

Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

December 2011 • Volume 4, Number 12

Canadian Wheat Board enters last days

BY CHARLES TWEED
As the Canadian Wheat Board's monopoly control over Prairie wheat and barley sales came to an end Nov. 28 on the House of Commons floor, Welwyn's Allan Johnston looked Prime Minister Steven Harper in the eye and gave him a resounding thumbs up.

"It was incredible to watch the whole process in action, we were just enthralled with it," said Johnston, who travelled to Ottawa in a 20-seat chartered plane to be in parliament when the bill was passed.

"We sat up in the gallery and looked down on it all and we were instructed by many people not to even lean on the counter or disrupt the house . . . you couldn't hardly smile."

"Then, when it was all over, we stood up because they passed it and the MPs and the Prime Minister were all standing up applauding and they were all thumbs up looking at us," said Johnston.

"We gave them the thumbs up back and that was totally against the protocol of the parliament, but they were so excited that they were acknowledging us more than we were acknowledging them. It was just a great feeling. It was just so thrilling."

"It's been a long time coming," said Souris- Moose Mountain MP Ed Komarnicki. "There are differences of opinion as to whether the government should go forward but I think predominantly most farmers would agree this will provide them with more options and it was good to see the bill pass its third reading and make its way to the senate."

"It was a highlight for many supporters of marketing freedom for Western Canadian farmers," said Komarnicki. "Many travelled to see the passing of the bill and I know it was an emotional moment for them."

Komarnicki said many of the MPs were just as happy to be passing a bill that had been a major plank in the Conservative Party's platform since the party formed government.

"Many of the MPs were quite happy to see the bill pass," said Komarnicki. "To see it come to fruition after promising to do it since 2004 was quite an emotional time for the MPs. There was certainly a lot of applause and a general good feeling in the house and I appreciate that there are those that didn't want to see it happen."

Bill C-18 still has to be passed by the senate and receive Royal assent before becoming

"I'm sure most of the Wheat Board employees will not get jobs in the grain industry because they have no trading experience. They're just puppets."

—Allan Johnston



Supplied photo

Allan Johnston and Joel Merkosky are front and centre, kneeling just in front of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, as proponents for an open market grain exchange in Western Canada get their pictures with Members of Parliament after the passing of Bill C-18.

ing law but with a conservative majority now in the senate Komarnicki expects the process to move quickly.

"The Prime Minister said he'd like to see it passed into law before we break for Christmas," said Komarnicki. "In my view the senate will pass it before then and when the house breaks the legislation will become law."

After the bill was passed, Johnston and Joel Merkosky were ushered to a private room near the House floor, where supporters of the bill got a chance to celebrate with the Conservative MPs who voted to pass it.

"Within five minutes in came Ritz, Anderson and Harper to a standing ovation and cheers," said Johnston. "It was quite an event and it was very rewarding to be there."

Johnston said there was a real energy in the room as farmers, grain brokers and politicians who supported the bill celebrated the end of the Wheat Board's monopoly.

"I had to go see it because I've been fighting for this all my life and I'm just tickled pink," said Johnston. "There was a lot of people that missed it and some people who are dead that fought for this their whole life, and many of them were discussed."

One of the more emotional responses came when the room recognized former CWB Director Jim Chatenay and all of his hard work to open the wheat and barley markets for western farmers. Chatenay spent 24 days in jail for donating a bushel of wheat to a 4H club in Montana.

"It was very touching to see Jim Chat-

enay and the response he got," said Johnston. "He just broke down in tears over the whole thing and it deepens your thoughts on how corrupt this whole thing is. To put someone in jail for selling their grain, I don't care if it was one guy that didn't want to sell his grain to the board, he should be allowed to."

Since 1943 western grain growers have been forced to market their grain through the CWB. Johnston said the bill doesn't abolish the CWB but instead opens the market for farmer.

"The Wheat Board isn't going away and there is a real misconception that the Wheat Board is being dismantled and taken down when it's just losing its monopoly," he said.

Johnston criticized Regina Wascana Liberal MP Ralph Goodale.

"Goodale is a bold faced liar," said Johnston.

(Goodale) is telling people that the government is stealing \$100 million from farmers in this contingency fund and that moron set up the contingency fund in 1998 and he knows what it is," said Johnston. "All the money has to be spent on what it is there for and it's there as a buffer for trading . . . the Board sells the grain and they don't pay the farmer all the money, so the contingency fund sits there in case they lose \$100 million. It's a buffer."

Komarnicki said the fund would be used to facilitate a smooth transition for the CWB.

"I think it's important that whatever funds are required in the transition that

the government provide those," said Komarnicki. "The board to date hasn't been all that co-operative and using funds and money for purposes that are not exactly in line with where the government is going and the action by the minister was to ensure the contingency fund was preserved and used for transitional purposes."

Johnston believes the farmers who supported the CWB during a plebiscite held in the fall will change their views once they see the benefit of the open market.

