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COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



The Press

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Vol. 13 - Issue 6 | Wednesday, February 7, 2024

Building relationships and having fun is what last week's multi-team skills competition was all about



Accuracy winner Spencer Rheume after his big win.



Travis Verbeek flying to his Fastest Skater title. See story page 5.



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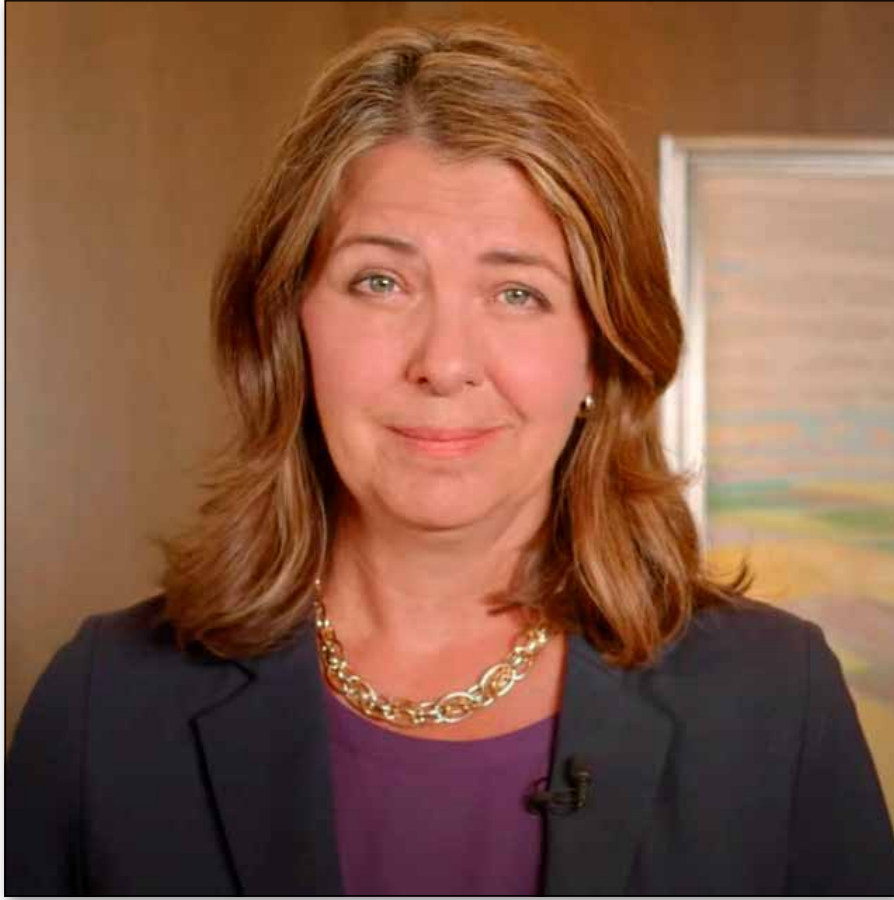
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Premier Smith calls new policy on gender identity “preserving of choice” for Alberta’s youth



Premier Danielle Smith recently announced changes involving medical procedures and therapies relating to gender identity, specifically concerning youth and their access to it under certain ages. The announcement also impacts sexual education and increases parent awareness of what their children are doing at school. Premier Smith said the policy changes are about not letting children make adult choices.

| By Serena Lapointe

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith kickstarted February by announcing policy changes and guidelines on gender identity. The guidelines focused heavily on children, the ages they can access specific medical procedures or treatments, and changes that affect the school setting. In a video address on February 1 and a press conference the next day, Smith said she deeply cares about Albertans who identify as transgender and said she will see that their rights are protected.

Smith said one of the greatest responsibilities parents, teachers, and community leaders have is preserving the rights of children to grow and develop into mature adults. She said being a youth is a complicated time, noting that children are “constantly learning about themselves, trying new things, dealing with biological changes,” and working through new thoughts and feelings.

“Decisions like choosing a career, a partner, raising children, their interaction with legal drugs like alcohol and cannabis, their sexual activities and preferences and many other adult choices,” said Smith, are for adults only. She noted that it was her view that the list of adult choices included deciding whether to alter one’s biological sex.

“Making permanent and irreversible decisions regarding one’s biological sex while

still a youth can severely limit that child’s choices in the future,” said Premier Smith. She explained that prematurely encouraging or enabling children to “alter their very biology or natural growth no matter how well-intentioned or sincere” posed a risk to a child’s future.

“I certainly do not want children to be making decisions before maybe they’ve even had sex about whether they want to stop that aspect of their life or before they’ve even contemplated whether they want to have kids, to cut off that aspect of their life. I think as adults, we have an obligation to ensure for kids that they preserve all of those important choices until they’re adults, until they’re able to make those decisions with the maturity that goes along with that. When you’re talking about irreversible decisions, that falls into the category of adult choices, so we want to make sure that they’re making those choices as adults,” she explained.

In the policy, children fifteen and under will not be permitted to use puberty blockers or hormone therapies for gender reassignment or affirmation. Minors aged 16 and 17 can, provided they are “deemed mature enough” and have parental, physician, and psychologist approval. Minors already undergoing puberty blockers or hormone therapies

will not be affected by policy changes. Top and bottom surgeries will not be permitted for minors 17 and under.

In the school setting, teachers will be required to give parental notification and opt-in requirements every time they intend to give formal instruction on gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality. Third-party materials or presentations on the above-mentioned topics will require pre-approval from the Ministry of Education. “It shouldn’t be onerous. It should be fairly straightforward to (keep) parents in the loop on these issues.”

Youths wishing to alter their name or pronouns in school, aged 15 and under, will need parental notification and consent. Minors aged 16 or 17 who want to change their will not need parental approval, but the government will require that parents be notified. “We know that nearly all parents, even those who may disagree with the decision of their children, will love and care for their children no matter what choices they make.” She added that parents who reject or become abusive to a child identifying as transgender are protected under the existing child protection laws, adding that they would be “strictly enforced.”

