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The Press

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

Locally Owned & Operated

Canada

Vol. 15 - Issue 29 | Wednesday, July 29, 2026

Win-win - Boosting the local economy by helping non-profit sports groups afford to hold provincial events

| By Serena Lapointe

Each year, a number of small pockets of municipal dollars are set aside from the budget for community groups, businesses, and individuals to access through several grant opportunities provided by the municipality. Whether it is a large group, like a sports team, cleaning up the community's right of ways, green spaces and ditches through Whitecourt's Community Clean Up Program in exchange for cash or a business owner upgrading their curb appeal by utilizing the Vitalization Grant Program to enhance their exterior appearance, aligning to the municipalities theme of wood and stone and receiving a portion of their project's cost back, the dollars received are impactful.

Some of the grants available are only ac-

continued on page 2



Thousands of municipal dollars were recently dolled out to local sports teams hosting provincial-level events this year. Four groups from three sports, hockey, baseball and taekwondo, received financial support. Pictured is Master Jim Rennie.

Two outdoor classrooms are on the way for Whitecourt

| By Serena Lapointe

A spot to learn and explore while enjoying the outdoors is coming soon, thanks to a grant from the Forest Resource Improvement Program (FRIP) supported by the Forest Resource Association of Alberta (FRIAA). Whitecourt has successfully received millions from FRIAA over the years, using dollars to do acres and acres of vegetation work in the forested areas in and around the community, including along Centennial Park, Dahl Drive, and behind St. Joseph's School.

Funding through FRIAA also made the newly finished fi-

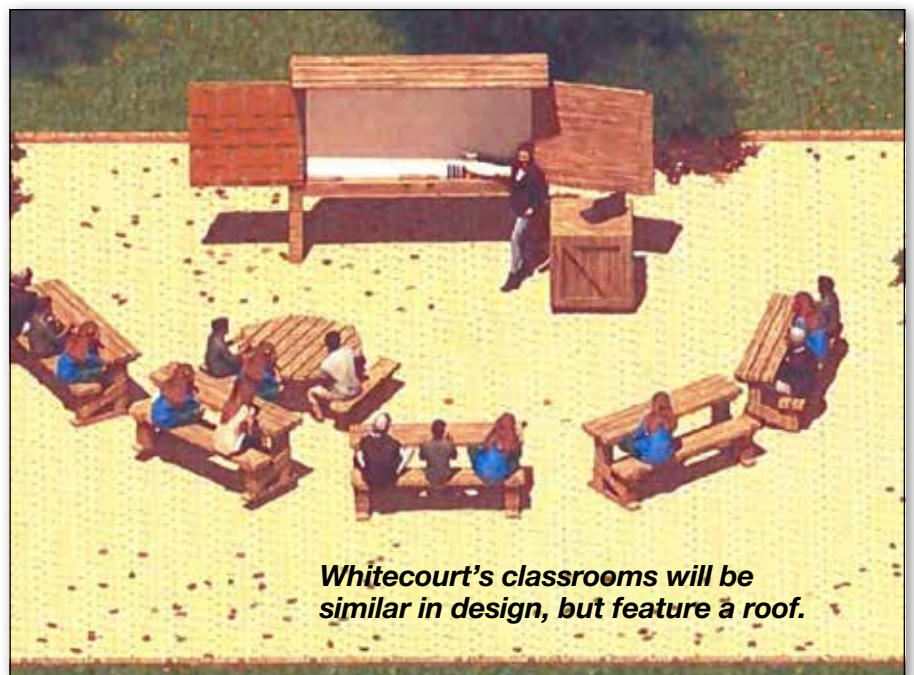
reguard a reality, pumping over 1.5 million into the project. The community also received a couple of hundred thousand dollars for a regional FireSmart Coordinator, and the Mountain Bike Park received significant funding to help enhance its facility. Add to that the countless dollars towards educational projects, and needless to say, the community has utilized FRIAA funding whenever and wherever possible.

The latest project that is new to the community, which is being supported by FRIP through FRIAA, is for an outdoor classroom. Not just one, though, there

are actually two outdoor classrooms going in. One will be going up at the Forest Interpretive Centre, and the second will be located at Festival Park.

During the July 20 Regular Meeting of Council, Kelly Sadoway, Manager of Recreation, Arts and Culture, presented the elected officials with the list of companies that responded to the Request for Proposals issued on April 23, which closed on May 20. Seven companies applied for the opportunity to create the spaces, and it was up to Council to select one to award it to.

continued on page 7



Whitecourt's classrooms will be similar in design, but feature a roof.

An outdoor learning experience is coming to Whitecourt thanks to grant dollars successfully garnered from a provincial body. The spaces, dubbed outdoor classrooms, will add a new opportunity for area educators and the public to enjoy the great outdoors.



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continued from page 1

cessible to non-profit groups. One of these is the Sports Hosting Program, which is available to sports groups hosting events that will attract attendees from outside the municipality, bringing in visitors from across the province or beyond. This ultimately has an economic impact on the community, including hotels, meals, and more.

This year, four groups were successful in garnering municipal dollars to support their events through the grant. Back in March, the Whitecourt Minor Hockey Association hosted a U13 Provincial Championship at JDA Place and was approved for \$3,500 to support it. Early this month, three other groups were successful in their applications: Whitecourt Taekwondo and two Whitecourt Minor Ball teams.

On July 20, Rhonda Woods, Economic Development Officer for the Town of Whitecourt,

sat before Whitecourt Town Council with the three applications. She explained that Whitecourt, the Whitecourt Royals, were hosting two provincial tournaments, U13AA from July 24-26, and the U11AA Tier 3 from July 31 to August 2.

Woods explained that six teams would be hosted to compete for the provincial titles of each division and that 120 players, along with their coaches and managers, families, and supporters, were expected to descend onto Graham Acres for both weekends. She noted that most would be staying overnight at local hotels and that the teams included area attractions within their registration packages to help encourage visitors to explore the local experience.

