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COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



The Press



Locally Owned & Operated



Vol. 11 - Issue 49 | Tuesday, December 6, 2022



Inflation forcing some to choose between paying for food or paying the electric bill

Lori Coffey (right), and super volunteer Shirlz, help spread Christmas joy, just like their buddy, Santa Claus. See page 6 for article.



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The Wolverines are second and third in the North Division and AJHL standings

A paper airplane race for free Wolverines' tickets during the first intermission.



A wicked shot attempt but an even better save.

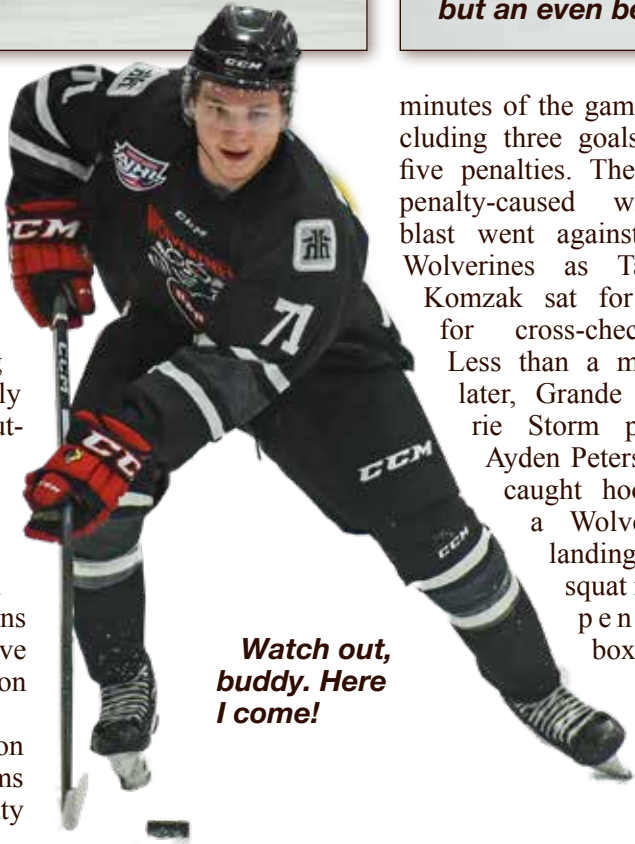


The puck is mine and you can't have it.

By Serena Lapointe

The Whitecourt Wolverines ended November by taking on the Grande Prairie Storm at the Scott Safety Centre on the 30th. The Wednesday evening matchup was a chilly one as temperatures outside dropped to negative double digits, and a sizeable snowfall earlier in the day kept many fans at home. Just shy of 300 fans made the slippery drive to the arena to cheer on their team.

Much of the action between the two teams came in the first twenty



Watch out, buddy. Here I come!

minutes of the game, including three goals and five penalties. The first penalty-caused whistle blast went against the Wolverines as Tanner Komzack sat for two for cross-checking. Less than a minute later, Grande Prairie Storm player Ayden Peters was caught hooking a Wolverine, landing a squat in the penalty box.

One minute later, Peters' Storm teammate Logan Cunningham received a double minor for high sticking, giving the Whitecourt Wolverines one minute with a five-on-three man advantage and three minutes of five-on-four to try and get themselves on the scoreboard.

Nearing the end of the extended powerplay, Wolverine Colby Browne, flanked by Tanner Komzack and Spencer Rheume, took full advantage of the remaining seconds, batting the puck behind the Storm's goal-

continued on page 3

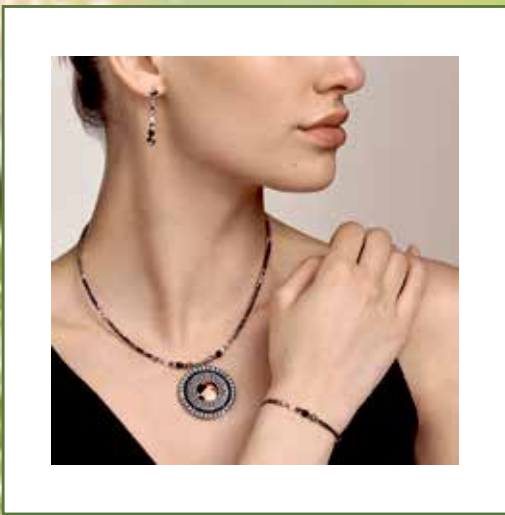
The Whitecourt Wolverines continue to dominate their North division, sitting in second place behind the Spruce Grove Saints. The Wolverines have 39 points, only a few shy of the Saints. In the overall standings of the AJHL, the Wolverines are third with three points above fourth place (as of December 2).

