

Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

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Allan Johnston photo

The scene last Wednesday outside Kindersley as Prime Minister Harper announced the end of the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly.

A new grain-marketing era:

Canadian Wheat Board monopoly ends

BY LESLIE-ANN KROEKER

For the first time in his life, Moosomin farmer Murray Bruce woke up Wednesday morning with the ability to do what he pleased with his wheat.

He figured he wouldn't take much time to exercise his new rights.

Bruce was one of the first farmers in the province to sell his wheat to a producer without first going through the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). He sold 2,500 bushels to Parrish & Heimbecker Wednesday morning.

"I woke up and thought 'I can do this now' so I did," said Bruce.

The CWB monopoly officially came to an end last Wednesday, eight months after Bill C-18 was passed in parliament.

Since the 1940s, the CWB was the sole purchaser and marketer of the West's wheat and barley—farmers could sell their grains only to the Wheat Board. The end of the monopoly now gives farmers the opportunity to sell their own grain and barley to whomever they want.

The CWB will still exist under a new logo and will run on a voluntary basis; which means producers can choose whether or not to sell their grain to the board.

There has been much debate whether the end of the monopoly is a step in the right direction or will have a negative effect on

grain markets.

Those who oppose the end of the monopoly say producers will now have to deal with large international grain companies, and might not always get the best price for their grain—which the Wheat Board would regulate in the past.

But those in favor of the end of the monopoly say it will allow farmers to finally control their own prices and get better pay outs in the open market.

For Bruce, being able to have sole control of his wheat is a dream come true.

"It's a wonderful thing. It's a great achievement and I was beginning to think I wasn't going to see it in my lifetime—the ability to sell my own wheat. It really is a market-freedom day," said Bruce.

Bruce said the whole idea of a monopoly was outdated and in the end hurt the wheat and barley farmers by preventing them from capitalizing on their products. He looks forward to wheat becoming more of a cash crop.

"It was something that was so entrenched in our politics and in the farming community. It was so ludicrous a program that they just didn't know how to get rid of it until Harper and Ritz had enough gumption to keep pushing it through," said Bruce.

"Now we can actually grow a field of wheat, combine it and sell it that very day.

We can have a cheque for it the same day instead of waiting eight months."

Because he has other commodities on his 8,000 acre farm, Bruce says adjusting to selling his own wheat will not be difficult.

"Eighty per cent of our other commodities we've been able to sell, it was just wheat and barley we couldn't. It's not going to be an adjustment, we've been selling our canola and oats on an open market forever."

"It's our grain now, it never used to be, it was the Wheat Board's. Not anymore."

He said with more grain buyers coming in the open market, it will create an even greater opportunity for producers in the future.

"More options, more choices. It's exciting," said Bruce.

MARKETING-FREEDOM DAY IN KINDERSLEY

Prime Minister Stephen Harper, along with federal Minister of Agriculture Gerry Ritz, was on a farm outside Kindersley, Sask. to make the official announcement Wednesday afternoon.

"They said it couldn't be done, but we did it," said Harper in his speech.

"Never again will Western farmers... be told how they can and can't market their products."

Speaking at a podium that read 'market-

ing freedom', the Prime Minister acknowledged the farmers who had gone before legislation in the past and argued against the monopoly, calling them courageous. He congratulated them for their fight and officially pardoned those farmers who went against the 'unjust legislation.'

"To them, much of this victory is owed," said Harper.

MP for the Souris-Moose Mountain, Ed Komarnicki said pardoning past offenders of the Wheat Board was a historic moment for the country.

"The pardon was given to any of those who have received convictions as a result of their civil disobedience in terms of working against the law they felt was unjust," said Komarnicki.

"There will certainly be a handful or more who were directly involved and sentenced. . . It is certainly an unusual occurrence. It doesn't happen on a regular basis."

Harper went on to say Wednesday he is proud of his government for dismantling the monopoly.

"Our government has simply given to Western Canadian grain farmers the exact freedom that already belongs to similar farmers in the rest of this country," said Harper.

"This truly is a great day."

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Kevin Weedmark photo

This canola crop in bloom near Rocanville may be a field of gold in more ways than one. It should produce a strong return for the farmer who planted it this year. Due to a major drought in the U.S., most commodity prices are high across the country.

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Spreading the word on Canadian farming

BY LESLIE-ANN KROEKER
John Varty is on a quest to give farmers a voice, and is travelling across Canada on a tractor in order to do so.

He says his mission is simple; to travel across Canada, record the stories of farmers and create a documentary in an effort to show Canadians the true essence of farming.

Varty, who is a former professor at McMaster University, says the goal is to help the everyday person realize the struggles farmers face. He also wants to give people a first hand look at what exactly goes into the food they eat.

One would only have to look at Varty's souped up tractor with his homemade farmhouse attached coming down the highway to know that he is committed to the project.

"I know it looks a little gimmicky, but we're very serious. I could've flown around the countryside doing interviews. But I think this (tractor) has attracted attention to the concept and it has gratified farmers in that they see we are willing to not just take a big university grant and do this. Our hearts are in it," said Varty.

Varty, along with his partner Molly Daley, arrived in Saskatchewan Tuesday night and marked their first stay in the province by spending the night just outside of Moosomin.

The pair hitched their tractor and mobile farmhouse in a site at Fieldstone campground and spent most of Wednesday in town.

Their travelling farmhouse is hand made, built from leftover scraps from Varty's family farm. He converted a basic steel shack into a certified travelling house without spending too much money, which Varty said would be contrary to the whole point of the trip.

The farmhouse doubles as the couple's bedroom, equipment storage and kitchen, when they do manage to buy a few groceries.

Varty and Daley started their adventure last summer in Charlottetown P.E.I. with the hopes of making their way to B.C. that September. Daley admits she was a little overzealous

with the timing of the trip.

"I decided to call it for the winter because it would've been too cold and we really didn't want to rush through the Prairies. This thing isn't exactly professionally insulated," said Daley, tapping at the couple's farm house.

Varty and Daley started up again last June out of Ontario with the hopes of making it through the rest of the country by September.

"It seemed like an impossibility, but I kept plugging away at the notion. If I would've thought more about it, I probably would've not done it," said Varty.

The response so far has been really positive.