"A lot of people can't accept change," said Johnston. "Those guys are hypocrites because they will be front and centre getting the highest price they can get."

Johnston said he's not sure what the new market will look like but said there are good examples of the free market running smoothly in Ontario and Quebec.

"There could be a whole lot of nothing different other than better pricing and better opportunities," said Johnston.

The grain market opening will force the CWB to retool and reorganize—a process that will cost hundreds of jobs on the board, but Johnston doesn't necessarily see that as a bad thing.

"The Wheat Board started in 1935 and it survived till 1943 when the government under the Liberals made it a monopoly, but it was only getting 10 per cent of the grain. Ninety per cent of the grain was going to the open market because farmers didn't want to pool it and wait," said Johnston. "There will be new pooling options. The status quo will not be good enough for the board moving forward. There will have to be massive changes to survive and if they don't survive then they weren't supposed to."

"They never mention that when the government made the monopoly they lost about 50 companies that were doing business in Winnipeg," said Johnston. "They might be back and I'm sure most of the Wheat Board employees will not get jobs in the grain industry because they have no trading experience. They're just puppets."

"Vote for freedom," said Johnston. "The world is not going to come to an end."

"The MPs were all waving with their thumbs up looking right over the opposition into the gallery and even some of the opposition turned and looked up," said Johnston. "It was frigging exciting and fun to be there."

Continued on page 7

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Minot poker tournament continues to grow

Canadians continue to head south for the chance to win on New Year Eve

Eight years ago, at its inception, the North Dakota Texas Hold'em Championship held at the Vegas Motel in Minot registered 483 participants. Today, the tournament is expecting 1,900 people, many of them Canadians who will be heading south for a chance to get in on a \$146,000 prize pool.

"Last year about 15 percent of our players were Canadian," says Wendy Rupert, manager and event organizer of the Vegas Motel. "We welcome all of our players from any state and any country, and we especially love Canada. We've always had a special relationship with our Canadian players."

The North Dakota Texas Hold'em Championship is the largest charity poker tournament outside of Las Vegas as far as attendance and payout, according to Rupert. Rupert says the tournament has steadily grown every year, starting with a first place prize of \$19,000 back in 2004. This year, the first place prize is \$42,500.

Despite the chance to

win big money at the tournament, Rupert says the buy-in is only \$100 per round, making it affordable and accessible to the average person. This is one of the reasons the tournament continues to be a success, along with the fact that the championship round is held on New Year's Eve.

Rupert is one of the people who got the tournament started eight years ago.

"Myself and another lady, Stacy Norton, the general manager of the restaurant in the hotel, wanted to create a marquis event in our community that would bring trade and traffic and tourism into our city during a slow time of year," she says. "Texas hold'em was a big craze back then."

Rupert says the tournament and its steady growth has exceeded their expectations.

"It has over a two million dollar economic impact into the community," she says. "We've had people attend from

39 states and seven coun-

"We especially love Canada. We've always had a special relationship with our Canadian players."

—Wendy Rupert
Manager, The Vegas Motel

tries. They come to Minot for the tournament, they bring family and friends, and they stay here for a few days. The impact is big for hotels, restaurants and shopping.

"It's always over the New Year's Eve weekend which is traditionally a slow time for a lot of communities. A lot of people come from Canada. We have a great turnout from Canada, and it blends well with the after-Christmas shopping."

Rupert says many of the Canadians who participate in the tournament are people who attend year after year, bringing friends and family with them.

One of those people is

Barb Cuthill from Welwyn, who has been heading to Minot with her family for the event for the last seven years. This year Cuthill won't be playing in the tournament, although her husband and children will likely be attending, which Cuthill spends time in Minot with the grandchildren.

"I suppose it's just the atmosphere," says Cuthill. "It's not something that is available here. It's only \$100 to enter, and every year, because there are more people, the prize money gets better."

"It's kind of a neat way to take a chance. Everyone has as good a chance as winning as anyone else. It's just kind of like a new

year's celebration (for our family). It's what we do for new year's now."

Cuthill says it's appealing to play in a tournament where any one of any skill level can compete. There are two qualifying rounds before the championship round in the tournament, each only costing \$100 to compete.

"They are a little more forgiving in Minot," she says. "You can enter both days if you want. And if you don't make it the first day, then you have a chance the second day."

Cuthill says that it's always pleasant to see many of the same people come back year after year.

"There will be people that you meet and sit with. If you're fortunate, you'll sit with the same table of people each time you play, and you remember them from year to year."

"Our poker tournament is like a big family," adds Rupert. "Every year they bring more and more players."

"We just love our Canadian players. They bring

a wonderful aspect to the game because there are a lot of poker players across the border, and they have some wonderful tournaments in Regina and Brandon, and they bring a whole new level of experience.

Rupert says many of the Canadians have come home with prize money in their pockets and a few championships to boot. In 2008, a player from Oxbow, Sask. won \$35,000.

This year Rupert says the Vegas wants to "up the game" a bit to make the tournament ever more fun.

