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March 2024 • Volume 17 Number 3

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba



Evan Keller of Keller Developments says his company will break ground within weeks on two apartment buildings planned for Moosomin.

More construction in immediate Moosomin area than ever before: More than \$52 million worth of construction under way

Moosomin Economic Development Officer Casey McCormac says the fact that everyone is working together on economic development is the reason there is more construction going on in Moosomin and the immediate surrounding area than ever before.

There is more than \$52.5 million worth of construction under way right now in the Moosomin area, with more projects coming up, one to start within weeks.

Current projects include:

- A \$14 million water plant expansion and new water line from wells at Moosomin Lake under way which will accommodate growth in the Town of Moosomin up to 4,600 people.

- \$12,550,000 worth of commercial construction in Moosomin including the new Borderland Co-op grocery store, Skout Brewing's new building, and the Anytime Fitness Gym.

- A \$10 million airport expansion which will allow the Saskatchewan Air Ambulance to serve the region, and

will lead to new commercial opportunities.

- An \$8.8 million rehabilitation project at Moosomin Dam under construction currently.

- Several million dollars worth of commercial construction in the RM of Moosomin commercial development just east of Moosomin.

- A \$1 million rebuild currently under way at the Moosomin Weigh Scales.

On top of the more than \$50 million in construction currently under way, projects on the horizon include:

- Two 12 unit apartment buildings planned by Keller Developments for a total of \$4.1 million. Evan Keller says work will start soon on the 24 new housing units. "We have our development permit and we have applied for our building permit," he said Thursday. "The intent is to get started as soon as possible, so likely breaking ground in the next couple weeks."

- A proposed \$10 million McNaughton High School renovation. The Southeast Cornerstone School Division is

applying for provincial funding for the renovation project. An application was submitted to the provincial Education Ministry Thursday, February 29.

- A second building for Play Fair Daycare to accommodate 90 additional day care spots. That project is estimated to cost about \$3 million.

- A bulk fuel and cardlock development planned by the United Farmers of Alberta.

McCormac says she believes Moosomin is an attractive place to live, leading to the strong growth trend.

"I think that it's the amount of people that we have in town—more and more people want to live that small-town life, they like that small-town feeling. The cost of living is so much higher in cities now so I think we've seen a lot more people move to town and we have a lot of people with that entrepreneurial spirit that gets things done. Moosomin is big on collaboration and we want to see growth for the town and for the people in town."

Continued on page 6

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In Moosomin:

National Firefighters Curling Championships start this week

BY ASHLEY BOCHKE
Moosomin is hosting the Canadian Firefighters Curling Championships, starting this week and running March 15-24.

Moosomin Recreation Director Mike Schwean says a lot of work has been done by a lot of people in preparation for this event.

The organizing committee is made up of local volunteers formed after Dale Nixon took the initiative to bring the event to Moosomin.

"There are probably three or four curlers in town curling in it. Dale Nixon was the one elected to the National Firefighters Curling board and bringing this event to Moosomin is something he was interested in and pursued. It is a Dale Nixon initiative. There is about 12 of us on the committee—Myself, Patti-Jo Nixon, Dale Nixon, Peter Nabholz, Graham Mannle, Sandra Garrett, Owen Frappe, Jeff Warken-tin, Samantha Felsing, Casey McCormac, and Rob Hanson.

"The Moosomin Moose is the group hosting the event, we did everything under the Moose name. Our committee is made up of representatives of Economic Development, Recreation, the Curling Club."

Moosomin smallest centre to host national event

Schwean says this is the first time this curling event



The Canadian Firefighters Curling Association's Championship trophy.

has been held in a small town.

"It's been hosted mostly in cities before. Next year it is in Calgary. This is the first time they have done it in a small town. The rest are all cities, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary. They were out on the East Coast last year and it is a little different because they curl and then their hotels were a ways away, but here everything is close. I think it will work really good for the community and the curlers."

He says a lot of work has gone into planning this event by the committee and local volunteers.

"There has been a lot of hours put into it. It is quite detailed like something you wouldn't think about for example, drivers and vehicles. We have to have drivers and vehicles for each team and buses to pick them up. That was another difference to is if they were in Fredericton they just hoped in a cab and were at the rink or their hotel."

"Here, we have to get to the airport in Regina plus drive them back and some teams don't come until later so it is a lot of planning. It is a pretty intensive week with a fair amount of planning."

He said lots of volunteers will be involved in the event.

"There are a lot of volunteers, so that has been good. I think they are good with all their drivers, all the nights are sponsored so it is good."

"There has been good support from the community—when they went out to do the program they were hoping they would get \$20,000 and I think they're at about \$30,000-\$35,000 now so that is obviously really good."

Schwean says the funds raised from the event will be distributed among multiple causes.

"There were four pillars, Muscular Dystrophy, the CT Scanner, Fire Department, and the Curling Club."

"There were different agreements made for example the curling club

would charge for the venue, but then they would get some of the funds back. Our goal is to raise \$20,000 to \$50,000. There are a lot of expenses going into this event, but we have a lot of support from the town and businesses."

The curling draws, entertainment and Silent Auction are open to the public throughout the week.

"There will be a Silent Auction at the venue. I think it goes on all week during the events there. Anyone can bid on the Silent Auction. Same with the meals, there are meals at the Convention Centre every day and those aren't

open to the public, but all the other things are open to the public. The entertainment, auction, the curling draft. That will be pretty cool. We have Rhett Parks as auctioneer and Darren Dupont with the Rod Pederson show as the MC."

Schwean says there are a few last-minute preparations before the event begins.

"We have to make sure they get all the vehicles in place, all the itinerary done, and all the stuff set up at the Convention Centre. They hired Cory Turpie to do the ice again so he is going to come in and do all the major maintenance this

weekend and starting next week, melting it down and building it back up. Sandra is really busy with meals to so it is a lot of work, but going to be really cool. I've never been involved in anything like this and think it is cool like for example, a lot of the different nights the team picks the meal with a flavour to their province. So, the Atlantic teams said lobsters, I think Saskatchewan is baby back ribs. It is all different for each province so it makes for quite a chore for Sandra. She cooks it all. She is cooking the meals every night."

Continued on page 6

Daryl Harrison

Member of the Legislative Assembly
Cannington Constituency



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306-443-4400

CanningtonConstituency@sasktel.net

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List of Classes
MARCH - APRIL 2024

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY
Friday, March 15	6 pm - 8 pm	Kids' Pysanka (Ukrainian Easter Eggs) with Kristy Ostafie
Saturday, March 16	1 pm - 4 pm	Pysanka (Ukrainian Easter Eggs) with Kristy Ostafie
Sunday, March 17	1 pm - 5 pm	Open Studio
Monday, March 18	9 am - 3 pm	PrairieLand Art Group
	7 pm - 9:30 pm	Flower Doodles with Darlene Strong
Wednesday, March 20	3:30 pm - 6 pm	Kids' Cooking Class with Jen Grant
	7 pm - 9 pm	Beginner Knitting with Chris Moellmann
Thursday, March 21	3:30 pm - 6 pm	Kids' Cooking Class with Jen Grant
Saturday, March 23	9 am - 12 pm	Oil Painting with Easy Art Valley View Studio
Monday, March 25	7 pm - 9 pm	Open Studio
Tuesday, March 26	7 pm - 9 pm	Spring Bulb Workshop with Dana Crosson
Wednesday, March 27	3:30 pm - 6 pm	Kids' Cooking Class with Jen Grant
Thursday, March 28	3:30 pm - 6 pm	Kids' Cooking Class with Jen Grant
	7 pm - 9 pm	Resin / Wooden Feathers with Kathleen Lagasse
Monday, April 1	9 am - 3 pm	PrairieLand Art Group
Wednesday, April 3	7 pm - 8 pm	Photshop for beginners with Krista Crellin
Saturday, April 6	9 am - 2 pm	Bun making with Devona Putland
Sunday, April 7	1 pm - 5 pm	Open Studio
Monday, April 8	6 pm - 8 pm	Kids' Tote Bag Painting with Olha Volokh
Tuesday, April 9	7 pm - 9 pm	Tote Bag Painting with Olha Volokh
Friday, April 12	6 pm - 9 pm	Card Making with Pamela Wushke
Saturday, April 13	9 am - 12 pm	Oil Painting with Easy Art Valley View Studio
Monday, April 15	9 am - 3 pm	PrairieLand Art Group
	7 pm - 9 pm	Open Studio
Friday, April 19	4 pm - 5:30 pm	Kids' Alcohol Ink with Lyla Smart
	6:30 pm - 8 pm	Adult & Teen Alcohol ink with Lyla Smart

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Contract signed with Copper Ridge Construction: Rocanville Pool to reopen in 2025

BY KARA KINNA

The Rocanville pool project took a giant leap forward on March 1 after the town signed a contract with Copper Ridge Construction in Wapella to act as general contractor for the project.

Plans are for construction to start right away, with the project to be completed by the end of 2024 and the pool being operational for the 2025 swim season. After putting out a call for RFPs, the town made the decision to switch from a steel building to a wooden building, with the project budgeted at \$4 million.

"We have chosen a contractor. We're working with our engineering group and they still have some work to do to get finalized drawings on a wood building because we made that switch, but for all intents and purposes, I believe work will be starting as early as next week on the inside trench—the piping trench around the pool," said Rocanville Mayor Ron Reed. "They're going to do a fair chunk of that before demolition just to get it out of the way."

"So everything is a go, and looking at schedules, we should be done by the end of the year and within the town's budget."

"Copper Ridge Construction out of Wapella is our contractor, and we're looking at right around the \$4 million mark for overall cost. They are the general contractor and the big thing is that the Pool Committee is going to have a lot of say in the subtrades and doing a bunch of that work just to help save costs overall. For any kind of contractor, time is money, so if we can reduce that time spent for them it should reduce the overall costs of the project."

"We're going to work on finding those subtrades right away and then work that into the schedule of the general contractor. With the type of building that we're doing, things like electrical are all going to be service mount conduits so it's not like the electrician has to be there during construction. But any synergies we can find with that time-wise and schedule, with the subtrades and the general contractor, obviously we're going to take advantage of."

Reed says little has changed from the original project plan other than switching to a wooden building.

"It's basically the same but we went a little bit bigger."



A rendering of what the inside will look like after construction.

The building is going to be a little bit bigger just to avoid the old concrete foundation so we don't have to completely remove all of that concrete because we're going to be outside that old footprint of the building. So we're going to kind of get it down to grade level but start from scratch outside of the original building."

How much of a difference did choosing a wooden building make?

"It was a little bit cheaper but the big thing for us was the time frame," says Reed. "In order to secure a steel package we would have had to have a manufacturer start on that probably a month and a half ago to have it here in time to meet our schedules for construction. But with wood being more readily available, we had some time to finalize some finer details. And then talking with a couple of other business owners in town that have gone with steel buildings in the past, versus a wood building in a similar high moisture area, we felt a wood building is actually a superior option."

"Some of the finer details that we've ironed out is that it's going to be very moisture proof—small things like cement board versus drywall just to avoid that moisture being able to penetrate into the drywall. It won't do that to the cement board."

Reed says the pool committee more or less knows what to expect in terms of costs for some of the subtrades that

will be involved in the project due to quotes that came in during the RFP process.

"We got a fair amount of quotes with this last proposal that we put on SaskTenders with some of the major subtrades—the HVAC portion and the electrical portion. That interior finishing is probably going to be the big part that's kind of unknown," he says.

As for the impact on taxpayers, Reed is hoping there won't be much impact at all.

"The overall project and the overall borrow that the town is going to be looking at is probably, as far as we can tell, around the \$2 million mark. But as we said kind of from the beginning of this project, we're looking into 2025 for a rather substantial increase to our potash tax sharing. So with initial construction this year and grant finalization having to be done by the end of year, we're really feeling that there's going to be no impact to taxpayers."

(The expected increase in) potash tax sharing will cover loan payments and we have had a fair amount of donations that have already come in that will give us a good start to make up that difference as well.

"We're somewhat bound by that referendum as well. People knew what the implications might have been with that \$700 tax increase over three years and we had good support even with that being a potential."

Steven Bonk, MLA for Moosomin Constituency

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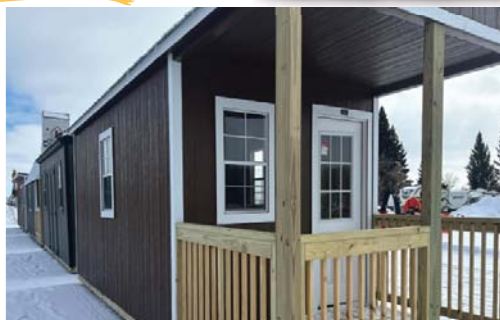
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Provincial funding sought for renovation project: Division applies for \$10 million McNaughton project

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK
AND ASHLEY BOCHIEK

The Southeast Cornerstone School Division is applying to the provincial government to fund a \$10 million renovation project for McNaughton High School in Moosomin.

"The Minor Capital submission is going to focus on health and safety, first off, which is like the fire suppression, electrical upgrades accessibility, additional washrooms, etc.," said Southeast Cornerstone Director of Education Keith Keating.

"It will also look at the re-modernization of the school, so like interior and exterior, windows, doors, stucco, brick repointing etc., as well as looking at some programming upgrades, specifically Practical and Applied Arts. Air conditioning will be part of what we put in the proposal, but we'll see what we get."

Why did the school division decide to apply for a capital project for McNaughton High at this time? "I think there's a compelling argument to apply for minor funding in that one to ten million dollar range," said Keating.

"The input from the community helped confirm that, with support from almost all participants who answered the survey," said Keating.

He said the plans have been in the works for a couple of years.

"It's been a couple of years that we've

been thinking about it because they just came out with that Minor Capital Project Application, so we've been thinking about where would be a good place to do that and Moosomin was at the forefront of the communities that could really utilize that.

"We worked pretty hard with the school admin as well as Facilities and Transportation for feedback but then the community consultation provided some further consideration for priorities for us. That helped assist us with that application process. There will be additional input from staff and students if there's an approval from the province."

The program the funding is being sought through has an upper limit of \$10 million, and the Moosomin project is likely to come in close to the limit.

"The application will be on the mid to high end of that \$10 million dollar cap. Just looking at all of the things that we'd like to do at McNaughton School," said Keating.