"I haven't talked to anybody who thought this was a stupid idea. I'm sure there are a lot of farmers out there who thought 'what does he know?' But everyone (else) says it's a really neat idea," said Varty.

Daley is originally from New York City and will openly admit she is not a farmer, but she has no farming background, but says that works well with what the couple is hoping to achieve.

"I come from a sales and marketing background and looked at it as my next big project. Aside from that, I'm John's on-the-ground litmus test. I'm exactly the type of person we'd want to reach with the documentary. If I'm surprised by something or didn't know something, then he can see it's a valuable thing. It's a real learning journey for me. I've gone from city girl to farm girl pretty quickly," said Daley.

They have done drop-in visits on certain farmers, but they encourage farmers to contact them with their inquiries so they can be a part of the documentary.

The word has spread about what they are trying to accomplish. The couple gets media attention virtually everywhere they go, and also do speaking conferences and trade shows.

They are not hard pressed to find people to talk to them, even getting messages on their window when they park at Tim Hortons for a coffee.

"If anything, we can't get to all the places we'd



Leslie-Ann Kroeker Photo

John F. Varty (right) and Molly Daley are travelling across Canada on this tractor and homemade farmhouse to gather information for a documentary that will take an in-depth look at rural farming across Canada. They stopped in Moosomin last Tuesday and Wednesday.

like anymore," said Daley.

As for money, the tractor was donated by Massey Ferguson and they also have a couple of other sponsorships, but everything else comes from the pair's savings. They have a donation box on the side of the farmhouse and have been treated to some hospitality, whether from farmers handing them a few steaks, or complimentary rooms at the Fort Garry hotel in Winnipeg.

But they admit that the point of using the means of transportation is to get a close-up look at farm living.

"We're poor, we're dirty. We're routinely wondering where the next source of money is coming from," said Daley with a laugh.

"My family is all farmers. I do know how (disappointing) it is when the prices drop or you go to the elevator and don't get the price you thought you should, when you have two calves in a row die in the freezing nights of March.

I have seen that before and have some experience in it. That is a big part of what prompted me to do this," said Varty.

It is no doubt that Varty is passionate about his project. As a former professor of agricultural economics, he has a wealth of knowledge he is more than eager to share.

"What I teach is important but only 200 people a year hear it. So I thought maybe I'll try to take a bigger audience and start a national conversation about farm issues in Canada," says Varty.

Varty admits he is an amateur film maker, but knew he had to create something to make his quest visible to the public, and producing a film would do just that.

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Farmers look forward to marketing own grain

Continued from page 1
 Alan Johnston of Johnston Grain Marketing in Welwyn was on hand Wednesday afternoon in Kindersley to celebrate. He met and shook hands with Prime Minister Harper and congratulated him on the day.

"It was a pretty happy day. Everyone was really just tickled pink," said Johnston.

"People flew in from Winnipeg. Two guys flew in from Calgary that I saw. There were piles of trucks and cars that drove in from all over the country... It was just a day everyone expected. It went well."

For Johnston, it was an emotional day as well. He said he has been fighting 40 years for the change.

"Since I was farming up to when I was a grain broker I've been fighting for an open market," said Johnston.

Johnston was so passionate to see the end of the monopoly that he flew down to Ottawa in November to see Bill C-18 passed.

"I was a part of all of it. It was in my hide, I had to be there," said Johnston.

He said being under the monopoly was a horrible thing for the grain market in western Canada.

"It was the worst thing that ever happened to western Canada. Keep in mind it was only western Canada, not throughout (the country). It cost western Canada millions of dollars over the last 67 years," said Johnston.

He is already beginning to see the effects of a free market.

"We are already moving up here. A bushel is a dollar higher than we ever had before... I traded winter wheat out of Redvers last week at \$7.25 (a bushel). We've never seen those prices before. There's a drought in the United States that's helping the markets, but there have been droughts before and we were never able to capitalize. We never saw it come back to the producer, now we can," said Johnston.

However, unlike Johnston, not everyone was happy with the change. Several groups have been formed in favor of the keeping the monopoly, one being the Friends of the Canadian Wheat Board.

"By destroying the world's largest marketer of



Leslie-Ann Kroefer photo

Chris Thomas (left) of Parrish and Heimbecker in Moosomin hands Murray Bruce a cheque last Thursday morning after Bruce sold 2,500 bushels of wheat.

wheat and barley, Stephen Harper has transferred a tremendous amount of wealth and influence away from farmers," said Stewart Wells, Chair of Friends of the Canadian Wheat Board last week in a press release that responded to Harper's announcement.

Wells noted that the farmer-controlled CWB was always an advocate for the farmers and had the resources to be a strong voice. "There is no longer any meaningful influence by farmers inside the grain trade," said Wells.

But according to Johnston, there wasn't a single person in the crowd Wednesday who wasn't happy to hear the announcement.

MP Ed Komarnicki said Prime Minister Harper's announcement was a historic moment for the province and allowing farmers to take control of their wheat and barley will be good for southeast Saskatchewan.

"There were a lot of farmers attending who have been promoting the idea of being able to market the grain as they see fit for a long time against some very difficult odds. It was very gratifying to see them there," said Ko-

marnicki. He has spoken to several farmers in the area who are excited for the upcoming season.

"They can now have the choice to go with the CWB or to go with any other buyer. They are able to deliver their crops to whoever they wish at a price that is going market price. In fact, some farmers today mentioned to me that they were picking off winter wheat and able to make sales," said Komarnicki.

Komarnicki said selling grain should have always been seen as a matter of choice, and not an imposition from the Canadian government.

"It's a fundamental principle. They own the land, they do the investments for the farm land, they grow the crop, they take the risk, they do all of that and it seems odd that (they didn't) have the ability to sell their grain as they see fit. It's something that other farmers in other areas in Canada could do and it was long overdue in terms of giving farmers the opportunity to decide."

With demand high and the prices looking to be at good levels this year, Komarnicki said farmers will be able to

adjust accordingly. "It's an important step. I know there will be a steep learning curve for everyone involved in the industry but I think in time everyone will be able to adjust, including the Wheat Board," said Komarnicki.

THE FUTURE OF THE WHEAT BOARD AND PRAIRIE FARMING
 Because of the end of the monopoly, the CWB has shown major signs of adjusting. It just recently signed handling agreements with all western Canadian grain companies.

