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The Press

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

Locally Owned & Operated

Canada

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Some divided highways in Alberta could see their speed limit increase from 110 km/h to 120 km/h, depending on the results of a current survey by the Alberta Government. Preliminary reports show strong support for the change, with full results expected mid-December. (Pictured) Highway 43 from west of Edmonton to Grande Prairie could soon be 120 km/h.

Should the speed limit on certain divided highways in Alberta increase?

| By Serena Lapointe

Highway 43, from west of Edmonton to Grande Prairie, is one of several highways in the province that could see a speed limit change. Over the last couple of months, the Alberta Government has been running surveys and seeking input from municipalities on the potential switch-up, which would see speeds increase from 110 kilometres an hour to 120 kilometres an hour.

Other highways that would see the same increase in speed are Highway 1 from Banff to the Saskatchewan border, Highway 2 between Edmonton and Calgary (excluding Deerfoot Trail), Highway 4 from Lethbridge to the USA border, Highway 16 from Hinton to Lloydminster, Highway 63 from north of Highway 55 to Fort McMurray and beyond, and portions of Highway 3.

Combined, 2,150

kilometres of Alberta highways would be impacted by the change.

On November 13, Whitecourt Town Council received a letter from the Deputy Minister of Transportation and Economic Corridors, Paul Smith, seeking feedback on the proposed speed changes. Municipalities along each of the highways mentioned above received similar

continued on page 2

A neat feature at the Culture and Events Centre will enable quick seat changes

| By Serena Lapointe

Work at the Culture and Events Centre, just off Whitecourt's downtown, continues to move forward with lots of completed exterior work that residents can see and much more happening inside, as crews work towards the fall 2026 completion timeline.

One of the features planned for inside the events centre is a large retractable seating sys-

tem that will enable staff to create different seating arrangements with the push of a button. At the November 24 Regular Meeting of Town Council, Chelsea Grande, Director of Community Services, gave the elected members a run-through of the system.

"The telescopic seating is unique to the multipurpose room at the Culture and Events Center. It is a system

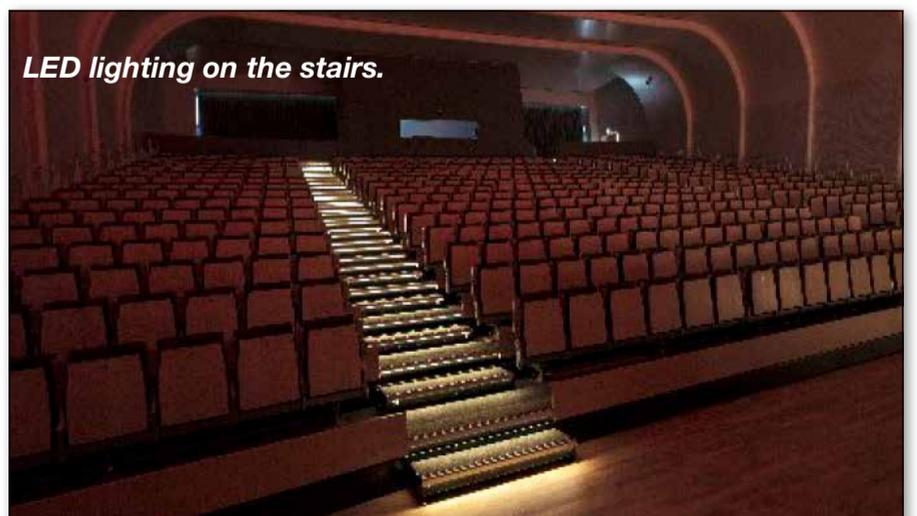
that can move across the floor," explained Grande, as a video showing the chair system moving across a large indoor space was shown on the projector screen.

The retractable system shrinks over 300 seats into a tall, long column that is barely five feet thick. Hussey Seating Systems, the only supplier of this

continued on page 7



A similar arrangement from Hussey.



LED lighting on the stairs.

One of the unique features of the new Culture and Events Centre is the seating options in the multipurpose room, thanks to a neat system that, with the push of a button, moves hundreds of seats from a small, inconspicuous package into something grand.



