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# The Press

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

Locally Owned & Operated

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Vol. 15 - Issue 26 | Wednesday, July 8, 2026

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## Business retention and succession planning are key pillars for Whitecourt's economic success

Succession planning is an integral part of a business's success because it helps ensure long-term sustainability and viability. Whitecourt's Economic Development Committee is working alongside its partners to help local businesses access the tools they need. Pictured is Professor Rebecca Purc-Stephenson PhD from the University of Alberta. See story page 2.



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# Business retention and succession planning are key pillars for Whitecourt's economic success

| By **Serena Lapointe**

Business retention and expansion are a couple of the top focus points for Whitecourt's Economic Development Committee, led by Economic Development Officer Rhonda Woods. "How do we support local businesses and assist them with long-term growth? The committee came up with some action items like working with Community Futures and the Chamber of Commerce to make sure we align our efforts," she explained.

"A lot of business training is going on right now, some workshops, coordinating with our partners on grants for workforce development, meeting with businesses to find out what the concerns are in the community, and partnering on small business week," elaborated Woods during a Town Council meeting last week.

One of the models for gathering infor-

mation to create programs, grants, supports or to provide advocacy involves visiting businesses on their own turf and talking to owners in person. Business visits have become an important piece of how Woods and the committee best align their efforts to have as much impact as possible.

On one such visit, Woods said they identified the need to provide information on succession planning, allowing current business owners to have an exit strategy when they are ready to move on to something else or retire, who don't necessarily have someone waiting in the wings to take up the job or do have someone but don't know how to go about it properly. "We are putting together a campaign and workshop for businesses on that one," she said.

She explained that they are working with Economic Developers Alberta and Communi-

ty Futures Yellowhead East to put it together so that business owners who aren't sure on their exit strategy, of where to go or who to contact, are made aware that there are currently supports out there. Woods said it's not about creating something new or providing a new service but rather connecting business owners to things that are already available to them that they might be unaware of. "They already exist, and it's just about connecting businesses to those partners providing them."

Succession planning is a growing topic, and for good reason. Last year, University of Alberta Professor Rebecca Purc-Stephenson, PhD, led a study that looked specifically at farmers' perspectives on succession planning. In an article on the university's website, written by Bev Betkowski, Purc-Stephenson called it one of the most "pressing yet

overlooked challenges facing farmers today."

She said that though younger generations can help keep the farming industry going as retirements take place by taking over operations, 88 percent of Canadian farmers don't have a formalized succession plan. She said that by 2033, 60 percent of farmers will have passed the retirement age, which will become the largest leadership transition in the country's history. "We are just not ready for it," she said.

Purc-Stephenson said that as part of their research, they interviewed 35 family members from 16 Alberta farms. These conversations revealed that the top priorities for succession planning included keeping the farm in the family and sharing the assets to avoid hard feelings.

Roadblocks to doing that, however, included the strongly held self-identity that most

farmers hold dear. "For most of them, farming wasn't just a job, but a lifestyle and a legacy built on generations of hard work," said Purc-Stephenson, as reported by Betkowski, making retirement difficult.

Of those interviewed, twenty-five percent of those interviewed have plans in place for succession, forty-four percent didn't see immediate need to make a plan, and 12.5 percent understood the risks of not having one but planned to keep farming as long as they were physically able.

Lastly, nearly nineteen percent were what Purc-Stephenson called "end-of-the-line farmers." They either didn't have family members interested in taking over the farm or lacked the confidence to talk about it, opting instead to sell and divide assets, ending their legacy.

Though farming is just one piece of the

business succession plan pie, and Whitecourt's business community is made up of a large variety of different businesses, Purc-Stephenson's research should stand as a cautionary tale of what can happen when the day-to-day life of running a business overshadows the issues of tomorrow, resulting in them being pushed further off into the distance. As the research showed, those issues, like how to retire and what it means for an active business, tend to come sooner than anyone wants or likes them to.

For Woods and the Whitecourt Economic Development Committee, sharing info on succession planning will continue to play an important role in helping local business owners access available supports and ultimately create plans that allow legacies to continue for generations to come.



**GOT A NEWS TIP?**

Call Valerie Winger at 780.706.1858  
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The Press

## Goose Lake placed under blue-green algae advisory



By **Haylee Winger**

Residents and visitors to Goose Lake are being urged to exercise caution after a cyanobacterial, commonly known as blue-green algae, bloom was detected in the lake.

The advisory, issued for Goose Lake in Woodlands County, warns that the bloom and its toxins may pose health risks to both people and animals. While the advisory remains in effect, health officials are asking the public to avoid contact with any visible algae and to take extra precautions when spending time around the lake.

Anyone visiting Goose Lake is advised not to swim or wade in areas where the bloom can be seen. People should also avoid touching algae that has accumulated along the shoreline or is floating on the water's surface. If accidental contact occurs, the affected area should be washed thoroughly with clean tap water as soon as possible.

Officials are also reminding the public that lake water should never be used for drinking or cooking while the advisory is in place. Boiling the water does not destroy the toxins produced by cyanobacteria, making it unsafe for consumption even after treatment by boiling. Anyone camping

or spending time at the lake should ensure they have an alternate source of drinking water.

Anglers are also encouraged to take precautions. While properly cleaned fish fillets are considered to contain fewer toxins, health officials recommend that people do not consume whole fish or fish trimmings from Goose Lake, as toxins can accumulate in organs such as the liver. Fish waste should also not be fed to household pets.

Pet owners are being reminded to keep their animals away from affected areas of the lake. Dogs are particularly vulnerable because they may drink contaminated water or

lick algae from their fur after swimming. Exposure to cyanobacterial toxins can cause serious illness and, in some cases, may be fatal to pets. Livestock should also be provided with an alternate source of clean drinking water while the advisory remains active.

Cyanobacteria occur naturally in Alberta's lakes and reservoirs, but blooms become more common during periods of warm weather and calm water conditions. Blooms can vary widely in appearance, ranging in colour from blue-green to greenish-brown, brown, pink or even red. They may resemble paint floating on the water, pea soup, grass clippings, scum or streaks and often

have a musty or grassy odour.

