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COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER



# The Press

Locally Owned & Operated

Vol. 14 - Issue 8 | Wednesday, February 26, 2025



**Trees, trees and more trees! The Town of Whitecourt plans to green up the Highway 43 corridor by adding plants and trees to the boulevard between the highway and flanking side roads. The two boulevards for phase 1, flank the highway between Riverboat Park Road and 53 Avenue.**

Whitecourt bidding to join funding stream that wants to help plant two billion trees nationwide

By Serena Lapointe

A project to beautify the highway area in Whitecourt might receive a financial boost should a recently applied for funding opportunity get

the thumbs up. The Town of Whitecourt had already planned to add greenery along Highway 43 as part of the municipality's 20-Year Capital and Major Maintenance Plan,

which included adding shrubs and trees to the boulevards on both sides of the highway.

A grant from the Federation of Cana-

continued on page 6

## A large-scale business analysis project is on the go for the Economic Development Committee

By Serena Lapointe

A project to help better understand the needs of area businesses and the business community is underway following grant funding from the (SCOP) Small Community Opportunity Program. SCOP is a provincial grant that provides dollars to communities under 20,000 people to help

solve challenges and seek opportunities. Eligible projects can receive funding anywhere from \$20,000 to \$100,000.

The Town of Whitecourt applied for funding last year to put towards the Business Market Analysis Attraction and Retention Strategy Project and successfully received

\$70,000. In December, the Economic Development Committee met with the company hired to do the work, FBM Planning Ltd and data collection is well underway for the new year.

During a late January meeting of Whitecourt Town Council, Eco-

continued on page 12



One of the community's volunteer groups with lots on the go is the Economic Development Committee. A recent report showed what the group was up to over the last six months, including recommending local groups to receive grant funding, supporting new businesses, and a big data collecting project to aid area businesses. Finding gaps in the local economy, including the downtown core, is one part of the market analysis project.



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# Whitecourt Mountain Bike Association secures funding to expand and upgrade bike park and trails!

We're excited to share fantastic news with the Whitecourt community: The Whitecourt Mountain Bike Association (WMBA) has been awarded funding through the Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIAA) and the Community Facility Enhancement Program (CFEP) to complete the final two phases of our bike park development. These grants will allow us to make major upgrades and expand our trail system, creating an even better experience for riders of all levels.

- With this funding, we'll be able to:
- Add new trails and features suitable for all skill levels.
  - Improve safety and accessibility, ensuring the park is more inclusive and welcoming.
  - Introduce exciting new elements, including a pump track, a beginner zone, a skill learning zone, a fun track, and more!
  - Provide an educational experience about our local environment while enjoying our trail and park facilities.

This is a huge milestone for the WMBA and a great step forward in enhancing our local bike park. We can't wait for you to experience these upgrades, and we're deeply grateful for the support that will help us make this dream a reality. Thank you for your continued support!

We want your input! This project is all about YOU, our incredible community! We want to hear your ideas on how we can make the bike park even better. What features or improvements would you love to see in the upgraded park? Share your thoughts by completing our quick online survey.

"This grant is a game-changer for us," said Mike Braun of WMBA. "It's going to help us build a space where riders of all ages and abilities can have fun, learn, and connect. We're incredibly grateful for this opportunity! It's been a long time

coming, and we're so thankful for all the hard work our members have put in to bring this vision to life."

A big thank you to our partners—Alberta Newsprint, Millar Western, Canfor, and West Fraser—through the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA), as well as the Government of Alberta through the Community Facility Enhancement Program (CFEP), for their significant investment in this project.

Work on the park upgrades will kick off this spring and continue through the summer. We'll keep you updated on our progress and look forward to celebrating with you at the grand reopening!

Stay tuned for updates by visiting our website at [www.bike-whitecourt.com](http://www.bike-whitecourt.com), following us on Facebook at Whitecourt Mountain Bike Association, or on Instagram @bike.whitecourt. Let's make this the best bike park yet—together!



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# PUZZLES

SEE SOLUTIONS PAGE 15



## SUDOKU

	2		8		5		3	
	6	8		1			4	2
4						5		
	1			8	4		7	
		2						
		3		9				
				3			1	4
			2		6			8
						6		

Level: Intermediate

### 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!

## CROSSWORDS

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10		
11				12		13				14			
15						16				17			
	18				19		20			21			
					22	23				24			
25	26	27	28	29									
30							31						
32									33	34	35	36	37
					38	39	40		41	42			
					43				44				
			45	46									
47	48				49				50	51	52	53	54
55					56					57			58
59					60					61			
62					63								64

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. S. American plant
- 2. Soul and calypso song
- 3. Fruit of the service tree
- 4. Continent
- 5. Albania's capital
- 6. Poisonous plant
- 7. Argues
- 8. Assists
- 9. Town in Galilee
- 10. Russian leader
- 12. Promotional materials
- 14. Wings
- 19. Not odd
- 23. Expression of creativity
- 24. Conceptualize
- 25. A digital tape recording of sound
- 26. Peyton's little brother
- 27. Cost, insurance and freight (abbr.)
- 28. Difference in potential
- 29. Owner

- 34. I (German)
- 35. Chinese conception of poetry
- 36. The world of the dead
- 37. Sign language
- 39. Coincide
- 40. Religious observance
- 41. Confined condition (abbr.)
- 42. Polite interruption sound
- 44. Texas ballplayer
- 45. Type of sword
- 46. Abba \_\_, Israeli politician
- 47. Basic unit of a chemical element
- 48. Native American people in California
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Hebrew calendar month
- 53. Easily swindled person
- 54. One point south of southwest
- 58. Small island (British)

## HOROSCOPE

### ARIES

(March 21 - April 20)



People are not mind readers, Aries. If you want others to know how you are feeling, you are going to have to give them some sort of indication this week.