"We just keep adding more and more features to mimic the World Series of Poker," she says. "Several of our tournament managers went to the World Series of Poker this year to get some ideas and to up our game."

The North Dakota Texas Hold'em Championship is from Dec. 27-31 this year, with the championship round taking place on Dec. 31. The entire event takes place on site at the Vegas Motel in Minot.

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Bill C-18 passes in House of Commons:

Future will look different for farmers

Continued from front
 "Forty-five percent of farmers didn't vote because they thought it was going to be an open market anyway," said Johnston. "It was a waste of farmers' money for that plebiscite."

Myles Fuchs, a farmer in the Fleming area, said he wished the whole situation surrounding the CWB was handled better.

"For some time we've realized that the present government is committed to removing the monopoly and the CWB is going to be done away with so that didn't come as a surprise," said Fuchs. "I think there hasn't been a lot of thought and planning about the transition from the CWB to whatever type of marketing structure will take place."

Fuchs believes one of the biggest changes through the whole process should have been a binding vote

held by producers regarding the future of the CWB.

"In fairness to producers and being the type of issue it is and the impact it has on many people that it would have only been fair to producers to have a fair and binding vote," said Fuchs. "A vote that didn't have any trick questions . . . and that would have given fair opportunity for everyone to vote. I know in a lot of the producer/director votes and even the plebiscite, I don't think there was a real seriousness taken on the part of the producers."

"There would have been a greater seriousness on the part of the producers to look at the issues and make a decision on how to vote," said Fuchs. "I do honestly believe if everyone who had a vested interest in marketing grain voted, the vote would have been for change."

Fuchs said the notion that

the CWB can exist in a free market isn't true, at least not in its present form.

"The role of the CWB was to market in accordance with the legislation that had been passed in the past," said Fuchs. "The board isn't an entity without the monopoly . . . You have a Wheat Board or you don't."

Johnston suggested the opposition parties used the issue for political gains and couldn't understand how an MP from Quebec could suggest the free market is acceptable for eastern Canadian producers and not western Canadian producers. Fuchs said there should have been more emphasis on the issues affecting producers from the opposition parties.

"I do think that the opposition parties were a little irresponsible in not focusing on the issues that need to be addressed with the CWB not there as it is

now," said Fuchs. "How to keep producer car loadings for the branch lines? What happens to our branch line railway system? What is the marketing system going to look like? What about the Port of Churchill? The focus was on keeping the board and people stayed with the notion of how grand or terrible it is going to be if we get rid of the board, and there was no thought to the real issues."

Fuchs isn't sure what the new marketplace will resemble, but suggested it would have both positives and negatives for wheat producers in western Canada.

"The CWB is bound by law that it can only sell 25 per cent of what it expects the entire wheat crop to be in any one given quarter and this was a sore spot for some producers," said Fuchs. "Producers wanted to price their entire crop at a point in time which

they felt was best for the year and that was difficult under the CWB structure and that option will now be there."

"How much margin is going to be taken by those doing the marketing, that remains to be seen," said Fuchs. "I think the net dollars coming into producers will decline slightly . . . Many producers are willing to accept that to have an option to go in and contract and try to pick a price at some point in the year. They feel more in control."

One area that Fuchs said had to be addressed dealt with the transparency of trading, feeling strongly that it was important to set up a price guide similar to the Minneapolis Grain Exchange.

"There is going to have to be a Canadian traded futures contract," said Fuchs. "We're definitely going to need Canadian contracts and I don't see an open market functioning properly without some visible and open price finding mechanism."



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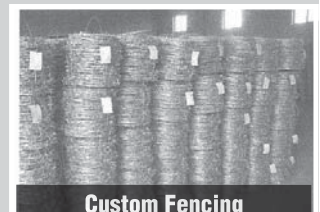
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Holland rink busy during stop in Moosomin

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK
Amber Holland and her Team Canada rink will be busy when they come to Moosomin Dec. 16 and 17. Both Moosomin and Maryfield have been selected to host visits from Amber Holland and her team.

Moosomin Curling Club president Wendy Leeds says members are getting excited about Holland's visit, and have planned a full schedule for her visit.

"We're really excited to have them here," she said. "We're hoping that we have good crowds and ev-

eryone is interested in seeing her and hearing her experiences over the last year on the circuit."

Holland's visit will kick off with a presentation to the Moosomin Chamber of Commerce at noon on Friday, Dec. 16 at Boomerang'z.

The chamber is switching its regular December meeting to Friday in order to have Holland as a guest speaker, and everyone is welcome to attend.

On Friday afternoon, Dec. 16, Holland will be doing a presentation at McNaughton High School for

both the elementary and high school students.

She will present a power point presentation of her journey to the Scotties and the World Championships. She will also have her awards on display.

Friday night the Moosomin Curling Club is holding a meet and greet from 7-10 p.m. which will include an appetizer evening and a bearpit session with the public and photo opportunities with Team Canada.