Woods said that the Economic Development Committee recommended that Town Council approve \$2,100 towards each tournament to help offset the costs. Whitecourt Town Council agreed, ap-

proving the allotment. The third group, Whitecourt Taekwondo, was recommended to receive \$4,000 towards its upcoming tournament on November 20-21 at Allan & Jean Millar Centre. "They are hosting the Whitecourt Welcomes the World Tournament," said Woods.

Councillor Brian Wynn asked for clarity on why one group would receive more than another. Woods explained that it had to do with the impact on the community. "When we score them, it's based on the number of them entering the community. We look at previous events and how they scored based on spectators, teams and what that brings to the community. We look at the economic impact."

Woods said they also look at what a group budgets towards their event and how it compares to smaller events. In the case of baseball, she said they look at what it costs to run a smaller tournament and what it costs over and



A proud youngster with his broken board at a past tournament at the AJMC.

above that to run a provincial-level tournament. "We go through it and, based on our policy, look at what could be funded out of their budget. The cost of umpires, rental facilities, and those types of things. With Whitecourt Taekwondo, it's about them bringing a lot more spectators and their budget being a little bit bigger," said Woods.

It's expected that the weekend event will draw in over 240 non-local registered competitors, many of whom will opt to stay overnight. The event will also feature an anticipated audience of 1,000 spectators coming to watch the competitors, including everything from newbies to Olympic-calibre black belts. Within the grant's scoring mechanism, events expecting to use over 200 hotel room stays are scored

higher than those needing fewer. Whitecourt Town Council approved the funding.

For Whitecourt Taekwondo owner Master Jim Rennie, the dollars provided through the Sports Hosting Program, which they also received last year, have allowed them to grow their tournament and be on par with the bigger centres in terms of attendance, both provincially and internationally. "With the extra funds from the 2025 Taekwondo Tournament helping reduce expenses, we were able to entertain our first delegation from Mexico. This year, 30 fighters are coming to our 2026 tournament! We went from one fighter from outside Canada to having 30," he said.

He said that type of international attendance puts Whitecourt on the map for fighters across Canada, placing

the community on their radar for which tournaments are worth traveling to. "In 2026, every major tournament with guests over 1000 people (fighters, coaches and family) will be held in Calgary, Edmonton, and Red Deer. Plus, Whitecourt! This grant helped make that happen," said Rennie.

He said that municipal dollars, like those in the Sports Hosting Program, are instrumental in helping groups afford to put on big events. "It sets Whitecourt apart from other municipalities. Why can't big cities like Grande Prairie, Fort McMurray, Medicine Hat or Lethbridge (all with huge Taekwondo communities) have big tournaments like Whitecourt? I don't know the answer, but I do know this helps put Whitecourt on the map for our community," explained Rennie.



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A closer look: Capital spending growth by sector

| By Carol Kamel

ATB Economics

As we recently explored, expanding Canada's productive capacity is no longer just an economic ambition—it is essential for protecting prosperity and leverage in an increasingly competitive world. While we have seen renewed urgency at the federal level to advance major nation-building projects, business investment continues to lag—remaining below levels from early 2023 and the peak level more than ten years prior in late 2014.

There are tentative signs, however, that investment could once again start turning higher. The latest Bank of Canada Business Outlook Survey and Monetary Policy Report indicate a rebound is expected in the second half, though the Bank explicitly noted that national business investment is being "boosted in the near term by the oil and gas sector." The Bank expects investment in sectors outside oil and gas to pick up in 2027 and 2028, as the drag from trade tensions and uncertainty fade. But given recent tariff action by the U.S., those forces may prove much stickier than anticipated.

We don't have a sector breakdown of the latest quarterly data, but Statistics Canada's investment survey results released in February provide some clues on where the gains in 2026 are expected to come from. Of Canada's 20 major industry groups, just nine are driving the entire gain in investment spending this year. Strip out the top four sectors alone, and they account for roughly the entire net gain, as was recently highlighted by the C.D. Howe Institute. The other 11 indus-

tries, some of which are acutely tariff-exposed, said they were going to cut back by a combined \$5 billion.

Who's "gaining" and who's cutting back?

The top four drivers of 2026's gains are transportation and warehousing; utilities; mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction; and public administration.

Based on the energy price spike from the Iran war and recent progress on advancing pipeline projects, it's unsurprising that the Bank of Canada notes an improved outlook for investment in the oil and gas sector.

But if you look closely at that list of industry groups that are growing, the "investment recovery" starts to look uneven.

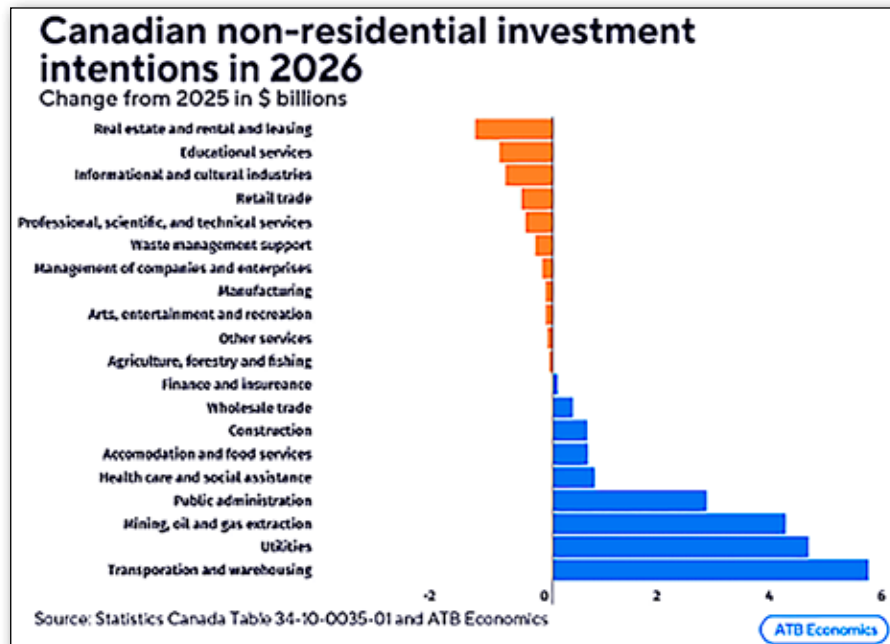
Broad-based commercial business investment in Canada is contracting. We see this most acutely in sectors exposed to cross-border trade friction. Manufacturing capital spending is set to decline for a second consecutive year, reflecting ongoing trade uncertainty and tariff pressures.