Exposure to contaminated water can cause a variety of symptoms in people, including skin irritation, rashes, sore eyes, sore throat, swollen lips, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and fever. These symptoms typically develop within one to three hours after exposure and usually resolve within one to two days. Children may experience more pronounced symptoms, although anyone can become ill after contact with the toxins.

Health officials note that weather and wind can move blooms from one part of the lake to another, meaning conditions can change quickly. Although recreational activities

may continue in areas where no visible bloom is present, visitors are encouraged to remain alert and avoid any water that appears discoloured or contains algae.

The advisory for Goose Lake will remain in effect until further notice. Residents and visitors are encouraged to monitor conditions and follow posted warnings while enjoying the area.

Anyone with health concerns related to possible exposure to blue-green algae is advised to contact Health Link by calling 811. More information about cyanobacterial blooms and health precautions is available through Alberta Health Services.



# Increases and decreases in collisions, says the 2025 Collision Report

**Collision activity within the Whitecourt boundary last year showed both increases and decreases, depending on the line item, as well as a bump up in the traffic counts on Highway 43. Pictured is the No Frills/Walmart intersection, which was a busy one for collisions last year.**

**| By Serena Lapointe**

Each year, towards early summer, a report is generated with all the collision data from the RCMP for the previous year, breaking down where and what type of incidents occurred, pinpointing hot spots, and showing trends relating specifically to collisions on the highway corridor, at town-controlled intersections, on town streets and in parking lots.

Once compiled, the report is presented to Whitecourt Town Council so that elected officials can better understand the issue and identify areas that need to be addressed due to growing trends of accidents over several years or decreasing collisions, indicating that upgrades or changes were successful.

Lee Hardman, Director of Community Safety for the Town of Whitecourt, presented the report to Town Council in early June.

One of the first highlights shared was that in 2025, 171 collisions were reported within the Town of Whitecourt, which is comparable to 2024, when there were 175 collisions.

It is worth noting that traffic levels have largely returned to pre-pandemic levels, meaning that there are more vehicles on the road than in previous years. However, collision numbers are remaining steady and not increasing along with traffic movements. The five-year average is 173 collisions per year, putting 2025's 171 collisions below average.

Two big decreases in 2025 compared to 2024 were collision occurrences on private property (parking lots) and at town-controlled intersections. The largest difference between the two, parking lots, decreased by 29 percent, while town-controlled intersections decreased by three

percent. Both scenarios also fall below the five-year average. These two categories are combined in the report and make up the largest chunk of the total collisions for the year, at twenty-eight percent.

On the flip side, the Collision Report also showed increases. Collisions within the Highway 43 corridor increased by 27 percent, exceeding the five-year average.

However, another piece worth noting here is the effect that the pandemic had on traffic levels. The five years making up the current average were all grossly affected by lower traffic counts and are now being used to compare against 2025, a year when levels had all but returned to normal levels.

In fact, when compared to years before the pandemic, 2025 fell below the average of 42 collisions, with 38.

The story is similar

for town streets and parking lots. Both increased from 2024 to 2025, jumping by twenty-two percent. However, when compared to years prior to the pandemic, both remain below the five-year average of 49 collisions per year. In 2025, town streets and parking lots saw 44 collisions, which is twenty-six percent of the year's total collisions.

The majority of all collisions within the Town of Whitecourt fall into the category of property damage/reportable, with 91 in 2025, meaning that most result in damage of some kind to a vehicle or other property and that most are reportable concerns. Other categories included property damage-non-reportable, of which there were eleven, thirty-nine for failing to stop or remain at the scene, and thirty collisions categorized as non-fatal injuries.

The highest number

of non-fatal injuries and reportable property damage incidents related to collisions occurred along the Highway 43 corridor. Perhaps the best news in the report is that there were no collision-related fatalities last year. From 2020 to 2025, there were three collision-related fatalities, all of which occurred in 2022.

One change that stood out in the report was the number of collisions at the intersection of 52 Avenue and Dahl Drive (No Frills/Walmart). In 2024, there was one collision there.

In 2023, there were four. Last year, that already busy intersection faced eight collision events, exceeding the five-year average by close to double. The next highest intersection for collisions was IGA/Home Hardware, which saw five last year, two more than the previous year.

The report stated that the increase in colli-

sions could be due to increased traffic in the area, with the opening of both Shoppers Drug Mart and Dollar Tree that year. It also stated that it may have been weather-related, as all but one of the collisions occurred during the winter season. It noted that the interaction would be monitored to see if patterns continue, which could lead to changes, if necessary.

The last part of the report showed the traffic count on Highway 43. Westbound drivers crossing 51 Street totalled 16,000 in 2025, while Eastbound at the same intersection totalled 16,100. At the Dahl Drive lights, 14,380 drivers passed by heading west, while 16,320 crossed on their way to the east. All counts were up from previous years but remain shy of 2019 traffic volumes, which saw 17,120 drivers cross through the 51 Street intersection, heading eastbound.

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Whitecourt

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING:

**Monday, July 20, 2026 – 4:00 PM**  
**Forest Interpretive Centre**  
**3002 – 33 Street, Whitecourt, AB**

Pursuant to the provisions of the Municipal Government Act, the Town of Whitecourt has received an application to amend:

- Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 1576; and
- Land Use Bylaw 1577

#### Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 1576-1

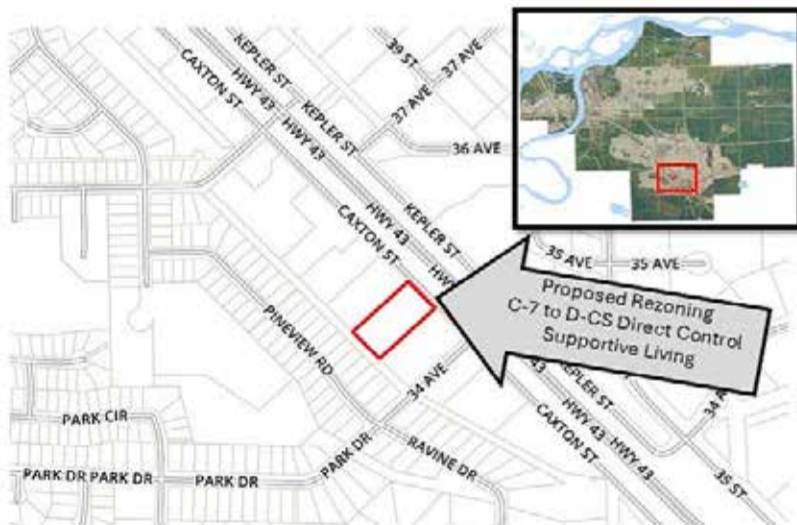
Proposes to amend Section 7.4, the Highway Commercial policy area, of the Municipal Development Plan.

