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COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



The Press



Locally Owned & Operated



Vol. 12 - Issue 5 | Tuesday, January 31, 2023



Celebrating the history of traveling by canoe with voyageurs on Rotary pond in 2017.

The history of Rotary Park and how it came to be the gem that it is

By Serena Lapointe

Whitecourt's Rotary Park is a history-rich spot. The Woodlands Cree Nation enjoyed the beauty of this area long before any others, calling it Sagitawah, the

place where the rivers meet. Sitting just beyond the meeting place of the Athabasca River and McLeod River, it is fitting that Rotary Park is now a meeting place for many all year long.

Throughout the summer months, when the slides are in full swing and the splash park is a hotbed of activity, thousands upon thousands

continued on page 10

A Gordie Howe hat trick at a recent Wolverines game gave fans an extra reason to cheer

By Serena Lapointe

The Whitecourt Wolverines took on the Grande Prairie Storm on Wednesday night for a mid-week home game at the Scott Safety Centre. Three-hundred and sixty-eight fans were in the seats, eager to cheer on their team. As of Friday, January 27, with fifteen games left in the regular season, the Whitecourt Wolverines were in second place in the North AJHL standings. The Grande Prairie Storm was

in seventh, with thirty points separating the division rivals.

Shortly after the 7 pm puck drop, the Wolverines had an early lead. Spencer Rheume, assisted by Caleb MacDonald and Graham Skinner, smashed one past the Storm netminder at 2:54 of the period. Outside of three penalties, two for Whitecourt and one for the Storm, the lone goal from the home team was the only action of the period.

In the second, Wolverine Caleb MacDonald was caught tripping a Storm player and sat for two. Thankfully, his teammates kept the Storm from capitalizing on the man advantage. As if to make up for it, MacDonald scored four minutes later, thanks to Graham Skinner (his second assist of the night) and Michael Lovsin. It was now 2-0 for the Wolverines. Roughly 90 seconds later,

continued on page 2



With a little over a dozen games left to play in the regular season, the Whitecourt Wolverines are looking to climb the standings and distance themselves from those below. The hometown squad would love to leapfrog a team or two before the playoff run begins in early March. A big hit from the Storm but not enough to knock the Wolverines off the puck.



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The face of pain after a blocked shot.



A ref's view of the action.

continued from page 1

the Storm came in with a vengeance and managed to get one past the Wolverine's goalie Lochlan Gordon, coming within one goal of tying things up. The second ended with a score of 2-1.

In the final frame, the Wolverines knew they had to come in big. In a blink-and-you-miss-it type of moment, Wolverine Jonah Bevington sniped one right off the draw thanks to two fantastic tic-tac-toe passes from Tanner Klimpke and Michael Lovsin just seven seconds into the period, making it 3-1. The quick goal set the tone for what the next twenty minutes would be like.

Eight minutes and

forty seconds later, the Whitecourt Wolverines once again had their fans cheering as they scored another, this time off the stick of Colby Browne. Matthew Sutter assisted, as did Cooper Smyl, grabbing his 28th assist of the season. The Storm managed to get one in shortly afterwards, bringing the tally to 4-2.

Just over halfway through the period, things got a little testy. Storm player Ty Toews and Wolverine Caleb MacDonald got into it and collected two major penalties. Both players received five-minute majors for fighting and ten-minute game misconducts. The offsetting penalties didn't give one team an advantage over the other, and

the game continued without issue.

With two minutes and thirty seconds remaining in the game, Wolverine Dylan Leslie, alongside Jack Franklin and Tanner Komzak, scored his eleventh goal of the season, bringing his team to five goals on the night. In the final 90 seconds, the Storm achieved a quick goal but could not climb out of the hole they found themselves in. The Wolverines took the win 5-3. Caleb MacDonald was named the Wolverine's Star of the Game after grabbing a Gordie Howe hat trick with one goal, assist, and scuffle.

The Whitecourt Wolverines have a solid grip

continued on page 3

PUBLIC NOTICE

www.whitecourt.ca | facebook.com/TownofWhitecourt | 780-778-2273



GET INVOLVED....IT'S YOUR TOWN! Opportunity for Public Participation

Every fall, the Town of Whitecourt recruits citizens to fill volunteer positions on various boards and committees that provide Town Council with perspective and recommendations regarding important civic issues. Whitecourt is a diverse, growing town, and citizens are in the best position to provide input on our changing community needs.

