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## Running for health, community spirit, and to keep the memory of four brave men alive



Town of Whitecourt

Seven-year-old Cameron Bourdages (#157) on the right, taking off in his first race nine years ago. See story page 3



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# Local chess club gathers at library



**By Haylee Winger**



The Whitecourt Chess Club is offering residents a chance to enjoy the classic strategy game in a friendly, welcoming environment.

Meetings are scheduled from 12 to 2 p.m. at the Whitecourt Library on the following dates: April 25, May 9 and 23, and June 6 and 13. The club will take a break over the summer months. No prior experience is necessary, making it an ideal opportunity for newcomers to learn and enjoy chess.

The club held its first spring session on April 4, though turnout was modest. Organizer Grace Johnson

attributes the smaller crowd to the Easter weekend. “We’ve had nine people join us in the past,” Johnson said. The Whitecourt Chess Club began last fall. Initially, the group met outdoors at Rotary/Festival Park, but moving inside the library has provided a more comfortable setting. Johnson started the club to give her son a chance to meet other chess enthusiasts.

For residents looking for a quiet and engaging way to spend a few hours, the Whitecourt Chess Club provides a friendly environment to play, learn, and connect with fellow players.



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# Running for health, community spirit, and to keep the memory of four brave men alive



Town of Whitecourt

Whitecourt's Run 4 Fun is coming up later this spring. The event brings all ages together to mix fun with healthy living, and last year's event had record-breaking attendance. It is also a spin-off from the Fallen 4 Marathon, honouring four young men who lost their lives in the line of duty. Pictured are two RCMP officers keeping runners safe.

| By Serena Lapointe

On Saturday, June 6, bright and early in the morning, runners will take off from the Allan & Jean Millar Center parking lot for the annual Run 4 Fun event. The event brings together area athletes of all ages and skill levels, from beginners to intermediates and everyone in between, for a race against their own abilities, pushing themselves to new heights.

The Town of Whitecourt has held the yearly event since 2017, following the unfortunate ending of the Fallen 4 Marathon, a 42km marathon that saw runners take on the unforgiving hills, wide open stretches and long turns of Highway 43 between Mayerthorpe and Whitecourt, which held its last race in 2015. For a decade, the Fallen 4 Marathon Society successfully hosted the event, bringing together runners from across the region and beyond.

The original race, a four-person relay

event, began three months following the devastating tragedy in Mayerthorpe, where four young police officers, with full lives ahead of them, were murderously gunned down while executing a search warrant on a farm. Constable Peter Schiemann, 25, Constable Anthony Gordon, 28, Constable Leo Johnston, 32, and Constable Brock Myrol, 29, lost their lives in the line of duty, which tore through the fabric of not only the local area, but the province and country. Their deaths are widely regarded as the worst multiple-officer killing in contemporary Canadian history.

To honour their bravery, sacrifice and memory, the Fallen 4 Marathon was created, bringing out runners from all over to take part. From June 2005 to June 2015, the event helped bring healing and remembrance to participants and the two communities. In

2016, sponsorship that supported the event, and was crucial for its continuation, ended. Without new sponsorship to replace what was lost, the marathon ended.

The following year, the Town of Whitecourt decided to do a spinoff of the event, creating Run 4 Fun, with the number four in the name, seeming to give honour to the four officers for whom the original race was created. On the Town's website, it states that "The Run 4 Fun will carry on the enthusiasm and admiration our community had for the Fallen 4 Marathon, while at the same time encouraging healthy and active living."

Unlike the Fallen 4 Marathon, which had participants running down Highway 43, Run 4 Fun utilizes the uptown community and parts of the trail system, taking runners along a scenic route behind the Forest Interpretive Center. It pro-

vides four options: a half-marathon, a 10K, a 5K and a kids run, which uses the track at Hilltop High School.

Cameron Bourdages took part in Run 4 Fun for the first time when he was just seven years old.

His mom, Stacie, said he was encouraged to run by a teacher at his school. "The first time he wanted to do it was because his gym teacher at school said that he should, because he was a good runner."

She said after he was done, he was really tired, but that he loved it, especially the Dilly Bar he had following the race. The next year, Bourdages signed up again, this time with his younger brother, who would've been about 4.5 years old. "He was the proud big brother showing his little brother Joe what it was all about. Joe didn't care for it at the time as much as Cameron did. But I think Joe would run circles around the kids now," chuckled

Stacie, adding, "he should run this year."

Bourdages said that taking part in the event and testing their abilities amongst their peers gave them both a boost of confidence. "Now they feel like they are undefeatable. Being active without even realizing it, because you're having fun, is important. Events like this get kids pumped for physical activities."

The connection to the Fallen 4 Marathon is even more of a reason to take part in it, said Bourdages. She said she feels proud knowing her sons are running for a good cause, not only for their health, but with the memory of four police officers who deserve to be remembered.

Those interested in joining this year's race on Saturday, June 6, are encouraged to check out the town's website to sign up. The half-marathon starts at 8:00 am, the 10K at 8:30 am, the 5K at 8:45 am, and the kids' run

starts at 10:30 am. Early bird pricing remains in effect until May 4.

Kids cost just \$15.

During the March 23 Town Council meeting, officials approved the road closure necessary for the Run 4 Fun, the portion of Sunset Boulevard from the traffic circle to the west entrance of the JDA parking lot. Chelsea Grande, Director of Community Services, said they hope to see the attendance they saw in 2025. "We had a record-breaking event, and we hope that it continues this year. It was the most registrations we've had."

Grande also explained that the run is a break-even event. Funds dispersed after the disbanding of the Fallen 4 Society continue to support it. "We have those funds set aside in a reserve, and anything that we don't break even on, that funding is taken out of the reserve to balance it."