- The key change proposed under this amendment is to allow Council to consider supportive living accommodations on a site-specific basis within the Highway Commercial policy area.

#### Land Use Bylaw 1577-6

Proposes to create a new 'D-CS' Direct Control – Supportive Living land use district and proposes to rezone **3515 Caxton Street** to this new D-CS district.

- The key change proposed under this amendment is to allow for a supportive living accommodation (an "Assisted Living Facility") at 3515 Caxton Street, along with discretionary uses such as associated offices, ancillary health or social services, and community support services directly related to resident care.



**Public Hearing – 4:00 p.m. Monday, July 20, 2026**, in the Town Council Chambers. This is a formal opportunity to make presentations for or against the proposed application. All comments are directly to Council, and form part of the public record. The Public Hearing will be available in person and through electronic means. **All presentations are limited to five minutes each.**

#### Written Submissions:

Individuals or organizations wishing to make a submission for the Public Hearing are encouraged to provide their comments in writing prior to noon on Thursday, July 16, 2026. Written comments are to be emailed to [stephanieschaffner@whitecourt.ca](mailto:stephanieschaffner@whitecourt.ca), dropped off at the Town Office 5004 – 52 Avenue, or mailed to Box 509, Whitecourt, AB, T7S 1N6 with attention to Stephanie Schaffner. **Please note the following:**

- If mailing a written submission, please ensure that it is mailed sufficiently in advance to allow enough time for it to be received prior to the above noted deadline.
- If emailing a written submission, please note that any attachments greater than 5MB or sent as a .zip file will NOT be accepted by the Town of Whitecourt email server.

#### Electronic Presentations:

Individuals or organizations who wish to make a presentation by electronic means must **pre-register with the Legislative Manager by emailing a request to [administration@whitecourt.ca](mailto:administration@whitecourt.ca) prior to noon on Thursday, July 16, 2026.**

All written comments and pre-registration emails must clearly state your full name, municipal address, daytime phone number, and your support or opposition to the proposed amendments. It is also recommended to confirm receipt of all written submissions or email pre-registration requests.

A copy of all related documents can be viewed in person at the Town Office 5004 - 52 Avenue, Planning Desk, during regular business hours prior to the Public Hearing. The proposed amendments can be found on the Town of Whitecourt website at [www.whitecourt.ca](http://www.whitecourt.ca) or viewed using the following QR code:



The Public Hearing will be livestreamed via the Town of Whitecourt YouTube Channel.

Questions on the process or the Public Hearing should be directed to Stephanie Schaffner, Planner, at 780-778-2273, e-mailed to [stephanieschaffner@whitecourt.ca](mailto:stephanieschaffner@whitecourt.ca), or mailed to Box 509, Whitecourt, AB, T7S 1N6.

### NOTICE OF DECISION

The following decisions were made by the Municipal Planning Commission:

Application No. 26-068 – Variance to Reduce Building Separation Distance From 5.0m to 3.81m at 6 Westview Trailer Court - Approved with conditions.

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

Application No. D26-077 – Discretionary Use – Veterinary Clinic operating – Dog Daycare at 3509 35 Street - Approved with conditions.

Subdivision W14-317 – Request for Extension NW36-59-12-W5M – 25 Lots at Wellwood Drive - Approved with conditions.

**Date of Decision:** June 25, 2026

**Appeal Closes at 4:00 pm:** July 16, 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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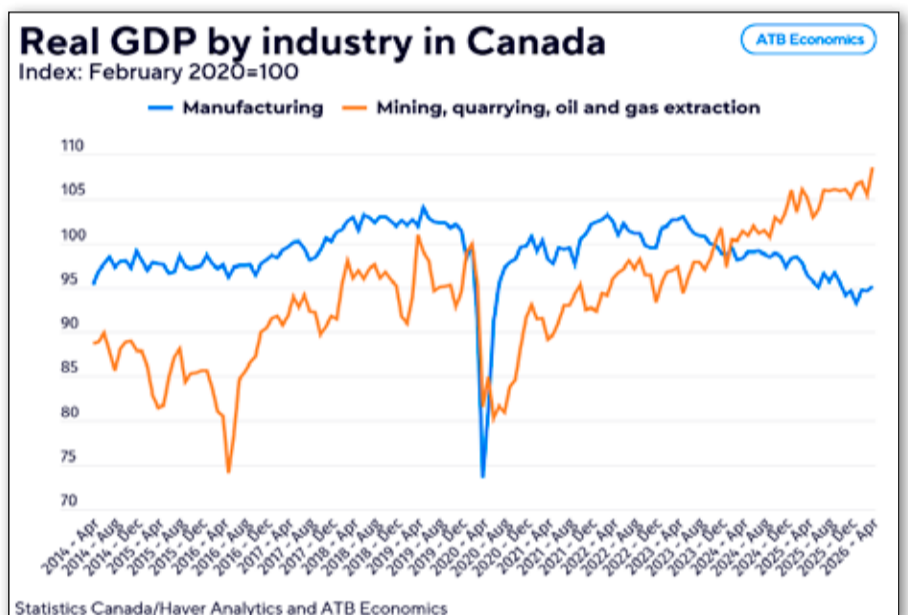
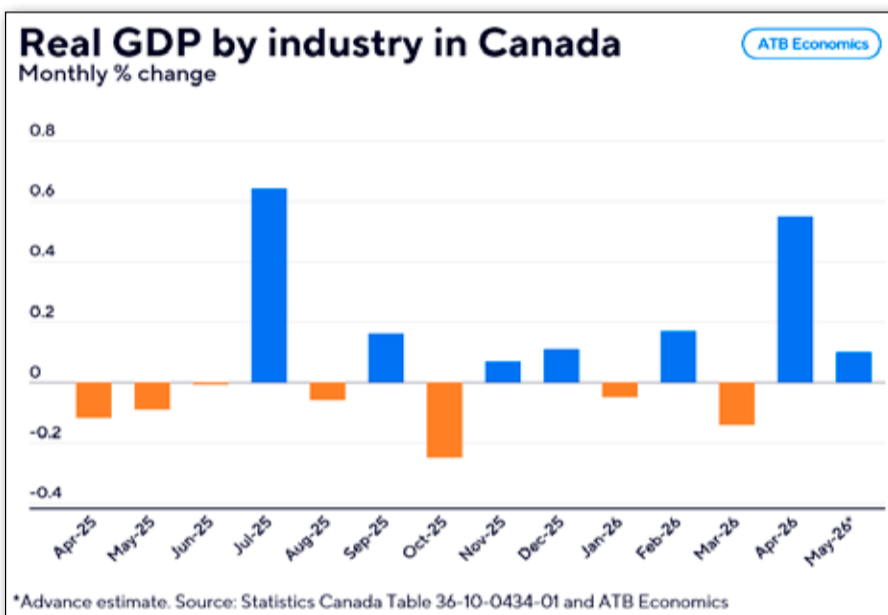
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The Press

