

Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

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Kenosee Superslides making a splash in Saskatchewan

BY CHRISTEEN JESSE

The lifeguard gives you the 'go' signal, and you plunge yourself onto the twister slide, getting wrapped up in the icy blue water and the thrill of the speedy ride. Kids laugh and splash around in the water, and classic summer songs play in the background—it's July and you're at the Kenosee Superslides.

It's the perfect way to spend a hot summer afternoon, and it's a lifestyle that James Mills has grown to love.

"I wouldn't trade it for anything," says Mills about his job as Manager of the Kenosee Superslides.

"It's so much fun—it can be incredibly stressful and sometimes it's hard to be here all day every day, but it's just so much fun seeing all the kids having fun and all the laughs and smiles."

Mills has been a part of this experience since he started at the Superslides ten summers ago as a lifeguard. Now in his third season as manager, he is just as happy to be a part of the water-park as he was on day one.

The park, which opened in the summer of 1986, offers a variety of slides and other water activities, pleasing everyone from daredevil sliders to casual floaters.

"It's a different thing for every different person," says Mills. "The young kids love the kiddie slides and splashing around there. I know I've talked to a couple of adults who say they just come to laze around in the canal and just read a book all day, and that's perfect for them. Older teenagers to younger twenties love the tube slide—that's the only slide they will go on all day. So it's different for everyone."

The water park is home to two inner-tube water slides, the Bonzai speed run, two twister slides and the renowned eight story Free Fall slide. Three kiddie slides provide fun for youngsters and the Lazy Canal serves well for those wanting a slow paced

jaunt on an inner tube.

With hundreds of people coming through the gates daily and lots of traffic on the slides, it's essential to keep things at the Superslides running smoothly and safely. Mills says his staff of about

They do a really good job of managing."

"And I love talking to people, it's so much fun," she adds. "Everybody talks to you and is really friendly."

As is evident from her uniform

"With life-guarding, you have to be able to stay outside all day, and at the beginning and end of the day we do cleanup, so it's not too labor intensive but it can be hard work."

Her fellow co-worker agrees

water slides have also gone out of business.

Despite the disappearance of major outdoor water parks in the area, the Kenosee Superslides have managed to keep their popularity growing and numbers high.

"I think it's just because people care about them," says Wood. "People come from all around to come to them. I've been coming to the slides since I was little . . . I can't even remember the first time I was ever here. So I think it's a big community thing, and people would be crushed if they were to close."

Mills says that roughly 20,000 to 25,000 people come through the gates of the Superslides every June-August season, and it is that continued community support that keeps the business afloat.

"This region has always been really good," says Mills. "Kenosee was amazing in the early 1990s,

it has kind of died down a little bit . . . but it's still the place to be. It's Kenosee, it's Moose Mountain Provincial Park, and as long as we keep up with maintenance here, there is no reason for people to turn away."

Mills knows that the slides have a strong past behind them, and a good future ahead of them, but he still hears talk about the Kenosee slides facing the same fate as other unsuccessful slides in the area.

"The rumor of us closing always goes around, and I have no idea who starts it," says Mills. "I hear 'The Superslides are closing down? I hear they are moving to Edmonton? Or they are moving to Calgary or Ontario?'"

There's no way. We're not going to move anywhere. They could be disassembled if it stopped making profit, but it still makes a great profit."

Continued on page 2



Christeen Jesse photos

35 workers does a great job of ensuring this.

"We have two different sets of lifeguards—the bottom sets are the really trained lifeguards, because if anything happens, its going to be at the bottom," says Mills. "Then I also have a lot of people applying with just First Aid training, so those are the top guards that designate the rules, and let kids know when they can go."

Only two weeks into her job as a lifeguard at the Superslides, Skylar Wood is already impressed by the operation.

"It's awesome, I love it here," says Wood from her post at the bottom of a slide. "The working environment is very good—you get to work outside, and our bosses are great



of sunglasses and a bathing suit, Wood has an enjoyable summer job, but says it's not always just fun and games.

their kind in the province.

The outdoor water slides at Regina's Maxwells Amusements closed in 2007, and the Brandon

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Potential "Best year ever" for Superslides

Continued from front

A great profit indeed—Mills says that the Superslides are in their prime this summer, experiencing one of their top seasons ever, and putting to bed any rumors about closure.

"This summer we are ahead of last summer, and last summer was our best year ever," he says. "So this very well could be our best summer in history . . . I have my fingers crossed for it."

It's a business that thrives on hot days, and summer sun, but Mills says that there is still work to be done in the eight month off-season.

"(The slides) actually manage to winterize very well," he says. "You have to push all the water out, everywhere, but it was built properly. There are a couple of things that have had to be changed here or there . . . but I always make sure to be very careful. If we ever have a huge snowfall then I come here and I push snow out of any of the slides."

But winter is far from their minds of staff at the Superslides this summer—they are instead focused on soaking in the success of this season and hoping for many more to come.

"Last year we renewed our lease with Moose Mountain Provincial Park for ten more years, so we've got at least that much in our planned future," says Mills.

With the solidified contract, continued community support and effective management, the Kenosee Superslides will undoubtedly maintain their status as one of the only, and one of the best outdoor water parks in Saskatchewan.



Above: People head up the hill to the tube slides.

Below: Two ladies lounge in the canal, soaking up the sun.



A lifeguard gives watersliders the 'Go' signal.



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Human bones found at Moosomin Lake

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK
Moosomin's Robert Mullett and his daughter Kalea found more than they bargained for when they headed to shore to take a break while canoeing on Moosomin Lake Tuesday night.

As they took their shore break at an area south of the cabins, the Mulletts saw what appeared to be human bones on the ground.

"We just came up on shore to stretch our legs. I walked along the shore, and Kalea hiked up to the top of the hill," said Robert Mullett.

"There was a bunch of small stones, and at first it didn't look like anything special—there were about 15 or 20 smaller stones, and the skull was kind of blending in with the stones.

"When you looked closer you could see the back bones exposed a little further down."

Mullett said the sight gave him the chills. "It was a little eerie," he said. "Just the way everything was half covered. It looked like the sand had washed away—it was partly covering a rib cage.

"It looked like it had been buried and the high water washed some of the sand away—everything was still intact, the teeth were still in the skull.

"We didn't know if it was a burial area or not. We just kind of looked around to see if there were any bones or anything else, and we thought we better leave it alone and leave everything where it was in case the police wanted to look at it."

Wednesday morning Mullett notified the Moosomin RCMP detachment and took them to the site.

"The police wanted to get out there quickly to make sure nothing was disrupted," Mullett says. "We went out there as soon as possible."

Mullett says he has spent a lot of time on Moosomin Lake over the years and has never seen or heard of anything like the exposed bones.