Premier Smith said, given the controversy

continued on page 3

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Minors aged 15 and under would need parental consent to change their name or pronouns.

Not a quiet Gym Riot!



The students from Grade one to five at Pat Hardy Elementary School enjoyed an exciting day last week during the Gym Riot event, making unforgettable memories brimming with joy. Among the various activities, the newspaper snowball fight at the conclusion likely stood out as the highlight!

continued from page 2

around discussing sexuality and gender, especially when children are involved, that Alberta's adult population needs to "depoliticize the discussion" and focus on the well-being of the children involved. "They all need our unconditional love and support." She also called on everyone, teachers, students, and the community to report bullying of any kind so that it can be stopped in its tracks.

Policy changes also touched on sports. Smith said she strongly believed that those born male who had transitioned to or identified as female are "owed the opportunity to meaningfully participate in sport." But, she said "obvious biological realities" gave them a "massive competitive advantage" over women and girls, which she called unfair.

She said her government would be working with active sporting organizations in the province to ensure that women and girls can compete in women's only divisions in athletic competitions and not be forced to compete against biologically stronger transgender female athletes. She said they would also work to ensure the expansion of co-ed or other gender-neutral divisions for transgender Albertans to compete in.

Support for transgender youth and adults is also included in the policy and guidelines. She said her government is hoping to attract one or more medical professionals to Alberta who specialize in transgen-

der surgery. Currently, Canadians seeking gender reassignment travel to Montreal to visit one of the world's busiest gender surgery clinics, which performs more than 650 surgeries per year. It is the only clinic of its kind in Canada.

Premier Smith said having specialized medical professionals in the province would enable transgender Albertans to receive care for their "extremely unique and complex medical needs" closer to home and not travel for surgeries. Smith also provided a few details on a new pilot project in the works that will provide appropriate counselling services to support parents and youth identifying as transgender.


When asked at the press conference if she felt she spoke for most Albertans, Premier Smith said she was confident that most Albertans didn't want roadblocks between parents and their children. "I am confident that Albertans do not want children to make irreversible decisions that impact their reproductive health. I am confident that they do not think that those are child decisions to make, that those are adult decisions to make."

Further details on the policy will be forthcoming. Premier Smith said her government hopes to have a package ready for September that outlines the changes made. She said they will be seeking consultation on how to implement it. She credited consultations with members of the transgender community for helping develop their approach.

2024 BUDGET OPEN HOUSE

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DISCRETIONARY USE APPLICATIONS

DISCRETIONARY USE APPLICATION 15-002-2024

Location: PT. SW 26-58-10-W5M
Proposed Development: Garden Suite
Response Deadline: February 15, 2024, 4:30 pm
Decision Date: February 21, 2024, 4:00 pm, Whitecourt Municipal Office

For full details on Development Permits visit <https://woodlands.ab.ca/>, Email: planning@woodlands.ab.ca, Call: 1-888-870-6315

DISCRETIONARY USE APPLICATION 15-005-2024

Location: PT. SW 23-59-12-W5M
Proposed Development: Home Occupation (Major): Bound to Detail
Response Deadline: February 15, 2024, 4:30 pm
Decision Date: February 21, 2024, 4:00 pm, Whitecourt Municipal Office



DAVE KUSCH
Mayor
Councillor for Area 1
dave.kusch@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-778-9337



JOHN BURROWS
Councillor for Whitecourt West
Division 2
john.burrows@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-778-4747



ALAN DEANE
Councillor for Whitecourt
Central Division 3
alan.deane@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-778-0804



JEREMY WILHELM
Councillor for
Whitecourt East Division 4
jeremy.wilhelm@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-779-6554



BRUCE PRESTIDGE
Councillor for Blue Ridge
Division 5
bruce.prestidge@woodlands.ab.ca
Phone: 780-779-3917



PETER KUELKEN
Councillor for Green Lake
Freeman River Division 6
peter.kuelken@woodlands.ab.ca
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DEVIN WILLIAMS
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Four charged after nearly a kilogram of drugs were seized in Valleyview

On Jan. 25, 2024, members of the Western Alberta District Crime Reduction Unit (WAD CRU), with the assistance of the Valleyview RCMP, executed a search warrant at a residence in Valleyview.

As a result of the search warrant, mul-

tiple items we seized, including:

- Over 780 grams of methamphetamine;
- Over 180 grams of cocaine;
- \$4800 in Canadian currency;
- 1 prohibited firearm;
- 2 prohibited weapons;
- Multiple edged

weapons; and

- Ammunition.
- As a result of the investigation, Brandon Lee Munro (34), Jordana Goodswimmer (24), Mitchell Trotter (21), and Gail Isadore (20), all residents of Valleyview, were charged with a combined total of 57 offences, including:

- Possession of cocaine for the purpose of trafficking;
- Possession of methamphetamine for the purpose of trafficking; and
- Several firearms and weapons offences.

All four were brought before a justice of the peace. Munro was remanded into custody, while Goodswimmer, Trotter and Isadore were released on conditions. They are all scheduled to appear at the Alberta Court of Justice in Valleyview on Feb. 15, 2024.

“WAD CRU began the investigation earlier this month and those accused are believed to be responsible for a significant volume of drug trafficking within Valleyview and the neighbouring Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation” said Sgt Chris Power. “Our District Crime Reduction Unit continues to support local detachments by providing specialized policing services, targeting drug trafficking and property crime, both of which have significant impacts on the residents of the communities we serve. We encourage anyone with information regarding these crimes to report it to your local detachment or anonymously through Crimestoppers”.

