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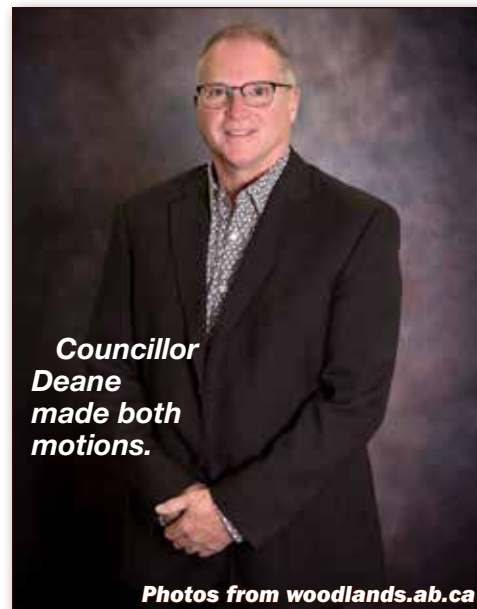
Vol. 12 - Issue 11 | Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Significant changes coming to Pat Hardy and Central School this fall

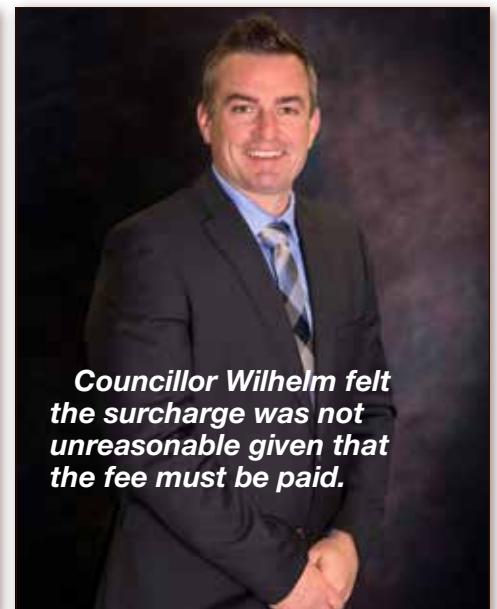


See article page 2

A small credit card fee, similar to businesses, could be instated for CC users at Woodlands County office



Councillor Deane made both motions.



Councillor Wilhelm felt the surcharge was not unreasonable given that the fee must be paid.

Photos from woodlands.ab.ca

Woodlands County Councillors discussed two draft policies last week during their Governance & Priorities Committee (G&P). The G&P allows Council to dig deeper into topics like draft policies and gives them time to reflect on it before officially voting at an upcoming Council meeting. See story page 8.



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Significant changes coming to Pat Hardy and Central School this fall

By Serena Lapointe

Parents of young, school-aged children continue to discuss the changes coming to Pat Hardy Primary and Whitecourt Central School next school year. This September, both schools will realign as kindergarten to grade five models, changing the current state.

Through December and January, parents and residents affected by the change took part in stakeholder consultations where they provided comments about the proposed change. Survey data helped form the basis for the decision. Survey comments were posted on the Northern Gateway Public Schools website (link below).

The two-question survey asked what the advan-

tages and disadvantages would be. Forty-eight advantages and 127 disadvantages were provided in the document. At the beginning of the release, it was noted that repetitive answers were not all included and that most comments against change were included despite some repetition. Without knowing how many repetitive answers weren't included under the advantages column, it's hard to know which side had more comments overall.

Advantages provided included consistency and familiarity for children and less transferring (bussing). Another said that it would be helpful for children who do not like changes, bringing more stability. One parent said their children would "be

together in one place for the first five years of their schooling."

A reduction in bussing and traffic was also mentioned as an advantage. One survey responder said that more students could walk to school and that parents of multiple students would only have to drive to one school. They also felt that volunteerism would increase as parents wouldn't be dividing their time between the schools where their children attend.

One responder felt that the switch would allow for role models as younger students could pair with older students. Some also thought it would result in stronger friendships/relationships as students remain together longer. The same was said for stu-

dents feeling comfortable at their school since they would stay for six years rather than the current model of three.

Some parents felt the ages, K-5, were better suited to blend and that leadership opportunities would naturally evolve. Multiple responders pointed to leadership/mentoring as an advantage. One person said that it would help distribute student needs more. "Pat Harder is completely overwhelmed with needs, and there is not enough space in the school for all the classrooms," they said. Another said that the change would help teachers and EA's balance needs better.