## Back in the game: Canadian GDP growth returns



| **By Mark Parsons,**  
**ATB ECONOMICS**

Canada's economic growth returned to positive territory in both April and May (advance reading), following two straight quarterly declines.

The headline numbers show that April real GDP gained 0.5%, while the advance reading for May points to a 0.1% increase.

### Industry details for April:

Goods-producing industries (+1.2%) drove April's gain.

- Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction: Rose by 2.9%, the largest monthly gain in over two years, and accounting for about half the headline increase. The oil sands sector expanded 6.6% as synthetic crude oil production rebounded following previous unscheduled maintenance.
- Construction: Grew by 0.7%, the first increase in five months.
- Manufacturing: Up

0.6% after a string of weak performances. This sector has been hampered by sector-specific tariffs (GDP in primary metals, lumber, and auto manufacturing all remain below January 2025 levels).

### Services-producing industries (+0.3%)

- Widespread gains—notably in real estate, transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, and public administration—helped offset declines in wholesale trade and professional services.

### Bottom line

It's not worthy of a World Cup game celebration, but we'll take it. Today's report comes after two straight quarterly declines in GDP and a month-long debate over whether we're in a recession or not (our view: it's not an actual recession and this report should quiet the recession chatter,

but a sign of economic weakness and long-term structural issues - more below).

When combined with May's solid job gain, today's report shows that the Canadian economy still has some life. While the monthly GDP report is not always a reliable gauge of quarterly results, the economy is on pace for annualized growth of over 2% in the second quarter (assuming June comes in flat).

Further, Canada's GDP is growing again on a per-person basis, even if that's in large part due to a shrinking denominator.

But let's leave the champagne on ice for now, as we put today's data into historical context. Growth is returning in the second quarter, but this comes after declines in three of the past four quarters. The economy is now making up for lost ground.

More importantly, we are still looking for evidence that long-term structural issues (see playing less injured below) are getting re-

solved. So far, the consumer has been doing too much of the heavy lifting (retail trade GDP was flat in April, but this comes after an annualized gain of 3.5% in Q1).

### What's next?

Corner kick. A one-time tourism bump can be expected from the World Cup festivities in June/July. Food and accommodation services are poised for a temporary lift.

Playing less injured. Our eyes are squarely on whether the struggling components of GDP—exports and investments—will return to the field. The consumer has been resilient, providing an offset to a challenging trade environment for business. But consumer spending will be put to the test by a declining population, wobbly labour market and higher energy costs. As the tariff shock wears off, and businesses adjust to the new trade environment, we expect to see exports grinding higher, but still being

challenged. The Bank of Canada is also banking on more investment and exports in their latest forecast.

Game time decision. The Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) review is slated to start tomorrow, though President Trump does not appear to be in a rush. An optimistic take is a positive renewal, extending the agreement for 16 more years. But we think a more likely scenario is no renewal, ushering in annual reviews. Our base case is that sector tariffs remain in place, but with the CUSMA exemption retained. That is, no better or worse, but the same. Still, compared to last year's tariff turmoil, a period of relative stability.

Also coming soon, Alberta will announce its submission of the proposed West Coast oil pipeline to the federal Major Projects Office on July 2. The federal government will then have until October 1 to designate it as a project of national

interest.

Will a ringer enter the field? Canada could use the assistance of the "made in Canada" playmaker to kickstart growth. The largest upside comes from accelerating major projects that have been promised, but with shovels waiting to hit the ground. Lofty investment goals (Carney's plan is to catalyze \$1 trillion over five years) are not yet showing up in the data, with real business investment falling 1.9% y/y in Q1 2026. Going back further, investment is still 16% below its Q4 2014 peak.\*

On the sidelines. Don't expect the Bank of Canada to react too much to this report. The economy is only now making up for lost ground, and inflation is too high. We continue to see the Bank of Canada on hold next month and for the remainder of the year.

\*Real non-residential business investment in structures and machinery and equipment.

# Whitecourt Town Council Update

La Catrina and Brookes Creek Campground & Mini Golf have been awarded funds under the Whitecourt Launch Program.

Whitecourt Launch provides additional financial support for business development projects that stimulate business retention, growth and expansion. Thank you to all the businesses that applied and shared their ideas!

- La Catrina received \$10,000 towards the new business establishment of a restaurant in the downtown core.
- Brookes Creek Campground & Mini Golf has received \$5,000 towards the development of Everly's Eats, a coffee, snack and ice cream shack. The semi-annual re-

port on economic development activities was presented to Council and includes information on current initiatives and updates on projects undertaken so far in 2026. The report is available to view on [www.whitecourt.ca/business](http://www.whitecourt.ca/business).

Whitecourt has awarded the contract for the construction of multi-use courts at Festival Park to E-Construction in the amount of \$1,009,304.50. The project involves the construction of 2,545 square metres of court surface, which will include 12 pickleball courts, two tennis courts, one hockey court, and one basketball court. Construction will start this summer and is expected to be complete in the fall.