Maryfield artist Jayne Childs, who has created a print of Team Canada,

will have prints available of many of the other Canadian curling champions, and will have her original watercolor of the Holland rink on display.

On Saturday, on-ice curling clinics will be instructed by Team Canada.

Clinics will be held for three different age groups:

- Younger students (Grades 5-6): 9:30- 10:30 a.m.
 - Older students: (Grade 7-12) 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
 - Adults: 1:30-3 p.m.
- Curlers have to pre-reg-

ister for the clinics. People who want to pre-register for the curling clinics can contact Judy Gibson at 435-3933.

Leeds says she's hoping that having the Holland team in Moosomin will help build interest in curling among younger people.

"It's an honor to have them in our community, and we hope it breathes some life into our junior program," she said.

"We're trying to do a lot to get younger people interested in curling. We have the little rockers after school in January, and

I know there's really good interest in the junior levels as well.

"Last year we had 29 kids from grades 6-12, and the senior girls, senior boys and senior mixed teams all play in our curling leagues.

"They also promote curling in the school phys ed program. The elementary school has the Little Rockers program. It runs six weeks and teaches the basics of curling to grades 4-6. Last year they had 36 curlers.

"We're confident the younger generation is starting to get interested."



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Dec. 18 to 22	9 am - 4:30 pm
Dec. 23	9 am - 8:00 pm
Dec. 24	9 am - 4:30 pm
Dec. 25	Closed
Dec. 26 - 30	9 am - 8:00 pm
Dec. 31- Torch	9 am - Midnight! <i>Last chair 11:45</i>
Jan. 1 to 7	9 am - 8:00 pm
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Saturday, December 17
Curling Clinics instructed by Team Canada
Younger Students (Grades 5-6) need previous experience:
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German company to build new potash mine in Saskatchewan

CP—A German fertilizer company has approved \$3.25 billion Canadian in spending for a new potash mine in Saskatchewan that will create up to 1,300 jobs.

The K+S group said Tuesday it expects to have more than 1,000 people working on construction at peak periods and employ 300 at the mine when the operation hits full production.

"Even if people do not normally attribute the term enthusiasm to the Germans, believe me, we are enthusiastic," K+S chairman Norbert Steiner said on a conference call with investors.

"The Legacy project perfectly fits into our strategy—it's economically attractive, technically state of the art and solidly financed."

Production from the proposed Legacy mine is expected to begin in 2015 and ramp up over the next few years. The rural site is located about 50 km north of Moose Jaw.

"This will be a stimulus for Moose Jaw," said Glenn Hagel, mayor of the city, known as a retirement and tourist hub for hundreds of small towns and farms in the surrounding region.

He said there could be a significant economic impact for business and a boost in the local housing market.

"With the mine being just under a 30 minute commute from Moose Jaw (I expect) there will be businesses interested in either expanding who are here now or locating in Moose Jaw who aren't, that provide goods and services related to the construction phase or the operation phase of the mine," said Hagel.

The mayor also said he believes roads leading to the Legacy site will have to be upgraded to handle heavy truck traffic.

K+S acquired the Legacy

project when it bought Vancouver-based Potash One earlier this year. Legacy will occupy only a small area of the property acquired in the Pofash One deal, Steiner said, and the company will continue to explore for other areas rich in the mineral.

"The Legacy project alone, which only makes up a fraction of the total permit area, has proven reserves of 160 million tonnes of potassium chloride with a target annual production and including the ramp-up curve, this results in a useful life of more than 55 years," Steiner said.

However, "project Legacy 2 or 3 should not be ruled out in the future."

Saskatchewan Energy and Resources Minister Bill Boyd said the project is good news for the province.

"They are a first-class, world-class company. I think it's a great investment and we look forward to the business activity and the jobs that it will create," he said.

Boyd said the announcement also shows that the province's royalty structure—the way it collects money from companies who develop resources—is encouraging investment.

K+S said assuming annual production of 2.86 million tonnes and on the basis of current potash prices, the province will get considerable income in the form of taxes and royalties in the future.

Boyd couldn't put a figure on the amount, but said it could be in the "hundreds of millions of dollars per year."

The German potash investment is part of a growing trend of mining expansion in Saskatchewan, which has the world's largest deposits of potash,

a valuable mineral mainly used in fertilizer.

Other companies—from PotashCorp of Saskatchewan to Anglo-Australian mining giant BHP Billiton—are also expanding or building new mines in the prairie province.

Resources development in the farm, mining and oil and gas sectors has helped boost Saskatchewan's economy, pushing the seasonally adjusted jobs rate down to 4.1 per cent in October, the lowest in

Canada.

In a bid to expand its operations in Saskatchewan, BHP Billiton tried to buy PotashCorp last year in a blockbuster \$40 billion U.S. hostile deal. The takeover was opposed by the Saskatchewan government and eventually blocked by Ottawa.