The disadvantages provided touched on things

continued on page 7



Superintendent Kevin Bird said changes to Whitecourt's population and layout were big factors.



Playground changes are likely.

Two of Whitecourt's schools, Pat Hardy Primary and Whitecourt Central, are getting reconfigured ahead of the 2023/2024 school year. A decision to switch from a primary school model to an elementary school model will be going through. Parents and stakeholders have voiced both support and concerns for the change.

Important Notice Dangerous Ice Conditions

Millers Lake

SW-08-053-19-W5M; West of Edson

Peanut Lake

NE-15-058-03-W5M; South of Barrhead

Lake aerators create hazardous thin ice and open water. For your safety, observe these posted warnings at all times:

Lake Aeration in Progress Danger-Thin Ice and Open Water

Take these extra measures while on an aerated lake:

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WOODLANDS COUNTY RFPs AND TENDERS AVAILABLE

MPE Engineering Ltd. (MPE), on behalf of Woodlands County, is soliciting tenders from qualified contractors for the following projects:

- Township Road 594 (Old Blue Ridge Road) and TWP RD 602A (ANC Road) road reconstruction
- Horse Creek Road milling and overlay and Fort Assiniboine Public Works Yard asphalt pad
- One (1) Sand and Salt Shed at the County Public Works Yard in Whitecourt and one (1) Sand and Salt Shed at the Fort Assiniboine Public Works Yard

Tenders will be accepted on MPE's Bidding System until **2:00:00 pm local time, Thursday, March 30, 2023**. For full project details and to create a Vender Account, visit <https://mpe.bidsandtenders.ca>.

Woodlands County reserves the right to waive informalities in, or reject any or all tenders, or accept the Tender deemed most favourable in the interest of the County.

REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS

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

Lease/Purchase of Two (2) New All-Wheel Drive Motor Graders

Quotation documents may be obtained at either of the Woodlands County offices on, or after, March 8, 2023, as follows:

Woodlands County
Municipal Office
1 Woodlands Lane

OR

Woodlands County
Regional Municipal Office
Box 33

Whitecourt AB T7S 1N3
Telephone: (780) 778-8400

Fort Assiniboine AB T0G 1A0
Telephone: (780) 584-3866

Sealed quotations shall be submitted on, or prior to **April 21, 2023, at 2:00 pm** 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/
Timber Division 7
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: 780-779-6294



DAVE KUSCH
Councillor for Anselmo
Division 1
E-Mail: dave.kusch@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-778-9337



ALAN DEANE
Councillor for Whitecourt
Central Division 3
alan.deane@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-775-0854



PETER KUELKEN
Councillor for Goose Lake/
Freeman River Division 6
peter.kuelken@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-264-2425



2023 VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION AWARDS

WHO HAS BEEN STEPPING UP?

Nominate an **incredible** Woodlands County resident in one of these categories:

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

These youth are an example to their peers and the community. They show leadership at school, on their sports team, arts and culture group, or within a local business or non-profit.
* Ages 10 to 24 years

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

This person makes a difference in their community through their volunteer activities and works together with others to help set up events and initiatives.

CARING BUSINESS

Business champions who donate to community-focused initiatives and support their employee's dedication to helping the community
ie: staff volunteering as a fire fighter

VOLUNTEER PIONEER

A volunteer contributing more than 20 years. Their passion helps lead others to begin volunteering.



Submit your Nomination by email or to one of our offices by Friday, April 7, 2023

Contact Us
1-888-870-6315
communityservices@woodlands.ab.ca
woodlands.ab.ca/p/volunteer-recognition



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GRIEF SHARE

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.



"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

LORNE'S BLANKET
is transitional housing for men.

We exist to help homeless men get back on their feet.

If you know of any male requiring assistance, please Call Lorne's Blanket at 780-778-0952




Soaring Eagle Support Society

Offering support services for marginalized individuals

- Outreach worker, laundry and shower facilities by appt
- Tax program & Bag Lunch Program

5027 - 51 Avenue, Open: Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm **780-396-8777**




WHITECOURT GROUP OF NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS

All meetings are in person and online (hybrid)

- Mondays 7:30pm
- Wednesdays 7:30pm

Meetings held at the Family Worship Center upstairs.

ZOOM ID: 818 413 483 PASSWORD: gratitude



24/7 CRISIS LINE
780.778.6209
1.800.467.4049

WELLSPRING FAMILY RESOURCE & CRISIS CENTRE
@whitecourt_shelter


Shelter:
Wellspring Provides a Safe, Short Term, Supportive Residential Environment for Women With or Without Children, Fleeing Family Violence & Experiencing Crisis.