"I've never heard of anything like that in my life," he said. "Bones just lying there on the shore. It was like CSI Saskatchewan."

After RCMP were contacted Wednesday morning, a forensic unit removed the bones for investigation.

"Everything was removed," Sgt. Gord Stewart of the Moosomin RCMP said Thursday.

Although the bones appeared to be very old, "We have to treat it as a crime scene," Stewart said.

"We have to treat it as suspicious until we're satisfied that it's not."

He said RCMP were in constant contact with University of Saskatchewan forensic anthropologist Dr. Ernie Walker as they excavated the site. Walker confirmed the bones are human and will study the bones further in Saska-

toon.
"As he takes a look at the bones he can determine gender and age at death, and he can figure out just how old they are," said Stewart.

"I've never heard of anything like that in my life. Bones just lying there on the shore. It was like CSI Saskatchewan."

—Robert Mullett

The forensic anthropologist determined the bones are those of an adult, aboriginal male, and date back approximately 500 to 1,000 years ago.

The remains will be turned over to the Heritage Conservation Branch of Saskatchewan Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport for proper reburial.

Stewart believes the bones may have been exposed by heavy spring runoff and high water levels in Moosomin Lake this spring.

"Because of the water level being so high this year we thought they may have come out of the hillside—the water may have uncovered them," he said. Members from the RCMP

aboriginal male, and are approximately 200 years old.

Dr. Ernie Walker, who provided dates for both sets of bones, says the dating is based on a visual inspection, not carbon dating.

"The dates that are assigned are estimates based on the condition of the bone itself," he said. "We could do carbon dating, but that would be expensive."

He said his main task was determining if the bones are historical, or have medical-legal significance.

"I have to give some assurance that these are not of medical-legal concern," he said. "We have to always investigate these as potential missing persons."

"Once it's determined they are historical, it's no longer a matter for the police, and determining an exact age isn't a priority."

In the case of the Moosomin Lake bones, there were no cultural ar-

tifacts such as stone tools found along with the bones, leaving Walker to determine the age based only on the appearance of the bones.

He said having two sets of bones show up in a short period of time is out of the ordinary.

"It's pretty unusual," he said. "We haven't had one for a couple of years. It's hit and miss. The vast majority of my work is on the medical legal side—MVs, fires, etc. We don't find very many of these ancient ones."

The Prairie soil can preserve bones for thousands of years.

"It depends on the soil, but we've had remains that are 6,000 years old from Saskatchewan. These bones from Moosomin Lake are 500-1,000 years old, and that sounds old to a person on the street, but we've had many that are much older than that."



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Stephanie Lange photos

Top left: A rodeo clown and a junior steer rider at the Moose Mountain Pro Rodeo in Kennedy, Sask. on July 24.

Top right: A bronc rider dives off his bronc.



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Left: A bronc rider hangs on at the Moose Mountain Pro Rodeo.
Above: Team ropers zero in on a steer.



Stephanie Lange photos

Province to conduct special review of provincial dams

Minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Dustin Duncan announced a special review of the province's water management infrastructure and its current operations.

"In light of unprecedented flooding this year, I have directed officials at the Watershed Authority to take additional measures to review the impact record runoff and rainfall may have had on our water management structures," Duncan said. "Saskatchewan people depend on this

infrastructure not only for flood prevention and mitigation, but also irrigation, drinking water supply and recreational activities. It is essential that we make every effort to examine operations and determine any rehabilitation needs that may have resulted from such a record year."

As part of the review, Minister Duncan has also directed the Watershed Authority to conduct additional work in four main areas:

Undertake special inspections on dams that ex-

perienced unusually high water flows or reservoir levels in 2011.

Use inspection findings and ongoing monitoring and assessments to identify the long-term infrastructure renewal needs of the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority's dams.

Review and recommend upgrades to the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority's Dam Safety Program.

Review and make recommendations on operations at Gardiner, Rafferty, Alameda and Boundary dams.



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Ritz gives farmers relief

BY CHRISTEEN JESSE

People say that the best gifts come in small packages, but for Prairie farmers, it's just the opposite. A huge support package from the federal government was announced last Thursday—a package worth \$448 million, and one that will go directly toward flood relief for farmers.

"While farmers know how to deal with difficult weather, the extreme flooding of crop land this year, and year after year, can be devastating," said federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz at a farm outside McTaggart, Saskatchewan. "It's safe to say that it has been a remarkably tough year for farmers in the Western provinces that have been affected. Extreme weather and flooding is once again hampering farm production on the Prairies and preventing some farmers from producing the high quality foods that we have all come to expect."

Officials estimate that 13 to 14 million acres of crop was unseeded this year on the Prairies, including eight million acres in Saskatchewan, leaving many farmers with damaged land and minimal crops. So the federal government has stepped in to help producers manage the financial burden the flooding caused.

"I'm proud to announce with the government of Canada in partnership with our provincial colleges in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, we will deliver an assistance package worth some \$448 million to producers in the affected areas," said Ritz. "Under this initiative, crop producers will receive \$30 per unseeded acre to assist with the extraordinary costs of rehabilitating their crop land."

This AgriRecovery initiative will offer relief to the three prairie provinces, with about \$250 million being directed

towards Saskatchewan farmers. The program will provide producers with \$30 per eligible acre of land too wet to be seeded as of June 20, or seeded land that was ruined by flooding before July 31.

Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister Bob Bjornrud highlights that the newly announced support is in addition to the unseeded acreage benefit of \$70 per acre that crop insurance coverage customers are already receiving, so when used in conjunction, farmers will be receiving \$100 for every unseeded acre.

And grain farmers aren't the only ones getting assistance from the government.

"We recognize that it's not only grain producers who were affected by this year's wet conditions," says Bjornrud. "Livestock producers around the province have lost pasture land due to flooding and continue to cope with rain that is affecting their haying operations. To address this, the provincial government is continuing our Saskatchewan Feed and Forage program—the province of Saskatchewan is putting in our 40 per cent share to help livestock producers purchase additional winter feed if they have been affected by excess moisture."

This part of the program results in a payment of \$12 per ton of excess feed purchased by feedlot owners whose feed was too damaged to be used. Bjornrud hopes to continue talks with the federal government to increase this number to \$30. He also hopes that this program, which is continuing from last year, will help producers to re-seed hay, forage, and pasture land that has been damaged by excess moisture.

The team of agriculture ministers additionally announced a new program to offer support to intensive livestock operations such as feedlots that were affected by the excess moisture.

"Feedlots will now be eligible for up to 75 per cent rebate up to \$250,000 on the cost of repairing or replacing pens and manure storage systems that have been damaged by excess moisture," says Bjornrud.

