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The Press

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

Locally Owned & Operated

Canada

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Photo Woodlands County

The potential misuse of Woodlands County's Snow Flag Program was one of the topics of discussion during a recent meeting. Concerns over residents wanting more work done than the program was intended for have sparked the need for a closer look at the program. Pictured is one of the friendly faces plowing the County roads.

Successes and lessons learned - Woodlands County's Infrastructure report wrap-up for 2025

| By Serena Lapointe

At the end of January, Woodlands County Council received a status report from the final quarter of 2025, detailing infrastructure-related projects, both completed and ongoing and concerns raised with plans on how to mitigate

them going forward. CAO Matthew Ferris stepped in as acting Infrastructure Services Director for the meeting.

The report provided insight into several areas, including transportation, fleet management, environmental services, water

and wastewater, solid waste and airport operations, breaking down items relating to service delivery, pressures from an operational standpoint, program implementation and planning.

The report also fea-

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Bike bank, youth advertising initiative, among this year's plans for Whitecourt's Youth Advisory Committee

| By Serena Lapointe

Whitecourt's Youth Advisory Committee is busy working towards its goals for 2026. Each year, the group of ten community youth, aged 13 to 18, share their ideas during a Strategic Planning Session before collectively deciding on what to focus on for the term, which runs from November to September.

Last year, the group focused on creating a chalk art competition during the Canada Day

festivities at Festival Park, which ended up being very successful, as well as expanding its Here For You Campaign, which provides free menstrual products in Town-owned facility bathrooms including those at JDA Place, the Allan & Jean Millar Centre, the Forest Interpretive Centre and seasonally at Festival Park.

Last year, the group also focused on raising awareness about the dangers of vap-

ing through an info campaign. During the Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce Trade Show, the committee had a booth where they asked people about vaping, testing their knowledge and raising awareness of conditions like "popcorn lung," even providing popcorn on site to send the message home.

Volunteerism is a big part of being a mem-

continued on page 5



Whitecourt's Youth Advisory Committee has some fantastic plans for this year as the group takes on a couple of big projects. Members recently presented their goals to Town Council, including a neat bike-related project. Pictured are Three YAC members judging homemade goods during last year's Seniors Week festivities.



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If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, you need to know that you're not alone. You can also call if you are not in crisis, seeking additional information. The new Canada Suicide Prevention Service (CSPS), by Crisis Services Canada, enables callers anywhere in

Canada to access crisis support by phone, in French or English: toll-free **1-833-456-4566** Available 24/7 Crisis Text Line (Powered by Kids Help Phone) Canada Wide free, 24/7 texting service is accessible immediately to youth anywhere

in Canada by texting TALK to **686868** to reach an English speaking Crisis Responder and TEXTO to **686868** to reach a French-speaking Crisis Responder on any text/SMS enabled cell phone. KidsHelpPhone Ages 20 Years and Under

in Canada **1-800-668-6868** (Online or on the Phone). First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness 24/7 Help Line **1-855-242-3310** Canadian Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line **1-866-925-4419** Trans LifeLine – All Ages **1-877-330-6366**

Putting a face on suicide



Dustin Dakota Birch
Age 22

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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Your Story Matters

If you or someone you know has been affected by bullying, your voice can make a difference. We are looking to hear your story and raise awareness about the impact of bullying in our community.

By sharing your experience, you can help others understand they are not alone in their struggles, and together, we can take a stand against bullying.

How to Share Your Story:

- Reach out to us at thepresswtc@gmail.com
- Your submission can remain 100% anonymous if you prefer.
- Every story shared helps bring us one step closer to ending the cycle of bullying.

We believe in the power of raising awareness. Your story could be the one that helps someone find hope and strength. Let's take a stand together.



I didn't think I was a bully

I'm 15 years old, and for most of my life, I didn't think bullying was something I was involved in.

When I pictured a bully, I imagined someone obvious. Loud, aggressive, pushing people around in hallways. That wasn't me. I had friends. Teachers didn't get complaints about me. I wasn't "mean" all the time. So when people talked about bullying at assemblies or in health class, I tuned out. I thought it didn't apply to me.

But bullying isn't always obvious, and that's what makes it dangerous.

