jacks.</p> <p>DISCOUNTED TO \$57,500 OR ONLY \$191 BI-WEEKLY* WITH NO DOWN PAYMENT! OAC</p>	<p>2021 Suzuki King Quad LTA500 XPZM1</p> <p>Front and Rear Removable Cargo Racks, 33% Increased Towing Capacity, Stronger Frame, Revisions to the Fuel Injection System for better acceleration from a stand still and more effective at engine braking</p> <p>\$11,975 OR ONLY \$117 BI-WEEKLY* WITH NO DOWN PAYMENT! OAC</p>	<p>2021 American Hauler Night Hawk 7x16</p> <p>Aluminum wheels, RV door lock, 2 flo-through vents, 4 - 5,000 lb. d/rings, 2-LED interior lights along with all exterior LED's, front ATP V-Nose, all built 16" on centre for more strength and durability. REG. \$10,100</p> <p>CARLYLE RV PRICE \$9,095 OR ONLY \$89 BI-WEEKLY* WITH NO DOWN PAYMENT! OAC</p>	<p>FIFTH WHEELS</p> <p>2019 Avalanche 332MK 3 Slides, Auto Level, Washer/dryer \$72,900</p> <p>2018 Avalanche 375RD 5 Slides, Washer/dryer ...\$71,500 No GST</p> <p>2016 Hideout 2016 2 Slides, Rear SOLD \$27,500</p> <p>2008 Sportsmen 41K Toy Hauler 3 Slides, 12' Garage, Loft, Loaded \$34,900</p> <p>2004 Springdale 2498H Handyman Special \$7,995</p> <p>2002 Laredo 27RL Fiberglass, Large Slide \$11,900</p> <p>1997 Wildwood 22CB Nice Condition \$6,900</p> <p>1997 Coachmen 275RK No Slide, Rear Hitch \$8,995</p>

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Meetings on proposed assisted living facility:

Proponents happy with response from investors

Continued from page 20

"The engagement was almost overwhelming. All things considered, Covid-19 restrictions, we saw just over 70 people, and they had some great questions. It was an overwhelming response in terms of people letting us know the community needs this, and they were happy to have an opportunity to hear about it and to consider participating."

The proposal for the Moosomin project involves three companies—Bridges Road Developments, which originally developed Pipestone Villas and many similar independent living projects across Western Canada, Care by Design, which is an operator of assisted living facilities in Saskatchewan, and Kohr Capital, which is handling the investment end of the project.

Individuals will be able to invest directly in the Moosomin project through a limited partnership, or will be able to invest with registered funds through a mutual fund trust, which will invest in the Moosomin project—the first project for the new mutual fund trust.

So what are the next steps?
"There are three components—the investor standpoint, the design and construction standpoint, and the care component, which will become more engaged a little later in the process," says Scammell. "The next two steps will be to follow-up individually with every single person that expressed an interest. We will go through all the details relating to how a person can get involved and invest to support the project, with a view to the first closing, which we're anticipating will happen in March. That will be just



From left, Shayne Shepherd of Kohr Capital, Travis Penner of Bridges Road Developments, and Larry Scammell of Kohr Capital make a presentation to potential investors in a long-term care/assisted living facility in Moosomin to potential investors at the Conexus MCC Centre in Moosomin in January.

a portion, probably about 15 per cent of the total equity required will come in, in March.

"It's about \$500,000, which will be working capital to really engage the project and get the wheels turning. We're also at the same time looking to capture and solidify interest in investment in the balance of the financing. Which is going to happen somewhere between August and October. So the second need for capital, or the second need for investment, is going to happen in concert with construction starting. So again, we anticipate between August and October we would be needing to close on the balance of

the equity."

What was the main message of the meetings?

"From Kohr's standpoint, what we really tried to stress to everybody who was there is we exist as sort of a middle man to bring compliance to the transaction and we represent the investors' best interests," said Scammell.

"From a team standpoint we tried to stress and promote confidence in the collective ability to bring this project to reality. It's a three legged stool and it's a pretty solid one because Bridge Road, they have demonstrated in this very community for 10 years, they know what they're doing on the construction side.

"Shane and I at Kohr, based on our experience raising capital and putting investment structures like this together, same thing, this is the seventh mutual fund trust that we've worked with.

"Care by Design, the simple fact is, they're the largest independent care home operator in the province with 550 beds. The three of us together can bring this project together."

Further meetings planned

Zoom meetings and additional in-person meetings are being planned for February to connect with more potential investors.

Information on how to participate in the Zoom meetings will be included in next week's World-Spectator, once details are finalized. People who want to find out more about the opportunity can contact Larry Scammell at larry@kohrcapital.com

High risk areas prioritized in Sask vaccine plan

Continued from Page 3

"We are reviewing vaccine expansion plans. Recent news of drastic reductions in delivery of Pfizer vaccine to Saskatchewan and resulting scarcity of supply will be factored in to these plans," said the spokesperson. "Vaccinations will be able to expand when more vaccine becomes available."

As for where people will be able to receive vaccinations once they are available, pharmacies are being looked at as an option for rural communities.

"The role of pharmacists in the vaccination plan is currently under consideration," they said.

With Saskatchewan's phase two projected to begin in April, it will continue to prioritize the demographics Dr. Shahab has outlined, as well as start administering doses to the general population.

Distribution will occur throughout the province with a focus on people being able to access the vaccine where they live or work—the province is planning to have it administered by physicians, nurse practitioners, and pharmacists with additional vaccine providers being considered dependent on vaccine availability.

With two months until April, the shortages of Pfizer and lack of communication on when more vaccine shipments will be coming to Saskatchewan has the provincial government beginning to worry about the status of the vaccine rollout plan.

On Monday, February 1, Saskatchewan's Minister of Health Paul Merriman spoke in front of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the topic of Covid-19 vaccine supply shortages and Ottawa being more transparent with the situation.

"Simply put, we need more vaccines and we need more reliable information about when we're receiving those vaccines," Merriman said. "The flow of information is almost as important as the flow of vaccines. While our provincial vaccine administration plan continues to be very effective, we are now virtually at a standstill with no vaccines delivered to Saskatchewan in over a week, and limited quantities now expected in the next few weeks."

"Saskatchewan is a large province with many remote communities. So we need reliable information to plan appointments, transportation, refrigeration, and the deployment of our healthcare workers."

"If we don't get everything that we're promised right now, we will be in a challenging situation to get a second dose to the people that have their first dose in the timeframe that is recommended."



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USask researchers awarded funding to improve ag practices

BY ROB PAUL, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
Eighteen wide-ranging University of Saskatchewan (USask) crop research projects have been awarded a total of nearly \$5.8 million through Saskatchewan's Agriculture Development Fund (ADF), a program jointly supported by the federal and provincial governments and supplemented by industry partners.

Innovative research into disease resistant and nutritious crops, human health applications of cannabis, biodegradable plastics made of plants, and tracing the carbon footprint of an agricultural operation are among the USask projects supported by the program, which also attracted almost \$1.9 million in total industry funding for the teams.

"This major investment in USask research is indicative of the key role the university plays in growing Saskatchewan's capacity as a world leader in the agricultural sector," said USask Vice-President Research Karen Chad. "The adoption of new agricultural technologies and creation of competitive, value-added products has the potential for real-life benefits, including new jobs and increased economic prosperity for the province."

The ADF program is supported through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year \$388-million investment by the federal and provincial governments in strategic initiatives for the sector in Saskatchewan. A total of \$9.8 million was announced January 12 for 39 agricultural research projects in the province and across the country, of which more than half were awarded to USask.

