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The Press

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Vol. 13 - Issue 48 | Wednesday, November 27, 2024

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Critical care, anywhere, including Woodlands County and beyond

Three STARS air ambulances.



Photos by STARS X

STARS Air Ambulance helicopters are a recognizable bird in the sky. During a recent presentation to the Woodlands County Council, the elected officials learned about missions in the county from fall 2023 to fall 2024. They also learned about the farthest mission ever flown to date. See story page 2.

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Critical care, anywhere, including Woodlands County and beyond



Councillor Bruce Prestidge.



A decked out Premier Danielle Smith (left) chatting with a STARS pilot at the increased funding presentation in June.

By Serena Lapointe

STARS air ambulance helicopters have been a welcomed and familiar sight above Western Canada for nearly forty years. The red ‘birds’ signal that something serious has occurred and that the only option is to bring in those who will land almost anywhere to retrieve a patient in need, whether on the highway, in a field, or otherwise.

The funding model

for STARS is unique, given the job they do. Until this past June, STARS was predominately funded through its fundraising initiatives, donations and municipal partners, covering eighty percent of its yearly budget, with twenty percent from the provincial government, in a long-standing contract which ended earlier this year.

In June, however, the Alberta Government signed on to block

fund the program by 15 million dollars a year, over 40 percent more funding. During a recent presentation to Woodlands County Council, Glenda Farn-den, Senior Municipal Relations Liaison for STARS, outlined how important the new funding arrangement was to the company. (It is) a huge advancement in sustainability for STARS annually. (It is) almost double what they previously were

supporting us at,” she explained.

Farn-den was at the meeting to provide Woodlands County Council with an update on STARS activities within the county as part of a funding agreement through their Municipal Initiative, which sees the county give just over \$14,000 yearly to STARS, joining a vast majority of the province in providing support on a per capita basis.

The Municipal Initiative through STARS helps fund the remaining 56 percent of the budget. Most of the dollars that STARS uses to fund the program come through fundraisers, lotteries and donations, and communities that choose to support it.

“Next year, we will celebrate our 40th anniversary of serving Albertans. Forty years of providing critical care anywhere. In a worst-case scenario, STARS

is your best hope,” said Farn-den. “For the last fiscal year, STARS received 37,365 emergency requests through its Emergency Link

Centre. We do not fly on all those missions, but our transport physicians are involved on every critical call, regardless of the mode of transport. Whether that patient is going by ground ambulance or Alberta Health Ser-

continued on page 3

NOTICE OF DECISION

A decision has been made regarding the following development permit application:

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION	LOCATION	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	DECISION	DATE OF DECISION
15-054-2024	PT. NW 6-59-10-W5M Lot 6 Block 1 Plan 0829101	Transport Contractor Business (Minor)	APPROVED with conditions	20-Nov-24

Any person affected by this decision may appeal to the Secretary of the Development Appeal Board by forwarding a written appeal along with a \$500.00 fee, to the address listed below, prior to **4:30 p.m., December 11, 2024.**

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

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



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continued from page 2

vices fixed wing," explained Farnden. "Because STARS is the dedicated critical care provider in Alberta, we also dispatch Halo and Hero," she added.

She said the Western Canada STARS program now averages eleven missions per day, and each of the three Alberta bases (Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie) costs 11.4 million yearly.

Since 1985, more than 60 thousand missions have flown. Through the 2023/2024 season, 1,720 missions happened in Alberta.

Farnden provided information on the types of incidents that STARS responded to over that timeline. She said it was a five-way split, with each category (cardiac, stroke, vehicle incidents, other medical calls, trauma)

seeing roughly twenty percent of missions. "It gives you an idea of the high-level critical nature of our calls," she said.

The Municipal Initiative that Woodlands County is part of stretches across 94 percent of the province, with new municipalities joining each year. "Our main request is to ask for a minimum of \$2 per capita. We have communities giving anywhere from \$2 to \$90 and everything in between. You are one of our Regional Leaders giving at a higher amount. You are giving at \$3 per capita," explained Farnden.

Three missions happened near Fort Assiniboine in 2023 and one in 2024. "These may not all be pointed to your residents. These may be some of your neighbours or someone else that's just travel-

ling through, but these are the missions that have been flown within your boundaries," explained Farnden.

When accounting for inter-facility transfers through the Whitecourt Hospital, the average for the area is thirteen missions per year. "You're ideally located where you are served by two different STARS bases, Grande Prairie and Edmonton. You'll have lots of incidents throughout the rural areas where a critical patient has been delivered by local ground ambulance to your local hospital, but because it is of a critical nature, STARS is called to intervene and get patients to tertiary care," she explained.

Another part of the presentation was Farnden's postal code project. Using the postal codes of patients receiving help, she can

see where people are from and if they are near or far from home. She said this was key to showing that STARS is borderless and that within Western Canada, a Woodlands County resident could be helped even while on a skiing vacation, for example.

