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Vol. 15 - Issue 40 | Wednesday, October 14, 2026

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Jake's Gift brings story of remembrance back to Whitecourt

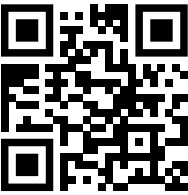


Photo Credit Dirk Van Stralen

Julia Mackey with D-Day veteran David Teacher following a performance in Normandy on June 3, 2019, during the 75th anniversary of D-Day. Photo: Dirk Van Stralen, director and stage manager of Jake's Gift.

See story page 3

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Jake's Gift brings story of remembrance back to Whitecourt



By Haylee Winger

A story inspired by the beaches of Normandy and the veterans who shared their memories there is returning to Whitecourt as part of the Royal Canadian Legion's Poppy Campaign.

Jake's Gift, written and performed by Julia Mackey and directed by Dirk Van Stralen, follows a Canadian D-Day veteran who reluctantly returns to Normandy for the 60th anniversary of the Allied landings to find the grave of his brother, who never came home from the war.

The story was inspired by Mackey's own journey to Normandy in 2004.

"I was inspired to write *Jake's Gift* after I travelled to Normandy for the 60th Anniversary of D-Day back in 2004," Mackey said.

She had created the character of Jake during a workshop in Vancouver a year earlier and felt there was more to his story. After hearing about the upcoming anniversary on The National, she decided to make the trip.

"It was one of the

most moving experiences of my life. I spent seven days attending ceremonies and walking the beaches, interviewing as many veterans as I could. Their generosity with their stories and my own experiences there enabled me to write *Jake's Gift*," she said.

The 65-minute, one-act play is a solo performance, with Mackey portraying four different characters.

While walking along the shores of Juno Beach, Jake meets Isabelle, a young French girl whose curiosity and charm push him to confront memories he has long avoided. Among them is the wartime death of his older brother, Chester, a promising young musician.

"At its heart, *Jake's Gift* is about the legacy of remembrance and personalizes the story behind one soldier's grave," Mackey said.

The play explores friendship, forgiveness and remembrance, themes that have taken on greater meaning for Mackey through her experiences meeting veterans and audience members.

"It has taught me that there are so many untold stories out there and that every veteran, regard-



Photo By June Heximer

Julia Mackey with Second World War veteran Art Heximer in Normandy on June 6, 2004, during the 60th anniversary of D-Day. Heximer was one of the first veterans Mackey met during her time in Normandy, and the two became close friends. Mackey continues to keep in touch with his family.

less of what campaign they were involved in, from the First World War to Afghanistan, has a story to tell," she said.

That message of remembrance is also part of what makes this year's return to Whitecourt special for Mackey.

"We are so thrilled to be returning to Whitecourt, and to kick off such an important week for the Legion. 2026 is also the 100th Anniversary for the Royal Canadian Legion, so it's a wonderful time to share

Jake's Gift with Whitecourt," Mackey said.

Over the years, some performances have held particular significance for Mackey. For the 70th anniversary of D-Day, she returned to Normandy and performed *Jake's Gift* at a venue on Juno Beach. Mackey also performs the play in French, making the opportunity to bring the story back to where it began especially memorable.

Another standout performance took place at the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa on June 6, 2009, during the 65th anniversary of D-Day, with dozens of Second World War veterans in attendance.

For Mackey, some of the most meaningful moments happen after

the performance, when audience members share their own connections to the story.

"One of my favourite parts of sharing this play is the time we get to spend with patrons after the show, who share who their 'Jake' was with us and their experiences of the play. There's no greater gift to us," she said.

Despite its serious subject matter, *Jake's Gift* also includes moments of humour through the personalities of Jake and Isabelle. "People have described it as a roller coaster of emotions," Mackey said.

She hopes the Whitecourt audience leaves thinking about its own connections to Canada's wartime history and the importance of

remembrance.

"I hope people will feel inspired to head to a cenotaph on November 11 and that they will be inspired to thank a veteran and to find out more about their own family's connection to the war. People have told us it has made them feel proud to be Canadian too," she said.

Jake's Gift will be performed Saturday, October 24, at 7 p.m. at the Whitecourt Legion. Tickets are \$40 and are available online at jakesgift.com or in person at the Legion.

The performance will also support the Whitecourt Legion. *Jake's Gift* buttons, books and magnets will be available after the show, with 100 per cent of the profits donated to the Legion.



