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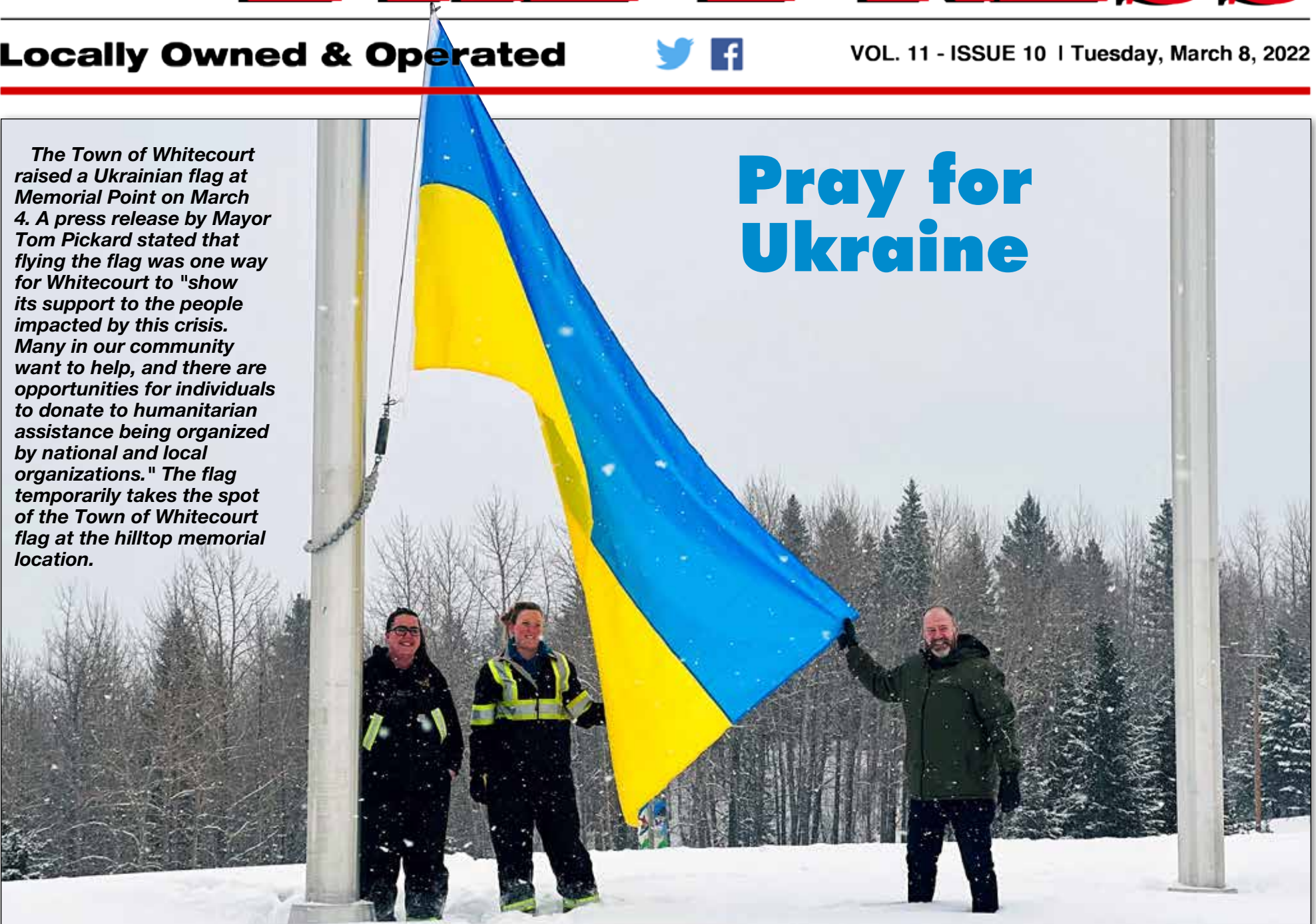
Free TAKE ONE! **COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER**
THE PRESS

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VOL. 11 - ISSUE 10 | Tuesday, March 8, 2022

The Town of Whitecourt raised a Ukrainian flag at Memorial Point on March 4. A press release by Mayor Tom Pickard stated that flying the flag was one way for Whitecourt to "show its support to the people impacted by this crisis. Many in our community want to help, and there are opportunities for individuals to donate to humanitarian assistance being organized by national and local organizations." The flag temporarily takes the spot of the Town of Whitecourt flag at the hilltop memorial location.



**Pray for
Ukraine**



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Whitecourt Town Council updates

The Whitecourt Fire Department presented its 2021 Annual Fire Report to Whitecourt Town Council on February 28.

- The Department logged its busiest year on record with 353 emergency responses.
- Members logged 9,396

response and training hours.

- Tower 1 (Aerial Platform Truck) was placed into service.

- Recruited 11 new members to fill vacancies.

Whitecourt Town Council has scheduled a Special Meeting to discuss the 2022 Final Budget on Wednesday, April 13 at 3:30 p.m.

