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Plain & Valley

November 2024 • Volume 17 Number 11

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

\$15,000 grand prize and \$10,000 in other prizes from local businesses

\$15,000 giveaway is on now

Local businesses are getting together to give away more than \$25,000 in prizes in the World-Spectator's 2024 Christmas Giveaway.

The main prize is \$15,000 to be spent locally, to reward one lucky shopper for shopping locally this Christmas season.

The winner will receive a chequebook and can spend their prize money at any of the participating businesses.

The draw will be made on December 19 and the winner will get the good news just before Christmas.

In addition to the \$15,000 prize, there are also 57 other prizes valued at more than \$10,000 in total to be given away in the World-Spectator's 2024 Christmas Giveaway. Shoppers can enter at 77 locations in 15 communities across the area.

Proud of local business community

World-Spectator publisher Kevin Weedmark said he is proud of the local business community for stepping up and supporting the promotion.

"This promotion has always been about rewarding local shoppers for supporting the local businesses, and the fact that so many local retailers and other businesses decide to take part in this promotion shows that they are working hard to serve their customers," he says.

"The first year we held the draw, we had no idea if we could do it or not. We threw the idea out there to businesses in the area, and the response was overwhelming."

Continued on page 3



The World-Spectator's Nicole Taylor, Joey Light, and Kara Kinna with some of the prizes that will be given away in the World-Spectator 2024 Christmas Giveaway.

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\$15,000 grand prize and \$10,000 in other prizes from local businesses

\$15,000 giveaway on now

Continued from front

"In no time we had enough support to be able to offer a substantial prize, which shows the incredible support from businesses," Weedmark said.

"It's wonderful to see local businesses coming together to offer this kind of prize."

The promotion has evolved over the years from a draw for a car to the \$15,000 prize.

"The car draw was a success, but I think the way the promotion has evolved is even better. The grand prize winner each year receives a book of special cheques they can use at the participating businesses," says Weedmark.

"That will ensure that the money the winner receives will stay in the local area. There are all sorts of other prizes as well. It's really a great way of rewarding people for shopping locally."

Shoppers can enter with a purchase at any participating business—there are 77 locations across the area in total where people can enter.

The winner can spend their \$15,000 any way they want at participating businesses.

They may choose to spend it at several different businesses, or spend the whole prize on a large ticket item like a quad, furniture, flooring for the whole house, hockey equipment, or a home reno.

"The possibilities are endless," says Weedmark.

"Our winners over the last few years have spread their winnings around, spending the prize money on everything from groceries to a family dinner to clothing to a garage package to electronics to furniture to jewelry.

"It's great to hand out the \$15,000 prize, and it's great to see our winners spend that prize at local businesses over the next few months and really enjoy it."

Over the course of the promotion there will be a centrespread running each week reminding readers of all the locations they can enter, and there will be a focus on several participating businesses each week.

"This promotion is both a way to reward people for shopping locally, and a way to remind people of all the amazing local businesses we have in our communities throughout the area," said Weedmark.

"We really are fortunate in our area to have an amazing range of great businesses in our, including several new businesses. I hope people check out the local businesses between now and Christmas, find out what our local communities have to offer, and do their Christmas shopping within the area.

"These shops are local, they're there for you when you need them, they support your local community, they employ your neighbors and friends—and now they're coming together to offer you the chance to win an incredible list of prizes!"

**Next issue: December 13 • Deadline: December 4
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9 a.m. - 12 nn.



Playfair Daycare launches trip of the month fundraiser

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
Members of the Playfair Daycare fundraising committee recently launched a huge trip of the month fundraiser with tickets on sale now. The Win and Wander draw is a fundraiser for the daycare's second building.

"At one of our daycare meetings, we were discussing fundraising ideas to obviously have a bigger fundraiser versus a little one, as we need to raise a lot of money for the new daycare," explained board member Samantha Campbell. Board chair Jill Jones heard about a group in Swift Current that had great success with a trip of the month format, so the Playfair Daycare's Win and Wander fundraiser was born.

Starting Jan. 10, draws for the trips will begin, held every second Friday of the month until June 13. There are trips targeting families, and getaways meant for couples in locations including Minneapolis, San Diego, Disneyland, San Francisco, Las Vegas, and Greece.