Why concentration is a productivity problem

It is tempting to look at positive headline increases and conclude that we're back on track.

But to raise long-term living standards, Canada's economy relies on broad-based capital deepening—putting newer, better tools and technology into the hands of workers across every sector. As C.D. Howe Institute research underscores, widespread investment improvements drive productivity and wage gains.

A handful of sectors



carrying the aggregate number doesn't do that.

Concentration can have different implications

Canada isn't the only place where capital spending gains look concentrated. Business investment in the U.S. has become heavily skewed toward AI and data-centre-related spending. In Q1 2026, business fixed investment rose over 10% (annualized)—driven almost entirely by information-processing equipment and software, while structures investment actually fell. By some estimates, roughly half of the headline Q1 GDP growth traces back to spending categories where the AI buildout is the dominant source of incremental demand.

The concentration shows up regionally too: Washington state has led all states in growth so far in 2026, powered by its information sector. More broadly across the U.S., states with significant exposure to information and professional services generally outperformed the rest of the country in early 2026. In contrast, states highly dependent on agriculture faced steeper economic headwinds; for example, South Da-

kota recorded the lowest growth rate in the country, contracting by 1.6% due to declines in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting.

Bottom line

To generate the economy-wide productivity gains that drive up real wages and living standards, Canada needs broad-based, private-sector investment. A few heavy sectors carrying the headline number might keep aggregate growth out of the red today, but they won't build the competitive economy we need for tomorrow.

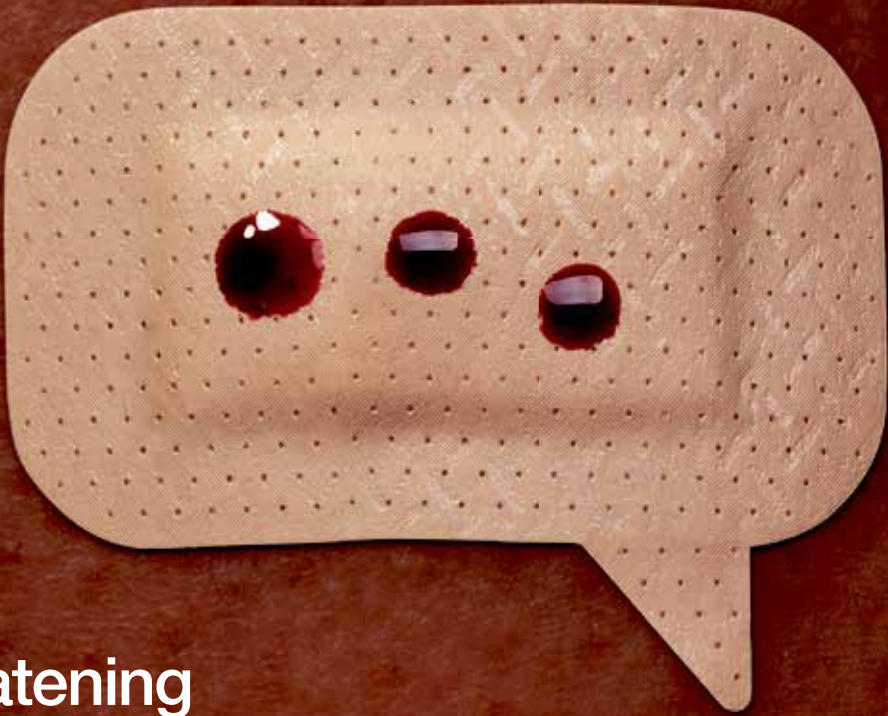
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DISCRETIONARY USE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION

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

If you have any comment or concern regarding this proposal you may provide a written statement via email to planning@woodlands.ab.ca prior to **4:30 p.m., August 4, 2026**. The Development Authority will be making a decision on the following development permit applications following this deadline.

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

Legal Description	Application Number	PROPOSED USE
SE 11-59-12 W5M	26-DP-067	Secondary Suite, External

Information regarding this application may be obtained by inquiring prior to **4:30 p.m., August 4, 2026**.

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

DISCRETIONARY USE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION

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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., August 4, 2026**. The Development Authority will be making a decision on the following development permit applications following this deadline.

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

Legal Description	Application Number	PROPOSED USE
NW 13-59-10 W5M	26-DP-065	Home Occupation, Major - Automotive & Equipment Service

Information regarding this application may be obtained by inquiring prior to **4:30 p.m., August 4, 2026**.

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



During our Store Renovations Caine's Jewellers' commitment to serving and meeting the Jewellery needs of our community and area still remains.

Starting July 6, 2026, if your Jewellery is in need of repair, or you need a battery for your watch, you can drop it off with our sales associates who will gladly take care of it for you. We can be found through the side entrance of the Whitecourt and District Chamber of Commerce building at **4907 – 52nd Avenue in Whitecourt Unit #7.** Monday – Friday 11am-3pm

You can also follow us on our Facebook page (**facebook.com/cjewellers**) for updated news as our renovation progresses.

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Whitecourt RCMP Report

| Release

July 9 - July 23

The Whitecourt RCMP were dispatched to 253 occurrences. The most common calls for service were as follows.

- Well-Being Checks
- Traffic Collisions/Offences
- Mental Health Related
- Offences Under 911 Act (misuse) - This is a reminder that 911 is for emergency use only.

Whitecourt RCMP have been conducting proactive patrols based on the areas identified in the Community Priorities Plan Survey.

Community Engagement:

Over the past two weeks, the Whitecourt RCMP spent time engaging with the community through events, business visits, and a positive ticketing initiative.