The government initiatives were stemmed after both Ritz and Bjornrud were subject to the reality that Prairie farmers faced this spring, but also are also a symbol that the government recognizes the importance of a healthy agricultural industry in the country.

"Agriculture has been a driving force in helping to steer this country through tough economic times," says Ritz. "It's an industry that gives a lot to Canada, and one that deserves our respect and our support. Canadians told us that while they tighten their own belts, they want to see their government do the same, and of course we agree. Given the disaster and the long-term impact it will have on future agricultural production, it's important to help producers deal with the extraordinary cost of disasters like this."

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Asessippi expects good crowd even without snow

There's no snow on the slopes but the Asessippi Ski Area and Resort north of Russell hopes to attract a different type of clientele when it hosts the inaugural Subway Asessippi Folk n' Fest on Saturday, Aug. 27.

"This is the first time we have hosted a summer concert, with the festival itself being the main attraction," said Roz Pulo, director of marketing for Asessippi.

In March of this year, the Kickin' it for Kids benefit concert raised funds for Kidsport Manitoba. But it was held during the ski season, when an average of 800 visitors are usually on site.

"The cottages trailside at Asessippi and at Lake of the Prairies are used year round, and as the population in these areas increase it is important for us to offer

more year-round activities and events," Pulo emphasized.

To date four bands have been confirmed for the day-long event. Swamp Gas is a Neepawa band that plays acoustic folk, Irish and East Coast music. Tailwind is a Winnipeg-based group that describes its music as a range from soul-driven folk to gritty Americana-esque. Stonypoint band members come from southern Manitoba and are known for their appreciation of traditional bluegrass and love of playing fast, with lots of toe tapping favorites. Fish and Bird is a five-piece indie-folk powerhouse with a wide variety.

Blue Moffatt, who joined the Asessippi Ski Area and Resort sales and marketing team earlier this year, is in

charge of organizing the concert and associated events. Moffatt has years of experience working in both the tourism and hospitality industries, and has lots of extras lined up for festival-goers to take part in.

"Along with the music, we wanted to make sure this event has something for everyone—children entertainers, activities and lots of great hospitality all set in the beautiful valley," said Moffatt.

Eurobungy, face painting and a farmers' and artisan market are some of activities planned, plus there are lots of great food and beverages available at the ski lodge.

Asessippi Ski Area and Resort is located just west of Inglis, near the Manitoba/Saskatchewan border.

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Arrow Oak integrated watershed management plan accepted

On June 7 representatives from the Upper Assiniboine River Conservation District board and staff attended a reception at the Manitoba Legislature in the minister of water stewardship's office to mark the acceptance of the Arrow Oak Integrated Watershed Management Plan.

Provincial Deputy Minister of Water Stewardship Don Norquay presented the conservation district with a plaque in honor of the combined efforts of the towns, communities, and 12 RMs located within the Arrow Oak Watershed.

The Arrow Oak Watershed, named after the two largest rivers which are found in the area, includes all or portions of the municipalities of Rosburn, Park, Shoal Lake, Strathclair, Archie, Miniota, Hamiota, Blanshard, Wallace, Woodworth, Daly, and even bits of Pipestone and Sifton.

This planning effort was a collaboration of both the Upper Assiniboine and Little Saskatchewan River conservation districts.

"First of all I would like to thank all the dedicated people from both conservation districts that



Minister Don Norquay presents a plaque to the Arrow Oak Watershed.

spent numerous hours to complete the Arrow Oak IWMP," says Ron Kostas, chairman for the Upper Assiniboine. "It just goes to show that conservation districts can work together to achieve the goals and challenges set before them. "Myself as the chair, and

the board of the UARCD appreciate the recognition by the deputy minister on behalf of the department of Water Stewardship for our achievement. We look forward to continue working with the LSRCD to achieve actions that are outlined in the plan."

"These goals are ambitious and will require teamwork between districts and good working relations with our many partners to address the big issues such as nutrient reductions, surface water management and habitat loss," says Manager Ryan

Canart.

"In our current state of affairs, some of these topics are not timely, and discussing water storage is almost taboo at this point, but we cannot lose sight of the long-term impact of our land use decisions.

These issues are not going away and this spring Mother Nature showed us just how vulnerable we are. New approaches and changes to current land developments will have to be considered.

"An Integrated Watershed Management Plan is an organized way of looking at big picture issues and setting long- and short-term priorities for protecting and improving our watersheds natural resources. These plans provide a venue where all watershed residents, local municipalities and government agencies can openly discuss watershed concerns and work together to develop long-term solutions. Integrated Watershed Management Planning promotes responsible

landscape management, provides an opportunity for public dialogue, watershed education, and develops long term development strategies for watershed resources to achieve healthy watershed communities."

The Upper Assiniboine River and Little Saskatchewan River Conservation Districts began the process to develop an Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) for the Arrow Oak Watershed in March of 2006. The process involved a lot of hard work from many organizations and stakeholders over three years of public meetings and workshops. In October of 2009 the plan was completed and submitted to Manitoba Water Stewardship for Government approval. After undergoing various reviews from government personnel, the Arrow Oak River IWMP document has been approved and accepted by the Minister of Water Stewardship, Christine Melnick.

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Charles Tweed photos

Jody Aylard, assistant deputy minister of agriculture and David Gehl, officer in charge of Indian Head Research Farm pull down the veil to reveal the new sign that will stand at the entrance of the farm. The farm has operated since 1886.

I.H. Research Farm celebrates 125th

BY CHARLES TWEED

The Indian Head Research Farm celebrated 125 years of advancing agriculture in Western Canada and the world July 19.

The farm has been credited with many breakthroughs in the agricultural sector and was a major contributor helping settlers break the wild west.

"Experimental farms were initiated in 1886 to provide new settlers with reliable information on the best farming methods and practices for local conditions. Over the past 125 years the station at Indian Head has had many accomplishments such as developing methods to reduce soil erosion, nutrition and management practices that have improved crop and livestock production in Saskatchewan," explained Prime Minister Stephen Harper in a letter to the farm.

The milestone recognizes the importance the farm played throughout agriculture on the Prairies. David Gehl, officer in charge of the farm, talked about what the settlers would have seen when they first ventured west.

"When the settlers came here they came to a treeless plain and they brought with them the agricultural techniques from Eastern Canada and Europe. They quickly discovered those techniques were not adapted to the harsh environment of the plains," said Gehl. "Many of the first settlers did not succeed and so the Government of Canada established a series of experimental farms to help the settlers."

Gehl credited the invention of marquis wheat by Sir Charles Edward Saunders as one of the most important steps to settling the West. Marquis wheat was first planted and test at the Indian Head Research Farm and by 1920, about 90 per cent of all wheat grown in Western Canada was the marquis variety.