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BRANDED CONTENT

# FortisAlberta expands its wildfire prevention efforts with new public safety measures



Extreme wildfire conditions are becoming more common across Alberta, with recent years seeing an increase in both the frequency and scale of wildfire activity. While the risks are a growing concern, there is positive work underway to help reduce the risk.

### FortisAlberta takes a proactive approach to wildfire safety

FortisAlberta's wildfire preparedness efforts combine advanced technology, real-time awareness of local conditions and coordination with local authorities. This approach supports year-round wildfire mitigation measures, including regular inspections, vegetation management around power lines, early-warning technology to detect issues and infrastructure upgrades to improve resilience in wildfire-prone areas.

In rare cases, if conditions such as strong winds, low humidity and dry vegetation create extreme wildfire risk, FortisAlberta may implement a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) as a last resort safety measure. A PSPS involves temporarily turning off electricity in targeted areas where operating power lines could increase the risk of wildfire during these extreme conditions.

“Although a PSPS event would be a rare occurrence, it's important that individuals and businesses are aware and prepared.

If conditions warrant, we will notify customers and coordinate with municipalities and emergency partners. We would also leverage social media to help warn residents and businesses that we will be shutting off power.

Denis Andre, Manager, Land Environment & Sustainability at FortisAlberta

This advanced notice helps residents and businesses prepare, particularly customers who rely on medical devices that require electricity. To stay informed, update your contact information with the retailer that issues your utility bill.

### A community approach to wildfire mitigation

“Preparing for wildfire risk is a shared responsibility,” says Lorena Charest, Crisis and Wildfire Communications Strategist. “Staying ready helps everyone. Steps such as keeping devices charged, assembling an emergency kit and staying informed about wildfire conditions and potential power outages can make a meaningful difference.”

Alberta's provincial government advises individuals to take proactive steps to build wildfire resilience for their properties and be prepared.



**Clear dead wood, pine needles, debris and firewood within 1.5 metres of your home** to reduce wildfire risk.



**Stay informed about local conditions and update your contact information** with the retailer that issues your utility bill.



**Build an emergency kit** with water, non-perishable food, a flashlight, radio, medications and important documents.



**Have an evacuation plan** for your household, including pets and livestock.



**Keep devices and medical equipment charged** and check on neighbours who may need help.



**Follow Alberta Wildfire fire bans and restrictions.** When permitted, fully extinguish firepits and burn barrels.

Visit [alberta.ca/wildfire-preparedness](http://alberta.ca/wildfire-preparedness) for more.

This is intended for general information only.



For more information on PSPS and how to stay safe this season, visit [fortisalberta.com/pssp](http://fortisalberta.com/pssp)

These images are for illustrative purpose only. Remember to keep a safe distance away from power lines. For more information visit [fortisalberta.com/safety](http://fortisalberta.com/safety)

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# Excessive speeders, increased complaints and loose animals made for a busy quarter for enforcement in Woodlands County

| By **Serena Lapointe**

Enforcement officers from Lac Ste. Anne County, which patrol within Woodlands County under contract with the municipality, were quite busy for the last quarter of 2025, compared to previous quarters. During the March 26 Woodlands County Council meeting, Inspector Dallas Choma, Community Peace Officer and Enforcement Manager for Lac Ste. Anne Enforcement Services provided a look back at the activities from October, November and December, including the top incidents faced by officers and the fine value collected.

“Our officers wrote 140 citations, varying from exceeding speed limit, traffic safety operations, which means that they didn’t have registration or insurance, failure to provide an operator’s license or driver’s license and being uninsured,” explained Inspector Choma. With those 140 citations, officers generated \$31,216 in revenue, 40 percent of which went to the province.

Officers also handed out 33 warnings, valued at \$6,784. “We do give breaks out here. It’s not just hammer, hammer, hammer. We

continued on page 6



Officers from Lac Ste. Anne County were busy beavers through the end of 2025 with a significant increase in both citations and incidents reported. Time will tell if the jump in numbers continues into 2026. Pictured is Inspector Dallas Choma, Community Peace Officer and Enforcement Manager for Lac Ste. Anne County.



Whitecourt Skating Club photo

Whitecourt Skating Club’s StarSkate Gold skaters take centre ice during the WSC Gala on March 26 at JDA Place. Their polished performance highlighted the strength, grace and dedication of the club’s talented athletes.

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### Enhanced Driveway Crossing Replacement Program

The Town of Whitecourt is continuing the Enhanced Driveway Crossing Replacement Program for those property owners wishing to upgrade their private driveway crossings. The Town will cost share with the owner up to 60% for the costs associated with the removal, disposal and replacement of the residential driveway crossing installed according to the “Minimum Standard for Local Improvements”.

The program is intended for driveways in areas with high profile of older, rolled curb and gutter which create a harsh entrance into private driveways.

The program application for 2026 must be completed, signed and submitted with a minimum \$800.00 deposit prior to April 30, 2026 to be considered for replacement in the current calendar year.

Program information and an application form may be found on the Town’s website at [www.whitecourt.ca](http://www.whitecourt.ca) or by contacting:

Town of Whitecourt, Box 509, 5004 – 52 Avenue, Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N6  
Email: [administration@whitecourt.ca](mailto:administration@whitecourt.ca) | Phone: 780.778.2273

continued from page 5

do look at the driver's history, and if they haven't had a ticket for several years, we will definitely write them a warning, but they are all documented in our system," he added.

The top citation in the quarter was for speeders, with over 50 percent of the pile going to that alone. The second highest was citations for operating a motor vehicle or trailer without proof of registration, and third was failure to provide a valid driver's license.

When Inspector Choma showed a map highlighting where incidents and warnings took place in Woodlands County, Councillor Karen St. Martin noticed that some fell inside Whitecourt's boundary. She asked why that was. Inspector Choma said stats are calculated by GPS, and the program pings the stop as close as possible on the map, which could lead to location overlap if an incident happened close

to Whitecourt.