There's also extra incentive to get a ticket sooner rather than later with an early bird draw happening on Dec. 20.

"If you get your ticket before Dec. 20, you will be entered in for a \$5,000 cash prize," Campbell said, adding that the early bird winner will have their ticket put back into the raffle draws for the trips.



"Plus we'll do the \$3,000 cash prize every month as well on top of the trip, so you have 13 chances to win if you buy it before Dec. 20."

There is a limited number of tickets, set at 1,700, and Campbell is hoping that after

expenses, the daycare could raise around \$80,000 towards their new building.

In the case where a winner chooses not to take the trip, there are alternatives available.

"You can do a 75 per cent travel voucher

to anywhere that you want to go, or you can take a 50 per cent cash value of the prize that each trip is worth," explained Campbell. "So there's a couple of options if you aren't a traveler, don't have a passport or anything, there's still obviously a lot of cash that can be won."

Tickets are \$125 each, and can be purchased online or in-person.

"You can go straight our website (playfairdaycare.com) and purchase off there," she said. "You can contact any of our Playfair Daycare families, we gave each family that attends the daycare a book to try to entice people to buy, and you could also reach one of the board members."

Campbell can be reached at (306) 435-9052, or Jones at (306) 435-7276

"We will have posters at various businesses with a QR code on them as well, for those that are tech savvy, you can scan the QR code," said Campbell. "But for the generation that doesn't use social media or QR codes, they can call or email. We're hoping to do some more advertising in the coming months to try to get it out there so there will be more ways to purchase a ticket on there."

Word about the Win and Wander fundraiser has been getting around town, as Jones said ticket sales have started strong.

Continued on page 19

21st Annual Dickens Village Festival

Carlyle, Saskatchewan

Friday, December 6th & Saturday, December 7th

-English Market-
Saturday, December 7th - 11am to 3pm

Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 7th @ 8:30 am to 10:30 am
Afternoon with Santa on Saturday, December 7th @ 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Food Bank Donations will be accepted at the Carlyle Memorial Hall

-Food Vendors-
On Main St. both evenings from 4:00pm to 6:30pm.

-Lighted Parade-
Friday & Saturday evening @ 6 pm
Parade Route: Start at Nursing Home, then east on Railway Avenue to Main Street, down Main Street to 1st Street East

-Carriage Rides-Horse Drawn Wagon

Fezziwig's Pub
Free Entertainment
Friday, Dec 6 - 11:45 am to 1:00 am &
Saturday, Dec 7 - 8:30 am to 1:00 am

Kids Free Entertainment
Saturday, Dec 7 - 10am to 11am - Cratchitt Kids
Al Simmons - 1:00pm - 2:20pm

-Cornerstone Theatre Play-
"It's A Wonderful Hockey Life"
December 6th & 7th @ 7:30pm • Matinee Dec 8th @ 2:00pm

-High Tea Carlyle United Church-
Friday, Dec 6th & Saturday, Dec 7th @ 1:30pm to 4:30pm

-Christmas Decorating Competition-
For Residents and Businesses
Judging December 3rd from 7 pm - 10 pm



Contact 453-2363 or 577-7543 for more information.
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A worker paints the ceiling inside Borderland Co-op's new 30,000 square foot food store in Moosomin. The \$18 million project will be complete next year.

Kevin Weedmark photo

New grocery store to open in 2025

BY ASHLEY BOCHEK

Borderland Co-op has been working on a new 30,000-square-foot grocery store in Moosomin since November of 2023 and is planning to have the new building open in 2025.

Borderland Co-op GM, Jason Schenn, says they plan to be open in the new year.

"The opening date is still a moving target, but from a substantial completion standpoint, we have targeted the end of February for substantial completion," he said.

"Depending on how things go, if we can get in a little bit earlier then to start doing some of our setup alongside the finishing work that CCR will be doing, that will all set

the stage as to how fast we can get to opening."

What will the transition look like from the old building to the new?

"We will basically close down business in the old store one day and open business up in the new one the next day, then we will have a whole transition team moving product into this building. There will be a constant stream for a week or so until we empty the old store and then we will auction off the equipment and start demolition."