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continued from page 2

tender. The Wolverines had struck first, 1-0.

Forty-four seconds after Browne's ninth goal of the year, Wolverine Evan Smutney was caught hooking onto a Storm player, calling a penalty. Sixty seconds into the man advantage, with Smutney looking on from the penalty box, the Grande Prairie Storm seized the opportunity before them and tied things up, 1-1.

The fast-paced first period continued with a sniper of a shot off Aiden Long's stick, giving the Whitecourt Wolverines back their lead, 2-1. Long was assisted by Cooper Smyl, with his eighteenth assist, and Adam Lore, his third. The period saw one more penalty, a slashing call against Wolverine Matthew Sutter, but the Storm could not capitalize on the powerplay.

In the second period, the quickness of the game continued, but there were fewer whistles to speak of. Unlike the action in the previous period, the second only saw three penalties. The Grande Prairie Storm sat a player for a two-minute in-

terference penalty, and the Whitecourt Wolverines sat for two penalties: Graham Skinner for high sticking and Kaiden Wiltsie for cross-checking.

In the third, things were much quieter on the penalty front. The teams moved back and forth quickly and kept up the fast pace that started the game off originally. Near the period's midpoint, Wolverine Michael Lovsin was called for goalie interference and sat for two. In the game's final minute, Wolverine Jarred Feist was caught tripping a Storm player. His penalty lasted forty-eight seconds, and fans

were on edge, hoping the Wolverines could hold onto their lead and take the win. Thankfully, the Whitecourt Wolverines did just that, ending November with a big win against their rivals.

There are four home games at the Scott Safety Centre this month. The Wolverines play against the Olds Grizzlys on Friday, December 9, the Canmore Eagles on Saturday, December 10, the Sherwood Park Crusaders on Friday, December 16, and the Drayton Valley Thunder on Thursday, December 29, which will be their final game of the year. All games are 7 pm starts.



I'm just going to move you a bit, ok?

Whitecourt Town Council updates

Whitecourt is partnering with municipalities and industry from across the province to advocate for better rail service and capacity. The railway system is critical to Whitecourt's economy, and there have been concerns regionally regarding railway transportation and decreased carrying capacity. The Community Railway Advocacy Group will be hiring a lobbying company to execute an advocacy strategy over a 4-month period, demanding better rail service from the two rail companies and from the federal regulator.

Council has approved use of the public parking lot in Rotary Park and the parking lot behind the Whitecourt Legion for use during this week's Santa Claus Parade. The Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce will be hosting the annual event on Friday, December 2 at 7:00pm. Street closures

were previously approved to accommodate the event. Details on the parade can be found on the Chamber's Facebook page.

Each year, Alberta Municipal Affairs compiles results of financial and governance performance measures for all municipalities. The performance measures are used as benchmarks by the Province to ensure Albertans live in viable municipalities that are responsible, collaborative and accountable. Whitecourt did not trigger any of the critical indicators, however the Town's Investment in Infrastructure indicator result was less than the expected result, mainly due to project deferrals due to inflation and limited resources/manpower. To view a copy of the Municipal Indicator Dashboard for Whitecourt, visit www.whitecourt.ca/Government.

The Municipal Development Plan and

Land Use Bylaw have been amended to add a new Highway Industrial land use district. The change follows an application made to allow for light industrial and commercial uses on six lots located on 48 Avenue, east of Mill Road.

Utility Bylaw 1511 has been amended to allow for onsite inspections of sump pumps on private property. The bylaw amendment also specifies the material specifications for utility service connections.

Whitecourt will be completing parking lot enhancements at the Whitecourt Seniors Circle. At the request of the organization, additional accessible stalls will be added to allow for closer access to the facility.