He explained that it could also be that the officers were, in fact, stopped within Whitecourt's boundary. "All of our officers now have authority on primary highways. So, the offence could have been on a side road, failing to stop at a stop sign or speeding just before town in the county, and they initiated the stop in town, which we're totally legal to do at that point. So, the offence could've happened in Woodlands County, and the stop ended up happening in town or through town."

Councillor Patricia MacNeil asked for clarity on the authority that Community Peace Officers have on primary highways. Inspector Choma explained that it was a designation that his crew had to work towards by taking the Emergency Vehicle Operations course and then seeking permission from the Solicitor General once completed.

She asked why it was something they wanted the ability to do and if they were now actively patrolling Highway 43. "We come across a lot of offences going to different locations in the county, which gives us the opportunity to pull the vehicle over. We're not sitting on Highway 43 doing an operation to generate revenue." Inspector Choma said speeds on the highway have gotten out of control, with officers seeing drivers travelling up to 160 kilometres an hour. "If we see something like that, not just twenty over the speed limit, that gives us the authority to stop that person and make sure that everyone is travelling safely on our highways," he explained.

Inspector Choma added that if Woodlands County Council wanted them to work on Highway 43 more, to generate more money for the municipality, it's something they could ask for. "That is one of the models from Lac Ste. Anne Coun-

ty is moving towards bringing some more money into the county itself. That would be direction from you guys if you wanted to do that."

As for incidents in the last quarter, Inspector Choma said there were 121 reported. Last year, Choma spoke about wanting to see an uptick in the complaint line usage, so that complaints would funnel through the dispatch line to officers. In the fourth quarter, complaints rose. "The majority of ours are coming through our dispatch center, which is awesome. So, the complaint line is working extremely well for you guys, and we are attending these calls in a timely fashion."

In the third quarter of 2025, animal control issues had become a problem, especially for large animals like cows and horses. Creating a bylaw to deal with loose pasture animals was a topic of discussion, but Inspector Choma said they had

recently found a solution. "We have worked with the brand inspectors, and we now have a way to deal with it without a bylaw."

Choma said they would bring in a group to wrangle the loose animals and have either the brand inspectors hold them or have the wranglers hold them. Then, the farmer or ratepayer would have to bail their animals out, paying all required fees, so there's no cost to the county. He said if the owner didn't follow through, they could also send the animals to auction to recoup costs that way.

Other animal concerns include dogs. "Dog complaints have gone through the roof," said Inspector Choma. Councillor MacNeil asked if the dog issues stemmed from the same residents or if the issues were more varied. "Is it essentially the same people and issues or generally different people with different issues?" Inspector Choma said it's a

bit of both. "There are some continued offenders in certain areas of Woodlands County that we've paid close attention to."

They are normally just called in, whether the dog is on the road or in the neighbour's yard or chasing livestock," he said.

Compared to 2024, the end of 2025 certainly stands out. In the entirety of 2024, there were 164 citations and 62 incidents. The citation count of October, November and December 2025 is only twenty less than that, while the incident count is three shy of double. Even the previous mid-portion of 2025 is lower, with 83 citations and 73 incidents. The busiest day of the week for offences was Tuesday, with the busiest time being 3 pm.



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A look at the local weather	Wed., Apr. 15	Thu., Apr. 16	Fri., Apr. 17	Sat., Apr. 18	Sun., Apr. 19
P.O.P.	Flurries	Mainly cloudy	Mix of sun and clouds	Chance of shower	Cloudy
High	60%	30%	40%	60%	60%
Low	1°C	2°C	6°C	6°C	6°C
Wind	-9°C	-9°C	-6°C	-6°C	-5°C
24-Hr Rain / Snow	NW 21 km/h ~1cm	W 10 km/h	W 18 km/h	SE 13 km/h <1mm	E 12 km/h

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**Whitecourt addresses zoning compliance concerns for Soaring Eagle Support Society**



| By Haylee Winger



The Town of Whitecourt has recently identified that operations at the Soaring Eagle Support Society property no longer comply with the zoning regulations for its Highway Commercial district.

Town officials explained that the original use of the property differed from current operations, which has led to the non-compliance

issue. While the coordination and availability of social services is recognized as an important community resource, the location and operational impacts of such facilities must align with local zoning regulations.

Town staff have met with representatives from the Society to provide guidance on options for addressing the issue. According to the Town, the Society

is actively preparing an application to rezone the property to reflect its current use.

The Town of Whitecourt noted that land use planning in Alberta is regulated under the Municipal Government Act, which requires rezoning applications to follow a formal process. Once a rezoning application is submitted, the Town will advertise it on its website and in newspaper, followed by a formal Public

Hearing to allow residents to share their feedback. Until an official application is received, Town Council cannot accept submissions or comments on the potential rezoning, as doing so could compromise the integrity of the decision-making process.

Residents will be informed when an application is submitted and will be provided with details on how to participate in the public consultation process.

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UPCOMING FIRESMART INFO SESSIONS



Join Woodlands County on **April 30** for our FireSmart **Community Drop-in Session**, where you can learn how to help protect your home and community from wildfires.

- Topics include:
- Creating a FireSmart community
  - Tips for homes and acreages
  - Wildfire preparedness

DUST CONTROL

Starting **March 16**, Woodlands County is accepting application forms from residents who want dust control applied to County roads adjacent to their property.

Rates for dust control are as follows:

- \$425 + GST for 100 metres • \$750 + GST for 200 metres
- \$750 + \$4.25 per additional metre over 200m + GST

Application forms and more information about dust control are available at [woodlands.ab.ca/p/dust-control](http://woodlands.ab.ca/p/dust-control).

**Deadline for submitting your application form is Friday, May 1, 2026.**

#woodlandscounty #dustcontrol #roadsmanagement



**Did you know? All properties with a residence in Woodlands County must have a blue rural address sign**, with one sign required for each residence. These rural addresses help emergency services quickly locate property access points.

