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The Press

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

Locally Owned & Operated

Canada

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Albertans will be heading to the ballot box on Monday, October 19, to have their say and answer questions around immigration and constitutional topics. Premier Danielle Smith announced the decision to have a provincial referendum last week. Pictured is Premier Danielle Smith.

Provincial referendum on immigration and constitutional topics coming this October

| By Serena Lapointe

Last week, on Thursday evening, just before 7 pm, Premier Danielle Smith went live across social media to talk about Alberta's economy and immigration. "In the year I became Premier, the price of oil averaged \$90 a barrel U.S. These strong oil prices saw our budget enjoy royalty revenue of over \$25 billion and

a surplus of around \$12 billion, which we used to build up the Heritage Fund and pay down provincial debt." She said that it had fallen by over \$30 a barrel since and that every one-dollar drop in the price of oil translates to roughly \$750 million less in royalties for the province.

Premier Smith said the difference with the

current oil price crash is that the economy of today is more diversified, and despite the drop in oil prices, the province is growing, leading the country in almost every economically related category. "To put it bluntly, people across the country and around the world continue to want to move to our province

continued on page 3

Wolverines Bianchet now in the record books, and a Team Canada goal from a former player

| By Serena Lapointe

After leading both the AJHL North Division and the league in points for much of the season, the Whitecourt Wolverines have found themselves fighting for top spot against their Storm rivals from Grande Prairie. As of Thursday, February 19, only one point separated the teams, with the Storm ahead with 66 points, although the Wolverines had two games in hand.

Interestingly, the top four teams in the north have more points than the top team in the AJHL's Southern Division.

DeGraves begging the ref not the send him to the penalty box.

The Canmore Eagles lead the south with 54 points, but the fourth-place team in the AJHL North, the Lloydminster Bobcats, have 59 points, showing quite a difference between

the two divisions' point totals.

Since the beginning of February, the Wolverines have had a mix of wins and losses. The month started with a win against the Calgary Canucks. Two goals from Cole Barrett, and solos from Brendan Ruskowski and Tyler Pretty lifted the Wolverines over the Canucks lone goal, giving the Wolverines a 4-1 road win.

Five days later, the Wolverines were at home against the Drumheller Dragons. Win or lose, the game had the chance to mean something big to Captain Jalen Bianchet. Heading into the game, Bianchet was

continued on page 9



Fans close to the action.



The Whitecourt Wolverines have had a season to be proud of and are steps away from playoff action. Individually, Captain Jalen Bianchet recently hit an incredible milestone and a past player from 2014/2015 is living it up on the world's stage.



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Three greener ways to manage snow removal

(NC) Snow-covered driveways and icy sidewalks are a fact of Canadian life, but the way we manage them can make a real difference to the environment. According to polling, 54 per cent of Canadians clear snow at least once a day during snowfalls, with nearly one in four heading out multiple times a day to stay ahead of it. This winter, try these three greener approaches to keep your property safe while reducing your carbon footprint.

1. Use less salt, and

smarter alternatives

While salt is an easy go-to solution, it can be tough on plants, pets and waterways. Cut back where you can by mixing in sand or gravel with salt to boost traction or by switching to eco-friendly deicers made with natural ingredients—they're gentler and just as effective in moderate conditions. Heated mats are another smart swap for high-traffic areas, melting snow without chemicals.

Tip: clear snow early and often to prevent ice from forming.

2. Switch to energy-efficient snow removal equipment

Traditional gas-powered tools get the job done, but newer options are both cleaner and quieter. Battery-powered snow blowers and shovels are now strong enough to handle most driveways while reducing emissions and fuel use. For larger properties, choose models designed for efficiency to minimize both your carbon footprint and time outside in freezing weather.

Another way to lower your environmental

impact is by opting for durable, long-lasting manual tools instead of disposable or short-lived options. Some Canadian manufacturers, such as Garant, offer ergonomic shovels, pushers and snowblowers designed to last for years—helping reduce waste while keeping winter work efficient.

3. Make it a community effort

Greener snow removal doesn't have to be a solo job. Consider teaming up with neighbours to clear common areas or take turns maintaining sidewalks. It helps save energy, fosters connection, and can reduce overall emissions by avoiding multiple homes each running machines at once.

Some communities

even organize shared snow blower programs or coordinate local plow services to make cleanup more efficient and affordable. It's a simple way to lighten the workload, shrink your environmental impact and build stronger neighbourhood connections along the way.

Learn more about eco-friendly snow removal at garant.com.



On the right track: Inflation edged down in January

By Rob Roach,
ATB ECONOMICS

The year-over-year (y/y) inflation rate in Canada was 2.3% in January, down slightly from December's reading of 2.4%.

Lower y/y gasoline prices (-16.7%), due in part to the removal of the consumer carbon tax in April 2025, kept the overall inflation rate in check.

Excluding gasoline, national inflation was running at 3.0% in January. Some of this was due to the statistical noise created by the temporary GST/HST exemption on, among other things, restaurant meals, alcohol, and children's clothing and toys that was in effect in January 2025 but not in January 2026.

The y/y rates of price growth of food purchased from stores and rented accommodation, while down from earlier highs, were still

more than double the 2% target at 4.8% and 4.3%, respectively.