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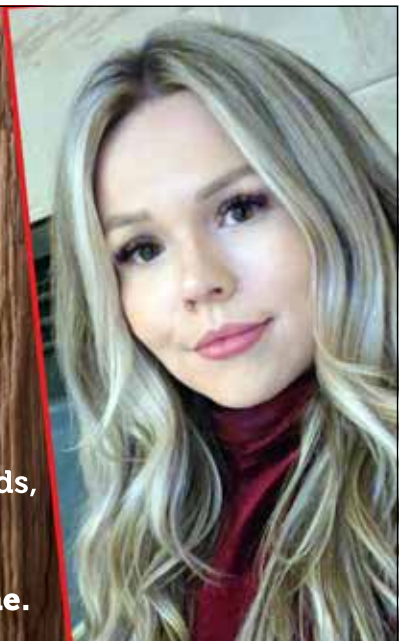
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Photos: Woodlands County

Woodlands County’s bank stabilization project, addressing damage caused by the 2023 flooding, has moved into Phase 2, with contractors now working on Cutbanks Road. Work will continue as weather and site conditions allow.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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TAKE PART! GIVE BACK!

Opportunity for Public Participation

Every fall, the Town of Whitecourt recruits citizens to fill volunteer positions on various boards and committees that provide Town Council with perspective and recommendations regarding important civic issues. Whitecourt is a diverse, growing town, and citizens are in the best position to provide input on our changing community needs. Get involved! It's your town. Share your knowledge and meet new colleagues.

Economic Development Committee

"To set up and establish an economic development program to further the interests of the Town of Whitecourt in the areas of economic development and tourism."

(1) Member – term to expire in October 2029

Health Professionals Attraction & Retention Committee

"To develop and support a sustainable and collaborative system for health professionals' attraction and retention that will support ongoing health care services to the community and provide a welcoming environment for health care providers and their families."

(1) Member – term to expire October 2029

Municipal Planning Commission

"To deal with land use planning matters with particular emphasis on the Land Use Bylaw."

(1) Member – term to expire in October 2029

Subdivision and Development Appeal Board

"To make decisions on appeals of subdivision or development decisions made by the Development Officer or Municipal Planning Commission."

(2) Members – term to expire in October 2029

If being on a Council Committee interests you, please complete an application form which can be found by scanning the QR Code below or by going on the Whitecourt website at www.whitecourt.ca/your-town/mayor-council/public-participation or picked up at the Town Office. Applications must be received before 12:00 noon, Monday, October 19, 2026 to:

Whitecourt Town Administration Office

Attention: Executive Assistant

5004 - 52 Avenue, Box 509

WHITECOURT, AB T7S 1N6

email: administration@whitecourt.ca

Applications for all committees will be presented to Town Council at the October 26, 2026 Regular Meeting.

Questions?

Contact our Administration Department at 780.778.2273 or email administration@whitecourt.ca.



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 Fire Prevention Week focuses on safe charging habits



Photo: Whitecourt Wolverines

The Whitecourt Wolverines joined the Whitecourt Fire Department for Fire Prevention Week, helping raise awareness about fire safety and the importance of safe charging practices.



By Haylee Winger

Everyday charging habits were the focus of this year's Fire Prevention Week, which encouraged residents to take simple steps to reduce the risk of fires involving rechargeable batteries.

The campaign ran from October 4 to 10 under the theme "Charge into Fire Safety: Safe Charging Is a Superpower." Led by the National Fire Protection Association, the campaign focused on the safe use and charging of devices powered by lithium-ion batteries. These batteries are found in many household items, including cellphones, laptops, tablets, toys, power tools, e-bikes and scooters.

Although lithium-ion batteries are commonly

used in everyday devices, they can become hazardous if damaged, improperly charged or used with incompatible charging equipment. In some cases, a battery can overheat, catch fire or explode.

One way to reduce the risk is to use the charger and cord supplied with a device or one approved by its manufacturer. Using incompatible charging equipment can damage a battery and increase the risk of fire. Residents should also follow the manufacturer's instructions for charging and storing their devices.

Where devices are charged is another important consideration. Electronics should be placed on a hard, flat surface with good ventilation rather than on beds, couches or beneath pillows and blankets, where heat can build up. Charging

devices should also be kept away from doorways and other escape routes.

