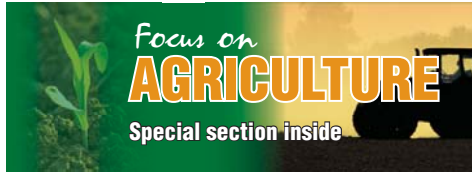




Chrysler dealership coming to Moosomin **Page 5**



Universe Satellite wins ATV dealer of the Year **Page 11**



Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

March 2017 • Volume 10, Number 3

Health minister visits Moosomin

Local doctors happy with meeting

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

Dr. Wessell Roets says a visit by Saskatchewan Health Minister Jim Reiter to Moosomin on Monday, Feb. 27 went well.

"He wanted to hear some of our concerns, so we brought up issues like sustainability of the practice, recruitment issues, and the format under which the practice will continue under the new health region structure. We hope we don't encounter the same problems we did previously, under the previous health region," says Roets.

"Since the changeover from Pipestone to Regina-Qu'Appelle Health Region—and I wasn't there for that—it impacted the practice quite a bit.

"The concern from our side is that with one big health region, we are so far on the periphery and far from direct communication."

Roets said the doctors are happy with the new arrangement through which local municipalities own the building the Family Practice Centre operates in. "I think it's working out excellent," he said. "This is a long-overdue situation. With their involvement, it will help make this practice sustainable for the future, because it brings stability."

What are the biggest issues that face a rural medical practice? "The biggest thing is the amount of on-call," says Roets. "It affects clinics, and it affects your daily routine and health. If you don't sleep at night, you have to recuperate the next day. At the moment we're okay, but the moment you lose personnel, the pressure mounts, and you fatigue eventually, especially with the vast area that we serve. We have over 10,000 active patient folders.

"I was on call last night, and I was up at 12 o'clock and up at 4 o'clock. That's standard."

There are currently five partners and four associates at the Family Practice Centre—nine physicians



Kara Kinna photo

Moosomin MLA Steven Bonk, left, and Health Minister Jim Reiter, centre, discuss health issues with Dr. Wessell Roets at the Moosomin Family Practice Centre.

altogether. One additional physician may be joining the practice in September.

"We're always recruiting," says Roets. "Dr. Kerkhoff and Dr. Van der Merwe are specifically look-

ing out for Canadian-trained doctors who are willing to come this way. We can still use more doctors. The pressure's still on. There are still people who can't get into Open Access. There are still peo-

ple who have to wait an extra day, and there are still people who call and are told they can't get in within a week."

Additional pressure comes when neighboring facilities close

temporarily, sending more patients in Moosomin's direction.

"There's notice that Virden may be closed again," Roets said. "Those days, people get in their cars and they come to Moosomin."

Roets said he felt that the health minister listened to the doctors' concerns.

"The attitude from the minister is positive," he said. "Like he said, it's a chance in a lifetime with the change coming in health care, there are lots of changes coming, and hopefully we can get it right. The minister listened to us on what a rural practice should look like."

Mayor happy with meeting

Moosomin mayor Larry Tomlinson agreed that the meeting went well.

"I think it went very well," he said. "He listened to what we had to say. We told him what we've done in the community, how we've tried to help with doctor recruitment and that we've purchased the clinic."

The mayor said a number of concerns were raised.

"One issue is the designation of the lab techs and the x-ray," he said. "If someone has blood work here, and they go to Regina they have to have their blood work done over again, and yet they're on the same system. All they're doing is doubling the work. It just doesn't make any sense."

Tomlinson said he hopes the health minister took some ideas home with him from Moosomin, such as replicating the Moosomin Family Practice Centre's model.

"We're hoping that some of the things we have done here could work in other places," he said. "Hopefully they will take some of the ideas here and maybe they could work in other places."

Continued on page 18

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The announcement that a Chrysler dealership is coming to Moosomin is big news for the area

The announcement that a Chrysler dealership is coming to Moosomin is big news for the area.

No doubt it will be a good move for the owner of White-wood Chrysler, and it will be good for the existing dealerships in Moosomin.

Two of the big three North American automotive manufacturers are already represented by strong dealerships in Moosomin. Having a Chrysler dealership along with Bradley's GM and Celebration Ford will help all three dealerships by providing more selection locally-giving people more choice.

It will also cement Moosomin's reputation as a burgeoning regional centre. With Ford, GM and Chrysler automotive dealerships, Case, John Deere and Ford New Holland agricultural dealerships (and a new Versatile dealership just starting up), a major Flaman agricultural and rental store, two expanding farm input suppliers, and a strong local business community, Moosomin is a regional centre unlike any in southeast Saskatchewan and southwest Manitoba.

The community has come a long way in the last few years.



Kevin Weedmark

It was November 6, 2008 when the twinned Trans-Canada Highway was completed at Moosomin-just over eight years ago. At that time the Red Barn and Dano's was the only business near the new highway. Owner Dan Davidson had the foresight to locate where the highway was moving to.

At the time there were no hotels along Lake Avenue. What was an empty field has been filled with three hotels and an A&W.

At that time, there was no Flaman's at the west entrance to town, and no Celebration Ford, Borderland Co-op C-Store or Tim Horton's at the east entrance.

There was no Pipestone Villas across from the Communityplex on Wright Road, no MCC Centre, no Sportsplex, no

houses along Hussein Drive (as a matter of fact, there was no Hussein Drive!)

A lot has happened in a few short years. We have confirmation from the latest census that our population is growing, and we can see all around us how the business community has grown.

The growth shows no signs of slowing down. This year Borderland Co-op will open a large new home centre, and expansions will come on line at P&H and Sharpes Soil Services. All of these businesses have invested in Moosomin, and no doubt their investments will pay off.

There is potential for more growth. The town has set up an economic development committee led by Councillors Ron Fisk and Jason Miller. With the town paying more attention to economic development, and with the committee members speaking to businesses and explaining why Moosomin is a good place to do business, there is huge potential for new businesses to come to town.

Welcome to the new Chrysler dealership!

With Moosomin's potential, there may be many more new businesses to come!

Moosomin Music Festival will be March 13-26

The Moosomin and District Music Festival will take place from March 13 to 26 this year, with Sharon Gerspacher and Jeri Ryba as adjudicators for the festival.

Piano, Fiddle, Guitar will be held March 13-16 at the Moosomin Baptist Church. Vocal and Speech Arts will be held March 20-23 at Bethel United Church. The Adjudicator Showcase will be March 26 at Bethel United Church.

Adjudicator Sharon Gerspacher began studying piano with Rosalie Calver in Yorkton, Sask, and then took her ARCT in piano performance in 1987 under the direction of Jean Laube from Springside. She went on to study with Robin Har-

ison in Saskatoon at the University of Saskatchewan and received her LTCL under his direction. She won many scholarships and awards at the Yorkton music festival, and won the Haydn/Mozart scholarship at provincials in 1988. Her focus of her career has been as a piano teacher and she has taught in Yorkton, Battleford, Regina and Humboldt over the years.

Many of her students have competed at provincials and even won the national composition competition, and several have gone on to pursue a career in music.

She has also been a very active accompanist in Humboldt and area for many community events, and

has played piano for many concerts in the Marysburg concert series. In addition to playing for the choirs and also doing some solo piano work, she has played for Sharon Carter and Maxine Moore (voice), Terry Sturge (cello), and has been the co-director/accompanist for children's choir camps. She is also an active voice teacher, and has been a member of St. Peter's choir for many years. She has three very musical children, the youngest of whom is in a music program in university.