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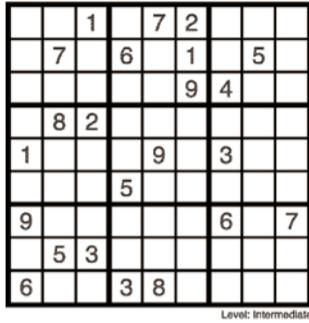
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SEE SOLUTIONS PAGE 11

SUDOKU

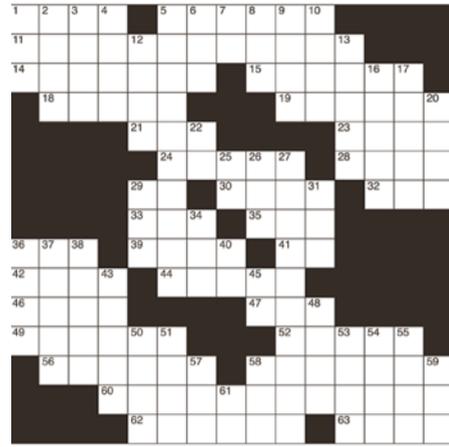
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Crossword Clues

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Popular wine __ 1.
- Dough made from corn flour
- 5. Rise
- 11. Gratitude
- 14. A low wall
- 15. Kidnap
- 18. A cup golfers want to win
- 19. Outgoing
- 21. "Partner" to flow
- 23. Former Michigan coach Brady
- 24. Proverb
- 28. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- 29. Helps a body recover
- 30. Baseball Cy Young winner
- 32. Very fast airplane
- 33. Offensive baseball stat
- 35. Body of water
- 36. Record of one's heartbeat
- 39. Signs a contract
- 41. Atomic #24
- 42. Bind securely
- 44. French Jesuit

theologian

- 46. Fragrant brown balsam
- 47. Post office box
- 49. Sells tickets at inflated prices
- 52. Places to hang coats
- 56. Jewish salutation
- 58. Yellow fruits
- 60. Poorly educated
- 62. Microorganism
- 63. Talk show host Barrymore

CLUES DOWN

- 1. A way to plan
- 2. Three-banded armadillo
- 3. Mobile
- 4. Romanian city
- 5. Making sour
- 6. Take a seat
- 7. "The Golden State"
- 8. When you hope to arrive
- 9. Pointed ends of pens
- 10. Extinct flightless bird
- 12. Sharp-pointed dueling sword
- 13. Nape of neck
- 16. Problems (Spanish slang)

- 17. Narrow carpet
- 20. To avoid the risk of
- 22. Spiritual academic degree (abbr.)
- 25. Equally
- 26. Traditional cars still need it
- 27. Eligible voters
- 29. Greek alphabet letter
- 31. Body part
- 34. Referee-declared outcome
- 36. Means to moving money
- 37. Popular footwear brand
- 38. Cockatoo
- 40. NFL's big game
- 43. Botswana currencies
- 45. News-reporting organization
- 48. Batman villain
- 50. Urgent request
- 51. Not all
- 53. Hallmark's specialty
- 54. Knot in a tree
- 55. Satisfy
- 57. Notable space station
- 58. Baby's dining accessory
- 59. Stitch clothing
- 61. __ and behold



Early reports show many Albertans in favour of the proposed speed increase.

continued from page 1

engagement. At the November 17 Policies and Priorities meeting, members discussed the proposal at length, including concerns about there not being a speed buffer at the south/east exit/entrance of the community (Kanata) and that a speed increase would require traffic to drop from 120 kilometres an hour to 70 kilometres an hour as it reached the recently built stop light at Highway 43 and 33rd Street. During the November 24 Regular Meeting of Council, Lee Hardman, Director of Community Safety, summarized the discussions. "The committee felt that the transition zones entering the community should be extended to allow motorists to have adequate time to adjust to the speed limit in town," he said. "Extension of the transition zones would also impact surrounding Woodlands County subdivisions; therefore, it was recommended that a joint letter from Whitecourt and Woodlands County be drafted on behalf of the region," continued Hardman. He said that typical transition zones are less than 500 metres. "Our current transition zone is around 200-300 metres, from 100 to the 70/km zone in town," said Hardman, speaking of the buffer zone at the northwest exit of the community. Traffic heading into town from Grande Prairie transitions to 100 kilometres an hour after leaving