Interest rate implications: Putting all this together, there is nothing in the January numbers that is likely to spook the Bank of Canada one way or the other. Although still above target, two key measures of underlying, or core, inflation (CPI-trim and CPI-median) both fell in January.

From that perspective, it's an encouraging inflation report. As the Bank of Canada reminded us last week, its stance on interest rate remains dependent on the incoming data. As such, our call remains that the Bank will keep its trendsetting policy interest rate at its current 2.25% for the remainder of the year.

In Alberta, y/y inflation came in at 2%. The somewhat lower rate in Alberta was due in

part to a smaller impact from the GST/HST exemption.

Because Alberta does not have a provincial sales tax, it was not removed in January 2025. As a result, the price increase this January from the reinstatement of the provincial sales tax on restaurant meals and other items was not a factor in Alberta.

The price of food purchased from restaurants in Alberta was 6.9% higher y/y in January with the GST back in place, but this was much lower than the 12.3% rise nationally with both GST and the provincial tax once again in effect.

A larger decrease in the price of natural gas and gasoline also contributed to the lower overall inflation rate in Alberta. A larger price bump in categories such as electricity, rent and clothing worked in the opposite direction.

How to recognize a controlling relationship

(NC) For many teens, figuring out what a healthy relationship looks like isn't easy, especially when they're just starting to explore dating and friendships. Without much experience to draw from, it can be hard to tell the difference between care and control, respect and pressure. Parents, guardians, and trusted adults all need to know how to recognize the signs of a controlling relationship, and how to intervene safely when it's needed.

Identifying coercive and controlling behaviours

Coercive control can show up in many ways and is a form of gender-based violence (GBV) that youth and young adults can face in intimate relationships. It's a type of abuse rooted in controlling, manipulative and fear-instilling behaviours.

There are four common types of coercive

controlling behaviours which include possessive behaviours, psychological abuse, sexual jealousy and stalking. This may look like a partner making threats, breaking personal belongings, isolating someone from family and friends or monitoring where they go and who they talk to. They may even threaten self-harm to pressure victims or survivors to comply and maintain power over them.

The dangers of gaslighting

One particularly harmful tactic of coercive control and frequent type of GBV is gaslighting. Gaslighting makes someone doubt their own memory, perception or sense of reality. For example, a partner might deny their abusive actions, blame the victim for things they didn't do or twist events so the victim questions their own judgement.

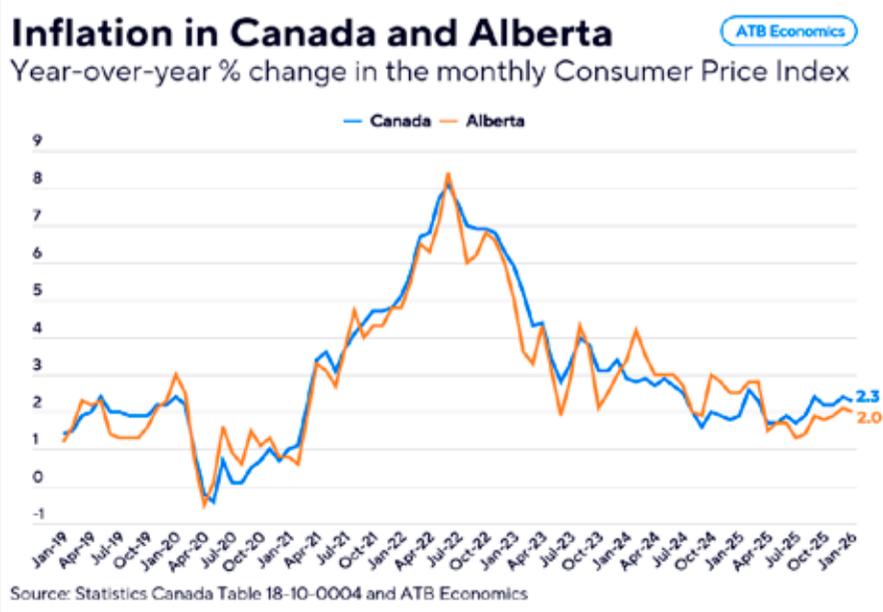
Over time, gaslighting erodes confidence, instills doubt and makes it harder to leave relationships.

What you can do to help

It's important to be able to recognize when something isn't right. Look for signs like isolation, emotional manipulation and controlling acts, such as a victim has being made to give up autonomy over their phone, money or social life.

If a young person confides in you, the best things you can do is listen, believe them, label the behaviour for what it is and remind them that it's not their fault. This can help them connect with resources to support their safety and well-being.

Everyone deserves healthy relationships without abuse or control. You can learn more and find resources to support the youth in your life at canada.ca/itsnotjust.



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continued from page 1

in very large numbers to pursue job opportunities and prosperity.”

She said that past federal immigration policies held international immigration to “manageable levels” so the province could keep up, while also ensuring that newcomers primarily arrived with highly valuable skills and jobs lined up so they could contribute to income taxes upon arrival.

“That is the story of the vast majority of our amazing new Canadians who arrived here during that time and are now citizens. These Albertans were and are a huge strength to our economy and provincial culture.”