BHP Billiton is currently developing its \$1.2 billion Jansen mine in Saskatchewan and hopes to start producing potash in 2015. The project is expected to

employ 1,900 people during construction and create about 1,000 operational jobs once the mine has reached full capacity.

BHP is also exploring two other properties in Saskatchewan near Melville and Young.

Chinese companies are also acquiring stakes in potash developments in Saskatchewan. Demand for fertilizer is soaring in China and India as farmers seek to increase crop yields to feed growing populations.

K+S said that the assets it acquired from PotashOne are among the world's most economically attractive startup projects.

"The benefits of the project include the already existing very good infrastructure, the significantly earlier availability of product that solution mining brings and, not least, our many years of expertise as an established potash producer," said Joachim Felker, a member of the K+S board of executive directors.

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CFGB aiding Pakistan

Three months after monsoon rains triggered major flooding in Pakistan, millions of Pakistanis are still in need of assistance.

The disaster—the second major flood in two years—has affected over five million people. At least six million acres have been inundated and 2.3 million acres of crops have been lost. About three million people still require assistance, and over 700,000 are still displaced.

According to the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the needs in the country are urgent, and additional funding "will be critical to the implementation of ongoing life-saving interventions and livelihood recovery activities."

Since October, Canadian Foodgrains Bank has been responding to needs in that country. Together with matching grants from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the organization has committed \$1.8 million of assistance, including 1,980 tonnes of wheat flour, 176 tonnes of pulses, 111 tonnes

of oil and 15 tonnes of salt for 51,000 people.

The assistance is being provided through Foodgrains Bank member agencies Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Presbyterian World Service and Development and the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund.

Although the situation continues to be dire, some aid groups say they may be forced to close some operations in Pakistan since donations have fallen far short of what they need to help people affected by the flooding.

The United Nations has also come up short in its funding drives for flood relief. The UN asked for \$357 million from donor countries, but has only received \$96.5 million so far.

"We are grateful for everyone who has faithfully donated to the Foodgrains Bank," says International Programs Director Grant Hillier. "The funds we have received over the past year have made it possible for us to help many people in Pakistan."



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December 6, 13, 20, 27	December 7, 15, 21, 29	December 8, 14, 22, 28	December 2, 16, 30	December 23
February 7, 14, 21, 28	February 1, 9, 15, 23, 29	February 2, 8, 16, 22	February 10, 24	February 3
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Snowmobiling at Jackson Hole



BY JASON WILLIAMS

Jackson Hole, in northwestern Wyoming, has become one of North America's top tourist destinations. Widely known for world-class skiing, easy access to two of the most famous national parks in the United States, and the best wildlife viewing in the lower 48, it's no wonder that over four million people come to Jackson Hole every year.

A lesser known aspect to Jackson Hole, however, is the world-class snowmobiling waiting for all levels of riders. You don't have to go more than 45 minutes from Jackson to find everything from short half

day trail rides to hot springs to spectacular off-trail riding through varied mountain terrain.

Togwotee pass, to the north of Jackson, is home to over 950 km of groomed trails, hundreds of square miles of backcountry terrain and over 600 inches of light powder snow annually. There are several convenient trailheads to access the continental divide snowmobile trail system within the Bridger Teton National Forest where you will find yourself neck deep in untracked powder right off the bat.

Black Rock trailhead on the east side of Togwotee pass offers access to several

routes leading to the top of the pass. Enjoy winding trails with magnificent views of the Tetons through critical winter range for moose, mule deer and elk. A few miles up the trail the gloves come off and all the terrain opens up and anything goes. Follow the trail and have fun riding up and down the ridges and drainages of Spread Creek or play off trail and enjoy unlimited powder. For the more advanced rider, explore some of the tight single track boondocking routes through the trees often leading to open meadows and steep bowls begging to be tracked up. These routes often connect to different spurs of the trail system, though its not unheard of to find yourself stuck in a willow choked creek bottom. You could spend a lifetime riding here and still get lost!

You can also decide to drive up the pass

and start at Togwotee Mountain Lodge or several other parking areas as you head east along

"The riding is outstanding and great for all levels."

the highway. If you decide to base out of Jackson make sure to at least have lunch at Togwotee Mountain Lodge or Brooks Lake Lodge. Either offer a nice break with good food but Brooks Lake should not be missed! With two lake, dozens of easily accessed backcountry meadows and no access by road, Brooks is a must visit for a bite to eat and an afternoon ride.

After a few days of hard powder riding at Togwotee, a day exploring Granite Creek is guaranteed to please. The trailhead for Granite Creek is only 30 minutes southeast of Jackson and easily accessible with a large snowmobile trailer. Granite is host to an easy 10-mile trail that dead ends at an amazing natural hot spring open to the public from 10-5 every day all winter. Stick a towel, trunks and lunch in with your shovel and probe, then play your way up the canyon to the hot springs. You will find the thermal water pouring out of the cliff into a well-maintained pool. Time will stand still as you relax your muscles in the hot water while enjoying the views of the towering peaks that surround the pool.

