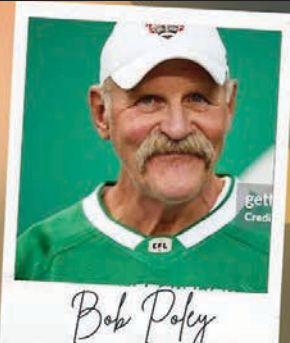


Rod Pederson



Bob Poley



Larne Mollen



Gil Dash

Wolseley Sports  
Celebrity Banquet  
coming up October 19  
**Page 11**

# Plain & Valley

October 2024 • Volume 17 Number 10

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba



The new 5,000 foot runway at Moosomin Airport. Saskatchewan Highways Minister Lori Carr visited Moosomin recently to see the expanded airport. This view from the south end of the runway shows the scale of the project.

## New runway completed at Moosomin Airport

BY KARA KINNA

On September 17, the Government of Saskatchewan and people from across the region came together to celebrate the completion of a brand-new runway located at the Moosomin Airport.

With the project complete, the runway now allows the regional airport to land fixed-wing air ambulances and corporate jets.

The provincial government invested more than \$2.4 million toward the estimated \$10.6 million Moosomin

Airport expansion project, which includes a 5,000 foot by 75 foot paved runway, along with a new taxiway and apron completed this summer.

New navigation and weather systems will be completed soon.

"Aviation is an essential part of Saskatchewan's transportation network," Highways Minister Lori Carr said when she visited the airport Tuesday. "This project illustrates the significance of maintaining and improving the infrastructure necessary to ensure the continuation of vi-

tal services like air ambulance, business and agriculture operations, and private usage. Congratulations to the communities, businesses and partners in the region for working so hard together toward a common goal to land this milestone."

The airport is operated by the RM of Moosomin. The remainder of the project is funded by 18 municipalities across the region, area community members and various donations.

*Continued on page 19*

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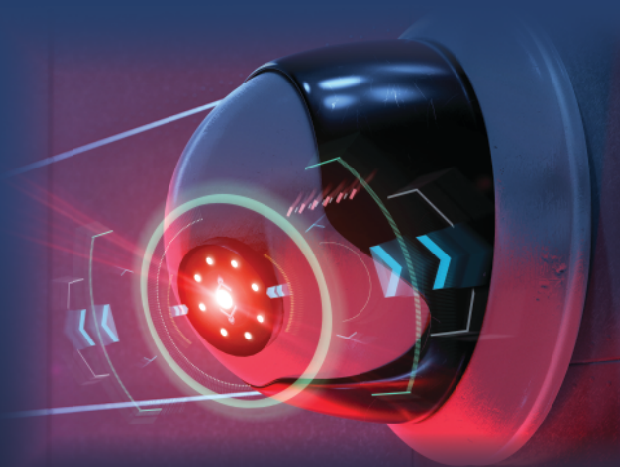
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### Campaign kickoff rally attracts large crowd

Kevin Weedmark, the Saskatchewan Party candidate for the Moosomin-Montmartre riding, held a campaign kickoff Thursday October 3 at the Moosomin Legion Hall.

A large number of people came out to show their support. Former Moosomin MLA for 30 years, Don Toth, spoke at the event in support of Weedmark, as did Community Builders Alliance president Tyler Thorn and Councillor Murray Gray.

The provincial election kicked off on Tuesday, with Voting Week set to take place October 22-26, and Election Day set for October 28. As of Friday, Weedmark was the only candidate in the Moosomin-Montmartre riding to have filed his nomination papers.

**Top of page:** A few supporters and Kevin Weedmark with election signs following the rally.

**Left:** Sask Party Candidate Kevin Weedmark speaking.

**Right:** Former longtime Moosomin MLA Don Toth speaking.





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Dr. Schalk Van der Merwe at one of the first landings of the Saskatchewan Air Ambulance at Moosomin's newly expanded airport this summer, left, and with his wife, Henriette, right.

## Dr. Schalk van der Merwe

# Local doc named Family Physician of the Year

BY ASHLEY BOCHEK

Dr. Schalk Van der Merwe has been awarded Family Physician of the Year for Saskatchewan.

Van der Merwe is from South Africa and has lived and served southeast Saskatchewan as a family doctor for the past 25 years. Van der Merwe came to Canada in 1998 and is one of 14 physicians in Moosomin, who also serve smaller communities through local clinics.

"We came to Canada in September of 1998, to Redvers with a four-month plan. We were away for the weekend when

Henriette, my wife, saw an ad in the paper that said they were looking for a locum in Redvers for four months and we thought let's go on an adventure.

"We came for four months because I was in a specialty position and then, I was going to go back to South Africa and specialize. I really wanted to do heart transplant surgeries. The first heart transplant surgery ever done was in South Africa in 1969. It still fascinates me to this day.

"We had always decided that if we had kids that I wouldn't do that job because that's a 20 hour a day job, but we'd come

for four months, and two weeks before we flew to Canada, Henriette found out that she was pregnant with Heinrich, with our son, but we decided to go anyway.

"I remember we came in August, and all we knew about Canada is that it was cold, so we came in August and it was hot—we had no shorts and no short sleeve shirts.

"We worked in Redvers from August to December of 1998 and then I met Dr. Crouse at a convention in December and he asked what my plan was after my locum, and I told him that we weren't entirely sure and he said, 'Do you want to come work

in Moosomin for a few months?' Then, I talked to Henriette and she said we could extend it for a few months, and 25 years later we're still here."

### Stresses of travelling to a new country

Van der Merwe says there were many little stresses when coming to Canada from South Africa. "I remember flying into Regina when there was one luggage carousel. That's all there was.

*Continued on Page 21*



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### Moosomin Visual Arts Centre holds Grand Opening

Eight months after opening its doors, the Moosomin Visual Arts Centre held its grand opening on Saturday, September 28. The day consisted of an open house from 10 am to 3 pm, mini classes and demonstrations throughout the day, lunch, and a ribbon cutting. From left are MVAC board members Ashley Simon, Darlene Strong, Jen Grant, Olha Volokh, Joy Hamilton-Flaman, Moosomin town councillor Greg Nosterud cutting the ribbon, MVAC chair Krista Crellin, board member Kyla Fingas, and MVAC vice-chair Terry Grant. Sitting on the steps are Hunter and Quinn Flaman.



Terry Grant does a pottery demonstration.



Darlene Strong demonstrating how to make a stained glass piece.



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# Who is running in the provincial election

## Moosomin-Montmartre

In the last election, the Saskatchewan Party received 78 per cent of the vote in Moosomin-Montmartre, the NDP 16 per cent, the PCs 3.5 per cent and the Greens 2.5 per cent.

Moosomin business owner **Kevin Weedmark** won a competitive nomination race against two other candidates—former NHLer and finance executive Nevin Markwart and Wawota Mayor Kevin Kay, to become the **Saskatchewan Party** nominee in Moosomin-Montmartre.

Weedmark earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Regina and owns a printing and publishing business. He has been involved in his community as a volunteer with his church, his Chamber of Commerce, his Economic Development Committee and the Community Builders Alliance.

**Chris Ball** of Indian Head was named the **NDP** candidate in Moosomin-Montmartre. Ball grew up in Wolseley and lives with his family in Indian Head. Ball works operating a mobile service truck for commercial tractor trailers and farm implements. He volunteers with his local fire department.

**Rémi Rheault** of Langenburg is the **Green Party** candidate in Moosomin-Montmartre. According to a biography provided by the Green Party, “As a long-time social activist (e.g., Black Lives Matter) he targets the loss of self-esteem that comes with joblessness and alienation from cultural traditions.”

**Otis Ayre** of Wolseley is the **Buffalo Party** candidate in Moosomin-Montmartre. Ayre is working as a cook in a health care facility. According to his Buffalo Party biography “my career has taken me across a variety of fields—from the railroad to construction delivery, and most notably, in cooking.”

**Adam Erickson** of Wolseley has been named as the **Saskatchewan United Party** candidate in Moosomin-Montmartre. He is a project manager in the agricultural and energy industries. According to his SUP biography, he was involved in efforts to revive a church camp near Wolseley: “Recently, Adam and his family moved out to Circle Square Ranch hoping to revive it for the children of their community, but six months later it was sold and thus ended the dream before it could ever take hold.”