Since the CWB does not have its own elevators in the province, other operations are needed in order for farmers to sell their grain to the board. Now, producers who still choose to contract with the CWB can deliver wheat and barley to any grain elevator across the Prairies.

Ten companies, including big names like Parrish & Heimbecker, Viterra, Cargill and Louis Dreyfus have all signed on with the CWB to be grain-handling providers.

"The future is bright for CWB and the farmers we serve," said CWB CEO Ian

Johnston on the other hand isn't too sure the CWB will be as successful in the next few years.

"I'm sure some people will use it, I just don't know what last week. "We now have the necessary business arrangements in place to operate in the new grain-marketing environment." "They will be taking steps to be a competitive force in the market and I trust that farmers that wish to utilize their services will ensure that they will stay a positive force in the marketplace," said Komarnicki.

"I'm sure many will (still use it) but it will be in a large measure what the best deal is for them and I'm sure that's how many will perceive it."

Johnston on the other hand isn't too sure the CWB will be as successful in the next few years.

"I'm sure some people will use it, I just don't know

if it's as much as Mr. White expects. He's calling for maybe 40 per cent of the grain, so we'll just have to see," said Johnston.

Bruce said he doesn't know any farmers in the area who were against the Wheat Board, just their policies.

"The Wheat Board will still go strong. They are just one of the other options we have to sell our grain. We can still pool it (or) we can sell it on our own. So nothing has really changed for any farmer who would like to use it. It's still all available to them," said Bruce.

"There are farmers out there who don't want to deal with the marketing of their grain, don't want to have to watch it. They just want to be able to grow it, haul it in and let someone else do the marketing for them."

Chris Thomas, the general manager of the Moosomin Parrish & Heimbecker terminal, says the next year will be a transition period for everyone in the industry but isn't too worried about the direction farming is taking.

"It will be a transition for all of us. There are things popping up in the computer system already that they haven't thought of. I think it's great though. The marketing-freedom for farmers now it pretty important," said Thomas.

"For us, we used to source wheat for the Wheat Board and then have to buy it back from them to send it to our own mills. Now we can skip that step. That is going to be good for us."

"Nothing has changed for the people who want to leave it status quo, they still have the Wheat Board. But we also have the chance to market how we want and that's why today is so special," said Bruce.

"The future looks bright."

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- 2008 GMC K2500HD SLE CREW 4X4**
6.6L Duramax, ACT, PW, PL, PS, AP3, PDD, PDF, NZZ, JLI, UY2, UK3, G80, Brown, 115,000 kms **\$35,995**
- 2006 CHEV AVALANCHE LT2 4X4**
5.3L V8, ACT, PW, PL, PS, BUCKETS, CF5, STEPS, AU0, 17"alum, GCD, Z82, Red, 158,883 kms **\$15,995**
- 2011 GMC 1500 SLT CREW 4X4**
5.3L V8, AC, Cruise, Tilt, PW, PL, PS, 40/20/40, Lift Cap, Black, 55,612 kms **\$31,995**
- 2010 GMC 1500 SLT CREW 4X4**
5.3L V8, AC, Cruise, Tilt, PW, PL, PS, Nav, 18" alum, White, 40,587 kms **\$34,995**
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5.3L V8, AC, Cruise, Tilt, PW, PL, PS, Buckets, 17" alum, Blue Granite, 88,900 kms **\$26,995**
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Unable to get answers:

More Manitoba farmers cite lost paperwork

BY LESLIE-ANN KROEKER
Lost paperwork, unanswered phone calls and a general sense of hopelessness.

These are a few of the recurring themes in the lives of many farmers who have land in the Assiniboine Valley in western Manitoba.

The land, which is often subject to flooding when the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle rivers overflow their banks, was flooded once again this year.

This is the third year the farmland lays underwater, leaving many farmers frustrated and looking for answers.

The Shellmouth Dam, situated 24 km northwest of Russell, was designed to assist in water flow and prevent potential flooding. Many farmers in the area believe the dam was operated incorrectly and the flooding could have been prevented.

A number of farmers have cited that the claims they do send to the Emergency Measure Organizations (EMO) have gone missing, and they haven't received compensation from last year's flood, let alone this year's.

Three weeks ago, The World-Spectator spoke to farmers in the St. Lazare fighting with the issue.

Now, Gary Kochanowski, who farms directly under the Shellmouth Dam, says he is undergoing the same problem.

"We thought that must be just us. After reading the article, we realized we weren't the only ones," said Kochanowski.

Like the St. Lazare farmers, he is frustrated with both the way the government managed the Shellmouth dam and how the EMO claims are being handled.

Kochanowski has filed his EMO claims for the 2011 flood damages three times now, each time with a separate adjuster who claims to have lost his paperwork.

"By the third inspection, I gave up. I thought I'm not touring anyone around anymore if you guys can't get it straight," said Kochanowski.

He has received no compensation from the 2011 flood.

This year, Kochanowski was able to seed his 350 acres of farmland in the valley and paid for the inputs. It now lies under three feet of water.

Because Kochanowski

has land above the valley as well, crop insurance will not pay for the destroyed crop because he will average out with some harvest at the end of the season. But Kochanowski says it's not about getting crop insurance.

"There's nothing crop insurance can do to deal with it. We have a blended crop so it evens out. . . I need more than just crop insurance because I have to have something back from my loss," said Kochanowski.

He says it's about getting the inputs back after seeding his land and watching it flood.

He called a number of offices to speak to government officials about his concerns, without having much luck and having his phone calls redirected to several departments—none of which gave him answers.

"My main concern is that I can't deal with the economic loss. It's going to put us under. You can't put out hundreds of thousands of dollars and get nothing back. I can't even sell the fish in the water on my land," said Kochanowski.

"There are two issues here; EMO is one, that's trying to get back your land. And getting something back from our investment on land is a separate issue."

The Shellmouth Dam Act passed in 2010, provides

for 100 per cent compensation for farms flooded in the Assiniboine Valley, if the floods are deemed artificial.

An engineering firm has been hired to assess whether the damage is artificial or natural for the 2011 flood, but the firm has yet to release the study.

Much like the farmers in the St. Lazare area, Kochanowski isn't too optimistic that farmers will get compensation from the Act.

