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Vol. 15 - Issue 42 | Wednesday, October 28, 2026



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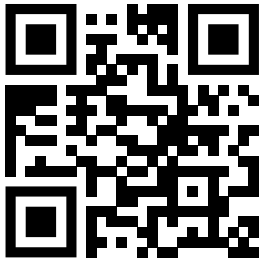
## Premier Smith calls Albertans to "unite and lead" following referendum vote



**Stronger Alberta within a united Canada**

*Last week, registered voters across the province took to the polls to help decide on things like separation and non-resident/permanent resident access to provincially funded services. Numbers showed that a majority of voters took advantage of advance polls. Premier Smith held a press conference the night following the referendum. See story page 3*

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A



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Acute system resumes normal operations; Code Orange stood down

Acute Care Alberta release

Acute Care Alberta (ACA) extends its deepest sympathies to all those affected by the tragic incident at CFB Wainwright.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the patients, their families, and everyone impacted by this tragedy.

Following a coordinated emergency response involving healthcare teams and emergency services across Alberta and Saskatchewan, all Code Orange activations in Alberta have now been stood down. Regular

acute care operations have resumed, under existing high-capacity pressures and some additional localized staffing pressures in the Wainwright and Flagstaff County areas.

Care for affected patients continues, and our commitment to supporting them and their families remains unwavering.

The healthcare system's emergency response provided seamless and exceptional care in the most trying of circumstances.

EHS-Alberta deployed 30 units directly into Wainwright,

including 22 ground ambulances, six fixed-wing and two rotary wing units. This was a unified response between EHS-Alberta direct delivery and contracted service partners in both Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Active emergency response was sustained across the system for more than 10 hours, with patients transported to and receiving care at facilities across our entire province.

Specifically, as of today, patients were transferred from Wainwright Healthcare Centre to four facilities: the

University of Alberta Hospital (UAH), Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH), Foothills Medical Centre (FMC) and Red Deer Regional Hospital Centre (RDRHC)

It is anticipated that care for patients impacted by this incident will be intensive and will add to existing high demand on acute care in Alberta.

The coordinated response demonstrated the dedication, professionalism and compassion of healthcare teams and first responders. We extend our sincere gratitude

to the physicians, nurses, healthcare professionals, emergency responders and leaders who worked tirelessly under extraordinarily difficult circumstances to ensure patients received the care they needed.

Our focus remains on supporting patients, families and healthcare providers as the recovery continues.

Acute Care Alberta is the provincial health agency dedicated to the governance and coordination of high-quality, timely and efficient acute care services across the province.

Working in close partnership with acute care service providers and provincial health corporations, we drive improved emergency and acute care services for all Albertans. For more information, visit [www.acutecarealberta.ca](http://www.acutecarealberta.ca).

The Press

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# Premier Smith calls Albertans to "unite and lead" following referendum vote

| By **Serena Lapointe**

During her post-referendum press conference last Tuesday night, Premier Danielle Smith called the vote historic, and the numbers reflect why. According to Elections Alberta, there were 2,966,192 registered voters in the province in 2025. On the question of whether Albertans wanted to remain in Canada or not, 2,058,973 votes were cast (as of Friday, October 23 at 2:30 pm), roughly 70 percent of registered voters. In West Yellowhead, 23,240 votes were cast for that question, 13,951 of which were in favour of Alberta remaining a Canadian province.

For context, in the last provincial election, sixty percent of registered Albertan voters took to the polls, and over the last three decades, according to Elections Alberta, the average voter turnout was 54 percent. The highest percentage was August 1935, when 81.8 percent of the province's registered voters showed up to vote. The lowest was in 2008, with only 40 percent.

Following recognition of the lives lost and wounded in Wainwright, and thanking polling station workers and volunteers, Premier Smith dove into

the referendum. "The question about whether Alberta should remain a province within Canada was put on the ballot because of Alberta's citizen-initiated referendum process. Two petitions were put forward by the people and received hundreds of thousands of signatures from Albertans," explained Premier Smith.

She said that "out of respect for that democratic process," the question was added to the ballot, calling the debate over Alberta's future in Canada "many years in the making." Premier Smith noted that the conversation was passionate at times but said that for the most part, "the various campaigns and dialogues have been civil and respectful."

She then paused, took a breath and stated firmly, "Alberta will remain a province of Canada. Albertans will continue to be Canadians, and our government will work cooperatively with Albertans, the federal government, and our fellow provinces to secure a prosperous future for our province and our country."

Premier Smith said that as long as she was in the premier's seat, she would honour the mandate and would not hold another referendum on the issue. "It is

time to move forward together as a strong and free Alberta within a united Canada. Make no mistake, our government will continue to boldly assert our province's autonomy by exercising the provincial rights guaranteed to us under Canada's constitution. We will use every legal and political tool at our disposal to protect and advance the interests of Albertans." She said that when Ottawa interferes with the province's rights, she will be unrelenting but said the fight would be fought within the political and legal institutions in Canada, rather than pursuing separation.

Interestingly, the question of separation had the widest split between yes and no votes. Five questions received majority yes votes (questions 1-5), and four did not (questions 6-9). Questions 1 through 9 were separated by anywhere from 80,000 to 330,000 votes, unlike the separation question, which had a difference of over a million.

Voters gave the provincial government the mandate to increase its control over immigration, prioritizing economic migration and giving Albertans first priority on new employment opportunities, as well as intro-

ducing a law mandating that only Canadian citizens, permanent residents and those with Alberta-approved immigration status be eligible for provincially funded programs like healthcare.

"They (voters) have given us direction to ensure temporary residents pay a portion of the costs of public services used by themselves and their families, and they have spoken in favour of requiring proof of Canadian citizenship in order to vote," said Premier Smith. Voters also green-lit the government introducing a law requiring those with non-permanent legal immigration status to reside in Alberta for at least twelve months before qualifying for provincially funded social support programs.

Questions that did not receive public endorsement were constitution-based, such as seeking the abolition of the unelected federal Senate, and autonomy on selection of provincial King's Bench and Appeal court justices instead of the federal government doing it.

During her press conference, the Premier also spoke to those who had voted in favour of separation. "I recognize you as loyal Albertans. You love this province,

and you want your family and neighbours to have every opportunity to succeed. Many of you view Ottawa as having threatened your freedoms and blocked your path to prosperity, and I acknowledge the legitimate frustrations you've felt, most especially during the Justin Trudeau, Liberal/NDP coalition years," spoke Premier Smith.