Premier Smith said that the “open border immigration policies” under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau caused “an unprecedented strain” on the province. She said that over the last five years, Alberta grew by nearly 600,000 people, which equates to roughly half the size of Calgary or Edmonton. “Although sustainable immigration has always been an important part of our provincial growth model, throwing the doors wide open to anyone and everyone across the globe has flooded our classrooms, emergency rooms, and social support systems with far too many people, far too quickly,” said Premier Smith.

Speaking to the student population, Premier Smith said that more than 80,000 students have joined the province in the last four years and that more than 140,000 students provincially have English as their additional language. “Is it any wonder that our teachers and students are struggling so much with classroom complexity and crowding?”

Premier Smith offered a three-part strategy to address the issues. First, in the long term, she said her government would build up the Alberta Heritage Fund to more than \$250 billion by 2050 and said they are ahead of schedule due to reinvesting interest earned in the fund and tucking away surpluses. “Our government has already doubled the Heritage Fund from roughly \$16 billion in 2021 to almost \$32 billion today.”

She said if future Alberta governments stick with the strategy through to 2050, the annual interest earned on the fund would protect the province. “When we reach this goal, Alberta will be forever free from its overreliance on oil and gas revenues. We need to stay the course,” said Premier Smith.

In the medium term, Premier Smith said they are aiming to double Alberta’s oil and gas production and exports to more than eight million barrels a day by 2035. “Doing so will allow us to secure higher resource revenues for our budget, even when energy prices are lower, like they are today. And when energy prices bump back up, our province will see large surpluses, which will help us to reach the \$250 billion by 2050 Heritage Fund target.”

As for the short-term plan, Premier Smith said it does not include drastic cuts to social services.

“The approved wage increases for our doctors, nurses, and teachers will remain in place so we can continue to attract the skilled professionals needed to catch up with our growth. Albertans have learned from experience that during times of low oil prices, the key is to limit increas-

es in spending and focus it on building the schools, health facilities, roads, and other infrastructure needed to build a strong and diversified economy with a world-class standard of living.” She said they would cut “unnecessary bureaucracy,” prioritize needs before wants, and implement more income testing for social programs, “so they are more financially sustainable.”

At the core of the issue, said Premier Smith, is immigration. “The changes we need to make to immigration are a significant departure from the status quo, and therefore, I am seeking a referendum mandate from Albertans to implement them. On October 19th, 2026, we will hold a provincial referendum primarily focused on how Albertans want our government to deal with the issue of immigration, as well as steps we can take as a province to strengthen our constitutional and fiscal position within a united Canada,” she explained.

The five main questions on the ballot will be:

1. Do you support the Government of Alberta taking increased control over immigration for the purpose of decreasing immigration to more sustainable levels, prioritizing economic migration, and ensuring Albertans have first priority to new employment opportunities?

2. Do you support the Government of Alberta introducing a law mandating that only Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and individuals with an Alberta-approved immigration status will be eligible for provincially funded programs such as

health, education, and other social services?

3. Assuming that all citizens and permanent residents continue to qualify for social support programs as they do now, do you support the Government of Alberta introducing a law requiring all individuals with a non-permanent legal immigration status to be resident in Alberta for at least 12 months before qualifying for any provincially funded social support programs?

4. Assuming that all citizens and permanent residents continue to qualify for public health care and education as they do now, do you support the government of Alberta charging a reasonable fee or premium to individuals with a non-permanent immigration status living in Alberta for their and their family's use of the health care and education systems?

5. Do you support the Government of Alberta introducing a law requiring individuals to provide proof of citizenship, such as a passport, birth certificate or citizenship card, to be eligible to vote in a provincial election?

Residents will also be asked if they support working with provinces to amend the Canadian Constitution. Amendments include allowing provinces, not the federal government, to select justices appointed to the King’s Bench and Appeals Courts, abolishing the unelected Federal Senate, and giving a province’s laws dealing with provincial or shared constitutional areas of jurisdiction priority over federal laws when in conflict with one another. To watch Premier Smith’s address, visit www.alberta.ca/PremiersAddress.

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Pat Hardy School photo

Students at Pat Hardy Elementary School add some extra flair to their Valentine's Day celebration by wearing sunglasses during classroom festivities.



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!

DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

DID YOU KNOW? Home-based businesses require a development permit.

In Woodlands County, if you want to build a new structure or conduct a new land use, a development permit is required.

- Ensure your business and/or project meets local bylaws
- Avoid costly delays or penalties
- Support smart, sustainable community growth

Woodlands County Planning Department is here to guide you through the process every step of the way! Learn what permits you need, get step-by-step application support, and stay informed on zoning rules and timelines.

Visit <https://woodlands.ab.ca/p/planning-and-development>
 Email: planning@woodlands.ab.ca, Phone: 780-778-8400

DISCRETIONARY USE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION

Woodlands County Land Use Bylaw provides opportunity for any person who may have comments on the proposed development to deliver to the Development Officer, a written statement of their concerns indicating: their full name and address and the reasons for their comments to the proposed use.

If you have any comment or concern regarding this proposal you may provide a written statement via email to planning@woodlands.ab.ca prior to **4:30 p.m., March 12th, 2026.**

The Development Authority will be making a decision on the following development permit application following this deadline.