Adjudicator Jeri Ryba began her musical training at age four, singing "Where are you going to my pretty maid?" Piano training followed as well as training

in cello and flute. Her first musical production was at age six as Gretel in "The Sound of Music." Later musical studies led her to Lethbridge where she obtained a Bachelor of Education in Music from the University of Lethbridge. Ryba also holds an ARCT Singing Performer Diploma in Voice, from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

She has been teaching private lessons in Moose Jaw for over 20 years. Her students have received over 25 silver medals from the Royal Conservatory of Music and have been Provincial Festival Winners. She also works for the two school divisions in Moose Jaw as a substitute teacher, focusing mainly on

high school in the subjects of music and drama.

Through her teaching and adjudicating, she hopes she encourages a love of music and a passion to grow as a person and a musician.

She is currently the presi-

dent of the Moose Jaw Music Festival Association. Ryba, her husband Greg, and eight-year-old son Rundle enjoy living in Saskatchewan and traveling throughout the province and Canada.



Steven Bonk, MLA

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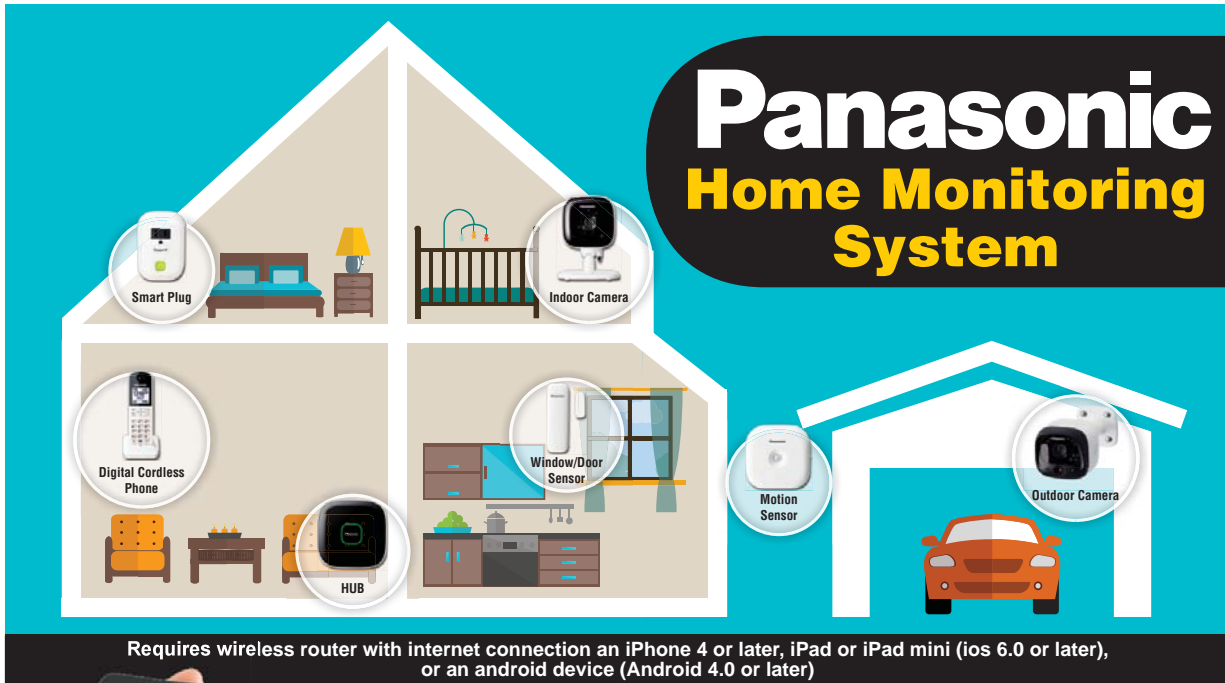
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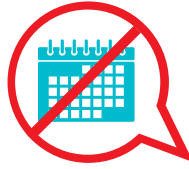
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The new Chrysler dealership in Moosomin will look very similar to this, in Chrysler's Millennium style, with the signature arch in the centre.

Chrysler dealership opening in Moosomin

BY KARA KINNA

Moosomin will soon be the home of a new Chrysler dealership.

Ron Kaban—who owns Yorkton Hyundai and Whitewood Chrysler Dodge, and is a partner in other dealerships around Western Canada—says

that he plans to open a Chrysler dealership in Moosomin.

While Kaban said he could not yet confirm the location of the new dealership, he said plans for a dealership in Moosomin are currently in the works.

"It's going to be great for the town,"

he says. "Chrysler gave me the okay to put a location there. I'm hoping to have a sales office in Moosomin by April or May and the location will be in full swing by the start of 2018."

Kaban said Moosomin's location and the growth of the business community are the reasons he decided to open a dealership here.

"It's a central location, it seems to be the place that things are happening," he says. "It was something I discussed with Chrysler."

"When I first bought Whitewood it was one of my long-term goals and plans to put a location in Moosomin because it is a good location and that seems to be where everything else is located."

"It's been in the making for a couple of years but I wanted to see how things were going to go in Whitewood and they've been awesome there. But we have to branch out."

"And let's face it, Moosomin is a central point where if oil takes off again, which it will, that's where you want to be."

"There's no Chrysler representation in the area outside of Whitewood so we need to fill that void for Caryle and Esterhazy and Rocanville by putting a store in a centralized area like Moosomin."

"In Moosomin the farming community is good. You're close to oil activity and the mines. There is the activity of all those things that add to the reason why you want to be in a place like Moosomin. It's because you are centralized in a location that has a lot of activity when it comes to other things besides farming."

Kaban says adding a Chrysler dealership to Moosomin will be a benefit to the town, especially since there is already a Ford and GM dealership in Moosomin. He says he's seen the impact of having multiple dealers in Yorkton, where he owns Yorkton Hyundai.

"Having more stores like import stores in Yorkton, no one goes to Regina anymore to shop for cars," he says. "When there were no import stores, people went out of town and we don't want that to happen. The more stores you have in any town, the less people opt to go out of town to look at other brands."

"I think it will be beneficial for the whole town and the other stores too."

Kaban says he plans to keep the location at Whitewood as well.

"Whitewood is staying open. I'm not taking anything away from Whitewood."

Whitewood has been great for us for the past couple of years," he says.

When the dealership in Moosomin opens it will employ at least 10 people.

"Between parts, service and sales we are going to be looking at 10-12 people," says Kaban.

"I'm looking forward to it. My daughter is in Whitewood running the White-wood store and I will have different people coming over there to Moosomin. I will have to hire some people for Moosomin."



RON KABAN

The new facility will be built in Chrysler's Millennium style, which features a large central arch over the main door.

Kaban says he can't divulge yet what the square footage of the building will be, but says "It's going to be a nice sized store for the town of Moosomin."

"It will be equivalent to other Chrysler locations in towns the same size," he says.

Kaban says his long term goal is to expand into Southeast Saskatchewan with more Chrysler dealerships in the future, although that will depend on the economy and other things.

"It's the start of our expansion of more Chrysler dealerships in the area," he says.

"No one reads the future, we hope that's going to be the trend, but no one knows. So we should just be thankful that Moosomin was the first pick on the list."

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Moosomin Elks holding Chase the Ace fundraiser

BY KARA KINNA
The Moosomin Elks Club is running a year-long Chase the Ace lottery as a fundraiser for the club, with the first one already taking place on Saturday, March 4.