"The deadline for applications is February 29 so I know that Facilities has been busily working away on the application. They're just waiting for some letters of support and some further information from the Provincial Education Plan and some of the things around PA opportunities for the school admin so that they can get that in before that February 29 deadline.

"That approval is typically given at budget time and a project can get approval quickly or can sit on the provincial lists for awhile before being approved, so we're hoping for sooner rather than later."

If the project is approved in the budget this March, the work would be done within two years.

"What they look at is that two year timeline from approval," says Keating. "You're then looking at the two school year timeframe to get things in place and get that going. There is an opportunity for an extension and looking at the scope of what we applied for, if there is an approval, it could be beyond that two year time scope. As we do that project of course, there's the project itself but there's the added complexity of providing programs for students while that renovation is going on as well."

The plan is at the conceptual phase at this point.

"Right now we have third party engineer reports which are required, which detail concerns, requirements and solutions, but it's more of a conceptual plan at this point. Detailed construction plans would follow the successful completion of an application," said Keating.

He said school staff will be consulted as plans are developed, if the project is approved.

"It certainly would be the best practice

to engage them when appropriate," he said. "The staff are providing the program in the school and I think you heard during the community consultation that they provide a broad range of options for students in the school in Moosomin, so we'll be working fairly closely with them if an approval were granted."

While school divisions are allowed to submit up to two applications for minor capital projects in a budget cycle, the McNaughton project is the only application in the works by the school division at this point.

Keating said he is hopeful the province approves the McNaughton application.

"It really does depend on what they see across the province in terms of those Minor Capital Renovations," he said. "As the process is relatively new, it's hard to say how many they will approve. All we can really do is cross our fingers and hope at this point."

"The letters of support from the community are one of the factors they look at. It's not the only factor they would look at but ultimately there are limited dollars at the provincial level that they're going to spread out so it really depends on what the other communities are looking at in terms of the Minor Capital Renovations and how much they can spread those dollars out."

Feds owe Sask. small businesses \$7,000 each: CFIB

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Operating a small business in these volatile economic times is stressful enough, but knowing there's money owed to you just sitting in a big pile can be infuriating. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business recently released figures showing that Saskatchewan small businesses are owed the highest amount in carbon tax rebate cheques across the nation, with each of the 43,007 small businesses in the province owed \$6,990.

"We're still waiting for the rebates, and it's quite unfair for a lot of the small businesses that have been patiently waiting, because the federal government recently announced that they're going to be cutting the allocated nine per cent of rebates to five per cent starting this year, for small businesses," said SeoRhin Yoo, a policy analyst with the CFIB. "For Saskatchewan small businesses, fuel and energy costs has been one of their biggest cost challenges since 2021. It would have been really great for them to see this money, just to help with everything else as well. For a lot of small businesses, it could be money that's used to help pay their employees, it could be money that's used to invest in new equipment, that's more energy efficient. But we're just not seeing that."

According to figures from the CFIB, small and medium-sized businesses in this province should be receiving around \$300 million of the \$2.5 billion national total, or a one-time payout of just under \$7,000.

"That's a big chunk of money that small business owners could really use right now. It's deeply unfair that five years into the program, Ottawa is still sitting on over \$2.5 billion it owes to small firms," said CFIB president Dan Kelly. "Enough is enough. The government must act now and return the promised carbon tax revenues to all small businesses in the eight provinces under the federal backstop."

An independent third party was supposed to be in place to oversee the distribution of funds, but that has not happened.

"They did set their deadline to redistribute these funds for 2025, but I mean, with how the rollouts have been panning out these last couple of years, we're not too sure if we can hold them to that," Yoo said. In the meantime, the CFIB continues with their unchanging requests.

"We're currently calling on the federal government to immediately return the \$2.5 billion that's owed to all the small businesses. We're also calling them to

scrap the idea to reduce the small business share of the carbon tax revenue from nine per cent to five per cent, and to rebate these rebates annually. We also are calling on them to freeze the carbon tax rate at it's current level, because it's going up to \$80 a tonne next month in April," explained Yoo. "We're asking the federal government to give small businesses the relief that they desperately deserve and if you're a business owner, you can also go on to cfib.ca and sign our petition that we have out."

At press time, calls to the federal ministers of Environment, Small Business and even the Prime Minister's office went unanswered. However, the provincial government was more than happy to share their thoughts.

"We agree that it's unacceptable that over the last five years, the federal government has sat on this money and they haven't come up with a mechanism to distribute it back to Saskatchewan small businesses," said Crown corporations minister Dustin Duncan. "It's completely unacceptable, and just one more example of how this carbon tax is not good for Saskatchewan. It's not good for Saskatchewan residents or businesses and it's why we continue to call on the federal government to scrap the carbon tax for everyone on everything."

Duncan noted the province is also joining the chorus of voices expressing concern over the rebate money.

"Our understanding is that for Saskatchewan small businesses, this is about \$300 million of carbon tax money that the federal government is sitting on," he said. "So our finance minister's working with the CFIB and she's going to be putting forward a request to minister [Chrystia] Freeland for the money to be distributed in a fair and equitable way to Saskatchewan small businesses."

Saskatchewan residents overall could see their carbon tax rebates carved, due in part to the provincial government's decision to remove the tax from natural gas heating bills. Federal government figures note a family of four in Saskatchewan could expect \$1,800 in rebates this year, and the provincial government's removal of the tax on heating was projected to save the average household \$400 annually.

"The Federal Minister of Energy, when we first made our announcement, he said that the federal government was going to scrap the entire rebate for Saskatchewan residents, which if they did that, once again, we'd be on an un-level playing field, considering the treatment of the carbon tax and the rebates to Atlantic Cana-

dians," Duncan said.

"In Atlantic Canada, they allowed for a three year reduction or a three year elimination of the carbon tax on heating oil, which disproportionately benefits people in Atlantic Canada. And at the same time, they did make a corresponding reduction in in the rebate."

No official word on when or if Saskatchewan rebate cheques has come to fruition yet, with Duncan pointing to a game of

'wait and see.'

"We're waiting to see how the federal government is going to respond to that, whether or not they are going to - as the Minister initially said - completely eliminate the rebate, which certainly we would have a very big problem with, or if there's going to be a corresponding reduction in the rebate based on the amount of the carbon tax that we're not submitting to the federal government," he said.

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Rocanville rallies around Haylee Johnson and her family

Johnson hopes her battle with leukemia encourages people to donate stem cells and blood

BY KARA KINNA

At age 28, Haylee Johnson is battling for her life, but it's a battle that she can fight knowing that her community has her back.

A fundraiser is planned in Rocanville for Johnson for April 6 to help Haylee and her family absorb some of the costs of an over-two-year-long battle with Leukemia that started in October 2022, and that sees Haylee currently in hospital for her second stem-cell transplant.

Haylee says this battle has turned her life upside down.

"October 6, 2022 is when I found out that something was wrong with my blood and then the official diagnosis was October 8 of 2022," she says. "And how we found out was I had a miscarriage and I had to have a D&C because my body wasn't recognizing that the baby was gone. With that, I had to get the blood work, and my blood work was terrible. So then I went to Regina and I had all the tests done, bone marrow biopsy, and then they found out that I had AML. So that's how it all started.

"It is a leukemia. It's a blood cancer. Acute Myeloid Leukemia is the actual name but they say AML for short."

Haylee started into chemo treatments once she got the diagnosis.

"I had an induction round, which was very hard because I had just had the D&C on October 6. Then on October 8 we started chemo and I don't even know how many blood transfusions because I was bleed-



Haylee Johnson with her husband Rustin Campbell and their two boys, five-year-old Aldin Campbell, left, and eight-year-old Eastin Campbell, right. In middle is the family dog Gunner.

ing. Also that same month I went septic because the D&C was a failed D&C. So then I had to have a second D&C. I almost died, because the chemo, it wipes out everything in your blood. It wipes out your immune system so I had nothing to fight anything. It was really scary. I was on a lot of big drugs.

"Then I had my consolidation round, which was after the induction round, in Regina. By then, they knew that I needed a transplant—a bone marrow or stem cell transplant. I only have one sibling, and they tested my sister, because it's best to have a sibling as a donor, because you accept it better. I was lucky that my sister was a 100 per cent match. It's very rare that we were the same blood type, so I was very grateful.

"Then in January of 2023 I had my stem cell transplant so I was in Saskatoon until mid-April. It's quite the process. I was in hospital for the transplant for 44 days and then I had to get an apartment for the rest of that time.

"After the consolidation they said I was in remission but because I have a mutation in my blood I needed the transplant because the cancer would just come back. So the hope was with the transplant that it would erase the mutation and I would take on my sister's blood traits. But I have relapsed now."

Haylee says the relapse is serious.

Continued on page 8

More than \$52 million worth of construction under way

Continued from front

She said that collaboration has led to unprecedented growth.

"Moosomin is growing at a rate that we've never seen before because of the collaboration that we've seen with the town of Moosomin, the RM of Moosomin and the Community Builders Alliance," she said.

"All of those entrepreneurial people put together have pushed for this crazy amount of growth and I think we're going to see even more than just this in the near future."

She doesn't believe the growth trend is short term, but is the start of a long term growth trajectory. "I think it's the start of a long period of growth because there are so many more projects that are on the horizon that are 5-10 years out and I think that it will just keep growing and growing from here," she said.

What will it take to keep the growth going?

"We need to continue to keep up with the demand for certain things like housing," says McCormac, "and make sure that the residents have everything that they need and that we're continually bringing in those people that are like-minded to Moosomin—entrepreneurial, community-driven and excited to be a part of small town growth."

The addition of 42 units of senior housing with the

opening of Cobblestone House last year didn't have the expected effect on vacancy rates elsewhere in town, and even with construction about to start on 24 units of apartments, McCormac said more needs to be done on the housing front.

"We'll start to see some stuff for housing here soon," she said. "We can't talk too much about it but council is working on some stuff that's going to assist with the growth and help with the need for housing," she said.

She doesn't take the credit for the development taking

place, but says it's everyone working together that makes the difference.

"I think that it's a collaboration with everyone and people realizing that it's not competition—it's all collaboration, and what you can do to help the community, is going to help you in the long run as well."

The \$52.5 million worth of current construction works out to \$17,500 per capita. By comparison, total construction in Regina last year, commercial and residential, totalled \$2,000 per capita.

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Firefighters Curling

Continued from Page 3

"There are about 11 teams and Dale figures about 100 people in total and the executives so probably about 120 people coming to town. Then the next weekend is our Carded Hockey tournament and there is about eight teams for that, so it will be a zoo. I know we have hockey teams staying in Virden and maybe one in Brandon because we don't have enough room in our hotels. That is as close they can get."

Vehicles are provided by local dealerships for the teams transportation.

"Rob found all the volunteers for the drivers—that was a big job. It is a long time like 10 days, so there were a couple times he would find someone and then there was a day they couldn't make it so he would have to find others. That to me would probably be one of the biggest jobs, finding drivers and vehicles. Celebration, Bradley's, Dodge, and Todd Davidson are offering some of their vehicles for drivers. I think that was probably the biggest job."

Mike hopes to host future events like this for the town of Moosomin.

"I think Moosomin would host something like this again. We are trying to become more of a destination, but we're running into a lack of hotel rooms. This worked out really good and the hotels were really good to us.

"It came together better than I thought, but Dale has a lot of experience. He knew exactly what was going on and that was good.

"I always think these events are huge for future possibilities you don't even know about. People talk and share their experience with the town. These events are impactful. All these things are great."

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Government, school boards ink four-year funding plan

Deal brings \$356.6 million per year for classroom supports and mental health

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Late last week, the provincial government announced a four-year funding agreement with the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, pledging a minimum of \$1.4 billion over four years—\$356.6 million annually—toward classroom supports and youth mental health.

The main goal of the agreement is to formalize collaboration between the ministry of Education and the 27 school divisions that make up the SSBA, and solidify the funding commitment over the next four fiscal years, effective April 1.

“This agreement provides a written guarantee, signed by the government, for long-term funding for classroom supports - funding that will address important issues like classroom size and complexity,” Education Minister Jeremy Cockrill said. “Now that our government has made this unprecedented commitment in a signed agreement, it’s time for the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation to end their job action and return to the bargaining table, so that students and teachers can return to the classroom.”

The agreement serves as a minimum funding commitment, and can be changed

at any time within those four years should all parties involve agree.

“This agreement allows for the continued discussions with school divisions regarding future funding as typically done during budget deliberations,” noted part of the signed funding agreement.

Supports of Learning will gain the lion’s share of the allocated dollars, with more than \$300,000 per year, and Educational Assistants will see \$7,000 per year. Under the Mental Health Capacity Building (through the Ministry of Health) tab,

there will be allocated \$3,000 annually. A separate line item for bullying prevention (through the Ministry of Education) notes \$609 per year.

“This agreement represents the willingness of both the Ministry of Education and school boards to work collaboratively toward solutions with some predictable and sustainable funding to back it up,” SSBA President Jaimie Smith-Windsor said. “These issues are best addressed at the local level, working with teachers, staff, students, parents, and families.”



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Rocanville rallies around Haylee Johnson and her family

Continued from page 6
 "It's very aggressive. My mutation is really rare and there is not a lot of information on it. My doctor is talking to clinics in the United States, big hospitals in the States, trying to gain more information on it just to give me a bit more of a fighting chance."

Haylee says the entire battle has been hard on her and her family, but she continues to hold out hope.

"It's been a total change," she says. "I can't work and now I'm going to be off again for another two years because after a transplant you can't do anything since you're so immune compromised."

"I never realized how important blood products are. I always tell my friends, 'Go donate blood because you are literally saving someone's life.' I've had in the hundreds of blood transfusions and each one of those saved my life, because if I didn't have that, I wouldn't be here."

"Same with the Stem Cell Registry, it's a 20-second swab on your cheek to be on the registry between ages 17-35 I believe for the Canadian registry."

"You can talk to your doctor or you can also go onto the website Canadian Blood Services and there's a thing where you can sign up and they'll send you a swab, you just swab your cheek and then send it back to them. I think my mother-in-law is trying to set up, at the benefit there, a stem cell drive. She's trying to get Blood Canada to come out and if people are willing to, to swab their cheeks. It really makes a difference. I was talking to my doctor and there's not a lot of people on the registry from Canada."

Haylee is away from home often due to her treatments and says the fundraiser for her and her family will help a lot.