Major USask projects awarded funding include:

- Strengthening pulse crops in the field and beyond: More than \$1.4 million has been awarded from the ADF program to USask researcher Kirstin Bett for two projects:
 1. Improving lentil quality and nutritional value by borrowing traits from wild lentils and developing new computerized imaging technology to target desirable seed characteristics. The results will lead to higher value lentils, and access to new, specialty markets for producers.
 2. Developing high-yielding, disease-tolerant dry bean varieties. The results will provide new, high-value pulse crop options that are well-suited to irrigation.
- Developing high-yielding chickpeas: Plant researcher Bunyamin Tar'an will use \$730,000 from ADF to develop high-yielding, large seed kabuli chickpea varieties suited to Western Canada. The results will lead to new chickpea varieties, benefiting Saskatchewan's producers and broader economy. Tar'an will also receive \$236,000 from ADF to study how using genetic diversity from wild



USask plant scientist Dr. Kristin Bett was awarded \$1.4 million in funding for two projects, one focused on improving lentil quality and the other developing bean varieties.

Debra Marshall Photography

chickpeas could help combat Ascochyta blight, a major disease threatening chickpea production across Western Canada.

- Breeding healthy peas for Western Canada: Tom Warkentin, Saskatchewan agriculture ministry's Strategic Research Program Chair in Pulse Crop Breeding and Genetics, was awarded the largest single-study award from ADF this year—more than \$981,000—to develop high-yielding, root-rot-resistant pea varieties. Root rot, a disease widespread across Western Canada caused by a combination of fungus and other pathogens, can destroy as much as 70 per cent of a farmer's crop during a wet year.

Other innovative crop-related projects with potential economic impact include:

- Finding plant-based climate-friendly alternatives to plastics (\$360,000): Plant scientist Martin Reaney's research aims to create carbon-neutral, biodegradable plastics from canola and pulse products to ease pressures on our oceans and landfills. Reaney is Saskatchewan agriculture ministry's

Strategic Research Program Chair in Lipid Quality and Utilization.

- Measuring the carbon footprint of crops (\$230,000): Plant scientist Kate Congreves' research team will establish Saskatchewan's first Greenhouse Gas Monitoring Station using micrometeorological techniques to measure greenhouse gases year-round and determine the net carbon footprint of a canola-cereal rotation. This type of field-scale data is needed to help the industry move forward in a carbon-based marketplace.
- Solidifying cannabis as a Saskatchewan product (\$188,000): Plant researcher Tim Sharbel will study the genetics of a cannabis seed material collection owned by Konetics, a company with ties to the Saskatchewan market. The goal is to strengthen the cannabis industry in the province through vigorous quality control of agronomic traits, in addition to connecting this material to the Cannabinoid Research Initiative of Saskatchewan for scientifically based studies on applications to human health.
- Heading off disease in wheat (\$410,000): In two projects, wheat breeder Curtis Pozniak will take aim at protecting wheat crops from fungal pathogens by identifying novel disease resistance in wheat strains from around the world, and by pinpointing the mechanisms used by Fusarium head blight—the most serious disease affecting wheat production in Canada—to overcome wheat's defences.
- Removing arsenic with agricultural waste (\$70,000): Engineering researcher Jafar Soltan is testing the use of low-value agriculture residue—such as straw and meal from canola, barley, wheat, and mustard—to transform it into high-value adsorbents that remove arsenic from mining wastewater. Soltan and his team of experts will engage in research using the Canadian Light Source synchrotron and a pilot project that simultaneously works in two vital economic sectors: mining and agriculture.

The 18 USask projects attracted a total of almost \$1.9 million from a wide range of organizations and agencies including Saskatchewan Pulse Growers (\$634,000), Western Grains Research Foundation (\$588,000), Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission (\$340,000), Saskatchewan Canola Development Commission (\$186,000), Alberta Wheat Commission (\$72,000), the Manitoba Crop Alliance (\$66,000), and the Saskatchewan Oat Development Commission (\$3,000).

Continued on page 25

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Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan invest \$9.8 million into crop research

BY ROB PAUL

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
Canada's Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Marie-Claude Bibeau and Saskatchewan's Premier Scott Moe have announced \$9.8 million in funding for 39 crop-related research projects through Saskatchewan's Agriculture Development Fund (ADF).

"Despite challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, Canada's crop sector has continued to work hard to ensure Canadians and families around the world have access to high-quality products," Bibeau said. "Investing in research helps producers grow the food the world needs in the most efficient and sustainable way possible. These applied research projects will help producers innovate and create growth."

"Saskatchewan's agriculture sector has incredible growth potential and this targeted investment will help our producers and agri-businesses innovate to continue to deliver what the world needs," Moe said. "This investment supports the bold goals in the Saskatchewan Growth Plan that will see our crop production increase to 45 million tonnes, agriculture exports increase to \$20 billion and value-added revenue increase to \$10 billion."

Support for ADF projects is awarded on a competitive basis to researchers looking to examine areas of importance to Saskatchewan producers.

Agriculture Development Fund Crops Project for 2021:

- 15 crop related projects with \$2,589,464 in total funding.
- 11 pulse projects with \$4,488,812 in total funding.
- Six cereal projects with \$1,357,903 in total funding.
- Three oilseed projects with \$864,674 in total funding.



\$9.8 million in funding has been announced for 39 crop related research projects through Saskatchewan's Agriculture Development Fund (ADF).

- Three alternative crop projects with \$404,490 in total funding.
- One forage project with \$94,996 in total funding.

The four projects that received the most funding were all from the University of Saskatchewan. Two of the projects are led by Dr. Kristin Bett and focus on enhancing the value of lentil variations for ecosystem survival (\$825,000) and dry bean breeding (\$609,552.80).

The USask project that received the most funding (\$981,150) focuses on pea breeding in Western Canada, it's led by Dr. Tom Warkentin. The fourth USask project is led by Dr. Bunyamin Tar'an and focuses on

breeding chickpea cultivars for Western Canada (\$730,317).

In addition to funding provided by the federal and provincial governments, the following industry partners have contributed a total of more than \$3.1 million in funding to these projects: Western Grains Research Foundation, Saskatchewan Alfalfa Seed Producers, Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission, Saskatchewan Canola Development Commission, Saskatchewan Oat Development Commission, Saskatchewan Pulse Growers,

Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission, Alberta Wheat Commission and Manitoba Crop Alliance.

"Sask Wheat has invested \$12.9 million of producer funding through the ADF process since 2015," Sask Wheat Chair Brett Halstead said. "The program provides opportunities for quality, innovative projects that will benefit Saskatchewan grain producers. The ADF funding process allows us to collaborate with other Prairie crop commissions, connect with researchers and fund projects that are developing crop varieties with greater yield potentials and resistance to common pests and environmental stressors. The benefits of farmer-funded research goes beyond farm gate, increasing market opportunities for Canadian crops and leading to a stronger agriculture sector and provincial economy."

The ADF is supported through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year, \$3 billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen the agriculture and agri-food sector. This includes \$2 billion in federal, provincial and territorial cost-shared strategic initiatives, and \$1 billion for federal activities and programs—there's a \$388 million investment in strategic initiatives for Saskatchewan agriculture.

The cost-shared programs are funded 60 per cent by the federal government and 40 per cent by the provincial and territorial governments and support region specific agriculture programs and services. While the federal government contributes to the funding for these cost-shared programs, the provincial/territorial ministry is responsible for reviewing and approving project applications received under their respective cost-shared programs.