"For so many of you, it resulted in you or a loved one losing a job or career or shuttering your small business. There were countless lost opportunities. I've listened to so many of your stories. Those stories have touched my heart, and I want you to know that I see and understand you. You need to know that your voices have been heard, not just by our government, but also by your fellow Albertans and your fellow Canadians. And make no mistake, you, along with your fellow Albertans who voted to remain, have had tremendous effect on helping to alter the direction of Canada for the better."

She credited the loud voices of frustrated Albertans as helping shift the conversation. "Both of Canada's major federal parties, the Conservatives and the liberals, now recognize the central importance of Alberta's energy

industry to our national economy. This is a monumental change that Albertans helped to bring about. We made our arguments. We defended our province. We challenged policies we believed were wrong, and Canadians listened."

She said that though she expects disagreements between the province and federal government to arise, her call now is for unity. "As Albertans and Canadians, it is time to unite and lead our nation forward because Canada has so much to offer and has such a solid foundation to build upon, and there is so much more that unites us than divides us," said Premier Smith.

"Albertans made their choice, and today we begin the next chapter. Let us move forward, not as a people divided by how we voted, but as neighbours, friends, Albertans and Canadians. Let us work together to build an Alberta and a Canada worthy of the generations that will follow us."

Across all ten questions posed to Albertan voters, over 20 million valid votes were cast. To see the final counts from the referendum, visit [www.elections.ab.ca](http://www.elections.ab.ca). Numbers were still being updated as of Friday afternoon.

## Fall Immunization Program launches in Alberta

| **Primary Care release**

Fall has arrived in Alberta and so has fall immunization season. Primary Care Alberta (PCA) encourages you to protect yourself and your loved ones from respiratory illness this season.

Getting immunized against influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and COVID-19 is one of several important steps Albertans can take to prevent the spread of illness. Vaccines are safe and effective.

Appointments are available through PCA public health clinics

and participating pharmacies. Where you should book your appointment will depend on your age and the vaccines you're receiving.

Visit [primarycarealberta.ca/getimmunized](http://primarycarealberta.ca/getimmunized) to learn which immunizations are right for you.

To book an appointment at a PCA public health clinic, visit [myhealth.alberta.ca/topic/immunization/pages/book-appointment.aspx](http://myhealth.alberta.ca/topic/immunization/pages/book-appointment.aspx) or call Health Link at 811. Albertans booking through a community pharmacy should contact the pharmacy

directly. Many pharmacies are accepting walk-ins.

You can also speak to your primary healthcare provider if you have questions about immunization.

Additional precautions to protect yourself from the spread of respiratory viruses include:

- Staying home when feeling sick;
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick, whenever possible;
- Washing hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds,

or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;

- Covering coughs and sneezes, followed by cleaning of hands;
- Avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands;
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and items at home, especially when someone is sick; and
- Wearing a well-fitting mask in crowded indoor spaces to help reduce the risk of becoming sick and to help protect others from being

exposed.

If throughout the next several months you need care, visit Alberta's Know Your Options website to learn about the healthcare services available in your community: [alberta.ca/know-your-options](http://alberta.ca/know-your-options).

Care is a lifelong commitment for Primary Care Alberta. We plan, fund and support primary healthcare across the province, improving access to care providers and offering front-line services through Health Link 811 and public health teams. Throughout the

health journey, we are by your side – managing, preventing and reducing illness. Along with our partners, we nurture the connections our communities need to thrive and strengthen the health of all Albertans.

*The Press*

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## Community Lunch Box sees growing demand in Whitecourt



By Haylee Winger

The Community Lunch Box Society supports more than 2,500 children and youth across Whitecourt and area, providing access to food through programs at 13 locations.

Founder Tara Baker said rising food costs and growing demand are putting added pressure on the organization as it works to meet the needs of local children and youth.

"If it were simply about rising prices, that would be one challenge to manage," Baker said. "But when the cost of providing food and the amount of food needed rise at the same time, it creates additional logistical challenges for some of our programs."

The Community Lunch Box began in 2004 with the goal of ensuring every child had an equal opportunity to learn on a full stomach.

More than two decades later, the organization has grown beyond its original Lunch Box Program. It now operates a Bottle Recycling Program, provides part-time employment opportunities and offers inclusive volunteer opportunities for people of all abilities.

Its food programs are available in local schools across both school divisions, as well as at the library and through programs for younger children and after-school activities.

Baker said the level of support a child needs can look very different from one student to the next.



Photo: Community Lunch Box

Some children may arrive at school with a full lunch but grab an orange after gym class. Another student might pick up a granola bar before an exam or have a yogurt after recess. For others, the program can provide breakfast, lunch and snacks.

Making food available in a welcoming way, without singling

children out, is an important part of the program.

"Food insecurity isn't always visible, and we don't always know what a child or family may be going through," Baker said. "Our goal isn't to decide who needs food more. Our goal is to make nutritious food accessible to kids in a welcoming

environment."

Sometimes that means providing a full lunch, while other times it may simply be an apple or a snack during the day.

"Either way, it's one less thing a child has to worry about during their day," she said.

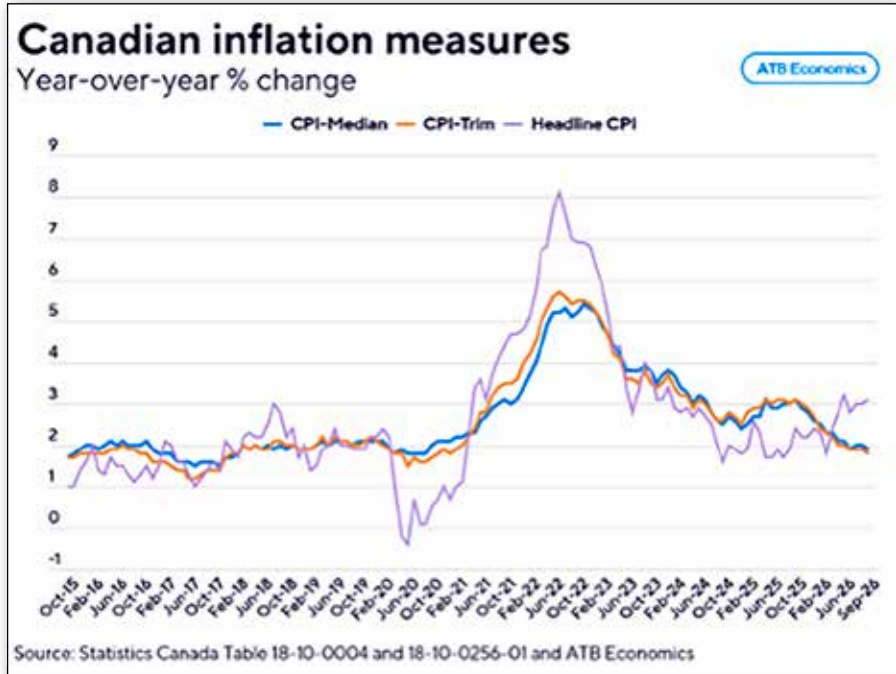
As demand grows, the organization must also consider how it

can continue meeting the needs of local children and youth in the years ahead.