"The one program that they have that is specifically designed for this. This is what it's there for. You have an Act that is specific to the area and yet you cannot get the compensation that we're told is there. . . the Valley land is very specific. The Shellmouth Dam act, should be acted upon," said Kochanowski.

"I asked one person to give me a scenario where somebody who farms can actually qualify under it but they didn't know. It's an Act well written by bureaucrats that may never pay out."

Farmers have yet to hear if the 2011 flood damage will be compensated under the Shellmouth Act. Now with this 2012 flood, Kochanowski is concerned that it will confuse the matter even further.

"They're three years behind. People's compensation is hanging on last year's report and we

flooded again this year—without getting last year's in," said Kochanowski.

Combined with his lost EMO claims and his land being flooded again this year, Kochanowski says he is beginning to feel defeated.

"You drive past this land, it's seeded. You drive past it the next week, it's under a little bit of water. Within five days it's completely underwater and you don't want to drive by it anymore."

He has been farming his whole life in the valley and says his father never encountered these flooding issues in the past.

"I remember one flood when I was little. That dam was put in for flood control. They say it's a weather event, I give it things had changed, but they have basically shut it (the dam) when it should've stayed open."

GOVERNMENT HAS ALTERNATE SCENARIO

Along with not being compensated yet for last year's flood, Kochanowski, like other farmers in the Valley, is upset that this is the third year his land is under water and thinks it could have been prevented if the Shellmouth Dam had released water from the reservoir in February and March of 2012.

But the government would disagree, stating that no matter what, the farmers would have

flooded.

The dam refrained from lowering water in the spring, despite concerns from the Assiniboine Valley Producers, and kept it at the 1,402.5 foot level, which they say assured adequate water supply.

The Manitoba government says the Assiniboine Valley is home to low-lying and vulnerable farm land. They cite that in both 2011 and 2012, the inundation of crops was a natural occurrence and the management of the reservoir actually reduced the peak level that could have occurred on the land.

The authorities refrained from lowering the water levels because flood forecasters predicted a dry summer.

"Flood forecasters determined the spring 2012 runoff from the snow pack would be low and there were indications that the province was going into a drought period," said a provincial spokesperson.

However the rainfall in April and May was well over normal. This excessive rainfall is what the government says caused the flood.

"These rainfall events increased upstream inflows resulting in the July 1 reservoir level peak of

1,413.39 feet asl and a peak flow of 7,630 cfs," said the spokesperson.

That level—1,413.39 feet—is 10.89 feet over capacity.

The Ministry ran a 'what if' scenario which looked at lowering the dam to 1,386 feet like the Assiniboine Valley Producers requested.

In the scenario, the flood peak would be reduced from 7,630 cfs to 6,810 cfs. Even then, the land would have flooded, according to the scenario.

"(The) scenario represents significant flooding for a long duration of the Assiniboine Valley Producers' land with a minor reduction of water levels at all points along the Assiniboine River," said the spokesperson.

"Given that the Shellmouth reservoir is a multi-purpose reservoir required to meet both flood damage reduction and water supply, that basin conditions were in drought prior to spring runoff, and the inability to predict three months of 200 per cent more than normal rainfall in the months of April, May and June, it would have been inappropriate to consider the implementation of the scenario in February 2012."

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Glock Days event raises money for charity



Ed James photos

Left: The range was full at the pay as you shoot event, Glock Days, held by Wolverine Supplies at the Brandon Wildlife Club range.

Above: Range staff member Matthew Hipwell (in red) and Henry Kyle.

BY ED JAMES
On July 6 and 7, Wolverine Supplies in Virden hosted Glock Days in Brandon, with all proceeds from the event going to Westman Dreams for Kids.

Glock is the name of an Austrian gun firm that has been producing high quality firearms for over 50 years. They were the leaders in the manufacturing of firearms using polymers and a great number of Canadian police forces use the Glocks as their

standard service side arm.

The owners and staff of Wolverine Supplies in Virden recently arranged a pay as you shoot event at the Brandon Wildlife Club range. The event let anyone try out a 10 round magazine of ammunition in various Glock hand guns for \$5 a magazine.

Each individual was under the one on one contact of a range safety officer and could try the Glock pistols in the 9 mm, 45 ACP, 40 S and W and 22 LR calibres.

The two-day event attracted over 300 people and featured prize draws, a barbecue lunch, representatives from the Glock company, and the sale of handguns and accessories.

When the last round had been fired, the event have made over \$6,000 for the Westman Dream for Kids charity.

"This even allowed everyone to try out a handgun, under strict supervision, without a license and at the same time to help

out a local charity," said Danielle Hipwell, a staff member of Wolverine Supplies. "We were very pleased with the turnout of men and women of all ages who had fun, learned about handguns and helped out a great charity cause."

As a sidebar, the people who came out for the event could also see the demonstrations of IPSC style competition shooting, which is a bit more challenging than shooting regular targets.

Minot air shows raises money for flood victims

BY ED JAMES
The Minot International Airport was a busy place on July 4 with an air show of vintage and new aircraft. However, what made the show extra special was a performance by Canada's own Snowbirds.

The purpose of the airshow was to raise some money for the rebuilding efforts in Minot, which lost many of its homes in the flooding of 2011.

The Snowbirds, on a stop over in Minot for fuel, heard about the damage to hundreds of homes and offered to come back and do a full performance to help with the rebuilding process.

The driving force behind the July 4 airshow were the Pietsch brothers of Minot, who are well known in the aviator world for their trick flying demonstrations. The show started at 6 p.m. On the airport grounds were displays of classic and antique cars, military equipment from the Minot air base and a

display of flying WWII and Korean era aircraft that had been faithfully restored to their former glory days.

Also on hand were a P-51 Mustang fighter of WWII and an F-86 Sabre jet from the cold war period. The F-86 Sabre was restored and painted in the colors of the Farmers Royal Canadian Air Force Golden Hawks aerial display team. Both the Sabre and the Snowbirds did Canada proud as they demonstrated their speed and aerial acrobatics. There was a lot of crowd support towards Canadians and their aircraft at the show.

Later in the evening there was a unique fireworks display put on by Kent Pietsch. The show was called aerial pyrotechnics as he discharged fireworks from his plane wings as he flew above the crowd of thousands of people. Later, a traditional fireworks display was given which was one of the best I've



The F-86 Sabre (below) restored and painted in the colors of the Farmers Royal Canadian Air Force Golden Hawks aerial display team.

seen in years. In fact, all around the airport people were lighting their own fireworks even late into the evening as we drove home. I can say safely that Americans love their fireworks!