Woodlands County coordinates the assignment, ordering, and installation of blue rural address signs.

If your sign is faded, incorrect, or no longer needed, please contact the County. Blue rural address signs are also available (optional) for recreational properties without a residence.

For more information or to request a sign, contact the Woodlands County office in Whitecourt at 780-778-8400.

Learn more: <https://woodlands.ab.ca/p/blue-rural-address-signs>

Or scan the QR Code with your phone:



*Spring is here, and so are road bans!* Weight restrictions in place in Woodlands County include:

- Gravel Roads: 75% legal axle weight
- Cold Mix Roads: 50% legal axle weight
- Pavement Roads: No restrictions

Road bans are temporary weight limits implemented during spring thaw to protect roads when they are soft and more vulnerable to damage. Conditions are monitored closely, and restrictions will be adjusted or lifted as needed.

Follow us on Facebook to stay updated! For more info and to read the full Road Ban Order, visit: <https://woodlands.ab.ca/p/road-bans>, or scan the qr code:



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[www.woodlands.ab.ca](http://www.woodlands.ab.ca)  
780-778-8400  
1-888-870-6315  
[admin@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:admin@woodlands.ab.ca)  
1 Woodlands Lane,  
Whitecourt,  
AB T7S 1N3



# PUZZLES

SEE SOLUTIONS PAGE 15

## SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

### Fun By The Numbers

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

## CROSSWORDS

	1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	
						11					12	
13	14				15				16			17
19					20			21	22			
23								24				
				25				26				
27	28	29						30			31	32
34											35	
36				37	38	39	40		41	42	43	44
				45					46			
47	48	49						50			51	52
54								55				
56						57	58			59		
						61				62		
						63						
						64				65		

### CLUES DOWN

1. A legally binding command
2. General feeling of discomfort
3. Dribble
4. Soft touch
5. South American plant
6. Clouds of gas and dust in space
7. Warm-blooded vertebrates
8. Lines created by folding
9. Strong belief
10. Senior officer
11. Adult
12. Joint entrance examination in India
13. Passports and drivers' licenses are two
14. Those who go against an accepted authority
15. One point east of northeast
16. Journalist Tarbell
17. One's mother (British)
18. Nowhere to be found
19. A way to save for old age
20. Fall behind
21. Midway between northeast and east
22. The work of a sailor
23. Mark with striae
24. Energy, style and enthusiasm
25. Sticky situation
26. Monetary units of Spain
27. Three-banded armadillo
28. Chooses
29. More disreputable
30. Defensive nuclear weapon
31. "The Partridge Family" actress Susan
32. Livestock owners assn. in Spain
33. Duplicating machine (abbr.)
34. OJ trial judge
35. Politician
36. Airborne (abbr.)

## HOROSCOPE

### ARIES

(March 21 - April 20)



Aries, you are catching a second wind this week that could rival a hurricane. No one can slow you down right now. Channel this energy into a passion project.

### TAURUS

(April 21 - May 21)



Taurus, your eye for recognizing the beauty in things or items that are fashionable is unmatched. This week is the perfect time to curate your space or your wardrobe.

### GEMINI

(May 22 - June 21)



Gemini, the connections in your brain are firing at a rapid pace this week. It is only a matter of time before you solve a problem that has been plaguing you and everyone for weeks.

### CANCER

(June 22 - July 22)



You are feeling more secure in your skin this week, Cancer. People are flocking to you for comfort and advice because you give off a warm energy.

### LEO

(July 23 - August 23)



Leo, accept recognition for your hard work when it comes your way in the coming days. Don't be humble; take the bow that you have earned over these last few months.

### VIRGO

(August 24 - September 22)



Everything is falling into place for you now, Virgo. Your routine feels like something you can do with your eyes closed. Find the perfect shortcut this week.

### LIBRA

(September 23 - October 23)



A friend of a friend is about to become a very important person in your life, Libra. It's important to keep your heart open to all possibilities. An unexpected invitation pops up.

### SCORPIO

(October 24 - November 22)



Scorpio, you don't have to try to impress. People are mesmerized by you. You can use this charm to negotiate for something you want this week.

### SAGITTARIUS

(Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)



Your thirst for knowledge leads you to a new obsession, Sagittarius. Diving into a new hobby, career path or volunteer experience could be the way to go.

### CAPRICORN

(Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)



Capricorn, you are making the impossible look easy right now. Take a moment to see how far you have come and review your accomplishments.

### AQUARIUS

(January 21 - February 18)



Your innovative ideas are officially trending around the office or workplace, Aquarius. Don't be afraid to lead the pack, as everyone is just trying to keep up.

### PISCES

(February 19 - March 20)



Pisces, you are walking on sunshine this week. Your creative output is at an all-time high. Paint, write, sing, or engage in anything else you enjoy.

## Crossword Clues

### CLUES ACROSS

1. Health care pros
2. A person inhabiting Benin
3. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
4. Split pulses
5. Frozen water
6. Small constellation
7. Perennial mountain rice
8. Pick up
9. Japanese historical period
10. Suggesting the horror of death and decay
11. Unattached
12. Fishing port in SE France
13. Products for dogs
14. One point south of southeast
15. Having the skill or resources to do something
16. Involve oneself deeply
17. Immobile
18. \_\_ pai dong: Hong Kong
19. food stall
20. Move quickly on foot
21. Gathered
22. A way through
23. Another name for Thor
24. Sharp dueling sword
25. The supreme commander of a fleet
26. Seasoned sausages
27. Path
28. Christian hermit
29. Ancient region of Asia Minor
30. Where wrestlers go to work
31. Roman statesman
32. Explosive
33. Licensed for Wall Street
34. Where golfers start
35. Grow old
36. Autonomic nervous system
37. No seats available

## ROAD TRIPPING WORD SEARCH

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

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

### WORDS

- |            |         |            |            |          |            |
|------------|---------|------------|------------|----------|------------|
| ASPHALT    | CARAVAN | HORIZON    | MOTEL      | PITSTOP  | SNACKS     |
| ATLAS      | COOLER  | INTERSTATE | NAVIGATION | PLAYLIST | SUNSET     |
| BILLBOARDS | DETOUR  | ITINERARY  | ODOMETER   | ROADSIDE | TOLLBOOTH  |
|            | HIGHWAY | MILEAGE    | OVERLOOK   | SCENIC   | VASTNESS   |
|            |         |            |            |          | WANDERLUST |

# Beyond energy: The Iran war will impact a multitude of costs

By Mark Parsons,  
ATB ECONOMICS

Sticker shock. That's how many people are describing their experience at the gas pumps following the war in Iran.