Get involved! It's your town. Share your knowledge and meet new colleagues.

The Town of Whitecourt is now accepting applications for:

Subdivision and Development Appeal Board

"To make decisions on appeals of subdivision or development decisions made by the Development Officer or Municipal Planning Commission."

(2) Members – terms to expire in October 2025

Whitecourt Tourism Committee

"To establish a brand and program to further the interests of the Town of Whitecourt in the tourism industry."

(1) Member – term to expire in October 2025

Municipal Planning Commission Committee

"To deal with land use planning matters with particular emphasis on the Land Use Bylaw."

(1) Member – term to expire in October 2024

(2) Members – terms to expire in October 2025

Health Professionals Attraction & Retention Committee

"To develop and support a sustainable and collaborative system for health professionals' attraction and retention that will support ongoing health care services to the community and provide a welcoming environment for health care providers and their families."

(1) Member – term to expire in October 2024

(1) Member – terms to expire in October 2025

If being on a Council Committee interests you, please complete an application form which can be found on the Whitecourt website at www.whitecourt.ca or picked up at the Town Office. Applications must be received before 12:00 noon, Tuesday, February 7, 2023 to:

Whitecourt Town Administration Office
Attention: Executive Assistant
5004 - 52 Avenue, Box 509, WHITECOURT, AB T7S 1N6
email: wendydavidson@whitecourt.ca

Applications will be presented to Town Council at the February 13, 2023 Regular Meeting.



Splits off the face off.



I'm about to shoot, guys!



A Wolverine stares down the Storm goalie milliseconds after a big save.

continued from page 2

on second place in the North, sitting behind the Spruce Grove Saints. League-wide, the Wolverines, as of Friday, January 27, were in fourth place, two points behind the third-place Okotoks Oilers. The Blackfalds Bulldogs and the Drumheller Dragons are hot

on the Wolverine's heels, though the home squad had games in hand on both.

The next home games for the Wolverines come on Friday, February 3, against the first-place Spruce Grove Saints and Sunday, February 5, against Fort McMurray, a matinee matchup. After their home game

on February 10 against Grande Prairie, the Wolverines will be taking a southern road trip to scrap it out against Camrose, Canmore, Okotoks and Calgary before returning to the Scott Safety Centre on Friday, February 24 to take on the Bonnyville Pontiacs for night one of a two-night battle.

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- Alberta Seniors Benefit

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Weekly grief support group starting February 7 through April 25, 2023, Tuesdays, from 6:30pm to 8:30pm., at Crossroads Community Church, 4419 44 Avenue, Mayerthorpe. \$35 for 12 sessions includes your personal GriefShare Workbook. Pre-registration is required by calling Reverend Ruth Lotholz at 780-786-2695.



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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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Outreach Support Program:
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Child Support Program:
Child Care & After School Programs - Age Appropriate Programs & Support for Children Who Have Been Affected By Family Violence

Preventative Education:
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Family Resource & Crisis Centre
www.whitecourtshester.ca




WHITECOURT CANCER & WELLNESS SOCIETY

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



If your life is in danger or you know someone's life is in danger DIAL EMERGENCY NOW 911!

If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, you need to know that you're not alone. You can also call if you are not in crisis, seeking additional information. The new Canada Suicide Prevention Service (CSPS), by Crisis Services Canada, enables callers anywhere in

Canada to access crisis support by phone, in French or English: toll-free **1-833-456-4566** Available 24/7
Crisis Text Line (Powered by Kids Help Phone) Canada Wide free, 24/7 texting service is accessible immediately to youth anywhere

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.
KidsHelpPhone Ages 20 Years and Under

in Canada **1-800-668-6868** (Online or on the Phone). First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness 24/7 Help Line **1-855-242-3310**
Canadian Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line **1-866-925-4419**
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Have you been bullied, and want to share your story?