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Building relationships and having fun is what last week's multi-team skills competition was all about

By Serena Lapointe

The Whitecourt Wolverines were joined by over 50 Whitecourt Minor Hockey players for a multi-team skills competition on Friday night at JDA Place, with many friends and family in the audience cheering them on. Thirty-five youths from the U9, U11, and U13 teams competed against each other first, followed by the Whitecourt Wolverines against the TRAC Wolverines U18 AA squad.

The youngsters received big cheers from the crowd as they competed in three different categories. Bentley Crabbe, from U13, took home the prize for Fastest Skater, handsomely beating out his competitors with a time of 14.66 seconds. Noah O'Gorman, U11, won Accurate Shot, nailing all four targets fast, and his U11 teammate, Cooper Perrin, handled the puck with kid gloves, as they say, taking the top award in the Puck Handling competition.

Following the U9, U11, and U13 skills competition, all three groups filled the space at center ice and posed for a group photo. Then, members of the Whitecourt Wolverines handed out treat bags to each player, which included a candy bag from Catering by



U11 Noah O'Gorman won the Accuracy Event in the U9/U11/U13 competition.



Jarred Feist giving it his best in the Hardest Shot competition.

Local talent intermingled last week as Whitecourt Minor Hockey players (U9, U11, U13, and U18) joined the Whitecourt Wolverines for one massive Skills Competition event.

Mama Gray's Kitchen and a Booster Juice gift card. Now, it was time to watch the big kids.

Kyle Venneman, Travis Verbeek, Xavier Lacoste, Evan Johnson and Jalen Bianchet were up first for the Fastest Skater contest against Camden Fowler, Joshua Werzun, Cash Hunt and Brock Hudson of the U18 AA. After some fast skating from both sides and a wipeout from Evan Johnson that gave his teammates and the Wolverines mascot a chuckle, Wolverine Travis Verbeek was crowned the speediest of them all with a smoking time on the stopwatch. Camden Fowler had the fastest skate for his team.

For Hardest Shot, U18 AA players Tanner Kickey, Amton Reeves, Branden Sex-

smith and Joshua Werzun were up against Nat Bannister, Colby Browne, Jack Pollock and Hunter Motley of the Wolverines. With two of Whitecourt's finest RCMP officers on ice with radar guns, Hunter Motley sniped a 132 km/hour shot to take the title. His teammate, Bannister, was a close second, clocking in at 121 km/h. Joshua Werzun was the fastest for the U18 group, reaching a smoking 114 km/hour with his shot.

The next competition was all about accuracy. Wolverines Dylan Leslie, Jarred Feist, Colby Browne, and Spencer Rheume took on Jonah Lillo, Lucah Lamb, Jake Baker and Darris Acker. Players took a knee in the Wolverines zone, with Slash the Mascot in the middle. Players took turns be-

fore the net, hoping to hear the puck ring off one of the four iron circles hanging on it. The overall winner of the Accurate Shot title was Spencer Rheume, who hit all four targets. The best shot on the U18 side was Darris Acker, who hit three targets.

The last listed event of the night was the Relay. Players grouped up to compete in various puck handling and shooting skills, with the goalies getting the final move by taking a cross-ice attempt on the far net. After some confusion, which had the U18s cheering and thinking they had won, Team 1 for the Wolverines (Arnold, Keeble, and Laplante) was announced as the winner.

Accurate Shot title holder Spencer Rheume said hanging out with kids from White-

court Minor Hockey is always a great experience. "It's awesome. We were in the dressing rooms with the kids and got to interact with them and ask them what their favourite part about hockey was, when they started, teach them a few things and let them ask us questions. It's awesome being with the kids like this."

For Rheume, having good role models is essential, which he takes seriously. "I think just being a role model and showing them what type of people they should be when they grow up and setting a good example is always good for them and making sure they know that everyone should be able to play hockey and be inclusive."

Rheume said his brother was his role model growing up and fondly remembers watching him play hockey in Grande Prairie. He said watching the junior team play and dreaming of being out on the ice one day, to now being a player in the AJHL, is a dream come true. Sharing that with the younger players helps a new batch of dreamers see a path to the AJHL just like he did.

"I think it's great having the kids out here. It's fun for us to compete, but at the same time, it's fun to watch the kids and see what they can do and maybe help them get to the next level. We hope they had fun out here with us," he said.

For Bryson Traptow, Wolverine's assistant coach, their partnership with Whitecourt Minor Hockey is hugely

important. "They are a huge reason this team has been here so long and is successful. It gives the kids an opportunity to get to see the guys they watch every Friday and Saturday. We're a team that needs fan support to be able to do what we do and play at a high level."

Traptow said being able to hold a free event made it even better. "It's something we talked about, especially involving minor hockey. They do so much for us, so it's something that we can give back to them, just a little thank you to them and all the people that support us." The skills competition allowed players to relax and pause in a busy season. "It gets them away from the coaches yelling at them all the time at practice or being on them in games," he chuckled. "It gets them away and involved in the community and meeting these younger kids who look up to them. It's an awesome event for everyone."

Before closing out the event, there was one final event as a surprise to fans. The "last man standing" event involved every player from the two teams. One at a time, they each took a shot on their own goalie. If they scored, they stayed alive. If they missed, they were out, and it continued until only one Wolverine and one U18 player were left. When the dust had settled, U18 player Brock Hudson stood victoriously on top, beating Wolverine Dylan Leslie for the bragging rights. The crowd went wild!



U18 player Darris Acker was having a blast.



Wolverine Evan Johnson stretching alongside a smaller teammate.

WOMBANIA™ by PETER MARINACCI

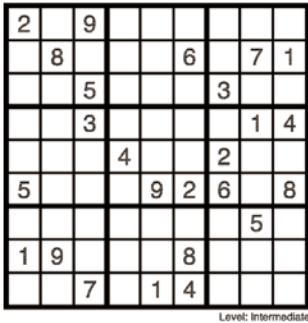
AND THEN TWINK SAID, "YOU'RE DOING EVERYTHING ABSOLUTELY PERFECT," AND THAT'S WHEN I REALIZED IT WAS ALL A DREAM.