The Chase the Ace will be held every Saturday from 6:30 to 7:30 pm at the Uptown in Moosomin.

Moosomin Elks member Dave Towler says the club knew that Chase the Ace has been successful for other organizations and communities, and they thought they'd give it a try.

"The Legion had this a few years ago and it went fairly well," he says. "We had been looking for a while for a fundraiser for the lodge to offset some of

our expenses. We support a lot of causes, and make donations, and need more money coming in. We thought this would be a good deal and everybody seemed gung ho about it, so a couple of our members went down to Elkhorn to see how the Elks do it there. They have been running one for a couple of years themselves.

"Theirs is going very well. Their jackpot this coming week will be \$4,900, and over the period of time of the project they have been able to give a lot back to the com-

munity. It has been over two years they have been running it."

"I know there are other different organizations that run it too. Carman (Manitoba) just had theirs. It came down to two cards if you can imagine. I think their jackpot was over \$40,000, so that is a lot of money a service club can make and it gives the opportunity to give it back to the community."

Each night that Chase the Ace is held, tickets will be sold that night, with half the ticket sale money going into a pot. One

ticket will be drawn each night, and that person will have a chance to choose from a deck of cards. If they choose the ace of spades, they get the pot. If they don't choose the ace of spades, they get a consolation prize of 10 per cent of the Elks' proceeds from that night.

The pot continues to build until the ace of spades is finally chosen by one lucky winner, at which time that winner gets half the pot.

The longer the ace of spades goes unchosen, the larger the pot will get.

The maximum payout could be \$24,700 if the ace goes unchosen until the end.

The Elks plan to run the fundraiser for at least a year.

"Our lottery license is legal for a year and if it happens to go over that year you have to contact gaming authorities . . . It can be extended.

"It always starts slow because you have to build up your pot, but one of the things that the Lodge itself is doing is that we are throwing in \$500 seed money to start the pot.

The first pot will be guaranteed to win \$500. It's like paying bingo. You don't want to see the jackpot go until it builds up. It is the luck of the draw, but the seed money is there in case someone does win early."

The Elks will also be holding meat draws each Saturday night before Chase the Ace.

Towler says the money from Chase the Ace will be donated back to the community and to charities.

"There will be lots of things we could do for the community with that money," he says.

Towler says the Elks Club in Moosomin is fairly active, with around 60 members.

RCMP on lookout for distracted drivers in March



Distracted driving returns as the traffic safety spotlight for the month of March.

Police across the province will be watching for drivers using their cellphones while behind the wheel, including those making calls, sending texts or sharing on social media.

They will also be on the lookout for motorists driving without due care and attention, due to distractions such as eating, putting on makeup, or programming a GPS, which can take a driver's focus off the road.

"When you're behind the wheel, you're responsible for thousands of pounds of glass and steel," said Earl Cameron, Executive Vice-President of the Auto Fund.

"At road speeds, a

quick lapse in attention can come with a lifetime of consequences. The next time you have the urge to do anything but drive while behind the wheel, ask yourself if that distraction is really worth it."

Distracted driving remains the top contributing factor of all collisions in Saskatchewan, and a top contributing factor in fatal collisions. In 2015, there were nearly 5,700 collisions in Saskatchewan due to distracted driving, where 802 people were injured and 36 were killed.

Cellphones are one of the key causes of distraction while driving as they have the potential to take a driver's eyes, ears and attention away from where they're needed—the road.

While texting or talking on the phone are problematic for drivers of all ages, distractions such as social media and mobile games have made phone use while driving even more enticing.

Cellphone legislation was strengthened in Saskatchewan on Jan. 1, 2017.

It now prohibits drivers from using, viewing,

holding or manipulating mobile devices while driving. Experienced drivers can use hands-free cellphones if they are activated with voice commands or one-touch, and are dashboard, visor or cradle mounted.

New drivers, meaning anyone in a Graduated Driver Licensing program, can't use cellphones at all—not even hands-free.

The presence of other distractions, such as passengers, loud music, grooming, eating or something as simple as searching for an item while driving can lead to disaster behind the wheel.

Everyone can drive free of distractions by following these tips:

- Silence your phone and put it out of reach before getting behind the wheel.
- Designate a passenger to navigate, adjust controls, and reply to texts or calls.
- Limit the number of passengers in the vehicle when driving.
- If children or pets need extra attention, pull

over to care for them.

• Apply makeup, select music or find personal items before driving.

• Call out your friends and family if you see them using a cellphone behind the wheel—it may save their life.

January traffic safety spotlight results: impaired driving

In January, SGI and Saskatchewan law enforcement focused on impaired driving for the fourth consecutive month. Seven people were charged with having a blood alcohol content (BAC) between .04

.08, while 269 people were charged with exceeding .08 BAC, impaired driving or refusing to provide a breath sample. Police also issued tickets for other traffic infractions including:

- 3,376 tickets for speeding/aggressive driving
- 397 tickets for distracted driving (321 of those were for cellphone use)
- 322 tickets regarding seatbelts/child car seats

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2016 Census

Moosomin leads area in growth

Growth rate of 10.4 per cent highest among communities in SE Sask., SW Man.

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

The 2016 census shows that the town of Moosomin led the region in population growth between the 2011 and 2016 censuses, with 10.4 per cent population growth. According to the census, Moosomin went from 2,484 residents in the 2011 census to 2,743 in the 2016 census. Moosomin had grown by 8.9 per cent between the 2006 and 2011 censuses.

The increase of 10.4 per cent in the last five years is the highest for any community in the region.

Redvers and Virden are the two other communities in the region showing significant growth, with Redvers up 6.9 per cent and Virden up 6.7 per cent.

The town of Moosomin's growth rate recorded in the census is higher than surrounding communities like Virden, Esterhazy, Kipling, and Carlyle, and is higher than cities in the region like Yorkton, Weyburn and Estevan.

For communities around the province of a similar size to Moosomin, Rosetown grew by 5.8 per cent, growing from 2,317 to 2,451, Outlook grew by 3.4 per cent, growing from 2,204 to 2,279, Tisdale grew by 1.7 per cent, growing from 3,180 people to 3,235, Esterhazy recorded a growth rate of 1.2 per cent, growing from 2,472 to 2,502, Assiniboia declined by 1.2 per cent, declining from 2,418 to 2,389, Maple Creek declined by 4.2 per cent, declining from 2,176 to 2,084, and Canora declined by 8.8 per cent, declining from 2,219 to 2,024.

While Moosomin itself is growing, some smaller communities and most rural municipalities have seen reductions in population. According to the census, Whitehead lost 9.3 per cent of its population between 2011 and 2016, dropping from 950 to 862 residents.

The village of Spy Hill lost 17.6 per cent of its population in the five years between 2011 and 2016, going from 204 residents to 168.

The village of Tantalton lost 13.3 per cent of its residents, going from 105 to 91 residents, and the village of Kennedy lost 10.4 per cent of its residents, declining from 241 to 216.

Most RMs in the area lost population with the largest decline in the RM of Martin, which declined 13.2 per cent, from 333 to 289.

SASKATCHEWAN POPULATION UP

The 2016 census shows that Saskatchewan grew by 64,971 since the 2011 Census.

Over the past decade, from the 2006 to the 2016 Census, Saskatchewan grew by more than 130,000 people.

That's a complete turnaround from the previous decade—1996 to 2006—when Saskatchewan's population dropped by 22,000 people.