For me, it looked like sarcasm. It looked like laughing when someone messed up. It looked like whispering about someone's clothes, their voice, or the way they acted, and then pretending it was just a joke. Sometimes it was leaving someone out of group chats or rolling my eyes when they talked. Sometimes it was saying nothing while my friends said worse. I told myself it didn't matter. I told myself people need-

ed thicker skin. I told myself that if I didn't say anything, I wasn't really part of it.

I was wrong. What I didn't see was how small moments add up. One comment doesn't seem like much until it happens every day. One laugh doesn't seem harmful until it follows someone everywhere. Being ignored doesn't seem cruel until you realize it is on purpose.

I never saw what happened after. I didn't see how some people went home and replayed those moments

over and over. I didn't see how they started doubting themselves, or how school became something they dreaded instead of enjoyed. I didn't see how being targeted, even quietly, can change how someone sees themselves.

Looking back, I think a lot of bullying comes from insecurity. I wanted to fit in. I wanted to be funny. I wanted people to like me. Sometimes putting someone else down felt like the easiest way to feel accepted. That doesn't make it okay, but it explains why bullying can come from people you wouldn't expect.

What really changed me was realizing that

bullying doesn't require intention. You don't have to mean to hurt someone for them to be hurt. Impact matters more than excuses.

I also learned that bystanders matter. The times I stayed quiet were still choices. Silence can feel safer than speaking up, but it can be just as painful for the person on the receiving end. Laughing along, even nervously, sends a message. Doing nothing sends one too.

I'm not writing this to ask for sympathy. I'm writing because awareness matters. If you're reading this and thinking this doesn't sound like bullying, I used to think that too. But it is.

If you're being bullied, I want you to know this. It is not your fault. You don't deserve to be treated that way, and you're not weak for being affected by it.

And if you recognize yourself in any part of my story, even a small part, it doesn't mean you're a bad person. It means you have a chance to do better. You can stop. You can apologize. You can choose kindness next time, even when it's uncomfortable.

I wish I had understood earlier how much words and actions matter. I can't change the past, but I can change how I act now.

So I am.

Money Matters

One Canadian Dollar = 0.73 US Dollar
at an exchange rate of **0.731** (using nominal rate).



Dollar Values as of February 11, 2026

GOLD

Unused or unwanted Chains, Rings, Bangles, Coins

SENIORS' SPECIAL 55+
10% more in February

SILVER

Royal Canadian Mint sets
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US 1964 and earlier 10, 25, 50 & silver dollars
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On January 30, Dean Amiot from Whitecap Resources Inc. visited Whitecourt Central School to present a generous donation, much to the delight of the staff. The gift will support exciting learning opportunities for students, and the school thanks Dean, Whitecap Resources, and all community partners for their continued support.

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Woodlands County Council recap

Woodlands County Council discussed the following items:

Council referred the Shelterbelt Program, including tree purchasing and distribution, to the Agricultural Service Board (ASB) for review and consideration as part of the 2027 budget. In 2026, the Shelterbelt Program will continue to operate as it does now.

Council gave first reading to Bylaw 637/26, Annual ATB Borrowing Bylaw, and requested that administrative amendments be made and that the Bylaw be brought to the next regular council meeting for consideration. Bylaw 635/25 Bylaw Enforcement Officers, Policy F-2.05 Electronic Payment Pol-

icy and Policy F-5.206 Electronic Payment Policy were directed to be brought to a future Governance & Priorities Committee meeting for further discussion. Council requested that Administration provide additional proposed dates for Governance & Priorities Committee meetings so Council can review the proposed Bylaws and Policies before Council consideration.

Council received for information the 2025 Q4 Reports from Corporate Services, Infrastructure Services, and the Chief Administrative Officer, which together provided a high-level overview of organizational performance, service delivery, operation-

al pressures, program implementation, planning, and key corporate milestones, including year-end financial close, approval of the 2026 Capital and Interim Operating Budgets, system stabilization, winter operations, and the municipal election and Council transition.

Council received the 2025 Q4 Policy Update Report and the Action Tracker 2025 Report for information. In 2026, Council will be receiving monthly Action Tracker Reports to monitor the status of Council direction and confirm that assigned actions are either completed or actively underway. This reporting supports transparency, accountability, and effective governance.