The air show was free,

but volunteers went about the crowd collecting donations for flood relief and rebuilding, and all the food vendors also donated their profits to the flood victims. The event was a great July 4 celebration.



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Moosomin Regional Park: A little piece of prairie paradise

By Leah-Ann Kozlowski
Nestled in the Pipestone Valley, just 15 km southwest of Moosomin, lies a little patch of land that many people in south Saskatchewan call home during the summer months.

Moosomin Regional Park is open for the summer season after the May long weekend and has thousands of visitors stream through the gates every year. Here, it's less isolated in that people are dropping over all the time," said Colleen.

"In all the years you've lived in Vancouver we didn't know any of our neighbors, but out here, you know everybody," said George.

Along with the community feel, it was the serenity of the lake life that was the main reason the Davisons decided to make the lake their permanent home. Coming from Vancouver, they say they now feel more connected to the people and nature.

"The fishing is good, the swimming is excellent. It's just a beautiful area of the province..."

—Janice Walker

"My wood working shop in Vancouver had five locks on the door. Five different kinds of lock, some were even hidden. I have one here," said George.

There is also a willingness among all the cabin owners to help out, which contributes to that community atmosphere.

"There's a huge amount of volunteerism that keeps this park operating. Other than the staff, we have a huge amount that contribute their time. We have hundreds of hundreds of hours put in by people," said George.

Being able to take her dog for a walk, hearing the neighborhood children play outside and enjoying daily visits from neighbors are just a few things Colleen loves about living at the lake.

"It's funny the number of people who left the lake and come back to live here. There's something about it, it's special," Colleen.

And they might have been onto something. Since permanently making the move, Colleen and George have noticed the lake become more of a hot spot during the summer.

"I've always wanted to move back to the country but you know what it's like with a career and a job. I love living in the country

compared to the city," said George. "It suits us to be here."

Colleen, a member of the Cottage Owners Association and George, a member of the Moosomin Park board, say there is never a dull moment at the lake because of the community feeling.

"I've seen fireworks all over the country and this venue is fantastic for fireworks," said Colleen.

"That view, said Colleen pointing out her bay windows towards the sparkling blue water. "Being able to be outside and have this whole park to enjoy. And the people."

Lake has father before him, George hopes to continue the tradition and pass down the new house to his own children. Moosomin Lake was always in the cards for their retirement, and they hope the other generations in their family can benefit from their little piece of heaven on the lake.

"Our plan is to leave it to following generations eventually. We want them to benefit from all the hard work George has done. When he was building it, he always said 'I'd like to last at least 20 years for the kids,'" said Colleen.

WORKING AT THE LAKE
About 15 staff members run the park every summer. This includes everything from maintenance workers to the toll booth operators to running the general store at the beach.

Carly Davidson is a high school student who has worked at the store for the past four summers. She said she wouldn't change her summer job for anything.

"It's relaxing. People come out here to have fun and it's just a great mood. It's not stressful at all. You just make burgers for people," said Carly.

"It's a lot more laid back than (in town)."

Carly has ties to the lake and has been coming every summer since she was born. Her family owns a cabin on the strip and she loves being able to live at the lake and work at the same time.

"I love our lake. I was raised here. I've come here every summer since I was a baby. Going boating and tubing, you just look forward to it all year," said Carly.

The 16-year-old says she has seen an influx of people visiting the park in recent years, and although this means more work for her, she likes how her job allows her to meet a variety of people.

"There's always people with accents. There are other couples from B.C. who are road tripping... you kind of get to know a lot of people," said Davidson.

known. Even in Moosomin you had people who have never been here. I think the (in their first hand) because people have more money and the change in the economy. The lake is much busier than it ever used to be," said Davidson.

The fireworks festival held in August is just one reason why the park is buzzing, according to George.

"I've seen fireworks all over the country and this venue is fantastic for fireworks," said Colleen.

Their favorite part of lake living?

"That view, said Colleen pointing out her bay windows towards the sparkling blue water. "Being able to be outside and have this whole park to enjoy. And the people."

Lake has father before him, George hopes to continue the tradition and pass down the new house to his own children. Moosomin Lake was always in the cards for their retirement, and they hope the other generations in their family can benefit from their little piece of heaven on the lake.

"Our plan is to leave it to following generations eventually. We want them to benefit from all the hard work George has done. When he was building it, he always said 'I'd like to last at least 20 years for the kids,'" said Colleen.

As both a member of the lake community and a member of the staff, Carly has seen the first hand how the people at Moosomin Lake come together to make it a welcoming place for everyone.

"The people that stay in the cabins here, they're all friends. This isn't a very big park and they're always interacting. In a way, it's kind of a big family here. You just walk into anyone's cabin, you don't knock," said Davidson.

Christine Currie would agree. She has been the park manager since April. So far, she has noticed the friendly atmosphere that attaches to lake life.

"The people here are so nice. Just so nice. Everyone is so relaxed. Even a bad day at work is in good cause if it's relaxed," said Currie.

Currie, who is originally from Northern B.C., has lived in Moosomin for four years. As the park manager she oversees all of the staff, is in charge of the reservations for sites and looks after the general maintenance around the area.

"I'm a jack of all trades. I was out there yesterday moving lawns as well," said Currie with a laugh.

It's a big job keeping the lake running all summer, especially on long weekends when there is an increase in visitors. Currie attributes a lot of the upkeep to the lake board members and the regulars in the area.

"Between the board and the cottage board, we all work hard around here to get things done," said Currie.

And how does this job compare to a job in town for the summer?

"It's a really nice community out here. Everyone is friends and get along. I've met some really great people and there are always something new going on which is good. I like that diversity."

Even in a small town like Moosomin, neighbors can sometimes be stranger to each other, but there's something about driving 10 minutes down the road that connects people and Currie can attest to that.

"We lived on the same strip that connects for four years now. The neighbors at the corner of the street. I had never met them until I started this job. I only recognized them by their truck by the trailers. We chatted and now I know them well," said Currie.