Whitecourt, before the speed limit increases to 110 kilometres an hour. Councillor Brian Wynn asked if the speed limit would apply to transport trucks as well, to which Hardman said yes. In the Alberta Government's survey, one question correlates to commercial trucks, asking Albertans if they feel they should be restricted from using the far-left lane on highways with three or more lanes, such as portions of Highway 2. Following the discussions, the Town Council decided to send a letter on behalf of the municipality with feedback for the Deputy Minister. Rather than focusing on whether the Town Council was in favour of raising the speed limit or not, Mayor Ray Hilts said the letter would focus on advocacy for a safe bubble around the municipality. "We decided to deviate more to making the highway secure approximal to Whitecourt so that we have a safer entry and exit of Whitecourt, versus commenting on the 120." Mayor Hilts said asking Woodlands County to partner on the letter was also important. "I think what we need to emphasize with our partners in Woodlands County is that the speed limit should be lower coming into town because we have those busy intersections (with) residential, truck traffic, new stop lights, etc. I think there's justification to request the ministry to revisit what that might look like

and what buffer zone they would agree to. If we indicate that that's something we really want to look into as a Council, then I think that's more palatable, maybe, to the ministry," explained Mayor Hilts. The Town Council voted unanimously to send the letter and to ask Woodlands County to join it. On the Alberta Government's website, it states that there are over 64,000 kilometres of provincial highways and that just under 12,000 of those kilometres are divided, with 2,150 proposed to increase. In the survey, which will remain open until December 12, the Alberta Government pointed to the province's western neighbours, British Columbia, and specifically, Highway 5 (Coquihalla), between Kamloops and Hope, which has been set to 120 kilometres an hour since 2014. Comments online locally range from full support to mixed reactions to concerns about how much faster drivers will go if they are already doing 120 km/hr now. Once the survey data is reviewed, the Alberta Government plans to conduct a mini trial of a 120 km/h speed limit to "Assess the impacts of higher speed limits on divided highways," as stated on Alberta.ca. It adds that this trial period would include "strong monitoring to assess driving behaviour." To do the survey, visit www.alberta.ca/divided-highway-speed-limit-increase-survey.

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What to ask before renewing your mortgage this year

(NC) Roughly 1.2 million Canadian mortgages are up for renewal in 2025, according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). 85 per cent of these mortgages were opened when the Bank of Canada's key lending rate was at or below one per cent.

As many Canadians prepare to renew in a higher-rate environment, a recent survey found that more than a quarter of respondents don't have a strong understanding of how to make their mortgage more affordable.

Here are some questions to think about if your mortgage is up for

renewal this year:

Should I choose fixed or variable?

A closer look at your financial situation and any changes to your income can help you determine which type of interest rate is best for you ahead of renewal.

If you're carrying a lot of debt or your income is inconsistent, a fixed rate mortgage could be a good fit. A fixed interest rate won't change throughout the term of the mortgage, and neither will the payments.

"It really comes down to the amount of flexibility in your debt service ability," says Gino Caputo, a senior real estate lending VP at TD.

"But if a homeowner has increased their income, they might be open to choosing a variable rate mortgage and managing higher monthly payments or a longer amortization period if interest rates go up in the future."

Am I interested in a mortgage renewal or refinance?

Renewing a mortgage isn't the only option. If you're looking to access more funds from the equity in your home, or thinking about consolidating debts, you might choose to refinance your mortgage instead of renewing it.

If you're planning to sell the home soon, it

could mean choosing a shorter term and an open mortgage. Having flexibility with your mortgage products can be important when considering a sale.

When should I ask for advice on my mortgage renewal?

To access trusted advice about mortgage costs, be proactive, start early and don't leave the process until the last minute.

It's a good idea to reach out to your bank or other lenders six months in advance to start the discussion, take stock of your personal circumstances and help inform your decision-making.



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High	30%	60%	30%	40%	60%
Low	1°C	2°C	-3°C	-9°C	-14°C
Wind	1°C	-3°C	-9°C	-15°C	-15°C
24-Hr Rain / Snow	SW 10 km/h	W 19 km/h	NW 25 km/h	NW 5 km/h	SW 5 km/h
	-	<1cm	<1cm	-	-

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NOTICE OF DECISION

The following decisions were made by the Municipal Planning Commission:

Subdivision Application W25-356 – 83 & 85 Park Drive - Approved with conditions.

Date of Decision: November 27, 2025

Appeal Closes at 4:00pm: December 18, 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.

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Traffic lights



Traffic control for motorists on Hwy 43, in and out of town.

A red light at the Kanata intersection on Highway 43.



The new traffic lights at the Highway 43 and 33rd Street intersection (Kanata) are up and running. Crews managed to get everything operational before winter weather kicked into high gear, with just a dusting of snow on the ground as the lights became functional early on Friday morning.

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Photos are available. For more information, please contact Whitecourt Pound at: 780-778-5767



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Bye, bye trees



Some big branches were cut on other trees.



Some of the beautiful trees that lined the No Frills parking lot have been removed. Over the last couple of summers, several of them had died making them a potential hazard for falling branches, or worse. Three were removed on Thursday.