Residents were encouraged to unplug devices once they were fully charged and avoid leaving them charging overnight. Larger battery-powered items, such as e-bikes and scooters, require particular care because their batteries store significant amounts of energy. These items should be charged according to the manufacturer's instructions, away from exits and combustible materials. When possible, e-bikes and scooters should be charged outdoors in a suitable location. Recognizing the warning signs of a damaged battery is another important part of prevention. Batteries or devices that become unusually hot, swell, leak, change shape or colour, emit unusual smells, or make hissing or popping sounds

should no longer be used or charged. Residents should follow the manufacturer's instructions for dealing with damaged equipment.

If a battery catches fire, residents should leave the area immediately and call 911 from a safe location. They should not attempt to fight a battery fire themselves. Closing doors behind them may help slow the spread of fire, but only if it can be done safely without delaying their escape.

Fire Prevention Week served as a reminder that small changes to everyday routines can help reduce fire risks at home. By choosing appropriate charging equipment, keeping devices away from flammable materials and recognizing signs of battery damage, residents can take practical steps to improve fire safety.



HOROSCOPE



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32. Largely forested municipality in Germany
33. Rider of Rohan
35. Ancient symbol co-opted by Nazis
38. Pioneer
41. Scribe
43. Painted a bright color
44. Member of British nobility
45. "Pulp Fiction" actress
Thurman
46. Helps people walk
47. Crest of a hill
49. People of southeastern Alaska
56. One's own device
57. The Mount Rushmore State

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 - Fridays 7:30pm at the Whitecourt Baptist Church in person only.
- ZOOM ID: 818 413 483 PASSWORD: gratitude**



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a creative
afternoon of
plaster
painting.
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Play Room
volunteered
her time
to lead the
activity,
making the
plaster pieces
and donating
all the supplies
so residents
could enjoy
the hands-on
craft.**



Photos: Spruce View Lodge

Free cornhole program gives Whitecourt youth a place to play



**By Haylee
Winger**

With winter settling in, the Whitecourt Cornhole League is giving local kids another way to get out, have fun and meet others.

The free youth drop-in runs Tuesdays from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at St. Joseph's Hall from October through May. Free busing is also available through Whitecourt Transit, similar to the town's Open Doors programming. Children can tell the bus driver they are heading to cornhole, and passes are provided for their trip home.

The youth program began as a pilot in the spring, with more than 60 kids taking part.

"We wanted to create something that was about more than just a sport," said Leanne Stark, a representa-

tive of the Whitecourt Cornhole League. "We saw an opportunity to give kids in our community a place where they could come, have fun, make friends, and feel like they belong, without cost being a barrier."



Stark said cornhole allows kids of different ages, abilities and experience levels to play together.

"You don't have to be the fastest, strongest, or most athletic kid in the room to be successful," she said.

Organizers have seen kids develop their cornhole skills while also

building confidence and connections with others. Stark said she has watched children who were initially shy or hesitant begin opening up, making friends, encouraging one another and celebrating their accomplishments.

"We've watched kids develop their skills, but more importantly, we've seen them learn sportsmanship, patience, teamwork, and how to handle both winning and losing," Stark said.

She added that success does not always mean being the best player. For some kids, it can be as simple as making a bag in the hole for the first time or having another child cheer them on.

"They're building friendships, confidence, and a sense of belonging, and those are things that extend far beyond the game," she said.



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WOODLANDS COUNTY

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—COLIN MACLEAN, EDMONTON SUN

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RCMP Whitecourt - RAVE Alert - Bi-Weekly Summary

| Release

The Whitecourt RCMP were dispatched to 264 occurrences. The most calls for service were as follows:

- Mental Health Related
- Traffic Collisions/Offences
- Well Being Checks

Whitecourt RCMP have been conducting proactive patrols throughout the community.

Community Engagement:

Over the past 2

weeks, the Whitecourt RCMP engaged with the community through various events.

On September 17, the Whitecourt RCMP attended Wellsprings Walk A Mile event to honour victims of domestic violence.

On September 18, members attended the Terry Fox Run and Welcome BBQ at Ecole St. Joseph School.

On September 23, the Whitecourt RCMP presented Certificates of Appreciation

to community members, James and Chase Northey, for their assistance in locating the suspect of an ongoing investigation. They showed dedication to the safety of the community. Thank you James and Chase!

On September 24, Whitecourt RCMP welcomed the ALERT Internet Child Exploitation Unit for a public presentation on internet safety. Thank you to everyone who attended!