### TAURUS

(April 21 - May 21)



You may discover that you enjoy a great deal of support from other people right now, Taurus. This includes those who you didn't realize are on your side.

### GEMINI

(May 22 - June 21)



Even though it can be challenging at certain times, try to see the positives in every situation, Gemini. This may make it easier to overlook some of their faults.

### CANCER

(June 22 - July 22)



Try to stretch beyond your comfort zone and limits this week, Cancer. This likely will involve meeting new people and asking a lot of questions along the way. You will develop and grow.

### LEO

(July 23 - August 23)



Leo, this is a great time to communicate with friends and socialize. Put aside any worries and engage in lighthearted activities that will enable you to laugh and smile.

### VIRGO

(August 24 - September 22)



The more peaceful and understanding you are this week, Virgo, the more you will get along with the other people in your life. Be the diplomat instead of a warrior this time around.

### LIBRA

(September 23 - October 23)



Libra, this is a good week for cleaning up your space and devising a better organizational system at work. You might be so good at cleaning up that you forget where you put things.

### SCORPIO

(October 24 - November 22)



Scorpio, do not feel like you have to change your personality to fit certain situations this week. Just be yourself. Those who want to be around you will naturally gravitate to you.

### SAGITTARIUS

(Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)



A great deal of information is available if you simply request it, Sagittarius. Word your request in a way that guarantees cooperation from others.

### CAPRICORN

(Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)



Capricorn, you are so focused on a personal project that you may completely forget about the needs of others. Make a change this week to be more receptive to others' needs.

### AQUARIUS

(January 21 - February 18)



Aquarius, take a look at the bigger picture to identify what you will need for the next few months. Then discuss your ideas with others to see if what you have planned is plausible.

### PISCES

(February 19 - March 20)



Your good mood will be elevated for much of the week, Pisces. Don't fret about a little hiccup along the way. You will bounce back quickly with a smile on your face.

## Crossword Clues

### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Greek mythological figure
- 5. Small amount
- 8. Play a role
- 11. River in Georgia and Alabama
- 13. Water in the solid state
- 14. Ancient Greek sophist
- 15. Having a strong sharp smell or taste
- 16. Fleece
- 17. Writer/actress Dunham
- 18. Behave in a way that belittles
- 20. Comedienne Gasteyer
- 21. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
- 22. Conceits
- 25. Slowed down
- 30. Nourishment
- 31. Midway between east and southeast
- 32. Fights
- 33. Comedienne Tyler
- 38. Standing operating procedure
- 41. Locks
- 43. Old
- 45. Song sung to one's lover
- 47. Whale ship captain
- 49. Moved quickly on foot
- 50. Volcanic craters
- 55. Large musical instrument
- 56. Liquefied natural gas
- 57. Ethiopian town
- 59. Not closed
- 60. A team's best pitcher
- 61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 62. Disfigure
- 63. Prefix denoting "in a"

## DENTIST OFFICE WORD SEARCH

B	W	M	C	A	K	Y	H	S	S	E	V	L	B	H	O	K	T	M	P
A	R	R	O	O	T	A	G	U	W	O	T	L	Y	S	L	N	Y	W	X
E	O	D	G	N	H	R	E	C	C	P	V	A	F	U	A	Y	C	H	R
N	T	B	N	H	G	P	D	T	R	U	P	S	N	L	S	E	C	E	A
L	D	X	I	S	I	S	I	I	O	K	H	S	A	I	L	N	X	R	Y
O	O	R	N	U	L	M	R	O	W	C	N	E	D	C	G	T	K	U	S
W	L	U	A	R	G	B	O	N	N	E	S	W	O	G	R	L	G	D	E
L	D	I	E	B	N	O	U	V	B	H	G	X	L	A	V	S	A	L	U
P	T	O	L	C	I	F	L	E	P	C	E	O	C	T	W	W	E	P	I
A	A	C	C	D	R	U	F	H	F	U	V	T	L	R	R	V	I	M	B
E	A	N	E	S	U	O	G	M	Y	E	I	O	B	R	A	R	A	T	F
E	W	A	O	K	C	M	I	I	S	O	Y	U	E	T	S	G	A	D	I
C	A	R	C	R	K	H	I	R	N	D	V	S	O	R	E	D	H	N	L
U	A	M	Y	Y	A	V	I	R	U	R	O	R	E	S	M	B	A	I	L
L	G	A	A	M	C	M	F	O	N	I	Y	R	P	X	Y	U	E	M	I
W	G	V	I	L	R	N	I	R	V	S	O	T	O	U	S	C	G	P	N
B	K	F	V	F	G	P	I	C	X	L	X	V	I	D	T	M	T	N	G
M	U	T	B	X	X	A	B	S	P	I	O	E	F	V	A	W	O	E	S
R	F	I	A	I	B	P	M	X	E	T	O	V	U	S	A	Y	O	S	W
K	A	Y	U	F	X	W	E	C	C	R	K	C	K	G	P	C	S	T	M

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

### WORDS

- ALGINATE
- AMALGAM
- BRUSH
- CAVITY
- CHECKUP
- CLEANING
- CROWN
- CURING LIGHT
- DAM
- ELEVATOR
- EXPLORER
- EXTRACTION
- FILLINGS
- FLUORIDE
- GLOVES
- IMAGES
- MASK
- MIRROR
- PANORAMIC
- RESIN
- SEALANT
- SPRAY
- SUCTION
- XRAYS

# Free family fun



A happy passenger.