Saskatchewan had the second-highest growth rate among the provinces at 6.3 per cent.

"The new census numbers show how far Saskatchewan has come in the past decade compared to the decade before that, when we were still losing people and some said it would be impossible for Saskatchewan to grow by even

POPULATIONS OF LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

Town/ RM/Village	2016 Population	2011 Population	Population % Change (2011-2016)
Town of Moosomin	2,743	2,485	10.4%
Town of Rocanville	863	857	0.7%
Town of Fleming	84	83	1.2%
Town of Wapella	326	333	-2.1%
Town of Whitehead	862	950	-9.3%
Village of Kennedy	216	241	-10.4%
Town of Wawota	543	560	-3.0%
Village of Fairlight	40	40	0.0%
Town of Maryfield	348	365	-4.7%
Town of Redvers	1,042	975	6.9%
Village of Elkhorn	479	471	1.7%
Village of St. Lazare	257	254	1.2%
Village of Spy Hill	168	204	-17.6%
Village of Tantalton	91	105	-13.3%
RM of Elice-Archie	887	971	-8.7%
RM of Wallace-Woodworth	2,948	2,857	3.2%
RM of Spy Hill	323	366	-11.7%
RM of Willowdale	299	297	0.7%
RM of Moosomin	470	504	-6.7%
RM of Martin	289	333	-13.2%
RM of Silverwood	410	466	-12.0%
RM of Maryfield	324	319	1.6%
RM of Walpole	326	338	-3.6%
RM of Wawken	571	559	2.1%
RM of Antler	523	577	-2.4%
RM of Rocanville	507	533	-4.9%
TOTAL:	15,965	16,017	-0.0%

100,000 people in 10 years," Premier Brad Wall said. "Obviously, given the current fiscal situation, a growing population presents some challenges for our province, but I would much rather be facing the challenges of growth than the challenges of decline."

All 16 Saskatchewan cities saw their populations increase from 2011 to 2016, by a total of 59,189 people or 9.9 per cent.

Saskatchewan towns saw their populations increase by 3,939 people or 2.7 per cent while Saskatchewan villages saw their populations increase slightly by 228 people or 0.5 per cent.

Overall, rural municipalities in Saskatchewan saw their total populations increase by 1,934 people or 1.1 per cent.

MANITOBA GROWTH INCREASING

More than 1.28 million people now live in Manitoba, according to the 2016 census.

The population grew by more than 70,000 since 2011, an

POPULATIONS OF NEARBY LARGE TOWNS

Town	2016 Population	2011 Population	Population % Change (2011-2016)
Esterhazy	2,502	2,472	1.2%
Carlyle	1,508	1,446	4.3%
Kipling	1,074	1,051	2.2%
Virden	3,322	3,114	6.7%

increase of 5.8 per cent. The national average was five per cent. This is the first time in several years that Manitoba has grown at a quicker rate than the national average.

Manitoba, like Saskatchewan, has substantially increased its immigration levels over the last five years, leading to the increase.

According to the census, most of the growth was in Winnipeg, Brandon, Steinbach and Winkler. These four cities accounted for 69.4 per cent of Manitoba's total growth between 2011 and 2016.

MORE THAN 35 MILLION CANADIANS

The census counted 35,151,728 people across Canada on May 10, 2016, an increase of 1.7 million for a growth rate of five per cent—slightly lower than the 5.9 per cent reported in the 2006-2011 census period, but still the highest growth rate among all G7 countries.

By comparison, Statistics Canada says the population count in 1871—the first post-Confederation census—was just 3.5 million, and 20 million in 1966.

The highest growth rates according to the latest census are in Western Canada.

Nearly one-third of Canadians (31.6 per cent) live in Western Canada, and the bulk of those are in B.C. (13.2 per cent) and Alberta (11.6 per cent).

Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, the country's three largest census metropolitan areas, are home to 12.5 million people—35.5 per cent of the country's population.

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Above left: Dakota's rec hockey team, Dirty Mike and the Boys, presenting the jersey with Dakota's number to his parents, Allan and Susan, and brother Brandon (in red). Dakota was made the honorary captain of the team.



Above Right: Joelle Garvey was the recipient of the \$500 scholarship that is raised with the tournament each year. Above, Garvey accepts the scholarship from Brandon Munro, left and Brandon Holloway, who organize the tournament.

Holloway tournament raises over \$7,200 for rink

The Third Annual Dakota Holloway Memorial Hockey Tournament was held January 27 and 28 in Wapella, raising a total of \$7,241.05 for the Wapella rink.

Organized by the Holloway and Munro families, the tournament is held each year on the last weekend of January in honor of Dakota Holloway, who loved hockey and lost his life in an accident at the age of 20. The two families decided to start a tournament in his memory on the last weekend of January each year, right before Dakota's birthday.

Eight teams participate in the tournament each year. A supper is also held as part of the weekend, as well as a silent auction and calcutta.

Proceeds from the tournament are donated to the Wapella rink for maintenance and repairs, and a \$500 scholarship is also provided to a local student each year.

This year, proceeds from the tournament will be used for the water heater at the rink. Wapella mayor Sandy Hintz says the tournament has been a huge benefit to the rink for the past three years, and has

even helped the community purchase a new zamboni for the rink.

Over the three years that it has been held, the tournament has raised a total of \$22,152.35 for the Wapella rink.

A special presentation was also made to the Holloway family at this year's tournament. Dakota's rec hockey team, Dirty Mike and the Boys, had a special hockey jersey made with Dakota's number, which they presented to his parents and brother. They also named Dakota as the honorary team captain.



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Universe Satellite wins Canadian ATV dealer of the year award

BY KARA KINNA

Universe Satellite Sales in Rocanville has been named the Arctic Cat Canadian 2017 ATV Dealer of the Year.

The award was presented to Universe Satellite owner Stan Langley at the Arctic Cat dealer show in St. Paul, Minnesota at the end of February.

Langley, who attends the dealer show each year, says he was shocked to find out he was getting the award. All of the Arctic Cat dealers from North America, as well as a few dealers from other countries, were in attendance. About 1,500 people were on hand for the awards.

"My rep came and saw me. He said 'Put up your hand Stan, I need to know where you are,' and he said 'sit by the outside edge of the row,' and I thought 'Something's happening,'" says Langley.

"And then a little way through the business meeting they announced all their award winners. They announced all the American winners and then the two from Canada. There was one for snowmobiles in Canada and myself for the ATVs. We were the top ATV dealer for Canada.

"When they started naming people off and people were going up on stage I was thinking 'holy, we must be going to get something.' And then they called my name.

"I was pretty pumped and it didn't really settle in until on the way home. I was thinking 'holy cow there are a lot of ATV dealers in Canada for Arctic Cat and we were picked number one so we must be doing something right.' I'm still thinking about that.

"But I've got good staff and we have good customers. We have a ton of good customers that make things like this happen. Because without them saying good things about me, this probably wouldn't have happened either."

Langley says there are a number of reasons why his dealership was chosen for the award.

"It was based on market share and your customer satisfaction information. When they send out a sheet to a customer that



The staff at Universe Satellite Sales with their award. From left are Randy Stanhope, Dylan Springer, Savannah Langley, Ian Langley holding Mason Langley, Garry Birkenshaw, Joe Mitchell, owner Stan Langley, Dawna Kingdon, and Tanis Stanhope.

we've sold something to, that customer says things about it. The reps also probably have a fair bit to say about it. We have our open houses, we do demo days, we advertise lots, we've grown our business from the ground up to be one of the higher selling dealers in Canada.