Baker said the team has worked to prepare for challenges, but the combination of higher costs and increased demand has required important decisions to protect the long-term

**continued on page 7**

# Walk the line: BofC balancing fragile economy, elevated inflation



**| Mark Parsons,**  
**ATB Economics**

Walk the line: BofC balancing fragile economy, elevated inflation

- #### Key points
- Inflation remains around 3%.
  - Core inflation measures closer to the 2% target.
  - We expect a ‘hawkish’ hold by the Bank of Canada next week.

Canadians can’t seem to catch a break from inflation. After enduring a post-pandemic surge, higher inflation has re-emerged due to the jump in energy prices following the war in Iran. We look into today’s inflation print for September and what it means for the Bank of Canada’s next move.

#### Fueling up

Canada’s consumer

price index rose 3.1% in September over the same month last year, a notch higher than the 3% reading in August.

Energy remains the culprit, with gasoline prices shooting up 28% year-over-year (y/y). Federal fuel tax relief helped, but could not offset the impact of tighter oil supplies from Strait of Hormuz disruptions.

#### Better core

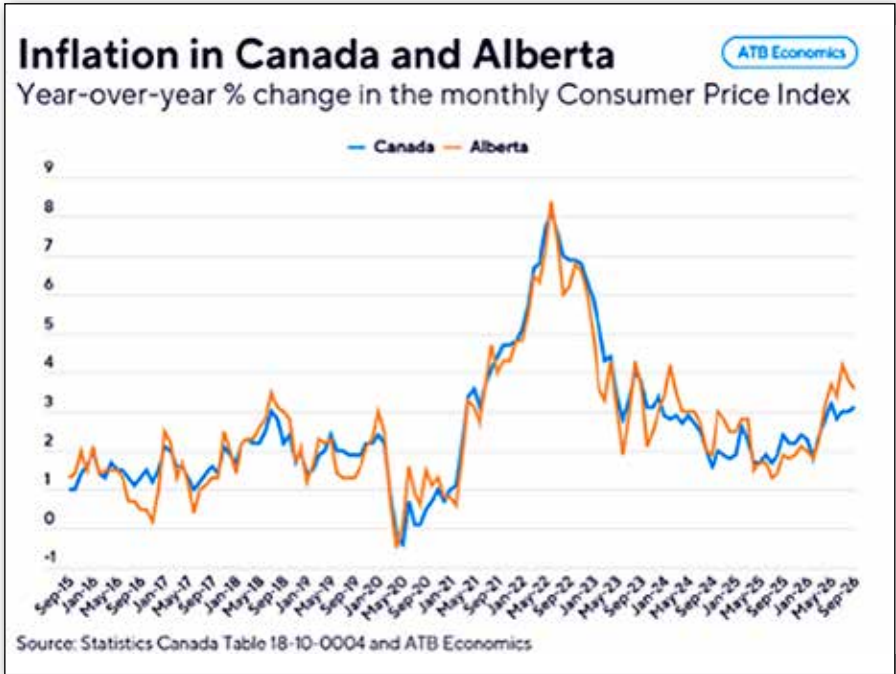
Canadians are feeling the impacts of today’s elevated inflation, compounded by past bouts of very high inflation. Regardless of the source, life feels pretty expensive.

That said, if you remove energy from the basket of goods and services, the Consumer Price Index rose at a much calmer 2.1% y/y last month.

Groceries are expensive, but are rising at a slower rate (1.7% y/y last month). And shelter costs (1.8%) are providing less force than in the recent past due to flat mortgage interest costs and cooling rental pressures. One thing we’re watching, though, is upward pressure on mortgage rates now that 5-year bond yields have increased.

We can go one step further by looking at ‘underlying’, or core, inflation measures. The Bank looks at the trim and median core inflation metrics closely, as they tell us if inflationary pressures are building at a general level. Both measures remain well behaved at 1.9% y/y for median and 1.8% y/y for trim.

However, it gets a tad more concerning when looking at more recent



trends. If you take the three-month moving average of trim and median, and annualize its month-over-month growth rate, both core metrics have been trending higher. Using this calculation, they sit closer to 2.5% in September.

#### A ‘hawkish’ hold expected

The Bank of Canada has been clear. They are willing to temporarily tolerate higher inflation caused by the surge in oil prices. However, they will not tolerate ‘generalized inflation’ caused by a passthrough of higher energy prices to other goods and services.

Then there is the economy. It’s been wobbly, with job losses in the last two months and signs pointing to a much softer third quar-

ter of GDP growth.

With the annual rate of core inflation below 2% and the economy fragile, we believe the Bank has enough breathing room to hold on a bit longer. It’s a close call, but we retain our view that the Bank remains on hold on October 28. It will come with warnings that they won’t tolerate this high inflation for much longer. They are watching inflation like a hawk and ready to hike.

#### Still higher inflation in Alberta

Alberta’s annual inflation rate ticked down slightly from 3.8% to 3.6% in September.

As in August, the main reason inflation is running hotter in Alberta is vehicle insurance premiums, up

22.8% y/y last month. This item has only a 3.8% weight in the CPI basket, but it’s enough to explain the gap between national and provincial inflation. Vehicle premiums are showing early signs of leveling off month-over-month, and the province is implementing a new “care-first” system in part to address higher premium costs.

Grocery inflation (1.8% y/y) is in line with national trends, while shelter is running a bit cooler (0.8% y/y) thanks to an outright decline in rents (-2.3% y/y).

The recent Alberta fuel tax holiday (effective October 1) will help lower inflation, but we’ll need to wait until next month to see the effect in the inflation data.