Email wctpress@telus.net All submissions remain confidential

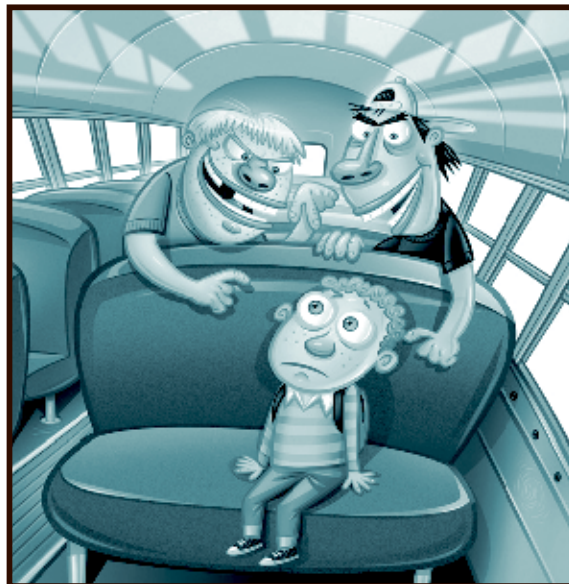


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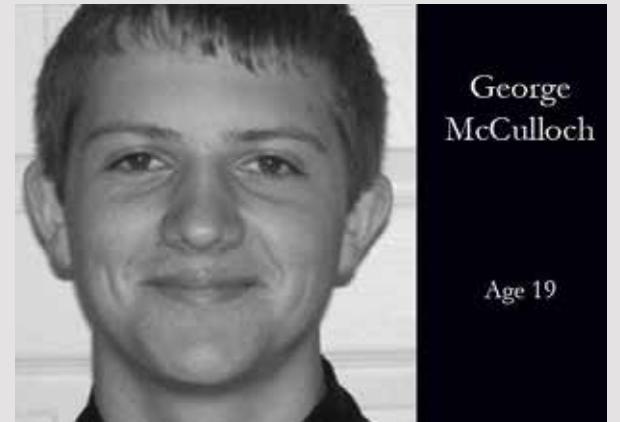


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Every 40 seconds somewhere around the world someone dies by suicide, that's 99 people every 66 minutes. Every day, that's almost 100 people in the United States alone, and over 2160 worldwide. *Putting a Face on Suicide (PAFOS)* is a suicide awareness 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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Premier Danielle Smith says she is seeking to find common ground between Alberta and Ottawa

By Serena Lapointe

On the Government of Canada's official website, the statement 'Just Transition' means to prepare the country's workforce to "fully participate in the low-carbon economy while minimizing the impacts of labour market transitions." It details the importance of identifying and supporting "inclusive economic opportunities for workers in their communities," and of putting workers and their communities "front and centre in discussions that affect their livelihoods."

The goal, it states, is to be net zero. Over the last couple of years, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government has held roundtables with experts, unions, and industry leaders, received over thirty thousand written submissions and has met with provincial leaders and Indigenous groups.

Speaking at a recent media scrum event, Premier Danielle Smith explained her reservations with the plan and offered ideas of how a greener plan might work for Alberta. "Just Transition is the language they used when they phased out the coal industry. If they wanted to talk about sustainable jobs, that's completely different. We would be happy to talk to them about sustainable jobs and carbon tech, sustainable jobs in hydrogen and sustainable jobs in this new economy that we are developing around small modular nuclear and other types of projects," explained Premier Smith.

She pointed to the Albertan oil sands producers, saying they have an "aggressive strategy to reduce emissions and use more bitumen beyond combustion." She also said that there is a petrochemical industry. "This is not about phasing out any of these jobs. It's about growing them and expanding the opportunity for oil and natural gas workers, and that's the kind of language I would like to hear the Prime Minister use."

One of the most recent announcements from the federal government in late December propos-

es legislation requiring at least twenty percent of new, light-duty vehicles sold in Canada to be zero-emission by 2026 and 100 percent by 2035. In response, Pre-

mier Smith said her own experience with a hybrid vehicle through the summer raised the alarm for her. "There's a five-year waiting list for hybrid vehicles with Toyota and

an equally long waiting list for other electric vehicles. How do you then mandate that twenty percent of vehicles sold in Alberta are going to be electric when they aren't even going to be available?"

The Premier said she had also recently spoken to a developer who installs transformers, noting there's an 80-week delay to get one. "We used to be able to get them within days. We've got a two-year wait to even be able to upgrade our power grid." She said an honest conversation about "what's doable and what's possible" has to happen sooner rather than later.

