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Kenyan delegation may visit Woodlands County this June

| By Serena Lapointe

Visitors from over 13 thousand kilometres away might end up paying a visit to Woodlands County as part of a fact-finding mission should a recent request be fulfilled later this year. Woodlands County Council recently received a letter from the County Government of Tana River, Kenya, asking if they could come and learn from Woodlands County.

In a letter dated February 5, Maurice Okech Osano, Chief of Staff for Tana River County Governor Dhadho Gaddae Godhana, explained that despite

continued on page 2



Photo by Tana River County

A delegation from the other side of the globe, in Tana River County, Kenya, has reached out to Woodlands County as part of a fact-finding mission to learn better ways of doing various municipally related tasks, like service delivery, planning and policy implementation. Pictured is Governor Dhadho Gaddae Godhana.



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AP

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continued from page 1

the importance that Tana River County plays within Kenya, they continue to face challenges, including low revenue collection, inadequate water and sanitation services, housing shortages, poor urban planning and governance restraints.

Their goal in visiting Woodlands County, as well as a few other municipalities, is to learn how things are done so they can take that knowledge back to Kenya and put it into practice. "On behalf of the County Government of Tana River, Kenya, I respectfully write to request your kind consideration and support in hosting an official delegation from our County in June 2026," wrote Osano.

Tana River County is one of 47 counties that comprise the Republic of Kenya. It is named after the Tana River, the longest river in Kenya, which stretches for approximately 1,000 kilometres before draining out into the Indian Ocean. By comparison, the Athabasca River is approximately 1,200 kilometres.

The land area of Tana River County covers 35,000 square kilometres and is home to over 350,000 residents, most of whom live in smaller groups. The largest municipality in Tana River County is Hola Town. With a population of around seven thousand,

it functions as the political, commercial, and service hub of the County, with health facilities, education institutions and legal courts.

Despite how large an area Tana River County has, and the large population that lives there, only one local authority exists, the Tana River County Council. Over the last forty years, the county has exploded in population from 92,401 in 1979 to 180,901 in 1999 to 315,943 in 2019, exacerbating some of the issues it is facing.

In the letter, Osano said they hope to learn more about how Woodlands County governs, particularly with policy implementation, financial management, public participation and service delivery, and plan on attending at least one council meeting to gain insight on how Woodlands County Council makes decisions.

They also want to learn about the county's growth strategies, land-use planning and the frameworks around infrastructure development. The Kenyan delegation has asked to tour water, sewer and solid waste management facilities, as well as learn about recycling and waste disposal services within the municipality.

"We kindly request your support in facilitating meetings, site visits, and engagements with relevant County officials and institu-



Photo by Wikipedia

A bird's eye view from Tana River County.

tions during our visit. We are confident that these interactions will strengthen relations between our two governments and lay a solid foundation for future cooperation and mutual learning," wrote Osano, adding that their team would coordinate all arrangements to ensure successful engagement between the two leadership groups.

Woodlands County CAO Matthew Ferris said that they see the benefits of not only sharing knowledge with the Kenyan delegation but also learning from them, including understanding how they function from a

public service delivery standpoint. He said they could also share information about the industries in Woodlands County, specifically forestry, adding that it could benefit them to take that knowledge back to Kenya.

He said the next step, with the council's approval, would be to seek out more information. "We think it's a good thing, but we also want to make sure we are being prudent with every dollar that we spend. We would like to have the authority to get a much more detailed program and budget prior to formally committing," said

Ferris.

Councillor Peter Kuelken said he liked the idea and was interested in learning from them. "I absolutely think this is a great opportunity. The part that was really interesting to me was that I would like to see their (agriculture) component. That would be really super interesting to see how they operate there compared to how we operate here."

Tana River County is a hotbed for agriculture and livestock production, sustaining the livelihoods of its many residents. The area is known for its sheep, cattle, camel

and goat producers, as well as for its mangoes. Thanks to the Integrated Fruit Processing Plant located in Hola Town, which can produce 1.5 metric tons of mango pulp per hour, the fruit is vital to the area's economy.

Woodlands County Council decided to approve hosting the Kenyan delegation, in principle, and directed Administration to work with the Kenyans to confirm who would be coming, their full intentions for the trip and any associated costs that could land on Woodlands, before any financial commitment is made.

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Is your fire pit permit older than 2025? Then you need to get a new one

| By Serena Lapointe

Nearly a year ago, Whitecourt Town Council voted in favour of changing how residential fire permits are attained, opting to switch what the permits are attached to. Rather than allowing residents to get a permit for their property, the changes made in March last year linked permits to an individual, specifically, the current homeowner.

The change was made to promote responsible burning practices while residents enjoy their pits, while also ensuring that fire pits are placed in the right spot within a resident's yard, far enough from structures or trees. Changes also included safeguards to strengthen compliance with safe burning requirements, including the type and size of fire pits. Details on the specifics can be found at the end of this article.

However, the changes to the bylaw meant that residents who already had a permit would need to re-register, no matter if someone had a permit for a couple of decades or a few short months.