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continued from page 5

sustainability of its programs.

Funding remains one of those challenges.

Baker said there is a misconception that the Community Lunch Box receives guaranteed ongoing funding. While the organization has long-term supporters, much of its funding comes from annual grant applications, fundraising, donations and its Bottle Recycling Program.

That can make long-term planning difficult because the need for food continues regardless of whether a grant application is successful or a fundraiser meets its goal.

Keeping the programs running also requires considerable planning behind the scenes.

In a typical week, the Community Lunch Box coordinates two delivery days, usually on Mondays and Wednesdays, with adjustments made during shorter school weeks. Food must be ordered, delivery routes organized and communication maintained with staff at each of the 13 locations.

Community support also plays a major role in keeping the programs running.

“Our community partnerships are the foundation of the Community Lunch Box,” Baker said.

Businesses and residents support the organization in different

ways, including donating food or money, collecting bottles, organizing fundraisers and giving employees time to volunteer.

Baker said support does not always have to come in the form of money. Seeing Community Lunch Box stickers displayed in local businesses or thank-you cards posted where others can see them also means a great deal to the team.

“The Community Lunch Box may coordinate the programs, but it is our community that makes them possible,” she said.

Financial support for the food security and nutrition programs is currently the organization’s greatest need. The Community Lunch Box shops at local grocery stores and can use financial donations and grocery gift cards of any amount to purchase food.

There are also other practical ways to help. The organization needs garbage bags and disposable gloves for volunteers at the Bottle Recycling Centre, while gas cards help keep its collection and delivery truck on the road.

The society is also hoping to invest in a more industrial-grade shredding machine for its shredding room, which provides volunteer opportunities for some members of the team.

The Bottle Recycling Program has become another important part

of the organization’s work.

Bottle donations help support food programs for children and youth while also providing meaningful part-time employment. After a busy summer, the organization hopes to keep its crew working throughout the winter.

Baker said crew members take pride in knowing their work helps local children while allowing them to earn their own paycheques.

Creating opportunities for people who may face barriers to traditional employment is something the organization takes seriously.

Baker said there are people in the community with skills, strengths and a willingness to contribute who may simply need someone willing to give them an opportunity.

The same approach carries over into the organization’s volunteer work. The Community Lunch Box offers inclusive opportunities for people of different abilities to take part and contribute to their community.

“Whether it’s access to nutritious food, meaningful employment or a place to volunteer, sometimes the greatest thing we can offer someone is simply the opportunity to belong,” Baker said.

The organization also wants to help remove the stigma that can come with needing support.

Baker said food in-

security is not always something people can see from the outside, and no one can know everything another person or family may be dealing with.

“We want to help normalize the conversation around asking for and receiving support,” she said. “Needing a helping hand should never come with shame or judgment and offering one should be part of how we care for one another.”

The Community Lunch Box also takes on other initiatives when needs arise in the community. These have included a Back-to-School Supply Drive and Lunch & Learns aimed at bringing people together, building friendships and reducing isolation.

The organization is also looking for more opportunities to connect directly with residents. Its team welcomes visitors to its facility and can arrange tours or presentations for businesses, organizations and community groups interested in learning more about its work.

The Community Lunch Box is preparing for its annual Celebration Night on February 27, 2027, an evening focused on inclusion, connection and community.

After more than 20 years, Baker said some of the most rewarding reminders of the program’s impact come from children who received support years ago.

Some of those children have now grown up and returned as adults who give back to the community and share their own stories with the organization.

“We know asking for help isn’t easy, so when support is offered free-

ly, without judgment or shame, it creates something lasting,” Baker said. “Children grow up remembering how their community made them feel, and we’re now seeing that kindness being passed along to others.”

# 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.



## WOMBANIA™

by PETER MARINACCI

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- PRECAUTIONS ..... 1
- BASIC OPERATION ..... 2
- CARE & HANDLING .... 4
- STORAGE..... 5
- EATING TECHNIQUES... 6
- LEGAL DISCLAIMER ... 7

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### A look at the local weather

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



Wed., Oct. 28  
Cloudy with snow  
70%  
0°C  
-6°C  
NW 10 km/h  
-



Thu., Oct. 29  
Cloudy  
30%  
0°C  
-6°C  
NE 5 km/h  
-



Fri., Oct. 30  
Mainly sunny  
30%  
-1°C  
-5°C  
SE 10 km/h  
-



Sat., Oct. 31  
Mainly sunny  
60%  
1°C  
-2°C  
SE 10 km/h  
-



Sun., Nov. 1  
Clouds clearing  
20%  
3°C  
-2°C  
W 7 km/h  
-

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Woodlands County's Service Request Portal makes it easy to report issues, ask questions, request services, or share feedback about County programs and services.

Submit a request online in just a few steps:

- Create an account or continue as a guest
- Select a location (if applicable)
- Choose a request type and provide details
- Submit and receive a tracking number to get updates



To submit a request and learn more, scan the QR code, or visit: [woodlands.ab.ca/service-requests](http://woodlands.ab.ca/service-requests)

Need assistance? Call 780-778-8400

PLEASE NOTE: Service Requests are not monitored for emergencies. For emergencies, call 9-1-1. For urgent County issues requiring immediate attention, call 780-778-8400 or the County's after-hours line 1-888-870-6315.



## DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

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

In Woodlands County, if you want to build a new structure or conduct a new land use, a development permit is required.

- ✓ Ensure your business and /or project meets local bylaws
- ✓ Avoid costly delays or penalties
- ✓ Support smart, sustainable community growth

Woodlands County Planning Department is here to guide you through the process every step of the way:

- 📍 Learn what permits you need
- 🔧 Get step-by-step application support
- 📅 Stay informed on zoning rules and timelines

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



# Documentary brings 2018 B.C. wildfire stories to Whitecourt



By Haylee Winger

A documentary telling the story of communities that came together during the devastating 2018 wildfires in British Columbia is coming to Whitecourt on November 4.

*The Fire in Our Hearts*, by Swiss-Canadian filmmaker Josias Tschanz, will screen at the Magic Lantern Vista Theatre. The feature documentary follows Indigenous communities, independent firefighters and residents who worked together to protect their homes and land during the wildfires.

For Tschanz, the story is also a personal one.

He immigrated to Canada from Switzerland as a teenager and settled with his family in the remote Southside community near

Burns Lake, B.C. At a time when his family needed a fresh start, he said the community welcomed them with open arms.