"I've been away from home a lot for the last two years and there are so many appointments and different things," she says. "About twice a month I'd have to go either to Regina or Saskatoon to see my doctors. Just with the cost of gas and driving and hotels, it's expensive. One thing with transplant is that you get

very tired. So with the hotels it's very expensive. And also medication. You're on tons of medication after transplant. So it adds up."

Haylee says the community support that she and her family have received have been amazing. The family moved to Rocanville from the Carrot River and Arborfield area in northern Saskatchewan in 2020.

"Oh, it's been amazing," she says. "When we first moved to Rocanville I was a little bit nervous because it's pretty far from home, from where I originally grew up, but the community has been great. They've helped with our kids. Especially when I first got diagnosed—your life just gets flipped upside down, you're trying to figure things out, how are we going to make this work? And get the kids to school on time. We have a dog also. But our neighbours and everyone reached out. 'We'll help you. We'll watch the kids or the dog.' They brought meals to my husband so he didn't have to cook."

Haylee says the entire ordeal has been hard on her family, especially knowing what's coming with the second transplant that she is having. She says she has about a 30 per cent chance of survival.

"Especially this time around because my kids understand now that mom's going to be away again. It's been quite hard on them and there's been a lot of tears," she says.

"It's a little bit more risky having the second transplant. I have about a 30 per cent chance of survival for the transplant. But you know, I told my husband—because my husband is pretty devastated, and I was too—but I said that some people go into the office and they get told, 'We've got nothing for you.' Then you have to go home and basically wait. So I said, 'At least we still have a chance.' My doctors are amazing. I am very lucky that they've all been great."

"I went through transplant once, so I kind of know what to expect this time around, and my doctor did say that I'm very lucky—other than the cancer, I am a fairly healthy

person. I couldn't imagine if I wasn't. It would be so hard, but I'm lucky in that sense. I'm lucky that I'm young."

"I can fight it a little bit harder. I think about the older people in here and I don't know how they do it, because it's rough. You're so sick. So I'm lucky in that

sense, I guess, but I'm too young to be going through this and it's challenging."

Haylee says, if anything, she hopes her battle inspires people to donate blood and stem cells, or to donate to organizations that help with cancer treatments.

"I hope it just brings awareness to what people

go through and maybe people will want to donate blood and stem cells. Or even help Telemiracle. They help out a lot of people in my position."

The fundraiser is set for Saturday, April 6 at the Nutrien Rocanville Hall. Doors open at 4:30 pm and dinner is served at 5 followed

by a dance from 7:30 pm to midnight. There will also be a silent auction, a live pie auction, door prizes, and designated driver services. Tickets for the fundraiser can be purchased in Rocanville at Manetain Liquor Store, Hag's Hideaway, TD Bank, and Rocanville Remedial Massage,

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Tanya Birkbeck changing lives in Haiti, working with World Food Program

Tanya Birkbeck grew up near Welwyn, and her career has taken her to Montreal, London, Sudan, and now Haiti

BY ASHLEY BOCHEK

Tanya Birkbeck has gone from one of the main food growing areas of the world to working with an agency distributing food to the world's most needy. She grew up on a farm outside of Welwyn and now is the Head of Communications for the World Food Program (WFP).

She is stationed in Haiti and sees the effects of food insecurity in the country. The World-Spectator interviewed Birkbeck about her work:

What is your role with the World Food Program?

I am head of communications for the World Food Program (WFP) in Haiti. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization. We are primarily concerned with food security. Our slogan is *Saving Lives, Changing Lives*. A lot of people will associate WFP with images of truckloads of food being delivered in the case of an emergency such as a storm or in conflict situations, or airplanes dropping parachutes of food to areas that have been affected by food insecurity, and that is part of what we do. In Haiti, emergency response is part of what we do, and is important. It saves lives.

We also have the aspect of working long term and changing lives. This is where we are working to address the root causes of hunger. That can include collaborating with local farmers, helping them to find local markets and increase their production. I really like this part of my job because it draws on my own roots.

I grew up on a farm just outside of Welwyn. For the past several years I have been working with farmers in different places around the world and that is something I am quite passionate about. We're not just working with providing emergency rations, that is part of it, but part of it is this work to help countries grow their own food. A lot of times food insecurity has to do with things like a lack of capacity to produce enough food, it has to do with the capacity to move food from one place to another. It's not so simple that there is just not enough food or that there is not the capacity to produce it. It could be that the farmers maybe just don't have the tools, or it may have to do with regulations.

What is happening right now in Haiti?

On Thursday, February 16, we issued a press release because we are really concerned about recent violence in Haiti. It has been difficult in Haiti for many years, but in the last couple of months, since the beginning of 2024,



Tanya Birkbeck (in the dark blue shirt at centre) with World Food Program Haiti Country Director, WFP security and a CNN crew after a day of content collection in Jérémie, in the south of Haiti. The helicopter is a UN Humanitarian Air Service aircraft, which is a designated air service for humanitarian use, run by the WFP.

(Photo: WFP / Luc Segur)

we have seen an uptick in the amount of violence. We are quite concerned about our ability to reach people at this moment. We look at the trends of what is happening with the organization and what messages you want to communicate at that moment. It could be a call to action, like right now we are saying we really need to have a certain level of security, which will allow for movement of humanitarian goods, and other times it can be sharing the results of reports which look at the levels of food insecurity.

Sometimes it can be telling the stories of the people that we work with, but we also tell stories and publish them on our own website. We also work very actively with journalists, and it is exciting stuff.

Unfortunately, the security situation in Haiti is very difficult, so that often means that it takes a lot of logistics to be able to get journalists to be able to tell stories of the people we are able to assist.

Sometimes that means taking them in a helicopter because it is not secure enough to drive from one place to another or arranging with communities in some of the most impoverished or dangerous neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince so we can go and meet the people. We work with the government and local organizations and together we all co-ordinate to make sure we can reach these people.

Continued on pages 16 and 24

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Little Dresses group celebrates 10 years of helping those most in need

On Tuesday, February 27, Wawota's Little Dresses group celebrated their 10th anniversary. The group gets together every Tuesday and makes dresses and shorts for children in developing countries. The group relies on donations of fabric to make the clothes, and relies on people travelling to deliver the clothes to developing countries. The volunteers make quilts out of the excess material.

See page 26 for a full story on how three local women delivered their dresses to Tanzania.

Sunnette Kamffer photos





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\$4.5 million grant for Redvers water treatment plant

BY KARA KINNA AND RYAN KIEDROWSKI,
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
The town of Redvers will receive \$2,464,000 from the federal government and \$2,053,128 from the provincial government for upgrades to the town's water treatment plant.

The town will contribute \$1,642,872 to the project, which has a total cost of \$6,160,000. Communities across Saskatchewan are upgrading critical public infrastructure through 34 projects after a joint investment of more than \$51 million from the federal and provincial governments.

"The value of these projects is so much more than dollars: it's setting communities on a course for continued growth and renewal," Saskatchewan Government Relations Minister Don McMorris said. "As we move into spring construction season, this new and improved infrastructure will produce immediate and long-term benefits and build excitement within our communities as they continue to grow and protect the quality of life of their residents for generations to come."

The Town of Redvers will see upgrades to their water treatment plant. This will include substituting the current water treatment process with two systems that are better at removing contaminants. The facility will also add more water storage and a back-up power source, positioning it for growth.

"The residents of Redvers will be beyond thrilled with the news of the awarded ICIP grant for our water treatment plant upgrade," Town of Redvers Chief Administrative Officer Tricia Pickard said. "Embarking on this project will ensure that Redvers is not only compliant with the Water Security Agency but also providing the best water to our residents directly to their taps today and in the future. This is an upgrade that was long-awaited! Acquiring the ICIP grant was instrumental in keeping ratepayer costs minimal. Our staff and council have and will continue to strive to provide high-quality services to our residents. We are truly thankful."

Redvers Mayor Brad Bulbuck says the town and the town staff have worked hard to make a new water treatment project a reality. He says it's a process that started



The current Redvers water treatment plant. An addition will be made to the existing plant to house the new water treatment infrastructure being done as part of a major water treatment upgrade.

around two years ago. "It was a long time coming. It was a long process. Going back two or three years ago, the Water Security Agency said we had to do something with our water," he says. "We went from wondering how we were going to accomplish this to all hands on deck, and doing a lot of background work prior to writing the grant, and then the work involved in writing the grant. The admin team did an absolutely fabulous job."

"The process spanned about two years. First of all we did a questionnaire in the community asking people where they spend their money on water, how often they replace their taps, how often they buy bottled water, and things like that. Because we knew there was going to be an education process to be able to implement an infrastructure fee because the infrastructure fee increase is what is going to service the debt on the loan. But when we did our due diligence and survey and checked with other communities, we found we were probably one of the lower priced for average costs of water, sewer and garbage in the southeast."

"So through that education process we talked about what was required to build a water treatment plant and what the infrastructure fund was for, and then we started the process. We did a survey on our existing wells and observation wells. We got all of our ducks in a row there and made sure

everything was compliant with the province and licensing, and then we applied for grants to close some old wells that should have been closed years ago."

"And one of the recommendations from Water Security was to have a second well in place. We funded that through gas tax money, and then we started the process of going down this road, working very closely with Water Security. They have been very, very helpful in this whole process. I can't say enough about them."

"So Tricia and her team put together all of the information required for the grant, and it was an 180 page application and we got approved on first try."

"We've known since September but we couldn't do a public announcement on it. Yet we had to go ahead and talk to the engineers and get the process started, but we haven't really been able to share our excitement with the community."

Bulbuck says the project is major in terms of the impact it will have on Redvers.

"It's huge. If you don't have good water, how do you attract new business?" he said. "When Carlyle has good water, and Carn-duff has good water, and Moosomin has good water, if you don't have good water, how do you attract new business to your community? How do you attract people to live there if you have bad water?"

He says work has already started on get-

ting a pilot project ready to find out what kind of water treatment system will work best for Redvers.

"The pilot project for the treatment is going to come together this spring. They are going to actually run a mini treatment plant based on what we are trying to accomplish. So they are going to do a mini treatment on the water and see what it needs before they go ahead with the final construction."

"So that's a process we are working with the engineer on and the company that was awarded the contract. But that's only the contract for the pilot process at this point."

"It's anticipated to be a combination of bio filtration and reverse osmosis. That is what we are doing the pilot on because that's what Carn-duff has and it's a similar water supply. So that's what we think it's going to be but we don't want to be firm on that until we go through the pilot process."

Tricia Pickard says the announcement of the ICIP grant is huge news for Redvers.

"This is very significant because back in December 2021, Water Security came through our doors and said 'You need to do a water upgrade. This is not functional any longer and you have to make steps.'

"So we needed to do this regardless, but to acquire the ICIP grant was instrumental to keep our ratepayers' utility invoices low and not have to do large increases because we would have had to do this. We would have had to increase quite a bit more—like two, three or four hundred dollars every quarter extra. We would have scaled the project back to just be probably biofiltration and then reverse osmosis in years to come, but it still would have been a \$4 million dollar project and would have fallen right to the ratepayers to pay."

"So accessing this, we are able to do the whole project, which is \$6.1 million, which will include the biofiltration and the reverse osmosis."

"We do have to go through a piloting process first—that's what we're thinking after doing our research, talking to communities, Water Security, our engineer, that biofiltration and RO will be the best, but you still want to go through the pilot project to figure that out."

Continued on page 19



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Tanya Birkbeck changing lives in Haiti, working with World Food Program

Tanya Birkbeck grew up near Welwyn, and her career has taken her to Montreal, London, Sudan, and now Haiti

Continued from page 13

Working with journalists is a big part of my job and it also includes managing communication within the organization itself. We are a humanitarian organization that works in many different countries around the world, so we want people to know what we are doing here.

I work with a team that also includes Haitians, we have a Haitian photographer, we have a Haitian communications officer, to help communicate not only with the international media, but also with the local media so that the people in the country that we are serving understand what we are doing and why we are doing it. The local community needs to know because sometimes people don't understand the way big international organizations work, where we are putting our funding and how we make decisions, which is why it is important to us to communicate with the people living in the countries where we are working.

What does Canada contribute to the WFP?

I work very closely with our WFP Canada office because Canada is one of our most important donors. We have a close partnership with our WFP Canada office to communicate what we are doing with WFP funds here in Haiti.

Canada is a really important donor to WFP and a major part of what Canada gives money for is school meals. That is a significant activity of WFP. We provide school meals to about 420,000 students across the country and for most of these kids it can be the only meal they have in a day, and Canada is a major donor to that, so I get to see the very significant impact of Canadian funding here. There are kids who are eating who wouldn't get a meal otherwise, if it weren't for the assistance of Canada.

What did you do before working with the WFP in Haiti?

I used to work for the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in South Sudan. There we did a lot of communication with farmers as well. We had a radio program where we gave weather information and we gave advice to farmers. It would link the people in rural areas in South Sudan where there is quite a low level of literacy. Radio is a very important medium for us so we would use it a lot and we would give information on what our organization does, weather information, and give advice on how farmers can improve their techniques or how livestock keepers could help keep their cows, sheep, goats, and chickens healthy.

Radio was a super important medium for us in that particular setting. Before that I worked many years as a journalist. I attended the University of Regina Journalism School and I worked for CBC in Regina. Then, I was in Montreal for about a decade and as most people do working in journalism these days you do radio, television, writing for the web, and I was also a radio producer for a few years, so I do have a strong background particularly in broadcast media. Then for a few years I also worked as a freelance journalist and did some international reporting, I did some reporting for the Globe and Mail, leading up to my career now, with the United Nations. That experience as a journalist has really informed the work that I do now, especially because I am interacting a lot with journalists now, so I know what they need to tell their stories and how to integrate what the organization I am currently working for does, how to integrate that into the story of the journalist so it all ties together.

How did you get to where you are, working with the WFP, from growing up in rural Saskatchewan?



Tanya Birkbeck interviewing women who have started small businesses thanks to cash transfers administered by the WFP.

(Photo: WFP/Jonathan Dumont)

ewan?

It is interesting. I have thought about that a lot to be honest. A lot of people from small-town Saskatchewan go on to do much greater and more interesting things than I have done. It is true I have a very international career where I am travelling all the time. It could look quite romantic to some people maybe. I think one thing is that the world has changed a lot. I grew up on a small farm with very little contact with the outside world except that I was a big reader, and I couldn't just look something up on my smart phone. I read a lot and became really fascinated by the world and by other countries. I always was creative, and I liked to create my own magazines at home and to write. I've always loved writing. I used to write fiction and submit my stories to competitions when I was a teenager.