Sgt. Craig Park and

Cpl. Martin Lajeunesse spent the morning of July 15th volunteering at Tim Hortons for Camp Day - Thank you Tim Hortons Elko Drive for the positive experience.

On July 16th, Cst. Jessica Roy gave a water safety presentation to the French Summer Program at the Whitecourt and District Public Library.

Members also completed their regular business visits and area patrols.



Whitecourt Town Council Update

A Special Meeting of Council was held to conduct a Public Hearing regarding Soaring Eagle Support Services' application to continue providing support to individuals who are homeless and hard to house at 3515 Caxton Street. The application requires amendments to both the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw. The item will be forwarded for Council's discussion at the August 18 Regular Meeting of Council.

Playquest has been awarded a contract, valued at \$199,738 plus GST, to construct outdoor classrooms at Festival Park and the Forest Interpretive Centre. Funding support for the two outdoor classrooms has been approved through the Forest Resource Improvement Program, and the spaces will be available for schools,

camp, and other groups to use to learn about forestry, wildlife, and other outdoor education topics.

Whitecourt's Sports Hosting Program supports local organizations to host sporting events that have a positive economic impact on our community. Events hosted by the sporting community increase visitors into Whitecourt, which has a positive impact by generating overnight stays and stimulating the local economy. Whitecourt has awarded funding to the following groups:

- Whitecourt Taekwondo for the Whitecourt Welcomes the World Event - \$4,000
- Whitecourt Minor Ball U11AA Provincials Event - \$2,100
- Whitecourt Minor Ball U13AA Event - \$2,100

Whitecourt will be

purchasing two John Deere 1585 Terrain-Cut Commercial Front Mowers from Horizon Ag & Turf Ltd. for \$163,115.02, plus GST.

Whitecourt has awarded \$7,740 in funding to Caines Jewellers as part of the Vitalization Grant Program. The Vitalization Grant Program was established to offer local businesses and organizations additional financial support to enhance the exterior appearance of their business or property.

Whitecourt Town Council has approved two requests from the Whitecourt Lions Club. Whitecourt will be working with the Club to add the organizations to Whitecourt's contract with the Alberta Municipal Services Corporation Energy Program. Whitecourt has also approved the Club's request for reim-

bursement of \$3,671.94 in costs incurred to correct issues with its sanitary sewer connection.

The pathway along the south side of 49 Street will be extended from 49 Street to 47 Street as part of the 2026 Street Improvement Program. The completion of the pathway along 49 Avenue will provide a continuous link on the south side of the road from 51 Street to Dahl Drive.

Whitecourt Town Council received a quarterly financial report that includes an operating report, and information on key accomplishments, innovations and efficiencies realized by the Town of Whitecourt up to the end of June 2026. Council also had the opportunity to review the 2026 Project List. Both reports are available for viewing on www.whitecourt.ca.

Whitecourt Transport is marking its 80th Anniversary and has invited Council Members to join in the celebration.

Whitecourt and Woodlands County Councils are meeting with Capital Power to discuss the company's plans in the region. Whitecourt Town Council has approved the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No.44's request to host the 2026 Remembrance Day ceremony at the Canfor Culture & Events Centre. Further information on the event will be posted closer to Remembrance Day.

The 2nd Annual Sirens & Swings (First Responders) Golf Tournament is scheduled for August 17, 2026. The August Regular Meeting date has been rescheduled to Tuesday, August 18 at 4:00pm in Council Chambers at the Forest Interpretive Centre. Whitecourt Town Council has pro-

claimed September 21 to 27, 2026 as Rail Safety Week in Whitecourt. The week is held in Canada, the US and Mexico to raise rail safety awareness.

Whitecourt Town Council has been authorized to attend the Pacific Northwest Economic Region Annual Summit July 19-23, 2026.

Whitecourt Town Council has been authorized to attend the Whitecourt Mountain Bike Park Grand Opening event on August 22.

At a Special Meeting scheduled on July 7, Whitecourt Town Council awarded the Canfor Culture & Events Centre Furniture Award to CDI Spaces Inc. in the amount of \$1,142,701.82, plus GST. Council also authorized the allocation of \$57,298.18 in the budget be allocated to future furniture-related contingencies.

A look at the local weather	Wed., July 29	Thu., July 30	Fri., July 31	Sat., Aug. 01	Sun., Aug. 02
	Chance of thunderstorm P.O.P. 40% High 21°C Low 10°C Wind W 17 km/h 24-Hr Rain / Snow <1mm	Mainly sunny P.O.P. 20% High 22°C Low 12°C Wind NW 14 km/h -	Chance of showers P.O.P. 40% High 24°C Low 13°C Wind SE 8 km/h <1mm	Mainly sunny P.O.P. 20% High 23°C Low 13°C Wind N 13 km/h -	Mainly cloudy P.O.P. 60% High 19°C Low 22°C Wind NW 6 km/h 2-4mm

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continued from page 1

Adventure Play-ground Plus, Boald, Canadian Recreation Solutions, Habitat, Kidnation Playgrounds Ltd, Park N'Play, and Playquest were the companies that applied for the project, with a budget of \$200,000 to play with. One company, Boald, came in well above the budget, at \$242,432, with the others either landing right at the budget or coming in somewhere just below it.

Sadoway said that the proposals were scored based on numerous factors. The classrooms are nature-based, with a wood design, so that element was a requirement of the bid. To access the funding from FRIP, the classrooms also had to align with the grant's intentions, which in this case meant it had to have little required maintenance.

Sadoway said the top-scoring bid, with all factors considered, was from Playquest for \$199,738. Playquest

was not the lowest bidder. Four of the bids were actually lower in overall cost, but their plans didn't align as well as Playquest's, leading to them having a higher score of 88, with the next highest score being 78.

The outdoor classrooms will have roofs allowing for students and community users to be semi-protected from the elements and enjoy the shade. "There will be benches under there and a table for someone with a wheelchair or someone with limited mobility to pull up some other devices, and not be on the bench," explained Sadoway. There will also be storage and a whiteboard.