## Cannington

In the last election, the Saskatchewan Party received 74 per cent of the vote in

Cannington, the **Buffalo Party** 16 per cent, the **NDP** 9 per cent and the **Greens** 2 per cent.

**Daryl Harrison** of the **Saskatchewan Party** is running for re-election in Cannington. Harrison was elected as the MLA for Cannington in the 2020 provincial election.

Harrison has been working in the oil industry for over 30 years in various roles including as an Account Manager with Baker Hughes General Electric. In addition, he has served as a councillor for the local rural municipality, the Director for Zone 1 of the Saskatchewan Stock Grower’s association, a member of the Lions Club, a volunteer fire fighter and a cattle rancher. He has also served as a school division trustee for the Souris-Moose Mountain and South East Cornerstone School Divisions.

**Michelle Krieger** is the **Buffalo Party** candidate in Cannington. Krieger owns and operates a business coaching, consulting and bookkeeping firm in her hometown of Alameda.

She is a town councillor in Alameda and sits on the Southeast Healthcare Recruitment and Retention and the local Saskatchewan Health Authority liaison committees.

**Dianne Twietmeyer** is the **NDP** candidate in Cannington. She is a retired teacher. She is a founding member of the Cornerstone Theatre, which maintains a community hall and theatre in Carlyle, and volunteers on the Library Board and as a member of the Legion.

**Natalie Clysdale** is the **Green Party** candidate in Cannington

## Melville-Saltcoats

In the last election, the Saskatchewan Party received 76 per cent of the vote in Melville-Saltcoats, the **NDP** 17.5 per cent, the **PCs** 4.5 per cent and the **Greens** 2 per cent.

**Warren Kaeding** of the **Saskatchewan Party** is running for re-election in Melville-Saltcoats.

Kaeding received his Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Saskatchewan in 1985 and worked in the agriculture industry including as the Executive Director for the Sask Farm Stewardship Association, Advisor to the Agriculture Development Fund, Crop Inspector with Maxcor Ventures, and Business Development Rep for Input Capital.

He was involved in his community as Chair of the local economic development board, elder in his church, is a member of the Lions Club, and an official with local minor hockey and baseball.

**Karen Hovind** is running for the **NDP** in Melville-Saltcoats.

She earned her Master of Education degree in 2021.

She is a teacher, currently working at Melville Comprehensive School. She was raised in Saltcoats and lives in the area. She was previously a town councillor in Saltcoats and has served on several community boards and committees. She is currently a councillor representing her region to the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation.

**Micah Mang** is running for the **Green Party** in Melville-Saltcoats

**Curtis Brooks** is running for the **Saskatchewan United Party** in Melville-Saltcoats.

Brooks was raised in Melville and made a career out of repairing vehicles. After high school, he joined the City of Melville Volunteer Fire Department, where he spent 18 years responding to emergencies in Melville’s large fire district.

He spent three years on Melville City Council, from 2006-2009.

He has taught fire training classes, an automotive repair class, a small engine repair class, and a mining pre-employment class.

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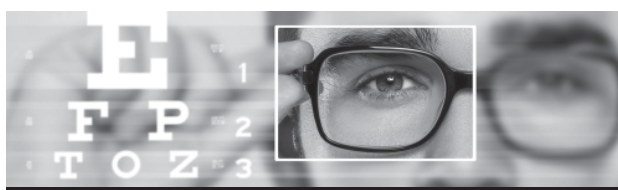
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Spectator



# Where to vote in the provincial election

## Voting Week takes place October 22-26, Election Day is October 28

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Voting in the Saskatchewan provincial election takes place later this month.

Voting Week is Tuesday to Saturday October 22 to 26, and Election Day is Monday, October 28.

"A few minutes ago I had the opportunity to visit with our Lieutenant Governor Russ Mirasty and I asked him to dissolve the 29th Legislature, which will start the campaign for the election on October the 28th," Moe said Tuesday morning.

There are 61 constituencies across Saskatchewan. A party needs 31 at minimum to form government.

Before the Legislature was dissolved last week, the Saskatchewan Party held 42 seats, the NDP 14, and there were four independents. One seat was vacant.

In the 2020 election, 444,997 people voted. A total of 841,807 residents were eligible to vote, meaning turnout was just under 53 per cent.

Here are the voting locations in the Moosomin-Montmartre, Cannington, and Melville-Saltcoats ridings.

### Moosomin-Montmartre

**Voting week locations** are open between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. from Tuesday, Oct. 22 to Saturday, Oct. 26 at: Moosomin Legion, Rocanville Nutrien Hall, Whitewood Legion, Cowessess Band Hall, Grenfell Community Hall, Indian Head Heritage Club, and Montmartre Seniors Golden Age Club

**Election day voting** takes place from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 28 in the following locations: Moosomin Legion, Whitewood Legion, Rocanville Community Centre, Wapella School, Fleming Community Hall, McLean Community Centre, Vibank Seniors Centre, Francis Town Hall, Odessa Community Hall, Indian Head Memorial Hall, Sintaluta Silver Horizons



Centre, Carry the Kettle Community Hall, Montmartre Seniors Golden Age Club, Glenavon Centennial Hall, Wolseley Town Hall/Opera House, Grenfell Community Hall, Zagime Anishinabek Community Complex, Cowessess Band Hall, Chief Joseph Crowe Governance Centre at Kahkewistahaw First Nation, Broadview Community Centre, and Windthorst Community Recreation Centre.

### Melville-Saltcoats

**Voting week locations** are open between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. from Tuesday, Oct. 22 to Saturday, Oct. 26 at: Melville Community Works Gym, RM Langenburg Auditorium, S.N. Boreen Community Centre in Esterhazy, and Saltcoats and District Community Hall.

**Election day voting** takes place from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 28 in the following locations: S.N. Boreen Com-

munity Centre in Esterhazy, Spy Hill Community Hall, Spy Hill, Saltcoats and District Community Hall, Calder Community Hall, MacNutt Recreational Centre, Langenburg Community Centre, Churchbridge Community Centre, Bredenbury Busy Bees, Melville Community Works Gym, Lemberg Friendship Centre, Neudorf Community Hall, Grayson Senior Citizen's Centre, Bangor Hall, and Senior's Ethnic Centre in Stockholm.

### Cannington

**Voting week locations** are open between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. from Tuesday, Oct. 22 to Saturday, Oct. 26 at: Wawota Drop In Centre, Redvers Golden Age Centre, Kipling Community Centre & Town Hall, Carlyle Happy Gang Club, Lampman Prairie Lily Club, Oxbow Friendship Centre, and Stoughton Legion Hall.

**Election day voting** takes place from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 28 in the following locations: Wawota Drop In Centre, Fairlight Drop In Centre, Maryfield Harmony Senior Centre, Kipling Community Centre & Town Hall, Kennedy Friendship Centre, Redvers Golden Age Centre, Manor Community Hall, Village of Fillmore Office, Corning Community Hall, Kenossee Lake Four Seasons Drop-In, White Bear First Nation Community Hall, Antler Community Hall, Carlyle Happy Gang Club, The Optimist Legion Hall in Arcola, Kibbey Rec Centre, Pheasant Rump Community Centre, Stoughton Legion Hall, Ocean Man Band Hall, Griffin Community Recreation Centre, Lampman Prairie Lily Club, Frobisher Union Church, Alameda Merrymakers, Oxbow Friendship Club, Glen Ewen Communiplex, Alida Golden Gate Centre, St. Andrew's United Church in Carnduff, Storthoaks Sunshine Club, Carievale Community Hall, Gainsborough Community Hall.

# Feds promise carbon tax rebates, lower credit card fees to small businesses

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

After holding onto some \$2.5 billion in carbon tax rebates promised to small and medium sized businesses since 2019, the federal government announced last week that payments could come before Christmas. The Canada Carbon Rebate for Small Business is poised to distribute those funds to around 600,000 eligible businesses across the nation by Dec. 16 through direct deposit from the CRA, or by New Year's Eve if in cheque form. Examples of what to expect for a typical business in Saskatchewan—based on employee numbers—is as follows: 10 employees, \$11,560; 25 employees, \$28,900; 50 employees, \$57,800; 100 employees, \$115,600.