"It gave us a sense of belonging almost immediately, and I've never forgotten that," Tschanz told the Whitecourt Press.

When wildfires threatened his former home in 2018, Tschanz wanted to give something back to the community that had given his family so much.

"As a filmmaker, I felt the best way I could help was by giving the people of the Southside a voice and making sure their incredible stories were heard," he said.

While making the documentary, Tschanz said one of the biggest things he learned was how resourceful and resilient people can be when they are forced to rely on one another.

During the fires,

communities across northern B.C. faced closed roads and stretched resources, while residents had to make difficult decisions about whether to leave their homes or stay behind to protect them.

Residents, volunteers, Indigenous communities and local firefighters stepped up to help one another, organizing emergency responses, transporting essential supplies and finding creative solutions when conventional systems could not keep up.

Tschanz also learned more about the Cheslatta Carrier Nation and its deep historical connection to the land. Their experiences became another part of the documentary, showing the resilience of a community that has already faced displacement and hardship.

continued on page 9



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## Local news printed on local newsprint





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albertanewsprint.com → Careers.**

continued from page 8

The process of making the film also showed Tschanz how the effects of a wildfire can continue long after the immediate danger has passed.

His parents still live on the Southside, and he has returned to the community every year since moving away. Hearing firsthand what people went through was particularly difficult because he personally knew some of those affected.

Tschanz said many residents continue to deal with PTSD, trauma and other serious physical and mental health issues as a result of their experiences.

“For some, the fires may have ended in 2018, but the emotion-

al and psychological scars remain,” he said.

Alongside the trauma were stories of courage, generosity and humour. Tschanz said people came together during the crisis, often putting the needs of others ahead of their own.

One of the challenges in making the documentary was telling those experiences fairly. Tschanz heard different perspectives on how the fires were handled and wanted the film to reflect those experiences without simplifying what happened.

“I wanted to give people the opportunity to share their experiences without reducing everything to a simple narrative of heroes and villains,” he said.

Although *The Fire in Our Hearts* focuses on the 2018 wildfires in British Columbia, Tschanz believes the story will resonate with people in Whitecourt because of the community's connections to forestry, fire-fighting and the surrounding wilderness.

“Wildfires don't recognize provincial boundaries, and neither should the conversations about how we prepare for them,” he said.

Tschanz hopes audiences leave with a greater appreciation for those who put themselves at risk to protect their communities, along with a better understanding of the importance of cooperation between residents, Indigenous

communities, firefighters and government agencies.

He also hopes the documentary encourages conversations about preparing for future wildfire seasons and ensuring smaller, remote communities have the resources and support they need.

*The Fire in Our Hearts* has received international recognition, including Best Environmental Film at the Sundar Prize Film Festival & Activists Without Borders, as well as Best Documentary and Best Cinematography at WorldFest Houston. The film is being released theatrically across Canada.

For Tschanz, the story ultimately goes beyond the wildfires themselves.

“At its heart, this is a film about what it means to belong somewhere and how far people are willing to go to protect their home,” he said.

*The Fire in Our Hearts* screens Wednesday, November 4 at the Magic Lantern Vista Theatre in Whitecourt.

## New Whitecourt app now available



By Haylee Winger

Whitecourt residents can now download the Town of Whitecourt's new mobile app for access to local information and updates.

The app provides residents with Town news and updates, a local business directory, information about walking trails and facilities, and other community information.

The Town is encour-

aging residents to delete the previous Loop 2 app and download the new version instead.

Residents are also asked to make sure general and emergency notifications are turned on in the new app so they can receive community updates and important information.

The app can be found by searching “Town of Whitecourt” in the App Store or Google Play Store.

The new app was announced by the Town on October 21.

Image: Courtesy of Josias Tschanz

# THE FIRE IN OUR HEARTS

A FILM BY JOSIAS TSCHANZ

FIRST LOOK PROGRAM  
WHISTLER FILM FESTIVAL

NOMINEE  
LEO AWARDS  
BEST ORIGINAL SCORE

BEST ENVIRONMENTAL FILM  
SUNDAR PRIZE FILM FESTIVAL

OFFICIAL SELECTION  
CATALINA FILM FESTIVAL

OFFICIAL SELECTION  
MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

BEST DOCUMENTARY FILM  
BEYOND BORDERS FILM FESTIVAL

BEST ENVIRONMENTAL FILM  
ACTIVISTS WITHOUT BORDERS FILM FESTIVAL

SPIRIT AWARD  
KELOWNA FILM FESTIVAL

BEST DOCUMENTARY FILM  
WORLDPEST-HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

SEMI-FINALIST  
DUMBO FILM FESTIVAL

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If you enjoy a fast-paced, progressive work environment and you have a passion for serving the local community- then this may be the opportunity for you! We believe that our values of diversity, collaboration, innovation and mutual respect bring out the best in our team, and we are currently looking to fill the following positions:

**Job#: 26-063** – Utility Plant Operator I – Permanent, Full-Time  
– Closes October 30, 2026

Please visit [www.whitecourt.ca](http://www.whitecourt.ca) for all employment opportunities and details on how to apply.



PUZZLES & FUN

See Solutions  
page 14

SUDOKU

CROSSWORDS

HOROSCOPE

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

Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

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

Here’s How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Crossword Clues

CLUES ACROSS

1. El Dorado High School
5. A sculpture representing a human or animal
11. A type of return
14. Tie the knot again
15. Washington city
18. Hairlike structures
19. Mark used over a vowel
21. Explosive
23. Popular 500 car race
24. Pile up
28. Currency
29. Commercial
30. A minute amount (Scottish)
32. Mass of fish eggs
33. Baseball stat
35. Licensed accountant

36. Japanese classical theater
39. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
41. Blood group
42. Assist in wrongdoing
44. Language of Cameroon
46. Grayish-white
47. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
49. Microorganism
52. Strong social customs
56. Calm and dependable
58. Congressman
60. Force
62. As a result of this document
63. A main branch of Islam