Once I was in university, I thought I wanted to be a teacher. I started out in the college of education and then realized I could get paid to write and to communicate with people and then that just seemed like that's not even work. Once I started working as a journalist, I immediately knew I wanted to tell stories from all over the world. When I was at the U of R and I was looking at all of the internships available, I was like 'which one is the farthest away?' So, I ended up doing my internship in Newfoundland. Then, I did a graduating scholarship in London which was with an international press agency and then I came back, and I worked in Canada for many years,

but whenever I had a chance to travel, I would always pitch a story wherever I was travelling to and submit that story for the international affairs show on CBC. I have a son and was a single mom for many years. I was mostly in Canada and I didn't really feel free to leave when I had my son. I wanted him to have a certain amount of security, especially for his high school years, but once he had finished high school, we kind of did the opposite of what most people do and I was like 'okay, I am leaving you the apartment in Montreal.' So, he started his post-secondary education there and I left.

I started working for an NGO in South Sudan, in Lebanon, and now I am here in Haiti. Once you are working in this world, one thing kind of leads to another. It was something I knew I wanted to do, so once I felt I was personally in a position where I had a significant amount of career experience that I could go out there and manage to share some information, I started working a lot as a journalism trainer and as a mentor and I felt like I had enough experience as a journalist that I had something to share with junior journalists working in other countries and

the confidence to go and just try and do something different.

I do feel a very strong connection still to Saskatchewan and the farm particularly, and I visit often, but I have this need to see the world and understand the conflicts and the drivers behind the stories we see in the newspaper. It has always been there, it's not good enough for me to just read about it. I am like 'no I want to go there and see what is actually happening.'

How do you deal with dangerous situations that come with living in places like those?

The risk is real. I wouldn't recommend anyone coming here at this particular moment; The country is very insecure. Just last week we had a lot of anti-government protests in the area immediately surrounding the office and it was affecting the whole country. It affects our sub and regional offices around the country, it affects more than anything the Haitian people themselves, but there are dozens of armed groups. They kidnap, they rape, they burn people's houses, and this is happening on a constant basis. Recently, every couple of weeks we have thousands more people who are displaced within the capital. This is the context we are living and working in.

We're working as part of an international organization which has a framework. There are a lot of measures to mitigate the risk, so we know the rules. For the last several years here in Haiti and in South Sudan I have lived with a curfew. It is a security rule. There are rules on your movement, you need to inform people when you are moving from one place to another. As I mentioned, there are a lot of places in Haiti where we cannot move by road—it is too dangerous so we need to move by air. We work with a team of experts because I move around a lot with journalists, I could not do it without the security team.

Every time I have journalists coming and saying 'We want to go out and see this or that place,' then the first thing that I do is go to the head of security and we talk logistically whether or not we can make it happen, with the safety of our personnel being our number one priority. You're not scared because it is part of a system that there are measures in place, and you know what you need to do in order to protect yourself. That is not to say something unpredictable can't happen because it can, but you have put in place the mitigating measures that you can, so you know that every time that you go out you have prepared properly, and you have done everything you can to reduce the risk and then you do your job.

Continued on page 24

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Tilston United Church exterior taken Nov. 2023.



Tilston United Church interior taken Nov. 2023.

Tilston United Church closes after 100 years

BY DONNA ANDERSON

When the town of Tilston was very young, there was no building for a church. So in 1910, since there was a two storey school and the upper room was not being used, the people began having church in the upper room. Church before this was being held in the hardware store.

In October 1921 the Tilston Ladies Aid decided to build a church. The Ladies Aid paid the first down payment of \$67, this being one-third of the price of the land. They also donated \$25 to buy the blueprints for the church. By April they had the lot paid for. The total amount was between \$200 and \$300.

In July 1923, a Tilston resident, Lorna Graham, lent the Ladies Aid \$150 at four per cent interest to help make up the \$500 needed to give the treasurer for the building fund, so he could begin work on the church. The Ladies Aid continued to raise money for a church and in 1923-24 their plans began to take shape!

The Tilston United Church has been a long standing building in our community, in fact, for a hundred years. Way back in 1924 the present standing building was being built as the Tilston Union Church. The opening service of dedication was held on Sunday, June 29, 1924, conducted by Rev. A.E. Smith of Melita at 11 am. Later in the evening Rev. Johnson of Lauder conducted another service. About 300 people with visitors from Reston, Pierson, Melita and Broomhill were present. On Monday evening the Ladies Aid served a supper in the basement and a program followed. It certainly was well celebrated!

An article in the July 10, 1924 Reston Recorder newspaper read "The building is a fine commodious one along the simple mission lines of architecture with full size basement. The woodwork and pews being done in soft brown tones and outside in cream and brown. Approximate cost \$9,000 and the people are to be congratulated on having only about \$2,000 owing on the structure."

In the early years the area was served by either a Presbyterian or Methodist minister, but in 1925 it became Tilston United Church. There were suppers, meetings, etc. held out of the basement, but in 1927 the interior was



Tilston United Church looking down from pulpit towards the congregation taken Nov. 2023.

further completed, to more ably host meals, etc. In these years, after the supper was over, a program of entertainment followed on the main floor.

In 1960 the basement was renovated with a good deal of carpentry being done by Roy Davies. Even in the 1970s the church's annual Fowl Supper was held in the basement, plus lunches following funerals. It was a thriving entity. Sunday School enrolment was good, a CGIT club was active, a boys Cubs club had a good attendance, the church had an active choir, thus the church played an active role throughout the community. Other organizations still supporting the church were the Ladies Aid and later the United Church Women (UCW). Times were good!

Somewhere, somehow the Tilston community began to shrink, businesses were closing, people were moving elsewhere for jobs, etc. To cut costs, services were held only once per month, the first Sunday of each month, with no services in July, August and September. Corners were cut as much as we could. The Catering Committee was still active and served lunches at funerals in

the Tilston Hall plus catered to many wedding and anniversary suppers and we had annual Fowl Suppers in the hall up until Covid hit in 2020. The Fowl Suppers included the entire congregation. The last Fowl Supper was on Sunday, October 6, 2019 with an attendance of only 230 people. We had been accustomed to a little over 300. Again this was due to our older population dwindling, harvests lasting longer into the fall and young people not being as interested in attending. Also our community itself was dwindling in numbers and we had a harder time getting workers and people to supply food.

It has been said that when hard times fall, the school closes first, then the elevators and then the church. This was almost true for Tilston. The elevators closed in 1977 due to a washed out bridge on the main line, the school closed in June 1987 due to very low attendance and now at the end of June 2023, the United Church closed.

A few years ago it became apparent that the church was really struggling to support itself. Attendance was severely low and there was no Sunday School. No one was having baptisms, weddings or funerals out of the church. It had lost its usefulness for the community. The only service that was supported a little more was the Christmas Service which we usually held on the evening of December 23. But even with outside annual donations, this one service could not bring in enough funds to keep the church going for the entire year. The church was running on a bare-bones budget, the church itself had not seen many repairs since the late 1970s and early 1980s and we are also "people poor."

And so it was that in February of 2023 the Tilston United Church Board held a Congregational Meeting to discuss and start the process of disbanding. The last service was Sunday, June 5, 2023 with just our usual small attendance.

Now the church and the property are for sale. It seems sad, but at the same time, our community has gotten so small. The only viable building in town is the Tilston Community Hall—for now anyway. Its years are numbered as well.

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\$4.5 million grant for Redvers water treatment plant

Continued from page 15

"So the whole project will be \$6.1 million and we received the ICIP grant for \$4.5 million. That is 40 per cent federally funded and 33.33 per cent provincial. So 73.33 per cent is funded and then we have to cover the rest, and our portion will be \$1.6 million."

With the announcement of the grant, the project is full speed ahead.

"We already started some of the steps because we actually found out that we were approved for ICIP on September 21, 2023," says Pickard, "but we could not release any of the information until the provincial and federal governments released it first. That came out on Thursday finally, after five months. So what we've been doing behind the scenes is we worked with our engineer and we put a tender out for the pilot process. Delco Water was awarded that contract and the cost is about \$65,000-\$75,000 and that is going to be starting in March. So that's our next step and we have to determine the pilot process first because we can't really build onto our existing water treatment plant without knowing what treatment process we're going with."

"We are going to keep the existing plant and do an addition and expand that area because it's in really good condition, and that was on recommendation from the engineers. So it will stay in the same spot and then we will be building west and adding on—it's going to be a pretty significant addition but it will add on enough space to house whatever we need. So if it's going to be our biofiltration tanks and then our reverse osmosis area, then there will be our little office area and a chemical storage area."

Pickard says shovels could be in the ground for the new water treatment system by fall or early next spring.

"The biofiltration pilot period can take up to six months so that's going to get us to the end of summer/beginning of fall. Then

that's when our engineering plans would be fully developed. So ultimately, the shovel in the ground could be as early as the fall of this year but more likely the spring of 2025.

"We are hoping by the end of 2025 our residents will have great water right to their taps, but like any other project, things can take different directions, but we have to be done for sure by the end of 2026."

The new water treatment system will also give Redvers added capacity for more households.

"Part of our process and even our application process was looking into the future and our potential population growth for the town of Redvers," says Pickard. "So with those numbers and the needs of now and in the future, we were able to add some reservoir water. So the water tower is going to be staying in place but will no longer be in service with this project because it needs quite a bit of upgrading but there will be additional reserves built in with this project."

"There's a backup generator as well that will provide generator power in the case of an emergency to the facility. So if we have an emergency we can utilize the rec centre as our emergency facility. Where it's positioned, the generator and water treatment plant is right close, so we wanted to plan for the future and plan for emergency. We didn't just put into the plans a generator for now, but we realized we also need an emergency centre. So it can provide power to turn on the lights and have heat and power during an emergency."

"It will be a huge lift for the community, both in water volume and water quality for their residents and surrounding communities as well," said Cannington MLA Daryl Harrison. "Like most communities, most towns and villages, they're always looking for an upgrade."

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Plain & Valley

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Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba



Blueberry Kitchen's 1 lb Jr. Burger included a mozzarella crusted potato bun, burger sauce, garlic and herb spread, sautéed mushrooms, pickles, crispy onion strings, cheddar, mozzarella cheese and bacon, topped with a piece of breaded bacon.



Dairy Queen's Backyard Chicken Bacon Ranch burger had applewood smoked bacon, ranch, honey barbecue, crunchy onion rings and melty cheese.



The Red Barn Triple B Burger had bacon, monterey jack cheese, thick cut bacon, blue cheese spread, lettuce and tomato.



The Sportsplex burger included caramelized onions and three cheese perogies, and top-secret boom boom sauce on a toasted pretzel bun.



The Witch's Brew served a Mediterranean chicken burger with balsamic glazed chicken breast on a grilled brioche bun served with balsamic aioli, purple onions, tomatoes, cucumber, and white cheddar cheese.



The Crate House served a Smoked Cajun Cheeseburger on a Pretzel Bun. The burger is not spicy but full of flavour.



The Windsor's Candied Bacon cheeseburger included two slices of candied bacon, mozzarella cheese, lettuce, onion and mayo.



Cork & Bone's Little Italy burger had a beef and Italian sausage patty, provolone cheese, capicollo ham, and tomato basil sauce on a Brioche bun.

Celebrating Canada's Agriculture Day:

2,776 burgers sold during Sharpe's Burger Blitz

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

In what has fast become a Moosomin and area tradition, the annual Sharpe's Burger Blitz was another overwhelming success this year. Filling an activity gap between Christmas and the first signs of spring, that one special week in February has fashioned into a cure for symptoms of the mid-winter blahs. Plus, as most businesses I spoke with described, a nice economic boom during what is traditionally a slower time of year; the vertex between traffic peaks, if you will.

"They all seem to always jump on board from year to year," said Lori Yeske at Sharpe's Crop Services, the organizers and namesake of the campaign. "It's always interesting to see what they come up with each year."

Sharpe's Soil Services first launched the unique week four years ago, marking Agriculture Day (Feb. 13) and as a direct way to promote Canadian agricultural products.

The natural fit was to partner with restaurants in a promotion as the final product the food-service industry utilizes on a daily basis is derived from what local producers raise. The idea has also extended to Sharpe's branches in Stockholm and Langenburg, dubbed the Burger Brawl with restaurants in those communities replicating the success of the Moosomin event.

"I do believe that the Burger Blitz draws people to town —given that this is not the first time that they've done it, I think it gets more and more popular each year," said Casey McCormac, Economic Development Officer with the Town of Moosomin. "I noticed lots of activity downtown at the restaurants for sure."

This year a total of 2,776 burgers were sold as part of the Burger Blitz week. Dairy Queen was the restaurant that sold the most burgers this year, with a total of 493 of their Backyard Chicken Bacon Ranch burger sold that week. A close second was the Red Barn with 469 of their

Triple B burgers sold. Blueberry Kitchen came in third with 360 burgers sold. People could vote on their favorite burger, and the winning burger was Blueberry Kitchen's Junior Burger. The burger included local farm-raised beef in a mozzarella-crusted potato bun, a house-made burger sauce, garlic and herb spread, sautéed mushrooms, pickles, crispy onion strings, cheddar and mozza cheese and bacon, and a strip of breaded bacon on top of the bun. The Fleming Windsor Bar & Grill came in second for favorite burger, and the Red Barn came in third.

"These types of promotions are awesome for the local restaurants to get new people in their door and to hopefully have them coming back in the future," McCormac said. "Moosomin does a great job at holding promotions to help small businesses and a great job at marketing them as well as amazing support and participation from the community and surrounding areas!"

Continued on page 25

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Major pea protein production plant coming to Saskatchewan

Louis Dreyfus Company's new facility is expected in 2025



A pea field.

On Feb. 7, the Government of Saskatchewan welcomed Louis Dreyfus Company's (LDC) announcement of a new pea protein isolate production plant at the site of its existing industrial complex in Yorkton.

"Louis Dreyfus Company's newest investment shows how Saskatchewan continues to be the best place to invest and do business," Trade and Export Development Minister Jeremy Harrison said. "As we work to create even more opportunities and jobs, we are fortunate to have a strong partnership with LDC. Today's announce-

ment takes us one step closer to achieving our goal of processing 50 per cent of the pulse crops produced in Saskatchewan. This announcement is great news for the Yorkton community and pulse growers across the province."