Given that over time changes naturally happen, with new structures added within a yard space, like decks and sheds, and that trees and plants get bigger, having a permit redo would help residents make sure their fire pits were still in the safest spot they could be.

The fee for getting a fire permit is normally \$26. Should a resident require an in-person inspection from the Whitecourt Fire Department, the fee is \$51. Since implementing the new rules, only 89 residential fire pit permit applications have been sent into the town, leaving the vast majority of the community's backyard pits unpermitted and potentially creating risk.

To help encourage fire pit users to get a new permit, a new online application system is expected to be up and running by the end of March. The system will allow residents

to send in their information, including pictures of their pits and surrounding yard, and measurements of the pit, negating the need for the Whitecourt Fire Department personnel to make an in-person inspection before approving a permit, as they used to do, unless, of course, it is needed.

Recognizing the importance of proper permits, Whitecourt Town Council asked administration to explore incentives that would encourage residents to validate their backyard pits and re-register.

During the February 23 Regular Meeting, the elected officials approved a one-year grace period where the fees for pit applications will be waived, meaning that residents who have not yet applied for the new permit can do so for the next twelve months without paying a fee.

Residents can either go to the Town Office and apply in person or wait until the online portal is up and running and apply that way. As long as their applications are fully completed and accurate, with all required information and necessary photographs, the permit will be free of charge. If the pictures provided don't give a clear indication or if staff feel an in-person inspection is best due to proximity or other factors, then the fees mentioned above would come into effect for that specific resident.

For the 89 residents who complied with the rules and purchased a fire pit permit over the last twelve months since the changes were made, a refund is coming once the online system is launched, to help keep things fair.

During the meeting, Council discussed how the information would be shared with the public, in hopes of reaching as many residents as possible within the grace period. Mayor Ray Hilts asked if the promotion period would be comprehensive, to "make sure residents know what's going on." Administration responded that it



Residents with fire pits older than last year need to get a new permit due to safety-related changes in Fire Services Bylaw 1582. To help get residents on board with re-permitting their fire pits, Town Council recently approved a grace period and hopes to see people take advantage of it. This pit is an example of what not to do. Although it uses non-combustible materials, there isn't a mesh screen, and the walls aren't high enough.

would be shared across social media platforms and other municipality-controlled means of communication. Council asked that it be shared at spring and summer events where possible, such as maybe Party in the Park, the Summer Park Parties or the Town's Canada Day celebrations.

Guidelines for fire pits in the Town of Whitecourt include that the opening cannot exceed one meter in diameter and the non-combustible sides must be at least 30 centimetres above ground.

The pit itself must be on top of a non-combustible base, such as cement or stones, and the base must extend out from under the pit, equal to the height of the pit. For example, if the pit is 2 feet tall, then a non-combustible material must extend out from the base by the same distance, creating a safe zone under and around the pit.

Also required is the use of a metal mesh screen, with openings no larger than 1.25 centimetres, to help reduce the hazards of sparks that, when not contained, often float

off far from the pit. To that end, there cannot be any combustible materials, such as trees, hanging overhead.

As for things in the vicinity, fire pits must be a minimum of three metres away from any property line. Depending on the size of the fire pit, there must be a minimum clearance of 2.5 metres from any structure or combustible materials, like trees and shrubs, for pits up to 0.7 metres in diameter. If a fire pit is one meter in diameter, that distance rises to a minimum of three metres.

To snag a fire pit permit for free, residents can visit www.whitecourt.ca and search "fire permit" and follow the guidelines on the form to install theirs. Then, with all required pictures and measurements collected, they can either bring it to the Town Office or wait for the incoming online portal in late March. Either way, don't miss out on the opportunity to get a free permit to replace the one you got years ago or as a new addition to the backyard, as fines for burning without a permit are not cheap.

**GET YOUR
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Woodlands County is fully within the Forest Protection Area (FPA). **As of March 1, a fire permit is required for all burning within the FPA**, with the exception of campfires.

Permits are free and available online through **Alberta Forestry at alberta.ca/wildfire**.

If you need assistance, contact the Whitecourt Forest Area office at **780-778-7153**, Monday to Friday, **8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** Please note that higher demand at the start of fire season may result in minor delays. Thank you for your patience and for helping keep our communities safe.