Continued on page 26

FOR SALE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders for the property described below will be received by:
Meighen Haddad LLP • P.O. Box 397 • Melita, Manitoba • R0M 1L0
Attention: Karen Beauchamp

PROPERTY:

- NW ¼ 28-2-29 WPM exc mines and minerals
- NE ¼ 29-2-29 WPM exc mines and minerals
- Oil well site surface lease on NE ¼ 29-2-29 WPM to be assigned to successful Tenderor but no adjustment on previous payment received by Seller.
- Each quarter must receive separate Tenders.

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

1. Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on the above or any other particulars or representations made by or on behalf of the Seller.
2. Tenders must be received on or before 12:00 p.m. (noon) on March 5, 2021.
3. Each tender must be accompanied by a \$2,500.00 deposit cheque payable to Meighen Haddad LLP. Deposits accompanying unaccepted bids will be refunded.
4. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE

1. The bidder whose tender is accepted will be required to complete an agreement covering terms and conditions of sale.
2. The closing date of the sale shall be April 15, 2021 on which date the Vendors shall provide a registerable Transfer of title to the Purchaser and the Purchaser shall pay the balance of the accepted tender. If the balance of the accepted tender is not paid within the set time limit or acceptable arrangements for payment have not been made, the deposit paid may be forfeited as liquidated damages and not as a penalty.
3. Possession is not authorized until April 15, 2021 and acceptable arrangements for full payments are made following acceptance of tender.
4. All mines and minerals will be reserved from any Transfer.
5. Land is in the Torren's Title system.
6. Successful bidders will be responsible for real property taxes commencing January 1, 2021

For further information contact
Karen Beauchamp (204) 522-3225

MH Meighen Haddad LLP
LAW FIRM

21c

FOR SALE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders for the property described below will be received by:
Meighen Haddad LLP • P.O. Box 397 • Melita, Manitoba • R0M 1L0
Attention: Karen Beauchamp

PROPERTY:

- NW ¼ 28-2-27 WPM excepting road plans and mines and minerals
- SW ¼ 28-2-27 WPM excepting road plans and mines and minerals
- NW ¼ 34-3-27 WPM excepting road plans and mines and minerals
- SW ¼ 34-3-27 WPM excepting road plans and mines and minerals
- NW ¼ 3-4-27 WPM excepting road plans and mines and minerals
- SW ¼ 3-4-27 WPM excepting road plans and mines and minerals
- NE ¼ 3-4-27 WPM excepting road plans and mines and minerals
- SE ¼ 3-4-27 WPM excepting road plans and mines and minerals

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EACH SEPARATE TENDER MUST HAVE A DEPOSIT CHEQUE

There are no conservation agreements against the land.

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

1. Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on the above or any other particulars or representations made by or on behalf of the Seller.
2. Tenders must be received on or before 12:00 p.m. (noon) on March 10, 2021.
3. Each tender must be accompanied by a \$2,500.00 deposit cheque payable to Meighen Haddad LLP. Deposits accompanying unaccepted bids will be refunded.
4. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE

1. The bidder whose tender is accepted will be required to complete an agreement covering terms and conditions of sale.
2. The closing date of the sale shall be April 23, 2021 on which date the Vendors shall provide a registerable Transfer of title to the Purchaser and the Purchaser shall pay the balance of the accepted tender. If the balance of the accepted tender is not paid within the set time limit or acceptable arrangements for payment have not been made, the deposit paid may be forfeited as liquidated damages and not as a penalty.
3. Possession is not authorized until April 23, 2021 and acceptable arrangements for full payments are made following acceptance of tender.
4. All mines and minerals will be reserved from any Transfer.
5. Land is in the Torren's Title system.
6. Successful bidders will be responsible for real property taxes commencing January 1, 2021

For further information contact Georgina Fletcher (204) 522-0968
or Debra Prive (204) 485-2754.

MH Meighen Haddad LLP
LAW FIRM

21c

Life down on the farm

I don't understand how painlessly this could have happened but we have made it (nearly) through the entire first month of the year rather quickly or so it seems. How can that be? We are Covid-19-stressed, Covid-19-unable-to-gather and Covid-19-don't-go-anywhere, yet still, the days go by and those days become weeks and voila! Month end is on the horizon.

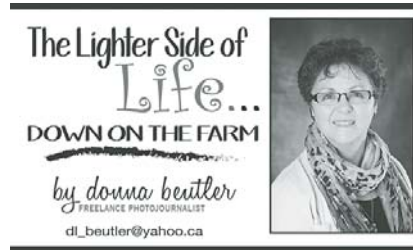
Don't get me wrong, I understand this isn't the case for everyone—it can be a real struggle in times like this to stay on the cheery side of life, especially at this time of year; I too miss family get-togethers around my dining room table just like everyone else; I too miss being able to plan a mini-vacay or a big one for that matter. There have, however, been some really good times with small groups of family at the tobogganing hill or at the fire pit at the creek or, like last week in Kipling, at the outdoor skating rink.

Such was the case the other day in fact, when I met my daughter there and sat around the fire with one of my granddaughters as her two cousins spent the afternoon skating and spinning on the ice. A warm fire, hot chocolate and snacks made for a most enjoyable afternoon even though I must admit I had a bit of trouble getting the fire going. As I lit yet another match, I was reminded of one of my playschool students many years ago who, at the age of three, responded to my question about what the first thing we would need to start a fire. Expecting to hear "wood" or "logs," I had to try very hard not to laugh when this wee little blonde-haired girl with the hugest smile immediately shouted out the answer: "gas." I can't say I wasn't wishing for some accelerate during my fire-starting struggle with the very damp, snow-covered logs.

After one entire roll of paper towel that I happened to find in the truck and after nearly every match in the book was used up, I still wasn't having much luck. My granddaughter (11) was sitting across from me, working on her 4-H speech in a coil notebook, so I asked if I could borrow the notebook, turned it toward the back and ripped the last three or four pages out of the book. The shocked look on her face said it all: I had just torn her 4-H speech out of the book.

"I am so sorry, I never even looked," I said, bumbling my way through my apology amid my impromptu tearing out of the pages. I have no idea, of course, how her speech reads now but I wouldn't be surprised if it starts out like this: "I was watching my cousins skate and was working on my 4-H speech one afternoon at the outdoor rink while my Auntie and my Grandma tried to get a fire started when all of the sudden, my Grandma tore my 4-H speech out of my notebook and threw it on the fire."

Eventually, with the fire going, and the marshmallows ready for roasting, my granddaughter, continuing to work on her speech, told us it was a bit of a bummer that she had had to sell her cow (former 4-H calf), Princess.



her niece. "Because she was open," was the response. "Open?" my daughter responded, "what do you mean open?"

At that point, this young 4-H'er and I absolutely lost it. How could I have raised my daughter on the farm only to hear such a question from her. To be fair, we were grain farmers and didn't get any cattle until after the kids were grown and gone from home. But still...

As the finer details of "openness," were explained to this mother of three, I couldn't help but think of how farm knowledge by osmosis just seems to occur naturally when you are a "cattle-farm kid."

Our chatter continued and I asked how egg-gathering was going out at the farm. The answer from my "farm" granddaughter went something like this: "I don't know how many we get every day," she said, "I don't go in there, not with Joe in there!" Ahhhh, Joe, the rooster, the husband of Zoe, the very reason I don't go in the chicken house. That rooster is crazy. I did, however, go into the chicken house with my camera the other day (as suggested by my husband who had been in there earlier). And there, sitting up in the rafters of the little chicken coop was an owl. I at first thought it was a plastic owl, placed up there by the twins for whatever reason. That was until it flew out through the door I was standing in. Whew! Nearly took me out but a quick move on my part meant only his wings brushed my shoulder. That was a close brush with feathers, let me tell you!

The month of January is not only a darker, drearier, colder (usually), windier month, it is also the month of trying to finish up year-end books, in my case for our farm and for my graphic arts design business. I should clarify. Technically January is the month. Sometimes it ends up being more March-ish.