A staff member getting ready to spin a big group.



Wheeee!

Thanks to Whitecourt Transport, families got to have fun on the tube run at Eastlink Park on Friday, at no cost. Mild temperatures brought out loads of people and made the famous run extra slick, which prompted lots of screams from some riders as they whizzed by.



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continued from page 1

dian Municipalities' Green Municipal Fund called Growing Canada's Community Canopies (GCCC) aims to fund planting projects across Canada, focusing on planting the right trees in the right places so communities can grow, manage and protect their trees. GCCC has a lofty goal of planting 1.2 million trees in Canada by March 31, 2031, and they've got nearly 300 million dollars with which to get it done.

All municipal governments in the country can apply for the funding, which will cover up to 50 percent of eligible project costs, to a maximum of 10 million. The Town of Whitecourt applied for funding for phase 1 of the Highway 43 Vitalization Plan, focusing on the west entrance of town between 53 Avenue and Riverboat Park Road. Phase 1 was estimated to cost the municipality \$280,000, but should the funding

be ok'd through GCCC, \$120,000 could be covered, leaving \$160,000 to be funded through the Town's Vitalization Reserve.

Jennine Loberg, Director of Planning and Development, explained the project to Council on January 27, calling the opportunity for funding "good timing." She explained that the grant also covers infrastructure costs directly connected to planting, such as sidewalk replacement or relocation, with up to one million per municipality set aside for that purpose. The proposed project was approved in the first stage of the application process and was eligible to move to the next stage, which required a resolution from Council to proceed, hence the presentation.

Designs shown in the meetings' public package illustrated mounded planting beds and how greenery would fit around existing swales, sod and curbs. Councillor Derek Schlosser asked about tree sur-

vivability. "How can we ensure when the province goes by and shoots the slush and all the salt (snow clearing), that the trees won't just die?"

Drew Hatfield, Director of Infrastructure, explained that the process had some protection. "Part of the planning process requires that the contractor doing the work guarantees the survivability of the plants for at least one season, and after that, we are on our own as far as maintaining them. Hopefully, by then, they have established and will flourish and grow without any challenges," said Hatfield.

As far as snow removal is concerned, Hatfield said the designs allow room for snow depositing from the town-maintained side roads, as planting sections will have space between them for snow to go. However, he said with the highway clearing, "we are kind of at their whim." A big part of the plant-

ing plan focuses on the types of plants, trees and shrubs best suited for the area, including those that are as salt-resistant as possible and fire and deer-resistant. The funding from GCCC focuses heavily on making sure that greenery is chosen based on the area.

Councillor Schlosser then asked why some of the existing planted areas tend to flourish more than others. He wondered if it was more species-dependent or something similar. Loberg explained that it was likely a combination. "Our plan through the vitalization plan for highway 43 is that eventually those plantings will all be replaced. So, whether it was improper planting or the wrong tree type, this plan has looked at species native to our community that will grow well in our climate." She added that a landscape architect and a certified arborist helped prepare the plan.

The Green Munic-

ipal Fund's Growing Canada's Community Canopies grant gets its cash through the Government of Canada's 2 Billion Trees (2BT) program, which, as the name implies, is working towards its goal of planting two billion trees over the next ten years. Funding the GCCC is one part of how they plan to do that.

As of September, last year, 2BT has already signed agreements (or is negotiating them) to plant 716 million trees. Of those, over 20 percent are already in the ground. Two-hundred and fifty different tree species are being planted within the projects, and 92 percent of 2BT projects feature a mix of two or more species, supporting biodiversity.

The 2BT program funds through five streams: Federal Lands, Indigenous Projects, Private Lands, Provincial/Territorial, and Urban Lands, which Whitecourt hopes to access thanks to the GCCC initiative. Over

100 communities in Canada have already been supported in planting trees since the 2BT funding started in 2021. The Urban Lands stream hopes to reach 1.2 million trees planted in approximately 300 communities by 2031.

Some of the coniferous and deciduous trees and shrubs destined for the boulevards of Highway 43, as per the diagrams, include Trembling Aspen, White Spruce, Ivory Halo Dogwood, Dart's Gold Ninebark, Dwarf Cranberry Bush Viburnum, Lodgepole Pine, Blue Willow Fox and Little Princess Spirea.

The Town of Whitecourt can apply for planting funding under the GCCC up to a lifetime limit of ten million, allowing the community to reapply for future projects for more planting phases of the highway project. Council motioned favourably to support the second phase of the application process. Results are expected soon.

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<https://wctcancerwellness.com/>

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



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### Child Support Program:

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

### Preventative Education:

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



Family Resource & Crisis Centre

[www.whitecourtshester.ca](http://www.whitecourtshester.ca)

## GRIEF SHARE

Support group on Tuesdays 6:30pm - 8:30 pm.

Our next series starts Tuesday, February 4 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**



# CANADIAN Kids Corner



### What's the Difference?

Find the four difference between pictures.