Councillor Tara Baker asked where the outdoor classroom was slated to be placed at the Forest Interpretive Centre. She asked if the benches and tables currently in place near the playground would be removed. "The existing playground is going to be removed, and that's where this is going to

go," explained Sadoway. Those sad to hear of the removal of the playground at the Forest Interpretive Centre will be happy to know that a new playground is slated to be added to the space near the new classroom.

Councillor Baker was happy to hear how the classroom and new playground would fit into the space. "For everyone's knowledge, we were here for a lunchtime meeting a couple of weeks ago, and people utilize the space up here all the time. I know the classroom is for learning and students, but I do believe it will get utilized by a lot of different people seeking shade on a hot summer day," she said.

Councillor Brian Wynn asked about the roof. He noted that the roof wasn't 100 percent rainproof, as per the agenda. "What is the roof made of?" Sadoway explained that if there was a little bit of rain, people underneath it would be ok and protected. "However, if it's

a full downpour, people would probably get wet," she explained.

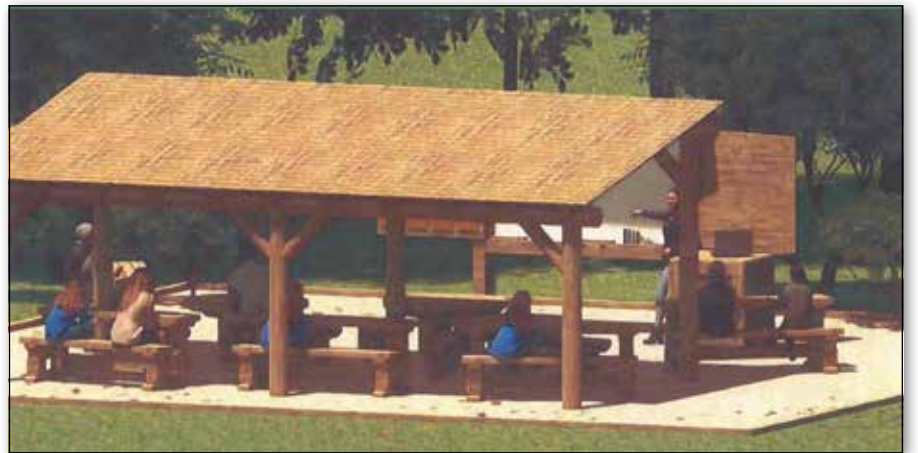
Council then asked how many seats the classrooms would hold. Given the size of a typical class of students, they wondered how many would feasibly fit under the covered portion of the outdoor classroom. "Ideally, 30 kids would be able to sit under the shelter," explained Sadoway.

Council then queried about the floor, asking if it would be paved, sand or something else. "We thought we would just keep it natural, so just grass," answered Sadoway. Mayor Ray Hilts then asked if the

seating would be seasonal and if the benches and tables would be removed in the winter. "Can we take that stuff and store it somewhere, or is this all going to be fixed to the ground?" Sadoway said she expects they would be able to remove it.

Mayor Hilts asked if potential vandalism was being taken into consideration when looking at outdoor infrastructure. "We did ask and talk to them about that a little bit and about putting a coating on them, just to make part that if they were sprayed, it would be easier to remove it," said Sadoway.

He then queried about the type of programming that would take place inside the indoor classrooms, given that the funding came from a forestry-related source, he wondered if it would line up. Sadoway said that a portion of the FRIP grant is for hiring an outdoor educator. "Someone who works with our existing summer programming and offers more about wildlife, learning about plants, learning about trees, forestry and all that good stuff," she said, adding that funding would cover the educator for three years. Both projects are expected to get underway soon.



A side view of what the classrooms will look like.

Stay safe from heat and wildfire smoke this summer

(NC) It seems that every summer in Canada brings with it a fresh round of headlines about wildfires. As the climate shifts, forest fires are becoming more frequent and intense. This is due to longer dry periods that make lightning strikes more likely while making grass and trees more flammable.

The 2023 fire season was the worst wildfire season, with 15 million hectares burned across Canada. Communities in every province and territory experienced wildfires and many thousands of people were evacuated from their homes. Drought and extreme heat conditions in 2025 also led to a terrible season with about eight hectares burned from several larger fires, especially in Manitoba, Northern Ontario, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

While they're an expected part of life in certain regions, wildfires bring serious health risks, especially when they occur with extreme heat events.

Here are some important things to know:

Wildfire smoke is dangerous, even far from the fire. The smoke from a wildfire can be carried on the wind thousands of kilometres away from the actual fire zone. It contains a number of potentially harmful substances, including fine particles—these are what pose the biggest health risk. There's no known safe level of

exposure to wildfire smoke, so it's important to be aware and protect your health, even when levels are low. The air quality can be poor even if you can't see or smell smoke.

Some people are at especially high risk. Wildfire smoke and extreme heat are dangerous for everyone, but some people can be at a higher risk. People more likely to experience health effects

from extreme heat and wildfire smoke include older adults, infants and young children, pregnant people, those with an existing illness or chronic health condition and people experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

It's important to take extreme heat and wildfire smoke seriously. Here are some simple steps you can take to stay alert and responsive to changing heat

and smoke conditions:

- Check local weather forecasts and air quality conditions regularly. Pay attention to heat alerts or air quality alerts issued for your community. This will help you know when and how to protect yourself from heat and wildfire smoke.
- Make sure your indoor space is as cool and clean as possible: indoor tempera-

tures can get dangerously high during an extreme heat event.

- Close any curtains or blinds to limit sun exposure and make sure to stay hydrated. Open up your windows if the outdoor temperature is cooler, to cool your space.
- Use the highest quality air filter that your ventilation system can handle, a certified portable air cleaner that can filter fine particles from the smoke, or both.
- If you need more support during times of extreme heat and wildfire smoke, contact your local authorities. They can provide information on public spaces you can access with cool and clean air spaces.

The risks of extreme heat and wildfire smoke are real, but by learning about them, how to avoid exposure and stay cool and hydrated, you can stay safer this wildfire season. Find out more at canada.ca/wildfiresmoke.