"Small- and medium-sized businesses are Canada's economic engine, employing nearly two-thirds of all Canadian workers," said federal finance minister Chrystia Freeland. "We are making it cost less for businesses to start-up, grow, and thrive, so they can help our main streets flourish."

When the carbon tax rebate for small businesses was first announced, a third party was supposed to be sought by spring of 2023 who would then distribute the funds sometime throughout the year. At that time, many groups were

critical of the federal government and the lack of a timeline for repayment. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business was one of those voices calling for an update back in February, and is now pleased to see movement in that regard.

"CFIB is relieved to learn the federal government will return the \$2.5 billion small business share of carbon tax revenue that has been stuck in Ottawa for the past five years," said Dan Kelly, CFIB president. "It's good news that this money will be returned to small businesses by direct deposit or cheque before the end of the year. These are not trivial amounts of money."

Businesses will not need to apply for the rebate as

the CRA will handle delivery of the dollars. The rebate is calculated by the number of employees a business employed from 2019 to 2023, then multiplying that number by a payment rate for each of those provinces and years.

### Credit card fees also reduced

Another big change for small business relates to credit card transactions with reduced fees to take effect Oct. 19. Estimated to save eligible small businesses \$1 billion over five years, more than 90 per cent of small- and medium-sized businesses that accept credit cards as payment will see their fees reduced by up to 27 per cent.

"By reducing the cost of accepting credit card payments, and returning more money to small businesses, Canadian entrepreneurs will be able to put more of their money towards growing their business and creating good-paying jobs," Freeland said.

An example of a store

processing \$300,000 in credit card payments would see that business pay around \$4,000 in fees right now. With the new agreements in place, that store could see a savings of \$1,080 in fees annually.

A further revision to the Code of Conduct for the Payment Card Industry

was also announced, and will come into play effective Oct. 30. The revised Code is seen to help businesses compare prices and offers from various payment processors, striving to also cut the complaint handling response time by almost 80 per cent to 20 business days.

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Austin Jones in the Minotaur Skyrace in June 2024. The race is 35 km long, with a vertical climb of 2,800 m. Jones completed the race with a time of 5:26:01

### Sets new record at Iron Legs Mountain Race

# Jones wins 100km race with a time of 12:15:11

BY ASHLEY BOCHEK

Austin Jones of Wapella is a marathon runner and has recently broken the Iron Legs Marathon race record. Jones won the 100 km race on August 17 in Calgary.

The World-Spectator interviewed him on his latest win:

**Tell me a bit about yourself.**

I was born in Brandon and I grew up in Wapella. All of my family is still there so I still go home quite a bit. Then, I moved to Calgary eight years ago. I am a plumber in Calgary.

I didn't get into running until the pandemic. Basketball was my first sport I really liked which I played a lot of growing up in Wapella and Moosomin. I started running during the pandemic because there was nothing really to do and I wanted to stay active and then I fell in love with it.

**Why do you think you fell in love with running? What about it makes you love it?**

I think for me you get out what you put in for the most part with running. If you put the time and effort in, you will improve. There isn't a whole lot of skill to running it is more just putting in the time which I really like that mindset.

**What sort of training do you do for running marathons?**

I really like trail running or mountain running. In Calgary we are about an hour from the Canadian Rockies so that is where I

really love running.

For training, I usually go to the gym once or twice a week to build some leg strength, but the bulk of training is just running.

I live in the city, and there are some trails by my house that I try and run there and then run on the pavement. On the weekends, I try and get out to the mountains and do some of my longer runs out there.

A weekly training split would be probably I usually run about six days a week anywhere from 100 kms to 150 kms a week for training.

Mostly what I like doing is running out in the mountains, so I usually try and run those kilometers in the mountains where there is lots of ups and downs and you're running up and over running passes. I pret-

ty much just run.

**How many marathons have you run?**

I did my first at the Calgary marathon in 2022, which is a road marathon done in the city and that is 42.2 kms.

I have done a few ultra-marathons—they are called—so anything over the 42 kms that a marathon is is called an ultra-mara-

thon.

I have done two 50 km races where one was near Swift Current and I did another this year in Vernon.

Then I did a 50 miler last summer in Crowsnest which is 80 kms. Then, I did Iron Legs this summer which was 100 kms.

**I understand you set a new record at the Iron Legs marathon. How did**

**that feel?**

It was pretty good. The day went pretty much as well as it could have there was no major issues and I trained pretty consistently all year, so it was nice to see that all pay off.

Those trails are pretty close to my house so it was kind of like my home trail, so it was nice to put down a good effort out there.

*Continued on page 17*

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Walseley & District Sportsplex Board

## Sports Celebrity Banquet

October 19, 2024  
Walseley Sportsplex



Rod Pederson

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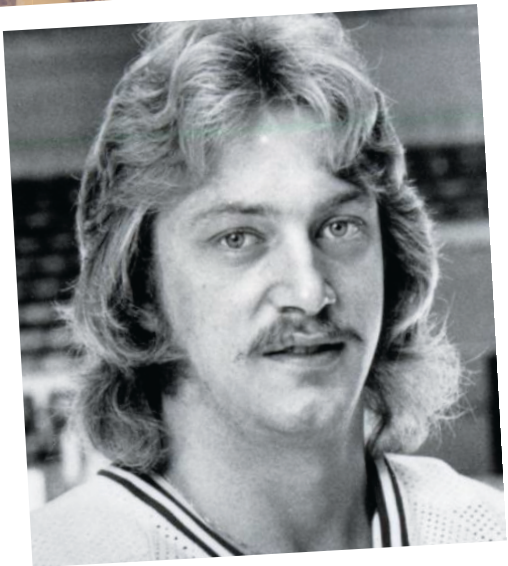


Gil Dash



Bob Polcy

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**Event to follow**



Lorne Mollenken

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All funds raised will go towards replacing our  
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winter sports.

Be part of the change and support our community!





# Wolseley holding Sports Celebrity Dinner fundraiser

BY ASHLEY BOCHEK

The Wolseley & District Sportsplex Board is hosting a celebrity Sports Banquet on Saturday, October 19 as a fundraiser for replacing the artificial ice plant at the Wolseley Rink.

The banquet will feature sports broadcaster Rod Pederson, and athletes Bob Poley, Lorne Molleken, and Gil Dash.

"We are hosting the Wolseley Sport Celebrity Dinner and it is going to be at the Wolseley Sportsplex on October 19," says Vance Weber. "Doors open at 5 pm, dinner is at 6 pm and speeches at 7 pm. We have special guests coming. There is one other speaker beyond those four, his name is Larry Beuler, he will be doing our silent auction and our live auction."

"We are hoping some funds are raised for the ice plant from the fundraiser, but it's also about exposure."

"The town of Wolseley has been really good at taking care of its properties. For example, our town hall has graced the cover of the Saskatchewan Heritage Society magazine. Our court house—which is another thing that we are slowly but surely trying to raise funds for to bring it back to its former glory—it is the oldest court house in Saskatchewan and what was the Northwest Territories. It was built in the Northwest Territories sometime in the mid-1880s. We want to get that kind of exposure for our rink, and we started with Kraft Hockeyville earlier this year."

He said the ice plant is overdue for replacement.

"Our ice plant is 44 years old, and it was designed to last 25 years. Through diligence and excellence of maintenance we have made it stay alive for as long as we have. Two years ago, we had a fairly major breakdown. It was a combination of breakers, compressor, and some leaks, and at the point we said, 'We are going to start raising some money for a new one.'

## \$250,000 raised

"About 18 months ago we started raising funds

Wolseley & District Sportsplex Boards  
*Celebrity Sports Banquet*

Rod Pederson  
Bob Poley  
Lorne Molleken  
Gil Dash

SAVE THE DATE  
*October 19, 2024*

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to replace our ice plant. It will probably cost between \$700,000 and \$800,000, but the cheapest version is going to be about \$700,000 for the ice plant, and in 18 months we have raised \$250,000 which I think is absolutely outstanding for such a small community," says Weber. "Wolseley has 850 people plus 300 in the Rural Municipality."