A



B



Answers: 1. Missing tooth 2. Smile on tooth is bigger  
 3. Missing toothbrush 4. Missing controls on machine

### CANADA

MONTH



### HISTORY

1999

Nunavut becomes the newest Canadian territory. Paul Okalik becomes the first premier.



Children are born with 20 of these, which will increase to 32 as they age.

Answer: Teeth

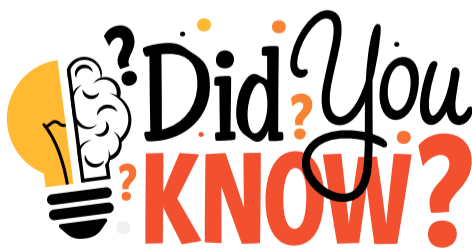


### TARTAR

a hard deposit that forms on the teeth



- English:** Dental
- Spanish:** Dental
- Italian:** Dentale
- French:** Dentaire
- German:** Zahn



It is important to visit the dentist at least twice per year for a thorough dental cleaning and examination of the mouth.





Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Brushing teeth





# 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](http://www.whitecourtpress.com)

Odds of a child becoming a top fashion designer: 1 in 7,000

Odds of a child being diagnosed with autism: 1 in 310

Some signs to look for:  
 No big smiles or other joyful expressions by 6 months | No babbling by 12 months | No words by 18 months

To learn more of the signs of autism, visit [autismspeaks.org](http://autismspeaks.org)

**AUTISM SPEAKS™**  
It's time to listen.

### Auctions

**TIMED AUCTION FOR MAIORANA STONE**, Edmonton, March 4. Full line-up of Stone Equip and Granite slabs; 2 screw compressors; Toyota forklift. ProdanukAuction Live Auction World.

**MEIER GUN AUCTION**, Saturday, March 15 - 10am; Wetaskiwin - Selling over 200 Rifles, Shot Guns, Antique Firearms, Ammunition, Scopes. Consign Now. Free Pick Up. Call 780-440-1860 [www.meierauction.com](http://www.meierauction.com).

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500,000 Alberta readers weekly. Three options starting at \$269, \$299 or \$599 to get your message out! KEEP people in the loop with over 75 Weekly Community Newspapers. Call THIS NEWSPAPER now or email [classifieds@awna.com](mailto:classifieds@awna.com) for details. 1-800-282-6903, 780-434-8746 [www.awna.com](http://www.awna.com).

### For Sale

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### Health

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Call Valerie Winger at 780.706.1858 or email [wctpress@gmail.com](mailto:wctpress@gmail.com)

Call Valerie Winger at 780.706.1858 or email [wctpress@gmail.com](mailto:wctpress@gmail.com)

### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

[www.whitecourt.ca](http://www.whitecourt.ca) | [facebook.com/TownofWhitecourt](https://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#: 25-016**, Guest Services Associate II, Permanent, Full-time Position.  
**Job#: 25-017**, Energy Manager, Contract Position.

Please visit [www.whitecourt.ca](http://www.whitecourt.ca) for all employment opportunities and details on how to apply.

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**Phone: 587-328-0743**  
**Fax: 1-888-289-2162**

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Bunions	Corns and Calluses	Diabetic Foot Care
Fungal Toenails	Flatfoot	Forefoot Pain
Heel Pain	Hammertoes	Ingrown Toenails
Prescription Custom Orthotics	Warts	

**Dr. Ben Sefcik, DPM**  
Podiatrist

**Whitecourt**  
Advanced Health Pharmasave  
5112 50 St.  
Whitecourt, AB

**Grande Prairie**  
Parkland Medical Centre  
#202, 10127 121 Ave  
Grande Prairie, AB

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

No Referral Necessary • New Patients Welcome • Covered under most Insurance Plans •

# Evolution Foot and Ankle Clinic

[www.bensefcikdpm.com](http://www.bensefcikdpm.com)

A look at the local weather	Wed., Feb. 26	Thu., Feb. 27	Fri., Feb. 28	Sat., March 1	Sun., March 2
P.O.P.	20%	40%	40%	20%	40%
High	6°C	6°C	4°C	4°C	3°C
Low	-1°C	-2°C	-4°C	-3°C	-5°C
Wind	NW 19 km/h	SE 21 km/h	NW 16 km/h	SW 4 km/h	NW 6 km/h
24-Hr Rain / Snow	-	<1mm	-	-	-

# 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 (CSPPS), 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](mailto:wctpress@telus.net) All submissions remain confidential

### Putting a face on suicide



Josh M. Copus  
Age 19

*Every 40 seconds somewhere around the world someone dies by suicide, that's 99 people every 66 minutes. Every day, that's almost 100 people in the United States alone, and over 2160 worldwide. Putting a Face on Suicide (PAFOS) is a suicide awareness project that creates posters and videos to pay tribute to those we have lost to suicide with dignity and respect. PAFOS humanizes the daunting statistics; lovingly replacing numbers with faces.*

### SPONSORED BY



**Tri-Logging Ltd.**

**Tri-Logging is against bullying**

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Owner  
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Whitecourt, AB T7S 0C3  
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Fax 780-778-8431



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Mental Health Helpline **1-877-303-2642**

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

WOMBANIA™

by PETER MARINACCI



THEY SAY PLAYING A SPORT IS A GREAT WAY TO LOSE WEIGHT.