Working with the federal government to find common ground is the first approach Premier Smith said she wants to take. "If we are working towards the same goal of emissions reduction, and we have a reasonable

timeframe, and we are working towards having the same kind of technological advancement, then I think we can work collaboratively and cooperatively."

Premier Smith sent two letters to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in January, supporting Alberta's energy sector. The first letter, sent on January 11, focused on Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's visit to Canada. "Given Alberta's close cultural and economic integration with Japan and given our role in supplying responsible energy to the world, I urge you to raise Alberta's strong desire to supply affordable, sustainable and reliable energy to Japan," she wrote.

She mentioned that Japan is the second-largest global importer of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). In 2021, nearly ten percent of its imports originated in Russia, "presenting significant challenges

given the ongoing conflict in Ukraine." She noted that Alberta's "unparalleled energy resources" and "commitment to emissions reductions," along with historical connections with Japan, put the province in a position to be a "key contributor to Japan's efforts to diversify its LNG supply."

Her second letter penned to the Prime Minister was released last Thursday. The letter focused on the federal government's Just Transition plan. Premier Smith said the world needs more Canadian energy, not less. "According to your government's own predictions, the federal Just Transition initiative alone will risk a full 25 percent of Alberta's economy and 187,000 jobs in Alberta while also causing major disruptions and displacement to 13.5 percent of Canada's workforce."

continued on page 7



Premier Danielle Smith penned two letters to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in January. She said her goal is to get a meeting and discuss ways to find common ground on emission reduction and the leadership role Alberta's energy industry can take in a changing world.



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continued from page 6

She stated that the relationship between the Alberta government and the federal government was at a "crossroads" and encouraged working together to fix it. In the letter, the Premier offered four objectives. The first was to decrease Canada's and Alberta's net emissions substantially. The second was accelerating private and public investment in projects that use/develop carbon capture, geothermal, petrochemicals, zero-emission vehicles and nuclear. The third

objective focused on attracting a larger skilled workforce, while the fourth was to increase the export of LNG and other resources to reduce global emissions.

She closed the letter by asking for a meeting. "Prime Minister, we can and must work together. Operating in political silos as adversaries on this issue is getting us nowhere, and I believe all Canadians are tired of seeing it. Canada should be the world's greatest energy superpower. It can be if we come together collaboratively in pursuit

of that objective. There is no limit to our nation's potential," she concluded.

Should the first approach of working together not pan out, Premier Smith pointed to the Sovereignty Act. "If the federal government is pursuing emissions caps and targets that are too aggressive and too short of a time frame and are unachievable, it is a defacto production cap which means it's a violation of our constitutional right to choose to develop our own resources."

She explained that if her government puts forward a "robust plan to reduce emissions in a way that works for Alberta," they will be ready, if necessary, to take the federal government to court and fight. "We are not phasing this industry out. We don't have to. We can export LNG, which will reduce global emissions. We can use carbon technology to capture CO2 and embed it into useful projects or bury it underground. We can develop a hydrogen industry. We can develop a small modular nuclear industry. Those are all the things that get us to the same goal."



DISCRETIONARY USE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION

The Municipal Planning Commission will be making a decision on the following development permit application as per the Woodlands County Land Use Bylaw, at their regular meeting on **Wednesday, February 15, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. at the Whitecourt Municipal Office**, downstairs.

Section 19 of the Woodlands County Land Use Bylaw provides opportunity for any person who may have comments on the proposed developments to deliver to the Development Officer, a written statement of their concerns indicating: their full name and address and the reasons for their comments to the proposed use.

If you have any comment or concern regarding this proposal you may provide a written statement via email to peter.mckay@woodlands.ab.ca prior to **4:30 p.m., February 8, 2023**.

Comments received will be taken into consideration by the Municipal Planning Commission.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION	DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NUMBER	PROPOSAL
PT. SE 23-59-12-W5M Lot 8 Block 1 Plan 962-0522	15-002-2023	Garden Suite

Information regarding this application may be obtained by inquiring prior to **4:30 pm, February 8, 2023**.