Outreach Support Program:
Ongoing Support, Advocacy, Follow-Up & Support Groups for Women, Men and Youth in Whitecourt and Surrounding Communities.

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

Preventative Education:
Provides Workshops, Information and Awareness to Schools, Community Organizations, Agencies and Businesses

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**
Trans LifeLine – All Ages **1-877-330-6366**

Have you been bullied, and want to share your story?

Email wctpress@telus.net All submissions remain confidential

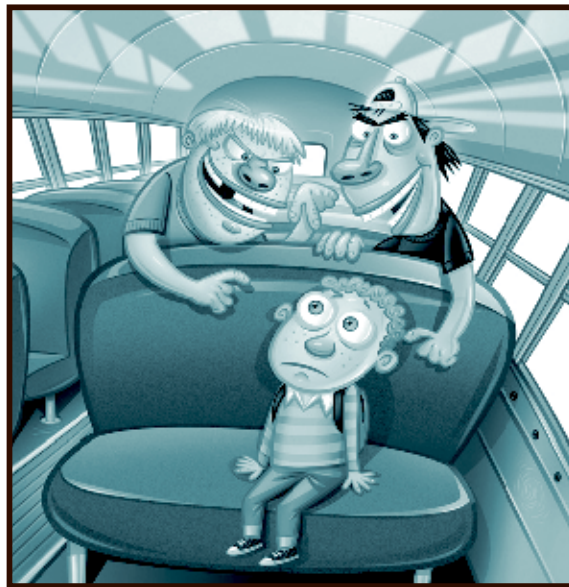


When you keep criticizing your kids, they don't stop loving you, they stop loving themselves.
Let that sink in.



Are you or someone you know being bullied?

Call the Bullying Helpline (Confidential)



Toll Free, open 24 hours per day, seven days per week

1-888-456-2323

Stand up! Don't be afraid of bullies!!

Putting a face on suicide



Mitchell T. Mckelvey
Age 19

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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Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza Now Hiring Cashiers NOC 65100

Responsibilities:

- Greet customers
- Receive and process payments by cash, cheque, credit card, or automatic debit
- Provide information to customers
- Calculate foreign currency exchange
- Calculate total payments received at end of work shift and reconcile with total sales
- Verify the age of customers when selling lottery tickets, alcohol or tobacco products
- Operate cash register
- Process money, cheques, and credit/debit card payments
- Scan Items
- Tabulate total payment for goods or services required
- Receive payment for goods or services
- Calculate daily/shift payments received and reconcile them with total sales
- Suggestive selling
- Provide excellent customer service
- Assist customers with self-service items
- Participate in promotional activities

Qualifications:

- Some secondary school education is usually required. High school graduation may be required by some employers.
- Eligibility for bonding may be required.
- A casino gaming license may be required for cashiers working in gambling casinos.
- Must be able to complete Smart training courses
- Must be able to complete AML

Experience: 2 – 3 years, or we will train.

Education: Some post-secondary, high school may require.

Terms of Employment: Permanent full-time 40-hour work week.

Language: English

Employment Conditions: Shift work, Day, Evenings, Weekends, Holidays, Nights.

Wage: \$15.00 per hour.

Benefits Package: Vision, Dental, Health after 90-day probation period.

Location: Twp.Rd.602A, Hwy 32 North, Whitecourt, AB Canada.

Address: Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza P.O Box 10 Whitecourt, Alberta Canada T7S-1N3

Contact: 780-779-2727 or Fax 780-706-7451

Visit our Website: www.eaglerivercasino.ca

How to Apply: Send resume to HR@eaglerivercasino.ca, mail or fax



This colourful, circular ramp at Eastlink Park is a favourite for users. One by one, skiers went up and over. There was even an audible "wheee" heard at one point. Ha-ha! Numerous ramps are placed throughout the hillside on the left-hand side of the carpet lift, and several differently-sized jumps and trick spots. A couple of them are along the trail leading to the T-Bar area trails too. These two skiers, along with countless others, sure seemed to enjoy the ride.



A group of intelligent, young entrepreneurs in the making took to the hill at Eastlink Park this weekend to entice winter sports enthusiasts with a delectably sweet fundraiser opportunity. The ladies were armed with boxes of vanilla and chocolate Girl Guide cookies, both considered hot commodities. Snowball, the super friendly Eastlink Park penguin, stopped to give the girls stickers and smile for a picture before heading back onto the slopes for a tummy slide.



Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza Now Hiring Casino Shift Manager NOC 62022

Responsibilities:

- Co-ordinate, assign and review the work of casino workers
- Establish work schedules and procedures and co-ordinate activities with other work units or departments
- Resolve work-related problems and prepare and submit progress and other reports
- Hire and train staff in job duties, safety procedures, and company policies
- Requisition of supplies and materials
- Ensure smooth operation of computer systems, equipment, and machinery, and arrange for maintenance and repair work
- May perform the same duties as workers supervised
- Perform the same duties as workers supervised
- Assist clients/guests with special needs
- Co-ordinate, assign and review work
- Ensure smooth operation of computer systems, equipment, and machinery, and arrange for maintenance and repair work
- Establish work schedules and procedures and co-ordinate activities with other work units or departments
- Hire and train staff in job duties, safety procedures, and company policies
- Requisition materials and supplies
- Resolve work-related problems and prepare and submit progress and other reports.

Qualifications:

- Completion of secondary school is usually required.
- Completion of college courses related to the area supervised may be required.
- Experience in the occupation supervised is usually required.
- AGLC casino gaming license will be required.
- Must be able complete Smart training courses
- AML certificate

Experience: 3 – 5 years.

Education: Completion of secondary school is required, casino gaming license.

Terms of Employment: Permanent full-time 44-hour work week.

Language: English

Employment Conditions: Shift work, Day, Evenings, Weekends, Holidays, Nights.

Wage: \$23.08 per hour.

Benefits Package: Vision, Dental, and Health after a 90-day probation period.

Location: Twp.Rd.602A, Hwy 32 North, Whitecourt, AB Canada.

Address: Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza P.O Box 10 Whitecourt, Alberta Canada T7S-1N3.

Contact: 780-779-2727 or Fax 780-706-7451

Visit our Website: www.eaglerivercasino.ca

How to Apply: Send resume to HR@eaglerivercasino.ca, mail or fax.

HELP WANTED

Tim Hortons in Whitecourt is looking to fill the following positions:

Food Service Attendant
Full Time / Shift Work

Food Service Supervisor
Full Time / Shift Work

SHIFT INCENTIVE FOR OVERNIGHTS

Please apply in person at the restaurant.



4331-52 Ave Unit 1
Whitecourt, AB

4216 Elko Drive
Whitecourt, AB

continued from page 1

like split families where custody is shared. "How do they get to choose which address they use," questioned one responder. Loss of friendships already made was another concern. One responder detailed concerns of losing "operational efficiencies" with the change, mentioning age-appropriate playground equipment and same levelled reading books as two examples. They also added that "splitting up the robust pre-K specialist team at Pat Hardy" would be a significant loss. Another made a similar comment. They said it would be a disadvantage to spread out learning resources between two schools rather than the "obvious advantage" of having it in one spot.

Several responders spoke of having younger children amongst older children as a disadvantage. One said that having small children mixed with older children would expose the younger group to more adverse behaviours, influencing a younger crowd. Others said they would prefer less of an age gap between students, with some calling it too big. One commenter said mixing big and little kids would require a "tremendous amount of resources" due to the academically-wide spread.

One continually echoed concern was a worry of a division created between children in the valley and those uptown. "The disadvantage I see changing to a K-5 is back to a community split," said one. It's "separating the town into classes," said another. "By splitting downtown and uptown, you create an economic separation. The model prior in Whitecourt showed this," said a responder. Another said it would create "have and

have not schools." Even another stated, "the whole point of changes (prior) was so it wasn't based on where you lived." The topic of "town-splitting" was one of the most mentioned points.

Other concerns included parents not getting to choose which school their children attend, children not remaining with their current friend group, same grades no longer being together, the financial cost of reconfiguring the system, having to establish new classrooms and losing collaboration with teachers of the same grade level, and losing age-appropriate learning spaces.

With the data compiled, Northern Gateway Public Schools had a big decision to make. The decision was made public at the very end of February; Pat Hardy and Whitecourt Central School would return to K-5 schools beginning this fall. Superintendent Kevin Bird said that changes to Whitecourt's size, population and layout led to the change. "Populations of learners' up the hill" and 'in the valley' have balanced over the years. At the same time, the needs of early learners have accelerated across the Division." He explained that the decision to return the two schools to K-5 models would "result in a more even balance of students and needs in Whitecourt."