Upcoming scheduled meetings:

- Regular Council Meeting – Thursday, February 12 @ 9:30 a.m.
- Governance & Priorities Meeting – Wednesday, February 18 @ 5:00 p.m.
- Regular Council Meeting – Thursday, February 26 @ 9:30 a.m.
- Regular Council Meeting – Thursday, March 12 @ 9:30 a.m.

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



Got a news tip?

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

The Press

A look at the local weather

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



Wed., Feb. 11
Mainly sunny
20%
30°C
1°C
-3°C
SW 10 km/h



Thu., Feb. 12
Mainly sunny
20%
2°C
-4°C
SW 11 km/h



Fri., Feb. 13
Mix of sun and clouds
30%
1°C
-9°C
E 7 km/h



Sat., Feb. 14
Cloudy with snow
30%
-2°C
-10°C
NW 11 km/h
~1cm



Sun., Feb. 15
Partly cloudy
30%
-5°C
-13°C
SE 4 km/h

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Hunt is a charming and intelligent dog with a personality that shines bright. This playful and affectionate pup has a "big sister" energy, especially towards her brother, Teddy. Hunt loves being outside and enjoys rubbing her face up and down your leg as a sign of affection. She thrives on attention and adores being pampered with pets and love.



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WOODLANDS COUNTY

Welcome to WOODLANDS COUNTY

Your Essential Orientation Guide

County Leadership
Meet the people who govern our region and make progress on its strategic priorities.

Land of Opportunity
Economic development resources and regional advantages that help Woodlands County...

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www.woodlands.ab.ca/pl/welcome-guide

HELP WANTED

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

Food Service Attendant Full Time / Shift Work

Food Service Supervisor Full Time / Shift Work

SHIFT INCENTIVE FOR OVERNIGHTS

Please apply in person at the restaurant.



4331-52 Ave Unit 1 Whitecourt, AB

4216 Elko Drive Whitecourt, AB

continued from page 1

ber of the Youth Advisory Committee and members have regular opportunities to do so including Canada Day, Youth Week, Party in the Park, the Run for Fun, the Spirit of Youth Awards, and acting as liaisons to other Town boards such as the Library Board, Party in the Park Committee, Protective Services Committee, and the Community Services Advisory Board.

In mid-January, the Youth Advisory Committee presented its 2026 Strategic Goals to Whitecourt Town Council. Member Logan Glidden mc'd for his peers, with most in attendance to help.

"Essentially, our job is to represent the youth in Whitecourt," he be-

gan, before introducing his fellow committee members.

Joining Glidden this year are Victoria Benson, Lucas Boudreau, Beckett Holloway, John Harasym, Dax Holloway, Andie Kennedy, Brianna Kison, Andi Olynyk, and Carter Taylor. Two councillors sit as representatives for Town Council, and this year's reps are Councillor Bill McAree and Councillor Serena Lapointe. The committee receives support and encouragement from Youth Development Coordinator Emma Harper, enabling them to organize and execute their yearly plans.

One of this year's goals for the committee revolves around how kids become aware of what's happening

in Whitecourt. "The Youth-Specific Advertising Initiative is about creating a more streamlined process for youth to get information about youth events. We are looking for options for online and print that would be released on a scheduled basis," explained Lucas Boudreau.

The committee also decided to include a bike bank as one of its goals. "We are going to plan a bike swap for youth to exchange their bike or get a bike for kids who might not have access to one." Thanks to \$2,400 from the Alberta Primary Care Grant - Soaring Project, the committee is creating a Safe & Accessible Cycling Initiative. The purpose of

continued on page 7



Raising awareness about vaping at last year's trade show.



Every three years the committee visits the legislature.



Last year's Town Council and Youth Advisory Committee.



Past town hall event at Percy Baxter, with Youth Advisory and Town Council.



Whitecourt Legion

Notice To all Members:
 Annual General Meeting and Installation of Officers
 Thursday March 12, 2026 at 1900 hrs (7:00 p.m.)
 In the Legion Hall. It is a special evening!
 All members are welcome!

PUBLIC NOTICE

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



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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

- 2026-01-20: Highway 43 Vitalization Phase I - Closes February 25, 2026 at 2:00pm MST.