Comments received will be taken into consideration by the Development Authority.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION	APPLICATION NUMBER	PROPOSED USE
SE 4-65-4-W5M	26-DP-006	Recreation, Extension, Campground & Event Site
SW 9-59-12-W5M Lot 6 Block 1 Plan 0940743	26-DP-009	Secondary Suite, External

Information regarding this application may be obtained by inquiring prior to **4:30pm, March 12th, 2026**

Contact: planning@woodlands.ab.ca
 Woodlands County, Box 60, #1 Woodlands Lane, Whitecourt AB T7S 1N3
 Telephone: 780-778-8400, Toll-Free: 1-888-870-6315

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- Coordinator, Facilities Maintenance
- Manager, Infrastructure Services

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

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NOTICE OF ADDITIONAL GOVERNANCE & PRIORITIES COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2026

- March 19, 2026
- May 13, 2026
- July 22, 2026

To be held at 5:00 p.m. at Woodlands County Council Chambers at #1 Woodlands Lane, Whitecourt, AB.

JOIN US! G&P Committee Meetings are open to the public and are live-streamed on the Woodlands County YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/WoodlandsCounty.

Access meeting schedules, agenda packages, minutes, and more through our CivicWeb Portal: woodlands.civicweb.net/Portal/



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A look at the local weather

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



Wed., Feb. 25
 Mainly sunny
 30%
 4°C
 -3°C
 W 14 km/h
 ~1cm



Thu., Feb. 26
 Chance of flurries
 40%
 -5°C
 -12°C
 SW 17 km/h
 <1cm



Fri., Feb. 27
 Mix of sun and clouds
 30%
 -11°C
 -19°C
 NW 17 km/h
 -



Sat., Feb. 28
 Mix of sun and clouds
 30%
 -9°C
 -16°C
 E 11 km/h
 -



Sun., Mar. 1
 Chance of flurries
 40%
 -9°C
 -16°C
 E 12 km/h
 ~1cm

Family Day fun



Lots tested out the cross-country skis.



The always popular ice slide.



Decorating an ice fort.



Nothing beats spending time as a family.



Roasting marshmallows.

Festival Park was a busy place on Family Day thanks to the beautiful temperatures. Drove of residents took part in the festivities, which included horse-drawn wagon rides, cross-country ski tryouts, marshmallow roasting, free bannock and hot dogs, a bubble station and the big hit of the day, the ice slide. A life-size Pikachu was also there, posing for pictures and waving hello to his little fans.

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2026 BUDGET OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, March 5
Allan & Jean Millar Centre
3:00-6:30pm

Drop In Event

Ask questions of Council and staff

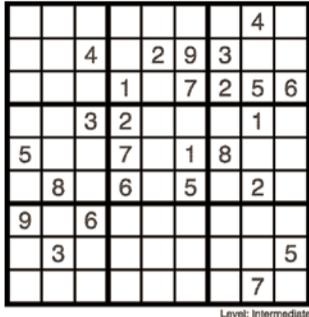
Learn about government operations and how tax dollars are invested

Provide input on what's important to you

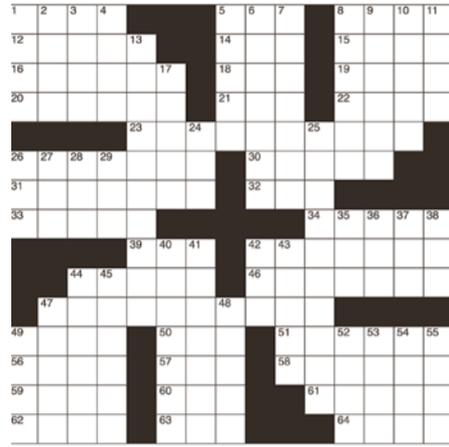
Free child mind will be offered for children 7 and under | Youth in grades 6-12 can attend the Doors Open Youth Program from 3:30-5:30pm

SEE SOLUTIONS PAGE 11

SUDOKU CROSSWORDS



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



Here's How It Works:

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

Crossword Clues

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Cut quickly
- 5. A way to state clearly
- 11. River in NE Scotland
- 14. Expansive
- 15. Lacking social polish
- 16. Amount of time
- 17. Frame
- 19. Automobile
- 20. Toadstools
- 21. High school dances
- 22. Utilize
- 23. Experimented with
- 25. One-sided
- 27. Acquisitive
- 31. Potted plants
- 34. Everyone has one
- 35. Kalahari Desert lake
- 38. Unidentified flying object
- 39. People 65 and over
- 41. Small amount
- 42. Daughter of Acrisius
- 44. Ornamental box
- 45. Government agents
- 46. Uncertain
- 49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
- 51. Treeless plains
- 55. One's sense of self-importance

- 56. Consumer advocate
- 60. Type of lounge
- 61. Body part
- 62. Can be persuaded
- 64. Woman (French)
- 65. Ready and willing to be taught
- 66. Arab ruler title
- 67. Unhappy
- 68. Gradually went away
- 69. Able to think clearly

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Brushed
- 2. Small water spirit (Germ.)
- 3. Heroes
- 4. Monetary units
- 5. Some don't want to share theirs
- 6. Free-swimming invertebrate
- 7. Litigates
- 8. Outer
- 9. Parallelograms
- 10. Uneasy feelings
- 11. Cross
- 12. A way to remove
- 13. Pages can be dog---
- 18. Ukrainian city
- 24. A citizen of Denmark