CLUES DOWN

1. Make a mistake

|    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|--|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4 |    | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10 |    |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| 11 |    |    |   |    | 12 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |  | 13 |    |    |    |    |
| 14 |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |    | 15 |    |    |    |    |  | 16 | 17 |    |    |    |
|    | 18 |    |   |    |    |    |    |    | 19 |    |    |    |    |  |    |    |    | 20 |    |
|    |    |    |   |    | 21 |    | 22 |    |    |    |    | 23 |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |   |    |    | 24 |    | 25 | 26 | 27 |    | 28 |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |   |    | 29 |    |    | 30 |    |    | 31 |    | 32 |  |    |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |   |    | 33 |    | 34 |    | 35 |    |    |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| 36 | 37 | 38 |   |    | 39 |    |    | 40 |    |    | 41 |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| 42 |    |    |   | 43 |    | 44 |    |    | 45 |    |    |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| 46 |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |    | 47 |    | 48 |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |
| 49 |    |    |   |    | 50 | 51 |    |    | 52 |    | 53 | 54 | 55 |  |    |    |    |    |    |
|    | 56 |    |   |    |    |    | 57 |    | 58 |    |    |    |    |  |    |    |    |    | 59 |
|    |    |    |   |    | 60 |    |    |    | 61 |    |    |    |    |  |    |    | 63 |    |    |
|    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |   |    | 62 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |  |    |    |    |    |    |

2. American DJ Rick
3. Fictional Asimov planet
4. Coughed out
5. Singing to one's lover
6. Scotland's longest river
7. One of the six noble gases
8. Body art
9. Two-toed sloth
10. Electronic counter-countermeasures
12. A foolish person
13. Of the wind
16. Mansion
17. Sound
20. English river
22. Business symbol
25. Exclamation of surprise
26. Pouch
27. Individually
29. Satisfaction
31. The bill in a restaurant
34. Japanese delicacy
36. Port in southern Japan
37. Double-reed instruments
38. Center
40. "The Mount Rushmore State"
43. Soldier
45. Indicates position
48. Beauty treatment: \_\_-pedi
50. Nonsense (slang)
51. Republic of Ireland
53. Ballplayers' tools
54. American state
55. Clusters of a fern frond
57. Patriotic women's group
58. A person's brother or sister
59. Breed of sheep
61. Of I

ARIES  
(March 21 - April 20)  


Aries, be especially patient and affectionate towards your loved ones this week. Someone close to you will need your help, and only you can provide it.

TAURUS  
(April 21 - May 21)  


Taurus, after many months spent figuring out what you want in life, this week you may finally be able to put a plan of action in motion. Enjoy the ride.

GEMINI  
(May 22 - June 21)  


Gemini, clear your mind of cobwebs and any other errant thoughts. Right now you need to relax and unwind for a bit. You will feel better after a few days of recharging.

CANCER  
(June 22 - July 22)  


Cancer, you have been practical and sensible with your finances. However, this week you may be lured by a flashy purchase. If it is in the budget, then let loose.

LEO  
(July 23 - August 23)  


Leo, sometimes it is important to go with the flow and learn from others with an easygoing approach. Take time to exhale and unwind.

VIRGO  
(August 24 - September 22)  


Virgo, you may feel refreshed and energized this week . This may pave the way to some new ideas, including a change of scenery or even a new job.

LIBRA  
(September 23 - October 23)  


Libra, an unexpected opportunity is presented to you in the days ahead. Give it some thought, but do not hesitate to take advantage of this exciting situation.

SCORPIO  
(October 24 - November 22)  


Scorpio, a public gathering in the near future may attract several people, including some you are interested in meeting. Take the first step and introduce yourself.

SAGITTARIUS  
(Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)  


It is alright to have some doubts when you are trying something new, Sagittarius. Just don't let those doubts get the better of you and derail your plans.

CAPRICORN  
(Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)  


An important decision is looming on the horizon, Capricorn. Take some time to look inward as you try to choose the best path to take.

AQUARIUS  
(January 21 - February 18)  


Aquarius, think about a purchase before you barrel through full steam ahead. Check your accounts and make sure your finances are in check before you buy anything new.

PISCES  
(February 19 - March 20)  


Others appreciate your authenticity, Pisces. Stay true to yourself and you will have no regrets. Encourage others to do the same when they seek your input.

PRESCRIPTIONS WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

AUTHORIZATION  
BRANDS  
COATED  
COMPOUNDING  
CONTRAINDICATION  
COPYAY  
DISPENSE  
FORMULARY  
GENERIC  
MEDICATION  
MOUTH  
OTC  
PHARMACY  
PRESCRIPTION  
PRO RE NATA  
REFILL  
SIDE EFFECT  
SIGNA  
STATIM  
SUBLINGUAL  
TOPICAL



PUBLIC NOTICE

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Whitecourt

CAMPING SEASON IS WINDING DOWN....



Residents throughout Whitecourt are getting ready to winterize and store their Recreational Vehicles (RVs) for the season. The Town of Whitecourt reminds residents that Land Use Bylaw 1577 and Traffic Bylaw 1573 outline guidelines and regulations for the parking of RVs on residential properties and streets. Below are some frequently asked questions regarding RV parking.

**What vehicles are considered RVs?**  
Motor homes, fifth wheel trailers, holiday trailers, and boats are all considered recreational vehicles under Land Use Bylaw 1577.

**Where can residents park their RVs during the winter?**  
During the winter, RVs must be stored beside or behind the house. From November 1 to March 31, on residential properties, one recreational vehicle may be stored on site. No portion of the recreational vehicle may be located any further forward than the front of the home (minimum of 6.1m from the front property line).

**Can residents park unattached trailers on a local street?**  
No, unattached trailers cannot be parked on town streets at any time. This includes (but is not limited to) tent trailers, travel trailers, fifth wheel trailers, boat trailers, utility trailers, campers not mounted on truck, etc.

**Can an RV parked on a local street or on a private property be utilized for sleeping?**  
No, an RV parked on a local street or highway cannot be utilized for sleeping. RV's are not permitted to be occupied for temporary accommodations except within approved campground locations.

**What are the fines for the improper parking of an RV and utility vehicle?**  
Fines can be issued according to Town Bylaws and Provincial Legislation.  
• Parking RVs in prohibited areas - \$300 fine for first offence under Land Use Bylaw 1577. Subsequent fines will apply for non-compliance.  
• Unattached Trailers - \$100 fine under Traffic Bylaw 1573  
• Parked over 72 hours – up to a \$324 penalty, plus towing cost under the Traffic Safety Act

For more information, contact the Planning & Development Department at 780-778-2273 or visit [www.whitecourt.ca](http://www.whitecourt.ca).