Knelsen Sand &

Gravel Ltd. has been awarded a \$732,251.80 contract for intersection upgrades at the 52 Avenue/47 Street and 49 Avenue/51 Street intersections. Traffic signal upgrades have already been completed at both intersections, and road-way upgrades will improve safety, traffic flow and overall functionality of the transportation network. The upgrades are part of a larger initiative to enhance accessibility and connectivity of bus stops along the transit route, and the project is 80% funded with the support of the Canada Public Fund - Rural Transit Solutions Fund. Construction schedules are being finalized, and further information will be provided to the community once confirmed. The project is

a partnership project between Whitecourt and the Rotary Club of Whitecourt, with funding support from the Active Communities Initiative Fund.

Enseicom Inc. has been awarded a \$118,002 contract for the supply of eleven bus shelters and benches. The project is being undertaken as part of a larger initiative to enhance accessibility and connectivity of bus stops along the transit route. Whitecourt was successful in receiving funding from the Canada Public Fund - Rural Transit Solutions Fund to complete this work, and the grant is funding 80% of project costs.

The annual review of Off-Site Levies is complete and, based on the study, rates will be de-

creasing as of January 1, 2027. Off-Site Levies are a cost recovery tool that to help pay for infrastructure projects that allow the community to grow, including roads, and water and sewage treatment.

Development Type 2026 Off-Site Levy Rate 2027 Off-Site Levy Rate Residential

- Single Family Dwelling \$4,763/dwelling unit \$4,745/dwelling unit
- Multi-Family Dwelling Units \$2,074/dwelling unit \$2,067/dwelling unit

**Non-Residential \$55,504/hectare \$55,303/hectare**

Earlier this year, Whitecourt awarded the Highway 43 Vitalization Phase 1 Contract; however, the contractor is unable to proceed with the project. The contract has now been awarded to West Peak Forestry in partnership with Trigg Seasonal Solutions for \$447,336.17. The project includes planting on both sides of the highway, between 53 Avenue and Riverboat Park Road, with raised planting beds. The project will improve the community's appearance and make the corridor more welcoming to visitors. The project is funded in part by the Green Municipal Fund's Growing Canada's Community Canopies initiative.

pies initiative.

Council has adopted the 2026 20-Year Capital & Life Cycle Plan. The Plan, which includes over 140 projects, provides a vision for the long-term development of Whitecourt's infrastructure; land development; parks and trails; and, building and recreational/cultural facilities to meet the needs of our growing community. The Plan incorporates projects and timelines identified through engineering studies, planning sessions, workshops, budget deliberations, and public engagement activities. The Plan is available to view at [www.whitecourt.ca/your-town](http://www.whitecourt.ca/your-town).

Council has adopted a new Council Remuneration, Allowances, Benefits and Expenses Policy. While the monthly honorarium and rates for Council have not changed, the new policy provides clarity regarding what is included in monthly honorariums, and guidelines for eligibility for per diems. The review of compensation also resulted in a new policy for Public Appointed Council Committee Members.

Council has approved the temporary closure of 35 Street, from 34 Avenue to 35 Avenue, on August 22, 2026 from 9am to 5pm for the Ralcomm Car Show and Shine.

## Can you develop food allergies as an adult?



(NC) Most people assume food allergies are a childhood condition that you either grow up with or outgrow. But for a growing number of Canadians, the first signs are showing up later in life.

"Adult-onset allergies are more common than people realize," says Dr. Harold Kim, an allergist and immunologist. "The challenge is that adults are more likely to dismiss symptoms or assume it was something else, and that can be dangerous." When symptoms

don't seem serious

Symptoms like hives, upset stomach, scratchy throat or even chest pain after eating can be easy to blame on stress, a stomach bug or acid reflux. This tendency to explain away reactions can delay a proper diagnosis and leave you unprepared to respond if a severe reaction happens.

Why reactions can change over time

Allergic reactions don't always stay the same and can change as we age. Research indicates that factors

like declining physical activity and underlying health conditions such as cardiovascular disease or respiratory illness can make an allergic reaction worse.

"An allergy that caused mild symptoms in your 40s may present very differently in your 60s," says Dr. Kim. "Age-related changes to the immune system and the presence of other conditions can change how your body responds."

An allergic reaction can happen fast and without warning. If

you've noticed a pattern of repeated symptoms after eating a particular food, it's important to see your doctor and not ignore it. An allergist can confirm a diagnosis through testing, help identify triggers and advise on how to manage it, including whether carrying emergency epinephrine medication, like an EpiPen, is recommended. The earlier an allergy is properly diagnosed, the safer you can be.

Find more information on allergies and treatments at [epipen.ca](http://epipen.ca).

**Meet Maverick**

Maverick is a handsome one-year-old Rottweiler/German Shepherd cross looking for his forever home.

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his sweet boy loves attention, belly rubs, and being by your side. He appears calm around other dogs and has a playful, affectionate personality.

Maverick is up to date on vaccinations and awaiting neuter surgery. Applications are being accepted now.

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## SCHOOL NEWS

Students enjoy a sack race during Pat Hardy School's Sports Day on June 19. The event was supported by parent volunteers, Percy Baxter Middle School leadership students, School Council and Alexander Safety & Environmental, which provided a barbecue lunch.



Pat Hardy School photo



Town of Whitecourt photo

Representatives of the Whitecourt & Area R/C Club accept a 2026 Enhancement Grant from the Town of Whitecourt outside the Town Administration Building on June 16. The \$3,426.78 grant will help fund a rental fleet of radio-controlled race cars, giving newcomers an opportunity to try R/C racing and encouraging participation in the growing community club.



Town of Whitecourt photo

Representatives of the Town of Whitecourt present a 2026 Enhancement Grant to the Five6Seven8 Cheer Association on June 16. The association received \$6,158.15 for its Special Abilities Enhancement Project through the Town's Enhancement Grant Program, which supports local recreation, arts and culture initiatives.



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### Money Matters

One Canadian Dollar = **0.70 US Dollar** at an exchange rate of **0.7041** (using nominal rate).