- 26. Month
- 28. Hindu queens
- 29. Group of chemicals
- 30. Rider of Rohan
- 31. Wet dirt
- 32. Southwestern Russia city
- 33. Observed
- 36. Angry
- 37. Drivers' licenses
- 39. Musical composition
- 40. Auction
- 43. They --
- 45. Women
- 47. Be filled with love for
- 48. Thick-soled sock
- 49. Appears
- 50. Old World lizard
- 52. The leading performer
- 53. Protein
- 54. "Gunga Din" script writer
- 57. Art __, around 1920
- 58. __ Blyton, children's author
- 59. Abnormal breathing
- 63. A place to rest



Town of Whitecourt photo

Whitecourt's newest event facility officially named the Canfor Culture & Events Centre

Town of Whitecourt release

The Town of Whitecourt and Canadian Forest Products Ltd. (Canfor) are pleased to announce that Whitecourt's newest event facility will be named the Canfor Culture & Events Centre. "Located in the heart of downtown Whitecourt, the Canfor Culture & Events Centre will serve our region and offer spaces to host conferences, trade shows, events, concerts, festivals and ceremonies," said Whitecourt Mayor Ray Hilts. "The new facility will increase service and program opportunities in our community, provide space for people of all ages to gather, stimulate downtown vitalization, and help to grow Whitecourt as a tourist destination." "Canfor is a global leader in low-carbon forest products, and through our Good Things Come From Trees Foundation, we're proud to support the communities where we operate," said Tom Thompson, Canfor's General Manager, Al-

berta Region. "Our contribution to Whitecourt's new Culture & Events Centre reflects our commitment to the town's growth and vibrant community, and our appreciation for the strong partnership and support we've received in Whitecourt." "This is an exciting milestone for the facility, and I'm pleased to be part of the announcement," added Mayor Hilts. "Canfor has a significant presence in our community, and this investment demonstrates their commitment to our region and projects that strengthen community connection and growth." Construction on the Canfor Culture & Events Centre commenced in the summer of 2024, and the facility will open this fall. The Centre includes an arts, culture and convention centre (theatre), library, and Town administration office. The theatre portion of the facility will allow people of all ages to develop their skills and talents in the areas of performing arts and increase the community's capacity to host a variety of cultural and

social events. The new library will provide enhanced opportunities to connect and learn. Bookings are already being made at the Canfor Culture & Events Centre, and the first major event, scheduled for October 2026, will be announced soon! "Pumpjack Players has been waiting for almost 20 years for a new performing arts facility, so you can imagine how excited we all are," added Brigette Moore, Treasurer of the Pumpjack Players - Whitecourt Drama Society. "There is also a large growing interest - particularly with youth - who want to perform or be a part of theatre productions. This new centre will have the latest theatre technology which will open so many doors for the types of productions we can do. We can't wait to perform our first production in the new performing arts centre!" For more information on the Canfor Culture & Events Centre, visit the Whitecourt website or follow the Culture & Events Centre on Facebook and Instagram.

VALENTINE'S WORD SEARCH



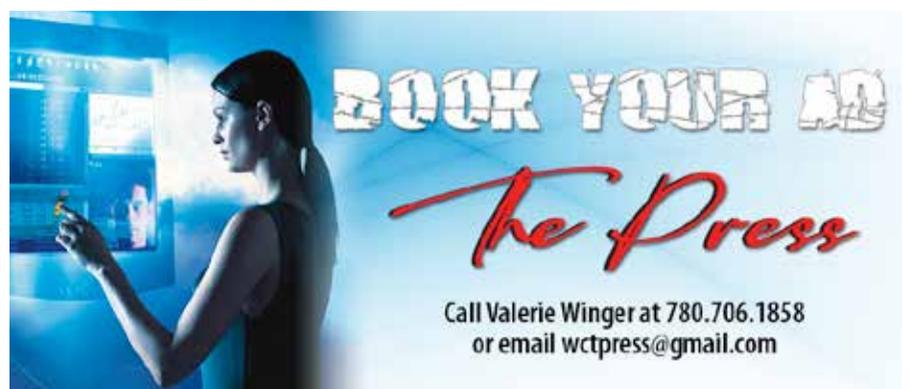
Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