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Notice of amendment to franchise fee for the Town of Whitecourt  
to be filed by FortisAlberta Inc. for acknowledgement  
by the Alberta Utilities Commission

**Application Summary**  
FortisAlberta Inc. will file an application with the Alberta Utilities Commission, at the direction of the Town of Whitecourt, requesting acknowledgement of the new franchise fee of 9.14 per cent for the Town of Whitecourt.

The current franchise fee of 7.09 per cent will change to 9.14 per cent, effective January 1, 2027. The franchise fee percentage is applied to the distribution tariff, typically consisting of both distribution and transmission charges. Based on the typical monthly consumption of 625 kilowatt hours, the average monthly franchise fee paid by an average residential customer is expected to increase by \$1.74 to \$7.31.

The franchise fee is charged in accordance with the franchise agreement between the Town of Whitecourt and FortisAlberta Inc., approved by the Commission in Decision 2014-152.

You may send your objections, concerns about, or support for the application in writing to the Town of Whitecourt or FortisAlberta Inc. on or before November 4, 2026, at:

Town of Whitecourt  
Mrs. Cherie Van Der Meer, Assistant Controller  
5004 – 52 Avenue, Box 509, Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N6  
Email: [cherievandermeer@whitecourt.ca](mailto:cherievandermeer@whitecourt.ca)

FortisAlberta Inc.  
Mr. Chris McCleave, Director, Stakeholder & Government Affairs  
320 17 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta, T2S 2V1  
email: [stakeholderrelations@fortisalberta.com](mailto:stakeholderrelations@fortisalberta.com)

Except for information designated confidential by the Commission, any information or materials, including personal information, that are provided as part of a Commission proceeding will become part of the public record.

If no submissions are received, or if submissions are received from a party not directly affected, or if submissions are frivolous, vexatious or of little merit, the Commission may render a decision on the application without further notice or without a public hearing.

**For more information**  
For more information on how to file a submission, please contact the Commission directly at 310-4282 (in Alberta) or 1-833-511-4282 (outside Alberta), or by email at [info@auc.ab.ca](mailto:info@auc.ab.ca). An information package, providing an explanation of the process and assistance on how to participate in the proceeding, will be immediately provided to any person who inquires with the Commission.

For a paper copy of the franchise agreement, please contact either the applicant or the municipality at:

Town of Whitecourt  
Mrs. Cherie Van Der Meer, Assistant Controller  
5004 – 52 Avenue, Box 509, Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N6  
Email: [cherievandermeer@whitecourt.ca](mailto:cherievandermeer@whitecourt.ca)

FortisAlberta Inc.  
Mr. Chris McCleave, Director, Stakeholder & Government Affairs  
320 17 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta, T2S 2V1  
email: [stakeholderrelations@fortisalberta.com](mailto:stakeholderrelations@fortisalberta.com)

The Alberta Utilities Commission is an independent, quasi-judicial regulatory body responsible for making decisions about utility-related applications.

Issued on October 21, 2026.

Alberta Utilities Commission

BOOK YOUR AD NOW

Call Valerie Winger at 780.706.1858  
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The Press

# PUBLIC NOTICE

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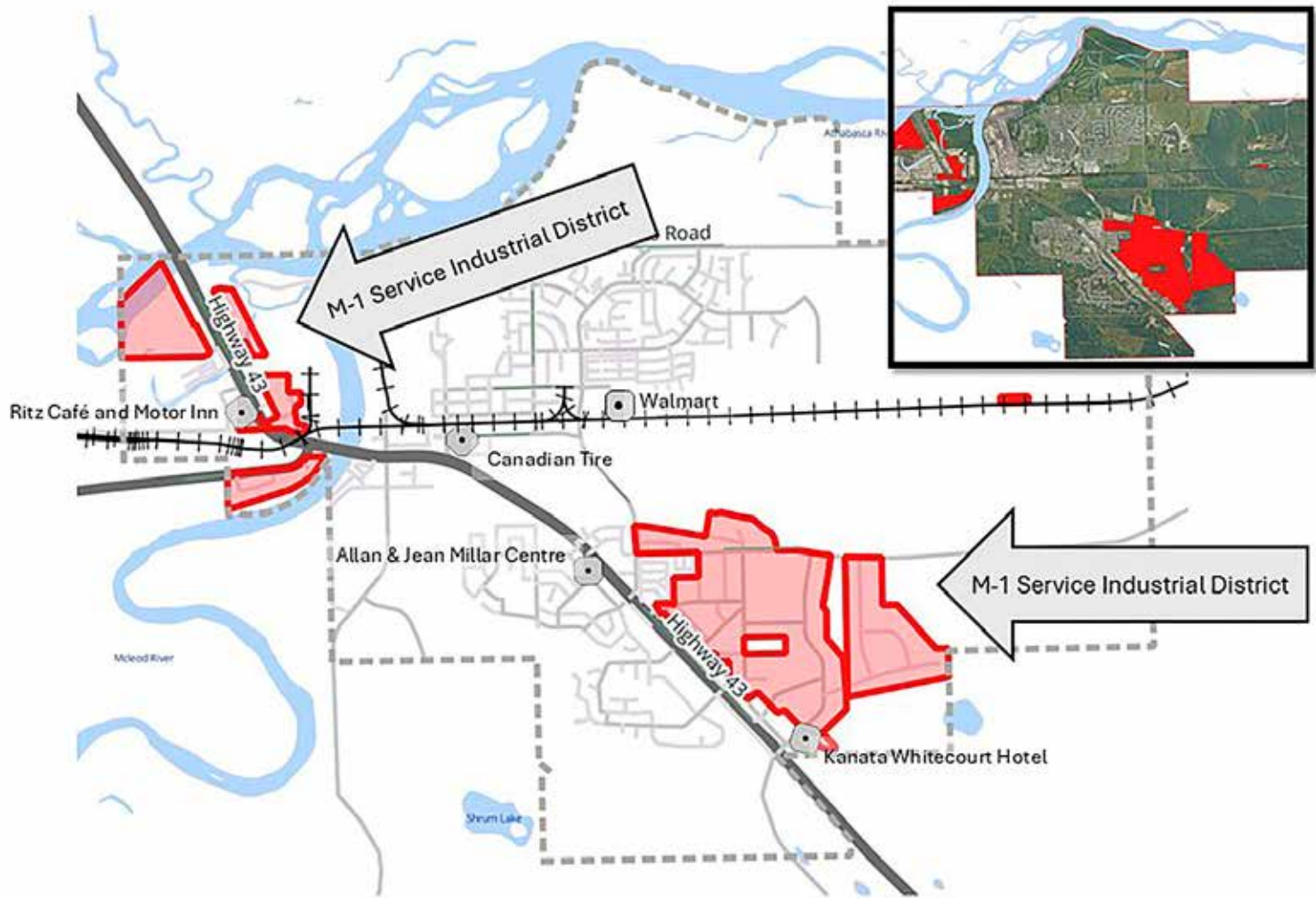


## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

### PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO LAND USE BYLAW 1577 NOVEMBER 09, 2026 AT THE FOREST INTERPRETIVE CENTRE 3002 33 STREET COUNCIL CHAMBERS

This amendment proposes to add Funeral Home as a discretionary use in the M-1 Service Industrial Land Use District.