Schenn says the new building will employ more people from the surrounding area.

Continued on page 7

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New grocery store to open in 2025

Continued from page 6

"We are probably going to have around 60 employees in the new building. The management group we have got established now—all of them are now working for us and on site, so they're getting up to speed with things over there and then we will start breaking a few of them out to the transition team probably within the next month or two. Then, operations will just continue there until they can start getting in here and setting up their spaces. Front line support, that will be more of a moving target in the new year."

Next steps

What are the next steps going forward from now until opening day for the new building?

"Right now, it is mostly mechanical and refrigeration that we are working on," says Schenn. "There are a lot of guys that are working on different refrigeration things. Drywall is the next big step and they're well ahead of it. Wall-Eye does great work in the area, they're always quick and high quality."

Schenn says the construction process has been going smoothly for the new Borderland grocery store in Moosomin. "It has been going pretty well. As you go and dig things up, you always find yourself little surprises. We found a lot of horseshoes actually. I am not sure if there was a livery barn here or in the neighbourhood at some point in history, but when they were digging the foundation, we found about a dozen old horseshoes."

Plans for old building

Borderland plans to host an auction for left over equipment out of the old gro-

cery store.

"The transition plan right now is— as soon as we can move things over, we will have an auction date set up that coincides with that, so as soon as we are out of there, maybe within a week we will get to an auction and get all of the old shelving, or any old equipment out of the way and then immediately start the demolition," Schenn said. "Of course, an old building like this, there are a little bit of expenses to deal with in some areas, so that is going to take some careful planning before they can bring in track hoes and things like that and start breaking it down."

The new grocery store will continue to have the same hours for shoppers.

"We will have at least the same hours in the new building and we are looking at expanding those hours if the need is there," Schenn said. "If we have the people, we will expand the hours."

Excited to be part of big project

Schenn says he is very excited to be part of such a big project for Borderland. "I am very excited," Schenn says. "This is by far the biggest project we have taken on since I have been here. It is one of those generational projects that we hope is going to last a long time. This one is hopefully going to have a lot of positive impact on our branch locations as well."

"People aren't relocating to smaller communities, we are finding that a real difficulty, but we have better odds of getting them here, especially if you have a good place for them to work. That is the idea that if we can't get the recruitment in our smaller locations for some of the specialized things like meatcutting, then we have the ability here to essentially produce things that they can't do. Any of

the bigger trays, incorporating more deli product, fresh baked bread, or a wider variety of things some smaller sites may not be able to produce—and so we are able to produce essentially for locations who don't have meat cutters or things like that on site."

Local contractors

Schenn says they have local contractors working on the new build.

"Tag's is working on mechanical, they are coming out of Esterhazy, Tom's Electric is doing the electrical, Wall-Eye is doing all of our interiors, GeeBee out of Kipling are doing the ground work which is local to us as they're part of Borderland's area, CCR is our general contractor here—they also worked with us on our Dairy Queen project in Whitewood last year and they did a fantastic job on that one, and a lot of the specialized jobs

come out of urban areas. As much as we can keep local stream, we certainly do."

New Borderland C-store in Kipling

Schenn says Borderland just finished a project in Kipling.

"In Kipling, it worked great working as our own general contractor. We are up and running there now, we have one week under our belt and things are looking good. The big thing for that is it was able to save us a lot of cost by keeping a lot of the things internal. We were able to keep the materials internal to us where everything we designed in that building was able to come from our own home centres which was a huge help, and then having a guy like Travis Holmstrom on staff that can be the project manager for it helps a lot."

Continued on page 8

MONEY MATTERS
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Tanner Lewis
Financial Advisor
Keystone Wealth | Aviso Wealth

OVERCOMING MONEY WORRIES

Money worries can be a significant source of stress and anxiety, affecting mental health and overall well-being. Many Canadians face financial fears, whether it's managing debt, saving for the future, or dealing with unexpected expenses. Here are some strategies to help you overcome these common financial worries and gain peace of mind.