"One hundred and seventy-six area residents have flown with STARS since 2010. Of those, 98 patients were picked up in Whitecourt and 78 area residents have flown in 27 other locations, using the service while away from home," explained Farnden. One hundred and fifty-two residents were from Whitecourt, twelve from Fort Assiniboine, eleven from Blue Ridge and one from Lone Pine. "This is a testament to the value of our partnership."

One of the most re-

cent advancements in the care provided on-board a STARS helicopter is the increase in blood. "Because we have seen so many massive trauma cases, we increased to carrying four units of universal blood, in addition now, with this new medication Fibrinogen. After applying the two units of blood for a severe trauma patient, we will utilize the Fibrinogen for hemorrhage control, which helps that patient to build blood clots. This is a huge advancement in our critical care model in being able to help patients because it buys them more time, and that patient does not bleed out," explained Farnden.

The final piece that Farnden shared was of a record-breaking flight that had recently happened for a STARS crew. "We flew our lon-

gest mission. It was for a hunter in the rugged northernmost mountains of B.C, on a riverbank at dusk. STARS Grande Prairie was literally the only hope this patient had to fly at night, bring the critical care model and bring the expertise. More than 2,400 litres of fuel were used, and more than 1,700 kilometres were flown. They said if we flew it in a straight line, it was flying from Calgary to Los Angeles," said Farnden.

Councillor Bruce Prestidge (Blue Ridge) shared that he lives near the STARS flight path and knows the sound. "Your helicopters have a distinct sound, and you know they are doing something (important)." Farnden agreed. "They're not coming if it's not a critical situation," to which they both nodded in agreement.



GOT A NEWS TIP?

Call Valerie Winger at 780.706.1858 or email wctpress@gmail.com

The Press

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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**
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Putting a face on suicide



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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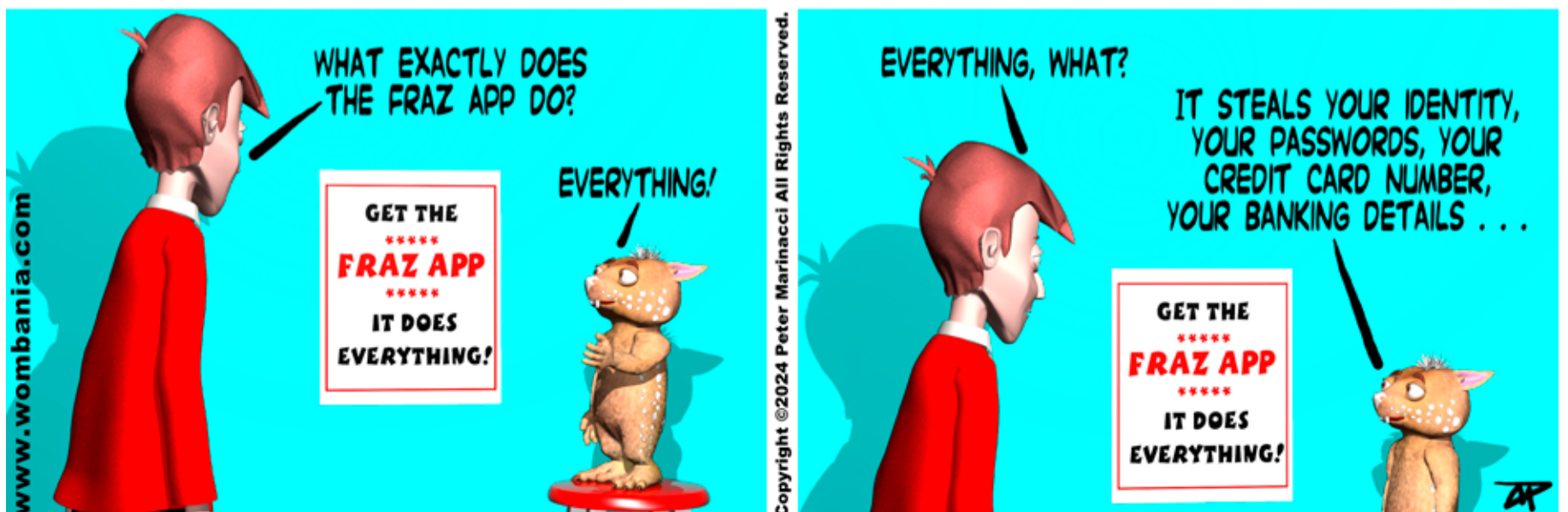
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Aimee Grierson **780-262-0222**

<https://wctcancerwellness.com/>

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



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The Food Bank relies on donations of cash or food in order to help families in need.

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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.

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Family Resource & Crisis Centre

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\$35 includes 12 weekly sessions.

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Meetings are three times each week

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

Helping healthcare professionals choose Whitecourt, grow roots and feel at home



The Whitecourt Hospital is in dire need of replacement.

By Serena Lapointe

The need for a new hospital in Whitecourt is no secret, but what the town doesn't lack is community spirit, and a new committee proves it. The Health Professionals Attraction & Retention Committee's (H-PARC) aim is to encourage student development in healthcare, help new professionals integrate into the community, and foster a

sense of belonging so professionals choose Whitecourt.