PUBLIC NOTICE

ANC Timber Ltd.
2026 HERBICIDE APPLICATION PROJECT

Please be advised that ANC Timber Ltd. is looking for input on their upcoming herbicide application program for 2026. ANC Timber Ltd. will be conducting both aerial and ground herbicide application programs between August 15th and September 15th, 2026. The application will treat up 1083 hectares of existing cutover area. The applications will be in portions of:

Township	Ranges	Meridian
48	14	W5M
49	13, 14	W5M
50	13	W5M
58	21, 25	W5M
60	23, 24	W5M
61	23	W5M
62	24	W5M
63	23, 24	W5M

Both the aerial and ground herbicide applications will be done using VisionMax® silviculture herbicide. The purpose of the applications is to control grass and shrub species that are limiting the survival chances of our planted seedlings on recent harvested areas. Access to all areas will be posted with signs upon completion and all applications will be done in accordance with Alberta Agriculture and Forestry regulations and the Environmental Code of Practice for Pesticides. For more information, please contact an ANC Timber Ltd. representative at (780) 778-7948 or visit ANC’s website at <https://www.albertanewsprint.com/woodlands/>.

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Whitecourt

NOTICE OF DECISION

The following decisions were made by the Municipal Planning Commission:

Application No. D26-072 – Discretionary Use – Equipment Sales, Rental and Repair, Heavy at 3903 38 Street - Approved with conditions.

Date of Decision: July 23, 2026 Appeal Closes at 4:00 pm: August 13, 2026

An Appeal of the above decision(s) may be made by submitting a written appeal and appeal fee (\$315) to the Office of the Secretary of the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board, Town of Whitecourt Administration Building, Box 509, Whitecourt, Alberta, T7S 1N6 prior to 4:00 pm on the above noted date. Any person(s) affected by the said proposal(s), has the right to appeal prior to the above date.

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of Highway 658

Woodlands County Council recap

| Press Release

Woodlands County Council met on Thursday, July 16, 2026, to consider a variety of reports, presentations, and policy matters. Highlights from the meeting include:

- Whitecourt & District Library presentation
- GlobalMedic fire skid donation
- Growth Alberta Partnership (CAP) update
- Joint Tourism Committee
- CT Scanner Advocacy Committee
- Q2 Department Reports

Ms. Nancy Keough, Library Director of the Whitecourt and District Library, presented Council with an overview of the library's services and their impact on the community. Woodlands County and the Whitecourt and District Library Board's five-year funding agreement, originally scheduled to end in 2025, was extended by an additional year

following the passage of Motion C-15-300-2025 at Council's August 13, 2025, meeting. Council received the presentation as information and directed Administration to refer it, along with the funding request, to a future Community Services Committee meeting.

Council approved the donation of three fire skid units from GlobalMedic to the Woodlands County Fire Departments in Blue Ridge (Station 3), Fort Assiniboine (Station 2), and Goose Lake (Station 5). On May 15, 2026, GlobalMedic officially presented the units to Woodlands County fire chiefs and members. The fire skid units enhance the County's ability to provide a rapid initial response to small grass and ditch fires. Council directed Administration to send a letter of appreciation to GlobalMedic for its generous donation and approved amendments to Policy F-5.208, Acceptance of Donations and Donated

Assets, including the addition of Section 6, Acceptance of Donations During a State of Local Emergency.

Ms. Janet Jabush, Executive Director of the Growth Alberta Partnership (GAP), provided Council with an update on GAP, a regional economic development alliance that brings together municipalities and other stakeholders to advance shared economic and community priorities. Council received the presentation as information and directed Administration to return with options for \$ 2,000.00 in funding for GAP at a future Regular Council Meeting.

Council directed Administration to send a letter, signed under the Reeve's name, congratulating the newly elected Chief and Council of the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation and to extend an invitation to attend a dinner with Woodlands County Council this fall. The invitation recognizes the Nation's

newly elected leadership following the June 19, 2026, election and reflects the County's commitment to maintaining a strong government-to-government relationship with its neighbouring First Nation.

Council approved the establishment of a Joint Tourism Committee with the Town of Whitecourt following a recommendation from the Whitecourt and Woodlands County Joint Liaison Committee. The committee will provide a collaborative approach to promoting and growing regional tourism by leveraging the County's natural attractions and the Town's tourism services. Administration from both municipalities will work together to develop Terms of Reference for consideration by each Council.

Council approved the establishment of a Joint Ad Hoc CT Scanner Regional Advocacy Committee with the Town of Whitecourt to support efforts to ac-

quire a CT scanner for the Whitecourt Healthcare Centre, with the Terms of Reference to follow.

Council received quarterly reports from the Community Services and Finance & Business Supports divisions, highlighting work, projects, and initiatives aimed at improving residents' lives.

Council received the June 2026 Service Request Tracker Report as information and directed Administration to include, going forward, the number of service requests that did not fall within the service standard time.

Council received an update from Greg Edwards, Director of Infrastructure, on the status of several capital projects, including the riverbank erosion repairs at Cut Banks Road and Old Ferry Road, the Groat Creek slide repair, and the East Mountain Road slide repair. Through adjustments to the funding allocation for the East Moun-

tain Road slide repair project, Administration identified approximately \$600,000.00 in potential surplus funding. Council directed Administration to explore options for reallocating those funds to the Tower Road and/or Bison Road rehabilitation projects. Council received the June 2026 Council Action Tracker Report, the Q2 2026 Council Committee Action Tracker Report, and the Q2 2026 Policy Update Report as information.

Upcoming scheduled meetings:

- Governance & Priorities Committee Meeting – Wednesday, July 22 @ 5:00 p.m.
- Regular Council Meeting – Thursday, August 13 @ 9:30 a.m.
- Governance & Priorities Meeting – Wednesday, August 19 @ 5:00 p.m.
- Regular Council Meeting – Thursday, September 10 @ 9:30 a.m.