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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
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Visit <https://woodlands.ab.ca/p/planning-and-development>
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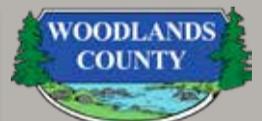
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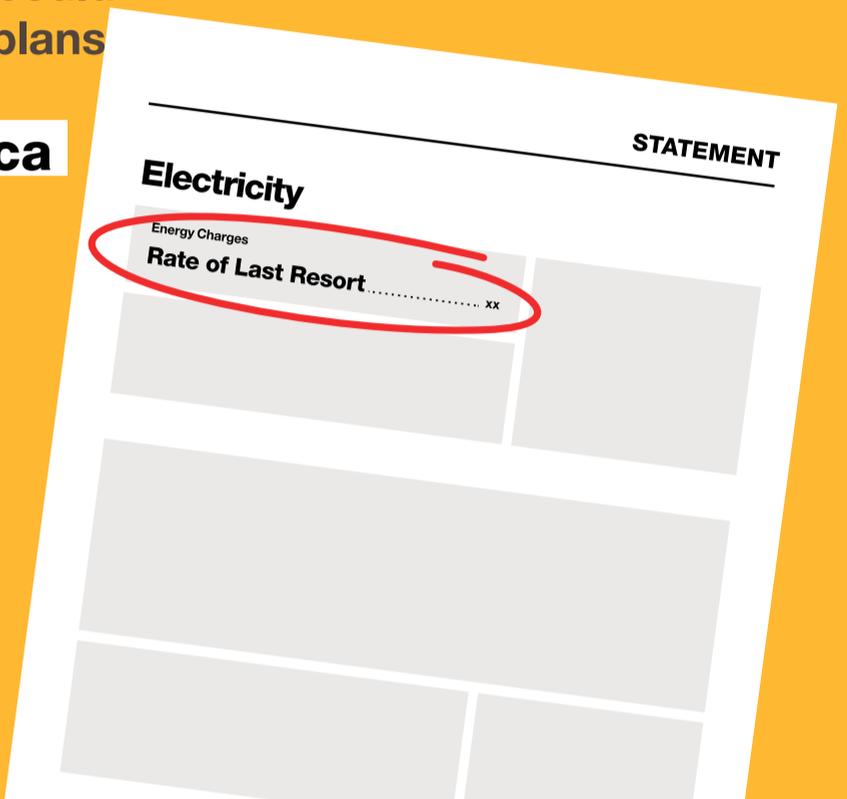
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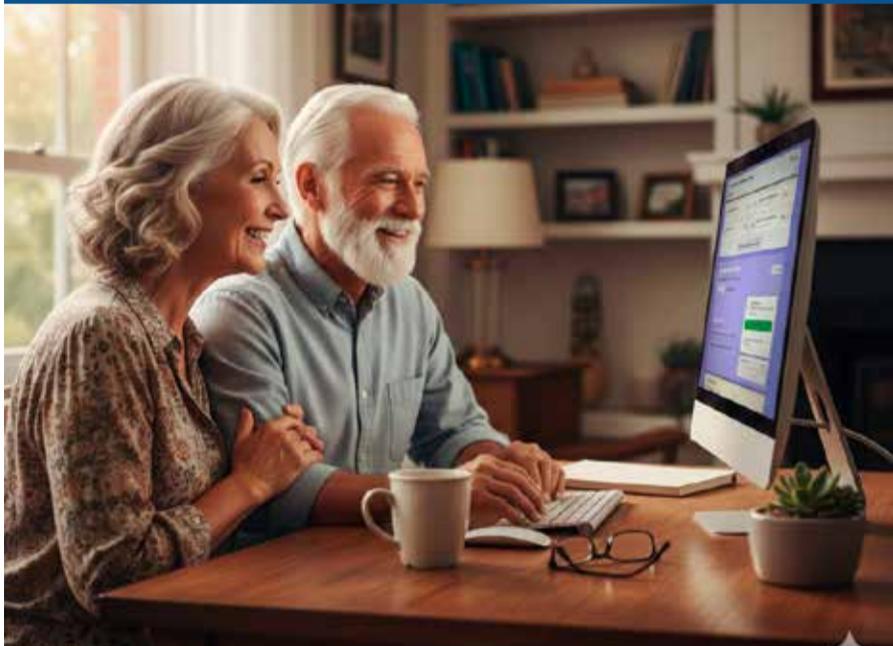
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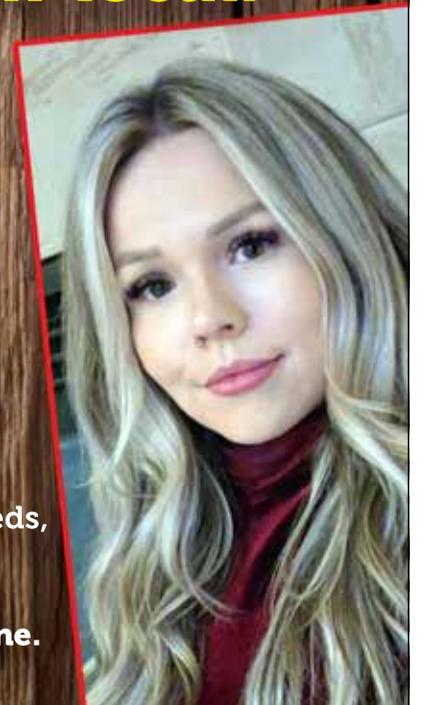
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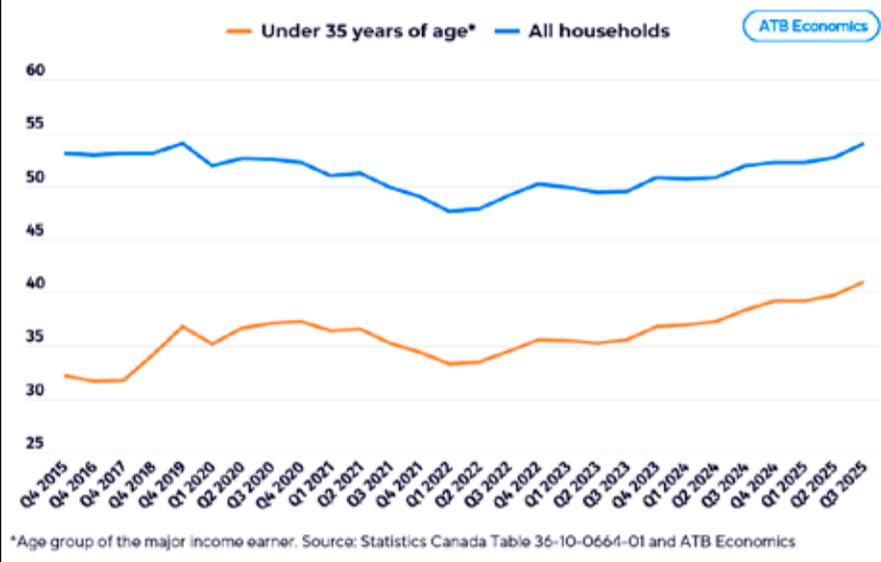
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Are the kids alright? A look into the financial decisions of young Canadians