"They've gone away from just giving it to the guy who just sells the most ATVs. I'm in a town of under 1,000 people and we got that award. I guess we did everything right to keep all of our customers happy and we've got tons and tons of repeat customers."

Langley also gives a lot of credit to his staff for winning the award.

"I've got good people working in the back, I've got the girls here up front, I've got really good staff. I think when people

come here and shop, they get an experience as well as buying something. We always have fun. I do a lot of deliveries in the evenings. You sit down with the customer and have a coffee or something with them after you've delivered that piece of equipment to them and they are quite happy with the service.

"This award also goes by what you have for trained staff. We have our people who are Cat Masters. They have all their training through Arctic Cat for the mechanics, and we've got all those people who are qualified to do these jobs, and that was another thing you get points on."

Universe Satellite has won awards from Arctic Cat before, but nothing this big.

"We've gotten Diamond Dealer awards—we've gotten a lot of awards

since we've started," says Langley. "There have been district awards. But all the dealers have a chance to become Diamond Dealers and that is based on numbers, whereas there is only one Canadian dealer of the year for 2017. And that's us."

Langley says getting the Canadian ATV Dealer of the Year Award means a lot to him.

"I think we're certainly recognized around the area and it's something we can use for promoting ourselves a little more," he says. "If we are the Canadian dealer of the year, we must be doing something right and hopefully we can use this to bring more people into the shop to sell more product as well."

Langley started selling snowmobiles in 1991 and started selling Arctic Cats in 1993—for almost 25 years now.

Universe Satellite has grown tremendously over the years and is one of the main dealers for snowmobiles in Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba.

What is the secret to their success?

"Small town businesses I think always do extremely well," says Langley. "There is a lot more customer service when you go to a small town, that's what I think. And we look after the people that buy from us. We go, I think, above and beyond looking after people's needs out here. And we are part of the community. Everybody knows everybody that works here, so we are a big part of the community as well."

Langley says, aside from the odd change to his business here and there, he plans to continue doing what he's doing.

"I'd sooner do a good job at what we are doing now and continue doing a good job than getting bigger and bigger and bigger," he says. "I know there are a few other things coming down the line we will be looking at. Arctic Cat has been bought by Textron and Textron manufactures Easy Go golf carts. That is something we are probably going to expand into—the golf cart business, sales and servicing them. But other than that nothing extraordinary coming down the line, because what we are doing now is obviously working."

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The new play structure for Wawota School will look similar to this. Approximately \$50,000 needs to be fundraised. The hopes are that the money can be raised over the course of four to five years.

Wawota fundraising for new play structure

BY KARA KINNA
A soup and sandwich lunch held in the Wawota Town Hall on March 1 marked the first step toward raising money for a new playground at Wawota School.

According to Leanne Porter with the Wawota School Playground Committee, the current wooden playground at the school is no longer up to code and has started to fall apart. Fundraising has now begun

in earnest for a new play structure.

"The one we are replacing is an old wooden structure. It's probably about 10 to 15 years old, but because it's wooden it's deteriorated quite a bit," says Porter. "On the one side there was a slide attached to it and they actually had to take it off because it was kind of cracked and broken."

"The Southeast Cornerstone School Division has done an audit of all of the

playgrounds and that was completed last year, and we were made aware last spring that play structure was not up to code and so it needs to be replaced. They do give you a 10-year time frame to do it. But it's deteriorating and we'd like to get it done maybe over the next two to three years if we could put together the money in that frame of time."

Porter says Wawota is also seeing more students in its school and wants to

ensure there is a proper play structure as more children move to the community.

"Wawota has had split grades in the elementary for the last several years, and we're seeing a real influx of kids coming in now that we will likely have the split grades eliminated," she says. "So it would be nice to have that play structure in place for the influx in population."

Porter says around

\$50,000 will need to be raised in order to purchase a new play structure. The playground committee would like to raise at least 50 per cent of that money on their own, while also seeking out corporate and community donations to help them along the way.

"Richardson Pioneer is a group that has done a lot for school community councils that have been fundraising for playgrounds. So we're going to write some pro-

posals and look for funding that is available," she says. "I would say of the \$50,000, we want to raise half of that for sure by ourselves. The Lions group had an inheritance that they got several years ago. They hold it in trust and they will provide funding for certain projects or improvements to the community, but they like to see you have 50 per cent of the funding in yourself."

Continued on Page 16

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CIBC will put no conditions on building sale:

Vanguard Credit Union considering Elkhorn

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

Vanguard Credit Union will consider opening a branch in Elkhorn—if enough customers indicate a willingness to move their business to the credit union.

CIBC plans to close its branch in Elkhorn in August.

Kevin Tutthill of the Elkhorn LUD said he is very happy that Vanguard is willing to consider a branch in Elkhorn.

"We just had a meeting over lunch with their CEO, and for the initial meeting it seemed positive," said Tutthill.

"He gave us the next steps, so that is where we are at."

He said the most important thing right now is to have as many people as possible sign up with the credit union.

"We have some sign up sheets going around town to try and get everybody's names and phone numbers so they can contact and confirm that they are a real person that will switch," said Tutthill.

"They want to ensure that they will have enough people make the switch. They are just doing their due diligence to phone people and see if they are committed to bringing all their banking."

"We have sign-up sheets in all the business and we are going to do mailbox stuffers right away."

Tutthill said there has been a positive reaction to Vanguard. "People around town seem very positive," he said. "People want a financial institution in town."

Tutthill said that, when CIBC announced the closure, the community started looking for an-

other financial institution. "We looked at all the different credit unions in Manitoba and just started phoning and telling them what is going on in our community and that we are interested in having somebody come to us, and Vanguard were one of the ones who contacted us back," he said. "Some of the others said they are happy with their size and are not interested."

Tutthill said the committee felt a credit union would be their best bet to get a financial institution to consider the community.

"To be honest, if we had any hope I thought it was going to be a credit union," he said. "That was my gut feeling and I have always banked with CIBC. I haven't got a whole lot of experience with credit unions, but by reputation if we were going to get anybody that is who we were going to land. We are very excited that Vanguard is willing to consider us."

Meanwhile, CIBC has decided not to place any restrictions on the future use of the bank building in Elkhorn.

"I can confirm that CIBC is not putting on any restrictions on the future use of the building," said Caroline Van Hasselt, director of media relations with CIBC.

The Elkhorn Chamber of Commerce had been concerned that restrictions on the future use of the building could make it more difficult to attract another financial institution to town.



The CIBC branch in Elkhorn is slated to be closed in August.

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Wawota fundraising for new play structure

Continued from page 13

Porter says the committee is already talking about potential fundraiser ideas. "We talked about doing a wine and paint night that's kind of a trendy thing to do right now," she says. "And we were also looking at doing a themed supper night, or progressive suppers. And we have also looked at maybe doing some ticket sales or raffles as well. And we'll probably continue on with more soup and sandwiches because they are quick and easy to throw together."

Porter says the new play structure should be more challenging and fun for children in their middle years.

"It will be for kind of the middle years—grades three, four, five, six. We're looking at having some rock climbing elements included in it, just some overheads that are a little bit more challenging for the older kids," she says.

She says the old playground may be donated if it can be refurbished.

"If it looks like we can refurbish it then we can donate it to the Lions park and they can make use of it over there," she says.