Alberta RCMP sees 10.4% decrease in Crime Severity Index across the province

The Statistics Canada report on Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2025 shows that there was a 10.4% decrease in the Crime Severity Index (CSI) across Alberta RCMP jurisdictions compared to 2024. The crime score in Alberta RCMP jurisdictions is the lowest it has been since 2014. The CSI tracks both volume and seriousness of police-reported crime. It assigns weights to different offences based on how severe they are; more serious crimes carry a higher weight than less serious crimes.

In Alberta there are 149 different RCMP jurisdictions that are measured for the CSI. These jurisdictions are policed by the 113 RCMP detachments across the province. Of the jurisdictions policed by the RCMP, 72% had a decrease in the CSI from 2024 to

2025.

Jurisdictions with small population sizes can generally see higher fluctuations in their CSI score year-to-year. This is because even small changes in crime, especially if they are violent crimes, can have a significant impact on the scores. Jurisdictions with larger populations are less likely to have large fluctuations in CSI scores; however, we have seen significant decreases in CSI scores in many of our larger jurisdictions.

In Alberta RCMP's jurisdictions, the top 10 CSI contributions account for 74.0% of the crime across the province. The number one contributor to the Alberta RCMP's CSI score is Break and Enters making up 15.4% of the scoring. While Break and Enters are the highest cause of the CSI in Alberta RCMP's jurisdictions, it is down

by 19% compared to 2024 with there being 2,027 fewer Break and Enters reported to the RCMP.

Of the top 10 contributors to the CSI in Alberta RCMP's jurisdictions, two were in violent crime categories: Assault and Uttering Threats. The trend in Assault and Uttering Threats has remained relatively flat over the past 5 years with ~20,000 and ~6,700 reports, respectively.

"We're encouraged to see Crime Severity Index scores continuing to decline across Alberta," said Superintendent Mike McCauley, Alberta RCMP's Officer in Charge of Crime Reduction Strategy. "This progress is a testament to the collective efforts of Alberta RCMP officers, our policing partners, community organizations, and the residents we serve. We are grateful

for the strong support and collaboration we receive from communities across the province. Public safety is a shared responsibility, and these results demonstrate what can be achieved when law enforcement, partner agencies, and all levels of government work together toward a common goal. While there is still important work ahead, the Alberta RCMP remains committed to working with our partners to reduce crime, enhance community safety, and help build stronger, healthier communities for all Albertans."

The Alberta RCMP uses the information gathered through the CSI to develop comprehensive, intelligence-led strategies that help to break the cycle of criminal activity over the long-term. They look at people, places, and crime types

prevalent in Alberta's most vulnerable communities and target priority offenders who cause the most harm.

In the past year, the Alberta RCMP has taken significant steps to increase the safety and resilience of the communities it serves. We have leveraged technologies, like Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems, to assist our frontline operations, as well as improved our Real Time Operation Centre, which triages calls for service and coordinated resources across the province. We have also deployed Community Response Teams throughout rural Alberta, providing focused outreach and targeted enforcement. Crime Reduction Partnership Liaisons work with community partners to help address the root causes of crime and educate Albertans on how to stay safe.

While our specialized Crime Reduction Units target prolific offenders and bring them before the courts.

The RCMP continues to look for new and innovative methods to help reduce crime across the province to keep Albertans safe. In May, the provincial government allocated an additional 2 million dollars in funding to the RCMP. The Alberta RCMP has allocated part of the funding to establish its new Rural Organized Crime Team; a mobile unit made of a core group of officers focused on gang activity and violence linked to drug and firearm offences. The team deploys to communities experiencing highest levels of crime, using data-driven intelligence, like the crime severity index, to identify and target priority offenders causing the greatest harm.

If your life is in danger,
or someone else's — dial 911
Emergency services are available 24/7

988
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1-855-242-3310
HOPE FOR WELLNESS
Indigenous crisis support

Putting a Face
on Suicide



Brandon Alvarez

Age 29

Every 40 seconds, somewhere in the world, someone dies by suicide. Behind every number is a name, a family, a community that felt the loss. This week we remember one of our own.

THIS WEEK'S TIPS

TIP #1

CONFLICT RESOLUTION CORNER

Take a Deep Breath

Before responding, pause and breathe. A calm mind finds the better words.

COMMUNITY WISDOM SERIES 01 / 60

TIP #2

POSITIVE COMMUNICATION TIP

Listen Without Planning Your Reply

Be fully present. The best response comes after you've truly heard them.

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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
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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.



NGPS Board Audit
Committee seeks
two External
Community
Members:



Northern Gateway
Public Schools

Northern Gateway School Division's Board of Trustees is seeking two community members to serve on it's Audit Committee:

- one community member with financial expertise and business knowledge; and,
- one community member at large.

The term for these positions begins September 2026 and ends in October 2028. The primary role of the Audit Committee is to assist the Board of Trustees in fulfilling its duties related to governance and oversight. The Committee meets 2 times a year, plus ad hoc meetings as required. Compensation is consistent with current board rates.

Candidate Eligibility:

Applicants should have sufficient accounting, senior financial management or other relevant business experience to understand public sector accounting and auditing standards. The applicant must not be a current employee or officer of the NGPS board or of any other school board or school authority.

Submissions:

Qualified candidates interested in serving on the Audit Committee are invited to submit a letter of interest and resume by 4:00 PM on September 8, 2026 to:

Tamara Spong, Secretary Treasurer
Northern Gateway Public Schools, E: tamara.spong@ngps.ca

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Applicants or their parents must be a resident or own property in Woodlands County to be eligible for a bursary.

POST-SECONDARY BURSARY \$2,000 for first-year \$1,000 for second-year awarded to 12 students annually Must be enrolled full-time in a post-secondary institution Deadline: October 15, 2026	APPRENTICESHIP BURSARY \$1,500 for first-year \$1,500 for second-year awarded to 6 students annually Must be enrolled in a provincially recognized apprenticeship program Deadline: Accepted throughout the year	AGRICULTURE BURSARY \$1000 awarded to 1 student annually Must be enrolled full-time in an Agriculture or Environmental Science program at a post-secondary institution in Alberta Deadline: October 15, 2026
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Contact Us
780-778-8400
dawn.fortin@woodlands.ab.ca
communityservices@woodlands.ab.ca
www.woodlands.ab.ca/p/bursaries
www.woodlands.ab.ca/p/ag-bursary

**HERITAGE DAY OFFICE CLOSURES
& SERVICE INTERRUPTIONS:**

Monday, August 3, both municipal offices will be closed.