Canadians' holdings of financial assets as a share of total assets %



| By Carol Kamel,
ATB ECONOMICS

When you think about the financial prospects of young Canadians, it tends to be framed as a bleak picture - housing unaffordability, cost-of-living pressures, elevated youth unemployment, the narrative of AI displacing entry-level jobs. A recent Bank of Canada survey backs up the mood: Canadians of all ages rated their financial well-being as worse than a year prior in every quarter of 2025. But bleakness masks the fact that there's more to the story, and it's not all doom and gloom.

Today's Twenty-Four digs into what's actually driving young Canadians' wealth-building decisions.

Stocking up

I was recently posed the question: Are young Canadians turning to financial assets like stocks rather than real estate to build wealth? My gut said yes, but a hunch wasn't enough, so I turned to Statistics Canada's Household Economic Accounts for a granular breakdown of Canadian household wealth.

The findings were striking. Households where the major income earner is under

35 saw their average net worth grow the fastest of any age group in Q3 2025 at 7.4% year-over-year (y/y) compared to 5.5% for all age groups. The engine of this growth was financial assets, which grew by 13.2% for the youngest households, also outpacing the average of 9.6% across all age groups. Moreover, the share of financial assets as a proportion of total wealth is growing faster for under-35s than any other cohort.

If you were looking for more data to establish this trend, take the CFA Institute's 2023 study: approximately 74% of Canadians aged 18-25 report owning at least one investment and invest a median of \$9,000—well above any country in the study, including our southern neighbours.

Also found in the study is a generational shift in the priorities of young Canadians. The study reports that the top financial goals for Canadian Gen Z investors are: 1) being able to pay monthly bills (55%); and 2) having enough money to travel/vacation (55%).

What about housing?

On the real estate side, Q3 2025 was the first quarter since 2022

in which the youngest households recorded a y/y increase in mortgage debt—and even then, at just 1.9%, it was the lowest of any age group. That multi-year retreat tracked with the Bank of Canada's rate-hiking cycle: from near-zero in early 2022 to 5.0% by mid-2023, compressing affordability. Meanwhile, the national benchmark composite home price peaked at around \$827,600 in February 2022 before pulling back to roughly \$665,000 today—still about 28% above pre-pandemic levels.

For young Canadians watching those numbers, the math simply didn't work, and the Bank of Canada's Survey of Consumer Expectations shows it. The share of renters planning to buy a home in the next 12 months fell from nearly 20% in Q4 2024 to just 14.5% by Q4 2025.

Not abandoning ownership, but adapting

It would be a mistake to read this shift as giving up on homeownership. When the door to real estate seemingly closed, the door to equities was flung wide open. For those who walked through that door, the timing has

been rewarding.

The S&P/TSX Composite index has returned approximately 88% on a total return basis (~13% on an annualized basis) over the past five years. Young Canadians today are flipping the typical wealth-building sequence, and so far, the market has rewarded them for it.

What's been playing out in Alberta?

Albertan youth are a part of this generational shift, but unlike the rest of the country, Alberta has been a destination of choice for younger Canadians priced out of more expensive provinces as we have recently shown. In 2023, the province posted a net interprovincial gain that was the largest on record since at least 1972, when the current

data series began, and has led the country in interprovincial migration since. People aged 25 to 29 have been the single largest cohort of arrivals, followed closely by those aged 30 to 34.

The province was simultaneously absorbing record international migration, and the combined population surge outpaced what the housing stock and labour market could absorb.