- ADMIRER
- ADORATION
- AFFECTION
- BOUQUET
- CANDLELIGHT
- CARD
- CHERISH
- CHOCOLATE

- CUPID
- DEVOTION
- EMBRACE
- FLIRT
- HEART
- KEEPSAKE
- LETTERS
- LOVE
- PASSION

- PROPOSAL
- ROMANCE
- ROSES
- SENTIMENT
- SOULMATE
- SWEETHEART
- VELVET



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

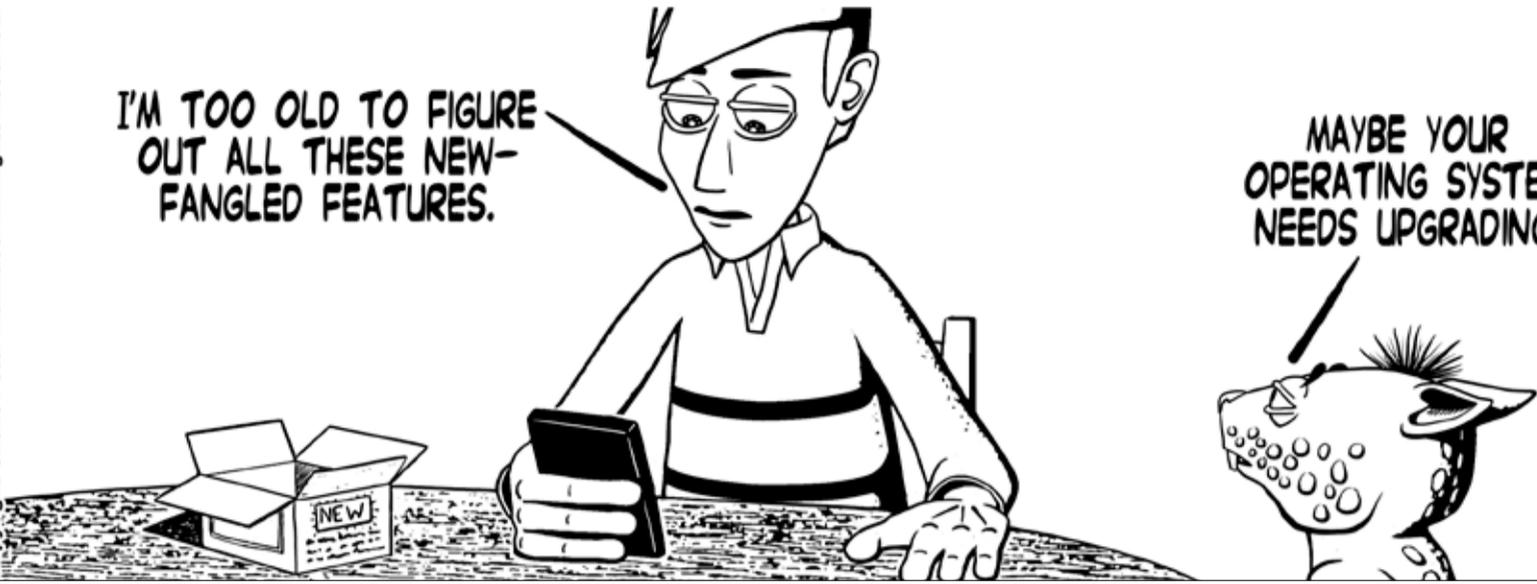
WOMBANIA™

by PETER MARINACCI

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I'M TOO OLD TO FIGURE OUT ALL THESE NEW-FANGLED FEATURES.

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WHITECOURT CANCER & WELLNESS SOCIETY

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

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



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Shelter:
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

Wellspring
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



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

NEED HELP? CALL ANYTIME! (24-7)

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



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If you would like to meet Hunt, please contact the Whitecourt Pound at: **780-778-5767**

Red Cabinet initiative brings free menstrual products to the community



From left, Lily Yuhar, staff member at Wellspring's Twice is Nice; Grace Johnson, Red Cabinet volunteer; Tamara Smith, Youth Outreach and Public Educator at Wellspring; and Rebecca Wells, Executive Director at Wellspring, stand in front of the Red Cabinets.

| By Haylee Winger

A new community initiative focused on dignity, accessibility, and menstrual equity is officially underway with the launch of the Red Cabinet. The cabinets are now installed at the mall, just outside Twice Is Nice, where they are stocked and ready for use.

The Red Cabinets provide free menstrual products in a range of sizes and options for anyone who needs them. Designed as a judgment-free resource, the cabinets aim to remove barriers to access while offering privacy and choice for community members.

The initiative ad-

dresses a basic and essential need. Menstrual products are necessary for health, comfort, and everyday life, yet the cost can create a financial strain for many individuals and families.

The Red Cabinet is an extension of ACWS's ongoing Period Project, which works to combat period poverty and promote equitable access to menstrual supplies. Through a partnership with Ballad Group, the custom-built cabinets were constructed and officially named "The Red Cabinet".

Organizers note that limited access to menstrual products affects

continued on page 11

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



Menstrual products fill a vehicle after being collected to help meet the needs of those facing limited access to hygiene essentials.

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#: 26-018 – Facility Trades II – Permanent, Full-time Position. Closes: March 6, 2026

Job#: 26-019 – Engineering Summer Student – Temporary, Full-time Position. Closes: March 6, 2026

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



Skiing sisters



Aubree grabbing a quick drink.



Breanna loves being out on the trails.



A big smile from Callie.

Breanna, Aubree and Callie were out enjoying the groomed trail at the Whitecourt Golf Course earlier this month with their mom, Serene Cotterhill. The sisters got into cross-country skiing after trying out the free equipment at the Whitecourt Library, through its Library of Things Program, which allows residents to try out different equipment, including cross-country skis and boots. "The kids loved it so much that they got their own skis for Christmas," said Cotterhill, crediting the library's program for growing their love of the sport.



A snow shower around goalie Elliott Pratt.