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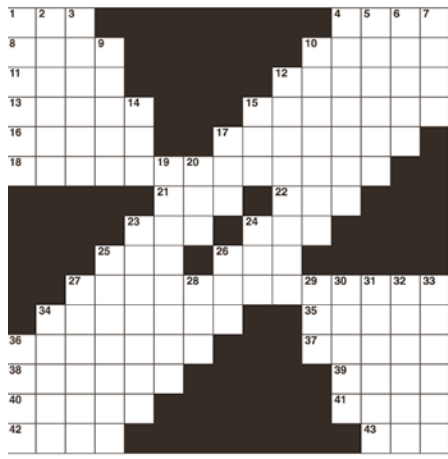
SEE SOLUTIONS PAGE 15

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Here's How It Works:

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

Crossword Clues

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. One point south of due east
- 4. Coagulated blood
- 8. Fortifying ditch
- 10. Devotee of Hinduism
- 11. Trunk of a tree
- 12. Bank note
- 13. Capital of Guam
- 15. Study again
- 16. Covered with hoarfrost
- 17. Opening
- 18. Legendary Rolling Stone
- 21. Stray
- 22. Computer storing system
- 23. Signal
- 24. Pitching statistic
- 25. Human being
- 26. Malaysian isthmus
- 27. The "Blonde Bombshell"
- 34. A gland
- 35. Bluish greens

- 36. Endangered
- 37. Three-dimensional
- 38. In a way, precipitated
- 39. God associated with dissolution
- 40. Blemished
- 41. Flow or leak slowly
- 42. Disco legends The Bee ___
- 43. Midway between south and southeast

CLUES DOWN

- 1. A way to board
- 2. Get down
- 3. Highly seasoned sausage
- 4. First day of month
- 5. Eurasian shrubs
- 6. The organ that bears the ovules of a flower
- 7. Small lake
- 9. Belief
- 10. Sunrooms
- 12. Metric weight unit
- 14. Vasopressin
- 15. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
- 17. One-time family room staple
- 19. Got back together
- 20. Anger
- 23. Sang merrily
- 24. Sea eagle
- 25. Military men
- 26. Kilo yard (abbr.)
- 27. Found in the sea
- 28. Protects from weather
- 29. Type of medicine
- 30. City along the Rhine
- 31. Animal disease
- 32. Martini ingredients
- 33. Get away
- 34. Lack of disunity
- 36. One-time European Commission officer

Skating Competition



Flower, medals, and smiles.



Happy skaters on the podium.



Ainsley with her gold medal from the Star 4 U10 Freeskate.



Teammates having fun.



Elliot (right) all smiles with her hard-earned medal and flowers.

The last two weekends in January were especially busy for the skaters in the Whitecourt Skating Club. After hard work and dedication to perfecting their routines, the athletes participated in two Grande Prairie competitions. The weekend of January 20, the Star 1 to 3 skaters put on a great show, taking home numerous medals and having a blast. The following weekend, skaters travelled back up north to attend the Star Series #3 Competition for performers in Star 4 and up. Whitecourt skaters repeatedly made it onto the podium, showing off their hard work. Ainsley (glasses) won gold for her Star 4 U10 Freeskate performance, and her teammates Isla, McKenna, Addison and Jenaka snagged golds of their own in their respective categories—great job to all the skaters who competed. You should be very proud! The club's Annual Gala will be on March 20.

HOT BREAKFAST WORD SEARCH



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

WORDS

- BAGEL
- BISCUITS
- BREAKFAST
- BRUNCH
- BUTTER
- CEREAL
- CREPES
- CROISSANT
- EGGS
- ENGLISH MUFFIN
- FRENCH TOAST
- FRIED
- GRAVY
- GRITS
- HASH
- MORNING
- MUFFINS
- OATMEAL
- PANCAKES
- POACHED
- POTATOES
- SCRAMBLED
- TOAST
- WAFFLES

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Meetings held at the Family Worship Center upstairs.

ZOOM ID: **818 413 483** PASSWORD: **gratitude**



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

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Kim Nendsa (President of Whitecourt Cancer & Wellness Society) **780-778-0932**
Aimee Grierson **780-262-0222**

<https://wctcancerwellness.com/>

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



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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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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

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



Family Resource & Crisis Centre

www.whitecourtshester.ca



Support group on Tuesdays 6:30pm - 8:30 pm, starting February 20, 2024 at Crossroads Community Church, 4419 44 Ave, Mayerthorpe.

\$35 includes 12 weekly sessions.

Pre-register by calling 780-786-2533.

Whitecourt Alcoholics Anonymous Group



Meetings are three times each week

- Monday 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm
- Wednesday 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm
- Friday 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm

New Women's AA Group on Saturdays @11 am

Located at the United Church Basement 5201 - 50 St

Please Leave a Message for AA member (780)424-5900

or **Contact Addictions Helpline @1(866)332-2322**

Otherworldly Sunrise



Bathed in pink.

Talk about a good morning! Last week, Whitecourtians and residents around the region awoke to one of the most beautiful and heavenly skies imaginable. Sunrises in the area are often stunning, but this was entirely out of the norm. Vibrant pinks, oranges and purples, painted with care by a true artist, had wholly engulfed the sky above the rising sun, leaving watchers in complete awe. Social media quickly flooded with snapshots from the unexpected display as excited residents shared it from their perspectives. These shots show the perspective of one of the staffers at GFL as he worked outside. The snow-covered ground around him is pink-hued, along with everything else in sight.



Purple perfection above Petro Pass and Reliable Trail Tire.



Last Monday's skies gave everyone a reason to look up.