Meanwhile, rents and home prices were pushed up by the supply gap, delivering some of the same affordability pressures young Albertans had moved to escape. Despite this, affordability metrics like housing costs to income are holding up better than in provinces like Ontario and B.C..

The Alberta story,

in short, is one of a province that absorbed a generational wave of young, ambitious Canadians looking for a more accessible on-ramp to stability—and is now working through the growing pains that came with it. We are in a period of adjustment for now, but it's an advantage in the long-term to have a large pool of young, skilled workers.

It seems that the "bleak picture" of the future is being redrawn by young Canadians who have stopped anticipating that the traditional financial playbook will work for them. Instead, they're pivoting towards a more liquid definition of security, swapping immediate home ownership goals for equity growth and geographic mobility.

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Whitecourt Central School photo

Whitecourt Central students and staff wore pink on February 25 in support of Pink Shirt Day.

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WHITECOURT ADOPTABLE ANIMALS

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.



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



Prestige Athletics photo

The Scorchers of Prestige Athletics light up the floor with confidence, power, and energy, earning an Excellent rating at the Cheerific Western Cheer Challenge on February 14 in Morinville.

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
- Job#: 26-020 – Bylaw Officer – Temporary, Full-time Position. Closes: March 13, 2026

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



Whee for Willow



Two-year-old Willow Sinclair recently had a ball on one of the animated rides in the Midtown Mall. The green tractor with Farmer Barney on board made for a perfect pit stop for Willow while she was out shopping with her family.

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

3 Day Miracle Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, you who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and you who are in all instances of my life with me.

I, in this short dialogue, want to thank you for everything, and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from you no matter how great the material desires may be, I want to be with you and my loved ones in your perpetual glory. Amen

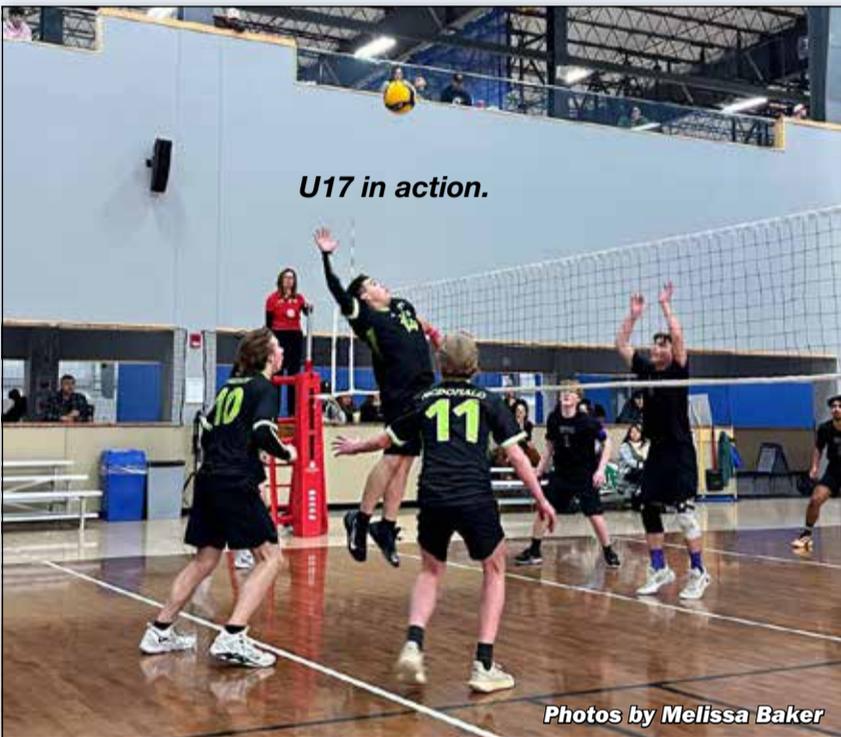
You must pray this prayer 3 consecutive days without asking your wish. After the 3rd day, your wish will be granted no matter how difficult it may be. Promise to publish this dialogue as your favor has been granted.

J.A.B.

Teamwork for the win



All smiles for the team photo.



U17 in action.

Photos by Melissa Baker

The Revz U17 Boys recently took part in the team's first premier in Edmonton, impressing their coaches with the hard work the boys put forward. The tournament was held earlier in February, and though they didn't take home the top spot, what they did come home with was valuable experience, confidence, and a more solidified and supportive team, especially given that most of the team is actually under 16. Way to go, U17!

Life Medical Clinic launches Access Care Clinic to improve same-day primary care

By Haylee Winger



Residents seeking timely medical attention for non-life-threatening concerns now have a new option in the community. Life Medical Clinic soft-launched its Access Care Clinic on February 17, introducing a walk-in model designed to improve access to primary care and reduce pressure on local emergency services.

Dr. Joseph Ojedokun, Family Physician and Medical Director of Life Medical Clinic, said the initiative comes in response to growing strain on both primary care and hospital emergency de-

partments.