YEAH. I DOUBT THEY MEANT VIDEO GAME FOOTBALL.

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### Money Matters

One Canadian Dollar = 0.70 US Dollar at an exchange rate of 0.7051 (using nominal rate).



Dollar Values as of February 26, 2025

**BOOK YOUR AD NOW**  
Call Valerie Winger at 780.706.1858 or email wctpress@gmail.com

### HELP WANTED

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

**Food Service Attendant**  
Full Time / Shift Work

**Food Service Supervisor**  
Full Time / Shift Work

#### SHIFT INCENTIVE FOR OVERNIGHTS

Please apply in person at the restaurant.



4331-52 Ave Unit 1  
Whitecourt, AB

4216 Elko Drive  
Whitecourt, AB

#### 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.



## The Press

A locally owned and family operated newspaper serving Whitecourt

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY

### Contact

Valerie Winger at 780-706-1858  
Email: wctpress@telus.net



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

WANT TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS?  
CALL 780-706-1858

### SNOWSHOE ADVENTURES

in the Blue Ridge area

**Guided Tour and Lessons**  
Saturdays & Sundays  
March 8 - 30

10:00 AM  
or 2:00 PM

Cost: \$45 per person  
or \$100 per family

**Drop-in Trail Access**

March 3 - 30

Weekdays  
5:00 - 8:00 PM

Weekends  
10:00 AM - 8:00 PM

Registration is **REQUIRED** for guided tours, lessons and drop-in access

Contact Woodlands County to register  
PHONE: 780-778-8400 EMAIL: community@woodlands.ab.ca

**Family fun, Dress for the weather and Dogs on leash welcome!**

Bring your own snowshoes or rent them from:  
Woodlands County - 780-778-8400  
Whitecourt & District Public Library - 780-778-2900



## LOCAL VENDOR PROGRAM



BECOME A VERIFIED LOCAL WOODLANDS VENDOR

**REGISTER NOW!**

EMAIL ECDEV@WOODLANDS.AB.CA

NO CHARGE TO ENROLL  
FREE BUSINESS DIRECTORY LISTING INCLUDED



continued from page 1

Development Officer Rhonda Woods provided an update from the committee on the last six months, including an update on the analysis project. "They've been in the community the last couple of weeks, doing lots of research and some phase 1 work. We have a couple of project outcomes (from that) that we are excited about," she explained.

Outcomes anticipated from FBM Planning Ltd include detailed reporting of retail, commercial and industrial gaps compared to other communities that compare similarly to Whitecourt, a database of employers, workforce needs in the community, and anticipated future skill gaps.

The committee will also see an economic gap analysis on where leakage occurs for consumers, such as what residents might be shopping outside the community for and that impact, and a report outlining targeted recruitment strategies

to help attract retail and commercial businesses to fill said gaps.

Lastly, the committee is anticipating information on expanding agriculture partnerships with producers and consumers, such as direct links. FBM Ltd will develop three business case proposals relevant to the community to attract different products and services or expand from the current.

The Economic Development Committee presents to Council twice a year, keeping elected officials aware of projects and initiatives currently underway, just like the Business Market Analysis Attraction and Retention Strategy Project. Woods provided updates on other projects underway during the January 27 meeting, including the Health Professionals Attraction and Retention Committee (H-PARC). "It has been quite successful. Between June and December, this committee hosted an appreciation barbecue. We had 133 people from all health sectors. It was quite

well attended, and there was lots of positive feedback," said Woods.

H-PARC helps local healthcare professionals in several ways, including settlement/integration support for them and their families, welcome packages and a loan program for doctors, which three physicians currently use. Along with the BBQ already mentioned, the committee is also working with high school students to provide framed artwork to the hallways of the Whitecourt Healthcare Centre. In October, the committee supported a video project for Whitecourt Small Business Week. Local business owners promoted the community and their offerings in short videos posted on social media, including Beaver Creek General Store, Just Peachy Arts and Crafts, The Shop, and Petals Plus. "The committee is super proud of this project. It came out of our downtown visits to promote our business community a little bit more," explained Woods.

Throughout Small Business Week, there were events in partnership with the Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce, Woodlands County, the Alberta Government and Community Futures Yellowhead East, including Strength Deployment Inventory Training workshops and an appreciation night for small business owners.

"The 10th Annual Career Expo was a super highlight for our committee. We were able to expand it. The Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce came on board and applied for a grant through Alberta Chambers and were successful. We were able to feature over 50 different career opportunities across various sectors," explained Woods. She said that over 1000 people attended the event, with students and the general public. "It was quite engaging," she added.

Another thing the committee does is help provide local grant opportunities. One is Whitecourt Launch, which provides up to

\$10,000 to home-based businesses wishing to move into a storefront or those opening a new business or expanding a current one. Applicants are shortlisted, must give a pitch in person to the committee, and a winner is chosen. Last year's winner was The Turn Indoor Golf and Lounge.

Another grant is the Sports Hosting Program. Last year, Whitecourt Minor Hockey TRAC Wolverines, Whitecourt Royals U11 Baseball, and the Whitecourt Blue Dolphins Swim Club received funding for their events. Woods explained that the economic impact on the community is significant. Though a basic overview from the three organizations that received a shared piece of \$10,000, Woods said the return on investment to Whitecourt was close to \$800,000. "It was very successful. We had over 620 rooms, and the average (stay) was three days. The average spending through Travel Alberta is \$127 per person per

day. Those events really do have an impact, and they are reaching the goals that the committee has put out," added Woods.