The first step in overcoming financial worries is identifying what specifically causes your anxiety. Common fears include debt, concerns about high credit card balances, student loans, or mortgages. Worries about not having enough saved for emergencies or retirement, stress about keeping track of income and expenses, and fears about job security or insufficient earnings are also common. Understanding your specific financial fears can help you address them more effectively.

A budget is a powerful tool for managing financial stress. By tracking your income and expenses, you can gain a clear picture of your financial situation. To get started, list all sources of income, such as salary, freelance work, or government benefits. Then, categorize expenses into fixed (rent, utilities) and variable (groceries, entertainment). Identify financial goals, such as paying off debt, building an emergency fund, or saving for a major purchase, and update your budget monthly to ensure you're staying on track. A well-maintained budget can provide a sense of control and help reduce financial anxiety.

A well-maintained budget can provide a sense of control and help reduce financial anxiety.

To effectively manage debt, prioritize paying off high-interest debts like credit cards, consider consolidation for lower rates, set a realistic repayment plan, and seek guidance from a credit counselor if needed. Reducing debt can enhance financial well-being and alleviate stress.

Long-term financial planning includes regular contributions to retirement accounts, diversifying investments, and getting sufficient insurance.

Talking about financial worries can be therapeutic. Share concerns with a trusted person. Seek advice from a financial advisor for personalized guidance. Strategies to manage financial worries include creating a budget, building an emergency fund, managing debt, planning for the future, educating yourself, and seeking support for financial stability and peace of mind.

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WE DISCUSS MONEY MATTERS BECAUSE MONEY...MATTERS!

New grocery store to open in 2025

Continued from page 7

"We haven't crunched all the numbers yet, but I am thinking we are going to be in the neighbourhood of \$700,000 under budget on that project which is phenomenal. In this day and age, you never see a project that comes in on time and under budget. It is hard to do that."

New build may be under budget

Schenn says Borderland is excited that the new grocery store may come in under budget as well. "The budget was about \$18.3 million, but we are tracking under

that, so we are excited to hopefully be coming in under budget.

"When you talk about rural projects, cost is everything because we are held to the same standards as every other place in Canada, but have a smaller market to deal with, so you have to cut down the cost of construction as much as you can to make these things viable which is why we approached this project and our Kipling project in the way we did, because we are trying to prove a point here that you can build some high quality projects in rural communities and they can be successful if we can get away from some of the surplus costs.

"So, having Travis and our group internally that is reviewing this stuff makes it work a lot better and hopefully we can pull close to a million dollars in savings out of this project by the time all is said and done, and for us as a co-operative that is important. We need to be able to save whatever we can in those situations so we can provide that value to our members."

Jason Bien of CCR, contractors for the new Borderland grocery store, says they are working on refrigeration and dry wall. "The refrigerators are just starting to arrive this week and then we also have our fire protection company that showed up this week along with all of the other trades

doing their stuff. It has been a busy week this week.

"The walk-in boxes (refrigerators) will take about two weeks to install and that will be complete with all the condensers and piping," he said.

"Then, we will start looking at more finishing stages after the refrigeration. There will be more drywall happening, mudding, taping, then finishing individual rooms like tiles in the bathrooms and kitchen, stuff like that. We will transition more from a rough stage to a finishing stage."

Bien says he is confident they will meet their timeline for 2025.

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Elizabeth Gagne opens The Garden Club in Wolseley

BY ASHLEY BOCHEK

When Elizabeth Gagne graduated with her business degree from McGill University earlier this year, she could have started her career anywhere.

But rather than head for the office towers of Toronto or Manhattan, Elizabeth decided to start her business career in Wolseley, Saskatchewan, where she has opened The Garden Club, a cafe and wine bar that looks like it's straight out of a Hallmark movie.

The Garden Club offers baking and lunches, and soon will be a wine bar in the evenings as well.

We interviewed Elizabeth about her new venture and the full interview follows:

Tell me a little bit about yourself.

I am 23 years old, and I just finished university at McGill University. I finished in May and moved to Wolseley. I grew up in Regina, but my mom is from Wolseley and my grandparents have lived here all of my life. It was the obvious choice to move here because this is where I spent a lot of my summers and a lot of my time, and it is a community I really love and enjoy being in.