The press release announcing the decision stated that a transition plan would be shared sometime in March. Parents and stakeholders interested in reviewing the cost/benefit analysis provided by Northern Gateway Public Schools can type the following direct link into their browser to view the breakdown, <https://www.ngps.ca/download/410375>. The survey feedback can be found here: <https://www.ngps.ca/download/410110>.



Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza

Now Hiring Executive Chef NOC 6321

Responsibilities:

- Plan and direct food preparation and cooking banquets and specialty functions.
- Plan menus and ensure food meets quality standards
- Estimate food requirements and may estimate food and labour costs
- Supervise activities of sous-chefs, specialist chefs, cooks
- Arrange for equipment purchases and repairs
- Recruit and hire staff
- May prepare and cook food on a regular basis or for special guests or functions.
- Demonstrate new cooking techniques for and new equipment to the cooking staff
- Prepare and cook complete meals or specialty food, such as pastries, sauces, soups, salads, vegetables, meats, poultry, and fish dishes. Create and decorate food displays for special events such as banquets.
- Instruct cooks in the preparation, cooking garnishing, and presentation of food.
- Maintain records of food costs, consumption, sales, and inventory
- Analyze operating costs and other data
- Ability to acquire and maintain relationships e.g., associates, customers, and vendors.
- Positive communication and interpersonal skills.
- Positive attitude and a consistent display of professionalism.
- Innovative, detail-oriented, and quality conscious.
- Ability to endure abundant physical movements in carrying out job duties.
- Demonstrated ability to lead and direct a team.
- Ability to respond quickly in a dynamic and changing environment
- Knowledge of cost analysis, fiscal management, and budgeting techniques as an asset

Qualification:

- Post Secondary diploma in Business Management, Culinary Arts, or Hospitality
- 3-5 years of supervisory or management experience in the Hospitality or Restaurant industry.
- Ability to provide leadership and communicate with all staff members.
- Ability to compute basic mathematical calculations.
- Knowledge of proper sanitation procedures and food safety guidelines.
- Understanding of food handling and sanitation standards.
- Understanding of restaurant operational procedures.
- Effective decision-making skills.

Education: Post-secondary in business management, Culinary Arts or Hospitality

Experience: 5 years or more

Terms of Employment: Permanent full-time, 44-hour work week

Language: English

Employment Conditions: Shift work, Day, Evenings, Weekends, Holidays, Nights.

Wage: \$70,000 per year.

Benefits Package: Vision, Dental, and Health, After a 90-day probation period

Location: Twp.Rd, 602A, Hwy 32 North, Whitecourt, Alberta

Address: Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza P.O Box 10 Whitecourt, Alberta T7S 1N3

Contact: 780-779-2727 or fax 780-706-7451 **Visit our website:** www.eaglerivercasino.ca

How to apply: Send your resume to HR@eaglerivercasino.ca, mail or fax.



Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza

Now Hiring Security Guard Supervisor NOC 62029

Responsibilities:

- Co-ordinate, assign and review the work of security guards and other service workers not elsewhere classified
- Establish work schedules and procedures and co-ordinate activities with other work units or departments
- Resolve work-related problems and prepare and submit progress and other reports
- Hire and train staff in job duties, safety procedures, and company policies
- Requisition of supplies and materials
- Ensure smooth operation of computer systems, equipment, and machinery, and arrange for maintenance and repair work
- Monitor quality and production levels
- May perform the same duties as workers supervised.
- Arrange for maintenance and repair work
- Assist clients/guests with special needs
- Co-ordinate activities with other work units or departments
- Ensure smooth operation of computer equipment and machinery
- Establish work schedules and procedures
- Handle emergency situations
- Monitor quality and production levels
- Prepare and submit progress and other reports
- Requisition or order materials, equipment, and supplies
- Resolve work-related problems
- Supervise the operation of mechanical equipment and machinery
- Supervise, co-ordinate and schedule (and possibly review) activities of workers
- Train staff/workers in job duties, safety procedures, and company policies.

Qualifications:

- Completion of college courses related to the area supervised may be required.
- Experience in the occupation supervised is usually required.
- Certification or licensing AGLC.
- Must be able to complete Smart training course
- Must have a valid driver's license class 5
- Must be able to complete AML.

Experience: 2 – 3 years.

Education: Completion of secondary school an asset.

Terms of Employment: Permanent full-time 44-hour work week.

Language: English

Employment Conditions: Shift work, Day, Evenings, Weekends, Holidays, Nights.

Wage: \$20.77 per hour.

Benefits Package: Vision, Dental, Health after 90-day probation period.

Location: Twp.Rd.602A, Hwy 32 North, Whitecourt, AB Canada.