The Economic Development Committee also helps provide the Tourism Enhancement Grant, which encourages partnerships with local non-profits to build on tourism-related events or products. Last year, The Canadian Motorcycle Tourism Association and Whitecourt Isga Tourism Association applied for funding and were successful, with nearly \$8,000 in total funding granted.

Woods said this year, the committee will continue to be as busy as ever. The Business Market Analysis Attraction & Retention Strategy project will conclude, and the group will choose its next steps based on the information collected. The deadline for this year's Whitecourt Launch grant is May 8, after which the committee will review applicants and start the pitch process.

For all your advertising needs,  
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at [thepresswtc@gmail.com](mailto:thepresswtc@gmail.com)

Idea



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# Burning the brush



*A hot glow visible beyond Whitecourt.*

**Brush fires have been happening outside of the community off and on for the last few weeks. This fire, captured from the ski hill with the valley of Whitecourt below, almost gave the illusion of a volcano with the darkness of the valley wall between it and the town.**

## PUBLIC NOTICE

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



### TAKE PART! GIVE BACK! Opportunity for Public Participation

The Town is recruiting citizens to fill a volunteer position. Board members provide Town Council with perspective and recommendations regarding important civic issues. Whitecourt is a diverse, growing town, and citizens are in the best position to provide input on our changing community needs. Get involved! It's your town. Share your knowledge and meet new colleagues.

**Community Services Advisory Board**

*"To create a healthy, strong community by meeting the leisure and social needs of the community."*

(1) Member – term to expire in October 2027

Applications will be accepted from residents of Whitecourt or the Woodlands County agreement area.

If being on a Council Committee interests you, please complete an application form which can be found on the Whitecourt website or picked up at the Town Office. Applications must be received before 12:00 noon, Monday, March 3, 2025 to:

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

You can also scan the QR code for a direct link to the application form:



Applications will be presented to Town Council at the March 10, 2025 Regular Meeting.

### Questions?

Contact our Administration Department at 780.778.2273 or email administration@whitecourt.ca.

### NOTICE OF DECISION

The following decisions were made by the Municipal Planning Commission:

Application 24-115: NE 32-59-11-W5 – Discretionary Use – 24.97 MW AC Solar Power Facility – Approved with Conditions.

**Date of Decision:** February 13, 2025

**Appeal Closes at 4:00pm:** March 6, 2025

An Appeal of the above decision(s) may be made by submitting a written appeal and appeal fee (\$310) 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.

### REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

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

- 2025-05-02: **JDA Place – Arena Restaurant/Concession Services**, Closes: February 28, 2025

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

# Trading places: Edmonton housing market heats up, Calgary cools off

By Mark Parsons, ATB ECONOMICS

At first glance, the national housing price story is, well, kinda boring.

The latest housing price data released on Tuesday show a national market that has been moving sideways since early 2024. Benchmark national home prices have barely budged over the past year (+0.2% year-over-year...yawn).

That's the national trend. But anyone who follows this industry knows that housing is local, not national. And this is where it gets interesting.

## Less expensive Canadian housing markets see larger price gains

Higher-priced markets like Vancouver and Toronto have seen almost no change over the past year, while lower-priced markets like Edmonton, Fredericton, and Saskatoon have witnessed large

gains. In other words, huge variation across markets, all washing out to very little movement in the national number (see the chart below).

price is \$1.2M) and lower-cost housing in other places (Edmonton sits at \$421K). An additional affordability squeeze came from higher mortgage rates

vincial migration flows into Alberta, particularly inflows from B.C. and Ontario.

## A tale of Alberta's two largest cities

What about inside

when Calgary gets expensive and Edmonton remains relatively cheap?

Calgary's housing market remained resilient following the Bank of Canada interest rate hikes. It was the only metro area in Canada with a population of 1 million+ where prices continued to increase year-over-year even as rates moved higher. This outperformance corresponded to breath-taking population growth, with more than 190,000 people added to the CMA in the last two years alone, putting pressure on housing.

Edmonton meanwhile saw a modest correction in home prices, and population growth (while strong) lagged Calgary.

The result? The price gap between the two cities hit a record \$194,000 in May 2024.

But then the pattern shifted.

Benchmark home

prices have been growing faster in Edmonton than in Calgary for six straight months on a year-over-year (y/y) basis. Last month, Edmonton's benchmark home price jumped 3.8% over December, the largest month-over-month increase since the housing boom of 2006. Meanwhile, the price in Calgary dipped 0.4%.