Focused.

continued from page 1

mainder of the season. "It's an awesome feat," said Young. As of Thursday, February 19, Bianchet and Young remained tied for one Whitecourt Wolverines record, and that's the overall points leader, a combination of regular-season points and playoff points, with 182 each. By the time this paper is printed, Bianchet will also have the crown for that title. Next up, the

Just forty-one seconds into the game, guess who scored? Bianchet, of course! As his teammates bombarded him in the corner of the rink, congratulating him, the hometown crowd erupted in cheers to celebrate the accomplishment. Bianchet is now the Wolverine's All-Time Regular Season Points Champ, and he did it in twenty fewer games than Young. Unfortunately, the game didn't end how Bianchet or his teammates would have wanted, losing 6-3. Following the game, the Whitecourt Wolverines posted a short video from Justin Young, congratulating Bianchet on beating his record and wishing him and the team the best for the re-

Playoff Points Leader title, currently held by Liam Motley with 28, is what Bianchet will set his sights on, and he only needs ten points to do it.

After their 6-3 loss to Drumheller, the Whitecourt Wolverines welcomed the Lloydminster Bobcats home to JDA Place. Thanks to a hat-trick from Brendan Ruskowski, a pair from Nolan Schmidt and a single from Quentin

Bourne, the Wolverines pummeled the visitors by the same score they had been beaten by the night before, 6-3. Wolverines goalie Elliott Pratt saved 28 of the 31 shots he faced.

The final two games in this update were back-to-back contests between the Wolverines and Grande Prairie Storm. When the season first began back

continued on page 10



I wonder what has the ref so shocked.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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



NOTICE OF DECISION

The following decisions were made by the Municipal Planning Commission:

Application No. 26-002 - Discretionary Use, Home Occupation – Taxi Service at Unit 403, 4502 52 Avenue - Approved with conditions.

Date of Decision: February 12, 2026

Appeal Closes at 4:00pm: February 12, 2026

An Appeal of the above decision(s) may be made by submitting a written appeal and appeal fee (\$315) 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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in September, the Wolverines played a back-to-back set against the Storm and took both as wins, one 7-4 and the other 3-2. The Storm wanted to clean the slate, but it wouldn't be easy.

On Friday, February 13, the Storm took a 3-0 lead in front of their hometown crowd, seemingly wrapping things up, but the Wolverines managed to tie things up in the last nine and a half minutes of the third with two goals from Jalen Bianchet and an unassisted marker from Jackson DeGraves, his tenth of the season. In the shootout, sadly, the Wolverines couldn't find the back of the net, giving the Storm the victory, 4-3.

The next night, at JDA Place, the Storm once again got on the scoreboard first, but the Wolverines answered, tying things up, thanks to Kyle Tucker. In the third, the Storm scored again, this time answered by Quentin Bourne. The teams

went into overtime knotted at two apiece, and unfortunately, the Storm managed to score the goal that mattered most, taking the win 3-2.

There are just a handful of games left in the regular season and only two home games before the playoffs begin. The first is on Friday, March 6, against the Grande Prairie Storm, and the last home game is on Friday, March 13, against the Devon Xtreme. The last game of the regular season will be on Saturday, March 14, on the road against the Devon Xtreme.

On the Olympic front, former Whitecourt Wolverine and Saskatoon-native, Brandon Hagel, is having the time of his life as a member of Canada's Men's Hockey Team, playing alongside the likes of Sidney Crosby, Connor McDavid and Nathan MacKinnon. Following a pass from MacKinnon, during the team's game against France last week, Hagel managed to slam a one-timer home, grab-



The best view in the house.

bing his first goal of the Olympics, and giving area fans an extra reason to cheer for Team Canada.

Hagel also played in the Four Nations Cup last year, where

he recorded one assist. He played for the Whitecourt Wolverines for six games during the 2014/2015 season and three games in the 2025/2026 season before moving up to the

Red Deer Rebels of the WHL, followed by the Rockford IceHogs of the AHL. He was picked up by the Chicago Blackhawks in 2019, where he played one game before doing

a stint in Switzerland to play for HC Thurgau. He came back to the NHL with the Blackhawks in 2020 and was traded to his current team, the Tampa Bay Lightning, in 2022.

Library Hours:
 Mon-Fri 10am-8pm
 Sat 12pm-4pm
 Sun Closed

MARCH 2026

EVENT CALENDER



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2 Adult Book Club 1:30-2:30 French Homework Help 4:00-5:00	3 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00	4 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00	5 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00 Scrabble Night 6:00pm-7:30	6 Yap & Yarn 6:00-7:30	7 Family Movie: Big Hero 6 1:00
8	9 French Homework Help 4:00-5:00 Tween & Teen Night 6:00-7:30	10 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00	11 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00	12 Story Time 10:30-11:15 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00	13 Adult Art Therapy: Book-Folding Hedgehog 5:30-7:30	14 Creative Corner Dancing Shamrock 1:00-3:00
15	16 French Homework Help 4:00-5:00	17 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00	18 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00	19 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00	20 Soapstone Carving 5:30-7:30	21 Creative Corner: Buddha Boards 1:00-3:00
22	23 French Homework Help 4:00-5:00 Tween & Teen Night 6:00-7:30	24 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00	25 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00	26 Story Time 10:30-11:15 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00	27 Crib Night 6:00-7:30	28 Creative Corner: KEVA Planks 1:00-3:00
29	30	31 Afterschool Program 3:30-5:00	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>St. Patrick's Day Scavenger Hunt</p>  </div> <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>All Afterschool Programs: Free, Drop-In at the Library, Designed for all school ages.</p> </div> </div>			