"The first 23 pounds of marquis seed was sent to Indian Head in 1907. In ten years that variety was grown on millions of acres and is credited with opening large areas of the prairies for agriculture," explained Gehl.

Dr. Guy Lafond, senior scientist, believes the centre still plays a vital role in agriculture 125 years after its inception.

"The primary function is to move re-

search knowledge up the pipeline to the farm level. We can play the intermediate role of bringing technology right to the farm. Testing, evaluating and validating is a major role," said Lafond.

The farm's research is directed to have short, medium and long-term focuses for agriculture in the area, a philosophy that is always creating new ideas while being mindful of what has worked in the past. The farm, in many cases, provides foresight for the farmer.

"The overarching theme is long term sustainability of our resources, our abil-

ity to provide food, our ability to maintain high quality air, soil and water," said Lafond.

The farm has nurtured a legacy in Saskatchewan the same way farmers nurture and tend to the land they own, but there is one area of research Lafond is especially proud of.

"One of its legacies will be the focus it adopted 25 years ago on the no-till production system as a way to put to rest the issue of wind erosion," said Lafond. "The other legacies will be tied into the research branch. Any new variety that has come to

the forefront has been tested here extensively and any new technology will have been evaluated here, so there will be many levels of contribution."

Allen Cole and Walter Clark worked at the farm together. They've seen many changes come and go in their combined 80 years at the research farm. The farm gave them an opportunity to provide a living for their families and they took great pride and ownership of the farm, knowing it was helping famers in the area.

"It meant stability to us and a place where we could earn a living," said Clark,

Allan laughed.

"He could hand it out though too," said Clark, a comment that got everyone at the table laughing.

The two remember being skeptical of some of the techniques the farm was developing at the time and appreciate how the progression of new information has never stopped since the farm opened.

"Continuous cropping was the thing I couldn't get over when we started with that. It was something that wasn't in my vocabulary or way of thought. When we first started I thought this is ridiculous and yet it was successful," said Cole.

Continuous cropping and zero till are a couple of the many ideas that received little enthusiasm and their fair share of criticism from farmers when first introduced.

"The advice we give to farmers is objective and it's based on real results. Whether they are a positive or negative result you can trust that they are accurate," explained Gehl. "There is always some skepticism when you are introducing a new technology but the earliest adapters are usually the most innovative farmers and one thing about prairie producers is when they see something that works they aren't slow to adopt it."

Gehl believes the farm's reputation has helped farmers trust and accept some of the technology they have introduced.

"I think our long standing tradition has definitely helped because farmers have seen the results hold true to their operation," said Gehl.

He said the Indian Head Research Farm is continuously looking for ways to improve the agricultural sector and believes there are exciting times ahead.

"I think that the next phase is matching what we put on a crop with what the crop needs so that we aren't creating pollution, polluting the environment with phosphorous or nitrogen or harmful agents that the crop does not use," added Gehl. "It will probably lead to the reduction of pesticides. Some of the varieties we have are resistant to wheat midge and that will eliminate the need for application for very toxic insecticides and those types of technological advances are going to become more and more important."



Allan Cole and Walter Clark reflect in front of a thresher that was used during their tenure at the research farm.

whose wife Ivy worked in the office. "We took a lot of pride in the farm. We wanted to see the farm look as sharp as we could by keeping things mowed and trimmed up. It was maintained within an inch of its life and just looked beautiful."

"You used to stop the vehicle and get out an pull a weed if you saw one," added Cole.

The Cole family is legendary at Indian Head Research Farm as Allan's dad Earl and uncle Irvin also worked at the farm. When asked if he took a lot of abuse with a father and an uncle working at the farm



David Gehl stands behind more than 50 varieties of wheat the Indian Head Research Farm has had a hand in developing. The farm has orchestrated many new farming technologies during its 125 year run, including planting the first seed of Marquis Wheat, the seed that is often credited for opening the prairies to cereal crops.



The bull riding event, left, and the calf roping event, right, at the 2010 Virden indoor rodeo. Organizers are looking forward to hosting the rodeo this year in Virden's new multi-plex.

Virden excited to host rodeo in new arena

BY KARA KINNA

The town of Virden, Manitoba is getting ready to host its 23rd annual indoor rodeo from Aug. 18-21, but this year, there's going to be something very big and very different about the event.

"There is a lot new," says Steve Dryden, the western chair for the rodeo. "But the biggest thing will be the Virden multi-plex. It's a brand new venue. It has 1,200 seats, it's air conditioned. We're very excited about that."

From wooden benches to individual seating, wheelchair access and upper levels to add more seating if necessary, Dryden says the multi-plex will be an added improvement to the rodeo, which is always the biggest weekend in Virden.

"I think it will give our event quite a boost," he says. "The old arena wasn't very well lit, it wasn't cli-

mate controlled. With the new arena we won't have to fight the elements, and there shouldn't be a bad seat in the house. We now have an upper concourse where we can have displays from sponsors and retail space. You will now be able to come and possibly shop for souvenirs or artwork that you traditionally wouldn't have been able to do at the rodeo.

"It's going to be a great benefit to our event and lots of events coming down the road."

Dryden says the Virden rodeo is best described as semi pro, with competitors from all of the Prairie provinces competing in the event.

Dryden says the Virden rodeo has always been a large rodeo.

"We will probably have very close to 300 entries over three days, and a slack, and probably 250 to

260 cowboys and cowgirls competing," he says.

"This rodeo has been voted rodeo of the year by the Manitoba Rodeo Cowboys' Association nine times over the last two decades... You couldn't win a better award because it is voted on by the cowgirls and cowboys of that association. It's pretty honoring to win that award because that means the cowboys and cowgirls coming to Virden are finding it a pretty good experience."

Dryden says it's typical to have two sold-out performances in Virden on the Friday and Saturday nights.

This year the rodeo kicks off on Friday, Aug. 19 with rodeo action starting at 6:30 p.m.

On Saturday, Aug. 20, a high school rodeo will run outside and inside from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and 3D bar-

rel racing will be held at 3 p.m. in the outdoor ring. A draft horse futurity will go from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. inside the multi-plex. Rodeo action begins at 6:30 p.m. that night, and is followed by a dance starting at 10 p.m. in the Virden curling rink.

The final day of rodeo is Sunday, Aug. 21, with the draft horse futurity halter class from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. outside, followed by 3D barrel racing at 11 a.m. and the every popular demolition derby at 1 p.m. The derby is held on PR 257 west of the cement plant.

Rodeo action starts at 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Dryden says junior steer riding and junior barrel

racing have been added to the rodeo this year.

"We also are introducing a live video feed in the arena," he says. We will have a jumbotron with a replay of the action and a closed caption screen in the sponsors lounge and beer gardens. Those are two pretty key things."

So why is the Virden rodeo such a success? Dryden credits it to a few things.