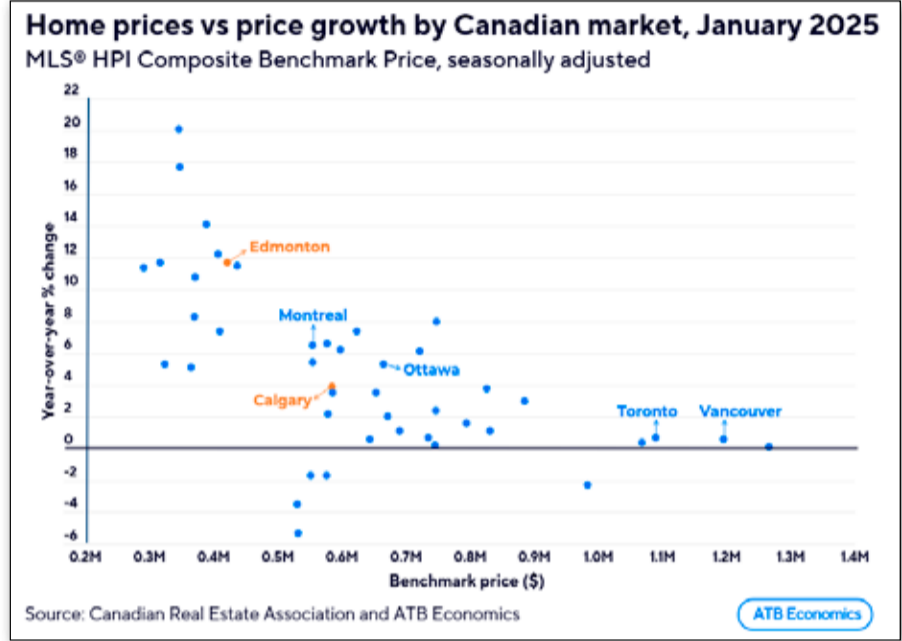
Now that Calgary-Edmonton price gap has closed to \$163,300.

The sales-to-listings ratio is another barometer. Calgary is still in sellers territory at 0.64, but Edmonton now sits even higher at 0.80. The national ratio is 0.49.

We are seeing a similar divergence in asking rents, though rental increases in both markets have cooled.

The good news for would-be home buyers is that housing supply

continued on page 15



What's going on here? We have long argued that Canadians are chasing affordability amid extremely high prices in certain parts of the country (the Vancouver benchmark

with the Bank of Canada hiking its policy rate in early 2022.

As we have found, Alberta's housing affordability advantage has, in large part, explained record interpro-

Alberta? For an interesting case study, let's look at Alberta's two largest cities: Calgary and Edmonton. If it's true that people are seeking lower-cost housing, what happens

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BYLAW 622/25 – AMENDING WOODLANDS COUNTY LAND USE BYLAW 490/17 LAND USE BYLAW AMENDMENT APPLICATION 2024LUA-02

PLACE	DATE	TIME
Woodlands County Municipal Office Council Chambers, Whitecourt, AB	Wednesday, March 12, 2025	5:15 pm

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 692 of the Municipal Government Act the Council of Woodlands County is considering an application for amendment to Land Use Bylaw 490/17, by making the following amendments through proposed Bylaw 622/25.

**Re-zoning of SW-24-58-12-5 Roll Number's: 235954 & 35572 from "A2" Agriculture Two District to "ARE" Agriculture Rural Estates District. For the purpose to subdivide an additional 16-acre parcel.**

Written comments or concerns on the above proposed bylaw amendment may be provided **prior to 4:30 pm on Friday March 7, 2025**, to:

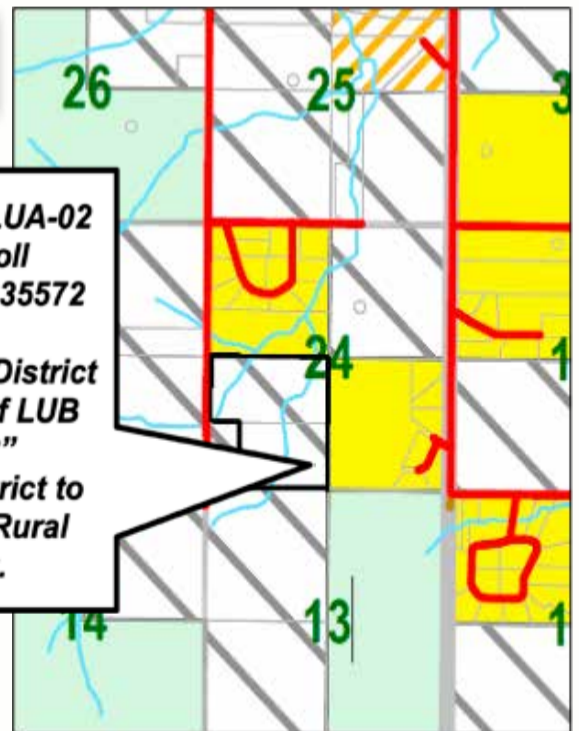
Woodlands County  
Box 60, Whitecourt AB T7S 1N3  
Attention: Joshua Raposo, Manager, Planning Services  
or by email at [planning@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:planning@woodlands.ab.ca) ATTN: Joshua Raposo

Written comments are preferred; however, this is a public hearing and interested individuals may attend in person to voice any comment or concern. The meeting may be viewed via YouTube: <https://bit.ly/3boRlkn>

The proposed land use amendment documents may be viewed during regular business hours at the Woodlands County Municipal office in Whitecourt located at #1 Woodlands Lane.