The committee has a tall but important order and has scored early success thanks to its dedicated, passionate, and community-minded members who want the best for the place they call home. During a recent Whitecourt Town Council meeting, H-PARC Chair Kristen Belke provid-

ed an overview of the committee's priorities, feedback, completed projects and achievements.

The committee began at a request from two local doctors (Dr. Jane Ojedokun and Dr. Ryan Roszko) two years ago. The pair presented the idea to Council in October 2022. The committee consists of Dr. Ojedokun, Dr. Roszko (phy-

sician representative), Kristen Belke (nurse representative), member-at-large Michelle Halladay (physician's families representative), member-at-large Kelly Robinson, Councillor Derek Schlosser, a Woodlands County rep, representatives from both clinics, and Alicia Randall (AHS representative). "We have a broad reach of people, and I think it

makes us good," said Belke.

The committee follows four priorities and an advocacy piece to lay the groundwork for what they do. "The biggest one is that 84 percent of healthcare professionals say a welcoming community is what keeps them here, so that is one of our biggest things that we focus on," said Belke.

She said they offer customized welcome packages depending on the needs of the individual. If a physician moves to Whitecourt from further away, the package includes information about real estate agents and local schools. "It makes it a lot easier for people to come and a lot more welcoming, so they ar-

continued on page 7

Four ways to boost your retirement savings

(NC) When you're just starting out in your career, retirement can seem like it's too far away to imagine. But the sooner you start planning for your retirement, the more money you'll have available to experience your dreams. Here are four things to consider when planning for retirement.

Start as soon as you can

You've likely seen charts and graphs showing how every dollar you invest today can grow multiple times over a long period of time. These charts visualize the power of compound interest. If, for example, you invest \$1 in an account that will earn you 5 per cent per year, at the end of the first year, you'll have \$1.05. But in the second year, you'll

earn interest on the dollar and the 5 cents. The larger the initial investment and the longer the investment period, the more your money will grow.

Maximize your RRSPs and TFSAs

There are two popular federal government programs that many Canadians use to help fund their retirement: Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) and Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSAs). Both are similar in that they allow you to invest money in various financial products, including mutual funds, stocks and bonds. The difference is that you get a tax deduction for anything you invest in an RRSP, but the money is taxed when you withdraw it. There are no immediate tax savings with the TFSA,

but the money in your investment grows tax-free for as long as you leave it in the fund. One great way to capitalize on both is to invest enough in your RRSP to qualify for a tax refund, and then invest that money in your TFSA.

Employment benefits

Once upon a time, most Canadians counted on a pension to pay for their retirement years. While many careers still include a pension plan, they're increasingly few and far between. A more common option today is for an employer to offer matching contributions to your RRSPs. If you're in the market for a new job, factor in the benefits of working for employers who offer a pension or matching funding for

retirement savings in your decision-making process.

Have a side hustle

For many of us, when we envision retirement, we picture ourselves signing off permanently. But the reality is that many people find the switch from a 40-hour workweek to zero hours somewhat bor-

ing.

Some find satisfaction in volunteering their time or doing other charitable work. But if you're worried about financing your retirement, perhaps you could turn your career skills or hobbies into a side gig. If, for example, you worked as an accountant, perhaps you

could do people's taxes for them. If you were a writer of some sort, maybe you could pick up some freelance work. If you have worked in construction, set up a business doing small renovation projects.

Find more financial literacy tips and free resources at abcmoney-matters.ca.



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continued from page 7

en't quite as scared," said Belke. "We also show our community off and all the things it has and the good things we offer."

For healthcare students, Belke said they give them extra focus. "Nursing students, pharmacy students and physician students that come in, we welcome them and give them a tour and passes to the Millar Centre (AJMC) so they feel welcome. Even if they only come for a day to the clinic, we still reach out to them and welcome them."

Belke said the conversation also includes high school students interested in entering the medical field. The committee recently expressed an interest in

hosting Let's Go Rural, an event that promotes rural health opportunities for students. "(They would) show them what physio does and what nursing does and get them hands-on trying some of those things so they will be interested. Lots of times, if a rural student wants to get into health care, they go back to rural. So, we want to branch out because it's hard to pull those urban people to rural. But if we can get rural students interested, they'll usually come back to rural," explained Belke. "It will also bring students from the university that are interested to integrate and learn what rural is."

Family and a sense of belonging are two significant pillars that can make someone feel at

home in a new community. "We make sure not only the physician is welcome but the whole family as well. We offer check-ins. One of our members calls and does check-ins with the family and we send cards for new babies or big changes. We make sure they know that we notice them and that they are important to us."

The committee also celebrated Rural Health Week and put on a family barbeque. "We had 133 attend. It wasn't just focused on hospital staff. It was focused on healthcare professionals in the whole community, like pharmacies, chiropractors, dentists and everything like that," said Belke.