Whitecourt has endorsed the submission of a resolution to the Federation of Canadian Munic-

ipalities (FCM) in support of the oil and gas industry. The resolution calls on FCM to urge the Government of Canada to promote and encourage consumption of Canadian oil and gas products over the use of imported resources; and, support development of a policy that requires oil and gas imported and con-

sumed in Canada to meet the same stringent environmental, governance and social standards that Canadian producers must meet. Whitecourt will be soliciting other municipalities to co-sponsor the resolution, which will be reviewed by the FCM Board of Directors in September 2022.



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Woodlands County Council recap

Woodlands County Council discussed the following items at their recent meeting of Council:

Sgt. R.W. Dodds with Barrhead RCMP was in attendance to provide an update on police activity in Woodlands County and review the 2021 crime statistics. Council will discuss their priority issues for the Barrhead RCMP detachment at the March 3rd Governance and Priorities meeting.

MPE Engineering Ltd. was awarded the tender for the Old Blue Ridge Highway and Bridge File 73047 engineering services at a value of \$173,928. Engineering services are required to undertake the reconstruc-

tion of the first 650-metre section of the Old Blue Ridge Highway, west of Blue Ridge, as well as the bridge located on Range Road 64, north of Horse Creek Road.

The summer regular Council meetings were scheduled for July 20, 2022, and August 17, 2022, at 9:30 am at the Municipal Office in Whitecourt.

The next regularly scheduled Council meeting is Thursday, March 17, 2022, 6:30 pm. The meeting is held in-person at the Municipal Office in Whitecourt and streamed on the Woodlands County YouTube channel. Agenda packages are available on the Woodlands County CivicWeb Portal.

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To the new members of the Canfor team at Whitecourt, Fox Creek, and Spruceland — we are so excited to welcome you.



Our people define our future, and together, our future is filled with possibilities.



Tuesday, March 8, 2022

A great way to get a mental health boost and socialize



Building with massive bricks.



Kennedy, 5, had fun giving Aubree, 7, a ride.

Community members are getting back into the swing of things now that events are picking up again. A fan favourite at the Allan & Jean Millar Centre, the Tim Hortons Community Fun Night is one of those events.

By Serena Lapointe Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

With restrictions dwindling and real normalcy edging closer, families in the community are getting back into routines they had in place from early in 2020, before COVID reared its ugly head. One of those is the Tim Hortons Community Fun Night at the Allan & Jean Millar Centre. The free monthly event routinely brought out around 120 people to play games, be silly, and enjoy time together as family and friends.

After a hiatus of over a year, through the heaviest restrictions in 2020 and much of 2021, the familiar event is now back on track. "We started up in October, and we had about 50 people come out that month. It's a small amount, but it was actually very nice. It was nice to ease back in since there were still restrictions. People were thankful that it was happening again, and we as staff loved seeing them again too," explained Emma Harper, Whitecourt's Recreation Coordinator, of the first event following the long drought without.

"This type of thing is just so chaotic that for the longest time, it just

didn't make sense to do it because it wasn't the type of thing that you could control the number of people or anything like that." She said that attendance for the first couple of months averaged 50 to 60 people, roughly half the typical attendance. Things picked up right away once the Restrictions Exemption Program (REP) ended. "February was the first one where the REP program wasn't in place anymore, and I think we had about 110 people, which is similar to tonight."

Without restrictions, community members are taking advantage of the fun-filled event, and Harper said she hopes to see even more people come out. "It is very nice to be able to invite people out again to have fun and to offer things like this again. Having it open to everyone to come and just show up and have fun is awesome. It's been very missed!"

The importance of having a sense of community and socializing with others is potentially more important now than ever before. Stats Canada published statistics from early in 2021, which showed that one-quarter of Canadians reported

experiencing high levels of stress most days. Rates were higher for specific groups, including those living with children under 15.

SickKids (Hospital for Sick Children) shared data from a study published in European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry on February 26 of last year, looking at how emergency measures impacted youth mental health in Ontario. The research showed that school-aged children faced more significant mental health impacts during the first stage of lockdowns, showing how important it is for them to learn in person and participate in extracurricular activities, both of which were on pause.

Having a free event in the community where children and parents can socialize together and freely have fun becomes more of a necessity than simply a nice thing to have, especially in terms of mental health. "I think a huge part of this is the socialization. It's not just the kids coming out to play and socialize but their parents too. The kids have a safe place to run around and have fun, and the parents can sit together and socialize."

As for who would have fun at an event, Harper said absolutely everyone. "It's for everybody to enjoy. It's a family thing to come and do together. We have babies up to teenagers that come and want to hang out with their families, and, of course, everyone loves the obstacle course. There is something here for everyone."

Each event has a theme, and this month was Monster Madness. "We had monster-themed activities and a monster ball game where kids could throw balls into the monster's mouth.

There was also a "Pin the Eye on Mike Wazowski" from Monsters, Inc." Next month (April 9), the theme is Eggstravaganza! "We will have an Easter egg hunt around the fieldhouse and some spring-themed crafts to go along with it," said Harper. On May 7, the theme will be Rock it Out Dance Night. "We will have some music going, and of course, the inflatable obstacle course will be up as always." The final event before summer break is in June and will be summer-themed.

"I find with these events, we will have a

few activities that have to do with the theme, but really people just make their own fun and come and hang out in the fieldhouse. It's really nice that Tim Hortons jumped right back on board when this started again as a sponsor. They are fantastic," said Harper. Along with sponsoring the inflatable obstacle course The Tim Hortons Double Double, they also provide donuts that make for a great dessert, considering the event runs from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

Local Journalism Initiative
Initiative de journalisme local



The Tim Hortons Double Double inflatable obstacle course is always a blast!