"We have had cabarets, we did a comedy night that raised about \$30,000, we have had tournaments. That is where the Kraft Hockey idea came from and Natasha Perras was our instigator on that. Then after Hockeyville we thought the best way to capitalize on it—and we heard other Kraft Hockeyville communities got around \$100,000 depending on the community—was with a sports celebrity dinner. For example, Assiniboia raised \$150,000 and we thought even if we only get \$50,000, we have to try it and so we did. This will be the biggest fundraiser for the ice plant, and it will also be the most labour intensive."

"If I were to talk about it from an infrastructure project and importance, I would put it third on my list for our town. Our long-

term care facility employs more people than anything else and it is vital to the spirit of the entire community. Number two we have a sewer line that we need to work on, however there is a bridge there and people are deciding on whether we keep the bridge or let it go, and then the ice plant is third."

## Community hub

Weber says the rink is the hub of the community in winter.

"The reason why it is on the list of the top three infrastructure needs in Wolseley, is because for eight months of the year it is a community hub."

"It is a place where great-grandparents can go and sit next to their great-grandkids and cheer on their family. You can grab a burger or a coffee and socialize with people in the

community. There is just something about it, whether it is figure skating, minor hockey events or just practice, it really ties the community together. I think it would be the most-visited facility in our community. It is vital to our community."

## Lots of volunteers

Weber says a group of volunteers has been working hard to put on this event.

"On our main committee there are about nine people helping organize this fundraiser and probably around 20 people altogether who have pitched in."

"Our sponsorship is incredibly successful. I believe we are at \$77,500 in sponsorship to date. I am pretty pumped about that and there are still a couple

more to come in. We are capping ticket sales at 300 because it is our first one. We currently are at 257 tickets sold so we are nearing our capacity. There is still time for people to buy tickets and help sponsor us."

## More fundraising

Weber says even after the sports banquet, there will be more fundraising to do.

"Even after this event we are going to be only about halfway there. I think this is something that reaches across Southern Saskatchewan. We were Saskatchewan's Kraft Hockeyville contestant this year and got support from all over. Nobody has ever won from Saskatchewan. It is an uphill battle because of our small population. I think we did fairly well, but we

just couldn't compete with Ontario. When we won \$25,000, Brent Wilson, who was a former Dragon off of Dragon's Den, he is a really cool dude, he gave us a personal donation of \$25,000 from his foundation which was amazing. He is just a very nice human being."

## Construction in 2025 or 2026

Weber says construction could start next year or the following year.

"We have applied for a grant and if we get it, I think we will start construction in the spring when the ice is out, but if we don't get it and we can continue our incredibly successful trajectory, I do think construction would then start in the spring of 2026 without any grant."

*Continued on page 22*

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# FREAKY FRIDAY

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# Virden Theatre Productions performing Freaky Friday the Musical

The talented creative team behind the consistently stellar community productions at the Virden Aud Theatre know they have a hit show on their hands with this year's Freaky Friday the Musical.

An adaptation of the classic novel and beloved films, Freaky Friday follows teenager Ellie Blake and her mother, Katherine, on the weirdest, strangest, craziest, freakiest day of their whole lives.

Try as they might, Katherine and Ellie just can't seem to understand each other; Ellie wants her mom to stop trying to change her, while Katherine wants her daughter to be the best possible version of herself. On a fateful Friday, the day before Katherine's wedding, something magical occurs when mother and daughter swap bodies. Now, both will have to literally spend a day walking in each other's shoes, learning about each other and the struggles each goes through, and forging a new mother-daughter relationship in this hilarious, energetic, and moving musical comedy.

The 41-member cast and a huge backstage crew of problem solvers are working tirelessly to bring this magical show to life.

At the forefront of this perfectly cast ensemble are the dynamic and hilarious Brandon mother daughter team of Ramey and Avery Praznik, who appear as Katherine and Ellie Blake. These two women bring such professionalism and vibrancy to their roles. Ramey is a guidance counsellor at Crocus Plains High School in Brandon, and she has taught drama and directed productions for many years. Avery is a graduate of Randolph School of the Performing Arts in Toronto, and she is, beyond a doubt, one of Westman's most incredible triple threats ever to take the stage. These two actresses are hilarious, and man, can they sing!

Acting alongside these two unbelievably talented women are clever Grade 7 student Corbyn Waller as the little brother Fletcher, and much-loved Brandon photographer Rob Lovatt as the patient, loving fiancé Mike. Ellie's romantic interest in the musical is Adam, and a Brandon veteran of the stage, Brody Burr, is cast perfectly in this role. Audiences will love his smooth vocals, and Brody's skill as a trained dancer shines through in all choreography.



The cast of Freaky Friday in rehearsals.



Virden Collegiate students Charley Dunning and Avrin Krieser play Gretchen and Hannah, Ellie's two best friends. These two homegrown talents certainly are proof of the strong training and opportunities that Virden music and theatre programs offer. Souris performer Nyah Perkin steps into the role of Savannah, Ellie's feisty, confident adversary. Nyah has many professional acting credentials, including starring in a feature film that has garnered her many international awards.

This vibrant show offers an excellent showcase for local talent. Retired FLB music educator Sandra Unger is truly wonderful as the demanding gym teacher Ms. Myers, Jill Radwanski (née Wakely) sets the professional acting standard in her role as Grandma (she's a scene stealer), local favorites Todd Plaisier and Darrell Corbel make a fabulous team as officers Sitz and Kowalski.

Of course, the depth of the cast's talent shines though in both the ensemble and in supporting characters—Danielle the reporter played by Cheryl Sisson and Meagan Perkin, Scott Perkin as Louis, Cody Thiessen as Parker, Rixon Suski as Wells, Piper Sisson as Laurel, Shane Groom as Mr. Blumen, Greg Kirk as Pastor Bruno, Les

Martens as Grandpa, and Wendy Bancescu as Mrs. Time. Virden Theatre Productions is so incredibly proud of the growth of all our performers, both young and old. We love the process as much as the product.

Producer/Director Michelle Chyzyk is excited about so many moments in the show, but she did mention that one definite highlight in her mind is the scene in the guidance counsellor's office that features Mike Thiessen as Dr. Ehrin, Darrell Corbel as Senor O'Brien, and Monique Waller and Christie Archambault sharing the role of Mrs. Luckenbill . . . laughs guaranteed.

When asked why people should attend this particular show, Dramatic Director Dean Munchinsky said, "This Freaky Friday is an absolute blast. We are fortunate enough to have amazing talent who have worked hard and collaborated with the entire team to create a very entertaining little universe. The story, the acting, the singing, and the visuals are stunning. We'd love to share this with everyone."

Dean and Michelle are very excited about having added two young talents into their production circle. These women have injected intelligence, hard work and magic into this venture. JaysaLee Davies has capably taken on the role of Assistant

Producer, while also appearing on stage as Torrey, Katherine's high strung personal assistant. Brandon dance teacher and choreographer Katey Rogowsky has certainly made her mark with innovative and exciting choreography that will have huge audience appeal. These four are joined by the most amazing, hard-working and creative crew who are planning costuming, props, sets, Ladies' Night, as well as some elaborate rock concert style lighting and technology. There is never anything "amateur" about these departments.

Audiences for Freaky Friday will be the first to try out the Aud Theatre's brand new seats. Shows are of November 6 - 9 at 7:30 pm, and there are also 1:30 pm matinees on Saturday, November 9 and Sunday, November 10. This fast-paced show is family friendly and suitable for most ages, although children under age four will not be admitted.

All tickets are \$25 and are now on sale on Eventbrite. Ladies Night tickets are also on sale at Flower Attic and Gifts in Virden.





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Austin with his family at the Iron Legs 100 km race he won, August 2024



Austin in the Kal Park 50km run, May 2024

## Sets new record at Iron Legs Mountain Race

# Jones wins 100km race with a time of 12:15:11

Continued from page 9

**Why do you participate in marathons? What about them do you like?**

The longer distances. I am not really sure to be honest. There is a mental part that I am drawn to and I am also not the fastest so the longer the races go the more chance you have of doing well when you're not the fastest runner because there are so many other things that you need to take care of.