This past year, between hip surgery recovery and Covid-19 and consequently its time-producing effect, I have proudly been able to say, every month, "My farm books are up to date!" And so, around the first of January, with

the Christmas tree already taken down and the decorations all neatly stored away, I continued working on the books, determined to surprise my accountant with a February 15 appointment as opposed to an April 15 one. He was going to be amazed!

It just so happened, however, that as I was making my December entries the power flickered for a nanosecond and I had to reboot my computer. My old, old computer that has one thing left on it—the old, used-since-forever accounting program on which my farm books have been stored forever. Not backed up, not that it mattered because did the power surge fry my computer? Nope, it is just fine! You should see my accounting program though. Beep, beep, beep, Quickbooks has encountered a fatal error. Fatal? Seriously I say to myself, fatal?

A call to my tech guy nets me: "No, Donna, I don't think the laying on of hands is going to restore your program to you." Okay, so that's not quite what he said, but you get my point. And he was right. No amount of rest seems to aid in the recovery of this program.

"You know," I said to my husband, "it's time for us to step into the next century and purchase an online subscription to do our farm books on. The monthly cost isn't exorbitant," I say as I cringe (not loving that everlasting monthly charge to my credit card). My old program probably cost me a hundred bucks total and has served me well for some 20 years.

Being that doing up the books and filing income tax isn't exactly optional, I hit the "purchase now" button, knowing I was going to hate setting up a new program. And I am. Not only that but I was really itching for a Pepsi, though I have pretty much renounced it totally for the past year. And every time I open that new QB program I want to reach for an ice-cold, sweet, caffeine-filled can. It's a good thing I draw the line at driving two blocks to the store to get one.

This Covid-19 lockdown business has caused us to be creative, not in a how-can-I-get-away-with-something manner, but in how can we connect in outdoor ways with a couple of others, at a distance, around a fire. It's not ideal but it is what it is and though I hate everything about it, I am willing also to do my part to the best of my ability to help keep my family and my community safe.

As the calves are now coming, though not in great numbers since the herd has been downsized, I am eternally grateful that I am not living in a high-rise apartment in some big city because it's pretty sweet for me to be able to hop in my half-ton and head out to the farm or the tobogganing hill or the creek and enjoy watching the newborn calves or the kids on the hill or whatever the day may bring. Here's hoping y'all are making the best of this challenging time in our lives. Until next time, keep doing what you do best and enjoying every blessing that comes your way!

FOR LEASE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders to lease the property situate in the R.M. OF PIPESTONE and described below will be received by:

Meighen Haddad LLP • 110 11th Street • Brandon, MB • R7A 4J4
Attention: Warren G. Barber, Q.C.

LAND TOTAL ACRES

as shown on Municipal Assessment:

Parcel 1: SE ¼ 36-8-26 WPM	160.00
Parcel 2: E ¼ 26-8-26 WPM	307.42
Parcel 3: SW ¼ 26-8-26 WPM	160.00
Parcel 4: SE ¼ 27-8-26 WPM	160.00
Parcel 5: E ¼ 22-8-26 WPM	239.76

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

- Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on the above or any other particulars or representations made by or on behalf of the Sellers.
- Tenders must be received on or before 2:00 p.m. on Monday, March 1, 2021.
- Tenders may be submitted to lease one or more parcels.
- The party whose tender is accepted will be required to enter into a written Lease Agreement to be prepared by the solicitors for Graycan Inc., a copy of which is available by contacting Warren G. Barber, Q.C. at wbarber@mhlaw.ca. Interested parties are encouraged to obtain a copy of the Lease prior to submitting a tender.
- Entry onto the land will not be authorized until the Lease Agreement is executed.
- Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

For further information or an appointment to view, contact:
Giovanni Colangelo at (204) 851-2101.

MH Meighen Haddad LLP
LAW FIRM

12c

FOR SALE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders for the property situate in the R.M. OF PIPESTONE and described below will be received by:

Meighen Haddad LLP • 110 11th Street • Brandon, MB • R7A 4J4
Attention: Warren G. Barber, Q.C.

PROPERTY:

E ¼ 32-8-26 WPM

This property is immediately adjacent to Hwy #83 and comprises 315.75 acres based on Municipal Assessment records.

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

- Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on the above or any other particulars or representations made by or on behalf of the Sellers.
- Tenders must be received on or before 2:00 p.m. on Monday, March 1, 2021.
- Each tender must be accompanied by a \$5,000.00 deposit cheque payable to Meighen, Haddad LLP. Deposits accompanying unacceptable bids will be refunded.
- Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE

- The bidder whose tender is accepted will be required to complete an agreement covering terms and conditions of sale.
- In addition to the deposit, the balance of the accepted tender must be paid on March 15, 2021 (the closing date) or evidence provided that the purchase funds will be available under conditions acceptable to the Seller. If the balance of the accepted tender is not paid within the set time limit the deposit paid may be forfeited as liquidated damages and not as a penalty.
- Possession is not authorized until acceptable arrangements for full payment are made following acceptance of tender.
- All mines and minerals will be reserved from any transfer.
- Successful bidders will be responsible for real property taxes commencing January 1st, 2021.

For further information or an appointment to view,
contact: Giovanni Colangelo at (204) 851-2101.

MH Meighen Haddad LLP
LAW FIRM

12c

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Ag researchers awarded funding

Continued from page 22

Crop research to increase efficiency

Two of USask researcher Dr. Kristin Bett's projects received over \$1.4 million in funding through Saskatchewan's Agriculture Development Fund (ADF) with both focused on examining crops and learning more about their traits to develop differing varieties.

"The big one is called EVOLVES (Value of Lentil Variation for Ecosystem Survival), it's a lentil Genome Canada grant that we received just over a year ago and this is the provincial contribution to that larger \$7.5 million project that we're running. It's a follow-up to a previous Genome Canada project we had that ADF also co-funded, and so the new one has got a genomic component, but what's more interesting to the general public is that the genomic part of it all has to do with quality traits.

"The idea being that we need to stay ahead—there's a whole issue in Kazakhstan where they're basically pilfering our genetics and then selling to our customers at a lower price because they're closer."

"To get away from that, the idea of being in a position to stay ahead of them with quality genetics, but also start to look more at instead of bulk shipping focusing more on value added aspects. Can we develop the genetic know-how to very quickly and nimbly put together packages of genes in a variety that would give you the right size, shape, colour, B vitamin profile, protein content—there's a whole range of different traits that we're interested in look at the underlying genetics for."

With the project studying lentils, Bett says they want to get a better understanding of the crop's makeup so they're able to know earlier how it will develop and what type of quality it will be, therefore making the process more efficient.

"The overall goal is to look at phenotyping and genotyping," she said. Phenotyping is looking at different characteristics of a diverse set of lines. So we're looking at that, but we also have the underlying genotypic information.

"We're sequencing genomes so that we

know all the genes that are in these and the idea is that we hope to take the phenotype and using fancy math you can put the two together and try to identify the region of the genome that contain genes that are controlling those traits. For instance, in lentils you can have yellow or red on the inside and that's a single gene—we've known that forever—but can we figure out what is that controls that genetically?

"It's not super critical, but what it will do is then allow us to figure out how to get redder lentils because the pasta industry wants them to be super dark red, they don't want the yellow/orange, they only want red. So can we figure out how to get really red lentils?"

"Plant breeding is a long process, but if we can shorten the time frame to developing varieties that have the traits that the buyers are interested in—one way would be using molecular markers and the actual genotype rather just what it looks like to be a little bit quicker.