Whitecourt has entered into a land lease renewal agreement with the Whitecourt Lions Club. The Lions Club leases land on the east end of Highway 43 from the Town of Whitecourt to operate the Lions Campground, a popular camping destination in the community.



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Weekly grief support group starting September 13 through November 29., Tuesdays, from 6:30pm to 8:30pm., at Crossroads Community Church, 4419 44 Avenue, Mayerthorpe. \$25 for 12 sessions includes your personal GriefShare Workbook. Pre-registration is required by calling Reverend Ruth Lotholz at 780-786-2695.



"Serving the community for over 30 years"
The Food Bank relies on donations of cash or food in order to help families in need.
Open Mon, Wed & Fri 11:00am to 2:00 pm
Phone: 780-778-2341

Located within the Carlan Services Community Centre
The Whitecourt Food Bank is operated by the Town of Whitecourt Food Bank Coordinator and dependent on volunteers to operate. The Food Bank relies on donations of cash or food from individuals and organizations. Local grocery stores drop off baked goods including bread and pastries weekly. Other corporations and schools schedule food drives throughout the year.
Open: Mon, Wed, & Fri 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Phone: 780-778-2341

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All meetings are in person and online (hybrid)

- Mondays 7:30pm
- Wednesdays 7:30pm
- and Saturdays at Noon

Meetings held at the Family Worship Center upstairs.
ZOOM ID: **818 413 483** PASSWORD: **gratitude**



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Family Resource & Crisis Centre
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Providing timely and easily accessible financial support for Whitecourt patients and their families who are dealing with a cancer diagnosis.

This can include help with parking costs for hospital visits, living expenses and unforeseen medical expenses. Applications can be made through the Drs at both Whitecourt Medical Clinics or (office hours, can leave a message): **Willow McIntyre** (Community Cancer Navigation Nurse, McLeod River PCN) **780-779-0079**, **Kim Nendsa** (President of Whitecourt Cancer & Wellness Society) **780-778-0932**
wctcancerwellness@gmail.com

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

Whitecourt AA Group Of Alcoholics Anonymous



Meetings three times each week

- Monday 8:00 p.m..... (12 Step Meeting)
- Wednesday 8:00 p.m...(Open Topic Meeting)
- Friday 8:00 p.m.....(Big Book Meeting)

Located at the United Church Basement on Legion St. (formerly 5201 - 50 Street)
More info Contact: (780) 396-8777. Please Leave A Message For Our AA member or Contact Addictions Helpline @1(866)332-2322

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Millar Western is a progressive forest company offering diverse, rewarding careers in great Alberta communities, with excellent advancement opportunities and a healthy work-life balance.

Process Operator

Millar Western's Whitecourt Pulp Division is seeking a highly motivated Process Operator to join the Production team. This individual will work in all areas of the operation including production lines, Bio Energy plant, water treatment, boilers, pulp warehouse and the control room. They must be committed to workplace safety and will be expected to contribute to the continuous improvement of our facility and our safety program. This position is a shift position working rotating 12 hour shifts of both days and nights.

The ideal candidate

The ideal candidate will have a 3rd or 4th class steam ticket, valid drivers license, Standard first aid, prior experience working in a manufacturing facility and an excellent safety record. Good communication skills, proficiency with the MS office suite and familiarity with SAP are desirable assets.

Why work for us?

Millar Western is a privately-owned Alberta company active in the forest products business for more than a century. Operating a high-tech pulp mill supplied with sustainably sourced fibre, the company provides stable, full-time employment in lively, friendly, communities offering an excellent quality of life.

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a resourceful company

The company offers:

- a competitive wage and benefits program, that includes a pension plan, comprehensive dental and health insurance and a profit-sharing plan
- a commitment to the highest safety standards, with a safety program recognized under initiatives such as Partners in Injury Reduction, Work Safe Alberta and the Premier's Award for Healthy Workplaces
- a collaborative and respectful work environment that values the skills of our people and encourages them to take on new challenges and advance within the organization
- a chance to live where you work – no commuting or camps

Your career starts here.