Five tips for communicating with someone living with dementia

(NC) Chances are you've had an opportunity to talk with someone living with dementia at the grocery store, your place of work or at home. A person living with dementia may have challenges with understanding others as well as being understood. Keep these tips

in mind to help make it easier to communicate:

Minimize distractions

Before you begin a conversation, turn off any background noise such as the radio or a running dishwasher. This may help the person living with dementia to focus. If you're in

a crowded public space, try to find a quieter area to communicate. It also helps if you stay still during your conversation so they can focus on you.

Keep communication clear

Speak slowly in a friendly tone and use

short, simple sentences that focus on one idea at a time. When asking questions, try to use yes or no options, or questions that offer one choice: "Would you like to go on a walk now?" or "Would you like coffee?" If the person living with dementia

repeats themselves or says something that is not accurate, avoid correcting them as this may lead to feelings of frustration and confusion.

Be aware of your body language

Calm and friendly body language such as eye contact and smiling

may help the person living with dementia feel at ease. Try to avoid body language that indicates frustration or anger, such as crossed arms, rolling your eyes or letting out a loud sigh. You can also use gestures to help reinforce the message you're trying to deliver, such as pointing at the thing you're talking about.

Aim to be an active listener

Active listening means giving time for the person living with dementia to finish speaking. You might also want to nod your head, make eye contact or repeat back some of what you heard so the person knows you are listening.


Communication is more than words

For some people living with dementia, it may be difficult to get their message across. Listen and respond to the feelings of the person living with dementia, not just the words. Watch for cues such as facial expression, tone of voice and posture to help you understand and respond with care.

Learn more about dementia and find advice for caring for someone living with dementia at canada.ca/dementia.

DISASTER RECOVERY PROGRAM

DEADLINE APPROACHING



Deadline is approaching for the Government of Alberta's Disaster Recovery Program, related to flooding in Woodlands County, June 16-22, 2023.

If you need help submitting your application to the program, contact our office for support. Woodlands County: 1-888-870-6315

HOW TO APPLY	
<p>ONLINE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Log-in to your Alberta.ca account. account.alberta.ca If you do not have an account, you can create one at the Log-in page. 2. Apply using the Disaster Financial Assistance Portal. recovery.alberta.ca 	<p>EMAIL OR MAIL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit www.alberta.ca/DRP to download the application form that applies to you. 2. Submit form via: Email: drp.info@gov.ab.ca Mail: Alberta Emergency Management Agency 5th Floor, Terrace Building 9515 107 Street NW Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2C1
<p>Deadline to Apply February 26, 2024</p>	

For more info contact:
Alberta Emergency Management Agency

phone: 1-888-671-1111
email: drp.info@gov.ab.ca



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

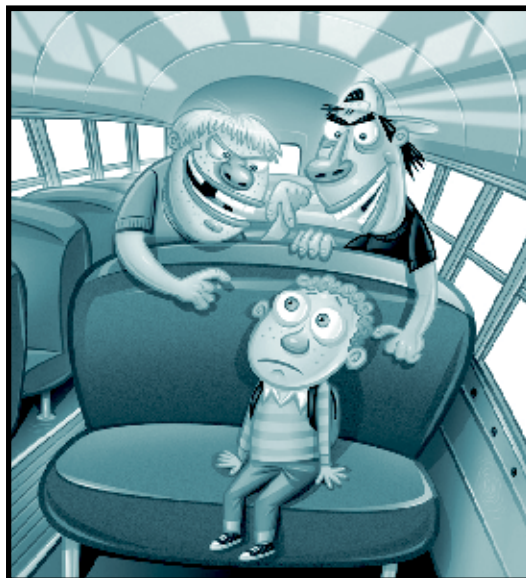


When you keep criticizing your kids, they don't stop loving you, they stop loving themselves. Let that sink in.



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



Indiana Cheyenne

Age 15

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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New study sheds light on working from home

By ATB Financial's Economics & Research Team

Most Canadians do not work from home, but as a new study from Statistics Canada shows, it is more common than before the pandemic.

Highlights of the study include:

- The percentage of Canadians working most of their hours from home spiked during the pandemic, reaching about 40% in April 2020.
- That percentage has come down, but at about 20% as of November 2023, it is still more than double what it was before the pandemic.
- While working almost exclusively from home has tapered post-pandemic, hybrid work arrangements have

become more common, rising from about 4% at the start of 2022 to 12% in November 2023.

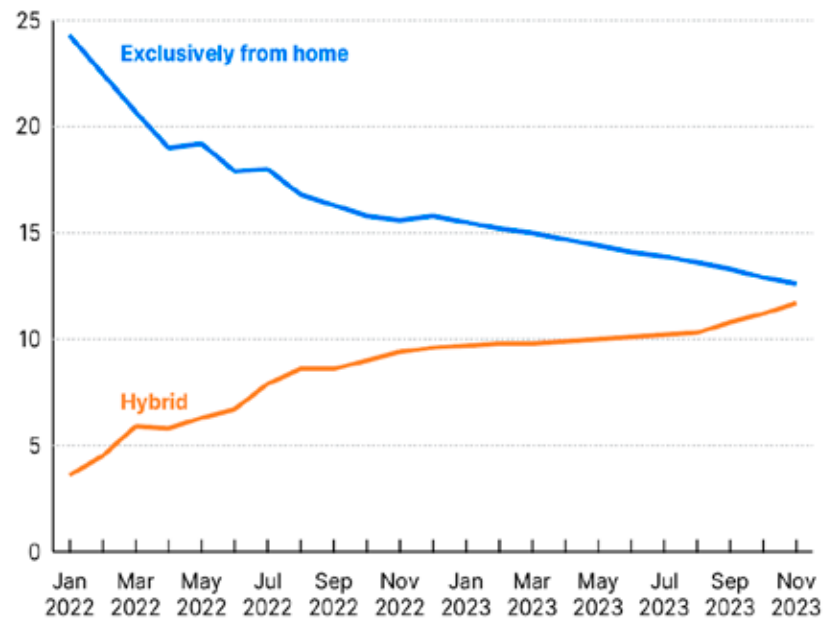
- One of the reasons most Canadians do not work from home is because they can't: only about 40% of jobs in Canada can—in principle—be done from home and the share “varies substantially across regions, education levels, wage deciles, industries and population groups.”
- For example, only 4% of jobs in the agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing sector can be done from home compared to 85% of finance and insurance jobs. (Full disclosure, I am writing this from my home

office.)