Although this is her first summer at the park, Currie has definitely noticed how popular the area is. She spends her days taking reservations and is always busy making sure everyone can get a chance to enjoy the lake.

"The work is getting out there that our park is beautiful. With the water last year, a lot of people had to try a different site. We now have people who come in previous years and are returning," said Currie.

Currie and her family even use the amenities for themselves, turning her work life into her own pleasure.

"My husband's family has cabins here so

we have just visited over the years but we do enjoy getting out and camping. Sitting by the fire at the end of the night. There's nothing wrong with that," said Currie.

The rise in popularity always keeps Currie on her toes. She is excited for the future of the lake and the plans for the next few years.

"I know there are some capital improvements in the budget. The park has grown so much in the past little while that we do need to do a few things just to keep up."

KEEPING THE LAKE RUNNING
Keeping the park running smoothly throughout the summer is a combined effort from the seasonal staff, the Park board members and the Cottage Owners Association.

Janice Walker is the secretary treasurer of the Park board and has been a member since 2003.

"Since I've been on the board there have been a lot more people coming through. I find there is a lot more campers that are using the facilities. We've looked solid this summer," said Walker.

Walker says the most the lake is becoming so popular is because of the convenience factor for those living in the surrounding area. There are seasonal site holders who book a site for the entire summer. They are able to leave the trailers down by the lake, creating a second home in a sense. Walker says this is an attractive thing for people who don't necessarily wish to own a cabin.

"A lot of the people who use the lake are from Moosomin and surrounding area. They don't have to travel far to get them. There are people who rent by the month too so they can just come and go with their families," said Walker.

"Whether you've got a cabin, a trailer or just going down for the day, a lot of people do that because it's just so close."

Another reason for the increased popularity is the fireworks competition, which is quickly becoming one of the must-see events of the summer. This year marks the third year the competition will take place on the August 10th.

"It was the best kept secret in town until the fireworks happened. It made a big boom," said Walker.

"I truly believe that the fireworks competition has put Moosomin on the map. They come from miles and miles to participate. We're talking western Saskatchewan and even Manitoba. It's a big draw."

The Park board doesn't do too much advertising, but they have seen an increase of people lately, mostly by word of mouth, according to Walker.

"One people have been there and see what we have to offer, they come back. Or they tell their friends. That's always nice," said Walker.

"I think it's maybe the price of gas. Sometimes people get busy and they want a place to go and have fun with the kids and not worry about the travelling. Some people will pull out for a week and go to Carven or go somewhere else for a bit but they and large they stay."

But there are plenty of reasons to stay parked for the entire summer.

"The fishing is good, the swimming is excellent. It's just a beautiful area of the province. With the busyness of our days and all

the demands, it's just a quiet place to go and enjoy," said Walker.

"I draw from quite a big area. We get a lot of people from Revelstoke and even Manitoba," said Chris Davidson, chairman of the Lake board.

Davidson has his own cabin and spends most of the time out there while still working in town.

"It's only eight miles out of town. It's close, really only a ten minute drive. It's really not a big deal to drive into work in the morning, and drive back after work."

Davidson has loved at the lake for many summers, but says this year has been great for a number of reasons. The water in the lake is clear with little algae, the fishing this summer has been excellent and there are many things for kids to keep themselves entertained.

"They've been pulling out some decent size fish in there. We do have a lot of people fishing there. There are fishing tanks, boating, swimming. The kids don't seem to be too bored out there," said Davidson.

Recently the board added a laundromat, upgraded the showers and change rooms. They also updated 14 camp sites just this spring, and bought a new lawn mower and garbage truck.

Because of the popularity in recent years, further expansion of the park is in the works.

"We're working on a bunch of projects right now. We're working on upgrading the water treatment plant, that will cost a few bucks. The road going out to the place is an ongoing issue, so we're working closely with the two IRAs and looking to restructure that. It's expensive and requires a bit of time but we're working on it," said Davidson.

The board is also looking at expanding capacity and upgrading all the campsites to just modern campers.

"Upgrading campgrounds and adding more campsites is always another area we're working on. We're upgrading from 15 AMP to 30 AMP for a number of years," said Davidson.

Upping the AMP at the campgrounds is a way to adapt to the requirements of more trailers and thus a way to appeal to more campers.

There are also funds set aside for playground equipment every year. The fireworks revenue is allotted to be put towards playground improvements.

"If a municipal leaves from cabin owners and campground fees and gate entry fees. The lake also receives a capital grant from the provincial government to go towards capital improvement."

But the majority of the revenue comes from camping and the gate, according to Davidson. The more popular the park, the more money it receives, meaning the more money the board has to make in an appealing place for visitors.

"It's a chicken and egg thing I guess. People are coming, so you keep improving it. They probably keep coming because you're making the improvements," said Davidson.

Davidson hopes that the Moosomin Regional lake continues to be profitable and provide a sanctuary for people in the area to come to during the dog-days of summer.

"It's a draw. The valley is nice as is the lake. People like to go to a way and have a change of scenery. It's pretty good down in the Pipestone."

"Best decision we ever made was to come back here. Smartest thing we ever did..." — Colleen Mulligan

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Photos from top left: Emily Harrison and Megan Davidson enjoy the water. Cabin owner Jacquie Harrison took this photo of the sunset from her boat. George McDonald and Colleen Mulligan pose on their newly renovated deck. Left: Carly Davidson working at the general store.

Cugnet named CEO

Marga Cugnet, who had been acting as interim CEO of the Sun Country Health Region, has been appointed permanent CEO.

Cugnet had served as interim CEO since September of 2010, when former CEO Cal Tant was fired by the board.

Cugnet has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Saskatchewan, and has worked for the Sun Country Health Region, and before that the Southeast

Health District.

"We are very fortunate to be able to retain a candidate with Mrs. Cugnet's qualifications," said board chair Marilyn Charlton. "The work she has done for the region as interim CEO for the past 22 months has been exemplary."

Charlton said the health region had a lot of interest in the CEO position, and decided Cugnet, who has a nursing degree, was the most qualified candidate. "The health authority re-

ceived 46 applications for the position. Mrs. Cugnet came to the top of the list and members of the regional health authority were happy to accept her application," said Charlton.

Before being appointed interim CEO, Cugnet was vice-president, primary care, for the health region. "Mrs. Cugnet has already shown to be a great asset to the health region and we know that good work will continue into the future," said Charlton.