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

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by PETER MARINACCI



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Kim Nendsa (President of Whitecourt Cancer & Wellness Society)
780-778-0932 *Aimee Grierson* 780-262-0222 <https://wctcancerwellness.com/>

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

CALL Ruth 780-674-7182

Support group on Tuesdays, February 17 to May 5.
Crossroads Community Church, 4719 44 Avenue Mayerthorpe, Pre-registration is required

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- Mental Health Helpline 1-877-303-2642
- Addiction Helpline 1-866-332-2322
- Health Link 811

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

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

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

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

Family Resource & Crisis Centre
www.whitecourtshester.ca

Whitecourt 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

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continued from page 1

tured a brand-new look from previous years. Ferris explained that recent updates to the style of reports were now coming out for council and the public to see. "This is our first rollout of a more formal-looking, public-facing document," he said. He said they would be adding graphics and more relatable data to the reports in the future.

The first topic in the report was the airport. Ferris spoke of a lesson learned from a successful emergency exercise held in early December, saying that the lesson would help them improve going forward. "Historically, we have been doing our emergency management tabletops and our airport tabletops in isolation. For 2026, we are looking at a more integrated approach so that not only do we cross-train, but our team here can better support the airport in the event of an emergency, and also the airport can support us as well." He added that administration is reviewing the hours of operation at the airport as part of a level-of-service review and that policy updates are underway as well.

Another lesson learned had to do with snow clearing, specifically with residential driveways that are signed up under the Snow Flag Program. Under the program, residents can have County equipment clear their driveways by signing up and purchasing a

flag (\$60/300m as of 2025).

However, Ferris said some residents seem to want more of a service than what the program was intended to provide.

He said that perceived abuse of the system has highlighted the need for conversations, especially if crews are dealing with a resident who is chronically misusing the program. When can they simply say no? "We do believe there needs to be a discussion with council on the Snow Flag Program, for expectations, and service level. Some people are, in our opinion, abusing the system. A good example we have is that someone called us saying that we missed their driveway and asked us to come back. Well, we already did it. They just wanted more detail," explained Ferris.

He said there are also other things to consider, including the types of driveways. "Is it just a 100m or 200m straight segment, or are we doing detailed work? We have individuals who will actively remove their snow flag signs so that our workers are there when they are, so they can get more details done, and those abuses impact everyone."

He said that with the available resources working to clear out properties, having crews provide higher levels of service at the request of homeowners isn't feasible. Ferris noted that the issue was flagged organizationally and that discussions will happen to ensure

efficiency ahead of next winter.

From a snow clearing perspective overall, Ferris said high winds, significant snow drifts and sustained snowfall didn't rattle the crews. Despite the severe conditions, with some snow drifts reaching eleven feet high, public feedback was minimal, and concerns raised were dealt with as quickly as possible.

Ferris added that they have prioritized the monitoring of winter service performance, including response times when requested, utilization of equipment and the pressures felt operationally during peak weather events, such as the snowfall reported in late December. They are also continuing to embed work order usage across the Infrastructure Department.

One of the last pieces that Ferris pointed to as a deficiency to be rectified is Woodlands County's Traffic Bylaw. "It is quite poor, currently. We've spent the last six months trying to finalize a new version, particularly around road ban clarifications, and where we require road use permits, that sort of thing. It was a deficiency that we were seeing, so we are trying to strengthen that but also clarify some issues that we anticipate might happen."

Residents can read the full report by visiting www.woodlands.ab.ca, clicking on Council Meetings and opening the CivicWeb Portal. The report was part of the January 29 Council meeting.

For all your advertising needs,
CONTACT HAYLEE
at thepresswtc@gmail.com

continued from page 5

the initiative is to help tackle physical and social barriers to living safe, active and healthy lives in the community, with a focus on biking. The committee will promote safety publicly and survey their peers to identify barriers, using that information to guide the initiative.

Brianna Kison explained how the committee plans to take it one step further once they have gathered the information. "We will advocate to Town Council based on the results from the survey and safety events on ways to decrease barriers to cycling in Whitecourt and increase safety and accessibility."

Another big goal this year is Youth Week. In the past, the group has played a supportive role, but this year, they want to grow their role. "The Youth Advisory Committee had a huge part to play in making our Youth Week 2025 a success. This year, we are going to organize and facilitate the events for the week with our identified partners,"

explained Beckett Holloway.