According to Gas Buddy.com, regular gasoline prices averaged over 167 cents per litre in Alberta yesterday—up from pre-war levels of about 125 cents. There's nowhere to hide in Canada, with gas prices up everywhere (at the national level, gas prices were averaging around 183 cents per litre yesterday).

Oil price forecasts are in flux given the ever-changing situation in the Middle East. Yesterday, the U.S. Energy Information Administration updated its monthly forecast, now expecting WTI to average US\$87.41/bbl in 2026 and US\$72.43/

bbl in 2027. But that was before news of the two-week ceasefire, which lowered prices from over US\$110/bbl to the mid-90s this morning. Even if the Strait of Hormuz opens permanently, it will take time for oil prices to move lower and we should expect a larger geopolitical risk premium to be embedded in prices.

Higher fuel prices are the most visible economic impact of the war so far. But the impacts are much broader than that. Food, for example, is effectively energy transformed—and not just via photosynthesis. Modern nitrogen fertilizers, which are by-products of natural gas, have shot up in price. Diesel, one of the largest input variables for food production and transportation, has jumped by an even

heftier amount than its gasoline counterpart.

Sorting out the implications of this for household budgets is an empirical exercise. University of Calgary economist Trevor Tombe crunched the numbers using detailed input-output accounts from Statistics Canada that trace the flow of goods and services in the economy.

Tombe finds that a 50% increase in oil and fertilizer prices raises the typical energy bill for Canadians by more than \$500 (if sustained for a year). The indirect effects are significant, with food, dining and alcohol costs up \$175. Even clothing and personal care products go up \$26. Tombe reckons these increases add 1.2 points to the Canadian inflation rate.

If anything, Tombe's inflation math may un-

derstate things. One of the indirect casualties of higher energy-price-induced inflation is borrowing costs. Even though we see the Bank of Canada on hold this year, longer-term rates have already shifted higher. Five-year bond yields, the benchmark for the five-year mortgage rate, have risen by over 40 basis points (or 0.4 percentage points to 3.1%) since the start of the war. This should add some modest upward pressure to mortgage interest costs—a component of the CPI that has been trending lower.

That said, Tombe's numbers roughly check out with our macro math. Our March forecast assumed oil prices stayed elevated for three months before easing. We landed on a US\$75/bbl average WTI price for

2026 (similar to the U.S. Energy Information Administration's March forecast), which added about 0.5 points to our previous CPI forecast. But if the conflict drags on, the average annual WTI price could come in higher. To give a sense of how sensitive our inflation forecast is to the WTI price, the following figure provides some rough estimates.

Of course, the economic implications are different in Alberta than elsewhere in the country. The province is by far the largest oil producer in Canada, and a massive net exporter. That means higher oil prices translate into gains in the value of Alberta's output, or nominal GDP, mainly in the form of corporate income and government revenue (royalties and taxes).

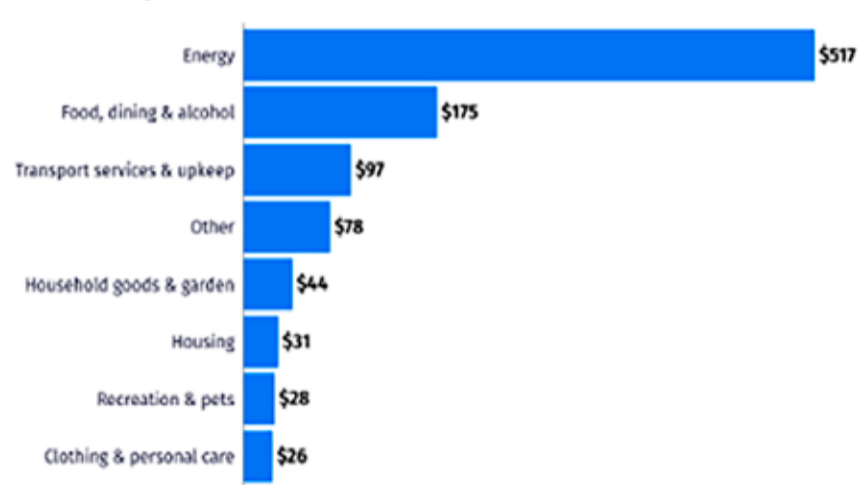
Nominal GDP is

forecast to rise by 6.0% (up from 0.7% in our December forecast) under the US\$75/bbl scenario for WTI, but the gain could be 12.4% if WTI averaged US\$95/bbl.

How this impacts real GDP (the volume of economic activity) and jobs is a trickier problem to solve. Much of it depends on how much of the additional oil revenue would be translated into new spending in the economy. We see oil producers remaining cautious regarding their capital spending due to uncertainty over the duration of the price spike and pipeline constraints. As a result, we are not forecasting an energy or employment boom, but we still expect real GDP growth to rise to 2.7% in 2026, up from our December forecast of 2.1%.