Dollar Values as of July 8, 2026

Local news printed on local newsprint



## 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](mailto:justpeachyarts@outlook.com)



Woodlands County photos

## HELP WANTED

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

**Food Service Attendant**  
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**Food Service Supervisor**  
Full Time / Shift Work

**SHIFT INCENTIVE FOR OVERNIGHTS**

Please apply in person at the restaurant.



4331-52 Ave Unit 1  
Whitecourt, AB

4216 Elko Drive  
Whitecourt, AB



Participants had a great time creating their own fairy gardens on June 27. Despite the rainy weather, everyone enjoyed the activity and came up with all kinds of unique designs in their pots.

# Woodlands County Council Recap

Ted Weicker of Qatalyst Research Group Inc. provided updates to the draft Strategic Plan 2026 to 2030 to Council. The Strategic Plan project work plan and the associated Public Participation Plan set out a nine-phase process that combines Council, Woodlands County Departments, and public input. Council accepted the presentation for information. Council also directed Administration to schedule an additional full-day workshop with Qatalyst Research Group Inc.

Council passed By-law 642-26, being the Chief Administrative Officer Amendment Bylaw. Council also gave first reading to Bylaw 638-26, being the Procedural Bylaw, and directed Administration to provide further amendments and bring it back to the next Council meeting.

At its June 3, 2026, meeting, Council received a Notice of Motion directing Administration to develop a formal process to track, document, and communicate revisions to agenda packages after publication. At the June 18, 2026, meeting, Council received Administration's assessment of a formal change-management and revision-tracking process for information. The proposed process aligns with amendments Council has requested be incorporated into the Procedural Bylaw, and the matter will be addressed through the bylaw review process.

Whitecourt ISGA Tourism Association (WITA) requested a letter of support from Woodlands County to accompany a submission to Alberta Parks regarding the future of its disposition located adjacent to Little

McLeod Lake (Goldfish Lake) within Carson-Pegasus Provincial Park. WITA currently operates a Tipi Village and provides Indigenous cultural tourism experiences and land-based educational programming. The organization advises that its current disposition expires in December 2026 and that Alberta Parks has indicated an extension may be contingent upon demonstrating continued public use and tourism activity. Council authorized a letter of support to the Whitecourt ISGA Tourism Association (WITA).

Council considered a sponsorship request for the 2026 Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) Annual Summit, taking place July 19-23, 2026, in Edmonton. PNWER is a non-partisan public-private forum that brings together government, industry, Indigenous, and academic leaders from across the Canadian and U.S. Northwest to address shared economic priorities. Council recognized the value of supporting the event, particularly as the Annual Summit is being held in Edmonton, providing a unique opportunity to participate in and showcase regional interests close to home. Council approved a \$10,000 USD sponsorship for the 2026 PNWER Annual Summit and directed Administration to invite industry stakeholders and the Town of Whitecourt to attend.

Each year, Woodlands County attends the Annual Economic Developers Alberta (EDA) Ministry Dinner. This annual event brings together EDA members, stakeholders, ministers, and senior staff from the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta

to network, share program information, and explore potential partnerships. Council approved that Councillors Karen St. Martin and Patricia MacNeil will attend this year's EDA Dinner.

Community Futures Yellowhead East (CFYE) has submitted an Attendance Request to Council for the Community Futures Network of Alberta (CFNA) Provincial Symposium. Council designated the Reeve to represent the County and provide welcoming remarks at the 2026 CFNA Provincial Symposium pre-event mixer and opening.

Council appointed the Chair, the Clerk, and the Certified Panellists to the 2026 Assessment Review Board.

Council received the 2026 Water and Wastewater Rate Review Interim Report for information and directed Administration to include stormwater in the review.

Council approved \$2,800.00, excluding GST, for a Joint Road Tour with the Town of Whitecourt and directed Administration to coordinate a joint planning discussion with the Town of Whitecourt on the objective and cost.

Council authorized the half-day closure of all Woodlands County offices on Friday, December 4, 2026, to allow for the County's Annual Awards Event.

Council appointed Councillor Peter Kuelken as Deputy Reeve for the term commencing June 29, 2026, and ending February 27, 2027, in accordance with Motion No. C-15-378-2025 regarding the Deputy Reeve rotational schedule. Councillor Kuelken graciously accepted the appointment.



Spruce View Lodge photos

Residents at Spruce View Lodge celebrated Canada Day with iced maple tea, Canadian trivia and a special visit from Sue and Boom the Therapy Pup.



## Public Notice

As part of Canfor's Whitecourt and Fox Creek 2026 Vegetation Management Program, we are proposing to apply glyphosate on cutblocks located within our Forest Management Area and timber licenses in the Whitecourt, Fox Creek, Fort Assiniboine, and Edson areas. A maximum of 4500 hectares are proposed for treatment throughout the following locations:

Township	Range	Meridian
50	11.12.15	W5M
51	11.12	W5M
53	11.12	W5M
58	16.21.25.26	W5M
59	10.11.13.14.15.16.17.22.23.25	W5M
60	12.13.14.17.18.22.23.24	W5M
61	12.13.14.15.16.18.19.20.23.25	W5M
62	14.15.16.18.19.21.25	W5M
63	7.8.9.19.21.22.23.24	W5M
64	6.8.9.19	W5M
65	6.7.15.16	W5M
66	6.7.8.12.14.15.16	W5M
67	10.11.12.13.14	W5M
68	9.10.11.12.14.15	W5M
69	11.12.13	W5M

This treatment, part of our forest renewal program, will temporarily control herbaceous, shrub and deciduous competition, to improve the growth and survival of tree seedlings and saplings. Herbicide will be applied through either aerial or ground-based application.

Application of herbicides is scheduled to begin on or around August 10, 2026, pending approval from Alberta Forestry and Parks. The planned completion date for the program is September 15, 2026.