The last member to present, Carter Taylor, provided insight into the committee's aspirations. She said giving youth an opportunity to be heard and encouraging the involvement of youth in positions of leadership, politics and advocacy as they become adults" are two significant focuses of the committee.

Getting young people involved in their municipality and giving them power to make decisions and be part of important conversations can help foster a wanting to continue being involved as they grow up, either through volunteering, joining a committee, or perhaps even running for office one day.

Taylor finished by stating the importance of considering the Youth Advisory Committee as a "sounding board for ideas and initiatives that affect youth," and encouraged the continued involvement of youth in decisions that affect them.

Town Council mem-

bers shared their appreciation of the committee, commending them for being active in helping make community events successful and not only bringing their ideas to the table, but also acting on their plans and making things happen. Councillor Brian Wynn said volunteers make Whitecourt the place it is and encouraged them to share that message with their peers. "I really hope that you guys can help drive that in our youth, because if you do it as a youth, I think you'll do it as an adult too. I would sure love to see that grow and grow."

Mayor Ray Hilts said the cycling initiative is "spot on" and that he looks forward to seeing how it progresses, thanking them for doing it. "It's a very practical approach to creating something different." Then, Mayor Hilts, who is a cycling enthusiast himself, said with a smirk, "anybody who cycles is also cool. Just as a side note," bringing about both chuckles and agreement from the committee.



Andrea Sommerfeld photos

Four curious deer stand on a residential sidewalk, appearing to welcome new residents who recently moved into the area.

WOODLANDS COUNTY FAMILY DAY CLOSURES & SERVICE INTERRUPTIONS:

Monday, February 16, both municipal offices will be closed. They'll reopen Tuesday, February 17, for regular hours.

Fort Assiniboine garbage collection will be deferred to Tuesday, February 17.

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS – DON'T MISS THIS!

Woodlands County's **small business property sub-class** offers eligible property owners the chance to apply for a **reduced non-residential property tax rate** for the 2026 tax year.

You may be eligible if:

- You own a non-residential property.
- Your business (or tenant businesses) has fewer than 50 full-time employees.
- The property complies with the County's Land Use Bylaw.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 13, 2026

Applications must be submitted every year and are reviewed before approval.

Pick up an application at the Woodlands County Office or apply online:
<https://www.woodlands.ab.ca/p/property-taxes>

FCSS GRANT FUNDING

Are you a local organization delivering preventative social programs? We can help.

Woodlands County is now accepting applications for Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) grant funding for initiatives that:

- Strengthen children, families & seniors
- Build life skills & community wellbeing
- Support volunteerism
- Increase awareness of local services



DEADLINE: February 27, 2026 (4:30 p.m.)

Apply online or pick up a form at County offices in Whitecourt or Fort Assiniboine
woodlands.ab.ca/p/fcss

Questions? Contact Community Services at 780-778-8400 or communityservices@woodlands.ab.ca

RURAL COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS GRANT – APPLY NOW!

Do you have a new neighbour or want to get to know your existing ones?

It's the perfect time to connect and build relationships in your community.

Woodlands County is now accepting applications for the Rural Community Connections grant. Receive up to \$500 to cover expenses such as food and entertainment.

Applications:

- woodlands.ab.ca/p/rural-connections
- Pick up at the Whitecourt or Fort Assiniboine County offices

Completed applications can be submitted:

- In person at the Whitecourt or Fort Assiniboine offices
- By email: communityservices@woodlands.ab.ca
- By mail: Woodlands County, Attn: Community Services, Box 60, #1 Woodlands Lane, Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N3

For more information, contact Community Services at 780-778-8400 or communityservices@woodlands.ab.ca.

BULK WATER STATIONS – PREPAID ONLINE ACCOUNTS

All Bulk Water Fill Stations have been successfully upgraded to a prepaid online account system. To access Woodlands County water fill stations, new and existing customers will need a Text2Car account and a prepaid fob.

For more info and to set up your account, go to: woodlands.ab.ca/p/water-fill-stations



Calling County Ambassadors!

Woodlands County is looking for two energetic, media-savvy individuals to represent the County and connect with our communities.

This unique role is ideal for someone who enjoys meeting people, attending events, and telling local stories. The Ambassadors will engage with residents, community groups, and small businesses; gather survey feedback; and capture photos and videos to share across social media platforms.