## Estimated annual Canadian household cost of a 50% oil and fertilizer price shock

Annual added costs per household, grouped by broad spending category, total = \$996 per household



Source: Trevor Tombe, "What rising prices mean for your bank account," Macdonald-Laurier Institute

## Select interest rates in Canada

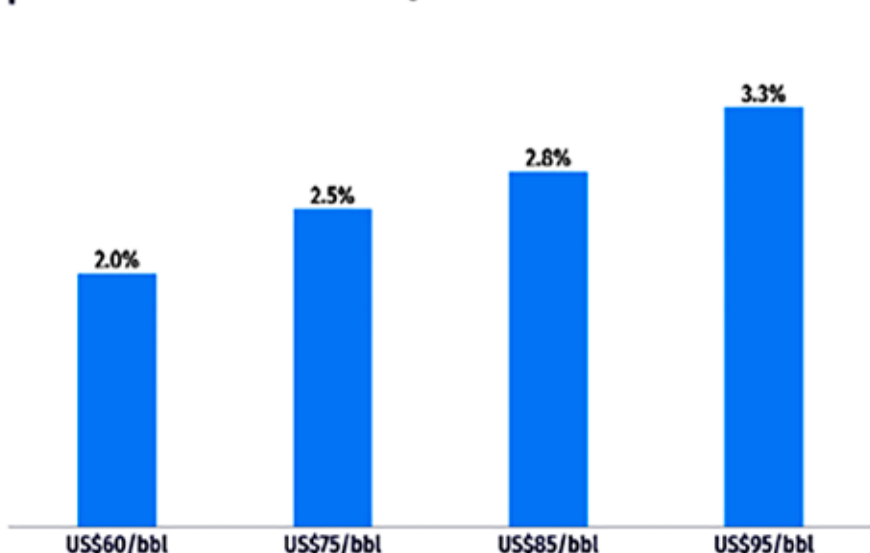
— Benchmark 5-year bond yield — Bank of Canada policy rate



Source: Bank of Canada/Haver Analytics and ATB Economics

## Estimated CPI inflation in 2026 by WTI oil price scenario

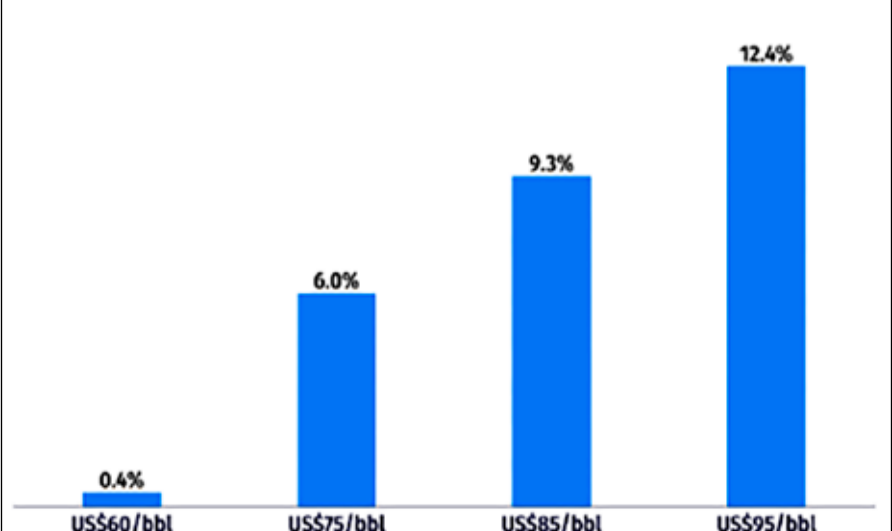
Annual average



Source: ATB Economics

## Estimated Alberta nominal GDP growth in 2026 by WTI oil price scenario

Annual % change



Source: ATB Economics

SCHOOL NEWS



Pat Hardy School photo

Pat Hardy School welcomed NGPS trustees on April 8, with choir students closing the visit with a special song performance. The visit provided an opportunity to highlight student talent and thank trustees for their ongoing support of the school community.

WOODLANDS COUNTY  
**BLUE RIDGE AREA STRUCTURE PLAN  
OPEN HOUSE & SURVEY**

Share your thoughts on the future of Blue Ridge! We are conducting an open house and a survey, and you're welcome to participate in both.

Woodlands County is developing an Area Structure Plan (ASP) for the Hamlet of Blue Ridge and is inviting residents to provide input on this long-range community planning document.

The purpose of community engagement is to understand how residents want the Hamlet of Blue Ridge to look like over time. We want to learn what residents value about the community today and what they would like to see in the future.

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OPEN HOUSE APRIL 21**

Come learn about the project, ask questions, and share your input!

What you can expect at the open house:

1. A come-and-go event where you can meet directly with the project team.
2. An overview of what an Area Structure Plan is and how the County is seeking community input throughout the development of the Blue Ridge ASP.
3. An opportunity to share your ideas through the Blue Ridge ASP Engagement Survey.
4. A chance to ask questions and provide feedback.

Location: Blue Ridge Community Hall & Community League,

304 2 Ave, Blue Ridge, AB T0E 0B0

Date: Tuesday April 21, 2026

Time: 4:00pm to 7:30pm

This will be a come-and-go session, and all Blue Ridge residents are encouraged to attend. If you are unable to attend, project information will be available on the project webpage. There will also be future open houses for residents to attend as we progress the project.

**ENGAGEMENT SURVEY**

Access the short four-question Blue Ridge ASP Engagement Survey:

1. Visit the Blue Ridge ASP Project webpage:  
<https://woodlands.ab.ca/p/blue-ridge-area-structure-plan>

2. Use the link or QR code to go directly to the survey:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X29QWV9>

The Survey will close on May 4, 2026, at 12:00 pm.



For more information, visit the Blue Ridge ASP Project webpage:  
<https://woodlands.ab.ca/p/blue-ridge-area-structure-plan>

You may also contact the Planning Department at any time if you have questions or feedback for the project team. Please email [planning@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:planning@woodlands.ab.ca) or call 780-778-8400.