The plant's expected completion date is the end of 2025 and, once operational, LDC anticipates that it will employ approximately 60 people. This new facility will expand and accelerate LDC's existing pea protein isolate and non-GMO soy isolate offerings, while delivering highly functional, taste-neutral and nutritious in-

gredients to customers.

This new facility, paired with other recent pulse processing announcements, puts the province on track to meet its pulse processing goal from Saskatchewan's Growth Plan.

"Canada is a key market for LDC, supporting our strategic growth plans in the region and beyond, and this is reflected in the continued expansion of our origination and processing operations and activities in Saskatchewan, and Yorkton in particular," LDC's Country Manager for Canada Brian Conn said.

In addition to helping

achieve the pulse crop processing goal, the expansion puts the province closer to meeting several other key goals outlined in Saskatchewan's Growth Plan, including:

- Grow private capital investment in Saskatchewan to \$16 billion annually;
- Increase the value of exports by 50 per cent;
- Grow Saskatchewan's agri-food exports to \$20 billion; and

- Increase agriculture value-added revenue to \$10 billion.

Saskatchewan's pulse production averages approximately four million tonnes annually, accounting for approximately 90 per cent of Canadian lentil exports and roughly 80 per cent of Canada's pea exports. Crop rotations using nitrogen-fixing pulses contribute to making Saskatchewan's carbon footprint for crop production

significantly lower than the global weighted average among comparable jurisdictions.

In 2022, Saskatchewan's agriculture industry posted a third consecutive year of record agri-food exports, with a total value of \$18.5 billion. Dry peas and pea proteins accounted for 6.5 per cent of that total, valued at \$1.1 billion.

Construction of the new plant is expected to begin later this year.

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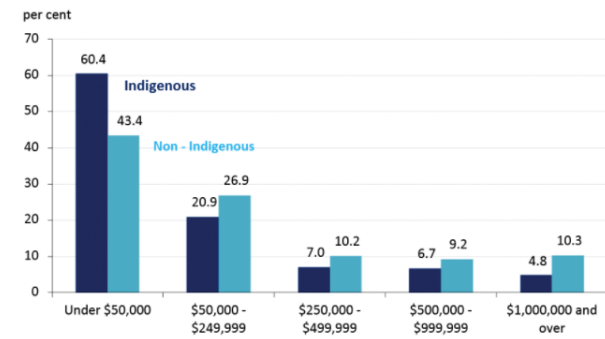
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Figure 1: Revenue class of Indigenous and non-Indigenous farm operators



Sources: Statistics Canada and FCC calculations

Table 1: Indigenous agriculture potential GDP growth

Scenario	Numbers	GDP per operator (\$)	On-farm Indigenous GDP (\$B)	Gains in on-farm GDP (\$B)
Status quo (2021)	5,405	64,900	0.35	n.a.
Proportional representation	13,036	64,900	0.85	0.50
Proportional GDP per farm operator	5,405	140,100	0.76	0.41
Proportional representation combined with closing income gap	13,036	140,100	1.83	1.48

Sources: Statistics Canada and FCC calculation

Indigenous agriculture opportunities could boost GDP by \$1.5 billion

BY ISAAC KWARTENG
SENIOR ECONOMIST, FCC

Indigenous people have a long history in agriculture, yet Indigenous participation in agriculture continues to be under-represented. Increasing participation of Indigenous people into agriculture and bridging the gap in farm income between Indigenous and non-Indigenous farm operations represent a \$1.5 billion boost in primary agriculture GDP. Renewed efforts towards reducing barriers in access to capital, equipment, and skilled labour, improved agricultural knowledge and farming methods are paths towards boosting Indigenous agriculture production, promoting Indigenous health, increasing food security, and strengthening Canada's economic well-being and resiliency.

Indigenous population remains under-represented in agriculture

Data from Statistics Canada suggests that the Indigenous population continues to face large and persistent economic disparities relative to non-Indigenous people in Canada.

According to the 2021 census, more than 1.8 million people identified as Indigenous, representing 5% of Canada's total population. Relative to the agriculture sector, there were 5,405 Indigenous farm operators out of 262,045 farm operators (2.1%) in Canada. Although this represents a 5% increase in

participation from the previous census, there is still a large possibility to expand participation. Indigenous farm operators live in all provinces and territories, with the four western provinces accounting for over 70% of Indigenous farm operators. Saskatchewan has the highest number of Indigenous operators at 1,165 (21.6%) followed by Alberta with 1,130 (20.9%). Indigenous farming operations are more predominant in oil-seeds and grains, vegetables, fruits, and other crops including greenhouse production followed by beef cattle ranching and farming.

Bringing equitable representation of the Indigenous population into agriculture would imply increasing the number of Indigenous farm operators to a similar level as their contribution to the total Canadian population, welcoming an additional 7,631 Indigenous farm operators in the ag economy, a 140% increase.

Closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous farm revenue

The impact of historical injustices on Indigenous peoples cannot be underestimated. Ongoing generational effects from the Indian Act, residential school experiences, the 60's scoop, and other factors contribute to significant and enduring economic differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadian populations.

Continued on page 35

UPCOMING TIMED ONLINE AUCTIONS

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<p>SALE 3</p> <p>FARM EQUIPMENT AUCTION</p> <p>Sunday, March 31st 8:00^{am} CST to Thursday, April 4th 11:00^{am} CST</p> <p>Darrell Bernard & Vanessa Luzny Khedive, SK Contact: Darrell 306-861-1155 RM OF NORTON #69</p>	<p>SALE 4</p> <p>FARM EQUIPMENT AUCTION</p> <p>Thursday, April 4th 8:00^{am} CST to Monday, April 8th 10:00^{am} CST</p> <p>Milton & Elaine Berday North Portal, SK</p>
<p>SALE 5</p> <p>ONLINE INVENTORY REDUCTION FARM EQUIPMENT AUCTION</p> <p>Sunday, April 7th at 8:00^{am} CST to Thursday, April 11th at 10:00^{am} CST</p> <p>Walter Farms Lampman, SK Contact: Allan 1-306-487-7692</p>	<p>SALE 6</p> <p>LAND ONLINE AUCTION</p> <p>Thursday, April 11th at 8:00^{am} CST to Monday, April 15th at 10:00^{am} CST</p> <p>Sage Farm Ltd. & DMB Farms Ltd Khedive, SK RM OF NORTON #69</p>
<p>SALE 7</p> <p>LAND ONLINE AUCTION</p> <p>Thursday, April 18th at 8:00^{am} CST to Monday April 22nd at 10:00^{am} CST</p> <p>Brad Simpson & Garnet Cowan Carnduff, SK Contact: 306-482-8652 or 1-403-376-5523 RM OF ARGYLE #1</p>	<p>SALE 8</p> <p>ONLINE LAND & EQUIPMENT AUCTION</p> <p>Thursday, May 2nd at 8:00^{am} CST to Monday, May 6th at 10:00^{am} CST</p> <p>Zanes Welding - Sherry Olson Bientail, SK Contact: 306-487-7815 RM OF ESTEVAN #5</p> <p>OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 2024 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM</p>
<p>SALE 9</p> <p>FARM EQUIPMENT ONLINE AUCTION</p> <p>Wednesday, May 29th at 8:00^{am} CST to Monday, June 3rd at 10:00^{am} CST</p> <p>Clayton & Marilyn Clow Carnduff, SK Contact: Clayton 306-483-7760</p>	<p>SALE 10</p> <p>ONLINE EQUIPMENT-RV-VEHICLE AUCTION</p> <p>Friday, June 28th at 8:00^{am} CST to Tuesday, July 2nd at 10:00^{am} CST</p> <p>Estevan Motor Speedway Estevan, SK To Enter Auction Contact: 306-421-2097</p>

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Tanya Birkbeck changing lives in Haiti, working with World Food Program

Tanya Birkbeck grew up near Welwyn, and her career has taken her to Montreal, London, Sudan, and now Haiti

Continued from pages 13 and 16

With the language barrier, how do you communicate with the Haitian people?

Absolutely no matter where I am working, I could not do it without my local colleagues. We tend to think of international organizations being only international people that come into a country and work in a country. There are international staff here, but the vast majority of people that work for WFP or any other organizations here are Haitians. The language here in Haiti is Haitian Creole. In South Sudan where I did a lot of radio, there are 63 different languages there. Some people use Arabic or English to communicate between certain groups, but in Haiti it is principally Haitian Creole. Thankfully I have an amazing team that speak Creole.

With the amount of food insecurity in Haiti right now, what are the next steps the WFP will be taking to help? What are your plans?

The situation right now is quite serious. The total population of Haiti is 11.45 million. Right now, there are about 1.4 million people who are in what we call emergency level food insecurity. All over the world there is a standardized system with five stages that we use to measure how hungry people are. Levels three, four or five are what we consider to be people who are acutely food insecure, and there are 4.35 million in Haiti at that level, and that is about 44 per cent of the country. Then when you get to level four, which is the level before famine, it is 1.4 million. There is not a famine here right now and it is relatively rare that a famine is declared—there is a whole process to declare a famine. This is a system used internationally to measure the level of food insecurity.

Per capita, Haiti is one of the most food insecure countries in the world. We ask people how many meals a day do you have and what kind of variety of food do you have and there is a scale where you can measure how much people are lacking basic nutrition. A lot of that is happening because roads are blocked. It is very difficult for people to move food from one area to another and Haiti is quite dependent on imported food. So, food that is coming into the capital, it is very difficult to get that food to rural areas because those areas are all blocked by armed groups.

Even within some of the rural areas, the armed groups are stopping farmers who have food in their field and the farmers and the people who transfer the food from the farmers to the market are being intercepted by armed groups.

A big problem of the food insecurity in Haiti is because the food cannot move around. We have seen some farmers who have to leave their crop to rot because they can't get it to market, and imagine how heartbreaking that would be for a farmer in Saskatchewan who would for example have to leave their wheat in a bin to rot because they can't sell it to the market and that is what is happening here. Then, not that far away you can have a hospital with a pediatric ward with more malnourished children than they can admit.

I have seen hospitals turn kids away. There are other factors, the economy has been affected by political and physical insecurity of these armed groups and there is high inflation. People may not have access to work and then the prices in the market go up, so there are all these factors which lead to a lot of people, in particular children, not getting enough food.

What services does WFP provide to Haitians in difficult situations?

In the last couple of weeks, we were not able to reach our partners to do emergency distribution in Cité Soleil which is one of the poorest parts of Port-au-Prince. In that case we give people bags of food. We also give people cash transfers, and the beneficiaries are identified. Through the communities and local organizations, we identify who are the vulnerable families, people with young children, older people, or people with disabilities, and we give them a cash injection each month.

That allows them to make their own decisions about what kind of food do they need and if they have enough food and live in a rural area, they can maybe buy a goat which would give them perhaps more food in the future. It can look a bit different—it could be an immediate need or help them invest and to be able to help themselves.

We also give school meals, and this is something that is important to what we do in the country because we have so many children who aren't getting nutrition at home, but if you give them school meals, that also increases the attendance of the schools. Kids are more



Tanya Birkbeck interviewing women in Haiti who have started small businesses thanks to cash transfers administered by the World Food Program.

(Photo: WFP/Jonathan Dumont)

likely to show up rather than dropping out if they are getting a meal every day. That is one of our concerns right now with lots of schools closing because of insecurity, so then those kids aren't getting those meals, so not only are they not learning but they aren't being nourished. The interesting thing we are doing with school meals is replacing imported food with local food. School meals used to be made from imported ingredients, but now about half of all the students that receive school meals—and we have 420,000 students that receive school meals in Haiti—are receiving what we call homegrown school meals. We are really proud of this program, and we are working towards hopefully by 2030 having 100 per cent homegrown school meals. It is benefiting the farmers in the communities and of course the kids who get the hot meal. We also have longer term solutions which help people to feed themselves.

Something that will be super familiar to people in Saskatchewan is the concept of Crop Insurance. We have started a program where we pay a small premium for farmers and then again in the case of flooding or drought there is a certain threshold that they can trigger a payout. The idea is that this is not something WFP wants to do forever, but we want to introduce the concept so then eventually farmers will see the value in it and start to invest in themselves. It is to help reduce the risk and help the farmers confidently produce more. Especially since Haiti is in the Caribbean area where it is very susceptible to extreme weather events.

You could have some areas of the country that are flooding and on the other side of the country they are in a drought. The other thing we see is a lot of displaced people and that's increasing. Just in the past 10 days we had about 10,000 people displaced within the capital, so we also work with the government to provide immediate assistance for these people and sometimes that means working with a third party provider to bring in hot meals for them because it tends to be mostly women and children that we find in these camps all over the city for displaced people. Then, we will gradually transition towards what we call Community Kitchens, that is where we use dry rations that we have in our warehouse, we add fresh produce, maybe some fish, and then we cook meals for thousands of people in a huge kitchen and then we deliver it to Internally Displaced People (IDPs) within the city.

Then gradually we transition them to cash transfers. It helps them get their feet back under them after they have often been displaced by armed groups coming into their community, sending them running for their lives with the clothes on their backs, they don't have any of their belongings or any reliable income.

It is very difficult for them to provide for their families in that situation, so we help people not forever, but to make that transition and adapt in this

shocking situation.

What are the most rewarding things you've been able to do throughout your career? What are the moments that stand out to you?

I do think we make a difference. The most rewarding part is just the people. When you meet somebody where there has been a small change, but it makes an impact in their life. There could be a million examples like this, but I was in the south of the country last year and we met with some mothers that have received these past transfers and they had got together in a group and created a business where they were making their own soap and selling soap in the markets as well as charcoal. You meet these moms, and I think any mom can relate with that, where you confidently know you are going to be able to provide for your kids.

I am also a mom and I know how much you want to make sure your kids are okay and if you see that you have been able to make some difference like that. Just to be there. I like the idea very much of being able to somehow build some empathy and understanding between people because I feel like Haiti has had a lot of problems throughout the years, and that could help.

Everybody knows about the massive earthquake in 2010, there has been a lot of political upheaval, Haiti is very vulnerable to extreme weather and people tend to be like 'Haiti is always a basket case' and I think it is to try and get through that defense that people have and make them see the real human beings inside that story. I guess that is fundamentally what we are trying to do.

From a personal point of view, doing this kind of work, it truly has given me a sense of gratitude, so just to be able to enjoy simple things like the security to go out and have a meal with your family in a restaurant safely. We take it for granted, but here it isn't something available.