“FUNERAL HOME” means development used for the preparation of the dead for viewing, or burial, and the holding of funeral services.



#### Participation Procedures:

**Public Information Session - 3:30 pm Monday, November 9, 2026, in the Forest Interpretive Centre lobby.** This is an in-person session only. This is an opportunity to learn more about the proposed changes and ask questions in an interactive setting.

**Public Hearing – 4:00 pm Monday, November 9, 2026, in the 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 both in person and electronically. All presentations are limited to five minutes each and must include the presenter's name and address. No registration is required for in-person participation; however, PowerPoint slides or handouts must be emailed to [stephanieschaffner@whitecourt.ca](mailto:stephanieschaffner@whitecourt.ca) prior to noon on Thursday, November 5, 2026.

- 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, November 5, 2026. Written submissions can 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, attention: Stephanie Schaffner.
  - Please note the following:
    - Written submissions must include the name and address of the submitter.
    - 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 5 MB or sent as a .zip file will NOT be accepted by the Town of Whitecourt email server.
    - Only static submissions (such as written content or images) can be included; video and audio submissions are not supported.
- Electronic Presentations:** Individuals or organizations who wish to make a presentation by video conference must **pre-register with the Legislative Manager by emailing [administration@whitecourt.ca](mailto:administration@whitecourt.ca) prior to noon on Thursday, November 5, 2026.**
- All written comments and pre-registration emails must clearly state 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. Proposed amendments can be found on the Town of Whitecourt website at [www.whitecourt.ca](http://www.whitecourt.ca).
- Comments submitted either verbally or in writing may be recorded in the minutes of the Public Hearing or otherwise be made public.
- The Public Hearing will be livestreamed via the Town of Whitecourt YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/@WhitecourtTown>

#### Contact Information:

For questions about the proposed bylaw or the Public Hearing process, please contact Stephanie Schaffner, Planning and Development Department, at [stephanieschaffner@whitecourt.ca](mailto:stephanieschaffner@whitecourt.ca) or 780-778-2273.

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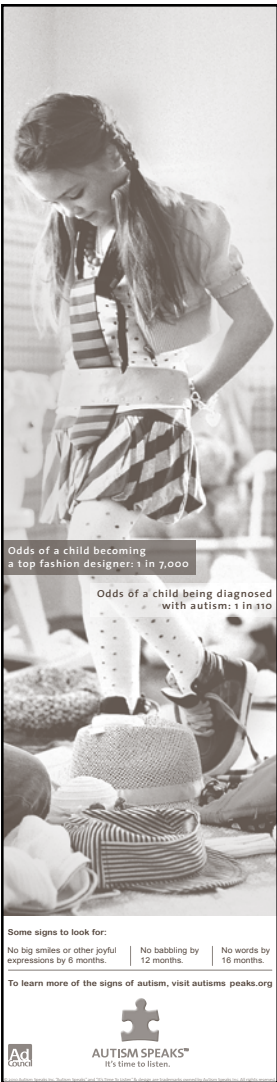
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## Alberta offers rural households up to \$1,000 for satellite internet



By Haylee Winger

Rural and remote Alberta households without access to high-speed internet may be eligible for a provincial rebate of up to \$1,000 to help cover the cost of satellite internet equipment and installation.

The Alberta Satellite Rebate Program is intended for households that lack high-speed internet access and are not included in existing government-funded broadband expansion projects.

The one-time rebate covers up to \$1,000 in eligible costs for low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellite internet equipment, installation and applicable taxes. Because LEO satellites orbit closer to Earth than traditional communications satellites, they can provide high-speed internet with less signal delay.

To qualify, a satellite internet service must provide download speeds of at least 50 megabits per second, upload speeds of at least 10 megabits per second and latency of 50 milliseconds or less.

Both homeowners and renters are eligible for the program, but only one rebate is available per household. Each verified Alberta.ca account can apply for rebates for up to

two households. Property owners seeking rebates for more than two eligible households must appeal through the program portal.

Applicants must purchase and pay for their equipment and installation upfront before submitting a rebate application through the program portal. Those who made eligible purchases after August 11, 2026, can apply for a rebate through the portal until March 31, 2027.

Covered expenses include satellite dishes and receiver kits purchased from authorized vendors, installation services and necessary supplies such as mounting poles, brackets and additional cable. Applicable taxes on eligible equipment and installation are also covered.

Optional accessories, such as Wi-Fi routers and extenders, are not eligible. Monthly internet subscription fees and hardware rental costs are also excluded, along with purchases made outside the program's eligible dates. Business internet connections are not covered.

Starlink kits currently meet the program's technical requirements. Equipment must be purchased from an authorized seller, and customers buying directly from Starlink must purchase the hardware rather than rent it, as rental costs

are ineligible.

Residents can check whether their home qualifies using the program's online eligibility map. The map relies on data from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's National Broadband Map to identify locations without high-speed broadband access and without a planned government-funded expansion project. However, eligibility shown on the map is subject to a final review by the province.

Residents who believe their address has been incorrectly classified can appeal through the program portal. They must provide evidence from all active internet service providers in their area confirming that service meeting the program's minimum speed requirements is unavailable at their address. Accept-

able evidence includes emails from providers or screenshots of their address-checking tools.

To check eligibility, residents can enter their home address, legal land description or GPS coordinates, place a pin on their property and select the eligibility check option.

Applicants must have a verified Alberta.ca account and apply after their first month of internet service. Receipts and invoices for eligible expenses must be submitted with the application, along with direct deposit information.

The application period closes March 31, 2027. More information, including the eligibility map and application portal, is available through the Government of Alberta's Alberta Satellite Rebate Program webpage.

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