When you are running that long, eating and hydrating are so important. Taking care of yourself is a huge thing. That is probably what I am drawn to, all of the other pieces of the puzzle. It isn't necessarily the running, you have to be on your food and nutrition and I just love spending big days out in the mountains.

**What are some of the challenges when running a marathon?**

If you're new to running, running is a really repetitive sport so it can be really hard and easy to get over-use injuries.

The stick-to-it-ness is a challenge I would say because it can be very repetitive which some people may not like.

The biggest thing—if you want to start running—is to very slowly build up your runs because if you do too much too fast you can injure your joints just from all the pounding.

Running is very hard on your joints. I think it is pretty crucial to eat and work your way up in distance.

**You sound like you have learned a lot about running and the effects it has on your body. How did you learn about it?**

Mostly through trial and error and the internet. For the last year or two I have met some other people that are into running ultras and they have taught me some things.

They have been through it and have the knowledge as well, just friends and stuff like that.

**What do you have ahead to look forward to in terms of marathons?**

Nothing right now. I might look into some races next summer, but as of right now I have got nothing planned.

**What are your goals in the future for running marathons? Is there anywhere you would like to go and run a marathon?**

I would like to continue to have fun with it and getting out running in the mountains.

Someday I would maybe like to do a 100 mile race so 160 kms, but nothing planned just something I would possibly be interested in, in the future.

We're so blessed here with the Canadian Rockies, there are so many beautiful peaks

out there, but if I had to pick a race I would be interested in, there is the Utah called the Trushar Mountain Run that I have kind of looked at that would be really cool.

There are some really big ultras in the States like Western States is out in California and it is a really historic race and I just recently got home from France with my wife and where we were there is a big ultra called UTMB. I don't have a ton of

interest in running it, but it would be cool to go see the event for sure.

**How many more years do you see yourself running marathons?**

As long as I am enjoying running I will continue running it so I hope there are still quite a few years left, but the main thing is as long as I am enjoying it then I will probably keep running.



Austin in the Sinister 7 50 Mile Ultramarathon, July 2023





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Shayda King doing stroud layout.



Truco Trick Riders with this year's sponsor, Hi-Hog.

## Truco Trick Riders end busy year

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

What began with a group of riders gathering to fill a trick riding clinic in Corning quickly evolved into close friends taking the rodeo world by storm. Back in 2021, Shayda King of Corning, Jordana White from Carnduff, and Kyla Dyer from Oxbow met at the King's riding arena for the clinic.

"We pretty much just needed girls to come out so that for the instructor it was worthwhile for her to come," explained Shayda. "And the other girls tried it and loved it, so then we talked about forming a team."

Soon, Bailey Steeves from Carnduff and Charlize Hallberg from Weyburn rounded out the team.

"I grew up on horses and climbing all over my ponies and stuff," Shayda said. "And then I knew there was a couple girls that did it from Estevan that we knew, and had seen videos of them, and I thought it was cool."

The summer of 2022 saw Shayda perform at rodeos the family was attending, offering some valuable performance time.

"The first summer that we had a team, I did a few shows by myself at rodeos that we were going to as a family," Shayda recalled.

She found a lot of support in those early performances as the people Shayda was performing in front of were friends and family.

During the following year, Steeves and White were able to perform with King, but Dyer was facing a major health issue that kept her from riding.

"Kyla was battling aplastic anemia, and was having a bone marrow transplant, so she took the whole year to recover," said Shayda's mom, Tammy. "Then in 2024 Kyla and was able to perform with us, and Charlize joined us."

Last year was when the group really began to launch, performing in 24 shows, but this year proved to be where the Truco Trick Riders really took flight.

"This summer, we had (shows) every weekend except two," Tammy said. "And they added six days at the Brandon Winter Fair, and Tisdale in the spring."

Each performance is six to eight minutes in duration, keeping people glued to their seats between rodeo events.

"Most places use them as a rodeo intermission," Tammy said. "They only need us to be that long, they don't want a long performance."

"For a trick riding performance, we have a longer show, because we also do amateur rodeos, so they want more time taken up," Shayda added. "Some of the pro girls can have shows that are under four minutes."

*Continued on page 25*

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From left are Sask Air Ambulance Chief Pilot Jeff Egeland, Sask Air Ambulance Aircraft Maintenance Manager Tanya Scheelhaase, Flight Nurse Brian Topp, Manager of Saskatchewan Air Ambulance David Mandzuk, Director of Flight Operations Dan Knisley, Jeff St. Onge with the Moosomin airport expansion committee, Sask Highways Minister Lori Carr, Dr. Schalk van der Merwe with the Moosomin airport expansion committee, RM of Moosomin Reeve David Moffatt, Moosomin Mayor Larry Tomlinson, and Tyler Thorn with the Community Builders Alliance.

## New runway completed at Moosomin Airport

*Continued from front*

"Although our municipality owns this airport, this aviation infrastructure serves the Moosomin region's residents, families, local businesses and industries," RM of Moosomin No. 121 Reeve David Moffatt said. "Thanks to neighbours coming together and the provincial government's investment, this project moved from vision to reality."

Fixed wing air ambulances serving Saskatchewan began landing at the Moosomin Airport in July.

"With this expansion, our Saskatchewan Air Ambulance team will be able to improve the critical care and lifesaving transportation services in the southeast corner of the province," SaskBuilds and Procurement Minister Terry Jenson said. "We appreciate the collaborative partnerships that made this a reality and look forward to the social and economic improvements this will bring to southeastern Saskatchewan."

Kevin Weedmark of the Moosomin Chamber of Commerce, the Community Builders Alliance and the Economic Development Committee said he was happy to see the project come together.

"I was proud to chair the event in 2023 where the provincial government and Nutrien announced their support for the airport expansion, I was proud to be there this summer when the Air Ambulance landed for the first

time in Moosomin, and I'm happy to see Minister Carr out today and see this project come to fruition.

"This was a massive project that is already having an impact. The airport is already much busier than before the expansion, the Air Ambulance is now able to serve the region, and with corporate jets now able to reach the region, there will be benefits for regional investment and for our resource industries. It was great to see the province come on board with this project, it was great to see Nutrien come on board with the project, it was great to see the local business community step up and it was great to see local municipalities each take a share. Collaboration builds our communities, and having everyone work together on this project made it a success."

"This airport epitomizes the spirit of how this province and the prairies remain committed to working together," said Jeff St. Onge, one of the organizers of the airport expansion. "It showcases strength and perseverance, dedication and relentless hard work, and is a testimony of what can happen if you have 100 businesses and personal donors, 18 towns, RMs and villages, two provinces and one provincial government working together. If you can have them working together in mutual trust, open communication and respect, you can get anything done."

"It gives us options for those who are sick or unwell and it gives us the option to serve all of our communities

that have contributed or that have in any way, shape or form been involved in this project," says Dr. Schalk van der Merwe, who helped organize the airport expansion along with St. Onge.

"On behalf of the local private sector and the business community, we would like to say thank you very much to the provincial government for their contribution, and to Nutrien as well for their contribution. Both of those were very significant and we're very appreciative of your generosity," said Tyler Thorn with the Community Builders Alliance. "I believe this project is a great example of what can be accomplished when you bring together the provincial government, local municipal governments, local corporate partners, the local private sector, and some very determined people who like to get stuff done."

"Between the government and Nutrien and everyone else that has been involved in this project, it's unbelievable what can be done when everybody works together," said Moosomin Mayor Larry Tomlinson.

"I have to thank Dr. Van and Jeff for all of the work that they've done and I want to thank the government and Nutrien especially. We're very proud to be a part of this airport and what it's come to be and I think going into the future, it will be part of the growth in our community here. This will do nothing but expand that and bring more to our town and the surrounding communities."



Jeff St. Onge with the Moosomin airport expansion committee and Sask Highways Minister Lori Carr inside the Sask Air Ambulance.



Jeff St. Onge and Dr. Schalk van der Merwe with the Moosomin airport expansion committee on the steps of the Sask Air Ambulance plane St. Onge and van der Merwe initiated the expansion project.