I had an opportunity to do what I have always wanted to do which was to start a cafe and have a place where I can bake and serve the food that I love to cook. That is where I am right now, running a small business just freshly opened, doing what I want do!

Why did you go into business school with and did you always think you would open your own business someday?

I grew up in a household that was very focused on business and entrepreneurship. My dad had a few stints of running his own business and it was just something that was ingrained into me when I was young. My mom worked with Junior Achievement, which teaches business concepts to young people, and it was always the path I wanted to go on. I always wanted to start a cafe, but I thought that was something down the road when I am older, but that was always my desire.

I went to McGill for business for this purpose of wanting to start something for myself. I have never really been one to want to work under someone. I want to have freedom and flexibility. I majored in marketing, but I took a lot of concentration on entrepreneurship, so I have those tools to understand what goes into being an entrepreneur and what goes into being in business.

You said you were freshly opened, so when did you open the cafe?

We opened on October 11 this fall. We will have a grand opening eventually, we just don't have the exact date. Since my cafe is also a wine bar, we are slowly introducing each step of the business to not overwhelm ourselves as we go and to get the hang of things and see the flow and the demand, but Thursday through Saturday we will open the wine bar.

Tell me a bit about your business.

Currently it is just a cafe and wine bar. So, during the day we're just a place for the community to gather whether that be through coffee or lunch with soup and sandwiches, we just want to be a place where people can come to sit around and socialize with one another. When we have the wine bar option it will be open Thursday through Saturday. It will be a community gathering place where people can have a meal with people they love and celebrate what they want to do. We will also host events whether that be High Teas, that will be probably about once a month and then women's nights, trivia nights, all those things. We want to be a place for people to do what they want to do. Some people may want to go to a wine bar or a trivia night, but you're going to have to go into the city and it is so nice to have something in your community to go and have fun.

Why is it called the Garden Club?

My grandma's maiden name is Garden and I wanted to



Elizabeth Gagne graduated from Montreal's McGill University with a business degree earlier this year, and chose to start her career by opening a business in Wolseley, Saskatchewan.

honour her and her legacy here in Wolseley because it is a common name in our community, but I want to honour her because a lot of our recipes are hers and we also have fresh food, so we want to play on that aspect of the word Garden as well. Club is also a word with a lot of meaning. We want it to be a place where you can have a book club, a wine club, a board game club, it is just an inviting place, but you feel a part of something.

Why do you think small businesses are important?

Small businesses are important because they are staples in every community. Without them your community lacks something. Small businesses, shops, restaurants give people a place to gather and feel that they're part of something. I think small businesses really bring together a community. It is not an owner who is removed and distant from your community and doesn't want to work with you. I think it is important because it is not only the community supporting you, but you supporting the community.

Have you seen people from all over come to your business?

We have gotten a lot of traffic not only from Wolseley, but we get some from Grenfell, Indian Head so those surrounding communities, but mostly we get a lot of highway traffic so people on their way to and from Winnipeg and a lot of my community from Regina has come out quite a few times. It is a wide variety of people we get, and it is so nice to meet new people and hopefully give them a nice experience.

What do you see for the future of your business?

I really just want to be a part of the community and be a place where the community can gather. That is my main goal, I just want to be here and do what I am doing. The goal is to remain a staple here. I want to give people a good experience not only from the food, but in the atmosphere here and what we can offer. I want to be a staple in the community and somebody who can help out in the community.

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Stops in Virden and Broadview planned on same date

Holiday Train coming to Moosomin Dec. 6

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The CP Holiday Train will be returning to Moosomin this Christmas season, with a stopped planned for December 6.

Now in its 26th year, the holiday tradition continues to bring festive entertainment and raise money and food awareness for people struggling with food insecurity from Nov. 21 to Dec. 20.

This year, the train rolls through the area on Dec. 6, beginning with a 10:30 am stop in Virden (on the north side of the tracks on 5th Avenue South), then Moosomin at noon (on the north side of the tracks at 1001 Front Street), and Broadview at 2 pm (at the CP Train Station, Front Street).

"Over the course of about five hours, you can watch three different shows, if the weather permits for some safe driving," said Terry Cunha, media relations manager with CPKC. "It'd be a great way to spend the afternoon!"