Application deadline: December 14, 2022
Please apply online at:
www.millarwestern.com/current-openings

Millar Western is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workforce. We appreciate the interest of all applicants; only those chosen for an interview will be contacted.

Grow with us.

Millar Western is a progressive forest company offering diverse, rewarding careers in great Alberta communities, with excellent advancement opportunities and a healthy work-life balance.

Stores Person

Millar Western Forest Products Ltd. Whitecourt pulp mill is currently seeking a Stores Person to join our materials management team. Reporting to the Purchasing Manager, this individual will be responsible for a number of warehouse duties, including materials issues & returns, shipping & receiving activities, stocking shelves, housekeeping and assigned activities relating to inventory management. The successful candidate will also play a role in promoting excellent business relationships with both internal and external customers.

The ideal candidate

The ideal candidate will be self-motivated and dynamic, capable of working with little supervision within a team environment. He or she will have a minimum Grade 12 education, a valid driver's licence as well as good verbal and written communications abilities and computer skills. Parts or supply chain training, forklift and SAP experience would be considered assets.

Why work for us?

Millar Western is a privately-owned Alberta company active in the forest products business for more than a century. Operating a high-tech pulp mill supplied with sustainably sourced fibre, the company provides stable, full-time employment in lively, friendly, communities offering an excellent quality of life.

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Millar Western is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workforce. We appreciate the interest of all applicants; only those chosen for an interview will be contacted.

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- Job#: 22-059**, Family Support Diversion Worker, Temporary, Full-time Position.

Please visit www.whitecourt.ca for all employment opportunities and details on how to apply.

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The Press

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How you can help spread the love of Christmas to Whitecourt's less fortunate

By Serena Lapointe

It's of no surprise to anyone that prices are going up. Going through the till at the grocery store, filling up the family vehicle with gas, or paying an electricity bill costs more these days, and price increases aren't slowing down. For Lori Coffey, Director of the Whitecourt Food Bank, the evidence of higher prices is visible in the increased clientele she welcomes at the door or greets at the pickup window.

She said that people are getting into the position of deciding between paying their electricity bill or buying groceries. "Can you imagine sitting in your house and choosing not to eat because you can't afford to buy food? If you are deciding between bills and food, then pay your bills and come see us for food. I would rather you have lights on and heat in your home. Some will say that other people need it more than they do, and I say, if you're in that position,

then you are that people (sic)."

Coffey worries about families, seniors, and single people in the community with colder temperatures in the forecast and higher prices on the shelves. "Once you get into a spot where there's an unexpected bill, or you get behind in your bills, it's so hard to get caught up. With groceries costs going up, and gas expensive like it is, and now with winter and heating bills, it becomes a hole for many people, and it's hard to climb out of it."

She said that many people are already struggling, as evident by the increasing need at the Whitecourt Food Bank. With the trajectory of inflation, Coffey said it would only get worse. "How do you live like that? Deciding between food and heat? And then, God forbid, you get a flat tire or an unexpected bill. Getting behind on bills can happen to anyone. That's a cycle that can get out of control fast. What will you do if

you can't buy food until payday, and that's days or a week away?"

To help those who need it most, Coffey looks to her community for help. Each year, residents dig into their pantries, their wallets, and their hearts to give to the Whitecourt Food Bank and each year, Coffey is reminded just how generous the community is. "The businesses that support the food bank and the people who donate are amazing. The town really comes together. It can get hard sometimes because you get so emotional seeing people helping like this. It's beautiful."

Six times a year, clients can access a hamper. Coffey said that the hampers have become more diverse over the years. "We try and include everything, even lunch kits for children. It's supposed to fix the household for two weeks. Seeing the look on people's faces, that relief they feel when they get a hamper, is awesome. They know

they are good."

Coffey explained that things like the toilet paper drive at Ecole St. Joseph's School and the cereal drive at Ecole St. Mary's School are hugely impactful. Some businesses collect items throughout the year, and groups come together to raise specific things. Either way, every single donation matters and is needed. The support at the Whitecourt Food Bank lasts all year long, and the donations that come through big at Christmas help support the effort 365 days a year.