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## Dr. Schalk van der Merwe

# Local doc named Family Physician of the Year

Continued page 5

"I remember landing in Montreal and that was a funny story. I said to the lady who booked our trip, 'We've never been out of the country so please make sure that our hotel is right at the airport,' and she said, 'Yup, no problem!' So we get to Montreal, we get off, everybody is speaking French and we didn't know that was a thing in Canada. We found an agent and I asked where the hotel was and she replied saying it wasn't at this airport. So, my wife who's four weeks pregnant and nauseous, she said, 'I'm going to sit here with all of our suitcases while you go sort this out.' I had the telephone number for the hotel, but as soon as I pick up the pay phone, it's all in French. I can't speak French and I'm thinking this is not good. I put the phone back and I walked around, then I would come back and pick up the pay phone again because I thought maybe there was a cycle where if you pick it up this time it's in French, but if you pick it up again it would be in English. That went on for maybe an hour and then finally I saw that there was a button you could push for English. So we landed at Dorval and our hotel was at Mirabel because the agent didn't realize that there were two international airports in Montreal.

"We realized just how vast this country is when we got into the aircraft and I asked the flight attendant—in South Africa we can fly across the whole country in two hours—how long it would be to our next stop and she replied, 'Oh, another four and a half hours.' I was shocked and thought four and a half hours in one country was crazy. I remember landing in Regina with wheat fields along the highway and I remember thinking we were going to be safe."

### First impressions of Canada

Van der Merwe says he immediately felt at home in Canada.

"I thought this may as well be a farming community in South Africa because it's exactly the same, the people are the same and just as friendly—it was the same except for the language. I thought that was so cool and things were smooth because I remember getting off the aircraft in Montreal and I had to go through immigration. All of my paperwork was there and when I got off, everything was there, they knew where we were going and what we were here for. Since it was so easy, I had a really good impression."

### Interested in medicine

Van der Merwe jokes that he got into medicine because he wanted to know what was behind the "Authorized Personnel Only" doors.

"The sign that says Authorized People Only, I wanted to know what makes you authorized. In the Operating Rooms you always see Authorized People Only and I always thought about what it means, and the answer was go to medical school for seven years and then we'll let you through. Truly that was it, I wanted to know what was through those doors."

### Family Physician of the Year

Van der Merwe says his colleagues nominated him for the award.



Schalk van der Merwe and a few of his colleagues at the Moosomin Family Practice Centre

"Ross Kerkhoff had told me he was going to nominate me for this award and I just thought 'whatever,' because there are a lot of people who do great work, not just in this province, but in the country, so I didn't think I would have much of a chance. I thanked Ross for doing the work because it's a long process," Dr. Van said.

"I was sitting in the hospital when my phone rang and it wasn't a number I had as a contact, but I saw it was from Saskatoon so I thought maybe it was the College of Physicians."

"I answered the phone and the guy said he was the President of the College of Family Physicians of Saskatchewan, to tell me that I had won this award."

"At first I thought it was just one of my friends that was messing with me, but he was serious."

"Then I got an email a little bit later from the College of Family Physicians saying congratulations and telling me that I won the award. That was really cool."

Van der Merwe says there was a lot of work for his colleagues to submit to nominate him for the award.

"You have to be nominated by one of your colleagues, then the mayor, Larry Tomlinson had to write something, the nursing staff, then my office staff wrote some stuff, and so did some of my colleagues. Then it gets assessed by a group of people because there are a lot of worthy applicants. Then you are notified if you're chosen."

### Appreciates recognition

Van der Merwe says he is very excited to attend the conference to accept the award.

"I have never won anything like this," he said. "It is such an overwhelming feeling because it's hard to think that people actually recognize what you do."

"To win it for the province—my first thought is this is pretty cool, and then my next thought is this is a huge responsibility."

"We have to go to Vancouver for the conference so I thought I can't not wear something green for the Riders. It's a national conference and I won something, I have to represent the province. I was actually in the Rider store last week wondering what I am going to wear."

He says it took a while to believe he won the award.

"I had thanked the person on the phone and then after I thought I can't believe this is real. I called my wife about it, but then thought I would keep it to myself because I want to see it first and believe it myself."

"Then, the email came so I knew it was real and then thought I'll tell some people. I talked to Dr. Ross and my colleagues thanking them for nominating me and having their support."

He says there is a national conference each year. "There is a conference every year and they alternate where it is going to be between western and eastern Canada. So this year it just happened to be in Vancouver, then next year it will be somewhere in the east or the Atlantic provinces. There is a College of Family Physicians of Canada which is equal to the

Royal College of Specialists or the Royal College for surgeons or radiologists. It is the national governing body."

### Excited for event

Van der Merwe says there will be a presentation at the conference before he is presented with his award.

"There is a presentation about me. They asked me to send pictures of where I am from, where you work, and then they present them at the conference."

"Ashley (Bochek) and I went around and took some pictures showcasing the town a few weeks ago for the presentation at the event."

He says he is looking forward to the event. "I am looking very forward to it. I actually went out and bought a new suit. The Saskatchewan chapter had an event on September 29 so they presented some stuff there as well."

Van der Merwe thinks award programs are a great way to recognize the outstanding people in the profession.

"I think there are lots of people that work without any recognition and I think the most important part of an award like this is to recognize not only individuals but the team around them. It is great for me to get the award, but really without having people to support you, that wouldn't happen. Medicine specifically, if you don't have the team, it isn't happening. You need your nurse team, lab team, x-ray team, so I think there is lots of value to it. Especially if you're selected by your peers in your province, there is lots of value in that."

## Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

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# Wolseley holding Sports Celebrity Dinner fundraiser

Continued from Page 11

## Four stages to project

"We have four phases for this project," said Weber. "Fundraising and scope of project designs is step one. Stage one is not completed on the fundraising side nor on the scope of project design either because if we get the grant we have applied for then we are going to do certain things that satisfy that grant that we cannot afford if we don't get it. So, phase one is still ongoing."

"Phase two is going to be a dehumidifier and electrical upgrades. We need to get the moisture out of the air to make it easier to start up our plant. It will actually extend the life of our existing plant with the dehumidifier, and it will extend the lifespan of the new one as well because it's easier to cool the ice if it is dry air because you don't have to work against the heat and humidity in the air. Then, it also makes it easier to keep it cool."

"Electrical is also a part of phase three, and phase four is the insulation for the new ice plant."

## Motivation for helping

Why does Weber want to help with this project?

"I am a person that says 'Put your money where your mouth is,' if you're going to open your mouth then you might as well do the work," he says. "I said we should have started raising funds a long time ago to replace the plant and so as soon as I started opening my mouth I thought I should help do the work and it is of vital importance to the mental health and well-being, and recreational opportunities of this community in the winter."

"If you're motivated to donate by reading this article you can reach out to the Town of Wolseley. They accept e-transfers and cheques—just put Ice Plant on it if you want to make a donation. We will give you a tax receipt as well if you donate because it is a charitable cause. Their phone number is 306-698-2477 and their email is townofwolseley@sasktel.net. If you want to have further discussions about this, you can reach me, Vance, at 306-698-7337. I am always willing to talk to people about this ice plant."

## Hockeyville run helped bring community together

Natasha Perras organized Wolseley's participation in Kraft Hockeyville.

"It happened after the ice plant meeting. We were just a small group that was all sent home to brainstorm ideas for fundraisers we could do," she says.

"I remember Pense was a part of the Hockeyville years ago and I thought we could do it too. We tried the year prior, but we just couldn't get enough push behind it and then we just tried a little harder and I gathered more people to get it started. January 1 of this year the nominations opened, and we planned to participate in

it." She says it took a lot of work. "The nomination process wasn't a lot of work, it was just a lot of push to do a nomination story to upload their pictures and do all the little things that needed to be done."

"Once we made the top four is when all the real work began. We had a little booth set up at the rink with technology where we could help you do your nomination story so we tried to get as many people as we could. Then, once we made top four there was a lot more work. We broke down into committees of what everyone was going to do, and we had a head of each committee, and everybody worked hard. We got our name out there as far and wide as we could and really hoped for the best."

Perras says the event brought the community together.