Between the Holiday Train and its American counterpart, the Holiday Express, 12 artists will make 160 stops during the campaign. While admission is free to take in the shows, a donation to the local food bank is encouraged.

"It's very similar to previous shows where each time that the Holiday Train stops, we will be having a 30 minute live performance with a very talented group of musicians, as has been done each year," Cunha explained. "It's just a great way to help raise funds and donations for local food banks, and we've been very fortunate for the outpouring of support that we get from everyone who comes out and watches these shows."

The support is overwhelming as Cunha explained how people across the country so freely give to the cause.



The Holiday Train pulling into Moosomin during a previous visit.

"Over the course of our history, we've been able to raise over \$24 million in funds to local food banks and over five million pounds of food, and we're looking forward to continuing to build on that this year," he said. "So we just ask everyone who's coming out to bring a non-perishable food item that can be donated to your local food bank."

The highly visual campaign often brings food banks a much-needed replenishment to their shelves.

"From some discussions we've had, for many of the food banks across the way that we meet with in each of our stops they reach, many of them have acknowledged that the amount they raised during that one stop is very much equivalent to some of the food they raise all year," said Cunha. "So it does have a positive impact."

All three stops will feature free concerts by a number of artists.

"The shows across Virden, Moosomin, and Broadview are all going to be with Tyler Shaw and Shawnee Kish. Those two very talented artists will be performing

at each of those three shows during the stops on December 6," Cunha confirmed. "Speaking to a lot of individuals, that's kind of how they kick off the holidays is when this holiday train comes in and stops in the community. It's kind of the official kick-off to the Christmas season. So it's great. There's so much enthusiasm from members of the community and the public."

When asked about his favorite part of the Holiday Train experience, Cunha was quick to answer 'the stops.'

"I'm fortunate enough that in addition to enceeding and introducing our musical acts, I'm introducing the local elected officials who are there as well," he said. "It's just an opportunity to walk around to talk to people, from meeting with members of the food bank who are dedicated members of the community, supporting those in need, to just talking to groups of individuals."

"I'm born and raised Canadian, and I get to see many of the communities across the prairies now through the Holiday Train. It's just a great way to get out and see and what's going on in some of the other areas across Canada and what they do during the holiday season."



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Grade 4 students learn about provincial election

Moosomin Grade 4 mock vote results: Sask Party 21 votes, NDP 1 vote, SUP 1 vote

BY ASHLEY BOCHER

The MacLeod Elementary Grade 4 class participated in a provincial student vote on October 28. Grade 4 teacher Karly Fregin says the student vote was a great learning experience to add to their curriculum on the provincial government.

The student vote locally yielded results similar to the actual election—but a bit more one-sided. Kevin Weedmark and the Saskatchewan Party won in the student vote among Grade 4 students, but with an even larger margin than in the actual election, and the Saskatchewan Party won the student vote count across the Moosomin-Montmartre riding, where eight schools and more than 550 schools participated.

"It is a program done by Civix Canada and they do them for provincial and federal elections," Fregin said. "I did it during the last federal election which was the last time I taught Grade 4 and we thought it was amazing program to do, and it fits very well with our Grade 4 social studies. We have a unit that focuses on government—understanding the responsibilities of the provincial government, looking at rights and responsibilities citizens have in a province, and we talked a lot about when you vote you have the right to vote, but it is our responsibility to learn about the candidates and what we think is important and to make that decision."

"In our curriculum, we also talk about describing ways people can be involved in the democratic process—understanding that we all have a voice and it is okay to have different opinions, that is going to happen, but to be respectful of everyone's opinions and what one person might think is important someone else may think is not. It led to amazing conversations in our classroom. We also went through all of the platforms of the parties ahead of time and I had the students write notes about what they liked to help them make an informed decision."

She said the program provides everything teachers need.

"We just got in touch



Keira Hadiuk casting her ballot.

with the program, and they sent everything we needed, all the information you need to know about the candidates in your area, the ballot boxes, the ballots that look very official, and then on Monday by 4 pm we had to upload all of our votes. It all went to their database, and they sent us the results on Tuesday morning."