Address: Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza P.O Box 10 Whitecourt, Alberta Canada T7S-1N3

Contact: 780-779-2727 or Fax 780-706-7451

Visit our Website: www.eaglerivercasino.ca

How to Apply: Send resume to HR@eaglerivercasino.ca, mail or fax

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

www.whitecourt.ca | [facebook.com/TownofWhitecourt](https://www.facebook.com/TownofWhitecourt) | 780-778-2273

If you enjoy a fast-paced, progressive work environment and you have a passion for serving the local community- then this may be the opportunity for you! We believe that our values of diversity, collaboration, innovation and mutual respect bring out the best in our team, and we are currently looking to fill the following positions:

- Job#: 23-012,** Arena Operator, Permanent, Part-time Position.
- Job#: 23-013,** Family Support Diversion Worker, Temporary, Full-time Position.

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

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



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As we approach the spring and summer seasons and spend more time outdoors, let's not forget to follow our sun smart guidelines: protect your skin by covering up, avoid peak hours of sun exposure, and apply sunscreen.

For all open career opportunities, please check out our website at albertanewsprint.com → Careers.

A small credit card fee, similar to businesses, could be instated for CC users at Woodlands County office

By Serena Lapointe

Woodlands County Council held its Governance & Priorities Committee meeting last Wednesday. The 6:00 pm meeting was a short one featuring two draft policies regarding the use of credit cards. The first draft presented was for Policy 1517, which concerned Woodlands County's surcharge to those who pay for services or fees with their credit card.

As part of the County's 5-year Recovery Plan, the Administration has been reviewing the costs connected to the level of service provided. The rationale presented in the meeting's Request for Decision (RFD) stated that draft Policy #1517 is a "cost-neutral initiative to balance the convenience provided to ratepayers with different payment options while minimizing the impact of credit card surcharge fees on the County's revenue source."

Woodlands County has paid significant fees for ratepayers using credit cards in the

last three years. In 2020, they paid \$40,250.57, the highest of the three years numbers were provided for. In 2021, they paid \$32,582.66. Last year, they paid a bit less, \$32,307.53. With \$30,000 set aside in the 2023 Budget for Visa/Mastercard fees, and \$4,000 for debit card transaction fees, some pocket change needed to be found to bring the cost under its mark or, better yet, save it entirely.

Victoria Chan, Director of Corporate Services, explained that draft Policy #1517 was new. "We want to take advantage of the new allowable 2.4 percent that we could charge to anyone using a credit card. This is a result of a class-action lawsuit backed by the small and medium businesses back in 2022. In this case, the network facility allows the Canadian merchants to charge 2.4 percent on the usage of the credit cards."

The class action lawsuit she referenced began in 2011 when Canadian businesses took

Visa and Mastercard to court over fees the companies charged retailers when their customers used credit cards to pay. The settlement was finalized last year, refunding merchants hundreds of millions in fees. In the settlement, businesses also gained the right to pass those user charges onto customers directly, which they couldn't before.

Chan said that Woodlands County is one of the few municipalities that accept credit cards as payment for property taxes, specifically with no limit to the transaction. She said that allowing the administration to charge the 2.4 percent surcharge would free up the money spent on it. "This policy is to neutralize the fee that the credit card facility charges," explained Chan.

Councillor Wilhelm asked if the four thousand dollar fee for debit card transactions was included. He wondered if they would be looking to initiate a fee recoup for it too. Chan said no.

"At this point, we are not because it is about five cents to twenty-five cents per transaction for using a debit card, so we find that this is a fee that we can manage. We want to encourage less usage of cash."

Councillor Prestidge said that the change could be a double-edged sword from conversations he had had. "Either we lose some money using the credit cards, or we have people that don't pay on time. A lot of people will pay with their credit cards, on time, and they won't do it with paying cash or a cheque, or something."

Councillor Wilhelm reiterated that the change wasn't stopping anyone from using their credit card. "This isn't going to prevent them from paying with their credit card. They just have to eat a 2.4 percent fee. This happens at a lot of businesses now if you're paying with a credit card. Most businesses, especially with anywhere where you're paying in the thousands of dollars,

they don't eat that 2.4 percent anymore."

Councillor Kusch echoed his colleague's comment. "There are a lot of businesses you see that do have a surcharge, especially on large credit card purchases." Continuing the conversation, Councillor Wilhelm said many businesses have a sticker displayed stating the surcharge. "I don't think it's unreasonable to ask for that to be compensated because somebody's got to pay that." Councillor Deane motioned to forward the conversation to an upcoming council meeting, where the policy could be voted on.