- In Ottawa, 53% of jobs can be done from home with 37% of workers doing just that compared to 28% and 7% in the Wood Buffalo-Cold Lake economic region of Alberta (as of December 2022).
- Nine in 10 new teleworkers (i.e. those who didn't work mostly from home before COVID) said they were just as productive at home as they were in the office (as of February 2021).
- The number of Canadians working from home for an employer located in another province or country has increased, but remains relatively small with 179,000 working for

Working from home in Canada

Percentage of workers working exclusively from home or in hybrid work arrangements January 2022 to November 2023



Source: Statistics Canada, "Research to Insights: Working from Home in Canada," January 18, 2024

an employer in a different province and 87,000 for an employer in a different

country (as of June 2022).

- The increase in working from home

has reduced commuting, public transit use, and (likely) carbon emissions.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

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

- Project Number: 1-2024-43-01 – Transfer Station Solid Waste and Recycling Services – Closes February 14, 2024

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

NOTICE OF DECISION

The following decisions were made by the Municipal Planning Commission:

Application 24-006: 5296 48 Avenue – Industrial Use – General – Worm Farm & Accessory Rotary Towers – Approved with Conditions.

Date of Decision: January 25, 2024 **Appeal Closes at 4:00pm:** February 15, 2024

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.

GET INVOLVED....IT'S YOUR TOWN!

Opportunity for Public Participation

The Town has 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.

The **Subdivision and Development Appeal Board** currently has openings available for people to serve as part of a quasi-judicial board, to make decisions on appeals of subdivision or development decisions made by the Development Officer or Municipal Planning Commission. The Board meets on an as need basis, and the successful appointees will also attend a mandatory training session. The Board typically meets less than twice a year.

If you are interested in serving on this Board, 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, Wednesday, February 21, 2024 to:

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

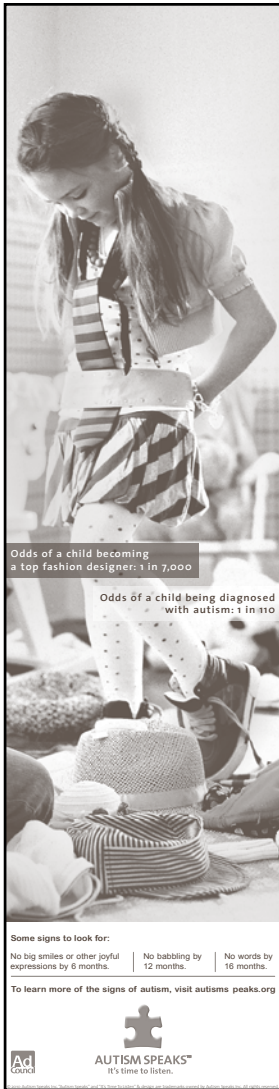
Applications will be presented to Town Council at the February 26, 2024 Regular Meeting.



Blanket Classified Ads

Alberta and NWT for \$269 (up to 25 words) \$8.00 each additional word. These ads are placed in over 100 community newspapers throughout Alberta. We can also place ads in other provinces throughout Canada.

Visit www.whitecourtpress.com



Announcements

AIRDRIE DREAM VACATION LOTTERY 2024. Tickets at airdriedreamvacation.ca. Only 600 tickets! \$35,760 in prizes and \$3,900 in Early Birds. 12 - \$2500 Dream Vacation Vouchers & 48 prizes of \$120.

Auctions

BLANKET THE PROVINCE with a classified ad. Only \$269/wk (based on 25 words or less). Reach almost 80 weekly newspapers. Call NOW for details. 1-800-282-6903 Ext 225; www.awna.com.

Buildings For Sale

INTEGRITY POST FRAME BUILDINGS since 2008 BUILT WITH CONCRETE POSTS. Barns, Shops, Riding Arenas, Machine Sheds and more, sales@integritybuilt.com 1-866-974-7678 www.integritybuilt.com.

Coming Events

FIREARMS WANTED FOR

OUR 2024 AUCTION PROGRAM: Rifles, Shotguns, Handguns, Antiques, Militaria, Collections, Estates, Single Items. For Auction, or Possible Purchase: Toll-Free 1-800-694-2609, Email Us at sales@switzersauction.com or Visit Us @ www.switzersauction.com.

Custom Homes

GET YOUR MESSAGE SEEN ACROSS Alberta. The Blanket Classifieds or Value Ads reach over 600,000 Alberta readers weekly. Two options starting at \$269 or \$799 to get your message out! Business changes, hiring, items for sale, cancellations, tenders, etc. People are increasingly staying home and rely on their local newspapers for information. KEEP people in the loop with our 90 Weekly Community Newspapers. Call THIS NEWSPAPER now or email classifieds@awna.com for details.

1-800-282-6903, 780-434-8746 X225. www.awna.com.

Employment Opportunities

CROWSNEST RIVER RV PARK. Seasonal contract May 01 - October 15. Couple for Camphost & Maintenance Groundskeeper. Serviced seasonal site provided. More info or resume: info@crowsnestriverpark.ca.

Feed and Seed

WE BUY DAMAGED GRAIN - Heated, Mixed, Tough, Light, Bugs, Spring Thrashed....Barley, Wheat, Oats, Peas, Flax, Canola. "On Farm Pickup". Westcan Feed & Grain 1-877-250-5252.