Items that Coffey said they always need more of are toiletries. "I won't buy toiletries because I put all the money I have into getting food, but we want to provide this stuff. If they come to us for food, other areas of the household are also struggling. If you can't buy groceries, you're

probably not buying toothbrushes or deodorant." Men's and women's deodorant, shampoo, and conditioner are high on the list of needed items, as are pads and tampons. For diapers, Coffey said the size they struggle to get their hands on is sizes 5 and 6.

When residents donate gift-like items, such as lotions, nail polish, face masks, bath bombs or toys, Coffey uses those to create gift bags for parents and kids. "Sometimes we see a parent come in, and we can see that they are all stressed out. We grab them a mom's bag or a dad's bag. The kids always get taken care of, but the parents are struggling. I think sometimes they can use something just for them. You can see when someone needs that boost," said Coffey.

Any presents donated

are used as birthday gifts in hampers throughout the year. "If a parent comes in for a fill and is stressed about their child's birthday, the food bank has a small collection of items that can be used as a gift for that child." Sometimes they receive cakes from IGA and freeze them, pulling them out when there's a birthday. "It makes their day. Birthdays are expensive, so it's nice to provide something to take that stress away," said Coffey. "Chevron this year made birthday bags with party favours and plates that match, and they did it by age and gender. With their generosity, we could take care of everyone's birthday through the summer. We still have a couple of them left. That's amazing."

All this to say that do-

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Helen "Delores" Giese

(née Weisbecker) March 24, 1940 – November 22, 2022

Helen Delores Giese, "Delores", passed away peacefully at her home in Whitecourt, Alberta on November 22, 2022 at the age of 82 years. Delores was born in Kelowna, B.C. on March 24, 1940 to parents Jake and Katie Weisbecker and grew up in St. Walburg, Saskatchewan. During her early years, Delores loved to play the piano and was an avid curling player for over 40 years. Delores enjoyed her time working for CIBC in Fox Creek, Alberta before moving to Whitecourt. This is where she would call her home for over the next 25 years. During her time in Whitecourt, she excelled and was passionate about her work at Whitecourt Stationery and Associate Medical Clinic. Delores enjoyed gardening, reading and doing crafts such as crocheting, knitting and



sewing. Delores was an enthusiastic participant in many local craft shows in recent years. You could often find Delores appreciating the outdoors while she watched the birds and the deer walking through the yard. Delores leaves behind her son's Lyle Giese and Brian Giese, grandson Brenden,

brother Tony (Freddie), sisters Eileen and Betty Ann as well as numerous nieces, nephews, extended family members and wonderful friends. She is predeceased by her husband Gary Giese and mother Katie Weisbecker.

As per Delores' wishes, cremation has taken place and a celebration of life will be held in the spring. If friends and family so desire, memorial contributions may be directed to the Alberta Cancer Foundation or a Charity of Choice.

Condolences may be sent to www.affinityfuneralservice.ca

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Frances Shirley Okrainetz

September 30, 1944- November 27, 2022

With great sadness, we announce the passing of our loving mother, grandmother, and sister Fran Okrainetz at the age of 78 years. Fran will be forever loved and remembered by her husband Art of 56 years, children Darrin, Dale (Janice), and Devon, grandchildren Brooklyn, Jamie, and Karlie, and sisters Viola



Whitlock and Ivis Long (Reid Currie). Fran was predeceased by her parents Steve and Sadie Holhauser, sister Marge Okrainetz, and brother Walter Holhauser.

No service will be held at this time. If friends and family so desire, memorial contributions may be directed to the

Pleasant View Lodge in Mayerthorpe, Alberta.