SEE SOLUTIONS PAGE 12

SUDOKU

2	4	6	5	1				
7		1	3					2
	3		7		6			
	9	8		6		1	2	
				3		5	8	
		8				7		4
8		3	2				4	
1		7					3	6
4	2	9	6	5				

Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

CROSSWORDS

CLUES DOWN

1. Scandinavian drink
2. Washington river
3. Fast-running flightless bird
4. Nerve conditions
5. Indicates near
6. Immediate relevance
7. Things you can eat
8. Receptacles
9. Retired Brewers great
13. Month
14. Happy New Year!
17. Exclamation to convey truth
18. Passports and licenses are two
20. Ebert's partner Siskel
22. Long skirt
27. Part of company name
28. Drugmaker __ Lilly
29. Electronic countermeasures

31. Klutz
32. Chinese statesman
33. Stir with emotion
37. Flat-bottomed boat
38. Go-between
39. This (Spanish)
40. A plot of ground where seedlings are grown before transplanting
41. Small waterfall
42. Modern tech necessity (abbr.)
43. Utter repeatedly
44. One of the bravest
47. Sun up in New York
48. Space station
49. Chilean seaport
51. Hasidic spiritual leader
52. They __
53. Soviet Socialist Republic
58. Single unit

Crossword Clues

CLUES ACROSS

1. Central mail bureau
4. Member of the family
7. Partner to flow
10. __ Angeles
11. Military mailbox
12. Patriotic women
13. Shallow lake
15. Tear apart
16. Middle Easterner
19. Eat to excess
21. Stained
23. Certain peoples of equatorial Africa
24. 1st day of month
25. Skin disease
26. Skating figure
27. Annelids
30. Gracefully slender
34. Kids need it
35. Swiss river

CLUES DOWN

36. Indents
41. A sheer fabric of silk or nylon
45. Belgian River
46. __ Spumante (Italian wine)
47. Originate from
50. Rugged mountain ranges
54. Made less clean
55. Professions
56. 3s
57. Scarf
59. Yellow light
60. Bird noise
61. Opposite of start
62. Bar bill
63. Northeastern Mass. cape
64. American rocker Snider
65. Midway between

HOROSCOPE

ARIES

(March 21 - April 20)



Aries, the universe is subtly trying to tell you to slow down a bit. Don't ignore those nagging feelings that you should take breaks whenever you can manage them.

TAURUS

(April 21 - May 21)



Prioritize your goals and put yourself first for the time being, Taurus. All eyes will be on you and you want to be sure that you are presenting the best version of yourself this week.

GEMINI

(May 22 - June 21)



Gemini, take every opportunity to foster growth in your professional ambitions. Network as much as you can and explore continuing learning offerings through your job.

CANCER

(June 22 - July 22)



Something surprising may help you feel more connected to the universe around you, Cancer. Sensory overload can be enhanced by spoiling yourself with something special.

LEO

(July 23 - August 23)



Leo, the small steps you are taking lately will eventually cover much distance, so keep up the progress. Some things take time and right now it's a lesson to learn.

VIRGO

(August 24 - September 22)



Virgo, even if things seem like they are a bit out of control, find ways to put yourself in a good place. Slow down and stay grounded as much as you can.

LIBRA

(September 23 - October 23)



Libra, only a few months into the new year you may be having trouble staying motivated with your resolutions. A partner or cheering squad can keep you going.

SCORPIO

(October 24 - November 22)



Physical affection is a great way to showcase your love right now, Scorpio. Take advantage of all the hugs, kisses and subtle touches you can muster in the days to come.

SAGITTARIUS

(Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)



Sagittarius, space out your tasks so the week doesn't seem like it is rushed early on. Don't put too much pressure on yourself to get everything done immediately.

CAPRICORN

(Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)



Look for ways to delve into the arts this week, Capricorn. Explore unique hobbies or visit a museum with a new exhibit. Work with your hands as much as you can.

AQUARIUS

(January 21 - February 18)



Aquarius, invest in your home space with some upgrades that will add warmth and a feeling of coziness. Creature comforts can have a profound impact on your mood.

PISCES

(February 19 - March 20)



This week you will need to assert yourself at work, Pisces; otherwise, others may overlook your contributions. Get what you deserve.