"We can screen material early on and get rid of the stuff that will be garbage. Basically our whole game is to throw away the bad stuff—the sooner you can throw away the bad stuff, the better because you're not wasting any other resources on it and then you can focus your efforts on the ones that are good and then maybe you can segregate for other traits you don't know about and then you can pick from amongst those. Efficiency is the whole goal—we want to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the breeding program."

The government funding was vital to moving the lentil project forward and Bett couldn't be happier.

"If we hadn't gotten this then not only would we have been out that amount of money, but we'd actually be out twice as much because with Genome Canada you have to find 50 per cent of the funding," she said. "We would have been out basically \$1.6 million, not just the \$800,000 for this project. So it's a big deal, you don't know how much dancing went on the day we found out about it!"

With the bean project funding, Betts is hoping through research they'll be able to breed crop varieties that are higher quality

and without the funding the project never would have gone forward.

"Our other project has to do with breeding," she said. "We actually had three of them come to our department—bean breeding, pea breeding, and chickpea breeding. We used to be funded up front by Sask Pulse Growers and in exchange they would get royalty-free varieties and there's biological reason as to why it was set up that way 20-plus years ago. But that model isn't as effective nowadays and there's more encouragement to have other players involved so we're switching to a model where the va-

rieties will be royalty bearing possibly, depending on who's partnering with us in the future.

"What we need is transition funding in order to get onto a new model and I think in all cases 75 per cent is ADF funding and the rest of the 25 per cent in my case is coming from Sask Pulse Growers. I would have had to shut the breeding program down without the funding. We don't have incoming funds at the moment because everything was royalty-free before—we do get some from international sales, but not enough to run the program so it was important to get this."

FOR SALE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders to purchase the property in the Municipalities of BRENDA-WASKADA and GRASSLAND and described below will be received by: Meighen Haddad LLP • P.O. Box 485 • Deloraine, MB • ROM 0M0 Attention: Warren G. Barber, Q.C.

Municipality of Brenda-Waskada

PARCEL ONE: SW ¼ 16-2-24 WPM 160.00 acres	PARCEL SIX: NE ¼ 4-2-25 WPM 157.23 acres 7 well sites
PARCEL TWO: NW ¼ 3-2-25 WPM 157.28 acres 6 well sites	PARCEL SEVEN: SE ¼ 9-2-25 WPM 156.66 acres 5 well sites
PARCEL THREE: SE ¼ 4-2-25 WPM 154.09 acres 5 well sites	PARCEL EIGHT: SW ¼ 9-2-25 WPM 156.83 acres 10 well sites
PARCEL FOUR: SW ¼ 4-2-25 WPM 140.41 acres 6 well sites	PARCEL NINE: NE ¼ 9-2-25 WPM 160.00 acres 6 well sites
PARCEL FIVE: NW ¼ 4-2-25 WPM 157.35 acres 9 well sites	

Municipality of Grassland

PARCEL ONE: NW ¼ 9-6-23 WPM This parcel includes: • 159.08 acres • 4 x 42,000 bu flat bottom bins • 2 x 25,000 bu hopper bottom bins • 4 x 6,500 bu hopper bottom bins ABOVE BINS ALL WITH AERATION • 1 x 6,500 bu flat bottom bin • 1 x 5,000 bu flat bottom bin • 1 x 4,350 bu flat bottom bin • 54' x 200' shop with heated cement floor, new lighting system (installed May/20), three phase 600 volt power, municipal water, natural gas service to the yard site	PARCEL TWO: NE ¼ 9-6-23 WPM 143.21 acres
	PARCEL THREE: SW ¼ 9-6-23 WPM 160.00 acres
	PARCEL FOUR: SE ¼ 9-6-23 WPM 156.93 acres
	PARCEL FIVE: SW ¼ 20-5-23 WPM 157.70 acres
	PARCEL SIX: NW ¼ 20-5-23 WPM 160.00 acres
	PARCEL SEVEN: NW ¼ 30-5-23 WPM 158.17 acres
	PARCEL EIGHT: SW ¼ 30-5-23 WPM 158.51 acres

CONDITIONS OF TENDER

- Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on any representations made by or on behalf of the Seller.
- Tenders must be received on or before noon on February 16, 2021.
- Each tender must be accompanied by a \$5,000.00 deposit cheque payable to Meighen Haddad LLP. Deposits accompanying unacceptable bids will be refunded.
- Tenders may be submitted on one or more parcels.
- Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.
- Acres shown are taken from the most recent Provincial Tax Assessment records and are believed but not guaranteed to be accurate.
- Properties in the Municipality of Brenda-Waskada will be sold subject to all existing encumbrances registered with respect to surface leases, easements and rights-of-way relating to oil production and transportation.
- All properties will be sold subject to existing caveats and instruments protecting easements or rights of way for public utilities or services.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE

- The bidder whose tender is accepted will be required to complete an agreement covering terms and conditions of sale.
- In addition to the deposit, the balance of the accepted tender must be paid within 30 days of notification of acceptance of tender (the closing date) or evidence provided that the purchaser funds will be available under conditions acceptable to the Seller. If the balance of the accepted tender is not paid within the set time limit the deposit paid may be forfeited as liquidated damages and not as a penalty.
- Possession is not authorized until acceptable arrangements for full payment are made following acceptance of tender.
- All mines and minerals will be reserved from any transfer.
- Successful bidders will be responsible for real property taxes commencing January 1st, 2021.

For further information, particulars of Surface Lease revenues, or an appointment to view, contact: Murray Temple at (204) 522.6597.

FOR SALE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders for the property described below will be received by:

Meighen Haddad LLP • P.O. Box 397 • Melita Manitoba • ROM 1L0 Attention: Karen Beauchamp

PROPERTY:

NE ¼ 6-3-25 WPM exc all mines and minerals
SE ¼ 7-3-25 WPM exc all mines and minerals
The two quarter sections are sold together as one package.

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

- Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on the above or any other particulars or representations made by or on behalf of the Seller.
- Tenders must be received on or before 5:00 p.m. on February 22, 2021.
- Each tender must be accompanied by a \$5,000.00 deposit cheque payable to Meighen Haddad LLP. Deposits accompanying unaccepted bids will be refunded.
- Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE

- The bidder whose tender is accepted will be required to complete an agreement covering terms and conditions of sale.
- The closing date of the sale shall be April 1, 2021 on which date the Vendors shall provide a registerable Transfer of title to the Purchaser and the Purchaser shall pay the balance of the accepted tender. If the balance of the accepted tender is not paid within the set time limit or acceptable arrangements for payment have not been made, the deposit paid may be forfeited as liquidated damages and not as a penalty.
- Possession is not authorized until April 1, 2021 and acceptable arrangements for full payments are made following acceptance of tender.
- All mines and minerals will be reserved from any Transfer.
- Land is in the Torren's Title system.
- Successful bidders will be responsible for real property taxes commencing January 1, 2021

For further information contact Henry Dickinson (204) 522-2408



Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan invest \$9.8 million into crop research

Continued from page 23

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership will focus on three key areas:

- Growing trade and expanding markets (\$297 million)- Providing core industry services, such as timely market information and sector expertise to help improve the sector's competitiveness, growth and adaptability. Advancing and defending international trade interests, as well as improving market development and market access activities to address emerging needs of the sector, and of small and medium enterprises (SME). This will help expand markets and trading opportunities for the sector.

- Innovative and sustainable growth of the sector (\$690 million)- Enhancing the competitiveness of the sector through research, science and innovation, and adoption of innovative products and practices, with an emphasis on the environment and clean growth. The Government will help support the resiliency and sustainability of the sector, helping farmers adapt to climate change, conserve water and soil resources, and grow their businesses sustainably to meet increasing global food demand.