Those simple joys are very rewarding.

I compare it to the area where I grew up and the lifestyle I grew up with.

I feel for the farmers here who aren't able to get their crops to the market and I imagine how farmers in our area would feel if their areas were invaded by people with guns and they could see kids starving and they weren't able to feed them.

I know the pride of the people where I grew up, and people elsewhere feel that, too. It's being able to get people to understand that these are people just like you, and this is what's happening to them.

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Emergency room access expanded in Broadview

The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) says that emergency room access at the Broadview Union Hospital will be expanded four hours per day, Monday through Friday from 7 am to 11 pm, effective Monday, March 4, 2024.

During these hours, local physicians will cover the ER from 7 am to 4 pm with virtual physician coverage from 4 pm to 11 pm. ER services will not be available outside of those hours on weekends, nor on weekends or statutory holidays.

This is the second time hours have expanded in the emergency department since it reopened in May of 2022, after a nearly three-year closure. In January 2024, hours at the ER were initially increased through the introduction of the virtual physician program, which was made possible by recent successful recruitment of combined laboratory and x-ray technologists and registered nurses to the facility.

Due to the successful introduction of the virtual physician program and continued recruitment success, the Broadview Union Hospital is able to expand access to emergency health services by four additional hours per day, Monday

to Friday, from the current hours of 7 am to 7 pm.

Using the existing infrastructure of HealthLine 811, the virtual physician program provides nursing staff with remote access to a physician when local physicians are not available to provide emergency department coverage. All patients are assessed, triaged and receive treatment based on their care needs. In addition to Broadview, the virtual physician program has been successfully launched in Porcupine Plain, Oxbow and Davidson.

The virtual physician program helps to maintain emergency services in the community while the SHA continues to address some of the barriers to resuming 24/7 ER access in Broadview, including stabilizing physician, nursing, or other health human resources.

Health-care recruitment and retention continues to be a priority for the SHA and the Government of Saskatchewan.

Individuals requiring emergency services should call 9-1-1. Non-urgent health-related questions may be directed to the provincial HealthLine 24/7 by calling 8-1-1.



Celebrating Canada's Agriculture Day: 2,776 burgers sold during Sharpe's Burger Blitz

Continued from page 21

"It brings people from a lot of different areas, it's good all around from that standpoint, especially in February, when it can be quiet," said Doug Creighton of the CrateHouse, adding that diner numbers were consistent with previous years.

The CrateHouse offered a Smoked Cajun Cheeseburger—a homemade smoked patty with Cajun aioli, Monterey Jack cheese, pickles and coleslaw, all assembled within a special bun.

"We had a pretzel hamburger bun, which was real popular," Creighton said. "It disappeared for the middle two years and then I was able to find another one for this year. That was really popular, too."

Over in Fleming, the candied bacon cheeseburger attracted folks from near and far for a taste.

"It was really busy, actually. We sold quite a few burgers," said Laura Barry of the Fleming Windsor Bar & Grill. "A lot of people said they liked our burgers, so that's really good."

She said people from Elkhorn, Virden, Welwyn and Wawota were among patrons ordering the delicious burger.

The Nutrien Sportsplex tantalized taste-buds with their offering, comprised of a "mountain of caramelized onions" and three-cheese perogies punctuated with a dollop of their famous (and top-secret) boom-boom sauce.

"It's always been a pretty popular event for us," said Mike Schwan, Director of Parks and Recreation with the Town of Moosomin. He said around 400 burgers being sold during the week, "so they were pretty close to where they were last year."

Sportsplex staff came up with a unique offering each year, with Schwan quick to credit them for creativity.

"They always do a good job of coming up with something different," he said.

The Burger Blitz is also a time for delving into more bold flavours, and the Triple B Burger at the Red Barn certainly did not disappoint.

"It was a bacon blue cheese burger," explained Melinda Griffin, General Manager at the Red Barn, adding that numbers seemed consistent at the Red Barn. "It was fairly similar to previous years, lots of amazing feedback as always."

This year's offering featured their signature patty (a 35-year-old family recipe), bacon jam, Monterey Jack cheese, thick-cut bacon, blue cheese spread, lettuce and tomato.

Deciding on what burger is featured each year takes everyone's input into account.

"We'll just design a bunch of burgers up and take our staff feedback, what they think and then that's the burger we choose to roll with," Griffin said.

Then it's time to create a huge batch of



World-Spectator staff Olha Volokh, Felicite Mailloux and Sunnette Kamffer enjoyed Red Barn's Triple B Burger—the Bacon Blue Burger which included bacon jam and a blue cheese spread.

patties as they usually hit the 600 mark each year.

Griffin also tries to sample every featured burger during the blitz, just to taste what everyone else has created and generate a buzz around the entire campaign.

"It gives people something exciting to look forward to and try something new," she said of all the interesting entries.

While most places I spoke with tend to leave designing their Sharpe's Burger Blitz item for later in the year, Griffin has begun planning the 2025 selection from Red Barn.

"I've already been thinking about that, I thought about that all weekend, actually," she said.

The Cork & Bone Bistro also brought a foreign flare to town with their Little Italy burger—a wonderful beef and Italian sausage patty topped with provolone cheese, capicola ham and tomato basil sauce fit into a brioche bun.

"I like to just try new things and if I see some products during my shopping for my bistro, I find things that I'd like to try and then we will bounce them off each other here at work and then put it together," Owner Jarrod Slugoski said. "I wanted to try something with Italian flavours."

He said he sold over 200 of the burgers during the week, and the hit sandwich may have just found its way onto the regular menu given its popularity.

"When you have your own kitchen,

while we were on holidays."

For a business focussed on caffeinated beverages, the Mediterranean chicken burger proved to be a resounding success as Garrett said she sold over 300 sandwiches through the course of the week.

"We're just a lunch place, so I think that's pretty good," she said. "Actually, some of our customers—I know at least two customers—had the burger three times that week, so they must have liked it!"

Noting about the same number of people through the doors as previous years, the week kept staffing hopping as on the second day of the promotion, Witch's Brew sold 70 burgers in an hour!

"For us, it's always about maintainability because we actually we don't have a char broiler or anything like that," said Garrett. "To maintain a beef burger is sometimes hard work for us, so we tend to lean towards chicken."

Over at TJ's Pizza, a "build your own burger" was featured on the lunch buffet.

Over at Dairy Queen, the Backyard Chicken Bacon Ranch was a big seller—a combination of Applewood smoked bacon and crunchy onion rings.

"We are always highly supported through Burger Blitz week and appreciate everyone who did come and try our burger," said Dairy Queen manager Morgan Kerr. "We also really appreciate Sharpe's for putting this on every year and getting the community out and through restaurant doors. Canadian Ag is important and what a neat way to celebrate and learn where our food comes from."

She noted that the DQ offering is from their "secret menu" and is a personal favorite. Kerr highlighted the surge of energy that Burger Blitz brings to the region.

"The town is always buzzin' all week about whose burger they tried when and which are the favorites," she said.

Blueberry Kitchen in Rocanville served up a Jr. Burger that included local farm-raised beef in a mozzarella-crusted potato bun. It also contained a house-made burger sauce, garlic and herb spread, sautéed mushrooms, pickles, crispy onion strings, cheddar and mozza cheese and bacon. Topping the already mighty burger was a strip of breaded bacon.

Aside from dining on wonderful meals, there was the added bonus of a prize worth \$500 in Moosomin Bucks up for grabs. At each participating restaurant, diners could get a special card stamped which once filled was entered into a draw.

This year's big winner is Telisa McGonigal, whose lucky ballot was drawn last Thursday afternoon.

By all accounts, it sounds like the fifth edition of Sharpe's Burger Blitz will be something to look forward to, and it's only 11 months and two weeks away!

An opportunity to help in Africa: Three local women volunteer in Tanzania, and deliver Little Dresses made by Wawota group

BY ASHLEY BOCHEK

A desire to help took Trudi and Lynce Holmstrom and Keysha Horn of Moosomin to Arusha, Tanzania, in the shadow of Mount Kilimanjaro in east Africa, at the end of January. They helped children while volunteering at a daycare. They say the trip was memorable and they will forever cherish the memories, and the people they met.

"I knew everybody would ask us about our trip, but I don't even know where to start—it is so different there than here," said Trudi.

"In high school I had read a book called *Live in Love* and it is about Thomas Rhett and his wife's journey toward adopting their daughter from Uganda, Africa. So, when I read this book I was like 'I am going there—this is happening!' That is kind of where it all stemmed from. It was my dream. Lots of people want to go to Africa to see the animals, but for me it was to see the kids," Lynce says.

"Since high school she always wanted to visit Africa and see the kids and see the conditions they live in and what the environment looks like there," adds Trudi.

"In the book it talks about their daughter being face down in the dirt at the orphanage, and so going there I knew the conditions were rough, but to experience it first hand is completely different," says Lynce.

"Covid hit right when Lynce was out of high school, so she wasn't able to go and it was a lot of paperwork because we were doing it as a volunteer experience. We needed a visa, a criminal record check, and an online program with the association we went with. The organization we booked it with was International Volunteer Headquarters (IVHQ) and they are based out of New Zealand, but they do volunteer programs all over the world. So, you can go anywhere they have arrangements to do volunteer work through them. They work with the local organization that houses volunteers in Tanzania which was called Tanzanian Host Experience. IVHQ partners with Tanzanian Host Experience, so they partner with a local organization and local people that help you once you get there. We went to Arusha, Tanzania. Arusha is the name of the city and Sakina is the area we were in.

"On the way we flew from Toronto to Detroit, and we got held up in Detroit with a storm and we missed our connecting flight in Amsterdam. So they automatically re-booked our flights and we flew to Qatar, which is east of Saudi Arabia."

"We went all over Iran and Iraq right through the Middle East," Lynce adds.

Trudi says, "So then we got to Qatar and looped around Saudi Arabia and went to Kilimanjaro."

"The plane would go straight like it was heading to Qatar and then all of a sudden we'd be doing a sharp left and sharp rights then up again flying around countries," Lynce explains.

Trudi adds, "we went right over the middle of the Black Sea. That was an adventure we didn't really plan on, but we got there safe and sound. Then the Tanzanian Host Experience picked us up at the airport. With all that, Lynce's luggage didn't arrive, but Keisha and mine both did. She spent two days without it. It had missed the transfer at Amsterdam. So, it didn't get transferred to our Qatar flight. That was a good thing with the Tanzanian Host Experience and IVHQ, we just told them what had happened and they took care of it for us."

Lynce explains, "We stayed in what they call a Volunteer Home Stay, so they have four different houses throughout Arusha and they split volunteers between the four different houses. There were probably 25 other volunteers in our house, but there was about double that in the other ones."

Trudi says they stayed in a compound in Arusha. "We say house, but where we stayed it was like a compound, so a common area and it had a dining room, living room, and kitchen, a separate area for a bunkhouse and office in a separate building all fenced in one area. We slept there, they fed us, they transported us, so it was like our accommodations and meals. They had people for the host company that would accompany us. They took us to get our SIM cards changed so we could get on their carrier so you can have data on your phones."

Continued on Page 32 ^{ESP}



A group photo with the Maasai Village.



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WSA releases preliminary runoff report: Reservoirs at normal levels

On Feb. 22, the Water Security Agency (WSA) released the preliminary spring runoff report. Below average snow conditions, in combination with the generally dry fall conditions, is resulting in below normal to well below normal runoff across the province.

Despite dry conditions heading into freeze up in Fall 2023, major water supply reservoirs in southern Saskatchewan are mostly at or above normal levels, except for Avonlea and some in the southwest.

"In Saskatchewan, we are fortunate to have Lake Diefenbaker and I am glad to see other reservoirs in the province are at near normal levels," Minister Responsible for the Water Security Agency David Marit said. "In anticipation of potential dry summer conditions, a conservative overwinter operating plan focused on retaining water supplies is being implemented for Lake Diefenbaker and other reservoirs across the province."

WSA is taking proactive measures to protect and manage Saskatchewan's water by keeping water levels at Lake Diefenbaker 3.5 metres higher during the winter period to retain water supplies in the event of low mountain runoff, and by maintaining higher winter level at other major reservoirs, to store as much water as possible.

Long-range forecasts predict near-normal precipitation and warmer temperatures than usual across Saskatchewan from February to April, with the southern areas experiencing the highest tem-

perature increases.

"Our network of reservoirs and canals combined with our allocation system means we can store water and prioritize to ensure communities have reliable drinking water, while producers and industry receive equitable supply that does not negatively impact our environment,"

Marit said.

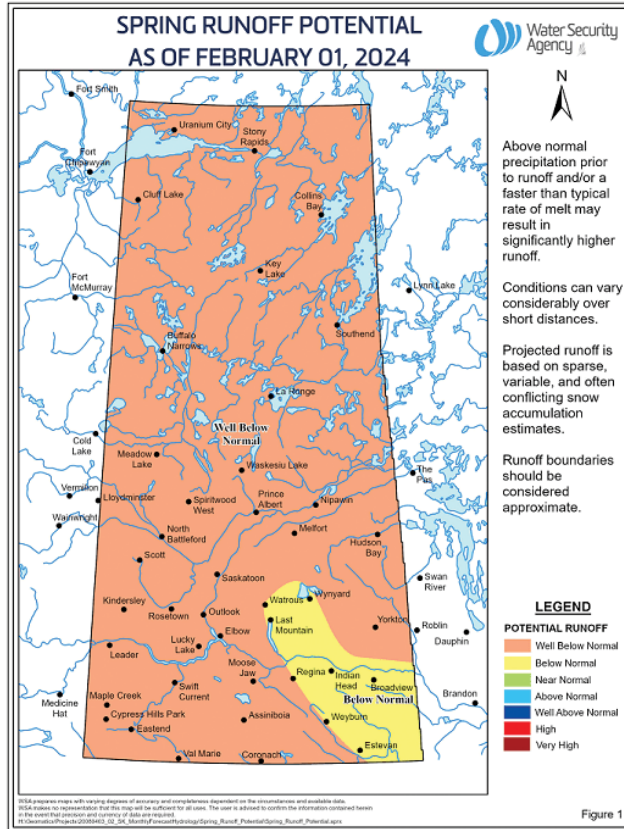
WSA owns and manages 72 dams and over 230 kilometres of water conveyance channels across Saskatchewan for water management purposes. WSA collects real time data from nearly 300 monitoring stations across the province. The data allows WSA to track and forecast

the province's water resources and make timely responses to changing conditions.