HEARING LOSS WORD SEARCH

I E N H D H H L E S A L Q O M L E A E E
 L A A Y S E V H I D Q S A D I V U H C T
 G A T Y L E A R D R U M D O I D S A F A
 H O R V I O P F F G Q I F T I P U N V R
 E Q S U E Y S Y N V Q Y C T N T D O L E
 Y V E T E D H S V Y Q U O A U Y D A A D
 E H H Q A N D R N U D R M Y U O E H T O
 Y H T V V D I E R N Y G N O E P N H I M
 D D N A I L P R O G R E S S I V E A N D
 R N Y O P P E C O D F U M H O A Q N E Y
 C U C U C O S R L S C C S Q R H E R G P
 C O R A T I R Q E O N L M I Q Y I U N I
 R F F C N E Y U C V R E N Q U U C T O N
 Q O G A O A A H E A E G S V Q V R U C N
 O R V U S O L U M N D S Y C M P E Q G A
 E P T I G E S R A E I U A V I Q F I C E
 S E P M A S I D E O T O Q F L P N M R O
 R R F O S E L C I S S O N C D N M F U S
 A P C P C V T Y O P S E M A E M M V A G
 E L D D I M C N N H N G F R P V O N T Y

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS
 ACQUIRED
 AUDITORY
 CANAL

COCHLEA
 CONDUCTIVE
 CONGENITAL
 DEAF

EAR
 EARDRUM
 HEARING
 INNER

LOSS
 MIDDLE
 MILD
 MODERATE

NEUROPATHY
 OSSICLES
 OUTER
 PINNA
 PROFOUND

PROGRESSIVE
 SENSORINEURAL
 SEVERE
 SUDDEN

The Whitecourt Fire Department hit a new record high for calls in 2021

By **Serena Lapointe** Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Whitecourt Fire Department (WFD) recently released their 2021 numbers showing the crew's activity through the previous year. Since its inception in 1958, the WFD had not seen a busier year than 2021. The department recorded 353 responses. The crew was kept on its toes with multiple calls overlapping each other. There were twenty occasions when a response was made to more than one call at once and three occasions when a response was made to three calls simultaneously.

The hours accumulated by members to respond to the 353 calls was 3,372, record-breaking

for the department. The closest comparable in the last ten years is 2016, with 346 calls.

When broken down into response types, false alarms took a significant portion of the calls. In descending order, from most to least, the call types are false alarm (126), motor vehicle collision (69), medical assist (52), wildland/grass fire (27), other (25), structure fire (19), vehicle fire (13), rubbish fire (13), technical rescue (6), and RCMP assist (2).

With false alarms a high portion of calls, the WFD provided a breakdown of the types of false alarm calls they receive. Most calls come through when someone mistakes smoke or steam for fire, such as

when cooking. The next highest was for detector activated alarms, where a detector goes off, and the department attends ready to fight a fire, and there isn't one. Next up is accidental, followed by sprinkler surge/discharge and unknown odours investigated. False alarms account for over 35 percent of the calls received by the Fire Department, and the numbers are increasing. In 2019, there were 108 false alarms. In 2020, there were 114. If 2021 having 126 is any indication, the upward trend looks to continue.

Calls are pretty spread out throughout the week. Sundays were the highest with 41 calls, followed by Fridays (36), Thursdays (30), Wednesdays

(29), and Tuesdays (27). Mondays and Saturdays tied for 23 apiece. Calls rarely came in from midnight to 8:00 am and were mainly seen throughout the rest of the day, depending on the type. Motor vehicle accidents occurred more often from 4:00 pm to midnight, as did medical aid. A couple of interesting tidbits from the 2021 report is that water-related emergencies increased eleven percent, and vehicle incidents increased 28 percent. Medical calls also rose in 2021, up by eleven percent.

Fires responded to by the WFD were caused by a range of things, the highest being human error or accident (26 percent). The second was

mechanical/part failure (22 percent), and the third was a three-way tie for electrical, arson, and smoking materials (13 percent). All fires must be investigated to determine the cause and origin and be reported to the provincial government. WFD has two members that are Certified Level 2 Fire Investigators.

A significant aspect of the WFD is public education on fire prevention. Though COVID made that difficult at times, creativity won in the end as the members chatted with students virtually from their Fire Hall, giving tours and teaching about fire safety. Through Fire Prevention Week, students were given fire safety packages,

which included a pre-recorded virtual fire hall tour on USB. Members then held live Q&A sessions with students.

The department is led by Fire Chief Brian Wynn, Deputy Fire Chief Aaron Floyd, and Deputy Fire Chief & Safety Coordinator Taya Green. In 2021, the brand new aerial platform truck, known as Tower 1, was officially placed into service. Items replaced last year include Fire Command Unit 2 (replaced by a new Dodge 2500) and twenty-two Scott breathing apparatus packs. In 2021, the department recruited ten new members to fill vacancies and continues to recruit to

continued on page 7



One of the few in-person events held in 2021 was the Trunk or Treat.



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NOTICE OF DECISION

The following decisions were made by the Municipal Planning Commission:

Application 22-009: Unit 2, 4164 Kepler Street, Condominium Plan 0321742 – Discretionary Use – Retail, General – Approved with Conditions

Date of Decision: February 24, 2022 **Appeal Closes at 4:00pm:** March 17, 2022

An Appeal of the above decision(s) may be made by submitting a written appeal and appeal fee (\$279.00) to the Office of the Secretary of the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board, Town of Whitecourt Administration Building, Box 509, Whitecourt, Alberta, T7S 1N6 prior to 4:00pm on the above noted date. Any person(s) affected by the said proposal(s), has the right to appeal prior to the above date.

TENDER OPPORTUNITIES

Current opportunities are posted on the Town's website and when required, opportunities are posted on purchasingconnection.ca. Currently Whitecourt has the following opportunities:

- 22-100: **2022 Street Improvement Program**. Closes: March 23, 2022 at 2:00 p.m.