"We have a very strong sponsor base in Virden," he says. "The rodeo has been Virden's signature event for probably 10 years or more. Our sponsors allow our committee to stay progressive and bring in new events."

Dryden also says the

Virden rodeo offers a fairly significant purse of money for competitors.

He also credits the rodeo committee.

"We have a lot of depth in our committee," he says. "Virden has been pretty rich with rodeo cowboys and cowgirls for three decades and a lot of those are our committee members. They have a lot of experience in the sport and know how to put together a show that people will want to watch."

"Hopefully we can put together the same type of show as we have in the past few years."

"I think our rodeo will be put on until people quit coming to watch it."

Lots of events planned along with rodeo

BY KARA KINNA

With hundreds of people planning to be in Virden on rodeo weekend, organizers have a whole lineup of events planned along with the rodeo.

"This is in addition to our rodeo, because we have a large crowd of people and it's our biggest weekend in Virden," says Donna Hunter, who plans the downtown events along with Christine Winter on rodeo weekend.

"We bring in a lot of children's events and we want to bring people to our downtown core area. This spreads it among the town a little more."

Rodeo weekend events start full swing on Thursday, Aug. 18 with a free barbecue from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Victoria Park.

Then, from 5 to 9 p.m. Seventh Avenue is blocked off. Stores stay open until 9 p.m. with sidewalk sales and there is a contest for best decorated business.

The high school rodeo club hosts a barbecue and there is a chili cookoff from 5 to 7 p.m.

Downtown events also include a demonstration by the Virden fire department,

a mechanical bull from 5 to 9 p.m., live bands, including old-time music and modern pop-rock-country, human chuckwagon races at 7 p.m. and a fashion show at 7 p.m., as well as a dunk tank and a bake sale and market garden.

Hunter says the human chuckwagon races are always a hit.

"We have teams of five people and they compete and it's a lot of fun," she says. "It brings a lot of people down to watch."

An entire lineup of children's events is also planned for that Thursday between 5 and 9 p.m. These include a fun fair, petting zoo, pony rides, pumpkin patch train rides, inflatable bouncers, mini doughnuts, face painting and reptile gardens.

On Saturday, Aug. 20 the day begins with a pancake breakfast from 8 to 10 a.m. and a large parade starting at 10 a.m. The day is capped off with the rodeo dance starting at 10 p.m. at the curling rink.

Weekend activities are capped off with one of the most popular events—a demolition derby at 1 p.m. "A demolition derby is

held on the edge of town, which is a huge hit," says Hunter. "We have had really big crowds attend that and it's lots of fun."

Hunter also points out that the high school rodeo will be running in conjunction with the regular rodeo on Saturday, making for a very full weekend.

Hunter, who is with the Chamber of Commerce, says the entire weekend could not be possible without a number of groups working together. "It's a combination of the Chamber of Commerce, the rodeo committee and the town of Virden itself who come together and make this a success," she says. "Between the town, the rodeo committee, and the Chamber, we all come together for this particular weekend."

Like everyone else, Hunter is excited about the new multi-plex where the rodeo will be hosted this year.

"That's where we're really, really excited," she says. "It's beautiful."

"We would love to have everyone come down to see our rodeo, check out our new rec facility and enjoy the town of Virden."

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Oilfield hands anxious to fire back up

BY CHARLES TWEED

A wet spring has taken its toll on homeowners, who have dealt with overland flooding and farmers, who were unable to seed, but another important industry has been hurt equally as bad by the excess moisture.

The oil and gas industry is dealing with an extended breakup, putting pressure and stress on employees, who haven't worked in some cases in nearly four months.

According to the Canadian Association of Oil-well Drilling Contractors (CAODC) there are 95 rigs working in Saskatchewan as of July 19 with another 60 rigs down for a total of 155 rigs. The number of working rigs has increased more than 240 per cent from this time last month, when there were only 39 rigs working, 119 down, for a total of 158 in the province.

"It's been pretty slow," said Scott Nichol, field supervisor with Phoenix Tech-

nologies in Estevan.

"We pretty much didn't have a job running for three months and we finally got a couple running where there was some dry land but for the most part there are a lot of starving guys out there."

A few rural municipalities in the area have chosen to extend road bans past the typical six-week ban due the weather. The bans have inhibited the rigs' ability to move from lease to lease. The RM of Moosomin brought road bans into effect March 14 and lifted them May 2, the normal six-week period. "When you have water laying on both sides of the ditch, if you don't watch it you will just pound your roads right out," said Kit Bell, reeve of the RM of Moosomin. "The road bans go on for about six weeks and we try to get them on strategically."

"It's just too soft and too damaged from the flood," explained Nichol. "There are a lot of roads that are cut



Kevin Weedmark photo

A service rig north of Moosomin proudly flies the Saskatchewan and Canadian Flags from the crown. Activity is starting to pick up in south-eastern Saskatchewan after a slow spring.

out, too. They had to cut a few roads to release water and it's turned in some situations an hour and a half long drive into a three and half hour drive. That slowed

quite a few guys up and a lot of companies don't want to pay for the extra trucking bill."

The long break up has added stress to employees

who depend on rigs working in the area. Mortgage and vehicle payments unfortunately don't take the same break the water has caused rigs to take this spring.

"A lot of guys have had to go into the unemployment offices and they certainly don't make as much as when they are working," said Nichol. "There is just a lot of starving guys out there and most of the phone calls I got were from guys trying to get back to work, but there's not much we can do."

One remedy Nichol has used to curtail the shortage of work has been to send guys who typically work in the Bakken formation west. Alberta had 151 rigs working as of June 21 and is now up to 231 rigs drilling for oil and gas of the nearly 550 rigs in the wildrose province.

"I sent a lot of my guys to Alberta to try to get them some days because Alberta picked up a lot quicker than we did," he said.

The record heat throughout the province has garnered some criticism from people who don't like the heat but Nichol said you won't find anyone complaining about it in the oil and gas industry, as land dries up and more rigs are able to get back to work.

"The weather's been great and it's gotten a lot of rigs out the door," explained Nichol. "It's kind of a funny country where we are two weeks away from being a desert after all of the flooding we had this spring. Everything is starting to dry up pretty fast out there now."

The Bakken formation has been one of the busiest patches in the world over the past decade and it took Mother Nature to slow it down.

"Nothing you can really do when you get hit with that much water. There was so much on the books and now everybody is so far behind that it's going to be a crazy busy summer with the amount of heat we're getting and the amount of rigs that are moving down into this area," he said. "All the companies are so far behind schedule that it looks to be a busy summer, fall and winter."

The consistent work in southeastern Saskatchewan has meant rigs and crews haven't done any extensive moving for more than a decade. Nichol expects that trend to continue but wouldn't be surprised if a few rigs were moved from Alberta to keep up with the demand.