They also delivered 24 appreciation baskets. The hard-work-

ing and passionate committee members have achieved numerous successes in just two years, including welcoming five new doctors and three new nurses to the community and supporting three physicians through the Doctor Loan Program. They have also hosted fourteen community tours and provided 36 welcome packages.

Belke said the need for an update to Whitecourt's infrastructure is obvious and that supporting Council with its advocacy efforts will continue to be a priority for the committee. "Our infrastructure is limiting our capacity to deliver services in our town. Obviously, that's beyond our scope, but we can only do so much." She said the need was even more on

display after a recent good news item faced a barrier. "AHS has recruited an anesthetist and a new surgeon to Whitecourt. (The barrier) is that we only have one OR suite."

Mayor Tom Pickard thanked Belke and the committee for their work. "I was at a recent conference in Wainwright, and many, many people asked where the rest of the crew was because, in their words, we want to get some more ideas from them. You and the group are recognized throughout the province for the work (you do)."

He added that in conversations he's had with Minister of Health Adrianna LaGrange, she has noted the passion in the group and enjoys engaging with them because of their

professional nature. Mayor Pickard said the gap was not the people. "We have passionate people here in Whitecourt, in healthcare, and the infrastructure facilities are the gap. I think there's general recognition of that, but the quality of life of the people and quality of the people that are in healthcare, there's no gap there. Everyone else is aspiring to that level."

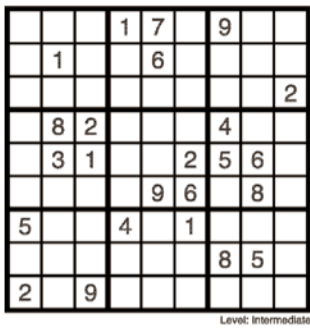
Belke said they are proud of the local environment around healthcare. "The LPNs (Licensed Practical Nurses) and RNs (Registered Nurses), we have no vacancies. That can't be said in most places. We are really proud of the environment that we set within our hospital ourselves."



A group of local healthcare professionals and community members are spearheading a community-based approach to rural recruitment by focusing on fostering a sense of belonging and support while helping Council in healthcare-related advocacy efforts.

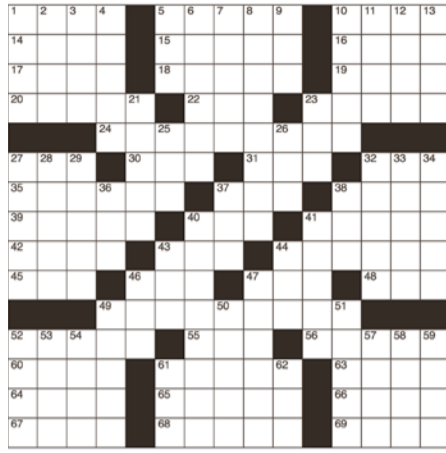
SEE SOLUTIONS PAGE 15

SUDOKU CROSSWORDS



Fun By The Numbers

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



Here's How It Works:

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

Crossword Clues

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Long piece of squared timber
- 5. Emaciation
- 10. "Bewitched" boss Larry
- 14. Combining form meaning "different"
- 15. Current unit equal to 10 amperes
- 16. Older
- 17. Large, stocky lizard
- 18. Ringworm
- 19. Actor Pitt
- 20. Indian hand clash cymbals
- 22. Data at rest
- 23. Jeweled headdress
- 24. Indicators of when stories were written
- 27. Check
- 30. Cigarette (slang)
- 31. Arctic explorers (abbr.)
- 32. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- 35. Delivered a speech
- 37. A place to bathe
- 38. Postmen deliver it
- 39. Surface in geometry
- 40. More (Spanish)
- 41. ___ and Venzetti
- 42. Exclamation at the end of a prayer
- 43. Hawaiian dish
- 44. Aggressively proud men
- 45. Fellow
- 46. Mark Wahlberg comedy

- 47. Mock
- 48. When you expect to get somewhere
- 49. Songs
- 52. Pair of small hand drums
- 55. Play
- 56. Sword
- 60. Evergreens and shrubs genus
- 61. Filmed
- 63. Italian Seaport
- 64. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- 65. Pores in a leaf
- 66. U. of Miami mascot is one
- 67. Snakelike fishes
- 68. Pretended to be
- 69. Body part

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Piece of felted material
- 2. Ancient Greek City
- 3. Aquatic plant
- 4. Potentially harmful fungus (Brit. sp.)
- 5. Body art (slang)
- 6. One who follows the rules
- 7. Ordinary
- 8. Honorably retired from assigned duties and retaining one's title
- 9. Relaxing space
- 10. Japanese socks
- 11. Indian city