For further details on any of these opportunities visit www.whitecourt.ca and search the project title.

continued from page 6

this day. Promotions in the crew saw Taya Green ascend to her current role of Deputy Chief/Safety Coordinator, Curtis Visser to Lieutenant, and Garret King to Senior Firefighter.

Fire department honours were given to several deserving members at the yearly awards banquet. Firefighter of the Year was Garret King. Curtis Visser and Christopher Green shared Officer of the Year, and Rookie of the Year was awarded to John Parker. Finally, the Pete Heck award went to Jessica Brown. Raphael Berube-Potvin, Dustin Jendrick, Kyria Baranowski, Tara Rooks, and Anthony Bain reached five years of service and were commended for the milestone.

WFD members continually train to build their abilities to serve the community better. In 2021, members invested nearly 5,000 hours in training. COVID made things trickier, but the team made do by breaking up their training night into cohort training nights. Some of the training included Driver's Competency, Aerial Operations, Vehicle Extrication, Ice & Water Rescue, and Confined Space Rescue. Members also completed specialty training such as advanced first aid. The hard work that the department puts into training opportunities for members is substantial and an area of pride for members and the community as a whole.



Prepping a firetruck for donation to Mexico in early 2021.

Royal Canadian Legion Branch #44

50/50 Cash fundraiser

Win up to \$10,000

<https://www.rafflebox.ca/raffle/rc144>

Draw Date: Sat Mar 19 2022

AGLC-591885



ARTS & CULTURE AND RECREATION GRANTS

Applications for Arts & Culture and Recreation programming grants are being accepted until Friday March 25, 2022. Organizations that apply must be non-profit and demonstrate other fundraising efforts and funding sources. Priority will be given to programs that are orientated to children and youth.

Applications, full policy and all other supporting documents can be downloaded from our website: woodlands.ab.ca or picked up at either our Whitecourt or Fort Assiniboine offices. For more information call (780) 778-8400 or toll free at 1-888-870-6315.

Completed applications can be dropped off at either the Whitecourt or Fort Assiniboine offices or mailed or emailed to:

Woodlands County
Atten: Heather Anderson
Box 60, #1 Woodlands Lane, Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N3
communityservices@woodlands.ab.ca

NOTICE OF DECISION

The following development permit has been conditionally approved under the provisions of the Land Use Bylaw.

PERMIT	LOCATION	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	DATE OF DECISION	APPEAL DEADLINE
15-004-22	PT NE 16-59-12-W5M	Dwelling: modular home, Accessory Buildings: Garage, shop	2-Mar-22	23-Mar-22

Any person affected by this decision may appeal to the Secretary of the Development Appeal Board by forwarding a written appeal along with a \$500.00 fee, to the address listed below, prior to **4:30 p.m. of the appeal date noted above.**

Information regarding this application may be obtained by inquiring at the address noted.

Attention: Peter McKay, Development Officer
Woodlands County
Box 60, #1 Woodlands Lane, Whitecourt AB T7S 1N3
Telephone: 780-778-8400
Toll-Free: 1-888-870-6315



JOHN BURROWS
Councillor for Whitecourt West
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Phone: 780-778-4747



BRUCE PRESTIDGE
Councillor for Blue Ridge
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Alberta Newsprint Company is committed to its employees, contractors and visitors to provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment

COVID-19 is changing how we Live, Work and Communicate. It is important that each of us take care of ourselves and others and to not let our guard down; the Safety and Health of our employees, our families and community is crucial.

Over two weeks without mask mandates and NGPS Division has good news to share

By **Serena Lapointe** Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Ever since the provincial government removed the mandate for children to wear a mask at school on February 14, Northern Gateway Public Schools (NGPS) Superintendent Kevin Bird has kept a close watch on the cases happening throughout his schools. During the March 1, 2022, NGPS Trustee Meeting, Bird provided an update on how things are going as far as cases go within the student body of the NGPS division.

“Since masking has come off, we’ve been tracking every school, every day, to see what the effect would be. The good news is that the number of cases on average across the division continues to diminish, especially among staff but among students as well,” he explained. “We do have one school where there’s still some cases hanging on but there not in a cluster. They’re spread throughout the school, so that’s just being managed as we go ahead.”

Bird said that he and staff members had a meeting the previous day (February 28), calling it a “very happy meet-

ing.” They confirmed that masking would be optional for all staff, following the provincial order to lift masking mandates on March 1. He said that protocols were lifted but that some things are sticking around. “The daily health screenings remain in place. Everybody is supposed to take a look at that checklist or think about that checklist every day. Am I healthy? Am I well? Should I be going? And then, of course, what happens when someone is sick remains the same. The key is staying home, of course, when people are sick. Hands cleaning continues, hand washing, and sanitizing practices continue.”

Bird stated that students who are “medically fragile” will continue to have individual plans to help best protect them. “We have students that we have to operate very carefully with and make sure their environment is conducive to their health, and there are individual plans that schools have put in place for those students,” he explained.

Bird added that parents who wish to visit the school could do so once again. He said that the routine of setting up

appointments would continue. “That’s not to keep people out of schools but really to give people a venue into schools.” He said they wanted to ensure that they protect medically-fragile students and allow principals to have more awareness of who’s coming and going in the building. “Of course, people are still signing in and all of those kinds of things. This is for parents and others that wish to visit during school hours, to make appointments.”