For more information, please contact our Silviculture Supervisor at (780) 778-2221 Ext 2402, or [WCTSilviculture@Canfor.com](mailto:WCTSilviculture@Canfor.com)

### A look at the local weather

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



**Wed., July 8**  
Risk of thunderstorm  
70%  
19°C  
10°C  
N 13 km/h  
~5mm



**Thu., July 9**  
Mainly sunny  
20%  
19°C  
9°C  
W 24 km/h  
-



**Fri., July 10**  
Chance of shower  
30%  
19°C  
10°C  
W 13 km/h  
~1mm



**Sat., July 11**  
Chance of shower  
40%  
20°C  
10°C  
SE 10 km/h  
~1mm



**Sun., July 12**  
Risk of thunderstorm  
40%  
20°C  
11°C  
SW 20 km/h  
<1mm

# 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



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

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## The Press

A locally owned and family operated newspaper serving Whitecourt

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY

### Contact

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



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

### 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.



<https://whitecourtpress.com>

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### 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](mailto:agservices@woodlands.ab.ca)

**NOMINATION DEADLINE IS JULY 31, 2026**

### UPCOMING WOODLANDS COUNTY COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The following is a list of upcoming Woodlands County Committee Meetings:

- Regular Council Meeting – July 16 at 9:30 a.m.
- Governance & Priorities Committee Meeting – July 22 at 5:00 p.m.
- Economic Development Committee Meeting – July 28 at 1:00 p.m.

JOIN US! All Committee Meetings are open to the public. All meetings are held at the Woodlands County Administration Building at #1 Woodlands Lane, Whitecourt, unless otherwise posted.



Access meeting schedules, agenda packages, minutes, and more by scanning the QR Code or going to our CivicWeb Portal: [woodlands.civicweb.net/Portal/](http://woodlands.civicweb.net/Portal/)

### WOODLANDS COUNTY BENEFITS PROGRAM - IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

**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](http://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.

### YOUTH PROGRAM FINANCIAL SUPPORT!

Do you have a youth aged 4-18 who could use a little financial help to join a recreation, sports, art, or culture program?

Woodlands County's Youth Enrichment Subsidy (YES) can provide up to \$600 per year to help cover program costs – and it can be used for multiple programs!

IMPORTANT: Apply BEFORE starting the program.

Call Community Services: 780-778-8400

More info & applications: [woodlands.ab.ca/p/yes-program](http://woodlands.ab.ca/p/yes-program)

Help your youth explore, create, and play!

### NOTICE OF DECISION - DEVELOPMENT PERMIT 26-DP-042

**Location:** NE 18-58-11 W5M Lot3 Block 3 Plan 1423727

**Proposed Development:** Accessory Building

**Decision Date:** June 23, 2026

**Appeal Deadline:** July 14, 2026

**For full details on Development Permits visit**

<https://woodlands.ab.ca/>

**Email:** [planning@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:planning@woodlands.ab.ca)

**Call:** 1-888-870-6315

### WOODLANDS COUNTY HAS EXCITING JOB OPPORTUNITIES!

- Economic Development Officer
- Fire Services Operations Coordinator

For more information and to apply, scan the QR Code, or go to: [woodlands.ab.ca/p/careers](http://woodlands.ab.ca/p/careers)  
Local work. Good people. Let's talk.



### 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](http://www.woodlands.ab.ca).**

Nominations must include two photographs of the nominated property.

**Submit your nomination forms:**

Emailed to: [agservices@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto: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**



**DAVE KUSCH**  
Reeve, Division 1 – Anselmo  
[dave.kusch@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:dave.kusch@woodlands.ab.ca)  
780-778-9337



**PATRICIA MACNEIL**  
Councillor, Division 2 -  
Whitecourt West  
[patricia.macneil@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:patricia.macneil@woodlands.ab.ca)  
780-268-3000



**ALAN DEANE**  
Councillor, Division 3 -  
Whitecourt Central  
[alan.deane@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:alan.deane@woodlands.ab.ca)  
780-778-0894



**KAREN ST. MARTIN**  
Councillor, Division 4 -  
Whitecourt East  
[karen.stmartin@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:karen.stmartin@woodlands.ab.ca)  
780-778-0822



**JENNA WRIGHT**  
Councillor, Division 5 -  
Blue Ridge  
[jenna.wright@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:jenna.wright@woodlands.ab.ca)  
780-779-6765



**PETER KUELKEN**  
Councillor, Division 6 - Goose Lake /  
Freeman River  
[peter.kuelken@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:peter.kuelken@woodlands.ab.ca)  
780-284-2425



**BENNY WHITTEN**  
Councillor, Division 7 -  
Fort Assiniboine / Timeu  
[benny.whitten@woodlands.ab.ca](mailto:benny.whitten@woodlands.ab.ca)  
780-305-4655



[www.woodlands.ab.ca](http://www.woodlands.ab.ca)  
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### Coming Events

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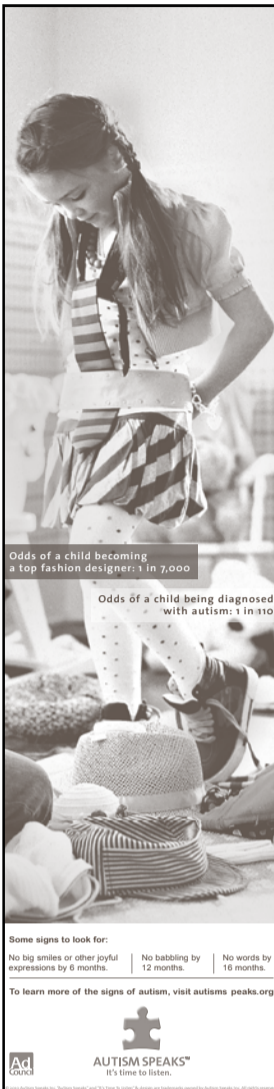
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Odds of a child becoming a top fashion designer: 1 in 7,000

Odds of a child being diagnosed with autism: 1 in 50

Some signs to look for:  
No big smiles or other joyful expressions by 6 months. No babbling by 12 months. No words by 18 months.

To learn more of the signs of autism, visit autismspeaks.org



## Pros and cons of a home equity line of credit



(NC) With the warm weather finally here, maybe you're considering installing a pool or doing those home renovations you've been dreaming about. Perhaps you want to get away and an RV or a cottage are at the top of your wish list.

A home equity line of credit (HELOC) is a quick and easy way to pay for such big expenses. But the long-term risks of HELOCs can outweigh their up-front benefits if you don't manage the loan well.