"It is often in a community this small it's not an unusual experience to see your community rally together, but to see your community rally together in such a posi-

tive experience, it was really good to see. "Normally, when the community does rally together, it is unfortunate circumstances, but this was a really positive circumstance for Wolseley and shone a new light on the community."

"People in the community that didn't know what we needed now know we need a new ice plant. It just made awareness of what the rink needs, the community needs, how much work goes into the rink, and the dedicated volunteers that we do have at the rink."

"It put Wolseley on the map and people know where and who we are. I think it was a good experience. It didn't turn out the way we wanted it to turn out, but it was a good experience that is for sure."

## Plans coming together for Sports Celebrity Banquet

Krista Laverdiere is the event co-ordinator for the Sports Celebrity Banquet.

"It has gone very well," she says. "We

have a great amount of support from the community behind us and the people on the committee are working really hard on this. We are a close knit group that want to get things done and see this new ice plant happen."

Laverdiere says the fundraiser should be a lot of fun.

"Based on the sponsorship levels, we do have a private meet-and-greet that will be happening earlier and whoever is a part of that will already know. Then, at the rink we will be having all of our dignitaries there and we will be having a catered supper as well as a silent auction and live auction."

What is their goal for the event?

"It would be nice to see a big crowd and raise around \$100,000," says Laverdiere. "We haven't raised a whole bunch since the Kraft Hockeyville Rock the Rink event that brought in around \$10,000 but we are still needing \$300,000 to 500,000. So, we are hopeful for this fundraiser. We are hoping it will be an annual event as well."

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The grand opening for the Eagle Sky Healing Lodge detox centre at Kahkewistahaw First Nation was held on Sept. 27. In the ribbon cutting photo, from left, are Eagle Sky Healing Lodge Manager Danita Benjoe, Kahkewistahaw Chief Evan Taypotat, YTC Tribal Chief Isabel O'Soup, YTC Director of Health Ivan Cote, and Ochapowace Chief Shelley Bear.

# Doors open at detox centre on Kahkewistahaw First Nation

**Ribbon cutting ceremony held at Eagle Sky Healing Lodge**

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER  
"The elders tell us that when you see someone who has addictions—someone that's hurting and that's in pain—they are our teachers. They have a special place in God's heart. They have a special place in God's kingdom which is why we're told, 'be careful how what you think of people', because as First Nations, we come from an equalitarian society where everybody was equal," said Elder Ross Cadotte during a prayer offering outside the Eagle Sky Healing Lodge.

The 10-bed detox centre officially opened on the Kahkewistahaw First Nation on Sept. 27. The centre is a safe and secure place for people on their healing journey, offering cultural, spiritual, and mental health supports in addition to a holistic treatment program. Relative support staff and security follow the Seven Grandfather Teachings in helping people between the ages of 18 and 25 in the co-ed facility.

It's been some time in the making with the Yorkton Tribal Council first announcing plans to base the centre in the former health building on Kahkewistahaw back in early March.

"We negotiated the lease for the facility here, but they came over and above the lease requirements on what we needed," said Ivan Cote, Health Director with the YTC on working with the Kahkewistahaw Chief and Council. "They were more than willing to help us, and we do appreciate that because of their help and their assistance in providing us this facility."

Doubling the number of beds at Eagle Sky Healing Lodge is the next step, something still in discussions, according to Cote.

"We're starting at the facility with 10 beds, and it's our intention to expand to

20 beds with the approval of the funding from the province," he said. "We take this as a very serious and positive step, because as we speak right now, there are funerals back home for people who have passed away from overdose. It's a small step to us, but it's a big step when it comes down to our fight against the addictions and saving our people."

There is a waitlist for Eagle Sky Healing Lodge, which will be admitting people effective Oct. 7. Manager Danita Benjoe credited staff members, calling them 'family,' and explained their approach to helping clients through their healing journey.

"All you need is your heart and compassion and that empathy and that love to our relatives," she said. "That's what we'll be showing here when our relatives come through our doors. It's going to be like a home for them."

Assembling the right people on the team at Eagle Sky was quite a challenge, as Benjoe recalled.

"It was April when I stepped in here and there was only two of us—I and my janitor! It was a difficult task in recruiting and getting this place up and running," she said. "I took it many times to ceremony, and I had my staff come my way. I just want to give thanks to our Creator, for allowing us to come together and for bringing this detox centre together."

Having just the right type of people in a detox centre is crucial, something program consultant Cliff Bird noted.

"I've always said the frontline workers are my heroes," he said. "They're the ones that bring their 'A' game every day, not knowing what they're going to be faced with. At times, they're going to face the brunt of folks that are coming off addictions, folks that are in horrific withdrawal, they have to face it all."

*Continued on page 27*



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## **FIRST PLACE** in all of Canada for **BEST AGRICULTURE EDITION** for the September issue of Ag News. All of our staff contributed to this issue.

**The judge commented:** *Very interesting content. Lots of scientific topics. Great photo coverage. Large variety of advertising.*

## **FIRST PLACE** in all of Canada for **BEST CIVIC JOURNALISM**

for Kevin Weedmark's investigation into the 2021 census that led Statistics Canada to fix its numbers for rural communities.

**The judge commented:** *Journalism that identifies a problem and leads to change. That is what civic journalism is all about. The paper served its community well with its investigation of census numbers, and got real results.*

## **SECOND PLACE** in all of Canada for **BEST CIVIC JOURNALISM**

for Kevin Weedmark's article on New Canadians from Ukraine having to pay international student fees, which led the provincial government to introduce a policy ensuring that the tuition for New Canadians from Ukraine going to university are the same as other Saskatchewan residents

**The judge commented:** *This identified a problem few knew about and got immediate action. Another example of civic journalism at its best, uncovering matters of public interest and spurring change.*

## **FIRST PLACE** in all of Canada for **EXCELLENCE IN RURAL REPORTING**

for Kevin Weedmark's investigation into the 2021 census

## **THIRD PLACE** in all of Canada for **EXCELLENCE IN RURAL REPORTING**

for Kevin Weedmark's article on New Canadians from Ukraine having to pay international student fees,

## **SECOND PLACE** in all of Canada for **BEST SPORTS PHOTO**

for Sunnette Kamffer's photo of rodeo action at Spy Hill Sports Days

**The judge commented:** *The ropes against the sky were well composed and created nice contrast. The judges would've liked to see the ensuing moments.*



## **SECOND PLACE** in all of Canada for **BEST FEATURE PHOTO**

for Kevin Weedmark's rodeo sunset photo from the Moosomin Bulls and Broncs event

**The judge commented:** *Might have scored higher, but the composition was hurt by the street lights. Nice use of backlighting, and seeing the visual at sunset. Would make a great calendar front page in the community.*

## **SECOND PLACE** in all of Canada for **BEST NEWS FEATURE PHOTO**

for Kevin Weedmark's harvest aerial photo

**The judge commented:** *Excellent composition and use of lines, makes for a great cover shot.*



## **THIRD PLACE** in all of Canada for **BEST COVERAGE OF THE ARTS**

for Ashley Bochek, Sierra D'Souza Butts, Kara Kinna and Kevin Weedmark's articles on local arts and artists.

**The judge commented:** *Excellent commitment from journalists finding and writing important local community arts stories that go deeper than a notice of upcoming performance, promote emerging youth artists, recognize the impact of a career and legacy, and sharing the excellence and local talent.*

## **THIRD PLACE** in all of Canada for **OUTSTANDING REPORTER INITIATIVE**

for Kevin Weedmark's investigation into the 2021 census.

**The judge commented:** *A worthy example of paying attention to the data, and then chasing down every response (or glaring lack thereof) when the data doesn't match observed reality.*

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# Truco Trick Riders end busy year

Continued from Page 18

Some shows also provide the Truco crew the chance to tell their story in addition to thrill an audience with their riding prowess.

"They did do a few places where they had to publicly speak and talk about the trick riding, and then they perform," Tammy said. "They went to a fair at Oak Lake, and they wanted them to fill up a half hour time slot. It's hard to trick ride for half an hour, so we talked and filled in the time slot."

### Not a lot of riders

There aren't a lot of trick riders out there, which can be a plus and a minus. On one hand, the exclusivity of being one of the few shows around means you have the market somewhat cornered. But on the flip side of the coin, there's a lot of driving involved just to hit various venues.