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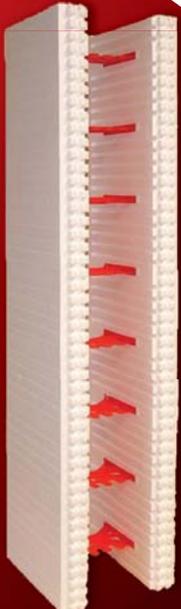
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Cross-country ride to promote rural farms

Continued from page 4
 "I made sure I bought equipment that is up to standards. As a professor, I had a great advantage of having students around me—some media study students—so I would buy them a pitcher of beer and say 'tell me everything you know,'" said Varty.

"Beyond that it's a learning curve. You figure out what you can and can't shoot. You figure out what's polite in terms of approaching people. You just feel your way through it," said Varty.

The couple says they are constantly learning. They always film in high def and currently have 160 hours of footage, with hopes of 300 hours at the end of it.

By shedding light on the issue, Varty hopes to show how farming affects the world, and not just the select few who are actually in the industry.

Gone are the days of the little family farm, a notion that many people have yet to grasp, according to Varty.

He also wants to cut the stereotypes between small hobby farms and big corporations, and explain just how difficult it sometimes is for farmers with various size operations to make a living.

During his travels, he has seen exactly how certain misconceptions can skew the public's opinion of farming.

"If there's anything con-

sistent, people just don't know enough about the food commodity chain. There's no question that the majority of cases the farmer is the low paid link in that chain. Everyone else is doing great guns in the food chain, commodity wise," said Varty.

Varty says everyone says they have a rough idea about what's going on with farming issues in Canada—inputs prices are going up and crop prices are dropping—but what he's trying to do is go past those statistics.

"Those statistics never really have an affect on people. We want to put human faces on the story. Try to get farmers to take us out in the field and show us," said Varty.

"The top broad issue is farm income. 80 per cent of farm income throughout Canada comes from off the farm. That's bizarre. 65 per cent of farmers report receipts of \$100,000 or less in gross receipts"

But what about in Saskatchewan farmers this summer? Farmers across this province are getting good crops—great crops—and are expecting to make good means this year. However, Varty notes that despite Saskatchewan's current trends, the secular trend is that farming is a difficult business.

"Especially now with nine dollar wheat and 13 dollar canola, (Saskatchewan farm-

ers) are laughing. There's no question they are happy. (Generally), it's a tough go though. Farm income has been declining steadily over the last 40 years. Debt ratio is now 20 to 1 in a debt income ratio. So we're looking at small and midsize farmers especially and asking them to give us stories about what it is that makes it difficult to remain viable," said Varty.

According to Varty, Saskatchewan is an example of how the other half lives, as far as farming goes.

The prevailing language in a lot of farm publications is this steady progress towards a more efficient, highly capitalized farm setting. He is interested in how these farms compare to the small operations in the east.

"I would like to see their take on their role in the whole food system. Are they more efficient? Or are they just bigger and willing to take on more risk?" said Varty.

Other issues he hopes to tackle while in Saskatchewan is the future of prairie farms without the wheat board from the perspective of bigger operations.

"As far as grain and crop land goes, obviously we are in the epicenter of it. There's the old joke that there are five farmers in Saskatchewan and they're all rich," said Varty. "It will be inter-



Varty and Daley's tractor and farmhouse they've been living in parked on Main Street in Moosomin.

esting to see what these people have in mind."

But his main aspiration while visiting the province?

"My number one hope for Saskatchewan, sorry to take this away from farming, but I want to see a Rider game. I'm not a Rider fan persay but I am a CFL fan and am dying to see some games in the West while I'm here," said Varty.

By and large, other than being able to catch to occasional football game, Varty wants common people to understand where they get their food and show the different separate agriculture issues throughout the province. He hopes to get city people talking about the situation.

For instance, the issues farmers are facing in Ontario

are vastly different than the ones in British Columbia. A couple of the other conversation Varty wants to start is the issue of small farms versus the big grain farmers, foreign investments, corporate tax exceptions, organic versus traditional farming and the price of inputs regarding chemical properties.

"We're all stake holders in the food system, I think it'd be good if more people were conversant on the issues," said Varty.

The misconceptions in the Canadian population is getting to be a serious issue, according to Varty, especially when it comes to the way chemicals are managed on crops.

"People in the city love going for this big corporate farm story. They think it's

dramatic and sensational. There's something sinister about it. A whole lot of stuff is not full of the big chemicals. They just don't know."

"It is good to clear up for city people because as long as you believe that everyone is a corporate farmer now, then what is there to save? But if more people in Toronto to know that the vast majority of their food comes from 500 acre farms they might start saying there is something to talk about saving."

The couple will spend the next couple weeks travelling around Saskatchewan, interviewing a number of farmers and setting up meetings. They made a stop in White-wood last Thursday with hopes of continuing south before heading up to Regina and Saskatoon.

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Maryfield RM celebrates centennial

BY LESLIE-ANN KROEKER
An estimated 400 people came out last weekend to celebrate 100 years of the no. 91 Maryfield RM.

The RM, which was incorporated on December 9, 1912, celebrated the weekend in style.

With perfect weather to greet all the out-of-town guests, the weekend had a number of events that kept everyone in attendance busy, including fireworks, a plaque ceremony and the very popular parade Saturday morning.

"I've attended many parades in many small communities, but Maryfield, you really get into your parades," said MP Ed Kormanick with a laugh during his speech to the crowd Saturday afternoon.

One of the highlights of the weekend, which was brought up several times during the dignitaries speeches, was when those in attendance received a history book that covered the highlights of the RM's past 100 years.

The book outlined the RM divisions and also showed ownership of each of the lands since 1980.

"It brings light to my eyes about how things were and how things are today," said Reeve Bruce Lemon.

The book also listed all the past Reeves, councillors, administrators and workers who fought to make the RM what it is today.

Gary Sweeting, a former Reeve of the area, was emcee for the ceremony. He was joined by Bruce Lemon, Reeve of the municipality, the RM councillors as well as many dignitaries who travelled to help celebrate the momentous occasion.