**Bylaw 622/25 2024LUA-02  
SW-24-58-12-5 Roll  
Number's: 235954 & 35572**

**Amending Land Use District  
within Appendix A of LUB  
490/17 from "A2"  
Agriculture Two District to  
"ARE" Agriculture Rural  
Estates District.**



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Phone: 780-778-0694



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Phone: 780-773-6594



**BRUCE PRESTIDGE**  
Councillor for Blue Ridge  
Division 5  
[bruce.prestidge@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:bruce.prestidge@woodlands.ab.ca)  
Phone: 780-779-3917

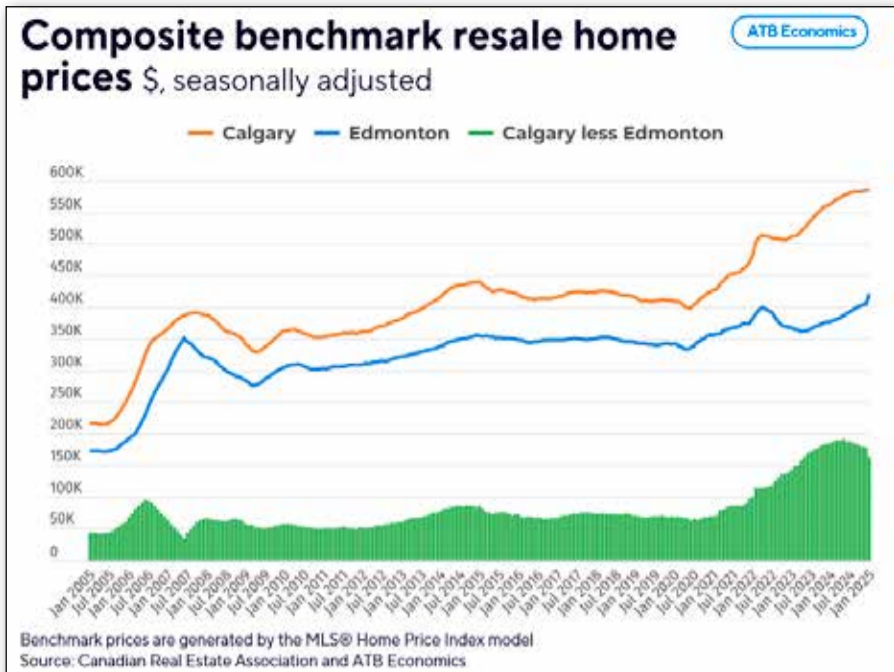


**PETER KUELKEN**  
Councillor for Goose Lake/  
Freeman River Division 6  
[peter.kuelken@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:peter.kuelken@woodlands.ab.ca)  
Phone: 780-264-2425



**DEVIN WILLIAMS**  
Councillor for Fort Assiniboine/  
Timber Division 7  
[devin.williams@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:devin.williams@woodlands.ab.ca)  
Phone: 780-305-1825





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has responded, with record housing starts in both Calgary and Edmonton last year. This is helping ease some of the price pressure.

The shift towards Edmonton is much more apparent in the housing data, than in the population stats. Edmonton's population growth has accelerated, but still lags Calgary's. However, we saw for the first time since 2008, net intraprovincial outflows from Calgary to other parts of the province in 2024, and inflows into Edmonton.

Our view is that the chasing affordability theme has partly moved from provincial to local. That is, local housing price gaps are closing in response to the appetite for households to find lower cost options within the province.

We suspect the rising share of remote workers, with more flexibility to separate place of work and residency decisions, is playing into this 'chasing affordability' trend.

With households across Canada still squeezed by elevated prices, softer labour

markets, and higher interest rates than before, we think this theme will continue to unfold this year. It is one of the reasons why we think interprovincial migration will continue into Alberta. After all, even with some convergence in markets, home prices in Alberta remain well below the national average. And with wide price gaps within the province and international immigration set to slow (mostly hitting major centres), we expect that population growth rates will become more balanced across the province.

## Six actions to help avoid money mistakes

(NC) According to recent research, while three-quarters of Canadians say they have strong financial habits, many are still making money mistakes that could be impacting their financial wellbeing. These actions range from not setting financial goals to not keeping track of expenses. The research also uncovered that many Canadians feel they lack the time or knowledge to make good financial habits stick.

Want to avoid money mistakes and build stronger financial habits? Here are six actions to help get you started.

**1. Set goals and create a plan:** Knowing what you want to achieve and creating a plan is an important step in making new financial habits stick. It allows you to see where you are financially and identify the habits you will need to create, and stick to, in order to reach your goals.

**2. Make a budget and track your spending:** These are two important habits that can

improve your financial wellbeing. Start by looking at your spending habits and then create a budget that aligns with your monthly earnings. Make sure to capture all expenses, big and small, and to review your budget regularly to ensure you are staying on track.

**3. Monitor your cash flow:** Knowing and staying on top of your cash flow is an important step to not only ensure you have enough money to cover your expenses today, but to make long-term planning easier by identifying how much money you have to put towards savings and investing goals. It can also help you determine if you need to tighten up your spending.

**4. Save and invest when and what you can:** With everyday expenses adding up, it can sometimes seem impossible to find money to save or invest. A common misconception is that it takes a lot of money to get started or make a difference. In reality, finding even a

small amount of money to put away can add up over time. The most important thing is to just get started.

**5. Chip away at debt:** Knowing how much debt you have is a good first step. Make a list of all your current debts, along with interest rates, then look at your budget to see how much you can put towards paying off your debts. While there are many approaches you can take, one strategy is to focus on your high-interest debt first.

**6. Get expert advice and use tools that can help:** Get expert advice and use tools to help you keep your financial habits on track. For example, digital tools like RBC's NOMI, which provides a suite of capabilities that use artificial intelligence to help Canadians manage their money, can help remove some of the barriers and friction that can come with creating better financial habits.

Find more tips to help you navigate creating better financial habits at [rbc.com/nomi](https://www.rbc.com/nomi).

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