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Keeping the shelves full: Marilyn Stevens inspires ongoing support for the Food Bank

By Haylee Winger

As demand for support continues to rise in Whitecourt, local residents and volunteers are stepping up to ensure the Food Bank can continue serving those who need assistance. In 2024, the Whitecourt Food Bank provided help to 2,626 people, marking a significant 23% increase from the previous year. With the busiest season approaching, community involvement has never been more important.

One of the most dedicated contributors to this effort is Marilyn Stevens, whose history with charitable meat draws spans more than two decades. She first began hosting draws in Red Deer from 1999 to 2003 in support of Search and Rescue. When Marilyn Stevens and her family made Whitecourt their “forever home” in 2007, she was determined to bring the fundraiser back.

“I always believed this community could benefit from something like the meat draw,”

Marilyn Stevens said. “With the blessing of Bill and Mary Newcombe, who owned the Road House at the time, I knew it was time to get it going again.”

Over the years, Marilyn Stevens worked to establish the meat draw as a Whitecourt tradition. She hosted it at several local venues, including Smitty’s, the old hotel downtown, and Green Gables, helping to build community support for the Food Bank. The event was active at Green Gables when COVID-19 forced gatherings to stop. Even then, Marilyn Stevens continued volunteering as a driver, delivering hampers to families in need.

“At one point, I realized families rely on the Food Bank for six hampers a year,” she said. “If the shelves are empty, it affects their daily lives. That’s why I knew I had to get the draws going again. It’s not just about Christmas—it’s about helping families all year long.”

Marilyn Stevens explained how she runs the draws: “I purchase 15 cuts of meat for each event, and I use my tips to buy door prizes. Even small contributions—like a few extra dollars on a tab—really add up. It’s incredible what a community can do when everyone pitches in.”

The weekly meat draws are held every Friday at the Road House until mid-January, giving community members multiple opportunities to participate and support the Whitecourt Food Bank. For those who can’t attend, Marilyn noted that the Whitecourt Legion also hosts meat draws on Fridays. “The Legion works very hard on this too,” she said, highlighting the broader community effort.

Local participation has played a major role in the success of the fundraiser. Marilyn noted that businesses such as Aquarius, along with staff and customers at the Road House, often

offer additional support, helping the draws remain successful week after week.

At the most recent draw, after covering the cost of meat, the event raised \$584 for the Food Bank. Marilyn Stevens’ fundraising efforts have now reached \$120,780.65 since 2009 for the Whitecourt Food Bank alone. In addition, she has raised \$56,000 for Wellspring, another initiative close to her heart.

“Even a little help can make a huge difference,” she said. “If we can shine a light on the need, maybe more people will step forward. That’s what makes Whitecourt so special—the way people come together when it counts.”

The Whitecourt Food Bank accepts donations year-round and relies heavily on local support. Residents can help in several ways:

- Food donations: Call 780-778-2341 to arrange a drop-off at the Carlan Services



Marilyn Stevens stands with Peggy, a past grand prize winner, during one of the community meat draws supporting the Whitecourt Food Bank.

Community Resource Centre.

- Financial contributions: Visit the Town Office (5004 52 Avenue) to donate by cash or cheque. Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$20.

Through the dedication of volunteers like Marilyn Stevens and the generosity of local residents, Whitecourt

families continue to receive the support they need—not only during the holiday season, but all year long.

Marilyn Stevens’ story serves as a reminder of the power of community. “Even a little help can make a huge difference,” she said. “Everyone deserves support, every month of the year, not just around the holidays.”



The first meat draw poster from 2009, created to raise funds for Wellsprings.



Children’s lunch items organized at the Whitecourt Food Bank, made possible through community donations.



One of the many door prizes Marilyn Stevens purchases and prepares for her weekly meat draws, raising funds for the Whitecourt Food Bank.



Cuts of meat from Mayerthorpe Co-op for the meat draw.

Whitecourt Town Council update

Council has approved the purchase of a telescopic theatre seating system for the Culture & Events Centre. The movable system has 322 seats when expanded, and will be stored against the east wall of the multipurpose room. For larger performances this system will be expanded, effectively converting the space into

a theatre, to provide a number of seating configurations to meet the needs of the event, users and audience. The system was purchased for \$599,995 plus GST.

Whitecourt has created a Tuition Assistance Bursary (TAB) Program that will provide up to \$10,000 in funding to local students accessing post-secondary

education and training opportunities. Funding to support this program has been provided through a pilot program with the University of Alberta. Details on the application process and application timelines will be posted on www.whitecourt.ca.