The second draft policy was for Policy 1518 – Corporate Purchasing Card Use. "This policy is an internal policy. It governs the use of the corporate purchase card by the administration," explained Chan. "Right now, we already have something in place, but not formalized in a policy. This has been identified by the external auditors as something

that we should develop. This is a policy developed in conjunction with the management's input. One of the criteria is that the credit card users must reconcile the statements. This is to formalize the existence process."

Councillor Deane asked two questions. "Currently, are the credit card users reconciling, or will this be a change for the user as well?" Chan responded. "Right now, it is not usually done by the cardholders. It's done by Finance (department). With this policy in place, the cardholders will be now accountable and responsible for that." CAO Gordon Frank said that they do ensure cardholders provide receipts and that it is reconciled. "If there is a receipt missing, we hunt it down."

Councillor Deane said it felt straightforward and made "complete sense." He made the motion to send the discussion item to Council for deliberation. Both draft policy motions made by Deane were unanimous. Reeve Burrows was absent.

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Date of Decision: March 9, 2023

Appeals Close at 4:00pm: March 31, 2023

An Appeal of the above decision(s) may be made by submitting a written appeal and appeal fee (\$300) 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.



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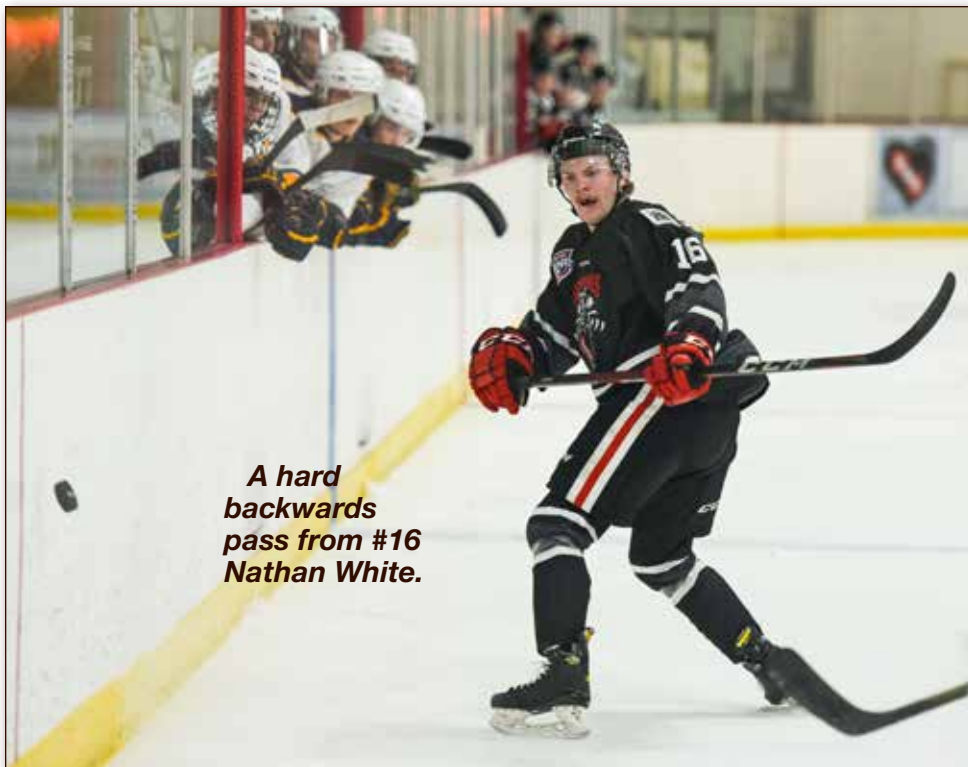
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A look at the local weather	Tue., March 14	Wed., March 15	Thu., March 16	Fri., March 17	Sat., March 18
P.O.P.	40%	10%	10%	20%	20%
High	-1°C	1°C	3°C	6°C	3°C
Low	-12°C	-10°C	-11°C	-9°C	-9°C
Wind	NW 15 km/h	W 6 km/h	W 10 km/h	W 8 km/h	W 6 km/h
24-Hr Rain / Snow	<1cm	<1cm	-	-	-

Wolverines score early lead in first playoff series



A hard backwards pass from #16 Nathan White.



A fan-made sign showed some love to their favourite seven Wolverines players.

The Whitecourt Wolverines have taken a commanding lead in their first playoff series. The feisty bunch will head to Grande Prairie this week to see if they can steal a win, or two, on Storm turf.