“Over the past several years, we have seen increasing pressure on both primary care access and the local Emergency Department, particularly for lower-acuity concerns that are best managed in a primary care setting,” Ojedokun said. “Many residents face challenges accessing same-day care, and some patients, especially those without a regular family doctor, have relied on the Emergency Department for non-emergent concerns.”

The Access Care Clinic was created to help bridge that gap by offering timely, team-based care for urgent

but non-life-threatening issues. The initiative is jointly supported by the Governments of Canada and Alberta, with funding provided through the Canada-Alberta Agreement to Work Together to Improve Health Care for Canadians.

“The goal is not simply to add more appointments, but to create a focused access point that improves flow, reduces avoidable Emergency Department visits, and strengthens follow-up and continuity while caring for our regular patients,” Ojedokun said.

The clinic operates using a team-based,

continued on page 10



PUBLIC NOTICE

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



Vitalization Grant Program

The Vitalization Grant Program offers businesses located in the downtown core and along the Highway 43 corridor up to \$10,000.00 to enhance the exterior facade of their business or property to meet the Town's architectural theme of stone and wood. The stone and wood theme has been incorporated in Land Use Bylaw 1577 and is now an integral part of renovations. This grant helps us to build a vibrant and beautiful community for both residents and visitors alike.

Information and application forms can be obtained from www.whitecourt.ca

Applications will be accepted until **4:00 PM on Wednesday May 20, 2026**, at the following location:

Town of Whitecourt - Planning & Development Department
Re: Vitalization Grant Program
5004 52nd Avenue, Box 509
Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N6
Ph: 780-778-2273
Fax: 780-778-2062
planning@whitecourt.ca

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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

- RFP 2026-02-23: Canfor Culture & Events Centre Kitchen Lease & Coffee Lease. Closes: March 31, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

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

continued from page 9

protocol-driven approach that includes a Licensed Practical Nurse, a Proactive Care Coordination Assistant and physician oversight. Structured nursing assessments are completed first, followed by physician evaluation for diagnosis and treatment planning.

The Access Care Clinic is intended to treat lower-acuity concerns such as minor infections, musculoskeletal injuries, skin conditions, urinary symptoms, mild to moderate respiratory

illnesses, some bowel symptoms, minor sprains and urgent medication refills. It is not designed for life-threatening emergencies such as chest pain, stroke symptoms, major trauma or severe breathing difficulties. In those cases, patients are advised to go directly to the Emergency Department or call 911.

Ojedokun said a significant number of emergency visits fall within CTAS 3 to 5 categories, meaning they are often manageable in a primary care setting.

“By offering a same-day access model focused on these concerns, we aim to provide patients with an appropriate alternative to the Emergency Department when their condition is not life-threatening,” he said.

For patients without a regular family doctor, the clinic also serves as a structured entry point into primary care. Beyond addressing immediate concerns, staff will aim to facilitate follow-up and attachment to ongoing providers within the community whenever

possible.

The clinic operates from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., excluding the hour between 12 and 1 p.m. Patients do not need to register in advance and may present during operating hours, with registration completed upon arrival. Those unsure whether their condition is appropriate for the walk-in clinic are encouraged to call ahead for guidance.

Since the soft launch, community response has been strong.

“We are already overwhelmed by multiple amazing responses from community mem-

bers, healthcare providers and community agencies,” Ojedokun said. “Early feedback has been very positive, particularly from patients who appreciated having an alternative to visiting the Emergency Department for non-emergent concerns.”

The clinic has also begun seeing patients from the Mayerthorpe area.

Life Medical Clinic will monitor visit volumes, referral sources, disposition outcomes and appointment availability metrics as part of what Ojedokun de-

scribed as a measured rural pilot initiative. The two-year pilot will evaluate the clinic’s impact on patient care and the broader health system.

“This initiative reflects our belief that primary care must evolve to meet growing demand while working collaboratively with hospital partners,” Ojedokun said. “We want residents to have timely access to the right care, in the right place, at the right time, while strengthening our hospital and primary care systems together as one community.”

Woodlands County Council Recap

Woodlands County release

Council gave second and third final reading to Bylaw 637/26, being the amended Annual ATB Borrowing Bylaw.

Administration received a letter on February 9, 2026, from the County Government of Tana River, Kenya, requesting that Woodlands County host an official delegation, expressing interest

in learning from municipal best practices to strengthen its rural and urban development initiatives and governance structures. Council, in principle, approved hosting the Kenyan delegation in June 2026 and directed Administration to liaise with the delegation to confirm objectives, attendees, scheduling requirements, and associated costs, and to

report back to Council with a detailed program and budget prior to any financial commitments.

Woodlands County has retained Qatalyst Research Group to facilitate the development of a new Strategic Plan for the 2026–2030 period. Council received Mr. Weicker’s presentation from Qatalyst Research Group on the Strategic Planning Work Plan for in-

formation and adopted the Public Participation Plan as discussed.

Council received the Provincial RCMP and Whitecourt RCMP 2025 Q3 Reports for information and directed Administration to conduct a public survey to obtain input from Woodlands County residents on Policing Priorities for the 2026–2027 RCMP Community Priorities Plan (CPP),

and that the results be reported to Council at the next Regular Council Meeting.