Condolences may be sent to www.affinityfuneralservice.ca

Arrangements in care of Mykenna Cabral at:



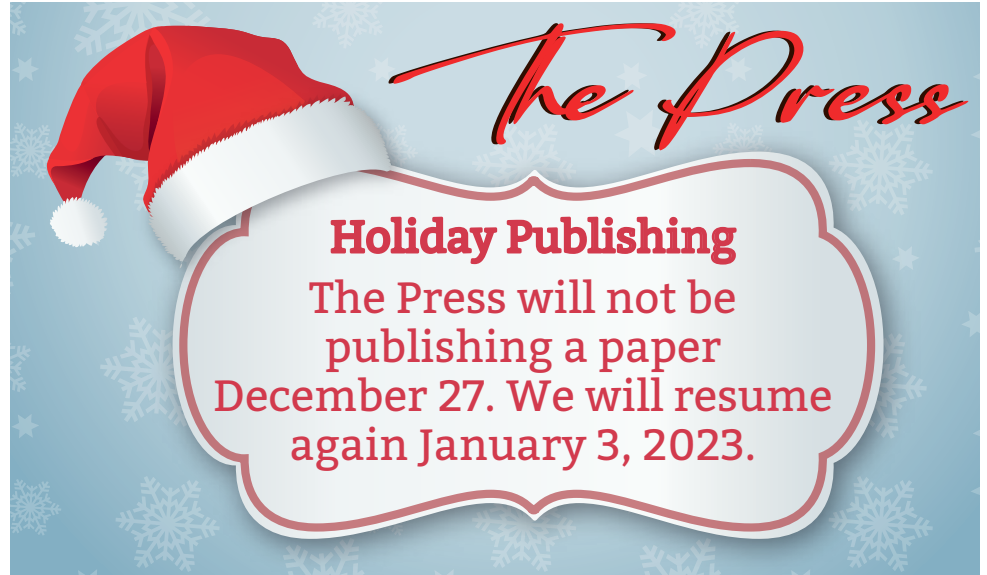
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2022 SNOW PLOW CONTEST



Enter our two part contest for a chance to win great prizes!

For entry forms, and contest details go to
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CONTEST 2 CREATE A FACE OR DESIGN FOR THE BLADE OF EACH PLOW

Show off your artistic skills and submit a creative design idea for one of the six plow blades from December 1 - 12.

The six winning designs will be painted on the blades of our snowplows and each design winner will receive a \$250 Visa gift card.

Contests are eligible to all ages.

You do not have to be a resident of Woodlands County to enter.

2022 SNOW PLOW CONTEST



***We Have our Final
Six Plow names!***

For more information and contest details check out
www.woodlands.ab.ca/p/contest

Congratulations to the winners of the Name Our Plows contest!

- * Clearapathra ~ Crystal Szybunka
- * Snow Problemo ~ Jessica Sharkey
- * No More Mr. Ice Guy ~ Riley Weatherby, Pauline Francis, Rochelle Bartier
- * Catch My Drift ~ Rochelle Bartier, Pauline Francis, Michelle Mosher
- * Snow Worries ~ Rita Thomas
- * Weird Plow Yankovic ~ Michelle Mosher, Crystal Szybunka

For more information on **Contest 2: Create a Face or Design** go to:

www.woodlands.ab.ca/p/contest

Contests are open to residents and visitors, of all ages.

continued from page 6

nations to the food bank can be something other than food items. Though that is the primary purpose of the Whitecourt Food Bank, keeping food on the tables of the community's less fortunate, there are so many options for what can be donated. "We want to uplift people who come in for a hamper. We want them to feel good about themselves and not have shame for needing help."

Those looking to grab food items are encouraged to donate things that Coffey won't buy, like kid's lunch items, juice box-

es, snack items, canned meats, boxed potatoes, side dish items, sweet treats, hearty canned soups with pop tops and similar things. Since Coffey focuses on the basics, having the "extras" donated means she can provide a well-rounded hamper.

Those wanting to grab something non-food-related can let their imaginations run wild, donating anything from gift items for parents and children to toiletries and the extra things that would bring a smile to someone's face to receive. "If you are one of the haves, please help. It makes somebody's day,

and you are helping your community in the nicest way possible," said Coffey.

Residents with donations but no way of getting them to the food bank have a new option this year. "Store To Door has become my newest sponsor. If anyone has food or anything at their house that they want to donate, they will pick it up and bring it here. I'm so grateful for their help," said Coffey, adding, "I am one of the most supported food banks, and I appreciate it so much. Our community is absolutely amazing. Together, we are helping people!"