Attention: Peter McKay, Development Officer
peter.mckay@woodlands.ab.ca

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

FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES (FCSS) 2023 GRANT FUNDING AVAILABLE

Woodlands County is pleased to provide grant funding for "preventative social initiatives to enhance the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities."

Funding is available for local organizations, for local initiatives!

The programs/projects must fall into one of the categories listed below:

1. Social development of children & their families
2. Enrich & strengthen family life by developing skills to function within our environment
3. Enhance quality of life in the retired & semi retired
4. Promote, encourage & support volunteerism
5. Inform the public of available services

Application forms available at woodlands.ab.ca or our offices in Whitecourt and Fort Assiniboine.

DEADLINE 4:30 P.M. FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2023

Approved funding must be utilized by December 31, 2023

Please contact the Community Services Department to obtain further information 780-778-8400 or toll-free at 1-888-870-6315.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL CRUSHING TO STOCKPILE

Woodlands County is seeking bids for crushing and stockpiling of 150,000 tonnes of 4:20, 10,000 tonnes of 4:40, and 20,000 tonnes of 5:8 in SML970017 located at SE 10-62-06-W5M.

Detailed information and bid packages may be obtained online at: Alberta Purchasing Connection or Woodlands County Website www.woodlands.ab.ca.

Bidders may submit sealed tenders only up to **2:00 p.m.** local time on **February 16, 2023**.

**To: Woodlands County Municipal Office
#1 Woodlands Lane
Box 60
Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N3
Telephone: 780-778-8400**

Bidders must submit proposals on the forms issued with the RFP document.

For further information contact:

Richard Twach, Manager, Field Services
Telephone: (780) 778-8400

REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS

Woodlands County is seeking quotations for the supply of the following:

- **One (1) New Tandem Gravel/Plow Truck and Front Discharge Combination Spreader**

Quotation documents may be obtained on the website woodlands.ab.ca/p/rfps-and-tenders or at either of the Woodlands County offices.

Woodlands County
Municipal Office
1 Woodlands Lane
Whitecourt AB T7S 1N3
Telephone: (780) 778-8400

OR

Woodlands County
Regional Municipal Office
Box 33
Fort Assiniboine AB T0G 1A0
Telephone: (780) 584-3866

Sealed quotations shall be submitted on, or prior to **2:00 pm on March 3, 2023**, to:

Richard Twach
Manager, Field Services
P.O. Box 60 #1 Woodlands Lane
Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N3

For further information, please contact the Municipal Office in Whitecourt at 780-778-8400.



JOHN BURROWS
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
E-Mail: bruce.prestidge@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-779-3917



DEVIN WILLIAMS
Councillor for Fort Assiniboine/
Teresa Division 7
E-Mail: devin.williams@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-305-1825



JEREMY WILHELM
Councillor for
Whitecourt East Division 4
E-Mail: jeremy.wilhelm@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-779-6694



DAVE KUSCH
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Phone: 780-779-9337



ALAN DEANE
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E-Mail: alan.deane@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-778-0854



PETER KUELKEN
Councillor for Goose Lake/
Freeman River Division 6
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For all open career opportunities, please check out our website at albertanewsprint.com → Careers.

Coming up short: Wage growth outpaced by inflation in November

By ATB Financial's Economics & Research Team

New survey results from Statistics Canada show that seasonally-adjusted average weekly earnings (including overtime) across all sectors in Alberta were 3.8% higher in November 2022 than the same month in 2021.

Consumer prices, however, rose by 6.6% in Alberta over this period (unadjusted).

Nationally, wages increased by 4.2% on a

year-over-year basis while inflation was running at 6.8%.

Average earnings were up in every province in November compared to 12 months earlier. Newfoundland and Labrador posted the largest increase at +6.5% while Saskatchewan posted the smallest at +3.7%.

Alberta continues to have the highest average weekly earnings of any province.

When the numbers are broken down by indus-

try, average earnings in Alberta were up the most on a year-over-year basis in the real estate and rental and leasing sector at +13.8% followed by the oil and gas sector at +11.8%.

The arts, entertainment and recreation sector was at the other end of the spectrum at -8.9% followed by the administrative and support, waste management and remediation services sector at -2.8%.

Average weekly earnings, Alberta

% change between November 2021 and November 2022, seasonally-adjusted



Source: Statistics Canada Table 14-10-0223-01

Graph by ATB Economics



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Thank You!