WOODLANDS COUNTY  
**DEVELOPMENT PERMITS**

**DID YOU KNOW? HOME-BASED BUSINESSES REQUIRE A DEVELOPMENT PERMIT.**

Whether you're starting a home-based business, building a garage or accessory building, or expanding your home, a development permit is the first step:

- ✓ 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
- 🕒 Stay informed on zoning rules and timelines

For more information, please visit our website at: [woodlands.ab.ca/p/planning-and-development](https://woodlands.ab.ca/p/planning-and-development)  
Or contact us at [planning@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:planning@woodlands.ab.ca) 780-778-8400



WOODLANDS COUNTY  
**BECOME A  
VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER**

**Now's your chance!** Woodlands County Fire Department is looking for new members at the following stations:

**BLUE RIDGE Station 3**

Fire Chief Richie Wilson: 780-779-6415

**ANSELMO Station 4**

Fire Chief Otto Stensrud: 780-779-6421

**GOOSE LAKE Station 5**

Fire Chief Darrell Orton: 780-305-8783

**For more information:**

Contact the Fire Chief at the station nearest you.

Scan the QR Code, or go to:

<https://woodlands.ab.ca/p/volunteer-firefighter-faqs>



Please note: Fort Assiniboine Station 2 is currently not accepting new members, but they are happy to accept applications for future consideration. For more info, contact Fire Chief Devin Williams: 780-305-4183.

**LEARN NEW SKILLS. MAKE NEW FRIENDS. PROTECT YOUR NEIGHBOURS.**

**Looking for Live-in Resident Manager for an apartment building in Whitecourt**

Duties to include: rent collection, bank deposits, show suites, leasing, notices, tenant concerns, dealing with contractors, common area cleaning. May include lawn care and snow removal. Training provided.

**Please send resume to [resumes@ayreoxford.com](mailto:resumes@ayreoxford.com)**

# Just Peachy

## ARTS AND CRAFTS

Locally owned and operated indoor artisan market. At Just Peachy, you will find over 100 artisans selling their creations. Everything from pottery and paintings to soaps and sun-catchers. @@@ **780-778-1051**  
5014 50 St, Whitecourt

Contact us about our workshops  
**justpeachyarts@outlook.com**



# Percy Baxter students raise funds through bottle drive



**| By Haylee Winger**  
Students from Percy Baxter Middle School took to the streets on April 8 for a community bottle drive in support of student travel opportunities.

Between 4 and 8 p.m., students went door to door collecting refundable containers, resulting in a substantial haul thanks to their hard work and strong community support. The total amount raised was not immediately available.

Funds from the initiative will go toward the Coast-to-Coast Connection Program, a travel fund designed to provide meaningful learning experiences and life-changing opportunities for students. The program helps offset travel costs and supports participation in educational activities beyond the classroom.



Percy Baxter's Coast to Coast Connection photos



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Regional Companies to Share Forestry Plans at Open Houses

WHITECOURT, ALBERTA, May 2026—This spring, forest companies ANC Timber (Alberta Newsprint Company), West Fraser Timber Co. Ltd. (Blue Ridge Lumber), Weyerhaeuser Co. Ltd., and CANFOR (Canadian Forest Products Ltd.) will be holding “joint open houses”, to share forestry operating plans for the year ahead. These events provide the general public and stakeholders with the opportunity to review each company’s planned activities in road development, harvesting, hauling, reforestation and herbicide treatment for the current forestry year. Public stakeholder input is gathered and utilized to influence operations where site specific concerns are identified such as trails, camping areas, recreation areas etc.

Dates and Locations

- May 4 – Fox Creek Multi-Plex – Flex Room. 4pm-8pm**
- May 5 - Whitecourt Allan and Jean Millar Centre 4pm-8pm**
- May 6 - Edson Galloway Station Museum – 4pm-8pm**
- May 7 – Swan Hills Community Club 4pm-8pm**

Companies Attending

- BRL, ANC, CANFOR
- BRL, ANC, CANFOR
- BRL, ANC, WEYERHAEUSER
- BRL, CANFOR

We would also like to invite you to visit the websites below or contact your company representative to view each companies upcoming forest activities. We will have a variety of plans available for review including: Annual Operating Plans for 2026-2027 season; Company Reforestation Plans; and Herbicide Treatment Plans.

**Alberta Newsprint Company (ANC)** - <https://www.albertanewsprint.com/woodlands/>

**West Fraser Timber Ltd – BRL**–Ryan Lanning (Planning Superintendent) – [ryan.lanning@westfraser.com](mailto:ryan.lanning@westfraser.com)

**Canadian Forest Products Ltd. (CANFOR)** - [www.canforforestmanagement.ca](http://www.canforforestmanagement.ca)

**Weyerhaeuser Co. Ltd. – Pembina**– <http://PembinaTimberlands.ca>

**Career Ads, affordable price, with print ad, receive free online job posting at ...**

**WWW.WHITCOURTPRESS.COM**

*The Press*

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

**Please recycle this paper**

## If your life is in danger or you know someone's life is in danger DIAL EMERGENCY NOW 911!

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

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

in Canada by texting TALK to **686868** to reach an English speaking Crisis Responder and 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



Bede John McMullan

Age 19

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

## SPONSORED BY

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**Robert Brown**  
Owner  
3507 37th Avenue  
Whitecourt, AB T7S 0C3  
Phone 780-778-0699  
Fax 780-778-8431

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## 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](mailto:wctpress@gmail.com).



# Woodlands County Council Recap

### | Woodlands County Media Release

Alyssa Calliou, Manager of the Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce, presented the annual Chamber of Commerce update to Council. The presentation focused on the strong and valued partnership between the Chamber and Woodlands County, emphasizing collaborative efforts that support economic growth, tourism development, and community vitality. Council received the presentation for information.