- Supporting diversity and a dynamic, evolving sector (\$166.5 million)- Strengthening the sector by better reflecting the diversity of Canadian communities, enhancing collaboration across different jurisdictions through a new Regional Collaborative Partnerships Program, securing and supporting public trust in the sector, and improving client services.

The three key areas include \$686.5 million over five years in federal programs and \$467 million of federally funded activities that benefit producers and processors and address priorities identified by the agricultural sector during consultations in the development of the plan.

The process of awarding funding from the ADF is through an application process with the Ministry of Agriculture and from there they decide what best fits the parameters of what they want to see in crop research.

"The Agriculture Development Fund awards funding on a competitive basis," said a spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture. "We review applications and select projects most relevant to Saskatchewan agriculture to help producers remain competitive. Through the Agriculture Development Fund, crop producers benefit from new knowledge and discoveries into disease resistance, herbicide resistance, increased yields, new varieties, improvements in value-added processing and much more.

Varying conditions across the province according to initial runoff report

The Water Security Agency (WSA) has released the preliminary spring runoff outlook for 2021, showing most of southern Saskatchewan with below to well below normal snowmelt runoff potential and the northern areas looking at normal to above normal potential.

Much of the southern areas of Saskatchewan experienced very dry conditions through the summer and into fall last year. The snowpack is generally below to near normal to date. An area covering Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Melfort and dipping as far south as Maple Creek and Val Marie is projected to have a below normal runoff, while an area covering Moose Jaw, Regina, Weyburn and Estevan is looking at a well below normal runoff.

The far north, encompassing the areas of Uranium City, Stony Rapids and Cluff Lake, saw extreme wet conditions carrying through the fall. This area also ex-

perienced historically high lake and river levels through summer 2020. There are indications that the snowpack is near normal, though data is limited. An above normal runoff is forecast.

Areas of central and northern Saskatchewan including Kindersley, Lloydminster, Meadow Lake and Nipawin are currently expected to experience a near normal runoff. While fall conditions were near to slightly drier than normal, a near to above normal winter snowfall season to date, including a heavy snowfall in early November, have been compensating factors. The far southwest corner of the province, from Cypress Hills to the US border, is also expected to experience a near normal runoff.

The spring runoff outlook could change as there is potentially another 8-10 weeks of winter remaining. The first spring runoff forecast will be issued early in March.

This year's projects will expand the growth potential of the industry by exploring topics such as value-added processing, variety improvement, improved crop yields and reducing production risks.

"We have a set research budget each year, and take into consideration research commitments from previous years as well as the budget available for new work to benefit the sector," they said.

"All submitted research applications are reviewed by members of the Agriculture Development Fund Advisory Committee, which makes a recommendation to the Minister. The committee is made up of producers and leaders in the agriculture industry.

We select research projects that align with the ministry's strategic goals to increase production, farm cash receipts, value-added production and agricultural exports. We also consider industry needs and which projects will have the greatest impact for producers. Co-funding from industry partners illustrates the extent to which the ministry collaborates with industry to provide funding for projects of strategic importance."

Projects funded by the ADF are focussed on all aspects of crop research with an emphasis on improving the efficiency and quality of products produced in Saskatchewan.

"The funding we provide for research addresses short, medium and long-term needs of the agriculture industry," they said. "We're focused on projects that explore new ideas and will have the biggest impact on the industry. For example, a project at the University of Saskatchewan will gather soil fertility data from cropping lands using near-infrared mapping technologies already available, with the goal of predicting crop yields. Another example is a project that explores how to enhance the value of lentil variations for ecosystem survival. This work aims to improve visual, nutritional and processing qualities of lentils using the latest genomics and molecular resources which will lead Canada to capture emerging market opportunities."

The Government of Saskatchewan has invested millions of dollars into different areas of crop research to help the province continue to be a leader in the Ag industry.

"Research and innovation are priorities for the Saskatchewan govern-

ment," they said. "The ministry has a research budget of \$32.9 million in 2020-21, a \$1 million increase from 2019-20, to support development in these areas.

"It is invested according to the ministry's research priorities which include support for: research and development institutions, research scientists, research and development projects, and commercialization and technology transfer.

"Investments in research help make Saskatchewan producers more profitable and more productive while increasing the competitiveness of our industry," they said. "Ultimately, research will help our producers meet the Saskatchewan Growth Plan objectives of increasing crop production to 45 million tonnes, increasing agriculture exports to \$20 billion and increasing value-added revenue to \$10 billion."



Heartland Livestock Services

Box 340 • Virden, Manitoba • Tel: 204-748-2809
Fax: 204-748-3478 • E-mail: hls.virden@hls.ca

SPRING 2021 SALE SCHEDULE

- FEBRUARY 2021 -

15	CLOSED	Louis Riel Day	
17	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale	9 a.m.
19	Friday	Bred Cow Sale	11:30 a.m.
22	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
24	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.

- MARCH 2021 -

1	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
3	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
4	Thursday	Sheep/Goat Sale	Noon
8	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
9	Tuesday	Bonchuk Simmental Bull Sale	
10	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale	9 a.m.
12	Friday	Bred Cow Sale	11:30 a.m.
15	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
17	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
22	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
24	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale	9 a.m.
29	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
31	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.

Monday Butcher Sales

Delivery accepted 12 noon until 8 p.m. Sunday.

Presort Sales

Please consign your calves ahead of time.
Delivery accepted until 5 p.m. the day before the sale

Bred Cow Sales

Please consign your cows ahead of time.
Delivery accepted until 2 p.m. the day before the sale.

Regular Cow Sales

Delivery accepted Tuesday 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Sunday delivery between noon and 8 p.m. for Monday Butcher Sales.
Sale dates and times are subject to change.

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For any marketing information or questions regarding our feeder finance program or online auction contact:

Robin Hill, Manager	204-851-5465
Ken Day	204-748-7713
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Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba



The Canadian Cowboys Association is prepping and planning as if there will be rodeos in the spring and summer of 2021, even if they're scaled back.

Rodeo organizers remain hopeful as they plan for spring and summer events across Canada

BY ROB PAUL
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Most years across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia, the spring and summer are filled with rodeo events over the weekend. In 2020, rodeos all across Canada were cancelled due to Covid-19.

For the first time in over 100 years, the Calgary Stampede was cancelled as a result of the pandemic, but for the time being it's set to take place in 2021. Along with the Stampede, other rodeos could be back this year too.

The Canadian Cowboys Association is Canada's largest semi-pro and pro rodeo association and has been around since 1963, promoting rodeos—it consists of 900 members. It sanctions events across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia—including seven major events and five optional, novice, and junior events per year—and draws over 850,000 spectators from the Western U.S., Mexico, Aus-

tralia, New Zealand, and all over Canada.

In 2020, it had to cancel its entire slate of events—the Canadian Cowboys Association sanctions over 50 rodeo events in prairie communities. Every fall it hosts its Championship Finals in Swift Current and has thousands of spectators.

The unknowns around what comes next with the pandemic and provincial guidelines will mean nothing is set in stone, but the Canadian Cowboys Association is preparing as if there will be a season and remains hopeful events can run, even if they're at a lesser extent.

"We're being hopeful that rodeos will happen this year and what we're looking at is if rodeos will be able to run as outdoor events with spectators," said Lenora Bells of the Canadian Cowboys Association. "With the rodeos that are indoors, we're looking at the possibility of switching them to outdoors so that they can have spectators."

"This is all of course only if the Covid-19 guidelines will allow us to hold these outdoors. We're being cautiously optimistic. We've been in touch with our rodeo communities—we have about 50 of them—and we've been communicating with the committees that are in charge of the rodeo events."