The Whitecourt Food Bank would like to thank the following community members and businesses that helped brighten our beautiful tree at the Town Office for the parade and the holiday season of 2022. As this is the only fundraiser that the Food Bank organizes for itself, we appreciate the continued, strong support of our annual Christmas Tree Light up that raised over \$3000.

Reflections Psychological Kujira Sushi Grill JR Pressure Service
Harris Home Inspections Glen & Jan Kingdon

Tri-Hi Pressure in memory of Jason Whelihan
Marlene Pinchbeck in Memory of Kellier & Pinchbeck Family
Wayne & Marge Whatmore in memory of Norman Whatmore
Sheena Piccolo in memory of Frank Piccolo
Mike Butterfield in memory of Helen Butterfield

In memory of:

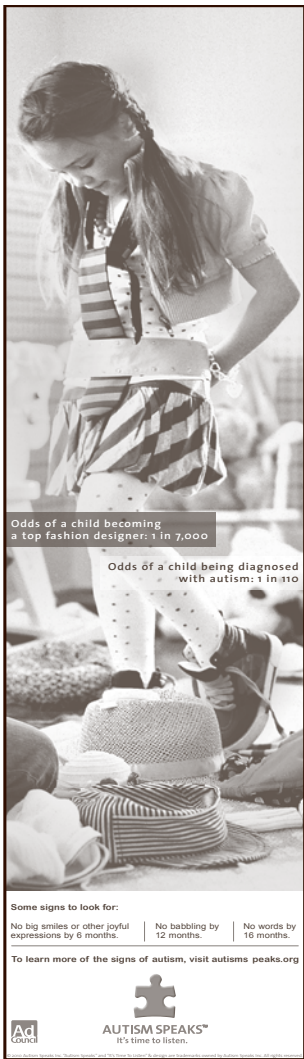
- Jennie Falk
- Bill Tetlock
- Debbi Waldersheim
- Gregory
- Brad Stack
- Edith Wise
- Fifi
- Veronica Alexander
- Edson Msalya
- Daniel Waldenburger
- Lowell Mathews
- Lenny Botterill
- Dr. Kenlin
- Fred Tschigerl
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The Press welcomes readers to write 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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A look at the local weather	Tue., Jan 31	Wed., Feb 1	Thu., Feb 2	Fri., Feb 3	Sat., Feb 4
P.O.P.	A few flurries 40%	Flurries 70%	Scattered flurries 60%	Mix of sun and clouds 30%	Mainly sunny 20%
High	-8°C	-11°C	-15°C	-3°C	1°C
Low	-12°C	-19°C	-16°C	-7°C	-9°C
Wind	NW 8 km/h	E 10 km/h	E 12 km/h	W 9 km/h	SW 12 km/h
24-Hr Rain / Snow	~5cm	~5cm	~1cm	-	-



Festival Way; a place for outdoor markets as envisioned decades ago.



Fishing at Rotary Pond.

One of Whitecourt's gems, Rotary Park, has an interesting history. What started as a dream on a piece of a napkin has steadily grown to become a shining star provincially, with thousands of visitors coming to the community each year.

continued from page 1

of Albertans and visitors from all over descend on the beloved local hangout to see what all the fuss is about.

The park as it is known today would not exist if not for the partnerships that made it happen. Millar Western, the Rotary Club of Whitecourt and several others worked with the Town of Whitecourt to create something unique that others would one day try to replicate. The pond,

a significant piece of the puzzle, which enables the water features to exist, came about uniquely.

In the 1980s, the Town Council of the day felt that the Whitecourt Rodeo Grounds (present-day Rotary Park) would be a good spot to put a big community park. In 1986, six hectares of the rodeo grounds were purchased by the Town of Whitecourt from the Whitecourt Royal Canadian Legion.

Two years later, Whitecourt's Community Ser-

vices Department brought consultants on board to draw up a master plan for the park they wanted to build. Original ideas during those brainstorming sessions included a pond, playground, picnic sites, farmer's market area with a concession, public washrooms, walking trails, an amphitheatre, BMX bike track, and even a par-three golf course. The Town Council of the day accepted the official master plan in 1989.