- 12. Rip
- 13. Icelandic book
- 21. Satisfies
- 23. Where golfers begin
- 25. Small amount
- 26. Snag
- 27. Determine the sum of
- 28. A distinctive smell
- 29. Exposed to view
- 32. Stain or blemish
- 33. Small loop in embroidery
- 34. River herring genus
- 36. Large beer
- 37. Deep, red-brown sea bream
- 38. Partner to cheese
- 40. At a deliberate pace
- 41. Gurus
- 43. Of each
- 44. Angry
- 46. Popular beverage
- 47. Flower cluster
- 49. Blocks
- 50. Those who benefitted from efforts of relatives (slang)
- 51. Polio vaccine developer
- 52. A (usually) large and scholarly book
- 53. Popular soap ingredient
- 54. NBAer Bradley
- 57. Popular movie about a pig
- 58. Musician Clapton
- 59. Not a sure thing
- 61. Recipe measurement (abbr.)
- 62. Father

Woodlands County Council recent meeting recap

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

STARS Air Ambulance Senior Municipal Relations Liaison, Glenda Farden provided an annual update on STARS current operations and activities in the region. This year, STARS attended 11 missions in the Woodlands County area, including 10 critical inter-facility transfers from the Whitecourt Hospital. From 2020 – 2024, STARS attended a total of 65 missions in the region. Woodlands County has pledged \$3 per capita, totalling \$14,250 annually until 2025.

Council was updated on **the condition of hot mix roads and bridges in Woodlands County.** McElhanney was contracted to inspect 37 km of hot mix roads while all bridges were inspected by MPA Engineering bridge inspectors. Approximately 85% of hot mix roads and 93% of bridges were assessed as being in fair, good, or excellent condition. Data collected will be used when applying for grant funding and integrated into the asset management program which will guide future

budget plans.

In 2024, Building-SCI was contracted to assess all municipal buildings to determine maintenance and replacement requirements. Council was updated on **the current condition of the buildings as well as a 25-year renewal forecast** to identify future budget needs to maximize the useful life of these buildings.

As per Council's strategic priority of pursuing new opportunities for labour force attraction and retention, Council endorsed Woodlands County's application for the design and implementation of a **Business Retention and Expansion Strategy under the Small Community Opportunity Program,** pending approved 2025 operating budget. The grant could provide up to a maximum of 90% in provincial contribution for the \$115,000 project.

In addition, Council also endorsed Woodlands County's application for the design and implementation of a **3-year integrated plan to enhance investment attraction and profile with corporate and industrial site selectors** under the Northern & Regional Economic Development Program,

pending approved 2025 operating budget. The grant could provide up to a maximum of 50% in provincial matching contribution for the \$600,000 project.

Council adopted the **amended Policy 6211 – Benefits Program.** The policy was updated to clarify that one tax rebate and three snowplow flags will be issued to one eligible landowner per parcel of land where the applicant resides.

The **Governance and Priorities Committee meeting** scheduled for December 11 was **cancelled.** **Upcoming scheduled meetings:**

Budget Discussion – Wednesday, December 4, 2:00 pm

- Regular Council – Wednesday, December 4, 5:00 pm

- Budget Discussion – Thursday, December 5, 5:00 pm

- Budget Discussion – Tuesday, December 10, 5:00 pm

- Regular Council – Wednesday, December 18, 9:30 am

Meetings are held in-person at the Municipal Office in Whitecourt and streamed on the Woodlands County YouTube channel. Agenda packages are available on the Woodlands County CivicWeb Portal.

MERRY CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH



WORDS

- ANGEL
- BIRTH
- CAROLS
- CHRISTMAS
- CHURCH
- COMPANY
- DECEMBER
- DINING
- EVERGREEN
- FRIENDS
- GARLAND
- GIFTS
- GREETING CARD
- HOLLY
- MAGICAL
- MANGER
- MERRIMENT
- MISTLETOE
- REMINISCE
- ROAST
- STAR
- TRAVEL
- TREE SKIRT
- WREATHS

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

WORDS

- ANGEL
- BIRTH
- CAROLS
- CHRISTMAS
- CHURCH
- COMPANY
- DECEMBER
- DINING
- EVERGREEN
- FRIENDS
- GARLAND
- GIFTS
- GREETING CARD
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- TREE SKIRT
- WREATHS

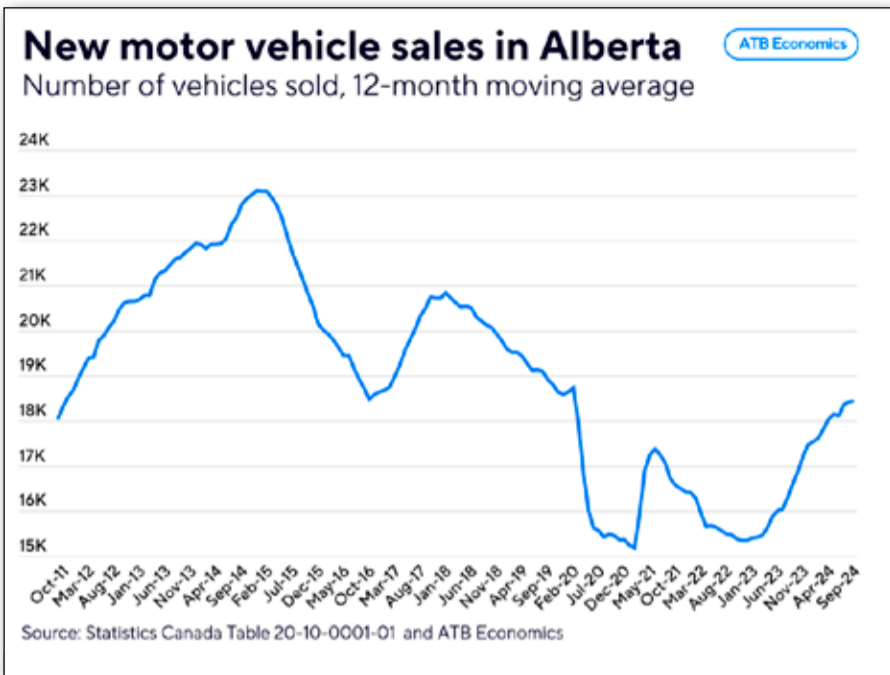
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Relatively speaking: New vehicle sales in Alberta