ALBERTA FEED GRAIN: Buying Oats, Barley, Wheat, Canola, Peas, Screenings, Mixed Grains. Dry, Wet, Heated, or Spring Thresh. Prompt Payment. In House Trucks, In House

Excreta Cleaning. Vac Rental. 1-888-483-8789.

Health

HIP/KNEE REPLACEMENT. Other medical conditions causing TROUBLE WALKING or DRESSING? The Disability Tax Credit allows for \$3,000 yearly tax credit and \$30,000 lump sum refund. Take advantage of this offer. Apply NOW; quickest refund Nationwide: Expert help. 1-844-453-5372.

Services

CRIMINAL RECORD? Why suffer employment/licensing loss? Travel/business opportunities? Be embarrassed? Think: Criminal Pardon. US entry waiver.

Record purge. File destruction. Free consultation. 1-800-347-2540. www.accesslegalmjf.com.

Wanted

WANTED OLD ADVERTISING: Dealership signs, service station, gas pumps, globes, oil cans, Red Indian, White Rose, Buffalo, Husky, Ford, GM, Dodge, Tire signs, Coke, Pepsi, etc. Call 306-221-5908.

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- Arthritis
- Corns and Calluses
- Flatfoot
- Hammertoes
- Warts

- Athlete's Foot
- Ankle Sprains
- Diabetic Foot Care
- Forefoot Pain
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Grande Prairie, AB

Airdrie
Apple Wellness Center
229 1 St. SW
Airdrie, AB

Evolution Foot and Ankle Clinic
www.bensefcikdpm.com

A look at the local weather

P.O.P.
High
Low
Wind
24-Hr Rain / Snow

Wed., Feb 7
Cloudy with sunny breaks
30%
-2°C
-10°C
E 6 km/h
-

Thu., Feb 8
Scattered flurries
40%
-2°C
-9°C
E 11 km/h
~1cm

Fri., Feb 9
Scattered flurries
30%
-2°C
-10°C
E 12 km/h
<1cm

Sat., Feb 10
Mainly sunny
20%
0°C
-7°C
W 3 km/h
-

Sun., Feb 11
Mix of sun and clouds
40%
0°C
-7°C
W 8 km/h
-



Human Resources Manager

Reports To: General Manager

PURPOSE

A structured Human Resources Manager role is critical to the success of the Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza. The primary purpose of the Human Resources Manager is to provide guidance and coaching on all Human Resources matters to our property.

ROLES

Reporting to the General Manager, the Human Resources Manager oversee all aspects of human resources practices and processes.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Support departments in developing and delivering strategic HR plans that fit with the overall business direction
- Plan, monitor, and appraise HR activities by scheduling management conferences, resolving employee grievances, training managers in how to coach and discipline, and counseling employees and supervisors
- Champion the onboarding process by ensuring that it's high-quality and up to date, and provide clarity and connection for employees so their roles serve the overall business vision
- Maintain management guidelines by preparing, updating, and recommending human-resources policies and procedures
- Build strong relationships with external suppliers, fostering trust and promoting collaboration
- Handle confidential matters with discretion
- Lead the recruiting function at the property

IMPACT OF ACTION

The Human Resources Manager has a direct impact on the ability to provide Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza staff and management with a safe and suitable environment in which to visit and/or work.

KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

This position requires the ability to communicate clearly, deal tactfully and work effectively with Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza staff and management. The incumbent in this position will provide a primary interface to other Casino & Plaza departments.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- A minimum of 8 years of progress human resources experience in a medium to large organization with experience leading teams and assessing human resources services
- A minimum of 2 years in a senior role in and HR department
- An affinity for the service sector is essential
- Demonstrated success in HR systems and HR Policy/Practice
- Experience of negotiation and influencing at senior management levels
- A leadership style that will incite enthusiasm, provide vision, create a positive morale, role model standards of professionalism
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills are necessary to support diverse associate population
- Strong facilitation and interpersonal skills are essential
- Ability and willingness to develop presentation as required
- A track record effective human resources decision-making and an "urgency to execute" attitude is essential for the fast-paced environment

CANDIDATE PROFILE

- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Ability to meet deadlines in a rapidly changing business environment.
- Ability to work independently.
- Developed writing skills sufficient to prepare written materials involving detailed descriptions and explanations requiring the accurate use of specialized terminology.
- Self-planning skills sufficient to schedule, organize, and carry out work assignments according to established work plans, adjusting work schedules according to changing priorities.
- Developed judgment and problem-solving skills sufficient to interpret and/or analyze factual and conceptual information with the ability to adapt general procedures or approaches when formulating responses to problems.
- Manages workload independently and works well in teams.
- Develops security and systems knowledge through on-the-job experience.
- Must display leadership skills, the ability to multi-task and adjust to multiple jurisdictions.
- Models company values at all times. Shows strong teamwork skills.
- Working knowledge of MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint.

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Mental Health Helpline 1-877-303-2642

- Addiction Helpline 1-866-332-2322
- Health Link 811

Letter to the Editor policy

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@gmail.com.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

www.whitecourt.ca | 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# 24-002:** Infrastructure Summer Labourers – Temporary, Full Time Position.
- **Job# 24-003:** Parks Summer Labourers – Temporary, Full Time Position.
- **Job# 23-004:** Festival Park Attendants – Temporary, Full Time Position.
- **Job# 24-005:** Utilities Summer Labourer – Temporary, Full Time Position.
- **Job# 24-006:** Landfill Summer Labourer – Temporary, Full Time Position.
- **Job# 24-007:** Visitor Information Counsellor – Temporary, Full Time Position.
- **Job# 24-008:** Summer Program Leader – Temporary, Full Time Position.
- **Job# 24-009:** Fire Department FireSmart Labourers – Temporary, Full-Time Position.
- **Job# 24-011:** Director of Infrastructure – Permanent, Full Time Position.

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





Front of House Manager

Reports To: General Manager

PURPOSE

A structured Front of House Manager role is critical to the success of the Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza. The primary purpose of the Front of House Manager is to provide leadership and oversight for the food and beverage service and sales.