If you are a wildlife enthusiast and want to use your sled to find some of the area's

wintering wildlife head up into the Gros Ventre river drainage towards slide lake. This trailhead just east of Teton National Park is home to wintering elk, moose, mule deer, big horn sheep, bald eagles, mountain lions and wolves. Due to the rain shadow effect from the Teton range to the west, the Gros Ventre river drainage receives dramatically less snow than other mountain areas in the region. This allows thousands of big game animals to more easily and survive the winter. There are also several elk feed grounds along the trail used to provide wintering elk with supplementary feed. There isn't any fuel or food for miles so plan accordingly and bring extra gas and a hearty lunch. Binoculars might also be handy if you want to spot one of the area's wolf packs.

Finally a trip to the Jackson Hole area to

ride wouldn't be complete without spending at least one day riding up the Grey's river.

Like the Gros Ventre, this area is great for wildlife but also hosts easy access to great powder and big mountain riding in the Wyoming range. The trail head is right in Alpine Wyoming about 45 minutes south of Jackson. The trail is fairly straightforward, with trail signs at all the major junctions and several spur trails that lead into higher country. Plan on having lunch at the Box Y ranch and fueling up there as well. This is big country and running out of gas is a real possibility if you are exploring the side trails. Yellowstone is also a popular and easily accessed destination from Jackson but requires you to hire a guide and ride a best available technology four-stroke sled. If you decide to visit Yellowstone by snowmobile plan on driving your sled like a car, obeying all rules of the road and following a strictly enforced speed limit. This trip is definitely more for the sightseeing than the snowmobiling. Whether you base out of Jackson Wyoming and ride several different areas during your vacation or stay at one of the trailside lodges and focus on one area, you will not be disappointed. The riding is outstanding and great for all levels.



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Construction zone Moosomin

Two major projects are under construction in Moosomin, Sask. Above: Exterior construction on the Pipestone Villas apartments is nearing completion. Below: The very beginnings of a Motel 6 being built along the Trans-Canada Highway in Moosomin.



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Hands on learning:

Mrs. Cowan's Grade 6 class from Redvers took some time to learn away from the classroom on Oct. 3. Students learned about the water cycle and how water on Earth is constantly moving and recycling itself.



Students run down a hill simulating how where and how water would run on the land.

Learning outside of the classroom

What do you get when you pair up the staff of the Lower Souris Watershed Committee and a class full of Grade 6 students?—A fun educational afternoon learning about the water cycle, plants, and watersheds.

On the afternoon of October 3, Mrs. Cowan's Grade 6 class from Redvers School met watershed staff near the Redvers dam to spend some time doing some hands on learning. The class was divided into 2 groups. One group started off learning how to identify a variety of tame and native plants that are common in this area. After a discussion with Brandy Woods (Group Plan Advisor) and Mandy Hummel (Watershed Technician) about characteristics of different plants and the roles they play in our ecosystem, the students went on a scavenger hunt for flagged plants which they had to identify.

The second group of students worked with Sheldon Kyle (Watershed Co-ordinator) and Karmen Kyle (Communications Director) learning about what a watershed is, what makes up a watershed, and did an activity to learn about factors affecting water flow in creeks. Run-

ning down a hill following the direction of a rope laid on the ground, the students timed themselves to see how fast it took to get to the bottom. The rope simulated a straight fast moving creek, a healthy slow meandering one, the important role that vegetation plays along stream banks and more. After a lot of trips up and down the hill (and a few wipe outs at the bottom), the students learned that vegetation along the streambank is important to slow water flow, helps filter the runoff water entering the creek, and provides important habitat.

After both groups did each activity, the water cycle was discussed and the students played another game in which they learned that in the water cycle the water on Earth is always on the move and recycles itself over and over. The watershed staff also learned a snappy little tune from a few of the students about the water cycle—evaporation, transpiration, condensation, precipitation.

The Lower Souris Watershed Committee would like to thank Teresa Cowan and her Grade 6 class for a fun afternoon and interest in our educational programs.

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Kara Kinna photo

English as an additional language instructor Bernice Holman and student Lyndo Quistadio cut the ribbon to officially open Southeast Regional College's second location in Moosomin. Mayor Don Bradley and Moosomin MLA Don Toth stretch the ribbon at the ceremony Nov. 29.

Southeast Regional College expands

BY CHARLES TWEED

When the Southeast Regional College officially opened the doors at its new location in Moosomin last year, little did college officials know, they would already be expanding its facilities to meet increasing demands.

"Facilities like these are really important because people can talk about holding adult high schools and English as an alternative language (EAL) programs but you have to have a place to put the students," said Brian Binns, co-ordinator of adult basic education. "A nice big roomy classroom like this makes it pleasant for students to come here and creates a good atmosphere to work in."

Binns said the college previously operated in a variety of makeshift locations and although he was thankful to the organizations and groups that found space for them it was time to get their own space.

"To have our own place to expand and do what we want and need is a better thing for everyone involved," said Binns.