Left: Dignitaries from left SARM representative Ray Orb, Dave Hill from the village of Maryfield, Dan D'Autremont MLA, Don Toth, MLA, Ed Kormanick MP

"It's a great place to live, raise a family with kids and make a living. You've obviously gone through some challenges but you've overcome all of them and you're here after 100 years. That's a long time," said Kormanick.

"Many things have changed, but one thing that hasn't changed is the character and the view of the people. You're determined, you're strong, you're honest a hard working. With that kind of entrepreneurship, you'll be here for another 100 years."

MLA Dan D'Autremont was on hand to represent his constituency, along with MLA Don Toth who was in attendance to represent his.

"It's a lot of work from the Reeve and the council to maintain a RM and it's well worth while. You're celebrating your 100 an-

niversary and that shows the dedication and hard work that the pioneers and everybody since then has put into maintaining the community," said D'Autremont.

"Everyone has worked very hard to maintain this community and I know you have a municipality here that's worthwhile."

Don Toth said he remembered in 1986 when he was first elected and Maryfield was part of his constituency.

"Some communities are almost special, because you run into different people. I enjoyed coming to the Maryfield community," said Toth.

Toth also noted the hardships of the past, like last year's floods and the difficulty of building the infrastructure from mud roads to where they are now.

"We're able to do that

because there are the people who came ahead of us. People who dedicated their time and came and settled in this area. No doubt the first Reeve and council had some real challenges," said Toth.

"A hundred years is defiantly an achievement."

The Reeve of Wallace, the neighboring Manitoba municipality that shares boundary roads and bridges with Maryfield, Don Neufeld, also noted the hard work from the pioneers that contributed to the RM's current infrastructure.

"There are others that have gone before us who have done a good job," said Neufeld.

"People make the difference, whether it's in this community or in others. You've been very successful in what you've done."

Mayor Dave Hill from the village of Maryfield,

who couldn't say 'great' enough in his speech to the crowd Saturday, was thrilled with the event and credited the hard work put in by the organizers.

"Everybody has put in a lot of work in this RM. The present, the past and the future to come," said Hill.

Ray Orb the Vice-President of SARM was also in attendance to represent the 296 RMs in the province

He thanked all the councillors on the RM board for their hard work in keeping up with the current trends.

"Sometimes we take council work for granted. Sometimes it is above and beyond the call of duty what they do perform," said Orb.

Orb presented a plaque to the councillor members of Maryfield RM that congratulated them on 100 years of success.

A common theme among all the speeches was how the current generation should value the work done in the past.

In front of the large crowd and dignitaries, a plaque was revealed by Reeve Bruce Lemon and RM administrator Anna Macksymchuk to congratulate the RM's service to the community.

The plaque was dedicated to the pioneers of the municipality who had a vision to create an area that promoted success, the leaders who had a vision to build and promote the municipality and the future generations with hopes of continuing the legacy set before them.

"Celebrating the past, living in the present and embracing the future," reads the last section of the plaque.

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Kevin Weedmark photos

Kennedy hosted the 80th Moose Mountain Pro Rodeo on Saturday, July 21 and Sunday, July 22. **Above left:** A dramatic photo from the bull riding event. **Above right:** A saddle bronc rider. **Bottom left:** A cowboy flips the calf so he can tie his feet in the calf roping competition.



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Tantallon road yet to be fixed

BY LESLIE-ANN KROEKER

Two years after the access road into Tantallon was destroyed, the highway still lies crumbled on the side of the hill.

A section of the access road that runs from Highway 8 into Tantallon and throughout the RM of Spy Hill closed in May 2010.

Water accumulated on the side of the hill facing the highway, allowing it to spill over the only paved road into town and subsequently destroying it.

The road was built on a known slide area, according to the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, and until 2010 showed minor movement.

Glen Blakely, a councillor for the RM of Spy Hill, says the road has yet to be fixed despite being told several times from the Ministry of Highway and Infrastructure a solution had been found to repair it.

"The department of highways did some testing to see how much of the hill was moving. The conclusion was it wasn't too bad. They let the contract out last summer and then changed their minds. . . they backed off on fixing it," said Blakely.

Since the slide, travellers and local traffic heading into town have had to use other entrances and detours operated by the RM, putting more pressure on the gravel roads.

"You're putting some congestion on the road where we haul a lot of heavy gravel. It's not as safe as it was before," said Blakely.

But the Ministry assures that the RM will be compensated for the traffic tear on the detour until a suitable solution is found.

Despite this, Blakely he wishes the project would be taken more seriously, so that the RM roads do not have to be used.

"The department of highways have the expertise and they have the money in the budget. Yet they want to abandon that hill and piggy back on the RM and we don't think that's



total fair," said Blakely.

The Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure says it continues to work with the RM in determining a solution.

The Ministry says it does not want to rebuild the road on the same area, because of the continued sliding. They have done tests to determine whether or not it would be safe to rebuild the road on the existing spot.

"Since late 2010, the Ministry has monitored the area with instruments and geotechnical experts to help determine how fast the closed section of the Tantallon Access road is moving," said the Ministry.

Officials have determined the sliding is still occurring. To rebuild it on the same land would subject it to sliding once again in future years.

"Operating the Tantallon access road in the long-term along the current route of its closed portion is no longer a feasible safe location," said the Ministry.

Blakely also notes that the problem keeps getting worse.

"It's slid about twice as far as it did (originally). It's still moving. Somebody needs to takes some

remedial action to fix it,"

said Blakely.

The Ministry, along with the RM and the Village of Tantallon continue to exercise a number of options to

relocate the road, but have yet to make a final decision.

Although the three organizations have open communication with one

another, Blakely said he would like to see the situation come to an end sooner.

"I would've liked to see it resolved sooner then this. It's quite frustrating. We hope in the near future we can come up with a solution," said Blakely.

"They are not in a big rush to fix the hill. We'd like to see them get at it and get it done. . . everyone was very patient ini-

tially to start with, understanding the situation. But as time goes on they get frustrated with the situation."

The groups are expected to meet again later this summer to continue discussing the matter.

"We're still negotiated, trying to influence them to get it fixed up and come up with a solution. At this point, it's in the process," said Blakely.

Left: The access road into Tantallon collapsed in 2010 and is still in the works to get fixed.

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Right: A competitor at the the 80th Moose Mountain Pro Rodeo in the junior steer riding in Kennedy, SK.

Kevin Weedmark photo



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