Council confirmed that the 2026 Interim Operating Budget remains in effect in accordance with sections 242 and 248 of the Municipal Government Act until replaced by the final 2026 Operating Budget. Council also directed Administration to draft a Policy or Policy amendment that further clarifies the Interim Operating Budget.

Council directed Administration to draft and/or implement a Facebook Poll and/or Survey Monkey Poll on the 2026 Interim Operating Budget to obtain ratepayer feedback during the 2026 budget process. Also, Administration is to develop a Public Participation Plan to support public engagement for the 2027 Operating and Capital Budgets by the end of Q2 2026 for councils’ consideration.

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="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>St. Patrick's Day Scavenger Hunt</p> </div> </div>			

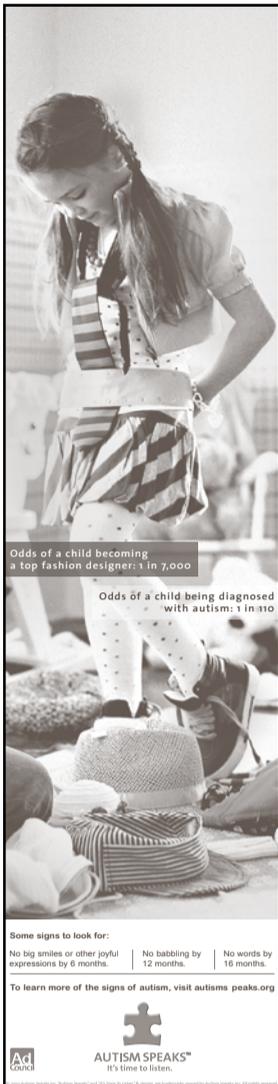
**All Afterschool Programs:
Free, Drop-In at the Library,
Designed for all school ages.**

For more Library information check our Facebook page, or call (780) 778-2900
 (www.facebook.com/whitecourtlibrary/)



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Business Opportunities

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Coming Events

FIREARMS WANTED FOR OUR 2026 AUCTION PROGRAM: Firearms, Ammunition, Accessories, or Militaria. Collections, Estates or single items. For Auction, or Possible Purchase: Contact us: 1-800-694-2609, Email: sales@switzersauction.com or Visit us @ www.switzersauction.com for Auction Dates & Details.

EDMONTON STAMP CLUB STAMP SHOW - March 21 - 22, 2026; Saturday 10 - 5 pm, Sunday 10 - 4 pm. Central Lion's Rec Centre 113 Street & 111 Avenue. Stamps for Sale, Door Prizes, Jr Table, etc. Exhibits (WSP): Stephan Cloutier cloutier1967@

sympatico.ca. Food Bank donation box. www.edmontonstampclub.ca.

Employment Opportunities

A-1 CEMENT CONTRACTORS LTD. is seeking an experienced Concrete Repair Technician to join our team in Calgary. This role is ideal for a skilled tradesperson with strong experience in concrete repair, cutting and breakout work and who takes pride in quality craftsmanship and customer service. Competitive wage: \$30/hour, depending on experience, plus benefits. To apply, please see the full job description on Indeed at - <https://ca.indeed.com/cmp/A--1-Cement->

Contractors/locations/ AB/Calgary.

THE LAKESIDE LEADER is hiring a full-time reporter/photographer position in Slave Lake. Salary negotiable. Email resume, cover letter and samples of writing and photography to spnproduction@hotmail.com.

Feed and Seed

BARLEY - *NEW-AB Standswell* Smooth Awn, High Yielding, Grain and Forage Great Lodging Resistance. 1st NITROGEN USE EFFICIENT CEREAL IN CANADA. OTHER BARLEY: Cerveza, CDC Austenson, CDC Durango, CDC Maverick, Esma, Sundre. WHEAT - Pintail, Forage or Grain. OATS

- AC Juniper, AC Morgan, AC Mustang, Derby, CDC S01 Super Oat. PEAS - Very Early Yellow Peas, Forage Peas. ALSO AVAILABLE: Polish Canola & Spring Triticale. Special pricing on truckloads. www.mastinseeds.com; 403-556-2609.

Health

HIP/KNEE REPLACEMENT. Other medical conditions causing TROUBLE WALKING or DRESSING? The Disability Tax Credit allows for \$3,000 yearly tax credit and \$30,000 lump sum refund. Take advantage of this offer. Apply NOW; quickest refund Nationwide: Expert help. 1-844-453-5372.

Livestock

33rd ANNUAL ADAIR RANCH BULL SALE. March 18, 2026, Brownfield, AB. 37 Red and

Black Simmentals, 8 Angus heifer bulls. Feed Efficiency Tested. Ken 403-575-5470.

32 Registered Red Angus yearling bulls, quiet, easy calving (43-88# BW with high CE scores), great WW's, lots of length and growth. From 6 herd sires. EPD's available. Selling quality bulls for heifers and cows since 1992. Cleveley Cattle Company 780 689-2754.