Preference will be given to applicants with experience or education in **communications, public relations, or graphic design**. Applicants must hold a **valid Alberta Class 5 driver's license** and be available to begin work **May 4, 2026**.

If you're outgoing, creative, and passionate about community, this could be the perfect opportunity to showcase Woodlands County.

For more information and to apply: woodlands.ab.ca/p/careers

More job postings:

- Manager, Infrastructure Services
- Administrative Assistant, Legislative Services
- Administrative Assistant, Community Services
- Lead Labourer, Parks & Recreation
- Seasonal Data Collector, Capital Assets
- Seasonal Labourer(s)

For more information on these postings and to apply: woodlands.ab.ca/p/careers

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GOT A NEWS TIP?

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



Beautifully bronzed



Photo by Loretta Lanoue

Emily Lanoue, 15, and Evan Hicks, 13, are two hardworking and talented martial artists from the community. Last week, they competed together at the 2026 Canadian National Taekwondo Championships in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where over 600 competitors battled it out in a range of levels and events. Lanoue competed in the junior category for 63 kg, and Hicks competed as a cadet in the 53 kg division. After giving it their all in the ring and landing amazing kicks, both came away from their rounds with a bronze medal around their necks. In the picture, Emily and Evan are sharing a bronze because they posed before Evan received his medal. That's right, Whitecourt! Two national-level, youth taekwondo bronze medalists right here in town. Congratulations to both Emily and Evan. You've made the community proud!

Science Fair fun!



Photo submitted by Ashley Leidl

Harper Leidl and Ansleigh Lazowski, both grade 4 students at St. Mary School, posing happily with their volcano science fair project. Students displayed their projects last week inviting parents and the public to see their hard work in action. Harper and Ansleigh put in a lot of time after school to create their volcano and had fun making it erupt. Pictured are Harper (left) and Ansleigh with their volcano.

Local news printed on local newspaper

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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

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

Job#: 26-017 – Mechanic II – Permanent, Full-time Position.
Closes: February 17, 2026

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



PUBLIC NOTICE

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



Public Auction Town of Whitecourt

Notice is hereby given that, under the provisions of the Municipal Government Act, the Town of Whitecourt will offer for sale, by public auction, at the Whitecourt Town Office, 5004-52 Avenue, Whitecourt, Alberta, on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., the following lands:

Roll	Lot	Block	Plan	Acres	C. of T.		
003186	6	1	1324870	2.24	132369947+1		
Roll	Pt. of Sec.	Sec.	Twp.	Rge.	M.	Acres	C. of T.
008084	NE	26	59	12	W5M	14.5	062388869

Each parcel will be offered for sale, subject to a reserve bid and to the reservations and conditions contained in the existing certificate of title.

The land is being offered for sale on an "as is, where is" basis, and the Town of Whitecourt makes no representation and gives no warranty whatsoever as to the adequacy of service, soil conditions, zoning, land use districting, building and development conditions, absence or presence of environmental contamination, vacant possession, the developability of the subject land for any intended use by the purchaser, or otherwise.

The Town of Whitecourt may, after the public auction, become the owner of any parcel of land not sold at the public auction.

Terms: Cash or certified cheque, 10% deposit to accompany auction bid, with sale transaction completion in 30 days. GST will apply if applicable.

Redemption may be effected by payment of all arrears of taxes and costs at any time prior to sale. There is no right to pay tax arrears after the property is declared sold.

Dated at Whitecourt, Alberta, February 5, 2026

Krista Spivak, Finance Department

SCHOOL NEWS



Pat Hardy School photo

Students in Mrs. MacRitchie's kindergarten classes at Pat Hardy Elementary School bundled up for outdoor learning on January 30, exploring the states of matter by creating bright and colourful ice sculptures in the snow.

Kindergarten students enjoy outdoor skating in warm winter weather



Pat Hardy School photos



Pat Hardy Elementary School kindergarten students enjoyed skating at the outdoor rink last week, taking advantage of the warm winter weather.

Whitecourt RCMP seeks assistance in identifying armed robbery suspect

| By Haylee Winger



Whitecourt RCMP are investigating an armed robbery that took place at a local hotel and restaurant late Thursday night and are asking the public for help identifying the suspect.