"About half of them have gotten back to us that they plan to go ahead with an outdoor venue as long as they can have at least 100 spectators and they're hoping that the government and the health authority

will look into increasing that. We're just hoping that there will be more flexibility for the outdoor events."

"Right now the decision for the seven months is coming from the health authority hopefully before the end of February and we'll go from there. I know that the communities, and even us as an association, are looking at our partnerships and sponsorships in anticipation of rodeos going ahead and we're also planning to go ahead with the finals in October in Swift Current."

The importance of rodeo

events across communities in the prairies cannot be underestimated, they help the local economy by driving more business into town.

Bells says they're working to ensure all communities are able to host some sort of event as long as the guidelines allow and they're ready to adjust venues and shift dates if need be.

"Our board has met a couple times already over this and we just continue to plan for having rodeos," she said.

"It would be great to

have all of them happen. We have two that happen in April that are indoors and they're looking at just rescheduling to a different date later in the summer.



"So there might be some rescheduling happening too so the communities can have rodeos and some kind of festival to gather the community together. They're definitely big for these communities—our subcontractors, our judges, our pickup men, our secretaries, everybody is just chomping at the bit to get out there."



Continued on Page 30

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Chamber CEO weighs in on small business support in Saskatchewan

BY SPENCER KEMP
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Government of Saskatchewan has expanded its small business support programs across the province to give businesses additional time to apply and access the funding that has been made available. These different programs are each intended to help a different aspect of small businesses that have been hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce CEO Scott McLellan explained that these programs provide a great opportunity for businesses to recuperate some of their lost funds due to COVID-19.

He explained that the program can supply businesses with up to \$5,000 to help make up for lost funds.

"I think they're very important. While it impacts some businesses differently, the grants dollars are real money. \$5,000 is a big number and for many companies it's the difference between them being able to payroll and pay their bills this month as opposed to last month," McLellan said.

Despite these programs being made available to businesses across Saskatchewan, McLellan noted that many businesses have not taken the opportunity to apply for funding.

The programs can all be applied for online and help assist small businesses with lost funds and proper training on both a provincial and federal scale.

"Each of the Federal and Provincial programs have different uptake levels but we're doing everything we can in the Chamber network to promote the program opportunities that are out there. We're strongly encouraging every single business, even if they think they're doing okay right now, this is still a very volatile market. If you're eligible we encourage you to get the money and take full advantage."

Three programs that have been available by the Government of Saskatchewan have had their application deadlines pushed back to help give additional time for businesses to apply.

"The bottom line is that it's still out there for those who still need it. It's great news," McLellan explained. "For those that have been able to take advantage of the government funding, it means that there's a bit of pressure they can relax from."

One program that McLellan pointed out was the Re-Open Saskatchewan Training Subsidy (RSTS) that helped cover costs of training staff for new business activities such as curbside pick-up, delivery, and most importantly online retailing.

McLellan says that the adaptation to online retailing is incredibly important as many people are now doing their shopping online from their computer or phones. This change means that businesses need to adapt to continue to thrive.

"We're absolutely promoting the move to digital because if businesses don't, they're really going to be challenged in the future."

The RSTS program helps to cover the costs of training, which does include training in how to create and operate an online website for their business. Since the fund-

ing covers this, McLellan strongly encourages small businesses to seek training and begin creating a website to be accessed by customers.

"It doesn't mean you need to have an Amazon-like website right away, but it does mean you have got to promote, you have to have a presence. When somebody goes onto their phone or their laptop, you have to be easy to find and your product better be easy to connect with, otherwise they will go to Amazon because it's easier."

McLellan encourages business owners to seek out web developers near them and take courses to learn how to set up and operate their sites.

"Whether you're a Bobcat guy or a retail store, you've got to be able to tell the world here I am."

The RSTS program reimburses employers 100 per cent of the employee training costs up to a maximum of \$10,000, which can include courses on operating an online store.

With the various support programs at both the federal and provincial levels, McLellan says that all businesses should take the time to apply, even if they are unsure if they're eligible for them.

"Too many businesses are literally just looking at their feet in front of them going one foot in front of the other," McLellan said. "This gives them a bit of latitude to say 'I can put this extra money away now and I can look up and start planning a little'."

Even if businesses are busy, McLellan suggests having someone look into the programs and application process.

"I know many businesses are so busy working the front counter that it's hard to get the time to look at these programs, but find the person in accounting, your accountants, or someone in the store who can look at it," McLellan concluded. "If we don't do it, the government will simply roll it back."

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Moosomin-area farmer moves to corn grazing

BY ROB PAUL
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Moosomin area cattle farmer Trevor Green has taken an unorthodox approach to raising his cattle. Rather than rely on the usual feed like hay or silage he's been corn grazing with his cattle.

"We basically got into corn grazing to eliminate using machinery and fuel every day," said Green. "Machinery and fuel are two of the biggest expenses on a cattle farm and cattle have got feet and teeth and they can go find their own feed."

"With corn grazing, you basically sow it in the spring and then it grows all year long and once it dries down you turn the cattle to it—we're grazing about 78 cattle in there and they're getting about 0.6 of an acre for about a three or four day stretch."

"On the fourth day we feed them a little bit of hay, they have hay in the morning and that afternoon I let them into the new paddock again."

"It cuts down on having to start a tractor every day and using fuel, the cattle are in great shape and it takes a little bit more mineral and stuff—we use a good mineral program through Moosomin. There's no cleaning cost, the cattle are pooping and peeing out in the field that I need the nutrients in to grow corn for next year again. The cattle go to the feed instead of us going to bring the feed to the cattle all of the time."

Three major factors that have led Green towards corn grazing are its efficiency, the amount it saves on costs, and that less land is needed to raise more cattle on corn. It was a transition he'd looked into before moving forward with it, but he's happy he did.



Moosomin area farmer Trevor Green has been corn grazing his cattle this winter as an alternative option that helps save money on fuel.

"It gives the ability to grow a lot of tonnes on a small amount of acres," he said. "As land gets more and more expensive, we have to look at whether we should buy more land or utilize what we have better by growing

more tonnes by acre. It's a 12-acre field and we're feeding 78 cows for roughly 100 days and if I was growing hay on that then I might have 30 days worth of feed on that 12 acres."

One thing that has really stood

out to Green with corn grazing is the drastic difference in fuel use. With corn grazing, tractor use is far less frequent and he's using hundreds of litres less of diesel fuel than average this winter.

"Some guys use straw, some

use silage, or hay bales," he said. "Unless you're baling grazing—which we're probably going to start doing here in a week—you're starting a tractor every day and taking that feed out to the cows. If you're feeding silage, you're generally starting two tractors—you've got a mixer wagon and a loader tractor—and it's a lot of fuel."

"So far this winter I've used about roughly 60 litres of diesel fuel, guy could be upwards of 300 or 400 litres on 78 to 100 cows. With that tractor running every day feeding bales and then you've got cleaning costs come spring and summer, it adds up."

After looking into corn grazing for some time, Green decided it was something he would like to try out. An unintended positive impact to come out of moving to corn grazing was easily being able to involve his family in helping out when he needs a hand.

"I took a little bit of it when I went to college, the Western Beef Development Centre is a huge resource for trying different stuff," he said. "They've been doing it up there and a couple years ago we thought we should just try it and see it how it works. It's nice because if I'm not available or I'm helping a neighbour or something, my wife Cindy can come home from work and her and the kids with the quad can go move the fence. Some people can be intimidated by a tractor and she can fire up the quad and grab the kids and they can go help. They can move the fence in like 20 minutes and the cattle are good for another three days. It's good for the whole family, the kids get to be involved!"