"There are a bunch of rigs that call this area home and stay pretty busy. They are trying to get as many rigs as they can down here but with Alberta being as busy as it is it is really hard to get them," said Nichol.

The high demand has forced some oil companies to work together, understanding it isn't in their best interest to create a bidding war for iron but instead use is co-operative.

"A lot of our rigs will finish up a hole for an oil company and be under contract but if there isn't another lease ready because it is too wet they'll loan out the rig for a hole. It creates kind of a juggling act for the oil companies and they understand the stressfulness of it and the need for the rig," said Nichol.

"Most of the companies are working well together. If they don't have that hole or lease ready right away they'll let another company pick up the rig."

The approach has been good for hands, who don't have to worry about being shut down for any length of time while the company clears and prepares the next lease.

Another option is to have guys come in and do some work in the office during down time but with such an extended break-up this spring that really isn't an option.

"For the most part we don't get to many guys into the shop because there's not much too do here either. We do all our own motor servicing but we had that cleared off a couple weeks after break-up so there hasn't been much to do in the office or the field so it's good to see things starting to fire up again," said Nichol.

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Charles Tweed photo

Farmers continue to cut hay for silage for the fall and winter months. This hay was cut and gathered just west of Moosomin recently.

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- 2008 Jeep Compass Blue, 205,000 kms
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August 18 - 21, 2011

- 2011 Virden Indoor Rodeo -

The Virden Indoor Rodeo Committee is very excited to announce that the 2011 Rodeo will take place in the new Virden & Area Multi-Purpose Recreation Facility. Don't miss your opportunity to be part of history on Friday August 19th as we host the first rodeo performance in our new 1200 seat indoor arena.

Enjoy our first-class rodeo performances in the comfort of your individual seat with excellent visual of this high class rodeo. The climate control system is sure to keep you cool & comfortable.

The Virden Indoor Rodeo has been voted "Rodeo of the Year" by the cowboys and cowgirls, nine times over the last two decades.

There's no two ways around it, cowboys, cowgirls and the fans all come to Virden in August for one thing - great rodeo action.

Wild West Daze activities in Virden are held from Thursday, August 18 to Sunday, August 21. Be prepared to spend the whole weekend so you don't miss out on any of the action.

The annual Virden Indoor Rodeo is slated for Friday, August 19 and Saturday, August 20. On Sunday, August 21 you can catch the finals. From bareback riding to barrel racing, team roping to bull riding, the action is a thrill a minute. Even youngsters get in on the action with mutton bustin' on Friday night.

The event is dual sanctioned by the Canadian Cowboys Association and the Manitoba Rodeo Cowboys Association. It attracts entrants from Canada, United States, Australia, and New Zealand.

It's known as a make it or break it event for cowboys wanting to earn points to take part in the MRCA and CCA finals.

On Saturday, the high school students take over the arena for the Virden High School Rodeo. Contestants come from all over Manitoba to take part in the same events as the main rodeo. Young rodeo stars, destined to be champions on the regular circuit compete in ten events for the title of high point cowboy and high point cowgirl.

Saturday morning the rodeo participants have been known to show up at the pancake breakfast on horseback. The Rodeo parade starts at the Virden Collegiate. Saturday night, be prepared for a great time at the Daze Dance. All the cowboys, cowgirls and the fans get a chance to kick up their heels.

Not all of the attractions happening this weekend take place in the arena, we are pleased to present the following venues as part of our weekend festival, downtown sidewalk sales, children activities, Human Chuck-wagon Races, Manitoba Pennwoods Draft Horse Futurity, and of course our ever popular Demolition Derby on Sunday.

We hope to see you in Virden August 18th to 21st!
www.virdenindoorrodeo.ca



- Rodeo Events -

Thursday, August 18

- Enerplus Steakholder free Barbecue 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
- Victoria Park - Everyone welcome.
- Streets blocked off from 5 - 9 p.m.
- Stores open until 9 p.m. with Sidewalk Sales
- Best Decorated Business Contest
- High School Rodeo Club Barbecue
- Virden Fire Department Demonstration
- Chili Cook-off 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
- Mechanical Bull 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.
- Music by Special Request Disc Jockey
- Human Chuckwagon Races - 7 p.m. located on Wellington Street between 6th & 7th Ave
- Phone Randy Slater 748-1996 for entries
- Fashion Show - 7 p.m. (same location as Chuck Wagon Races)
- Dunk Tank 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.
- Royal Purple Bake Sale & Peter's Market Garden

Downtown Kids Attractions

- Thursday, August 18 - 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.**
- Fun Fair, Petting Zoo, Pony Rides, Pumpkin Patch Train Rides, Inflatable Bouncers, Mini Donuts, Face Painting, Reptile Gardens

Friday, August 19

RODEO PERFORMANCE 6:30 P.M. - VIRDEN MULTI-PLEX

- Coors Light Corral at the Virden Multi-Plex banquet hall 9 p.m. - 1 a.m. MLCC Approval No. 273/11

Saturday, August 20

- Pancake Breakfast 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.
- Legion Hall
- Parade 10 a.m.
- Departs from Virden Collegiate
- High School Rodeo 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Virden Multi-Plex
- 3D Barrel Racing 3 p.m. (Outdoor Ring)
- Draft Horse Futurity - obstacle course 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. - Virden Multi-Plex
- Coors Light Corral at the Virden Multi-Plex banquet hall - 5 p.m. - 10 p.m. MLCC Approval No. 273/11

RODEO PERFORMANCE 6:30 P.M. - VIRDEN MULTI-PLEX

DAZE DANCE Saturday, August 20 10:00 p.m. - 2:00 a.m. Virden Curling Rink

Featuring: Electric Angel
 Tickets available at: Sooper Dave's, Virden School & Office Supplies, Hi-Way Grocery
 Must be 18 years or older to attend. Photo ID is required. MLCC Approval No. 273/11

Sunday, August 21

- Draft Horse Futurity Halter Class 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. - Virden Multi-Plex
- 3D Barrel Racing 11 a.m. (Outdoor Ring)
- Demolition Derby 1 p.m.
- Demolition Track on PR 257, west of Cement Plant
- Contact Jason Carruthers 512-0084

RODEO PERFORMANCE 5:00 P.M. - VIRDEN MULTI-PLEX

www.virdenindoorrodeo.ca



Prairie provinces helping with famine relief

BY CHRISTEEN JESSE

Tens of thousands of people have already died as a result of the widespread famine in Somalia, and thousands more in East Africa are experiencing the effects of the devastating drought.

The hunger-stricken victims are in desperate need of food aid, and Canadians are stepping up to help—opening their hearts and their wallets to donate to the cause.