WSA is also working with communities across the province to identify their water supply needs and support the creation of drought preparedness plans. A full runoff report in March will be released

once additional data is collected from snowpack surveys across the prov-

ince, and regular updates throughout the spring.



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Art card fundraiser supports Moosomin Visual Arts Centre

BY ASHLEY BOCHEK

Local artist Jacqui Beckett has started a fundraiser to support the new Moosomin Visual Arts Centre. She is selling art cards printed from her original watercolor painting of a chickadee on spring blossoms. I had a chance to interview Jacqui and get her thoughts on the project.

Why did you decide to create an art card fundraiser?

It was something that I could do to help support the arts centre. I am a painter and I have all kinds of paintings. I did a fundraiser last year for the Ukrainian community and I used my pottery at that time to do it and raised a couple thousand dollars for the families that came here, but for the arts centre I wanted to do something around a painting.

I have a lot of paintings and I do sell lots of cards of paintings. Then, I thought about the arts centre and talked to Kevin and Kara and got their idea of what they thought, if it would be a good idea and they thought it would be, so then I jumped ahead and got 500 cards made.

It's something that is not too hard for me to manage and everybody in town helps out selling things like that for fundraisers.

So now we sell the cards, and all the proceeds go toward the arts centre. I am hoping when I sell them all I will have about \$2,000 to go toward the arts centre, and with that \$2,000 I am going to purchase a clay slab roller for the pottery studio. Simply because it is kind of an extra thing, and if you have a clay slab roller then you can start pottery classes very soon.

It's something I want to do for the arts centre.

Why do you think the arts centre is important?

Oh my gosh, well art is extremely important in my view, as important as other activities.

I think Moosomin has fantastic sports facilities and for sporting events it is excellent, but our town has just been missing the arts content and opportunities. I see so many people leaving town to go to classes and support other towns and other arts centres and I just think our town really need something like this too, and I thought it would definitely work.

I thought we could get something started and I thought about it for years and then Krista Crellin contacted me last March and she had already talked to the Economic Development Committee and gave them the idea of the



Jacqui Beckett

arts centre as well, and she asked me if I would be interested in helping out and I just jumped at the task because I have been wanting to do this for years.

You said Moosomin has been lacking arts in our town, why do you think it hasn't started before? How come just now?

For me, it is having time to help organize it. I think it just has to be the right timing when you have the people who are willing to help work at it and start it.

There is a lot of planning, and it takes a lot of time organizing things and I guess the timing was just right.

I think our town has been very focused on sports and it

just hasn't really come up.

I know different people have taught classes privately or at the Prairie Girl Gallery.

Classes are going on, which is great, so I know people are interested in the arts. Even the ones who are really involved in sports still are interested in the arts as well.

You can do the arts until you are really old, and you can start when you're really young. I just think it is a great thing to have in the community.

Did you always think Moosomin would have an arts centre eventually?

Yes, I always hoped they would, and I always hoped I would be involved in it when it did happen. I knew it was just a matter of time, our town is really growing, improving, and expanding and it is just the right time, I think.

Would you consider teaching and participating in arts classes yourself?

Oh absolutely, yes. I will be teaching, and I will be participating too. There are a lot of interesting classes going on already that I would never have even thought about, like moss painting or just some different things that some people have never heard of.

What kind of classes will you be teaching?

I am not teaching any yet, but I am going to be involved! I want to teach all kinds of painting. I am very interested in the pottery, I do make pottery and I definitely want to teach it. Acrylics and watercolour—I would love to teach pretty much any kind of painting. I can't wait actually, it is very exciting!

What are your hopes for the arts centre?

I am hoping that it will be used every day. We plan on having it open to be used every day. It takes time to build it up, but I hope that it is very busy, and people support it. I am sure they will. I am also hoping that the arts centre can get sponsorships and grants to help funding because it is expensive to run an arts centre. Every little bit helps!

Jacqui is selling packages of four art card with envelopes for \$20 per package. She hopes to sell 100 sets for \$20 each. The cards are available to be purchased at The World-Spectator, Moosomin Pharmasave, Prairie Girl Gallery, Mane Tain Hair Lounge and Gift Shoppe in Rocanville, Southeast Regional Library in Moosomin, and from jacquibeckett@gmail.com

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Even on vacay, the farm is calling!

"No offense, Grandma," says my youngest grandson (9) as I prepare to throw a baseball to him. "Old people can just stand and throw." I stand and throw.

"No offense taken," I yell across the grassy field as he gets into a "baseball" stance and prepares to throw the ball back.

Our winter break from all things 'farm' has taken us south to California where the expanse of green outside our front doors is a golf course surrounded by palm trees. And as long as we clear out when golfers head down the course, we are good to play ball. My granddaughter, 7, is concerned we might overthrow the ball because, if she misses, it will land in the pond behind her. It does, but only once on this beautiful, sunny, albeit still cool morning. It is early. The kids got up at 5 am on this particular morning, having flown in with their parents the day before, and now, obviously still on Saskatchewan time, excited about spending a week in California and in particular, a couple of days at Disneyland.

And so it was, after a few days on the road to reach our destination, we were once again on the road to the happiest place on earth. It just so happens that the happiest place on earth happened to be the wettest place on earth on our first day in Anaheim. What were the chances we would book Disneyland tickets three months ahead of time and the time we were to be there happened to be amidst rain, rain and more rain, flash flood warnings and dangerous driving conditions?

Fortunately for us, we had this amazing driver who kept his cool (well he appeared to anyhow) through rain, expansive overpasses with multiple highway changes, and nine lanes (at times) of traffic going our way. Little does he know, but we invited our son in law for this visit so we would get a break from driving (and perhaps from barbecuing!)

Never did I imagine, since our Disneyland trip '89 with our own young children, that we would once again be back. The grands were absolutely delighted, though at times soaked, to be in Disneyland. My reaction, besides being elated for the kids, was simply wishing I could work there! Can you imagine!? Of course, as the day wore on and the hundreds of people became thousands (upon thousands), my initial delight in all things Disney changed somewhat. It was time to get out of L.A.

When I packed the car before we headed out on our road trip at the end of January, I loaded up my laptop and my farm books, determined that I would dutifully use some of my downtime to get the financials more or less wrapped up. Today, three and half weeks into my five-week holiday, I have not made a single entry. How's that for procrastination!? If I was graded on my life skills, I would certainly earn an A for procrastination.

When we do a road-trip like the one we are presently on, it is very easy for me to totally put all things 'home' in the back of my mind, except for missing our family and particularly the grands, missing some of the events they have been involved in, and missing my cats. Hubby on the other hand is still checking grain markets repeatedly, checking bin temps regularly and contemplating all things 'farm'. He never really gets away from the farm even when he is far away from it. He especially lights up when we travel through farmland, something we saw little of this trip. I would say we saw a whole lot of desert in our travels and very little else.

The Lighter Side of
Life...
DOWN ON THE FARM

by donna beutler
FREELANCE PHOTOJOURNALIST
dl_beutler@yahoo.ca



We even visited a date farm and there is one thing we have to say after learning about the length of time a date tree has to grow before producing and then what a hands-on, laborious process it is to work towards a date harvest—we will keep growing canola and wheat, thank you very much!

We have had the opportunity to chat with neighbours and people from all over Canada and the U.S. while we have been here in Palm Springs and during our Zion National Park stay in southern Utah. It's always interesting to hear where people are from, what they do, hear their political opinions and to guess where in the U.S. they are from depending on their accent. Many people recognized us as Canadians simply because of our 'accent.' (Didn't know we had one, lol). Last night as we walked across our golf and country club grounds on an extraordinarily beautiful evening, we stopped to talk to a couple who lives here year-round, though they vacation away from here in July and August to escape the heat.

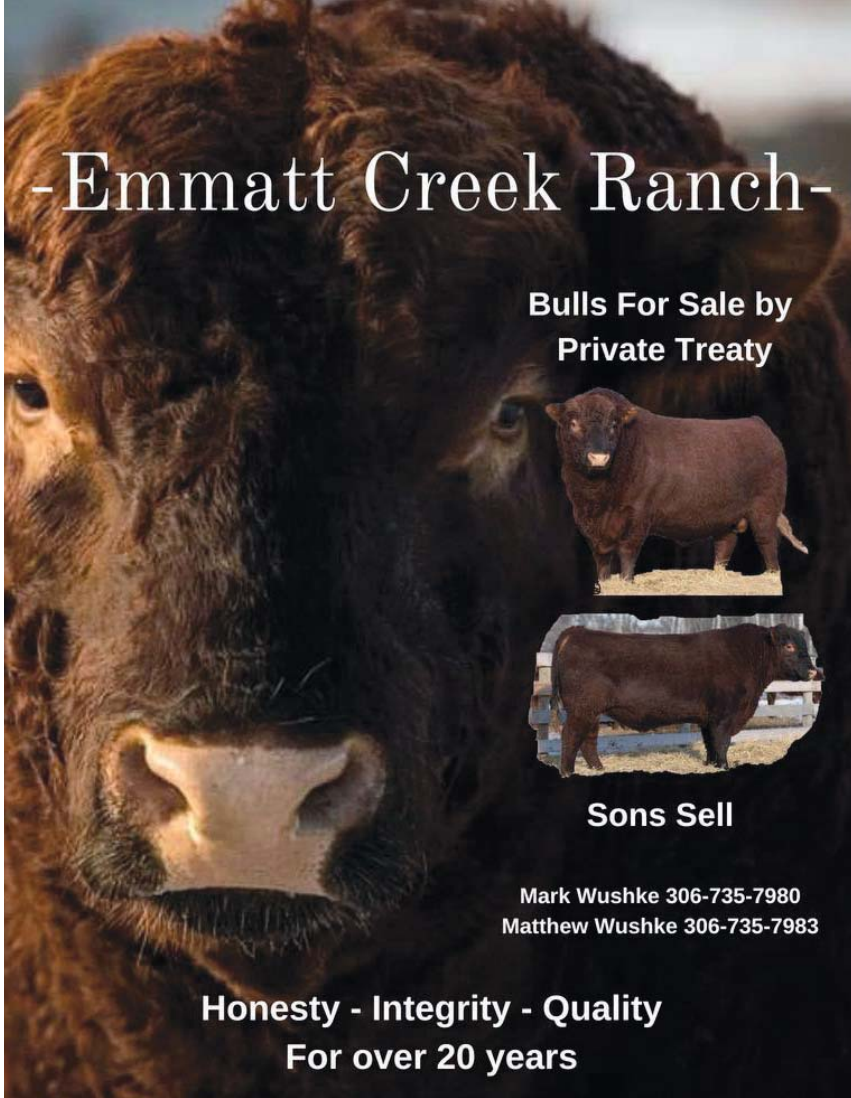
After just a couple of comments exchanged, they told us we must be from Canada and I right away said, "Accent?" "No," the lady responded. "You're in shorts and sandals!" And there they were, in blue jeans and running shoes, fall coats done up to their necks, arms crossed as if to keep out the cold, dutifully out walking their dog, not

because they wanted to be out on such a 'cool' evening, but because their little dog really wanted to go out for a walk. And there we were just soaking in the warm evening temps (to be fair, some desert evenings can be cool, but this wasn't one of them—in our estimation!)

Alas, the farm is calling and it's nearly time to head towards the Saskatchewan prairies. To be clear, the farm is calling hubby, not me. His motto is not even remotely, "Out of sight, out of mind." Even so, I am determined to get the farm books done in the next few days just so I can travel home without that albatross around my neck. We have enjoyed having our kids/grands down for a visit; we have enjoyed visiting with family and friends that winter down here in Palm Springs; we have enjoyed the green grass, the flowers and the palm trees of this area as well as just basking in the sun and enjoying the warmth of every day. As non-golfers staying on a golf course, we have also enjoyed watching some great shots And some not so great shots. I am pretty sure when I see those golf balls 'skip' across the pond out front of my temporary home that the shooter isn't thinking how cool it looks. It's also a whole lot of fun watching those who stop at the edge of the pond, get down low and start pulling golf balls out of the pond and lay their treasures all in a row. And not one person fell in during the sometimes awkward retrievals!


In retrospect, there are some things you can't put a price on a seven-year-old girl's eyes when she sees Minnie Mouse at Disneyland or sees a Target store (go figure!); a nine-year-old boy's delight with every ride possible at Disney; the look on the grands' faces as they feed a giraffe at the zoo; laughter with friends over the silliest things; a great backyard 'desert' bbq with the fam (especially when I don't have to cook!) and a million other things that we will treasure in our bank of memories, especially when we are back home and busy on the farm.

And now, it's back to the books for me. One invoice at a time. There are 250 entries to make and I mark my progress in percentages. How's 33 per cent sounding? Not bad for one day, I'd say! Here's hoping whatever our farmer friends are up to these days is reaching the 100 per cent completion mark! Because, as you know, the next project awaits you. Happy farming folks! Until next time!



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An opportunity to help in Africa

Continued from Page 26

Lynice adds, "At the beginning we were there for three days with no phones since we didn't want to pay Saskatchewan prices in Africa."

Lynice says they took excursions with the other volunteers, but did their volunteer work on their own. "Any excursions were together with the volunteers, but during the day our placement was different from others. Some of the other volunteers in our house were there for construction, child care, healthcare, women's empowerment. There were four people that we stayed with who were building a home for a lady, and a school. The women's empowerment people worked with women who have HIV or another condition and they would teach them how to make soap and sell it. They were trying to give them some skills that they can use to make some income."

The Little Dresses Group of Wawota sent dresses and boys' shorts with Trudi, Lynice, and Keisha to Africa to hand out to the children in need. "It was meant to be," says Trudi. "I ended up talking to somebody and they had mentioned their hobby was sewing dresses for kids in third world countries. So, I asked 'how do you get them there?' and she said they just send them with people if they know someone is going. This happened on Wednesday and we were leaving that Friday. So they packed a suitcase and the Little Dresses Group has people who donate suitcases to them for this purpose. So, we just checked another bag and took the suitcase with us, not knowing how they would be distributed, but we thought we would just figure it out when we get there."

Lynice adds, "Just another adventure we thought we would take!"

"In our placement we were in a daycare for one week with kids from under two to five years old. They're divided up by age in these classrooms and all of them are very needy. Needy as in they could all use something—food, clothes, education.