According to police, the incident occurred just before 11 p.m. on Jan. 29, 2026, at the Ritz Café and Motor Inn. An individu-

al armed with a firearm entered the business and confronted an employee, directing him toward the safe. The suspect left the scene with a cash box containing money. Police have not released the value of the money taken and reported that no injuries occurred during the incident.

The suspect was last seen wearing black running shoes, a black

jacket, grey sweatpants, and a grey face covering with eye openings.

RCMP are encouraging anyone who may have witnessed suspicious activity in the area or who recognizes the description to come forward. Information can be provided directly to Whitecourt RCMP at 780-778-5454. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Stoppers by calling 1-800-222-8477, visiting P3Tips.com, or



Whitecourt RCMP photos



using the P3 Tips mobile app.

Non-emergency police services within

Alberta RCMP jurisdictions are available by calling 310-RCMP (7267). Additional

RCMP updates and resources can be accessed through the Alberta RCMP app.

Alberta RCMP encourages distraction-free driving

The Alberta RCMP is reminding drivers that it's essential to remain distraction free. Operating a vehicle requires a motorist's complete attention to be aware of other vehicles and pedestrians and reduce the risk of collision.

In 2025, the Alberta RCMP issued a total of 3,337 tickets for distracted driving. Help

stay distraction free on the roads with following tips:

- If it impairs your driving, it's a distraction. Distracted driving is not limited to texting or talking on a handheld device while operating a vehicle – it also includes personal grooming, reading, writing, adjusting GPS or audio devices, at-

tending to passengers or pets and any other activity that might impair your ability to operate a vehicle safely.

- Plan ahead. Before putting your vehicle into drive, prepare by pre-setting your hands-free device, GPS, radio or music.
- Pull over and put it in park. If you need to text, make a call

or engage in any distracting activity, pull over where it's safe and park your vehicle. Simply stopping at a red light and engaging in a distracted activity is not safe and is still distracted driving.

- Distracted driving isn't worth it. The penalty for distracted driving in Alberta is a \$300 fine and three

demerit points. The bigger price you pay is risking your own safety and the safety of others.

"Distracted driving is a common bad habit among drivers," says Sgt. Darrin Turnbull, Alberta RCMP Traffic. "It may not seem like a big deal to check a text or change a song, but it only takes a second

where your attention is diverted for a collision to take place. Distractions behind the wheel are never worth putting yourself, or other motorists, at risk."

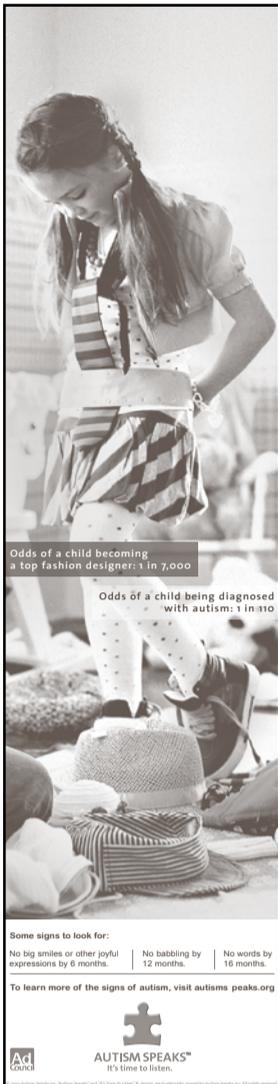
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1.5 billion barrels: Alberta oil production sets a new record in 2025