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Opening day is just around the corner! Staff at Eastlink Park are eager to officially open the gates to the public THIS Saturday, December 10. A milder November made things trickier for them as they couldn't make as much snow, but once evening temperatures dipped, staff took full opportunity, running the machines day and night, and working long hours to prep the hill. The hope is to have everything open, including the tube run, but staff will make that decision closer to Saturday. No worries if you don't have the equipment necessary to give the hill a whirl! Enthusiasts can rent skis, snowboards and helmets on-site. Starting this Saturday, Eastlink Park will be open 10:30 am to 4:30 pm on weekends and Thursdays and Fridays from 4-7 pm. Visit www.eastlinkpark.com for more information. Take advantage of one of the community's sparkling gems this winter!

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
15-067-22	PT NW 8-59-11-W5M L1 B3 P 082-9823	Accessory Building: attached garage	29-Nov-22	20-Dec-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

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Community Services Committee – 1 vacancy (1-year term until October 31, 2023)

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Application Deadline: Wednesday, December 14, 2022, 4:30pm

Submit Applications to:

Email: communications@woodlands.ab.ca

In-Person:

Woodlands County
Municipal Office, #1 Woodlands Lane, Whitecourt, AB
Regional Municipal Office, 61053A Highway 33
Fort Assiniboine, AB



JOHN BURROWS
Reeve
Councillor for Whitecourt West
Division 2
E-Mail: john.burrows@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-706-4747



BRUCE PRESTIDGE
Councillor for Blue Ridge
Division 5
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Phone: 780-779-5917



DEVIN WILLIAMS
Councillor for Fort Assiniboine/
Times Division 7
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JEREMY WILHELM
Councillor for
Whitecourt East Division 4
E-Mail: jeremy.wilhelm@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-775-1594



DAVE KUSCH
Councillor for Assiniboine
Division 1
E-Mail: dave.kusch@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-778-5337



ALAN DEANE
Councillor for Whitecourt
Central Division 3
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Phone: 780-775-0594



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The Press welcomes readers to write letters to the Editor. A maximum of 300 words is preferred but not necessary. Letters must carry a first name or two initials with surname and include an address and daytime telephone number. All letters are subject to editing. Please email letters to wctpress@telus.net.

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Dollar Values as of December 6, 2022

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P.O.P.	Sunny	A few flurries	Mix of sun and clouds	Mix of sun and clouds	Mainly sunny
High	10%	40%	30%	30%	20%
Low	-22°C	-1°C	-3°C	-8°C	-11°C
Wind	-23°C	-9°C	-12°C	-13°C	-17°C
24-Hr Rain / Snow	SE 8 km/h ~1cm	SW 14 km/h <1cm	SE 9 km/h	W 13 km/h	W 9 km/h

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Getting down to the nitty gritty, emphasis on the gritty

By Serena Lapointe

During last Monday's meeting, Whitecourt Town Council voted unanimously to update Utility Bylaw 1511, which deals with storm-water infrastructure and facilities on private property, such as sump pits. The updated bylaw comes with an educational campaign to help relay to businesses the best practices for sump pit maintenance. The goal is to reduce the amount of grit in the system.

As grit accumulates in sump pits and eventually leaks into the sewer, things get plugged up. Town CAO Peter Smyl explained that keeping grit from reaching the treatment plant is criti-

cal. "(It's about) trying to eliminate grit from our system, everything from in the pipes to the treatment plant. Part of the amendment is to go ahead and do a volunteer program, educational program, talking about it and providing some options for businesses to look out for, to make sure they are cleaning their sumps in their service industrial area."

He said the bylaw amendment also gave them tools to use if a business isn't complying. "One thing we want to ensure is that if people aren't complying (is to have) the ability to go and do the inspections and fine if we have to, as a last resort." The bylaw "expressly

authorizes the Town's designated officer to enter private property for the purpose of inspecting compliance," read the Request for Decision (RFD) publicly available at the meeting. There is a penalty of \$1000 should the designated officer not be allowed property access.