Dignitaries from the community received a tour of the new building and spoke about how important it is to have the facilities and education opportunities in the community.

"It's amazing and very good for the community to have this service," said Mayor Don Bradley. "The students are working hard and they're trying to advance themselves and they will if they get some education."

"We need these people in our town and in our services," said Bradley. "We've had great experiences and I hope employers see that there is tremendous potential from these people."

"It shows us the importance of having educational opportunities close to home," said Moosomin MLA Don Toth. "For many of the students it would be difficult to leave the community to receive their education and through the regional college concept we've been able to bring the programs to them."

"With these education opportunities it opens the door for employment opportunities," said Toth. "It's a matter of working together and enhancing the lives of Saskatchewan residents. There are many challenges for small businesses is finding the skilled people to fill the job opportunities and if we can help these young adults achieve their education goals and they happen to pick up a job in a small business, then not only did we allow them to get their education here but we might have opened the door for a good job opportunity and they might not ever leave, so it's a plus for the community as well."

Southeast Regional College operates in six southeastern Saskatchewan communities and really started with an emphasis on ABE (Adult Basic Education).

"At the trades level people might travel to get their education but at the ABE level it's not going to happen," explained Binns. "It has to happen locally. The people that fill our ABE programs are local people and if they didn't have something local it is really unlikely that they would go somewhere else."

Nowadays the school has diversified to include accounting programs, business courses and early childhood education, but one of the quickest growing courses is the English as an additional language program.

"Many of the people that come to the area come with a lot of skills but because they can't speak English they can't put those skills to use," said Binns. "In many industries knowing English is a safety issue because you need to be able to communicate to prevent risk of injury. In a local restaurant, trying to order your meal from someone who cannot speak English can be a frustrating process for both the customer and the server. So it's important and it starts to open doors for people."

Binns said even the most mundane or routine activities can be challenging for someone who doesn't understand the language.

"Dealing with health issues or going shopping can be tricky," said Binns.

Bernice Holman is the instructor of the EAL program in Moosomin and she understands the importance and challenges of understanding a foreign language.

"The students are finding it's very important to learn English, especially if they are working in the community and there is any slang or idioms or things we say that is out of the ordinary," said Holman. "They are very eager to learn our language and I take my hat off to them because they learn it really well."

The inability to communicate will often lead to reclusiveness and subsequently a lack of confidence and Holman said some students were cautious when they first arrived in her class but it doesn't take long to break the ice.

"When I first started some of them wouldn't say a word and now we have them laughing and talking and they really enjoy their class time and it's great to see how they've improved," said Holman.

"I think they have a better attitude about learning than we who have the greatest advantage of all," said Holman. "It's how they've been taught in their culture to not take everything for granted but to respect everything they receive."

Many of the people taking the course were recruited to Canada directly by companies in the business sector and Holman said she'd like to see business take a more active role in the education process.

"It's important for these people to be able to communi-

cate with their fellow worker or if they have children in school they have to be able to communicate with what is happening in the school system," said Holman. "I can't say so much about Moosomin but the community I lived in the past we had gone to some of businesses and said, 'We'd like to see some of your workers come to our class,' and they said, 'They don't have a problem. They don't need to learn English.' To me it was a way of keeping them in the dark as long as they could."

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Program helps homeless veterans

BY ANDY BLATFORD
THE CANADIAN PRESS

He steps over piles of trash, past the dog wolfing kibble off the floor, across his tattered mattress and into the perpetual darkness at the back of the shipping container.

Meet former Canadian Forces soldier Claude Lord—and welcome to his home.

He is one of 150 veterans the federal government says it has helped in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver under a program aimed at getting ex-military personnel off the streets.

Since connecting with Veterans Affairs Canada a couple of years ago, Lord meets regularly with government social workers and collects a monthly military pension of \$1,200; he is now hunting for a proper abode.

If it weren't for the active involvement of a concerned businessman, Lord might never have known this help existed.

He also would have struggled to navigate the months of phone calls, meetings and paperwork needed to finally claim his pension more than three decades after leaving the military.

The retired corporal's case raises questions as to whether more outreach is required to help Canada's homeless veterans, many of whom might be eligible for a military pension and not even know it.

The wiry 53-year-old with the mop of grey hair has toughed out three biting winters in his cluttered, steel-walled quarters, primarily with the help of a good sleeping bag and the wood-burning stove he installed at the back of the shipping container.

He tries to block out the rumble of nearby trains and the sound of prostitutes at work behind the nearby dumpsters; he's even gotten used to having his belongings stolen, most notably a generator, a camping stove and a stack of firewood.

After seven years on the streets, nearly half of them in the container, he figures it's time to use his pension money to find something a little more stable.

The thing is, he might never have had this chance without the help of a local businessman named Will Scully.

The beer-guzzling veteran—he candidly admits to knocking back 40 to 50 cans a day—was completely unaware that he in fact qualified for a pension despite previous warnings that he didn't.