On September 28,

members attended the Terry Fox Run at Ecole St. Anne School.

Thank you for supporting your Alberta RCMP - Whitecourt Detachment. For questions or concerns, please contact Kristen McLeod, Crime Prevention Liaison at kristen.mcleod@rcmp-grc.gc.ca or S/Sgt. Matthew Clarke at matthew.clarke@rcmp-grc.gc.ca. For emergencies call 911. For non-emergencies, please call 310-RCMP (7267).



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Photo: Submitted

Daisy the dog travelled from Mayerthorpe to Whitecourt to enjoy a visit to Festival Park.

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Jessica Lynn Gladhill
Age 25

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Feeling the squeeze: Inside the latest quarterly Small Business Pulse

By Carol Kamel, ATB Economics

Key points

- Despite Alberta's strong overall economic performance, small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) are facing a profitability squeeze due to shifting consumer demand, rising commercial rents, and rising raw material and input costs.
- To deal with these pressures, business owners say they are taking a number of measures, including raising prices, absorbing margin hits, slowing or halting capital expansions, and prioritizing workforce retention over headcount growth.

Alberta is outperforming the rest of the country on a number of economic indicators: population growth, employment growth, and consumer spending. However, headline numbers often mask sentiment in the economy, including that of small businesses.

Alberta small businesses are navigating rising input costs, shifting consumer demand, and difficult hiring decisions.

Our second edition of The Quarterly Small Business Pulse aims to bridge the gap between the macro and micro by

an environment where uncertainty is no longer a temporary headwind, but a baseline condition for operating.

Key themes explored in this quarter's Pulse:

- The squeeze on profitability: We break down the top three pressure points

bottlenecks? We look at the breakdown of how Alberta SMEs are splitting the burden of rising costs—from raising end-user prices to absorbing margin hits. We also explore why some are putting capital

owners cited weak consumer demand as a top challenge. Rising household costs for food and energy are leaving less room for discretionary purchases.

- While U.S. tariffs make headlines, the Alberta SMEs we surveyed remain largely insulated—82% generate zero revenue from U.S. customers and over 50% have no direct U.S.-sourced inputs. However, businesses continue to face heightened uncertainty and indirect supply chain impacts from tariffs and other geopolitical events.

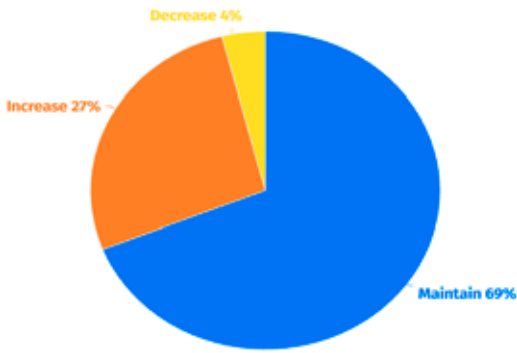
- To manage the squeeze, business owners are splitting the burden: 40% are raising end-user prices, 30% are absorbing the margin impact, and 28% are delaying or canceling capital expansions. With regard to employee headcount, businesses seem to be focused on retention, with nearly 70% planning

to maintain their current employee headcount over the next three to six months. At the same time, 27% are planning to expand headcounts, a higher rate than observed in national surveys.

The bottom line: While Alberta's economy continues to prove its resilience, the cost of doing business has increased. Alberta SMEs have also proven resilient, but the road ahead will be littered with the direct and indirect fallout of supply chain friction and uncertainty. Looking to the future, businesses appear to be taking a disciplined approach—safeguarding profit margins, maintaining strong cash reserves, and holding onto the team that drives their operations.

Over the next 3 to 6 months, how do you expect your employee headcount to change?

ATB Economics



Source: ATB Economics

combining economic data and the on-the-ground experiences shared by the business community in Alberta.

In this edition of the Pulse, which features a client interview and a survey of 78 Alberta business owners, we unpack how entrepreneurs are adapting to

SMEs are facing right now: shifting consumer demand, rising and volatile upstream raw material/input costs, and higher commercial retail rents.

- The strategic trade-off: How are businesses adapting to these operational

expansions on hold, and what that cautious holding pattern means for hiring intentions over the next six months.

A look at some of the findings:

- Despite a 7.6% surge in year-to-date retail sales in Alberta, 30% of business



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