As for what would happen should cases increase, or if there were a cluster of cases in a school or classroom, Bird said that online learning is an option to utilize if needed. Having everything in place already from the last year of back and forth online learning means that staff and teachers are more prepared to revert online if required.

Trustee Jim Hailes asked if they could advertise to parents about the need for an appointment and explain the requirement so that someone doesn’t show up and get upset when they are told to make an appointment. Bird said he would make sure the information was

provided correctly.

As per the NGPS Return to Normal Plan, students who fall ill at school must wear a mask and isolate themselves until they leave the school. Vaccinated students that test positive for COVID will be required to isolate for five days and mask up at school for ten days from when symptoms first presented. Non-vaccinated students isolate for ten days. Stu-

dents with symptoms and a negative test result for COVID must stay home and away from people until the symptoms pass.

Safety measures that continue include the daily health screening, as mentioned, and enhanced cleaning and disinfecting both at schools and on school buses. Suppose a case of COVID pops up at a school. The plan states that “due to the changing nature of the virus, an in-

crease in asymptomatic cases, and the reliance on non-reported rapid testing, schools have limited information about COVID cases and so are unable to send home individual notifications.” Parents will be notified if there is a “sudden risk in illness absenteeism” school-wide or in one classroom or group.

Local Journalism Initiative
Initiative de journalisme local



Superintendent Kevin Bird provided a positive update.

Things are looking good in Northern Gateway Public Schools. Superintendent Kevin Bird recently stated that COVID cases on average across the division continue to diminish even without masking mandates in place.

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in Canada by texting TALK to **686868** to reach an English speaking Crisis Responder and TEXTO to **686868** to reach a French-speaking Crisis Responder on any text/SMS enabled cell phone.
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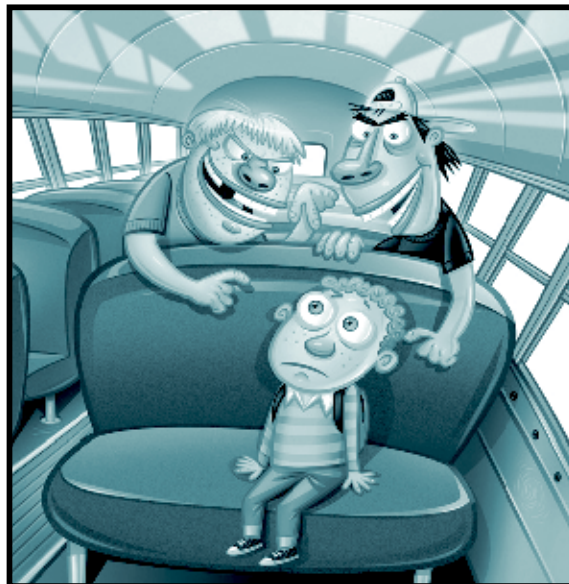


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Jason Marc Schillinger Sr.
Age 23

Every 40 seconds somewhere around the world someone dies by suicide, that's 99 people every 66 minutes. Every day, that's almost 100 people in the United States alone, and over 2160 worldwide. Putting a Face on Suicide (PAFOS) is a suicide awareness project that creates posters and videos to pay tribute to those we have lost to suicide with dignity and respect. PAFOS humanizes the daunting statistics; lovingly replacing numbers with faces.

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Inaugural Coldest Night of the Year event for Soaring Eagle a big success



And they're off! A stream of walkers as far as the eye can see.



The event was great for families to do together.

Soaring Eagle Support Society held its first annual Coldest Night of the Year event on February 26. The national event helps raise money for critical services for vulnerable families and individuals in communities focusing on homelessness, hunger, and hurt.

By **Serena Lapointe** Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Each year, Canadians from across the country take part in The Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY). Held in late February, CNOY takes people outside of the warmth of their homes to go for a winter's walk and shine a light of compassion on those who experience homelessness, hurt, and hunger. On February 26, Whitecourtians joined tens of thousands of Canadians in doing the CNOY walk for the first time.

Shelagh Watson, Executive Director of Soaring Eagle Support Society (SESS), is already excit-

ed for next year's event after seeing the support this year. In late January, Watson said she hoped to see twenty teams sign up and the final count for the 2022 CNOY event in Whitecourt was twenty-one. They had 102 people walk the event, and 37 volunteers helped put it all together. A half-way spot was set up in the St. Joseph's Church parking lot with drinks and snacks, and volunteers were spread out along the route to keep everyone safe. They had crossing guards at main intersections, drivers keeping track of participants, and a shuttle if someone couldn't com-

plete the walk.

Teams could pick either a two-kilometre walk or a five-kilometre walk, with many choosing the longer trek. The route kept walkers along higher traffic areas of the valley. Team captains and those who raised over a certain amount received a beautiful yellow toque that stood out brightly, helping to pique curiosity in anyone that drove by as they witnessed a large group of people walking along.

"Part of our thing is to be visible. Some thought that we should walk through the park to maybe feel like what it would be like to be homeless,

but that's not the point. It's to be visible, bring awareness and raise money. We wanted our location to be visible and our route too so that people would see us and be curious," explained Watson. As she sent walkers off, Watson said they should consider what it would be like to be out in the cold, walking around town, trying to stay warm and safe while also looking for a bathroom, or food, day in and day out.