"They have very little for personal possessions. The daycare was well staffed and a good building and good playground equipment, but it was almost run more as a school than a daycare. The kids were put in a room with kids of similar age and a teacher was with them. There are 60 kids at the daycare, 40 of them paid to be there and 20 went for free. So, Grace, the manager of the daycare, basically subsidized the 20 to be there with the 40 that paid so she could help out more kids. The kids were speaking English, the young ones and old ones, and the goal there was to learn and speak as much English as possible. So the younger ones did songs and games in English and that was our job, to teach them as much as we could."

Lynice explains, "Lots of their English is fluent, believe



Lynice with some daycare children.

it or not, but we still speak a stronger level of English, which is why we can help teach them. Lots of them can pronounce the words, but their grammar is just okay."

"English isn't their native language. There it is Swahili. They speak Swahili in their homes, but they speak English as a second or even third language in general. A lot of people on the street or in transportation didn't speak any English. People there don't really drive, they just take public transportation, women specifically. So, it is beneficial for them to learn English because it gives them more opportunity. So they try to get them learning more English as a kid. If they end up in a private school system they have a better chance of learning more English, but they have to pay to be in the private system," Trudi says.

Lynice said the manager at the day care helped find the best place to take the dresses. "We had told Grace, the manager of the daycare and our placement co-ordinator that we had these dresses from Canada and explained these ladies had made them and they are to give away. She told us there were kids she could give them to in the daycare, but there are kids she knows that need them more. There was a pile of dresses."

"There were about 90 dresses," Trudi adds. "There was a suitcase completely packed with all different sizes of dresses and some little boy shorts."

"Then Grace arranged later that week for us to take

them to this village. It was North of Arusha closer to Kenya in Longido. The following Monday after our week of volunteering in the daycare, Grace made arrangements with a driver to take us to a village just outside Longido. So this is a whole other story, but in and around Arusha the Maasai culture is prominent. Outside of Arusha there are these Maasai people, traditional tribal people, that live strictly off the land. Polygamy is part of their culture. One man and his wives live in a village. Each wife has a little mud hut that she lives in with her kids, and that is all they have. They have goats and cattle. They raise and slaughter their own goats for food and milk. We went with this driver and he took us out across what was like a pasture to this Maasai village. We needed an interpreter between Maasai and Swahili and then another interpreter to interpret between Swahili and English. There were three people to get the conversation around. Word got out when they found out we were coming with these dresses and the kids started coming in swarms. People were coming from different villages. It was so important for them to get the dresses that they were lined up to get them."

Lynice adds, "It was actually really funny because once all the people and kids started coming our driver said 'let's get into the car and run for our lives' but literally these villages had a lot of people. I would say the men probably had seven or eight wives each, and each wife had two or three kids, and they didn't have anything other than a mud hut and the traditional Maasai clothing they had on which is shawls in a certain arrangement that they wrap around themselves. It was overwhelming. They were so thankful."

"We also gave the adult women flour," Trudi says. "We'd given Grace money earlier in the week and she got it, but \$60 U.S. bought 37 bags of flour. They were about five pound bags. We actually went on this Maasai village tour earlier in the week and they dressed us up in their traditional Maasai clothing and they taught us their traditional dances. So, we kind of knew what it was all about before delivering these dresses. The kids started coming in swarms and we just went through the dresses and picked which ones fit the best and we actually had enough dresses for everyone that was there."

"Then we took the extra dresses back to the daycare for Grace and she was going to keep them and use them as back up clothes if any kids have accidents at the daycare or if there were kids there that she felt needed it she would give them to them," Lynice says.

Lynice and Trudi reflect on their experience and how it made them feel.

Continued on Page 33

FOR LEASE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders to lease the property situate in the Municipality of Grassland and described below will be received by:

MEIGHEN HADDAD LLP
110 11th Street
Brandon, Manitoba R7A 4J4
Attention: Stacy A. Senkbeil

The property to be leased is located at:

- SE ¼ 21-5-20 WPM and the lease is for the whole of the parcel excluding the portion of the property that is taken for the Fairfax Landfill.

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 noon on **Monday, March 25, 2024** and must include the proposed term of the lease, up to a maximum of 3 years and the total rent to be paid each year plus GST.
- The party whose tender is accepted will be required to enter into a written Lease Agreement to be prepared by the solicitors for Municipality of Grassland, a copy of which is available by contacting Stacy A. Senkbeil at sasenkbeil@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: Kristy Wells @ (204) 858-2590

Meighen Haddad LLP
LAW FIRM

FOR SALE BY TENDER

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

MEIGHEN HADDAD LLP
129 Souris Street
P.O. Box 397
Melita Manitoba
R0M 1L0
Attention: Karen Beauchamp

PROPERTY:

ALL THAT PORTION OF SECTION 9-3-28 WPM WHICH LIES NORTH OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY PLAN 10 BLTO (BO DIV) EXC ALL MINES AND MINERALS SET FORTH IN TRANSFER 80772B0

Tenders must be on the entire parcel of land.

- NW ¼ consists of 160 acres, 110 acres of pasture and 50 acres hay land. This quarter has a granary and a dug out, and the pasture acres are fenced in.
- NE ¼ consists of 160 acres of hay land.
- SW ¼ consists of 132.62 acres of hay land.
- SE ¼ consists of 78.28 acres of hay land, with an oil well producing yearly surface lease payments. Surface lease will be assigned to the purchaser.

All of the hay land had previously been cultivated acres before being sowed to hay.

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 March 27, 2024** in an envelope marked "TENDER".
- Each tender must be accompanied by a \$2,500.00 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 May 1, 2024 on which date the Vendors shall provide a registrable 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.
- 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, 2024.

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

Meighen Haddad LLP
LAW FIRM

An opportunity to help in Africa

Continued from Page 32

"The biggest thing for me is how privileged we are, and we don't even know it. Here, we are begging our kids to go to school because they aren't showing up, while there they are begging to learn, they want to go so bad."

"It is amazing to see how eager they are to learn. They can get a class of 24-year-olds to sit there and learn an English and Math lesson. At the daycare, they had five- and six-year-olds and they were learning how to add and subtract two and three digit numbers."

"Our last day at the daycare, they had a combination celebration for Christmas, New Years, and our last day there. They were celebrating Christmas in January. Christianity is very important to them. They had a celebration where we danced, had food for all of them, and games. We also taught them the macarena."

Trudi and Lynice agree they would go back for the people and friendships they made. "For the people, yes. The people we met were amazing. We still text with a few of them. They are just unbelievably grateful," Lynice says.

Little Dresses Group in Wawota has been helping for 10 years

Susan Eisler and Shirley Palendat of Wawota are part of Wawota's Little Dresses Group, and are celebrating 10 years of sewing dresses for people in developing countries. There are 12 members altogether



A group hug with daycare children

"We started the Little Dresses group in 2014 and 20 people showed up. Now, we have made and given 10,000 dresses to people in third world countries in the last 10 years. The dresses have gone to Africa, South America, Mexico, Caribbean Island, and we've also sent some to the North when they have fires. We send shoeboxes at Christmas time through Samaritans Purse. Samaritans Purse runs Operation Christmas Child, which distributes shoe boxes filled with gifts and necessities from Canada to developing countries. We also make shorts. We have also made over 3,000 pairs of shorts."

How did the group start? "I went to a bible study and a lady asked me if there is something I would like to do that I have never done and I said I wanted to make something for African kids and she said 'why don't you start?' After that, I did," Susan said.

Shirley adds, "She was afraid nobody would show

up. She put an ad in and she was afraid no one would show up, then we had over 20 people. Our first day was February 26, 2014 and we've met every Tuesday to sew these dresses after that."

Susan has always wanted to sew dresses for African kids and found inspiration on the internet for designs.

"I saw something on the media somewhere of patterns for little dresses in Africa and that is why I chose to send them to Africa," she says.

Shirley explains, "They have gone a lot of other places than Africa too, but that is the original place we had decided for them to go."

The Little Dresses Group has had people come to them by word of mouth in the area.

"We have never ever phoned anybody saying we've heard of them going places and would like to take dresses. It has always been word of mouth when people take the dresses to the third world countries.

They just approach us," Susan explains.

"We know one person who goes and works in Africa and they took very many to Equatorial Guinea. It is hard to know how many people have come to us and taken dresses over the past 10 years. All I know is it has been many people and many dresses sent all over."

"Since covid we haven't had that many dresses go over because during covid people couldn't travel," Shirley says. "Afterwards, I don't know of many people going to the poorer countries. I think around 30 people at least have come to us and taken dress to somewhere a third world country."

Susan and Shirley explain their group has made more than just dresses for kids in developing countries.

"We've also made small blankets and quilts along with dresses and boys shorts. As well as pencil

cases full of school supplies. During covid we made masks, headbands, and scrub caps."

They are surprised the Little Dresses Group has lasted this long and hope to continue for as long as they can.

"I am even amazed the group has lasted 10 years. I would never have thought or in my wildest dreams thought it would last this long. I think we will just keep going," says Shirley.

"As long as we have people donating the materials we will try to keep going, but we have lost numbers because we've had the odd death and some people move. So our numbers have dropped. Now, we have about 10 or 12 people coming to sew."

They have had many donations over the years. Most materials are donated from the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Foundation based in Calgary.

"Anyone donates. At first a lot of people were cleaning out grandma's house when they are moving and extra material that I will never use. We also have two people in Calgary that are associated with the Grandmothers to Grandmothers Foundation. They get material every spring and sell it. After the sale week we have our people in Calgary go and pick out what they want. That is where we get our material to make the dresses," Susan said.

Shirley adds, "A lot of our material comes from Calgary. UJAMMA Grandmothers, also known as

Grandmothers to Grandmothers, is a nonprofit organization that raises funds and awareness of African grandmothers who are raising orphaned children. They have the material donated to them and then they sell it and then what is left over, our two people in Calgary can go and pick what they want. We get a lot of our material from them."

"We make most of our own bias tape out of broadcloth because we couldn't afford to make these dresses if we had to buy the bias tape. Sometimes we do have to buy material, elastics to put in the dresses, and rotary blades. However, we do get some donations from people."

"We meet every Tuesday at 1 and we stop around 3 in the afternoon for coffee and a bit of a lunch and have a good visit and it is just a good social time. The Free Methodist Church here in Wawota let us use their Cannington wing," said Shirley.

Susan adds, "They even built us a big cupboard to put our material in."

Susan and Shirley enjoy the social environment and the feeling they get knowing they are helping others in this world.

Susan says, "You have to do something in this world. This is ours, our little bit."

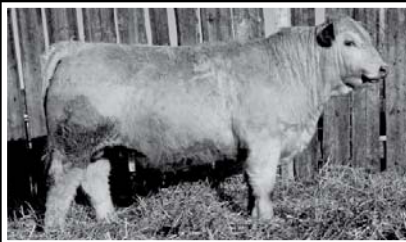
Shirley adds, "It's also when you are making the dresses and shorts you are associating with people you maybe wouldn't ordinarily and it is a real good social time."

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Indigenous agriculture opportunities could boost GDP by \$1.5 billion

Continued from page 23

Lack of access to capital, lower rates of participation of Indigenous people in the labour force, access and level of education attained, and higher unemployment are all major contributing factors that continue to hinder Indigenous economic progress overall, and in the ag economy.

According to Statistics Canada, the median farm operating revenue for Indigenous farm operators in 2020 was \$25,960, compared to non-Indigenous operators who earned \$73,440. This is a revenue disparity of \$47,480, or nearly 65%. The revenue disparity declined slightly between 2015 and 2020, being at \$49,900 (adjusted for inflation) in 2015. Revenue inequality has therefore improved slightly over the last five years.

These differences are largely due to under-representation of Indigenous farm operators in higher farm revenue brackets. Indigenous operators are highly represented in the lower threshold revenue classes (Figure 1), with 60% of Indigenous operators earning less than \$50,000 annually, compared to 43% of non-Indigenous opera-

tors. This goes to suggest that although some Indigenous operators own major farming operations, most Indigenous operations are small-scale oriented.

Closing the revenue gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous farm operations can be converted to a contribution to the economy measured in terms of GDP. GDP related to Indigenous primary farming operations was estimated to be \$351 million, or 1.0% of Canada's primary agriculture GDP in 2021. Conversely, the GDP contribution of non-Indigenous farm operations was \$35.9 billion. This estimated primary agriculture GDP per farm operator was \$64,900 for Indigenous and \$140,100 for non-Indigenous, for a GDP per farm disparity of \$75,200.

Potential of growing Indigenous representation and revenue

An equitable representation of Indigenous agriculture implies an increase in the number of operators as well as in revenues generated per farm.

Table 1 summarizes the impact on Indigenous and Canada's agriculture GDP

if we increase Indigenous participation in the sector and revenue generated per farm. Achieving these goals would increase Canadian primary agriculture GDP by \$1.5 billion.

An opportunity for the overall economy

Working towards achieving economic parity for Indigenous people in Canada presents an opportunity to lift the economic resilience of Indigenous populations as well as promoting food security. Increasing Indigenous participation in agriculture is a \$1.5 billion opportunity which would more than quadruple Indigenous agriculture GDP and provide an estimated 4.0 % boost in Canada's primary agriculture GDP. Government programs such as the Indigenous agriculture and food systems initiative and funding programs for Indigenous and northern communities and organizations are laudable, and could be complemented with an innovation plan and collaboration between all stakeholders to address the barriers to increasing Indigenous participation in primary agriculture and agri-food business.

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Balanced EPD'S, modest birth weight, loads of performance and hair.



BRIMNERS LEGION 35L

Feb 18, 2023 // 90lb BW // 855lb WW // Polled
CEDARLEA HILTON 204HX BAR J TROJAN 68X
CE: 4.6 // BW: -0.9 // WW: 56 // YW: 106 // Milk: 25 // MTL: 53
High performing, heavy haired mid-February Herd Bull Prospect



BRIMNERS LIBERATOR 36L

Feb 18, 2023 // 91lb BW // 960lb WW // Polled
HVA HARCO 11HX BAR J TROJAN 68X
CE: 7.5 // BW: -0.7 // WW: 61 // YW: 108 // Milk: 24 // MTL: 55
Loose made, high growth herd bull with a modest birth weight.



BRIMNERS LUXE 65L

Feb 25, 2023 // 82lb BW // 760lb WW // Polled
C2 JOSE 10JX SOS GAME OF THRONES 98D
CE: 11.7 // BW: -4.4 // WW: 45 // YW: 89 // Milk: 31 // MTL: 53
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