"I would've stayed here in the container," said Lord, who plans to move away from the muddy lot near a Montreal railway to a home outside the city.

"And life would have continued like that."

Scully, who works in a building near Lord's container, helped the vet wade through six months of bureaucracy, which included driving him to several appointments on the other side of town.

He credits the program for reaching out to homeless vets. But when it came to the pension application, he was stunned by the daunting amount of work and com-



Corporal Claude Lord was helped by a program aimed at getting ex-military personnel off the streets.

mitment expected from Lord over such a long period.

Scully was happy to give his neighbour a hand, though he wonders who's going to help other veterans with no support network, or fixed address like Lord's red shipping container.

"It's not fully thought out," Scully said of the process. "Does a homeless person have a Daytimer (for keeping track of appointments)? Does he have an alarm clock? Does he have electricity? Does he have a telephone? Does he have bus fare? Is he hungover at 8 o'clock in the morning?"

Lord was discharged from the army in 1979 after serving four-and-a-half years with the First Field Engineers at CFB Valcartier, Que. He applied for a military pension in the 1980s, but was told he was ineligible because he hadn't been in the army for the mandatory five-year minimum.

Scully made a few phone calls on Lord's behalf and discovered the pension requirements had changed over the years.

Lord, who developed post-traumatic-stress disorder following an explosion at Valcartier in 1977, was eligible for a pension.

He was never posted overseas and never engaged in battle—but that doesn't mean he avoided the psychological scars of war. For more than three decades, Lord has relived the same nightmare every day.

The images of the May 1977 explosion, which killed two of his comrades and wounded several others, replay in his head.

Lord, just 19 years old at the time, was part of a crew working on a bridge at the base, north of Quebec City, when they heard the noise.

A team of soldiers, which had been clearing brush from a field, had accidentally detonated a live shell.

Lord, who was at the helm of a boat near the bridge, said he helped bring the casualties across the water, including a man who lost his arm.

"It was disgusting—one of them didn't have a head," Lord recalled.

"The boat was full of blood. I'm sorry, but I wasn't used to that sort of thing."

There are no statistics on how many Canadian veterans are homeless—or on the verge of homelessness—but Ottawa has estimated the numbers to be in the dozens.

Veterans-rights advocates believe the number of homeless vets is actually much higher and have criticized the program for failing to find, and assist, enough former

soldiers.

Some believe the homeless-vet population could spike in the coming years, fed by soldiers who served in Afghanistan.

Lord said the government has to get the word out, so other veterans are aware of the homeless services and can find out whether they're eligible for pensions.

He suggests the government publicize these benefits on TV and in newspapers, and by putting up posters at soup kitchens and shelters.

"They have to announce it," said Lord, who used to earn his living collecting the deposits from bottles and cans. "It has to be well-explained."

Since meeting Lord a couple of years ago, Veterans Affairs workers have helped encourage and guide him through the process of moving to a more permanent home.

Lord admits there are also many things he likes about living in the container: friends, freedom and ample space for Rita, his protective—and beloved—German Shepherd-mix.

"It's like the country in the middle of the city," he said recently, while swigging an 8:30 a.m. beer outside the container.

"It's not really any more complicated than living in an apartment."

Initially, he didn't want to leave the container, where he keeps piles of items, including his yellowed novels, canned vegetables and a crest of the Canadian Military Engineers.

The home even features a chimney and a window, which he cut himself with a grinder.

It's the surroundings that are starting to get to him.

The main source of his restlessness is the very thing that makes him different from his poor, itinerant neighbors: money.

The flow of pension cash, which started about a year-and-a-half ago, opened the door to a rush of hangers-on into his life, particularly people who borrow money and never pay him back.

He doesn't mind helping out those who need something to eat and drink, but there are others whom he describes as "sharks." If he doesn't share his cash with them, they'll steal it from him anyway.

"They're always harassing me, it's almost too much to handle—that's why I want to move and rent a house," said Lord, whose conversations are frequently interrupted by his harsh smoker's cough.

The rest of the money, he says, is spent on his \$250 monthly rent for the container, restaurants and beer.

Scully, who has hired Lord to do odd jobs around his business and offered him a warm place to sleep during winter cold snaps, says Lord's story is still unfolding and is far from a happy ending.

"Even Claude with his money, and the progress that's (been) made, he's still on the street—that's where it gets crazy," said Scully, who noted that Lord lived in the container last winter even though he was collecting his pension.

"The snow is about to fly and he's still living in a shipping container."

"From a selfish perspective, I don't like coming to work . . . and having the potential of going outside and finding him frozen to death."

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At right: A scene with Trevor Poole as Joseph and Jessica Kelly as one of the narrators. Below: Trevor Poole singing surrounded by cast; Tawna Bartley dancing as a hippie chick; Trevor Poole playing Joseph and Randy Mavin as the comical Potipher.

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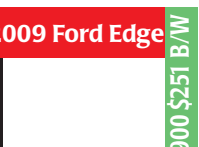
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