### How do HELOCs work?

HELOCs are secured by your home as a guarantee that you'll pay back the money you

borrow. With a HELOC you can borrow money, pay it back and borrow it again up to a maximum credit limit. They use a variable interest rate, which means your payment amounts will change as the lender's prime interest rate goes up or down.

### Advantages of HELOCs:

- They offer easy access to credit.
- They have lower interest rates than other types of credit, especially unsecured loans and credit cards.
- You can pay back the money you borrow at any time without a penalty.
- You can borrow as

much as you want, up to your available credit limit.

### Disadvantages of HELOCs:

- It takes discipline to pay off a HELOC because you're usually only required to pay the monthly interest charges.
- Large amounts of available credit can make it easier to over-spend and carry debt for a long time.
- You will have to pay off your entire HELOC if you sell your home or want to switch your mortgage to another lender.
- The amount you owe on your HELOC reduces the equity in

your home.

- Your bank could take possession of your home if you miss payments.

Before you take out a HELOC, make sure you consider the risks and have a repayment plan. If your lender is a federally regulated bank, they must offer and sell you products and services that are appropriate for you, based on your circumstances and financial needs. They must also tell you if they assess that a product or service isn't appropriate for you. Don't hesitate to ask questions and make sure you understand the product offered to you. Find more information at [canada.ca/money](http://canada.ca/money).

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Family Resource & Crisis Centre  
[www.whitecourtshelter.ca](http://www.whitecourtshelter.ca)



## Recover Out Loud

- Mondays are in person, at the Family Worship Center upstairs, and online (hybrid) at 7:30pm
- Fridays 7:30pm at the Whitecourt Baptist Church in person only.

ZOOM ID: **818 413 483** PASSWORD: **gratitude**

### Whitecourt Alcoholics Anonymous Group



Meetings are three times each week

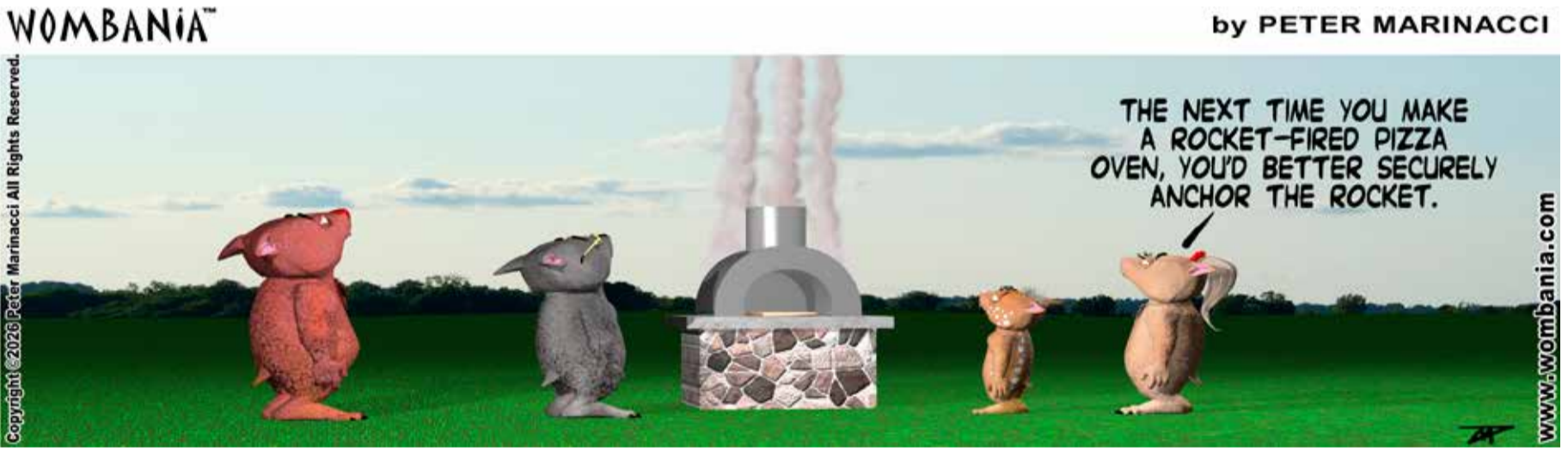
- Monday 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm
- Wednesday 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm
- Friday 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Located at the United Church Basement on Legion Street (formerly 5201 - 50 Street), Please Leave a Message for Our AA member or Contact Addictions Helpline @1(866)332-2322



**CALL Ruth 780-674-7182**

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



## Lower your risk of West Nile virus infection this summer

**Primary Care Alberta release**  
Mosquitoes are a common summer pest. It's important to remember that if you're bitten, you may be at risk for West Nile virus. With mosquitoes thriving this time of year, Primary Care Alberta asks Albertans to protect their health by preventing bites. While the risk of West Nile virus remains low in Alberta, some mosquitoes can carry the virus, so it's best to avoid being

bitten at all. West Nile virus is an infection that can give you flu-like symptoms. In rare cases, the infection can lead to brain and spinal cord inflammation, which can be hard to recover from. There is currently no specific treatment for West Nile virus infection. Here are some ways you can help prevent mosquito bites:

- Cover as much of your body as possible when outdoors, especially in grassy

- or wooded areas.
- Wear long-sleeved, light-coloured shirts and pants, and a hat.
- Stay indoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use a Health Canada-approved insect repellent (for example, products with DEET or Icaridin) and follow the product label instructions. If you're a parent or caregiver, do not use insect repellent with DEET on babies un-

- der six months of age. Instead, use mosquito netting and try not to be outside when insect activity is high, like at dawn and dusk. If your child is old enough for you to use insect repellent with DEET, limit use where you can:
- If your child is six months of age to two years old, do not use insect repellent more than once a day. Use insect repellent only when there's a high risk of insect bites, like

- at dawn and dusk.
- If your child is over two years of age, you can use it up to three times a day. Always make sure you use a registered product labelled as an insect repellent for use on people. Visit Personal Insect repellents - Canada.ca for more information. To learn more about West Nile virus and ways to keep safe, visit Fight-thebite.info. Care is a lifelong commitment for Primary Care Alber-

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