Things kicked off in the Home Hardware parking lot, near the busy intersection, for the utmost visibility. She said they also reached out to Canadian Tire and Microtel to

use their outdoor space, but Home Hardware was the first to respond. "Canadian Tire and Microtel were willing to allow us to use their space too, which was just fantastic. We only needed one parking lot, so we went with Home Hardware as they responded first, but all three were willing to help us, and I want to mention that. It's so awesome of them to be so supportive."

With their 21 teams and 102 walkers, SESS, through the CNOY event, raised \$23,613, 78 percent of their original goal. Watson said they are delighted with their support and hope that

next year can be even better. "I would love to double what we did this year. As a team, we know more about what we are doing and will start with the planning a bit earlier." The top five teams for fundraising were Hoofers Youth (\$3,603), Winter Warriors (\$3,210), Combat the Cold (\$2,580), Soaring Eagle Support (\$1,905) and Helping Hearts (\$1,900).

Once participants returned to Home Hardware, volunteers had set out food for everyone to enjoy together. There was also a beautifully painted sign for people

continued on page 11



Teams moments from take off.

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Whitecourt, AB

continued from page 10

to take pictures in front of, commemorating the event. Watson said that the toques that celebrate the event feature a new design each year. "One of our staff members has taken part in walks outside of our community, and she has several hats and collects them. I hope that this event can become something that people look forward to and to collecting each year's hat."

Watson said she sends a heartfelt thank you to those who donned their walking shoes and joined the movement. "Thank you for being so proactive and coming out and wanting to support Soaring Eagle and people in your community. The sponsors were awesome, and people were very willing to give, whether we asked financially or as donations. We are grateful!"

Nationally, CNOY set a goal of ten million and beat that by \$1.4 million! There were 5,411 teams and nearly 31,000 walkers who took part. When stacked against the other 164 locations across Canada that held a CYOY event, Whitecourt ranked 134th, above Brandon, Saskatoon, Lloydminster, and two downtown Winnipeg events. Whitecourt did exceptionally well for their inaugural year as it was one of the smallest municipalities having an event. "I'm excited to see what we can do next year," smiled Watson.

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In-Person/ Mail:
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Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N3

We thank all applicants for their interest. Only those selected for interviews will be contacted.

Position Type
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Hours of Work
Monday to Friday Some evenings or weekends required
Competition Close Date
Friday, March 18, 2022

Executive Assistant, Whitecourt

Competition No: 2022-004

As a member of the senior management team, the individual performs administrative duties to assist the Chief Administrative Officer, Council, and various Council Committees and administers the legislative process and procedural interpretation for legislative functions within the organization. Reporting directly to the CAO, this position will work closely with the Reeve and Councillors through the CAO office.

Functional Responsibilities:

The position is responsible for:

- Preparation of Council agendas, delegations, correspondence
- Attend all Council meetings, record minutes and disseminate the minutes afterwards
- Manage the preparation, dissemination and documentation of correspondence for the CAO and Council
- Research, draft, report and review agreements, bylaws, policies and correspondence
- Manage the calendars, travel arrangements and coordinate appointments for the CAO and Council
- Manage appointments of members at large, and the creation of acknowledgement, appointment and thank you letters and Council requests for decision
- Liaison with government departments and stakeholders to provide information associated with Council strategic initiatives and legislative mandate
- Act as the FOIP Coordinator handling FOIP requests from staff and the public
- Maintain the County records management program including the destruction and retention of County records according to bylaw
- Administer Commissioners of Oaths for County documents and solemn declarations for public purposes when required
- Responsible for the corporate seal, ensuring it is used for the intended purpose only
- Assist with ordering, inventory, and distribution of promotional items and gifts in conjunction with the Economic Development Officer
- Provide support for the Communications Coordinator

Functional Requirements:

- Flexibility to work evenings
- Ability to work independently with minimal guidance in a team setting
- Exceptional writing and interpersonal communication skills
- Time management, organizational skills, and the ability to meet deadlines

Qualifications & Education Requirements:

- Diploma in Business Administration, Public Administration Law, or certificate may be considered in a related field
- FOIP experience and training would be an asset
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Obituaries-Notices

DONALD BRUCE ELLIS, 1947 - 2022, Whitehorse, Yukon, passed

away February 20, 2022, leaving his "True Love, Carol", Whitehorse, with friends, relatives across Canada.

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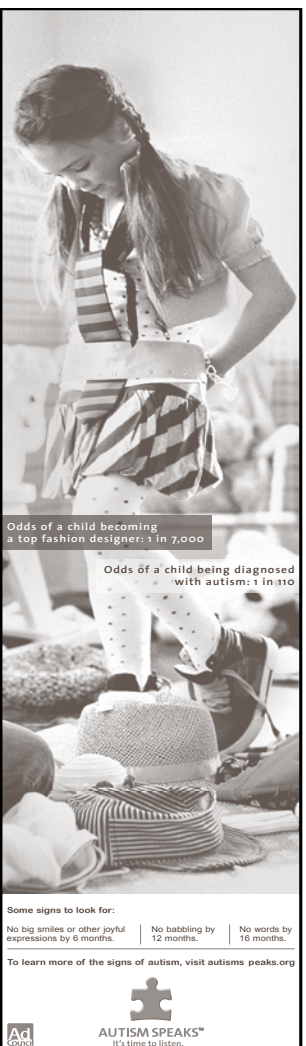
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Odds of a child becoming a top fashion designer: 1 in 7,000

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***Monthly meetings have been postponed due to COVID-19*



The Whitecourt Indigenous Friends Society accepted a recent donation from Woodland Rivers ATA Local 40 (Alberta Teachers' Association). The donation for \$250 will help the society in their advocacy and promotion as they get closer and closer to their goal of opening a local friendship center. Society President Faye Myshyniuk (right, holding check) said they are very grateful for the support.