A number of charitable organizations around the country have launched campaigns to raise money for the affected nations and do what they can to reduce the numbers of malnourished and starving victims.

The Canadian Humanitarian Coalition has been dedicating time and money to helping East Africa over the last few years, and Executive Director Nicolas Moyer stresses the importance of Canadians making donations.

"I think it's important for anyone to give aid because any human life that's in danger should make us feel like we should do something, and we really do have the opportunity to save lives here," says Moyer.

The coalition is made up of five members from various charities—CARE Canada, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam Quebec, Plan Canada, and Save the Children Canada—and the group started responding to the drought long before it hit national news headlines. Moyer says now that the disaster is garnering media attention around the world, they are seeing increased donations.

"The fact is that donations are highest when there is media coverage, so media coverage is key," he says. "So it's been good to see that the coverage has been much larger over the last week and donations have been in stride with that."

The Canadian Humanitarian Coalition has raised just over \$2.3 million so far from Canadians, including individual donations and large corporate gifts. That number will continue to increase over the weeks to come, especially since every dollar raised from now until September 16 will be matched by the Canadian government.

Moyer ensures that any money received by the Humanitarian Coalition goes directly to the affected people, providing relief in the form of food, water and other basic necessities.

"(The money) is definitely reaching people, and there are so many examples it's hard to list off," he says. "There is a lot of work being done at the Kebab refugee camp in Kenya, where so many Somalis are going. Well over 1,000 people per day are going there, so there is a lot of food-stuff being provided there—nutritional supplements, water, shelter and various materials like blankets and hygiene kits."

The group is participating in community outreach to other communities like Ethiopia, regions of Somalia and all of Northern Kenya as well.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is also playing a major role in sending food aid to victims of famine in East Africa and surrounding nations. A partnership of churches and church-based agencies, the Foodgrains Bank is involving Canadians in the effort to end hunger.

With a vision of seeing 'a world without hunger' the Foodgrains Bank has been providing food aid to hunger stricken countries since 1983, and acting as a way for farmers to share their harvests with the less fortunate. The organization thrives on donations from Canadians, especially from Canadian farmers.

"We accept donations in grain or any crop as well as cash," says Cain. "Most of our grain donations come through a system called Growing Projects . . . where a group of people in a community will come together, set aside some land, and work on it together and then they donate the proceeds of that piece of land to the Foodgrains Bank."

In light of the famine, these Growing Projects are increasing around Canada, and a local group of people in the area is embarking on one of their own. Members of the congregation at the Kola Mennonite Church have dedicated a crop to helping provide aid to those suffering in Somalia.

"It's important because as Christians, we are to help with the poor," says Pastor Will Rose. "Jesus tells us to care for the poor because they are among us so that is something that as a church we take seriously, and it's something that we are able to help out with."

The congregation decided to take action this spring and are doing what they can from small town Manitoba to help those in Africa.

"Within our church, we have a farmer that has a field and all the crop goes to Canadian Foodgrains Bank; this year it's canola," says Rose.

When it comes harvest time, Rose says farmers in the area will congregate with their combines and combine the crop in one day, giving all the crop from the harvest to the Foodgrains Bank.

"They'll sell it and then they will use the money to buy food for aid. And the government matches them 4:1, so every dollar that's raised, the government gives them four dollars," says Rose. "So all that helps with feeding not only Somalia but Pakistan who had the floods last year and other places all over the world."

"It's people across the Prairies who make our work possible."

— Emily Cain, Canadian Foodgrains Bank

The donation is an initiative of the Kola congregation, but Rose says that other communities in the area are doing their part to help too.

"There are some farmers in Maryfield that come over and help and partner . . . it's for all farmers in the community, not just for Kola. There's other people that are involved in it as well."

Cain says it is community initiatives like this that help the Canadian Foodgrains Bank run a successful charity.

"It's really amazing the support we have from the Prairies," she says. "It's incredible. These people come together—farmers who already have tight margins—and for them to donate part of their crop is just phenomenal. (They are) people who just believe in the cause."

"What I hear over and over again is that the farmers have been blessed, and they want to give back to people who don't have as much."

In a wet season where many farmers are seeing smaller crops and lower profits than usual, they are still donating what they have to people across the world who have even less.

"I think that farmers understand what it's like to have a tough year, and for people (in East Africa) who have lost their crops, I think farmer's hearts really go out to them," says Cain. "So it's phenomenal, and it's people across the Prairies who make our work possible."

With almost \$80,000 already collected for the East Africa drought, Cain says the Foodgrains Bank doesn't have a goal set, but hopes that Canadians will continue to open their hearts and donations will continue to flow in.

"Every bit helps, donations big or small are gratefully accepted," she says. "We're still trying to get a sense from our partners on the ground how much is needed, so we aren't an appeals based organization . . . but every bit helps. And there are millions of people who need help in this situation—so the more we can get, the better."

Moyer has the same consensus, recognizing that donations made by Canadians can really can save lives. With disasters like earthquakes or tsunamis, humanitarian aid is meant to help the survivors cope with the aftermath, but in the case of the famine, the disaster unfolding right now, and donations will help to increase the number of survivors.

"Donations that are made now can actually save people's lives, keep children from dying, and keep families from falling into abject poverty, so there is a real need to contribute up front," says Moyer. "A contribution now will make a huge difference in the weeks coming."

Anyone who wishes to donate to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank can make a contribution online at www.foodgrainsbank.ca or call 1-800-665-0377 to make a donation over the phone.



Canadian Press photo

A child is treated for malnutrition in a hospital in Kenya.

"So far we've gotten in about \$78,000 directly for the East Africa drought," says Emily Cain, Communications Co-ordinator. "The neat thing about Foodgrains is that because we have such solid support throughout the year from the prairie provinces, we are able to respond to these things right away, so we don't have to wait for money to come in. We have already been responding since May."

The Foodgrains Bank has had partners on the ground in the starving nations for months, and they are saying there is need in the communities of Ethiopia and Kenya, so the charitable organization is responding and directing their donations to these areas now.

"Most of the response is through food assistance," says Cain. "Distributing food to those who need it . . . food kits contain a cereal, a pulse and an oil. It's mostly maize, beans, and vegetable oil in this case, but because of the severe malnutrition in these areas, we are also distributing a food called Samix, which is a supplementary, therapeutic food for people who are malnourished."



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Christeen Jesse photo

Taking a break from the summer heat, crowds pack the waterways at the Kenosee Superslides.