Porter says the next big step will be getting new members to join the playground committee, which is just in the beginning stages of fundrais-

ing. "We're looking to have an information night in the future to form a committee and we are looking for new members to join," she says.

The soup and sandwich last Wednesday raised around \$1,800.



Left: A soup and sandwich lunch at the Wawota Town Hall Wednesday was the first fundraiser for the new play structure.



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Moosomin reunion and homecoming:

Diana Austin, Russ Parker will be speakers



Moosomin is planning a massive reunion for July 6-9 to help mark Canada's 150th anniversary. The weekend will start with the opening of the Tim Hortons Eventplex at Bradley Park on Thursday, July 6. The event will feature a performance by Elvis impersonator Adam T. Elvis on Thursday night. Friday night will feature a social with DJ Doug Hull, and Saturday's events will include presentations by the two speakers, and the day will wrap up with a homecoming dance with the Back 40 Drifters.



Diana Austin and Victoria, one of five young people in Ghana she has helped support through her charity Kids in Ghana since 2009.

Diana Austin

Diana Austin graduated from McNaughton High School in 2013, and has gone on to begin a career in medicine, and at the same time as studying medicine, developed her own charity to help out some young people in Ghana she met while volunteering in the African nation.

Diana earned her Bachelor of Arts and Sciences (majoring in Biomedical Sciences and Humanistic Studies) from McGill University in 2008.

She earned her Medical Degree from the University of Saskatchewan in 2014. She completed her Family Residency Program in Terrace, B.C. with University of British Columbia in 2016.

Diana is now working as a locum in rural Saskatchewan and British Columbia. She has a particular interest in First Nations, women's, and international health.

On March 4, she returned to Zimbabwe for the third time to work at a rural hospital in the African country.

The Kids in Ghana project started when Diana went to Ghana after high school, to volunteer at an orphanage.

This was the first of numerous trips to Ghana and seeds for the sponsorship program that Diana now runs with her family.

In 2009 Diana was working at Ashan Children's Home in Ghana when she found out that the home was ordered by the government to reduce the number of children by half.

This meant that half of the children had to be sent away. Some returned to where they came from and others went to live with extended family.

These four were identified as being those who would most benefit from sponsorship based on their personal aptitudes and the conditions that they would be returning to.

The four have now become five, and the plan is for the project to continue until the kids in Ghana become self-sufficient.

Diana says she is honored to have been asked to speak at the 2017 homecoming and reunion, and is looking forward to returning home for the reunion.

The Parker family started Calgary's first professional baseball team in 1977 when the Calgary Cardinals of the Pioneer League began play. In 1984, they purchased the Pacific Coast League's (AAA) Salt Lake City franchise and moved the team to Calgary. The Cannons played in Calgary from 1985-2002.

In 1990, the Parkers purchased an International Hockey League (IHL) franchise and established the Kansas City Blades. The Blades captured the IHL Turner Cup Championship in 1991-1992. The Blades were sold in 1996.

Russ was named the Pacific Coast Baseball League "Executive of The Year" in 1988. In 1989, he was awarded Calgary's inaugural "Pinnacle Award" for excellence in the business community.

In February of 1993, the Parker family purchased the Kelowna Spartans of the BCJHL. The Spartans won the Centennial Cup national championship in 1993-1994 and lost in the final in 1994-1995.

Russ and his wife Diane purchased the Regina Pats in 1995. Prior to the purchase, the franchise had been struggling both on and off the ice with season tickets at an all-time low.

Under the direction of Russ Parker in his capacity as both the president and governor of the franchise, one of Canada's most storied hockey teams was quickly rejuvenated.

Not only did season tickets improve dramatically during Parker's regime, but the support they provided for minor hockey and local charities rallied the community and helped the franchise win the bid to host the 2001 MasterCard Memorial Cup and many other national events.

In 2014, he sold the Regina Pats to a Regina business group.

He remains a proud Moosominite and is looking forward to coming home for the reunion!

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Russ Parker at a news conference announcing his sale of the Regina Pats to a group of Regina business owners.

Russ Parker

Russ Parker was born in Moosomin and grew up here. His parents, Clarence and Eleanor Parker, moved the family to Calgary when Russ was 16.

The Parkers founded Calgary Copier Limited in 1969. Before selling the company in 1988, it grew to be the second largest Canon dealership in the country, employing over 150 people.

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Health minister visits Moosomin

Continued from front

Saskatchewan Health Minister Jim Reiter visited Moosomin on Feb. 27 to meet with local doctors and elected officials.

Plain and Valley editor Kevin Weedmark sat down with Minister Reiter to get his thoughts following the meeting.

Following is a full transcript of the interview.

Tell me why you came to Moosomin today and what you learned.

I came out here at the request of Steven Bonk MLA. We have discussed it for quite some time and it has raised different issues. We are doing a bit of a constituency tour and spent a fair amount of time today in Moosomin.

We met with some of the local councillors and the doctors just to discuss health care in the area. We just left the laundry facility at the Kinability which is a great story I think. I think most of your readers know about it. It was the first time I had a chance to be exposed to it. It was a great opportunity. (The Pipestone Kinability Centre provides some laundry services for the Southeast Integrated Health Care Centre.)

What did you learn with the meeting with the councillors and doctors?

It was very interesting. The doctors were there which gives a very interesting dynamic to it. The discussion involved the folks looking for assurances that the services they have here now will stay and expressed their hope to increase the services here.

You have got a pretty good situation with a core group of doctors providing great services to Moosomin and area. Hand-in-hand with that we had a lot of discussion with the changes coming province wide moving from 12 health regions down to one. That took up a lot of the conversation.

What is your personal opinion of the model the doctors have developed at the Family Practice Centre, with a strong group of physicians in one location providing services to surrounding communities through clinics?

Clearly you can't argue with success. It has worked very well here. It has solidified health care in Moosomin and has helped the surrounding area very much.

I have been very impressed that I hear from Steven about the way it is working. I like seeing that. I realize how important health care is in rural Saskatchewan and there is challenges with doctor recruitment. Moosomin has done a very good job with that.

In the long term, is the government looking at concentrating more services within certain areas where you have the doctors, nurses and facilities to provide the services, or what is the long-term plan going forward?

Well certainly we are in the middle of a big project

with the move to one health region and that is going to have a significant impact on that. Our government has never been about closing rural facilities, whether it is hospitals or long term care, whatever the case may be. I think as we move forward we look at situations like Moosomin where they can provide a lot of the services. I think that is very important for us to consider how we do move forward because right now you look at the tertiary centres in the major cities and they have capacity issues. At times they are busting at the seams. So it just makes sense to me that by providing some of those services out in the other areas it is going to bring the services closer to the number of people using them and it is also going to help take the pressure off of some of the tertiary centers and emergency rooms.

At what stage is the whole process of amalgamation right now?

Right now it is very early. We only announced it about six weeks ago. The fellow who did the report did a very good job on the report. We decided to adopt the recommendations. Moving forward with it we have an eternal transition team within the ministry that is working on a number of things.

We are going to learn a lot from other provinces when they have done that. Alberta did it and they had some pretty dramatic growing pains early on and one of the things the panel pointed out that the big part of the problem was that they tried to do it too quickly.

We want to do it as quickly as possible, we don't want to drag it out. It is important to make sure you do it at a pace that you don't get lost in the transition. So we think probably next fall there will be a management team in place, a new board, and it is going to take in the ball park of a year, or possibly 18 months, until the whole thing is complete.