Council has approved a number of amendments to Utility Bylaw

1511. The changes adopted address administrative and current practice changes, as well as amendments to align with new legislation. A consolidated copy of the bylaw will be posted online as information.

Woodlands County submitted a request for Whitecourt to support its application to the Alberta Community

Partnership Grant for funding to complete an update the Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP). Whitecourt will be suggesting a Joint Liaison Committee meeting be held to discuss this and other partnership opportunities.

Whitecourt will be applying to the Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program to

fund an extension of 33 Street to support industrial growth in Whitecourt. Whitecourt has been working with a Developer who is looking to develop lands for industrial development in the 33 Street area, and the project proposes the extension of 33 Street from 41 Avenue

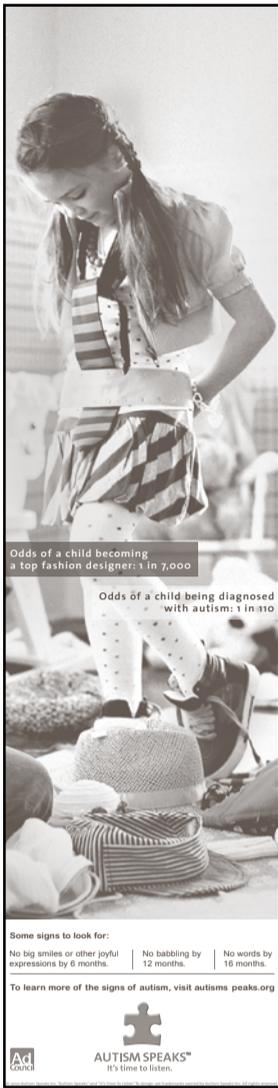
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continued from page 1

type of seating, has been in business since 1835 and has been making telescopic seating since 1952. Various venues use this type of seating, including theatres and sports venues.

What makes the system unique is that it moves on its own. "It doesn't have tracks. It is different than most telescopic seating systems because most are secured against the back wall, where this one can move forward, and it can come all the way up, past our divider, so you can make an intimate setting in the first third of the multipurpose room," explained Grande. "It telescopic's (sic) out and then the seats are flat, and someone just has to go around and push up all the backs on the seats," she added.

Choosing a system like this allows the space to be used for a broader range of events while also having the option to make a theatre-like experience for smaller audiences. "We

wanted to be able to use the venue for different options for seating configurations. This can be used at the back of the room, where we can put floor seating and table seating in front of it, so we can set it up for a concert," said Grande.

"It also allows us to move it up for a more intimate event with 322 people at a theatre," she said.

When asked if they looked into other products from different companies, Grande said they did, but the system they were looking for was only available from one company. The system also features LED lighting on the stairs and space for accessible seating.

"All of the other seating options have to be put in place. They don't be able to do as much with the room, and we really want it to be able to be used for theatre purposes but also multi-purpose, and this was the best option, and the only supplier of it," said Grande.

Although the pur-



chase of the seats was brought to the Town Council at the November 24 meeting, the funds were already accounted for in the budget. "This (cost) is in the 54-million-dollar budget, but because it's over our spending authority, as per policy, it has to come to council for authorization because it's outside of the construction contract with Clark Builders. It's in our furniture and equipment budget," explained Grande.

The seating system has grown in popularity in the United Kingdom and has recently moved into the United States and Canada. Grande explained that there are warranty operators in

Calgary and Edmonton, making issues easier to deal with, adding that the system has a five-year warranty. The cost of the movable telescopic seating system is \$599,995 plus GST, and as mentioned, it has already been budgeted for in the overall building budget. Council voted unanimously to approve the purchase. Grande added that they might consider adding cup holders to the seats, depending on the setup. "They could be added on. It's not a huge cost. I think it's around the two-thousand-dollar mark. But we want to make sure it fits with our operational model before we purchase the cup holders."



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.



Three AI-powered scams to watch out for

(NC) One of the biggest transformations artificial intelligence (AI) is driving is in the area of fraud. AI lets fraudsters impersonate more easily, personalize their scams and move faster than ever before. According to Mastercard, here are three scams where it's playing a major role, and ways to keep yourself safe.

The grandparent scam: This is a good example of how fraudsters can use AI to personalize their scams like never before. Fraudsters will target seniors with a phone call when they're off-guard or vulnerable. Using AI they will alter their voice to sound like a family member in distress who needs money right away.

Calls like this are meant to play on your emotions, so listen to your instincts. Ask yourself: Why would money be what they need, instead of help in some other way? If you are unsure, call them back using the number you have for them. Also, consider having a "secret word" that only family members know, to help verify identity.