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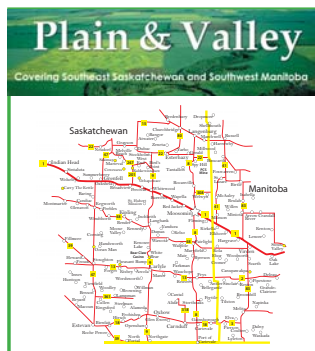
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Stephanie Lange photos

Ejected

A bull rider is fully ejected from his bull during the Moose Mountain pro rodeo held in Kennedy, Sask. on July 24. The rodeo is one of many held in Saskatchewan and Manitoba during the summer months.



Hangin on

A bronc rider holds on for his eight seconds at the Moose Mountain Pro Rodeo in Kennedy, Sask.



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Mosquito repellent myths busted

BY CHARLES TWEED
"Blood. It's in you to give."

The familiar line of the Canadian Red Cross appears once again to be hijacked by hungry mosquitoes across Saskatchewan. The above normal temperatures during the first two weeks of July has created an influx in the number of nuisance mosquitoes in some parts of the Prairies.

Mosquito expert Robert Anderson is a professor at the University of Winnipeg and not even he can safeguard against the menacing mosquito.

"There has been a significant amount of biting the last few nights near my

place and most interesting is it was pretty much all *Culex tarsalis*, which is the big West Nile vector," said Anderson. "They are starting to come up because of permanent water in places that don't normally dry out as the ditches and the fields do."

Trap results across Saskatchewan have shown a rise in *Culex tarsalis* numbers. And more alarming, Estevan has continued to show the highest average number of the genus responsible for the transmission of West Nile. The biggest reason for the increase is heat, as hot temperatures has a multiplier effect on the probability of West Nile

being transmitted to a level that poses a health risk to the population.

"The temperatures have been above average during the last couple of weeks and mosquitoes and high temperatures are a couple of the ingredients for West Nile virus transmission," explained Anderson. "(*Culex tarsalis*) development is temperature dependent in terms of how fast they go from egg to adult. The warmer it is the more frequently they blood feed, which increases the risk of picking up West Nile—if there is West Nile circulating in birds. The heat also increases the rate of which virus multiplies within the

mosquitoes so they not only feed more frequently but they're more likely to transmit sooner at warmer rather than cooler temperatures."

There have been no positive results for West Nile in mosquito pools, horses or humans across Saskatchewan, although Ontario has reported its first positive mosquito pool and South Dakota is reporting a case of West Nile in a person, while North Dakota has reported three positive tests in animals.

Mosquitoes are picky eaters, choosing to feast on specific people. These people can consider themselves the filet mignon of

the mosquito world.

"Some people are quite lucky and have a good odor profile which mosquitoes don't like and others are much more attractive," said Anderson. "There is good basis for people saying my husband or my wife or someone I was with was getting bitten and I don't get bit at all. It's not that they don't get bit at all but they usually get bit at lower rates," said Anderson.


Mosquitoes hone in on their prey using their antennae and although both sexes are nectar feeders, it is the women who are particularly annoying and irritating. Females often feast on blood meals in order to get

the necessary proteins and iron used to develop eggs. The females detect carbon dioxide and chemicals in breath and sweat, meaning some people are far more attractive to devour.

The customized feeding buffet that leads to bites affects each person differently.

"Some people react a lot less to bites," said Anderson. "Typically a skin allergy develops and generates the itchiness but some people simple don't notice or aren't as bothered by the bite."

Anderson also dispelled a few myths in the war waged on mosquitoes.

Continued on page 21 

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Bug spray, screens still the best defense

Continued from page 20
 "Ultra-sonic repellents don't work. They provide no protection," said Anderson. "The science is now out that says those kinds of mosquito traps actually make things worse because they tend to attract a lot of mosquitoes into the yard where they are set up but they don't catch nearly as many mosquitoes as they attract into an area. People are much more attracted to traps and if there is more mosquitoes in people's yards because they have been attracted by carbon dioxide and moisture and heat, all of which are generated by these various mosquito traps but there are live people around then the people actually get bitten more often."



A mosquito prepares to feast on a blood meal from a person. Mosquitoes recognize carbon dioxide and other chemicals omitted from people, using the scents to track their prey.

But there seems to be a rather simple solution to the problem posed by the ultra-sonic repellents.

"I never recommend the traps unless you want to put them in your neighbor's yard," said Anderson with a laugh.

Other commonly used and widely accepted products by the consumer have also been dispelled as helping keep mosquitoes away.

"Citronella candles don't work at all as repellents. They have zero value to keep mosquitoes away from decks and backyards. The electric bug zappers kill a lot of insects but very few mosquitoes and have been completely discredited scientifically to protect

against mosquitoes," said Anderson. "There are all sorts of nostrums that are sold, recommendations to eat garlic and B vitamins and it is all nonsense and hogwash."

In Moosomin some residents have pointed to dragonflies as the main reason for rather mild mosquito numbers this year compared to other parts of the province but Anderson believes that theory doesn't hold water—and reminds people to dump items around the yard that do holding water.

"Dragonflies do eat mosquitoes. The nymphs that live in the water will eat mosquito larvae but they don't occur at very high densities in ponds where most nuisance mosquitoes come out," explained Anderson. "When they are in

the aquatic stage they will eat mosquito larvae but they are also cannibalistic. After a fairly short time in a permanent pond you

get very few dragonfly nymphs."

There are several other reasons the Hannibal Lecter-esque dragonflies don't consume a lot of mosquitoes.

"They are really voracious predators. They are like little lions or tigers or leopards and are quite viscous and eat anything that they can handle with their jaws. But they are at low densities and really have no impact on the large number of mosquito larvae you can find," said Anderson. "And at the adult stage they'll take up a few mosquitoes but they take other insects as well. Mosquitoes are never a big enough part of their diet and dragonflies are diurnal, they eat during the day because they depend on their eyes and most nuisance mosquitoes are

starting to get active late in the afternoon, early in the evening so there is some overlap but not enough to make the dragonflies major league predators."

The dragonfly-mosquito relationship may be best summed up: "They'll eat them but they don't control them," said Anderson.

The same goes for bats said Anderson. Bats will eat mosquitoes but only tend to concentrate on the insect when they are

condensed into swarms. Since the only time a large swam occurs is when male mosquitoes are anxiously waiting for females the bats tend to eat the gender of mosquito that doesn't annoy anybody.

The simple fact of the matter is mosquitoes will continue to be a part of life on the Prairies.

"It keeps coming back to good and proper use of deep based repellents and screened refuges," said Anderson.

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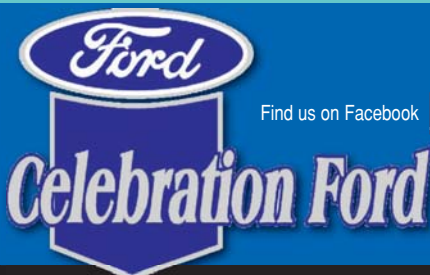
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