Continued on page 32

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Rodeo organizers remain hopeful as they plan for spring and summer events across Canada

Continued from Page 27

Bells thinks it's important for the Canadian Cowboys Association to try and do something this year if they're able to because even if it's a smaller rodeo, it's better than nothing and people haven't been able to look forward to local events in a long time. She says some communities have even begun prepping for their yearly rodeo as they remain hopeful the spring and summer will bring a safer atmosphere.

"Some of the communities are already selling, not tickets to the rodeo, but they're having fundraisers," she said. "Some of the communities are doing that where you can buy a raffle ticket and win something. I know some communities are starting to do that. We're keeping in touch with the communities and we have social media to keep up with."

"We encourage all our communities and members to follow our social media—we have over 600 cow-



girl and cowboy members, subcontractors, etc.—and this can keep everybody up to date. So we encourage everybody to keep an eye on that and continue to be optimistic that even if it's at a smaller scale, we can still plan on something happening. Everybody is ready to get together, but in a safe way so that's what we're figuring out."

It's not an easy task for the Canadian Cowboys Association to plan rodeos and guide communities in four different provinces through this because of the unknowns ahead. There's a few months until the season begins, but there's no way of knowing what trav-

el restrictions and numbers for gatherings will look like for each province.

Still, Bells doesn't think it would do any good to wait around to hear what they might be able to do in the coming months, they'd rather plan and ensure if they can do something then they will. She says for those in the rodeo community, communication is key as they move forward and encourages people to stay posted for updates through their social media channels.

"What we're doing is planning like we're having a season so the planning process is happening," she said.

"For the dates of the rodeos, we'll be going from last season's dates—which now would be the 2019 dates—we'll be posting those again on our website so people can see where the rodeos might be happening. If people want to look at that previous schedule, they can judge where and when rodeos might be happening."

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COVID-19 and its impact on producers

BY SPENCER KEMP
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Producers in Saskatchewan have felt the impact of COVID-19 daily in their workplace, with reduced capacity at processing plants and the constantly shifting health orders that sometimes limit producer's ability to work.

President of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS), Todd Lewis, explained the biggest concern was during the start of COVID-19 when the first cases were reported in Saskatchewan.

"It's been a real mixed bag," Lewis explained. "When it started, there was lots of concern, of course, even when it came to getting parts from the dealership and whatnot."

While some producers felt the blow of reduced capacity in processing plants, grain producers found a silver lining in the pandemic.

"Some positive parts for the grain industry was train transportation. There was extra capacity because other commodities were not being shipped," Lewis explained. "We really have had that record shipping and record service from the rail companies over the past year."

Due to the lack of product needing to be shipped from other operations, agriculture producers were able to ship more product faster to meet the higher demand that has been felt across Canada over the past year.

Agricultural producers are feeling the impacts of empty containers, however. While they have not seen as many layoffs due to capacity changes, they have noted an alarming amount of empty containers.

"I think another thing

we're seeing now more and more is probably transportation issues with containers," Lewis said. "There's a real shortage of containers in North America right now."

While it's not a cause of panic for Lewis, he says it is something they need to keep their eye on.

But on the other hand, livestock producers have certainly felt the impacts of constantly evolving public health order as processing plants have had to reduce capacity and even shut down.

Due to the constantly changing public health orders that are in effect, some plants have had to close while others are only permitted to operate at a limited capacity.

"Certainly there were issues with plant closures, the processing plants in Alberta closed and that affected the prices producers were getting. There's been volatility in the livestock market, in pork, and in beef. I think those producers have been affected the most negatively as well."

While the public health measures that have been put in effect are commended by Lewis, he expressed some concern over their impact on producers.

"I think the protocols they put in place were effective, but in the pork industry there were closures in Brandon," Lewis explained. "It's an ongoing issue and hopefully we're not going to see full closures or whatever, but it does hurt the capacity at certain times."

Lewis added that the ongoing pandemic is something that producers need to adapt to, and even though there have been advancements with the various COVID-19 vaccines, they still need to do what they can to stay safe.

"It's something that's not

going to go away until we get the vaccinations and everybody is covered off and we can wait and see if we have any more closures."

Rural internet was another topic that caught Lewis' attention. With many people working from home, Lewis notes the poor connectivity in rural areas. He explained that it is something that has always been known but has since only been amplified due to more people working from home.

"It really shows the issues around rural internet activity. Kids are trying to learn from home and there are university students who would rather take online courses, some of them haven't been able to stay at home and have to move to larger centers to have good internet just to take their courses," Lewis explained. "We knew the service was poor in much of rural Saskatchewan and it's really been proven with some of the issues we've seen here with rural connectivity."

Lewis adds that there have been efforts made to help remedy the poor connection in rural internet, and now with the pandemic having many working from home or schooling from home, additional

efforts are needing to be made

Isolation has also been an ongoing issue in agriculture as well. It is something that has only since been amplified due to the ongoing pandemic.

Producers have been hit hard by isolation, being unable to even visit their neighbor due to COVID-19 concerns has begun to take its toll on many in the in-

dustry.

"Agriculture has always been an industry where isolation has always been an issue. It is an issue without question, and it's been a long winter for many parents who have had their kids at home."

Lewis also said that with many rinks closed to the public and producers being unable to attend conventions and fairs, it has been

a rough winter all across the board. The inability to take part in these events has taken a toll on many in the province. He says that producers who are feeling the toll of the winter and pandemic should seek the appropriate help.

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Trevor Green has found on top of the costs he saves on fuel by corn grazing his cattle, he's been able to get his family more involved on the farm with helping him out when he needs it.

Moosomin-area farmer moves to corn grazing

Continued from page 29

"My son is six years old and he can go help move the fence, well what can you do if you're choring with the tractor? He can ride in the cab and do nothing. So it kind of gets the whole family involved and I like it that way, getting everybody to contribute a bit. Even in the deep snow, the leaves and the cobs are so high on the corn—there's places out there right now where the snow is over two feet and the cows can just plow right through it and go find the cobs and the leaves. It doesn't seem to bother them and it's cattle's natural instinct to go out and graze. If they can graze on the corn—I'm a Union Forage rep now so we're going to put some swath grazing in—then next year our idea is we can graze the cattle for 10 or 11 months of the year and there will only be a month where we actually take bail to them."

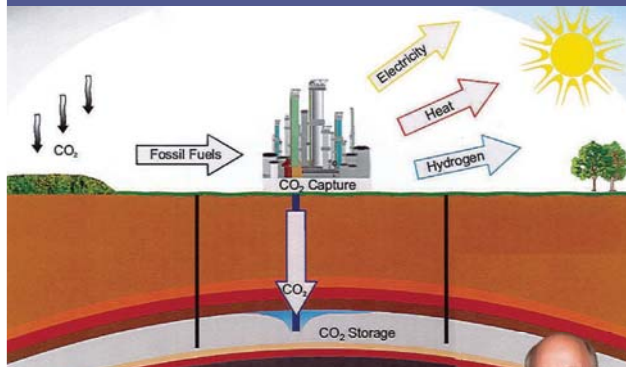
Green plans on corn grazing again next year too while exploring swath grazing which will help extend the grazing period and continue to reduce the cost and time for harvesting forage and cut down



on machinery use for handling feed and manure.

"The swath grazing will have a bunch of different varieties in it (Goliath forage rape, Hunter leaf turnip, green globe turnip, millet, forage peas)," he said. "Then with the corn they'll go graze it and our cows this year will be done in a few days, but next year hopefully we'll go right into the middle of February with corn grazing. It's just a different way of doing things and the margins are pretty tight on a cattle farm and everything we can do to save money is money in the bank."

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