The bylaw was also updated to specify the type of materials used in sumps. "While many types and materials are accepted, it remains best practice to utilize Type K copper piping for service connections as it is less likely to leak and allows earlier detection if a leak does occur. This bylaw amendment specifies that

continued on page 11



The Rotary Club of Whitecourt and the Whitecourt Oil Wives held their annual toy drive at Canadian Tire on Saturday afternoon. With a trailer parked just off the entrance doors, volunteers bundled up and spent four hours collecting toys and donations supporting the Whitecourt Christmas Hamper. With a growing need for support through the program, annual toy drives like this are a vital piece of the puzzle. The generous residents of Whitecourt helped the Rotary Club and Oil Wives bring in a big load of gifts for the hamper, which will undoubtedly bring glowing smiles to the faces of the community's youth on Christmas morning.

continued from page 10

the remainder of the service connection (from the curb stop to the building) also be made of the same material," clarified the RFD.

Reducing the grit entering Whitecourt's wastewater system will improve its performance, as it won't be as bogged down, ultimately reducing odour; win-win. Deputy Mayor Paul Chauvet asked if the changes would also impact the fine clay that had been acknowledged as an issue previously. He wondered if both problems, grit, and fine clay, would be reduced by the changes.

Smyl explained that the grit broke down into fine clay over time and was very hard to eliminate, requiring an expensive process. The fine clay needs a particular product to settle into to be removed, which takes at least 24 hours. "When we did our testing, it was such a fine particle, the sand from the oilfield, that we thought we would educate and address it right at the source, which would help eliminate our problem," said Smyl.

Having businesses understand the issue and be part of the solution is an easier and more cost-effective way to lower the amount of grit in the system and lower the occurrence of fine clay. The grit, being non-organic, doesn't break down, leading to more issues the further it goes down the line.

Councillor Lapointe asked if Administration had received any preliminary feedback from business owners. "We initiated the (voluntary) program this year. We were able to work with three shops, one in west Whitecourt and two in the Hilltop area, which are the sources of the grit that we collect through the system. The feedback has

been positive. There was one where it was clear that it was overfilled, and the feedback they gave us was basically, thank you for letting us know. It was well received. The next steps would be a more extensive program where we narrow down the sections that we would like to work with," explained Juan Grande, Infrastructure Services Manager for the Town of Whitecourt.

"We just want people to make sure. That's why you have a sump, a collection system. So, clean out your sumps, as you are supposed to be doing that," said Smyl. He noted how often sumps are cleaned depends on usage. "It depends on the amount of washing you are doing in your bays. (But), you have to clean them out. Car washes do it a couple of times a day."

Councillor Bill McAree asked where the "hammer" would be if a sump pit weren't built properly. Smyl responded that the problem doesn't usually lie with how a sump pit is made but that they can be modified over time, which is where less effective materials could be used. Materials other than Type K copper piping used for the service connections can leak, causing grit to get into the central system. "That would be part of the system to comply. One is to fix (the sump) if they modified it, and then number two is regular maintenance to get rid of the product. They have a number of options to take their grit for disposal," said Smyl.

Councillor Tara Baker asked Administration if they felt compliance would be an issue. "I think because we haven't really reminded people to do it, that people just haven't gotten to it. It's something (that should be) regular maintenance when they are washing

down the floors or every Saturday to have someone go ahead and clean it. Like Juan indicated, when we approach people, they say, oh ya, we need to do that. Have they been doing it on a normal basis? Maybe not. So that's what we are trying to say," explained Smyl.

The hope is for the educational campaign and business visits to raise compliance rates from 30 percent to 70 percent. "That would sure help out our pipes and mechanical system at the treatment plant," said Smyl. Council did all three required readings to update Utility By-law 1511, adopting the changes forward.



Car washes typically clean their sumps daily.

Grit has gotten into the wastewater system from sump pits in the industrial areas of Whitecourt. To try and mitigate the amount getting into the system, the Town of Whitecourt is doing an educational campaign encouraging proper sump maintenance. Once completed, onsite inspections will be required to ensure compliance.



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Application Dates

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Thursday, December 1..... 7pm to 9pm

Saturday, December 3..... 11am to 3pm

Wednesday, December 7..... 7pm to 9pm

Thursday, December 8..... 7pm to 9pm

Saturday, December 10..... 11am to 3pm

* no date or time exceptions

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Application Requirements

- Only one individual per family to attend interviews, with knowledge of all information required
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