Travel

VACATION IN CANADA'S WARMEST DESTINATION. Extraordinary villa in Osoyoos, BC, breathtaking lake views, just 3 minutes from town. Or warmer weather, two luxurious 5-star resort units in Phoenix, Arizona. Doug 306-716-2671 or visit osoyooslakevilla.com.

Whitecourt Town Council update

Town of Whitecourt release

In March 2025, Whitecourt adopted new legislation to regulate residential fire pits and fire permits. The updated bylaw now requires that individuals apply for Fire Pit Permits (rather than issuing the permit to a property). This change was made strictly with fire prevention and safety in mind, and will ensure safe fire pit placement and responsible burning practices.

- To further this mandate and encourage individuals to apply, Whitecourt is offering a one-year Residential Fire Pit Permit Incentive Program allowing residents to apply for fire pit permits for free between April 1, 2026 and March 31, 2027.
- Those that applied for permits in 2025 to now, will receive a refund for the application fee.

Watch for further details on the program in the coming weeks.

Whitecourt has signed a conditional sales agreement for the sale of the current Whitecourt Public Library property to Northern Gateway Public School Division. The library property, as well as the current Town Office property, have been listed for sale as both the Whitecourt & District Public Library and Whitecourt administration office will be moving into space at the new Canfor Culture & Events Centre when it opens this fall.

The Whitecourt Busi-

ness Market Analysis Attraction and Retention Strategy is complete, and the consultants for the project have presented recommendations from their findings to Town Council. Insights gained from the market analysis and business environment scan will assist with strategic planning by providing a foundation for setting goals, defining strategies, and developing action plans.

- Whitecourt's overall commercial vacancy sits at 3.9% - lower than the industry standard of 5%. However, downtown vacancy is higher due to a few larger retail buildings currently vacant.

- Mobile phone tracking data helped to determine where regional visitors were visiting from. While data showed country-wide counts, the majority of visitors that were in our community for longer than one hour were from Barrhead, Fox Creek, Edmonton area, Edson, and Grande Prairie.

Recommendations and insights provided by the project will be incorporated into Whitecourt's Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plans for the short and long term.

The Community Services Department has completed its 2025 annual report, which is available to view on the Whitecourt website.

- There were over 186,458 scanned visits at the Allan & Jean Millar Centre in 2025.
- 1943 participants

registered in swimming lessons and aquatic courses in 2025.

- Whitecourt Transit provided service to 29,636 passengers in 2025.

- The Whitecourt Food Bank served 2,712 people with regular food bank fills in 2025.

- The Dial-A-Bus Program provided transportation to over 3,861 passengers in 2025.

McKnight Enterprises Ltd. has been awarded the tender for the Athabasca River South Bank Protection for \$1,588,739.60, plus GST. Several of the spurs, located along the Athabasca River and originally constructed in 2015 to prevent bank erosion, were damaged during a flood in 2023 and require armouring to restore the spurs to their original condition to protect property along the river. This project is 90% funded through the Disaster Recovery Program, and will be completed this year.

A delegation from Whitecourt's sister city in Yubetsu, Japan will be visiting Whitecourt between September 25 and October 2, 2026. Community members interested in being a homestay, traveler, or both, are asked to email andrewmalmquist@whitecourt.ca for details on how to participate.

Whitecourt has awarded \$20,000 in funding to community organizations as part of the 2026 Family & Community Support Services Grant Program. The program

provides assistance to community groups that plan to provide social programs that are preventative in nature to the community. 2026 recipients include:

- McLeod River Primary Care Network - \$2,357.82 for the Living Your Best Life project

- Community Lunch Box - \$8,201.11 for the Volunteer & Inclusion Support Program

- Edson & District Community Learning Society - Settlement Services - \$800 for Cultural Connections

- Whitecourt & Area Men's Shed - \$8,641.07 for Men's Shed

Council has been authorized to attend the 2026 Spirit of Youth Awards Ceremony on May 21, 2026. Nominations for the program are being accepted until April 9 and the nomination form can be found on www.whitecourt.ca

An Energy Manager will be contracted for a one-year term who will be responsible for building and managing the Town's Energy Management program and projects. This will include the development of an energy management plan, practices and policies. The position is 80% funded by the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre.

Council has been authorized to attend the Woodlands County Agriculture Services Board Annual Appreciation Supper and the 2026 Political Action Day & MLA Dinner in March 2026.

Letter to the Editor policy

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



The Press

A locally owned and family operated newspaper serving Whitecourt

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY

Contact

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



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

Whitecourt Veterinary Clinic 4439 - 52 Ave



...where pets are family...



Thank you to all those loving families who've adopted the pets at the Whitecourt Vet Clinic.

Career ads, online at: www.whitecourtpress.com

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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!

Deb Elchyson photo



Hands in the air, Parker Cone celebrates a goal during the February 7-9 hockey tournament in Whitecourt. Parker competes in the U7 division.

Visit www.whitecourtpress.com