Will there be actual savings in administration by combining health regions?

There will be. I looked at it in my own area. That there was going to be savings that were going to be more effective.

The primary driver here isn't about cost savings—it is about having the best possible outcome for patients and there is a quote in the report that the panel did and it goes along the lines of this—that right now there are 12 independent health regions that are accountable to the minister but not to each other.

At the meeting today we heard stories about patients getting treated here going through tests, blood tests then going to a tertiary centre and then going through all those same tests again because there is no proper communication between regions or hospitals.

We think those types of things need to be improved on. There are other examples, like when someone



Kara Kinna photo

Saskatchewan Health Minister Jim Reiter and Moosomin MLA Steven Bonk toured the Moosomin Family Practice Centre on Feb. 27 as part of a visit to Moosomin by the health minister.

is released from a major hospital they should be going back to the hospital in their community. It doesn't go as smoothly as it should because there are two different entities that you are dealing with. It is those sorts of things that are the primary driver.

But we do believe there will be cost savings as well. One example is that right now each region has their own IT system in place. In this day and age it should be done under one IT system. E Health is going to be the IT provider for all the health regions. We think there is going to be some transition time but after the first year the estimate that we have is saving \$9 million annually. In a \$5 billion budget we are going to see it? No, but still \$9 million can still be spent better on front line health care.

There is a number of things like that, such as board governance. Right now we have 12 CEOs and 62 vice presidents across the province. We are going to have one CEO and not sure how many vice presidents yet but surely it is going to be a lot less than 62.

Those are some savings. In the big picture that certainly is not going to be a salvation to the health system but again every dollar matters and the dollars you save there could be better spent elsewhere. To answer your question cost savings is not the primary driver but yes there will be cost savings.

The Regina-Qu'Appelle Health Authority was in Moosomin last fall for a meeting, and there was a

lot of anger expressed by the public about a lot of issues. The same seems to be true of every health care public meeting I read about. Why in health care is there so much anger from the public and so many issues that people seem to feel are not being dealt with?

Health care is obviously near and dear to all of us. If we are not currently using it there is a loved one using it, and we all want to know it is going to be there for us. It is key.

I would say that—and this is not criticism of all health regions by any stretch—there are great people on boards and some great people in management that are doing a good job. I think by and large it is a fair criticism to say that a lot of the health regions, in instances they have lacked in community engagement about keeping the community informed about what decisions are and sort of what the future holds, and when people don't know what is going on that's when people get frustrated.

There has been over the years lots of complaints frequently in my office about communities, about their health region. That is why, as we move forward, as we consolidate and move to one health region, it is just really important that we are very transparent about what we are doing. I have done several news interviews in the last six or eight weeks since we have done the announcement, just letting people know where we are at and what we are doing. We plan on continu-

ing on doing that. that there is always some underlying concern in rural Saskatchewan. I think there is a fear that people are going to lose a facility, and I would just tell folks that nobody knows what the future is going to hold.

I would just say in the nine years that we have been in government it is not what this government does and I would just say if people have concerns for them to look back at our record.

The last two questions were directed to Moosomin MLA Steven Bonk.

Steven, what do you think is the most important thing that came out of the minister's visit today?

I take my role as an MLA seriously—that I am to bring forward the concerns of the people of this constituency. So that is what I was hoping to do today, to make sure that everyone could sit around the table and express their concerns.

I think that happened. I think everyone had their voice at the table and conversely to that, part of my job is to bring back the message to the government, to the ministry from this constituency. So I think just keeping that open communication between the constituency and the government is an important role and I am happy that I can do it.

What do you think was the most important issue raised today in the meetings?

Stability. Just to have open transparent communication so people know what is happening to the best of our government's ability, to let them know what is going to happen in the future and for them to express their concerns so that the government knows if they are on the right track or not or what they can improve on.

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Music Tour Nashville Memphis Branson
Nov. 2nd – Nov. 17th, 2017
16 day tour to Branson, Memphis and Nashville. 6 performances including Daniel O'Donnell and Shoji Tabuchi. Guided tours of Memphis, Nashville, Pigeon Forge and Indianapolis. Tour Fantastic Caverns, Country Music Hall of Fame, Churchill Downs and Slugger Museum. Spend time on Beale Street, Silver Dollar City, Branson Landing and Dollywood.

Upcoming Tours 2017/2018

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Survey on Mining Investment:

Saskatchewan, Manitoba top jurisdictions in world

Saskatchewan and Manitoba are now the two most attractive jurisdictions for mining investment in the world, according to the annual global survey of mining executives released by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

The two Canadian provinces beat out Western Australia, which fell from first to third this year.

"Competitive tax regimes, efficient permitting procedures and certainty surrounding environmental regulations and land-claims have vaulted Saskatchewan and Manitoba to the top in the eyes of miners looking to invest," said Kenneth Green, senior director of the Fraser Institute's energy and natural resource studies and co-author of the Fraser Institute's Annual Survey of Mining Companies, 2016.

This year's survey rates 104 jurisdictions around the world based on a combination of their geologic attractiveness for minerals and metals and their policy attractiveness.

Quebec ranks third in Canada and sixth globally—up from eighth spot last year—and is the only other Canadian jurisdiction in the top 10 worldwide for overall investment attractiveness. Yukon ranks 15th worldwide.

Two of Canada's other large jurisdictions—British Columbia and Ontario—dropped in this year's rankings. Internationally, Ontario places 18th (down three spots from last year) and B.C. ranks 27th, falling from 18th last year.

"While other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world have improved their attractiveness to investors, Ontario and B.C. fell this year because these provinces continue to be hampered by uncertainty surrounding land claims," said Taylor Jackson, a senior policy analyst with the Fraser Institute and survey co-author.

Nationally, Canada's overall investment attractiveness—based on the combined rankings of all Canadian jurisdictions—improved in 2016.



The PotashCorp Rocanville mine.

In fact, scores improved almost everywhere except Argentina and Asia where it declined substantially. In Australia, investment attractiveness remained largely unchanged from last year.

This year, the Fraser Institute also released a separate study examining issues surrounding the exploration permitting process.

Overall, Canadian provinces tended to get necessary permits to explorers faster than in other international jurisdictions, but there is still room for improvement.

Notably, Permit Times for Mining Exploration in 2016 finds that B.C. and the Territories are laggards in Canada with B.C. performing worse than Ontario and Quebec when it comes to the time it takes explorers to receive their permits, the transparency of the permitting process, and the confidence that explorers have that they will receive their permits at all.

"Time is money, and if permit approval times are unnecessarily long or lack transparency, confidence plummets, overall costs increase and investors will take their money elsewhere," Green said.

"Saskatchewan enjoys an excellent reputation in

the mining sector," Energy and Resources Minister Dustin Duncan said. "We are gifted with a variety of resources, and as a government we are doing our share to encourage the industry and to make sure we are competitive and friendly to investment. We have maintained a stable royalty structure over the last number of years, supported by clear government policies that have helped Saskatchewan remain a destination of choice for investors and business."

The Fraser Institute's Investment Attractiveness Index is based on two

components: the geologic attractiveness of a region based on actual mineral potential, and its policy attractiveness in terms of the effects of government policy on attitudes toward exploration investment.

"Aside from having high-quality geoscience information, we place a high priority on collaboration with our stakeholders in the industry to help reduce red tape wherever possible," Duncan said. "We are also continuing to upgrade and enhance the Mineral Administration Registry Saskatchewan (MARS) system to help mining companies oper-

ate more efficiently in the province."