The fake order: This is a type of phishing scam, where fraudsters send a message designed to look like it's coming from a legitimate source, in order to get sensitive information or login credentials from you. A common version is sending a fake invoice or confirmation for an online order.

Treat any unexpected messages like this with suspicion. Fraudsters often pose as businesses you trust. Never click on links or use any contact information from this type of message. Reach out to the business yourself through the phone number or contact form on the company's website. They're victims of the scam, too, and can work with you to get to the truth.

Authorized push payment (APP) fraud: AI tools can let fraudsters ask you for legitimate-seeming fast payments that often go through before your financial institution can react. They usually focus on impersonating quick but necessary payments, such as Can-

ada Revenue Agency back taxes, bank overdraft fees or credit card bills.

Thanks to the speed of AI, all it takes is a moment's lapse in attention for someone to send what could be an irreversible payment. But, AI is also being used to strengthen fraud prevention. Payment providers, like Mastercard, have developed tools that work in the background while you complete a purchase. These systems are designed to detect this type of fraud automatically, in real-time and stop the fraudulent transaction in its tracks.

It's up to all of us to be more cyber safe—better cybersecurity makes for a safer community.



A locally owned and family operated newspaper serving Whitecourt

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY

Contact

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



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BULK WATER STATIONS - PREPAID ONLINE ACCOUNTS

Beginning January 2026, all Bulk Water Stations will transition to a prepaid online account system.

To complete the required system upgrades, the stations in Anselmo, Blue Ridge, and Fort Assiniboine will be temporarily closed for a short period in January.

Closure dates will be posted on the County website Notice Board and shared through social media. Detailed information will also be included with the December invoices.

For inquiries or details, please contact the Municipal Office in Whitecourt at 780-778-8400.



- Both MUNICIPAL OFFICES close Wednesday, December 24, 2025 at 12-noon. Reopening Friday, January 2, 2026 for regular hours.
- All TRANSFER STATIONS are closed for the day Wednesday, December 24th. Open regular hours throughout the holiday season.
- BLUE RIDGE WASTE COLLECTION: Deferred from Friday, December 26 to Friday, January 2.
- FORT ASSINIBOINE WASTE COLLECTION: There is NO service interruption this holiday season.

SERVICE TRACKER: To report a road maintenance issue or road service request, please fill out a service request form: woodlands.ab.ca/p/service-request

For public works issues and emergencies, please call 1-888-870-6315 and follow the voice prompts.



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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 TEXT0 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

Putting a face on suicide



Thomas David TOM Bourn Age 20

21-Aug-1999 ... 24-Nov-19

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

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continued from page 6

north to the CN Rail tracks.

Whitecourt will be submitting comments to the Alberta Electoral Boundaries Commission on proposed changes to provincial electoral divisions. Among other changes, the Commission plans to consolidate several northern electoral divisions into six, effectively eliminating

a provincial representative in the north. Due to this, the West Yellowhead electoral division (currently represented by Honourable Martin Long) will change to exclude the Municipality of Jasper, and include the Town of Swan Hills. The Commission is accepting comments from the public until December 19, 2025 and Albertans can share their comments on the online

portal at <https://abebc.ca/>.

The Government of Alberta has requested feedback from the Town of Whitecourt on its proposal to change the Highway 43 speed limit from 110km/hour to 120km/hour. Whitecourt feels that if this change is made, the Province should increase transition zones entering the community to allow for adequate time for motorists to

change from the rural highway speed to the in-town highway speed of 70km/hour. Whitecourt will be asking Woodlands County if it would like to submit a joint letter, and will be submitting comments to the Deputy Minister of Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors.

Whitecourt Town Council has been authorized to attend municipal law seminars, and a

joint Christmas dinner with Woodlands County Council.

Whitecourt will be providing volunteers of the Whitecourt Christmas Hamper with food trays as a show of appreciation for their work wrapping gifts and building hampers for the community. For details on this year's program, follow Whitecourt Christmas Hamper on Facebook.

Louise Meier has

been appointed to the Whitecourt Protective Services Committee.



Canada's hedge: The LNG story

| By Carol Kamel
ATB ECONOMICS

In Economics 101, you learn the difference between being a price setter and a price taker. For decades, the Canadian natural gas sector has been the textbook definition of the latter.

Despite being the world's fourth-largest producer of natural gas, we lacked meaningful access to global markets. Without this access, our customer base was essentially limited to domestic users and the United States. This dynamic has often led to a steep discount on prices relative to international benchmarks and U.S. prices over and above differences due to transportation costs. Compounding the problem, Canadian producers have added both material gas production and reserves in advance of the LNG Canada start-up, which has led to a material local gas storage inventory build.