By Rob Roach
ATB ECONOMICS

New vehicle sales provide an indication of how a large slice of the retail sector is doing. They also provide a sense of how the economy is doing overall, with higher sales suggesting things are going well enough for more people and businesses to make a major purchase like a new vehicle. (Interest rates are also a factor with lower borrowing costs facilitating sales and vice versa.)

So what are the new vehicle sales statistics telling us about how things are going in Alberta?

On the bright side, the recent trend has a nice upward slope (see

the chart below). The number of new vehicles sold in Alberta has increased 20 times (on a year-over-year basis) between January 2021 and September 2024.

Despite signs of consumer fatigue setting in (retail sales in Alberta have been fairly flat with per capita sales declining), the number of new cars being sold points to some underlying resilience in the provincial economy.

But, as the chart above also shows, relative to the years leading up to the pandemic, the number of units rolling off lots in Alberta in 2024 does not appear especially strong. Unit sales between January and September 2024

were, for example, 8% lower than over the same period in 2018 even though Alberta's population was 14% larger.

Although it is a positive sign that new vehicles sales are on the rise in Alberta, because they are down relative to past periods, this suggests two things: 1) there is likely more room for them to climb back up as the provincial economy expands next year (lower interest rates will also help); and 2) even though Alberta's economy is performing well vis-à-vis the country as a whole, it has lost a few steps since the last boom cycle period in 2014.

The Gift Box, Holiday pop-up store opens November 23



By Haylee Winger

Get ready to kick off your holiday shopping at The Gift Box, a seasonal pop-up store designed to meet all your gifting needs. Located at 4-4331-52 Ave, the store's grand opening is set for Saturday, November 23, with hours from 10am to 8pm.

Open from November 23 to December 27, The Gift Box offers a wide selection of gifts perfect for everyone on your list. Shoppers will find cozy hoodies, trendy-t shirts, plush blankets, hats, toques, accessories, pictures and novelty items.

Operating seven days

a week, regular hours are Monday to Saturday from 10am to 8pm and Sundays from 10am to 6pm.

Don't miss the chance to find unique, thoughtful gifts this holiday season. Visit The Gift Box and check off every name on your list!



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SCHOOL NEWS



Kindergarten students from Whitecourt Central School had an exciting morning at the local firehall, where they learned important fire safety tips. The highlight of the trip was meeting Sparky the Fire Dog, who helped make the experience both fun and educational. The students also toured the firehall, getting an up-close look at the equipment and vehicles firefighters use to keep the community safe. It was a memorable day filled with learning and excitement!



The Whitecourt Wolverines made another memorable visit to Pat Hardy Primary School, bringing excitement and joy to the kindergarten students. The young learners were thrilled to spend time with the team, who have become local favorites for their engaging and positive interactions. These visits continue to strengthen the bond between the Wolverines and the community, leaving a lasting impression on their youngest fans.



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NOTICE OF DECISION

The following decisions were made by the Municipal Planning Commission:

Subdivision W21-348: NW & SW 35-59-12-W5; Lot 7, Block 8, Plan 1123991; Lots 5 & 6, Block 8, Plan 9422819; Lot 3, Block 8, Plan 8622565; Lot OT, Plan 4571 CL – Request for Extension (Millar Western Forest Products Ltd.) – Approved with conditions.

Date of Decisions: November 14, 2024 Appeal Closes at 4:00pm: November 28, 2024

Application 24-110: 3739 39 Street – Discretionary Use – Equipment sales, rental and repair, heavy – Approved with conditions.

Application 24-112: 3808 38 Avenue – Application for Whitecourt pain management, safety & wellness centre – Refused with conditions.

Date of Decisions: November 14, 2024 Appeal Closes at 4:00pm: December 5, 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.