Council deferred the adoption of Policy HR-7.004 – New Employee Orientation to the May 13 Governance & Priorities Committee Meeting, directing Administration to return with a revised policy that establishes governance expectations and delegates detailed onboarding requirements to administrative procedures, aligned

with current practices and applicable legislation. Amendments also include changing the document owner from Human Resources to Council and adding the department to the policy header.

Council deferred Policy HR-7.003 – Payment of Wages and Salaries to the May 13 Governance & Priorities Committee Meeting, directing Administration to revise the policy to focus on governance expectations, move detailed payroll processes to administrative procedures, align with current systems, practices, and legislation, update the document owner to Council, and add the department to the policy header.

Council rescinded Policy 1962-09 – Court Leaves and adopted Policy HR-7.017 – Court Leaves, with amendments that changed the document owner from Human Re-

sources to Council and added the department to the policy header.

Council rescinded Policy 1964-01 – Health & Safety and adopted Policy HS-3.001 – Health & Safety, with several amendments. These include adding definitions for permanent employees and part-time/casual employees, removing coverage for contractors, increasing the safety footwear reimbursement from \$90 to \$125 annually and from \$180 to \$250 bi-annually, updating the document owner to Council, and adding the department to the policy header.

Council authorized Administration to finalize and execute a Trail Manager Agreement with the Province of Alberta for the Centre of Alberta Natural Area, to the satisfaction of the Chief Administrative Officer and within the approved budget. This agreement will

strengthen Woodlands County's ability to plan, build, and maintain trails by enhancing credibility, improving access to grant funding, and demonstrating alignment with provincial standards. It also supports positioning the County as a regional tourism destination.

### Upcoming scheduled meetings:

- Governance & Priorities Committee Meeting – Wednesday, April 15 @ 5:00 p.m.
- Regular Council Meeting – Thursday, April 23 @ 9:30 a.m.
- Regular Council Meeting – Thursday, May 7 @ 5:00 p.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.

A locally owned and family operated newspaper serving Whitecourt

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**Contact**

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Email: [wctpress@telus.net](mailto:wctpress@telus.net)

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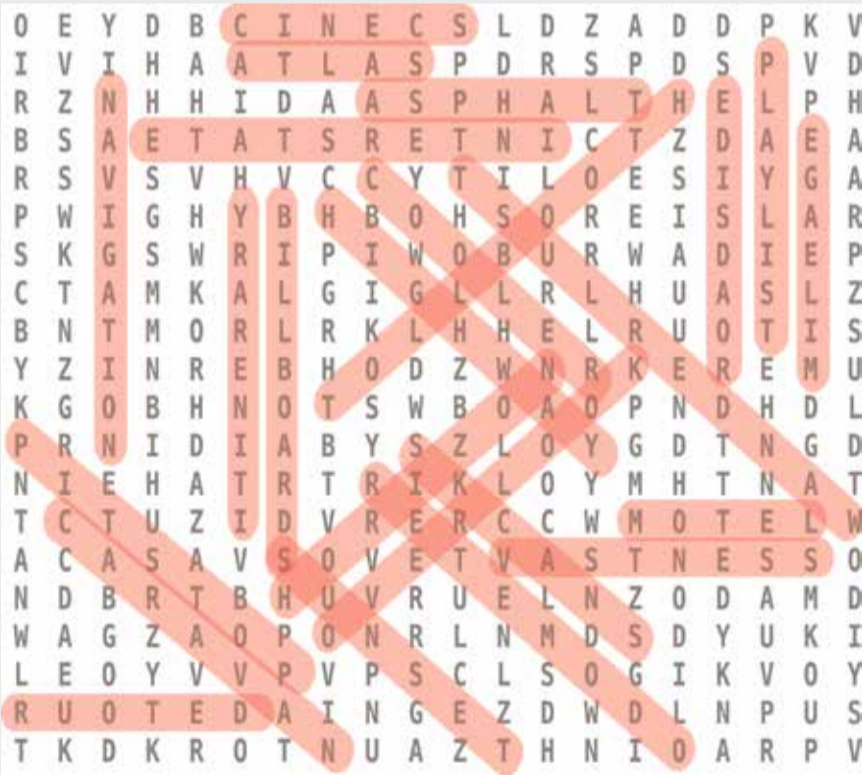
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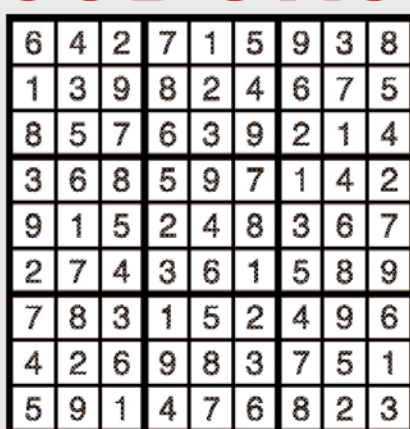
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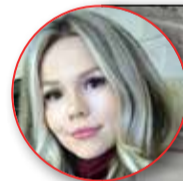
## Canfor Culture and Events Centre remains on track for Fall 2026 opening

By Haylee Winger

Construction of the Canfor Culture and Events Centre continues to progress, with the facility on schedule to open in fall 2026.

Recent updates indicate significant progress inside the building, where flooring and interior glass installations are underway. Interior masonry work is also in progress, while crews continue to complete the remaining exterior siding.

Local arts and community groups have already had an opportunity to tour the developing facility. Representatives from Illusion Dance, Pumpjack Players, the Whitecourt and Woodlands Performing Arts Society, and the Whitecourt and District Public Library recently visited the site and expressed enthusiasm about future programming planned for the centre. Once complete, the Canfor Culture and Events Centre is expected to serve as a hub for arts, culture, and community events in Whitecourt.



Town of Whitecourt photos

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