However, with liquified natural gas (LNG)

exports growing, with one project operational and four other export facilities in the works (in addition to LNG Canada Phase 2), this dynamic may be shifting.

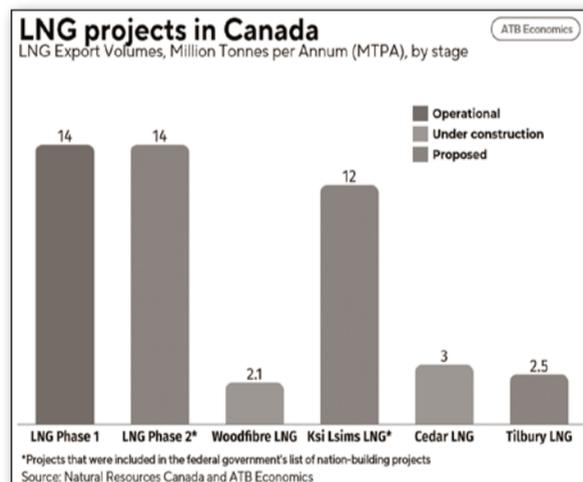
How did we get here?

The Canadian natural gas sector has some structural weaknesses. As mentioned, without access to global markets, the only external customer was the U.S. When U.S. shale production surged at the end of August, it displaced a large amount of Canadian gas and pushed down the realized price of our exports.

Domestic constraints have made the discount larger. Alberta and British Columbia account for 60% and 39% of the nation's natural gas output, respectively. Despite this lion's share, Western Canada's pipeline system has experienced recurring congestion, especially during maintenance periods and shoulder sea-

sons. When gas can't move out of the region, oversupply builds, and local prices fall (sometimes into negative territory!). For reference, we are entering this winter season with 558 billion cubic feet (Bcf) stored. That said, the Canadian benchmark price for natural gas, AECO, has rebounded from the several days of negative pricing in September to seasonal highs (still about a ~\$1 discount to Henry Hub, the American natural gas pricing benchmark).

Is Canada too late to the game?



Currently the U.S., Qatar, and Australia dominate the LNG landscape, with an expected 10,594 Bcf per year of LNG export capacity (a record) set to be added by 2030, largely driven by capacity additions in the U.S. and Qatar. Given this reality, the natural question that follows is how can Canada gain market share in an industry with established market participants and expected increased supply?

Rather than be discouraged, the presence of established players underscores the need

for diversification in an increasingly protectionist global economy. Canada's distinct advantages position it to capture market share despite rising supply and competition.

What is Canada's value proposition?

Canada's colder climate, which makes LNG liquefaction less energy-intensive (to liquefy natural gas it needs to be cooled to -162°C), Kitimat's (location of LNG Canada Phase 1) average temperature of ~7°C compares favourably to the U.S. Gulf Coast (~22°C). LNG Canada's Kitimat facility is expected to produce LNG with the least CO2 per tonne of LNG produced in the world.

Shipping logistics offer another advantage. Global demand for LNG is forecast to rise around 60% by 2040, largely driven by economic growth in Asia as countries seek to reduce their reliance on coal by switching to natural

gas, the cleanest burning fossil fuel. Canada's West Coast can deliver LNG to Asia in about 11 days, roughly half the time needed for the U.S. Gulf Coast shipments. This shorter route avoids major chokepoints such as the Panama Canal, Cape of Good Hope, Strait of Hormuz, and the Suez Canal that other LNG exporters can't avoid.

LNG provides the opportunity for Canada to not be shackled to a single export market and slowly chip away at the structural issues in the Canadian natural gas sector. It may take time to realize the full scope of benefits that come with LNG Canada Phase 1 and the other potential projects in the country and a venture like this does not come without its own set of challenges. That said, LNG is part of the essential next step of not constraining our own potential and becoming more resilient in the face of changing times.

MP Viersen awarded most Collaborative MP Award

Last week, Peace River – Westlock MP Arnold Viersen was honoured to receive an iPolitics 2025 Parliamentarians of the Year Award for Most Collaborative MP. Every year, Members of Parliament cast their ballot for an MP in four categories: Parliamentarian of the Year, Most Knowledgeable MP, Most Collaborative MP, and Best Constituency Representative MP.

"While it was a truly an honour that I hadn't expected, I have always enjoyed getting to know

my colleagues," said MP Arnold Viersen. "I've been able to work across the lines with all my colleagues to advance important issues. Whether they are Liberal, NDP, Bloc or Green Party leader Elizabeth May, there are some values and issues that can unite us as Canadians to make our country stronger and safer."