SCHOOL NEWS



The Hilltop Chargers senior boy's volleyball team captured gold at the GCAA playoffs on November 12, defeating Onoway in the final match. The team remained undefeated throughout the league

and league playoffs. The boys also secured victory at the 3A Zones tournament in Westlock last weekend, maintaining their undefeated record. They faced the Westlock Thunderbirds in

the semifinal, emerging victorious after an intense battle against a strong opponent. In the final, they went head-to-head with the Barrhead Gryphons, defeating them in an exciting match to

claim the Zone banner and gold medals. The Gryphons put up a commendable fight. The accompanying photos were taken during the Zones tournament in Westlock, including a team photo with the 3A

Zone banner. The Chargers were coached by Doreen Opsal, Maddy Bryson, Nick Bowman and Sarah Van de Kerckhove. The team qualified to compete at the ASAA

3A Provincials in Lloydminster, scheduled from Thursday to Saturday last week, where they anticipated facing strong competition. The Chargers are ranked 8th in the province for 3A schools.

Hallway of trees



Pretty wooden ornaments on the BOHN Petroleum Services tree.



Whitecap Resources went all out for baking with their decor.



The New Venture Safety Services tree is stunning.



Fully customized decorations on the Complete Projects tree.



Family Dental Health's tree features cute little Letters to Santa mailboxes.



A beautiful hallway.



A youngster checking out the trees.



AJMC staff rocked this tree, it's all about Bluey!



Schaffer's Custom Welding's tree.



A tanker truck atop a tree? Yes!

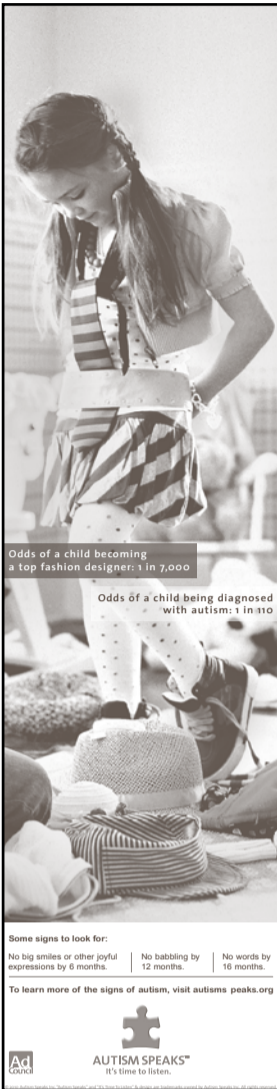
It's that time of year again! The Festival of Trees in support of the BGC (Boys and Girls Club) is on now until the draw date of December 14. Eighteen impeccably dressed Christmas trees line the hallway leading to the change rooms at the Allan & Jean Millar Centre, creating a perfect hangout spot for those seeking a festive place to sit. For the next couple of weeks, residents can purchase a ticket (\$10) for a chance to win the tree of their choice, with funds going towards the BGC. Businesses and organizations went above and beyond with the trees they decorated and donated, including a Bluey tree from the AJMC staff, full of the popular TV shows' characters and a big Bluey stuffy on top. There's also a sparkly number donated by Whitecap Resources decorated with baking supplies like cookie cutters, tongs and even a whisk. The tree also comes with a box of goodies underneath. Each tree shows the time and care put into decorating, from personalized decorations, like the Complete Projects tree with laser-cut truck ornaments, the Sniper Services tree with a homemade tanker truck on top and more trucks placed throughout its branches, and a vibrantly blue Elvis-themed tree donated by Kanata Esso and the Candy Mill. It's absolutely worth a trip to the AJMC to check out all the trees and support the BGC.



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A look at the local weather	Wed., Nov. 27	Thu., Nov. 28	Fri., Nov. 29	Sat., Nov. 30	Sun., Dec. 01
P.O.P.	30%	60%	40%	30%	60%
High	-9°C	-13°C	-15°C	-13°C	-12°C
Low	-16°C	-18°C	-20°C	-18°C	-15°C
Wind	NW 9 km/h	E 10 km/h	N 10 km/h	SE 5 km/h	E 6 km/h
24-Hr Rain / Snow	~1cm	1-3cm	~1cm	<1cm	<1cm

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Dollar Values as of November 27, 2024

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



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PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY

Contact

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The Press is printed on high quality newsprint using vegetable based ink. We encourage you to share, save, reuse, rehash & recycle.

Pumping up the Christmas spirit



Productions point of view.



Some puppet practice.

Pumpjack Players have two more nights of dinner theatre coming up this weekend. The local group already performed twice this past weekend, treating attendees to a hilarious production based around sappy holiday movies called The Holiday Channel Christmas Movie Wonderthon. This Friday and Saturday night, the group will put on its final two shows and hope to sell out the seats. Tickets can be purchased at the library. Here's a snapshot from the producer's point of view, as cast members practised ahead of showtime. The show features a TSA agent, some reindeer, a kidnap victim and some fangirls, to name a few, and hilariously weaves multiple Christmas movie storylines into one big chaotic mix. It's a local production not to be missed!