Bridging the gap for deaf or hard-of-hearing residents in communication with police

By **Serena Lapointe** Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Cheryle Trofimuk is a mentor for those who live with hearing loss. As someone who fully understands the barriers that face those who are deaf or living with hearing loss, she is determined to bring more awareness to the issues. She spotted a card during a visit to Glenrose Hospital several months back. It stated, "I am deaf or hard of hearing. This card is to help police officers and drivers with hearing loss communicate." Piqued, she grabbed a copy to bring home.

"I approached the Whitecourt Police Service, and they had no idea about it but were interested. So, I did more research and investigation into it. I contacted Deaf and Hear Alberta, out of Edmonton, and I asked them about the card." Trofimuk learned that they had permitted the program for use with the Edmonton, Calgary and

Medicine Hat police departments. At that time, those were the only three utilizing it.

"I told them that Whitecourt was interested after having talked to the Whitecourt Police Service. I did a lot of coordination between the po-

Whitecourt police officers are part of a new program that will help them communicate with deaf and hard-of-hearing residents. Cards created by Deaf and Hear Alberta allow residents to point to specific areas and communicate with officers without relying on speaking or hearing. Deaf & Hard of Hearing mentor Cheryle Trofimuk played an integral role in bringing the program to the area.

lice and Deaf and Hear Alberta and myself. We did a few meetings, talked about it, and got the program ready. After Whitecourt signed on and printed the card with Deaf and Hear Alberta's permission, it just so happened that it is now

Alberta-wide. All police services in Alberta have it," she explained.

With this program available throughout the province, Trofimuk said she is excited to see more people feel confident in their communications with po-

lice officers. "It brings awareness to everybody in the community who lives with hearing loss. It can be any age. It could be a teen getting their driver's license that also lives with hearing loss. Seniors that have a loss of hearing as they

get older can become more fearful about how to interact and live in their community, and I'm sure that if they had this, it would bring some comfort for them knowing that the police are

continued on page 15





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continued from page 14

there to talk to them and guide them."

She said this program is beneficial for those who are entirely deaf and do not speak, relying solely on sign language. "This is a game-changer because it brings balance in communication. They would have this brochure in their visor, and if they get pulled over or are in an accident, they will wait for a police officer to come and then present this to them. This pamphlet would show the police officer that this person cannot speak or needs to communicate differently and would allow them to communicate."

The card allows someone to state how they can communicate, whether verbally, in writing, texting, lip-reading, assistive listening device, or with an interpreter. Trofimuk said that if they choose an interpreter, there is another tool in their toolbox. "Deaf and Hear Alberta has created an app. Whitecourt Police Service has that app, and I think every police station needs to have this. If a



driver or person requests that they need an interpreter, the police officer can pull out his phone, open the app, and request an interpreter 24/7 by the Deaf and Hear Alberta. A live interpreter will come on to help and talk to the person and then to the officer. It's really cool."

Seeing more initiatives and services become available to the deaf and hard of hearing community is a blessing. "It's one

of my passions to do because I want to advocate for those who are deaf and are living with hearing loss because I've lived with it. I understand what it's like to live with it and how to live in the community, as you have to overcome challenges. If I can break that and close that gap more, it becomes easier for others. That's my goal." Trofimuk said that bringing more resources to rural Alberta is another

goal. "There's so much in the cities. Edmonton and Calgary have so much but not so much in smaller rural towns."

Born with bilateral sensorineural hearing loss in both ears, Trofimuk has used various resources throughout her life. With a cochlear implant, she is working hard to improve her hearing abilities and speech. Because she understands the process, she wants to give back to

those who need support, and having accessibility is significant. This program coming to Whitecourt is a huge step forward.

There are many forms of hearing loss. "Sensorineural hearing loss, hearing loss from a childhood disease, sudden hearing loss from a medical condition, traumatic injuries, and excessive noise at a workplace and aging," explained Tro-

fimuk on her Facebook page (Cheryle Trofimuk, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Mentor). "There is no one size fits all. All hearing journeys are unique and never the same as one another. But, there are relationships that can be forged upon, with having a similar commonality in hearing loss."

Residents who want to get a card for their vehicle can visit the Whitecourt police station. There are also some out at various organizations in the community like health services, the library, and some individual businesses. "I think the biggest thing is that just because a person is deaf or living with hearing loss doesn't mean communication stops. It can continue! You just have to find a way to communicate with that person. They want to communicate with everybody. They want to be part of the community and be part of a family and with friends and be part of events. They want accessibility to everything just like everybody else."



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