ROLES

Reporting to the General Manager, the Front of House Manager will be responsible for the daily operations of the outlets (the restaurant and the bar, as well as banquets, catering and special events). The Manager must ensure that service standards, appearance and cleanliness are of the desired levels. The Manager is also directly responsible for ordering inventory, inventory controls, budgeting, and cash floats.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Actively promotes an environment conducive to high quality customer service and employee relations by being a positive leadership example.
- Must ensure that staff maintains prompt, efficient, friendly and knowledgeable service.
- Scheduling, payroll, disciplinary actions, training and mentoring for staff of food and beverage outlets.
- Work with Marketing to promote the food & beverage outlets.
- Create, manage and implement departmental policies & procedure.
- Maintain compliance with AGLC regulations.
- Ensure alcohol is served responsibly.
- Maintain effective inventory controls and practices.
- Ensure maintenance of safety and sanitation standards and policies
- Provide overall direction, coordination, and ongoing evaluation of outlets operations.
- Budgetary, projections, and cost-control skills to be applied to the daily operations of the Department as outlined by the Manager.
- Use a "hands-on" approach to management. Able to coach staff effectively.

IMPACT OF ACTION

The Front of House Manager has a direct impact on the ability to provide Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza guests, staff and management with a safe and suitable environment in which to visit and/or work.

KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

This position requires the ability to communicate clearly, deal tactfully and work effectively with Eagle River Casino & Travel Plaza guests, staff and management. The incumbent in this position will provide a primary interface to other Casino & Plaza departments.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 4-5 years' experience in the Food & Beverage Industry.
- 3-4 years' supervisory/management experience within the Food & Beverage Industry.
- Experience in a casino setting preferred.
- Post secondary education in a related field preferred but not required.
- Training in management and employee development preferred.
- Continuous training and education to keep abreast of changes in the industry and external environment.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

- Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- Ability to meet deadlines in a rapidly changing business environment.
- Ability to work independently.
- Extensive food & beverage knowledge and ability to develop and apply practices, procedures, and principles in a casino environment.
- Developed writing skills sufficient to prepare written materials involving detailed descriptions and explanations requiring the accurate use of specialized terminology.
- Self-planning skills sufficient to schedule, organize, and carry out work assignments according to established work plans, adjusting work schedules according to changing priorities.
- Developed judgment and problem-solving skills sufficient to interpret and/or analyze factual and conceptual information with the ability to adapt general procedures or approaches when formulating responses to problems.
- Manages workload independently and works well in teams.
- Develops security and systems knowledge through on-the-job experience.
- Must display leadership skills, the ability to multi-task and adjust to multiple jurisdictions.
- Models company values at all times. Shows strong teamwork skills.
- Working knowledge of MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The Schedule for this position may vary and would require the ability to work shift work, late nights, weekends and holidays.

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.



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Whitecourt, AB

4216 Elko Drive
Whitecourt, AB



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or visit your community newspaper



Money Matters

One Canadian Dollar = 0.74 US Dollar
at an exchange rate of **0.7421** (using nominal rate).



Dollar Values as of February 7, 2024



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



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.

Woodlands County Council recap

Public hearings for Bylaw 611-24 – Woodlands County Municipal Development Plan are scheduled for a special Council meeting at 7:15 pm, February 27, 2024, at the Legion Hall in Fort Assiniboine and at the regular Council meeting at 9:45 am, February 28, 2024, at the Municipal Office in Whitecourt. The Municipal Development Plan is a high-level land use and community planning document providing broad direction for how Woodlands County grows and develops land in the future. Municipalities review the document regularly to ensure that the vision meets the communities needs.

Sgt. Bob Dodds joined Council as he prepares for retirement from the RCMP. Sgt. Dodds has played an instrumental role in reducing crime in the region over his nearly 14 years at the detachment and helped lead the establishment of the Barrhead & Regional Crime Coalition (BARCC). Cpl. Fil Vicente is the acting Commander until Sgt. Colin Hack arrives at the Barrhead detachment.

Lisa Grotkowski of Write to Communicate and Fran Ross of FAR Strategies presented an interim report for the Woodlands County Communications Plan. The interim report provides insights on the County's current communications operations and capacity and opportunities identified in stakeholder engagements. Once completed, the plan will establish goals, priorities, initiatives, and actions to improve Woodlands County's internal and external communications.

Open houses are scheduled 4:00 to 7:00 pm with a brief 2024 Budget highlight presentation at 6:00 pm on both February 26, 2024,

at the Municipal Office in Whitecourt and February 27, 2024, at the Legion Hall in Fort Assiniboine. Additionally, the opportunity to learn and discuss Local Improvement Taxes for Cold Mix Roads to explore new opportunities for roadways.

As per the Woodlands County/Town of Whitecourt ICF Arbitration Award, Woodlands County provided written input to the Town of Whitecourt regarding the use of Whitecourt Pierce Aerial Pumper (Tower 1) within Woodlands County. Woodlands County is continuing to work with the Whitecourt Fire Department regarding levels of service for the aerial pumper. Tower 1 is a specialized piece of equipment that has limited use within the County as there are no three-story residential buildings or structures 35 feet or more in height, there are no fire hydrants that have the flow required for Tower 1, and there are several one-way in, one-way out roads that cannot accommodate the size of the unit.

The 2024 Property Tax Auction is scheduled at the Woodlands County Municipal Office in Whitecourt at 2:00 pm, Thursday, March 28, 2024. Properties listed in the auction will be advertised in local newspapers and on the Woodlands County website and are offered for sale on an as-is, where-is basis with no guarantees or warranties.

The Take-it-or-Leave-it areas at Woodlands County transfer sites will remain in place as Woodlands County reviews the service individually for each site. Findings will be presented back to Council for further consideration and discussion.

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