"What we learned is trick riding is something that there's not a lot of people doing," Shayda explained. "We went to some competitions this year, and there's a lot of dead ends in trick riding, so you perform at rodeos, and there's a few competitions in Alberta to go to, but a lot of it is driving."

The big challenge then is 'where do you go next?'

"Trick riders are considered a contract act, so they buy their memberships to the association, and then they are hired by the rodeos to do their part,"



Bailey Steeves doing running man.

Tammy said.

Highlights this year for the Truco Trick Riders include the Brandon Winter Fair, and the Kennedy Pro Rodeo where they made the Cowboy Channel.

"The original three girls competed in competitions in Alberta this year, and Shayda was Intermediate Canadian Trick Riding Association Champion," Tammy said. "Bailey was Senior Open Canadian Ranch Roping Champion, and Jordana was the Senior Leader in the Open Class."

"Jordana's horse won Horse of the Year," Shayda continued, listing the numerous accolades. "And

then Bailey and her horse won Team of the Year for the Open Class."

### Looking forward to next season

"For most trick riders, this is pretty much the end," Shayda said when asked how long the season extends. "For the winters, we don't work on trick riding practice, but we work on horses and just build your bond and keep them in shape, and slowly learn new things."

The continued progression keeps things interesting; challenging the young riders to increase the difficulty level.



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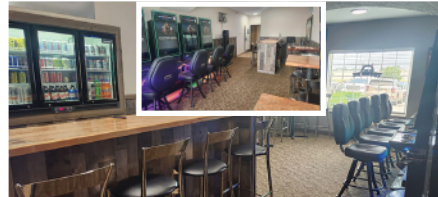
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# Doors open at detox centre on Kahkewistahaw First Nation

## Ribbon cutting ceremony held at Eagle Sky Healing Lodge

Continued from page 23

### Helping 10 at a time

Back in April, the province announced their Action Plan for Mental Health and Addictions, which included the commitment of adding 500 addictions treatment spaces across Saskatchewan. At that point, 183 spaces had been officially announced in Lloydminster (15), Estevan (26), Saskatoon (32), and 36 virtual spaces through EHN Canada. More spaces are needed, but Kahkewistahaw Chief Evan Taypotat sees the work before the Eagle Sky Healing Lodge as a path to sovereignty.

"As we settle our claims, as we build hotels and gas stations and other things, somewhere in there we forget to mention the people that are battling addictions—the people that need our help," he said. "When I think about this beautiful Eagle Sky Healing Lodge—10 beds, 10 people at a time we're going to heal, that has to be in the word sovereignty as well. We have to help fix those people that want our help."

He also addressed security concerns that may be associated with addiction and those battling it, noting that the local Community Safety Patrol will have an increased presence near the facility.

"We talked about it in the pipe ceremony this morning, where we said, 'the people that are coming to the First Nation are coming with problems, coming with baggage'," Chief Taypotat explained. "We need to make sure that the good hearts embrace those people the minute they walk in the door and fill them with love, because they're coming from places with hate, First Nations with hate, homes with hate. I'm really excited to see what the good hearts do for our community."

"I wish we could ask Chief Kahkewistahaw, 'are we making you proud? Are we doing what your vision was 150 years ago when you signed Treaty Four?'" Chief Taypotat continued. "This building alone, I know Chief Kahkewistahaw when he hears us today, I know he's proud of us, so that makes me really happy to know that he's within earshot. His spirit's here, and he's going to watch over these people as they come to our community for healing."

Taypotat called hosting the new centre on their land 'an honour,' giving his well wishes to the staff.

"We will do anything and everything for the people that come up with solutions," he said. "This is a solution, and we are at your beck and call. We will find the money. We will find a way, because sovereignty involves healthy people, and we will get there."

### Stark reality of addiction

Drug toxicity deaths set a provincial record in 2023 with 484 (291 confirmed, 193 suspected) people in Saskatchewan having died from drugs. Some of this rise has been linked with more fentanyl, xylazine, and benzodiazepines entering the overall drug supply.

During the opening at Eagle Sky Healing Lodge, Bird spoke of the explosion of crystal methamphetamine that his home community of Montreal Lake Cree Nation



Kahkewistahaw Chief Evan Taypotat

faced seven years ago—including six recent unsolved murders in the community linked to drugs.

"We recently had a young man that was beaten to death and his body burned over \$35 worth of meth," Bird said. "Crystal meth deaths among our young people are going to rival everything our nations have faced. Folks, if we are afraid of a time when we will begin to lose an entire generation—or a big portion of a generation—to crystal meth and these drugs, I want to say, ladies and gentlemen, that train has left the station."

Bird foresees the Eagle Sky Healing Lodge to be an extremely busy facility and a crucial component in healing from addiction.

"Initially, I would suggest that you keep your doors open for your local people, but I guarantee within the next three to six months, they will literally be kicking your door down to get in from all communities, all people groups, they're going to have our white brothers come as well, because they're in huge trouble," he said.

FSIN Vice Chief David Pratt also stressed the importance of healing, asking for a show of hands in the crowd of around 150 who "has a loved one that's battling active addiction right now or lost a loved one." Nearly every hand shot up in the crowd.

However, given the dark statistics, Pratt also spoke of the immense hope and opportunity to heal.

"That's the message we have to give to our people: there is hope for them," he said. "They're struggling because of trauma, things that happened, but we're still dealing with that ripple effect from the residential schools. What are our grandparents and our great-grandparents and our parents went through, and what some of us went through, that trauma that they carry, it's still within us and we're all on that healing journey—every one of us—and we're all at different levels. I want to encourage you, don't give up on our people. Love them. That's the thing that's going to make the difference."



The Wooden Face Singers perform prior to speeches from dignitaries gathered at Kahkewistahaw First Nation on Sept. 27.



Eagle Sky Healing Lodge Manager Danita Benjoe

He also addressed the Eagle Sky Healing Lodge staff, reminding them to also take time for themselves.

"We have so many losses that we carry in our own families, but we work so much, we just keep going," Pratt said. "We don't have time to properly grieve and take care of ourselves. So I want to encourage the leadership and the frontline workers, take that time for yourself. Take care of yourself. It's important whichever way you have to use whether it's through church or through ceremony, get that spiritual help that you need. It's okay. The world will not end if you turn your phone off for one weekend."

### More hope for the future

Ochapowace First Nation Chief Shelly Bear called the opioid crisis one of the toughest we've ever had, noting that it's not just youth being affected, but people of all ages.

"As leaders, the battles that we face standing beside our people are pretty tough, and addictions and the opioid crisis

that we're living in is one of the toughest that we've had," she said.

But Chief Bear had something very important to share with those in attendance—Ochapowace will soon be home to a treatment facility.

"We've chosen our site, we've actually been granted 20 beds for Ochapowace to build a treatment centre on our nation," she said, adding that there is a site in mind south of Broadview. The challenge before project organizers is in the financial support—Chief Bear explained that money from the provincial government will come once the treatment facility is constructed.

"So that's the dilemma we're in right now," she said.

The reason treatment centres are so important—especially in close proximity to detox facilities—comes through the process of healing. Once people withdraw from drugs and alcohol, the next step in their journey is an outpatient rehabilitation program. It is here that people learn how to reclaim their life after active addiction and reintegrate into society.

YTC Tribal Chief Isabel O'Soup shared about one young man she knew who was on the verge of being named a dangerous offender, but had the opportunity to enter treatment. As a result, the man turned his life around "and is living a good life" with a home and a job.

"When I see him, I see hope," Chief O'Soup said. "I see hope for First Nation people."

She also spoke of how healing is not a quick process, but it is also one people can embark on.

"We just need to deal with what's inside of us, because we weren't always like this," said Chief O'Soup. "I tell everybody that we took 150 years, probably, to get the way that we were from all our historical traumas, and we might take 150 years to get to where we want to be, but we're getting there now. Our focus is to keep it small, so you don't get overwhelmed one person at a time."

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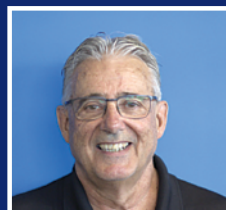
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