By Serena Lapointe

The AJHL playoffs have officially begun for the Whitecourt Wolverines. Their first-round opponent, the Grande Prairie Storm, bussed down to Whitecourt on Friday for games one and two of their best-of-seven matchup. Six hundred and nineteen eager and excited fans attended game one on March 10 at the Scott Safety Centre.

The Whitecourt Wolverines kicked off their first playoff round, scoring first at 6:51 of the opening period. The goal by Colby Browne, assisted by Jack Franklin and Aiden Long, whipped fans into a frenzy as cheer sticks banging together echoed through the arena. Six minutes later, the excitement level lowered considerably as the Grande Prairie Storm scored not once but twice,

ending the first period with a 2-1 lead.

In the second period, the Wolverines were hungry. They skated hard, moved the puck quickly and had great chances to get it in the net, but nothing could make it through. With eight minutes left in the frame and on the powerplay after an interference call against the Storm, the Wolverines scored. To the shock of fans, it was called off almost immediately.

Within the same two-minute powerplay, the Wolverines scored again, and again it was waved off. Fans were bewildered. Shouts of “come on, refs” and loud booo’s could be heard from one corner of the stands to the other. It was not a good time to be

a zebra. Fans stood up, shouting down to the ice surface, and players were visibly agitated to have goals clawed back.

Shortly after the two disallowed goals, Wolverine Goalie Lochlan Gordon brought fans to their feet. It wasn’t for a great save but rather a wick-

ed right hook. Following a save, a Storm player got a little bit too poky with his stick as he attempted to free the puck from Gordon’s grasp. Once the whistle blew, Gordon got to his feet and clocked him. Wolverine Tanner Komzack got a shot in, too, for a proper one-

two punch.

In the third, fans watched as the agitation between the Wolverines and Storm players grew and grew. Nearly each whistle blast resulted in a bit of pushing and shoving, but the only penalty of the period was a tripping call against the Storm. With 51 seconds to go, Cooper Smyl, flanked by Caleb MacDonald and Tanner Komzack, riffled the puck through the Storm goalie’s pads, tying things up. Fans went nuts!

The final buzzer sounded with the teams locked at 2-2. It almost took the entire overtime to end the game and crown a winner. At 15:54 of the extra frame, the man that started it all ended it. Colby Browne

scored the game’s opener and the winning overtime goal giving the Wolverines victory over the Storm.

The very next night, Saturday, March 11, was game two, and Ben Charette was in net for the Wolverines. After a close call the night before, as exciting as it was, the Wolverines wanted to come out swinging and try to put the game to bed as early as possible. One minute and twenty seconds into the game, Tanner Klimpke lit up the goal light. The 624 fans in attendance loved it and wanted more. Roughly four minutes later, Jonah Bevington scored his first of the playoffs, assisted by Daniel North, making

continued on page 11



Wolverines goalie Lochlan Gordon threw a big punch. Fans went wild!



Gordon closed the hatch and refused to let go of the puck.



This ref had his frog skates on.



MacDonald's view as he sent the puck flying down the rink.



A mid-game sliding race.

continued from page 10

it 2-0 for the hometown team.

Still in the first period, Michael Lovsin joined the ranks of playoff scorers, nailing his first at 12:58, unassisted. After the first period of play, the Wolverines had taken a commanding lead over their rivals and headed into the first intermission with a 3-0 lead.

In the second period, the Wolverines had two

early powerplays after the Storm were called for holding and roughing. No goals came of either powerplay. Halfway through the period, at 12:53, Colby Browne, Mr. Hot Hands from the previous night's game, scored his third goal of the playoffs, assisted by Aiden Long. It was 4-0 for the Wolverines!

In the third and final period, the Storm attempted a comeback, scoring in the last few minutes, making it 4-1, but they couldn't

catch the Wolverines. The next two games will occur in Grande Prairie at the Bonnetts Energy Centre on Tuesday, March 14 and Wednesday, March 15. If necessary, game five would take place in Whitecourt on Friday, March 17, and game six would be in Grande Prairie on Sunday, March 19. Should the series require a game seven, it would be in Whitecourt on Wednesday, March 22. Let's go, Wolverines!



The first 100 fans through the door at the Scott Safety Centre this past weekend received a pair of Whitecourt Wolverines cheer sticks to increase fans' excitement by raising the arena's sound level. This young lady was one of the lucky fans to score a pair of noise makers and was very happy about it.



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