They'll reopen Tuesday, August 4, for regular hours.

Fort Assiniboine garbage collection will be deferred to Tuesday, August 4.

RURAL BEAUTIFICATION NOMINATIONS

Woodlands County Agriculture Services Board (ASB) would like to recognize individuals who take pride in their property!

The Rural Beautification Awards recognize individuals who, through yard maintenance and property beautification, foster civic pride, environmental awareness, and municipal beautification.

Nominating someone is a great way to acknowledge the countless hours spent landscaping, maintaining, and enhancing a valued part of our County.

One agricultural and one non-agricultural recipient will be selected from each County Division. Awards will be presented at the Annual Agriculture Services Supper.

Nomination forms are available at both County offices and online at www.woodlands.ab.ca.

Nominations must include two photographs of the nominated property.

Submit your nomination forms:

Emailed to: agservices@woodlands.ab.ca Dropped off at either County office.

Or mailed to: Woodlands County, Box 33, Fort Assiniboine, AB. T0G 1A0 Attn: Manager, Ag Services

NOMINATION DEADLINE IS JULY 31, 2026

WOODLANDS COUNTY BENEFITS PROGRAM

PROPERTY TAX REBATE: Starting July 1, 2026.
Property owners can apply to receive a flat rebate of \$150.00.

For full program details and forms, visit woodlands.ab.ca/p/benefits-program, or call Community Services at 780-778-8400.

ABOUT THE BENEFITS PROGRAM:
Woodlands County's Benefits Program helps eligible low-income, senior, or disabled residents by offering the following:

- Health-related travel cost reimbursement: \$0.50/km, up to \$300 per person, per year.
- Property tax rebate: \$150 flat rebate if you own your own home.
- Up to 3 free snowplow flags per residence.

DOING BUSINESS WITH WOODLANDS COUNTY

Woodlands County invites contractors, suppliers, and service providers to view our current:

- Tenders
- Requests for Proposals (RFPs)
- Requests for Quotations (RFQs)

The **Alberta Purchasing Connection (APC)** is the official source for current bidding opportunities and tender documents.

Scan the QR code or visit purchasing.alberta.ca to view current opportunities.



**WOODLANDS COUNTY HAS
EXCITING JOB OPPORTUNITIES!**

- Fire Services Operations Coordinator
- Accounts Payable Clerk

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Local work. Good people. Let's talk.



AG PIONEER NOMINATIONS

Woodlands County Agriculture Services Board (ASB) would like to recognize individuals with a long-term commitment to agriculture - our Ag Pioneers!

Nominations are now being accepted for this prestigious award. Awards will be presented at the Annual Agriculture Services Supper.

Please submit a nomination letter briefly outlining qualifications based on the following eligibility criteria:

- Nominees must have resided and actively farmed in Woodlands County for a minimum of thirty (30) years.
- Nominees must be a minimum of 60 years of age.
- Priority will be given to individuals who currently reside in Woodlands County.
- Nominations will be accepted from family members, members of the public and Agriculture Services Board members. Individuals may also apply.

Nominations may be submitted by mail to:
Woodlands County, Box 33, Fort Assiniboine, AB. T0G 1A0, Attn: Manager, Ag Services

Or e-mail: agservices@woodlands.ab.ca

NOMINATION DEADLINE IS JULY 31, 2026



DAVE KUSCH
Reeve, Division 1 – Anselmo
dave.kusch@woodlands.ab.ca
780-778-9337



PATRICIA MACNEIL
Councillor, Division 2 -
Whitecourt West
patricia.macneil@woodlands.ab.ca
780-268-3000



ALAN DEANE
Councillor, Division 3 -
Whitecourt Central
alan.deane@woodlands.ab.ca
780-778-0894



KAREN ST. MARTIN
Councillor, Division 4 -
Whitecourt East
karen.stmartin@woodlands.ab.ca
780-778-0822



JENNA WRIGHT
Councillor, Division 5 -
Blue Ridge
jenna.wright@woodlands.ab.ca
780-779-6765



PETER KUELKEN
Councillor, Division 6 - Goose Lake /
Freeman River
peter.kuelken@woodlands.ab.ca
780-284-2425



BENNY WHITTEN
Councillor, Division 7 -
Fort Assiniboine / Timeau
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Two businesses receive Whitecourt Launch Program funding



Town of Whitecourt photos



Two local businesses, La Catrina and Brooke's Creek Ltd., have been selected to receive funding through the Whitecourt Launch Program. Created by the Town of Whitecourt's Economic Development Committee, the program is designed to help local businesses grow by providing financial assistance for development projects. New and existing businesses were invited to apply through a competitive process that included submitting a detailed business plan and presenting their proposal to a review committee. Each application was evaluated based on the viability and long-term sustainability of the proposed project. The Town also recognized the Community Futures Yellowhead East team for its expertise and support throughout the application review process.

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Recover Out Loud

- Mondays are in person, at the Family Worship Center upstairs, and online (hybrid) at 7:30pm
 - Fridays 7:30pm at the Whitecourt Baptist Church in person only.
- ZOOM ID: 818 413 483 PASSWORD: gratitude**



**CALL Ruth
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Support group on Tuesdays, February 17 to May 5.
Crossroads Community Church, 4719 44 Avenue
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Meetings are three times each week

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- Wednesday 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm
- Friday 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm

**Located at the United Church Basement on Legion
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The Press

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- Health Link 811

Money Matters

One Canadian Dollar = **0.70** US Dollar
at an exchange rate of **0.7099** (using nominal rate).



Dollar Values as of July 29, 2026



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