CANADIAN INVESTMENT ATTRACTIVENESS RANKINGS:
Saskatchewan
Manitoba
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Yukon
Newfoundland and Labrador
Ontario
Northwest Territories
British Columbia
Nunavut
New Brunswick

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McMullen in third year with U of R Cougars

BY ROBIN WARK
Moosomin's Devon McMullen has embraced being a student-athlete at the University of Regina.

The son of Peter and Patti McMullen is now in his third year playing hockey for the Cougars. Off the ice, he is studying kinesiology.

The best part of being a U of R student-athlete?

"Just being able to get your education paid for while still playing the game you love playing," McMullen said.

This year the strong student is applying to chiropractic schools. While he'd

love to play out all five seasons of his eligibility with the Cougars, McMullen said he could not pass up the opportunity to further his education if it is available.

"I want to be doing a job where I am helping people have a better everyday life," McMullen said.

This season McMullen has unfortunately not spent as much time as he'd like being a competitive athlete. He fractured two ribs in the Cougars' third exhibition game and did not return to the ice until after Christmas. Shortly after he was back, he sustained a concussion. As of Feb. 14, McMullen had played in seven games this season.

"It is frustrating because this summer I felt like I put a lot of work in," he said, noting he focused on adding power and weight.

However, McMullen said that he understands that's the way things go sometimes. He has tried to maintain a positive attitude. That is one of his strengths—and a reason why he was chosen to be one of the University of Regina's assistant captains for the second season in a row.

"Devon is a leader ... a real motivator," Cougars head coach Todd Johnson said. "Guys really respect him."

When asked about how he helps lead the U of R squad, McMullen said, "I'm a positive, optimistic kind of guy. I know there will be ups and downs. I speak my mind ... but keep that positive attitude."

When he is healthy, he is an important contributor on the Cougars' blue line. Last season the 5-foot-9, 165-pound defenceman had six assists in 23 games.

"He is a hardworking player. ... You know what you get every time he's on the ice," Johnson said.

McMullen first took to the ice when he was a young child. He has been told that his parents' enrolled him in figure skating but that he refused to go on the ice without a hockey stick. It is likely that he was trying to emulate his older brother Jamie, said McMullen, who also has a sister, Kayla. His father coached him during his early years in the sport. McMullen has had the strong backing of his family when it comes to hockey.



Photo courtesy of Arthur Ward

Devon McMullen in action with the U of R Cougars.

"My parents always said if you have a love of the game we'll support you all the way," he said.

He played bantam AA in Carlyle. Then he headed to Yorkton, a community that would soon become like a second home, for two seasons of midget AAA with the squad then named the Harvest. McMullen would go on to play four seasons for the Yorkton Terriers in the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League.

During an impressive career, McMullen played in three SJHL finals and won two league championships. He went out in style by captaining the Terriers to victory at the 2014 Royal Bank Cup, Canada's national Junior A championship.

"Being able to bring 22 guys together and all focus

on one goal ... The perseverance of that team was amazing," McMullen said.

He greatly enjoyed his junior career. "The bond I had with some of those guys I don't think I'll ever forget," he said.

He has enjoyed being a student-athlete for the Cougars and competing in the Canada West conference. McMullen feels that the U Sports level—the highest in Canada, formerly known as Canadian Interuniversity Sport—is underrated.

"People don't understand the level of talent," he said, noting that you sometimes are playing against former pros. "There are guys in the WHL who are 100 point scorers that are playing in this league ... It definitely does have that top end talent."

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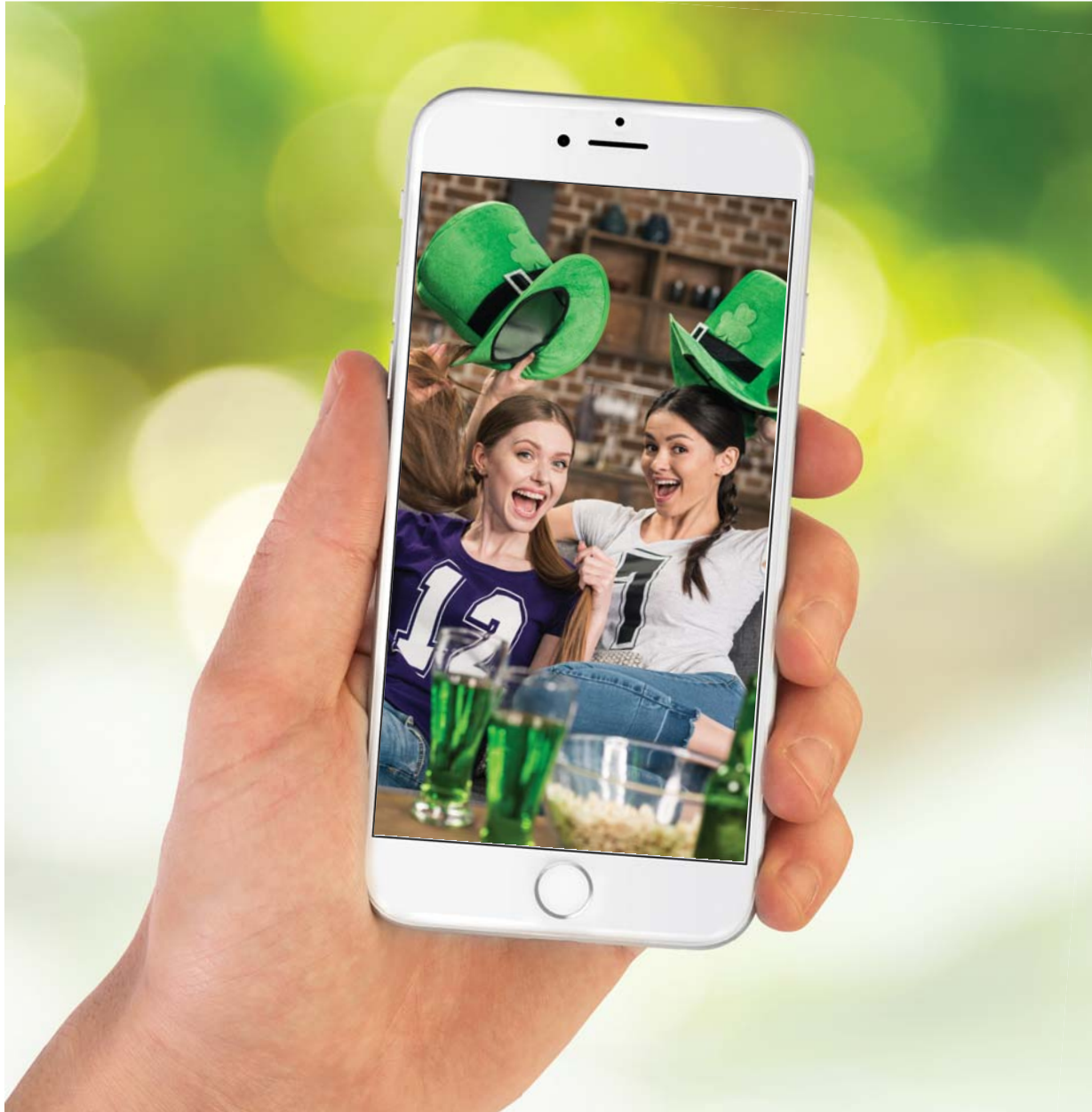
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