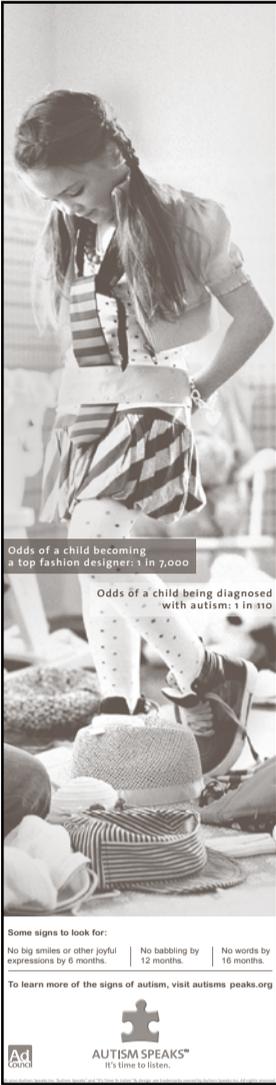
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Woodlands County staff welcomed riders back at the final checkpoint of the Whitecourt Trailblazers Annual Family Snowmobile Rally on the February 14-15 weekend, serving hot chocolate and sharing the new Welcome Guide at this community event.



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



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more than physical comfort. It can disrupt school attendance, limit participation at work, and impact overall well-being, underscoring the importance of initiatives like the Red Cabinet.

Sustaining the program depends on continued community involvement and care. Local volunteer Grace

oversees and maintains the cabinets to ensure they remain stocked and welcoming.

Organizers expressed appreciation for her dedication and stewardship of the project.

Community members are encouraged to use the cabinets respectfully and considerately. The guiding principle remains simple: take what is needed while helping ensure

supplies remain available for others.

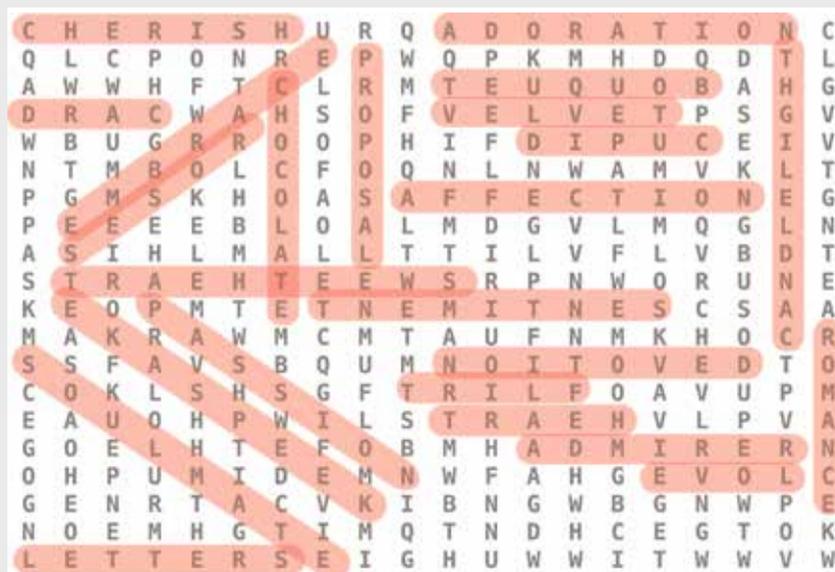
As the project continues to grow, organizers are seeking community partners to help sustain and expand the effort. Support can include donating menstrual products, organizing collection drives, or providing financial contributions for restocking and future growth. Businesses, organizations and in-

dividuals interested in partnering are invited to contact Wellsprings for more information.

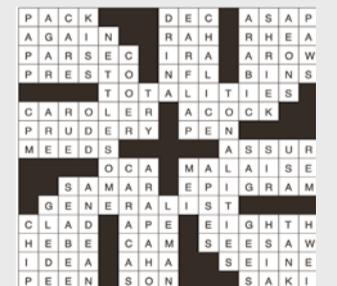
As the Red Cabinet initiative expands, it serves as a reminder that thoughtful, community-driven solutions can create meaningful change. Addressing basic needs is a powerful step toward building a healthier and more equitable community.

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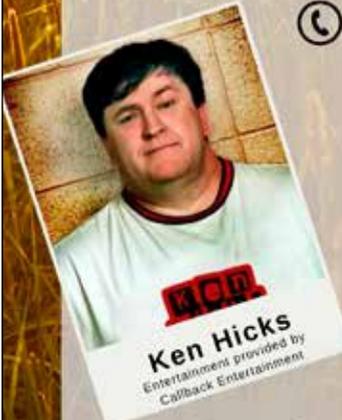
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Friday
March 6, 2026

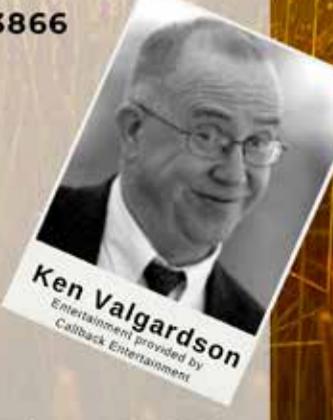
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