Uniquely, at the Award Ceremony on Monday evening, MP Viersen was presented the award by the Publisher of iPolitics, Brian Storseth who was the

former MP for Westlock – St. Paul.

MP Viersen's Interview with iPolitics:

What is it about your style of governance that you think makes your colleagues call you so "collaborative"?

Since first being elected in 2015, I have always tried to work across party lines to advance issues and policies that we can agree on. My first motion in 2016 on the harms of sexually explicit material on the health of youth passed unani-

mously because I was able to get seconders in all five political parties at the time. I also enjoy getting to know people individually. On my first day on the Hill, I ran into another new NDP MP and we were both trying to figure out our way around the Hill. This created a shared experience and a friendship that continued.

Why is it so important to you to make sure you're working collaboratively with other MPs?

One of my focus areas as an MP is ending

exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery. Its one of the worst injustices today and yet is all around. So it needs all of us to work together to end it. That is why I launched the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) to End Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in 2018. The four co-chairs represent very different parts of the country and political views, but we work together well on this important issue.

What inspires you most about working in

parliament?

I enjoy seeing the results of what we work hard on behind the scenes. Whether it is the impact of survivors of human trafficking speaking on Parliament Hill, passing legislation like Bill S-211 (slavery in supply chains), getting the House of Commons to recognize February 22 as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day (2022) or playing a role in securing a conviction for a human trafficker, the APPG is making a difference in this fight.

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Family Resource & Crisis Centre
www.whitecourtshester.ca



Recover Out Loud

- Mondays are in person, at the Family Worship Center upstairs, and online (hybrid) at 7:30pm
- Fridays 7:30pm at the Whitecourt Baptist Church in person only.

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

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

Located at the United Church Basement on Legion Street (formerly 5201 - 50 Street), Please Leave a Message for Our AA member or Contact Addictions Helpline @1(866)332-2322

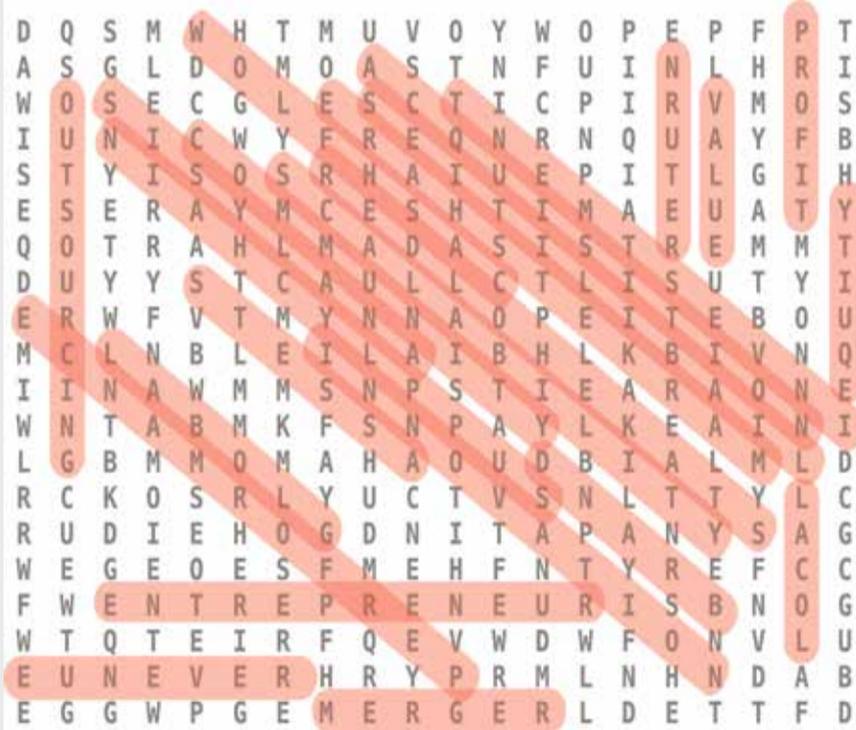


Remax Advantage photo

Cullen Witherly proudly donates to the Whitecourt Christmas Hamper after learning how the program helps local children during the holidays. He hopes to inspire others to give and has challenged Boston Pizza Whitecourt—where his mom works—to join the effort.

PUZZLES SOLUTIONS

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ECHO Society photo

Clients and staff from the ECHO Society pose with members of the Whitecourt Fire Department after an engaging November 19 tour that included safety tips, a look at specialized equipment, and plenty of excitement around the fire trucks.

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