The park's namesake,

Whitecourt's Rotary Club, became a committed partner in the park's creation and vision by 1998, and the name change to Rotary Park became official in September 2000. That same year, the man-made pond came to be. Millar Western Forest Products Ltd. needed gravel to prepare a spot for its new sawmill. Through sheer luck, the specific granular material Millar Western required happened to be right next door, on the rodeo grounds.

Throwback Memory info posts from the Town of Whitecourt, viewable on www.whitecourt.ca, detailed how the unique agreement worked. "The Town was able to contract Millar Western to excavate approximately 80,000 cubic metres of earth, forming a bed for a man-made pond. Through this partnership, Millar Western removed the fill and relocated it onto its site, and the municipality saved approximately \$300,000 in con-

struction costs," reads the infographic.

As quoted in the Throwback Memory, from April 2000, then-Mayor George VanderBurg said the lake excavation project with Millar Western was a win-win situation for everyone and "a tremendous opportunity for all involved." The Millars shared the sentiment. "We hope the park will be a great recreational and economic asset to the

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community, one that will be enjoyed by the people of Whitecourt and draw more visitors to the area," said Allan Millar.

Many upgrades have taken place at Rotary Park through the years, with something new happening fairly yearly. As planned decades earlier, the picnic areas and trails have been realized, as

have the washrooms and fishing pond, which began being stocked with Rainbow Trout by Alberta Fish and Wildlife in 2003. The newest addition, Festival Way, brings another of the dreams alive with a place to hold farmer's markets and small-business events. This summer, residents will see another addition join the ranks at Rotary Park with a massive bouncy pillow going

near the playground.

The Sportfield Master Plan, a document frequently updated, which details the plans for Rotary Park into the future, not unlike the original project that kickstarted everything in the first place, now leads the vision. Each council budgets for upgrades and plans for future developments, adding its unique special touches along the way.

Residents interested in learning more about the history of Whitecourt, including the first peoples, early residents, the connection to the Klondike rush, the seasonal post operated by the Hudson's Bay Company near the present Whitecourt Golf and Country Club, and the controversy of Whitecourt's name are encouraged to visit www.whitecourtheritage.org.



President's Gala

New Chamber president Louise Meier (center) with fellow board members.



Mountain Steak and Pizza manager Joanne Belke with the Legacy Award.



Bobby Jones gives thumbs up holding the Community Lunchbox's Non-Profit of the Year award.



Brandy Fleming (right) with her Customer Service Excellence Award for Oko Shop & Refillery.

By Serena Lapointe

The Whitecourt District Chamber of Commerce held its first Annual President's Gala on Saturday night at St. Joseph's Hall. The newly created event featured a five-course meal prepared by Tastebuds Catering, served at the table by the well-dressed youth of the Whitecourt Air Cadets, and live music by Slow Walkin' Walker. Mid-evening, the Chamber directors in attendance were presented to the audience. This year's directors are Paula Miller, Debbie Davio, Rachel Bachman, Terriann Masse, Karen Hamelin, Julie Sawyer, and Brienne MacLeod. Also on hand were vice president Travis Golby and treasurer Ray Hilts. Ahead of the awards portion of the evening, past-president Mark Dickin presented new president Louise Meier with the club's meeting gavel. With a quick tap,

he jokingly declared, "I'm out." Meier took the gavel without skipping a beat, tapped it, and said, "I'm in."

There were five awards given out at the gala. The first award was for Non-Profit of the Year, which the Community Lunchbox Society won. Motivator Bobby Jones proudly accepted the award on behalf of the so-

ciety. The second award was the Customer Service Excellence Award. The winner was Oko Shop & Refillery. Owner Brandy Fleming said she wants every customer that leaves her store to feel uplifted and fulfilled. The third award of the night was for the Emerging Business of the Year. Precious Sprouts Child-care Centre took home

the hardware and title for 2022. The fourth award, Community Attraction, was won by Microtel Inn & Suites. The final award to be handed out was to the Legacy Business of 2022. Mountain Pizza and Steakhouse manager Joanne Belke credited her amazing staff after she accepted the prestigious award. Congratulations to all the winners!

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I, in this short dialogue, want to thank you for everything, and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from you no matter how great the material desires may be, I want to be with you and my loved ones in your perpetual glory.

Amen

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KJB

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