Whitecourt Town Council updates

Whitecourt receives provincial support to construct a community fireguard

The Town of Whitecourt, with support from Alberta Forestry and Parks, has been approved for funding from the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta Community Fireguard Program. The \$1,534,180 in funding will be used to construct a community

fireguard with access points, approximately 4.5 kilometres long and 100 metres wide, on the eastern boundary of town.

The Community Fireguard Program is designed to help protect communities by clearing areas near or surrounding a community. The fireguard, a strategically constructed feature where trees, brush and fuel sources are removed,

will break the path of wildfire that could potentially move towards property, infrastructure, and other values at risk.

Minister of Alberta Forestry and Parks Todd Loewen stated, "Preparation is vital to mitigating the impacts of wild-fires. Through initiatives like the Community Fireguard Program and FireSmart, our government is committed to ensuring that communities like Whitecourt are well-equipped to face these challenges head-on."

Whitecourt, in con-

sultation with community stakeholders, recently completed a Community Fireguard Plan that involved planning and mapping the fireguard location. The project area extends from Ecole St. Joseph School in the north, to Highway 43 in the south. This span incorporates diverse terrain, including wetlands, mixed wood forests, and is located in close proximity to critical infrastructure, including schools, power substations, and wastewater treatment facilities.

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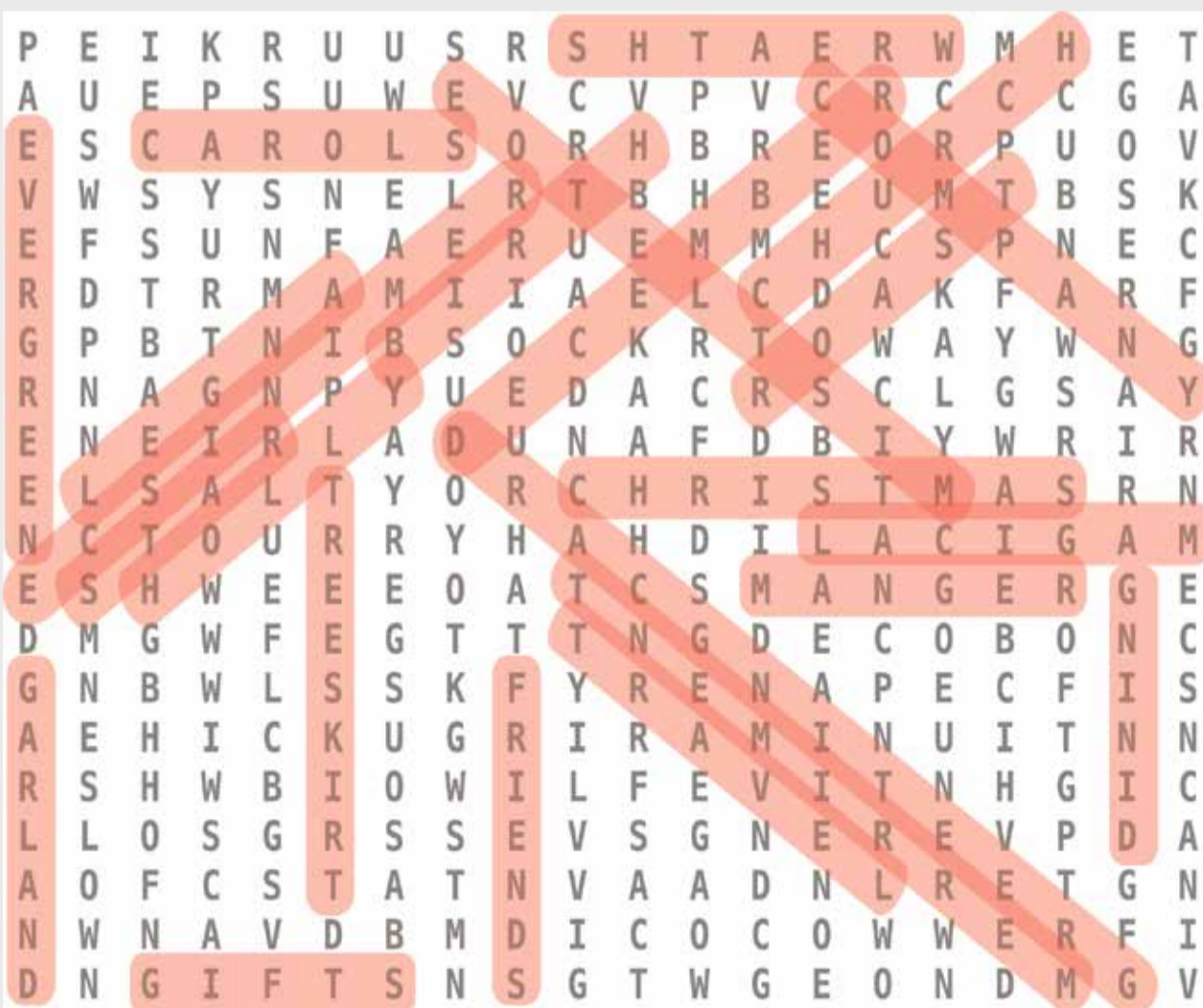
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