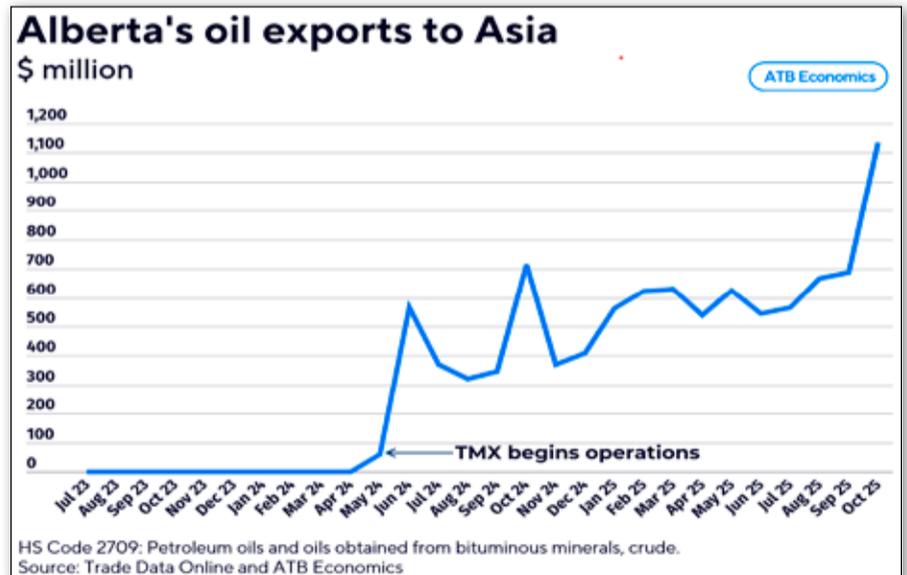
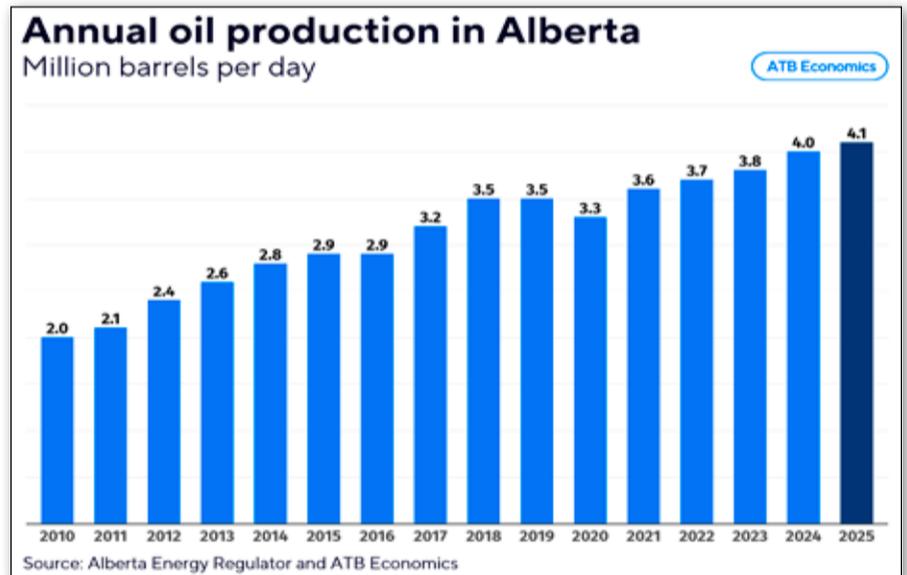
By Rob Roach, ATB ECONOMICS

What would fill approximately 96,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools? Alberta's oil production last year.

The numbers from the Alberta Energy Regulator are in for the final month of last year and show that 2025 set a new record for oil production in the province at 4.1 million barrels per day (bbl/d) for total output of over 1.5 billion barrels, 84% of which was from the oil sands. Average daily production in the province was up by 166,000 bbl/d or 4.2% compared to 2024.

A key enabler of the rise in production is the extra egress capacity provided by the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion (TMX) that was completed in 2024. The pipeline, which has a nameplate capacity of 890,000 bbl/d (up from 300,000 before the expansion project), has also enabled more oil exports from Alberta to Asia. As the chart on bottom right shows, the value of Alberta's oil exports to Asia went from zero before the expanded pipeline began operations to over \$1.1 billion as of October of last year.

Enhancements to the



existing pipeline system and filling TMX to capacity will facilitate additional production in 2026. We expect real oil and gas exports to grow at around 2% both this year and in 2027. At some point, though, without a new pipeline in place, a lack of pipe-

line capacity will once again act as a constraint on output growth, possibly as soon as 2028. While the rise in production provides a boost to economic growth in Alberta via ongoing extraction activity and increased exports, we expect oil and gas cap-

ital spending to remain flat this year. Absent final decisions on a new pipeline, the focus will remain on incremental production growth, efficiency, shareholder returns and debt repayment rather than greenfield expansion and new mega-projects.



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.

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