Civix let Fregin know her Grade 4 class results as well as the overall results from all the participating Saskatchewan schools.

"In our Grade 4 class, we had 21 Saskatchewan Party

votes, one NDP vote, one Saskatchewan United Party and four spoiled ballots.

"There were more than 38,000 votes reported from 348 schools across Saskatchewan, with results from all 61 constituencies.

Continued on page 23



Gavin Taylor marking his ballot.



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Moosomin wins Communities in Bloom

Earning five blooms, Moosomin qualifies for national competition

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Once again, Moosomin has a reason to be proud as results from the annual Communities in Bloom competition were released. Moosomin was named a provincial winner in the 2,001-3,000 population category, awarded five blooms with a special mention for Commitment to Cultural Heritage Preservation.

"We tried to do a few things a little bit different, and took some of the suggestions of the judges, and I think everything worked out pretty well," said Mike Schwean, Director of Parks and Recreation with the Town of Moosomin. "Jasmine (Davidson, Moosomin Communities in Bloom Project Manager) and her team did a great job.

"To get five blooms, it moves our project ahead. It's like anything else, when you see improvement, it's a lot easier to move ahead on things, so we're excited for next year."

Moosomin returned to the nation-wide beautification campaign in 2023 after a few years' hiatus. That year, the town was feted with four blooms, sparking the desire to continue with the project.

"It's awesome that we finally could get to five, we were so close last year," Jasmine Davidson said. "By doing it last year, we had a better understanding of the concept of Communities in Bloom, and then with having our new gateway sign, I think that helped a lot, too."

One of the things the CIB judges noted was the community-wide clean-up that Moosomin holds, earning the town the Environmental Action Award. While something that many communities participate in, Schwean noted that the annual clean-up is "something I think we do very well."

The community-wide clean-up has many volunteers each year, with businesses also pitching in, such as Nutrien donating gloves, Moosomin Dairy Queen providing garbage bags and ice cream treats, Borderland Co-op supplying water, and Tim Horton's keeping everyone warm with coffee. The town also encouraged participation by awarding Moosomin Bucks to participants that submitted a picture documenting their involvement.

Moosomin also picked up an honour for Trees and Urban Forestry, relating to work on the town's urban forest and highlighting The Labyrinth in particular, which was a project spearheaded by Carol Adair. The original vision of the labyrinth was to establish a tranquil environment, but it has become quite meaningful to residents.

"The labyrinth is something really unique and different that our town has to offer," Davidson explained. "They were really impressed that we had something like that."

"In addition to the labyrinth, she's really taken an initiative to have memorial trees put in there," Schwean said of Adair. "She's got quite a few memorials with signage and different kinds of trees and notes and stuff like that. It looks just amazing; it looks better every year. That's full credit to Carol and her crew."

The judges evaluate communities on a number of factors, including community appearance, environmental ac-



Above and right are photos of the judges visiting Moosomin.



tion, heritage conservation, tree management, landscape and plant and floral displays. This year, Moosomin scored 827 out of 1,000 points, for an 83 per cent bloom rating. A detailed report from the judges not only applauded efforts from the local CIB committee, but offered valuable recommendations the group can take into account in planning future years' participation.

"They give us a really thorough report of what we could do more and better, which is really nice to see it from a different perspective," Davidson said. "So it helps a lot."

One huge key to success is the continued partnership between the Town, Moosomin Regional Park, and the Pipestone Hills Golf Course. The three entities began their partnership in 2023, and it worked so well that the groups decided to continue into this year's competition.

"The park just looks amazing, and the golf course is probably the nicest it's ever been," Schwean said. "There were the three of us working together on the project, but we all have our own committees outside of each other. This is almost like three entries in one."

On the note of collaboration, Schwean added that the CIB committee would like to include rural municipalities to the list of partners.

"There's a lot of absolutely beautiful farmhouses and yards in the area," he said. "So that's something we'd like to do, and we'll work towards doing next year for our application."

The idea to draw in participation from surrounding RMs was something the team wanted to do this year, but there is a bit of a process to include farms.

"We have other things—not public right now—that we want to do as well for the project going forward," Schwean said. "Next year, we'll probably start a little bit earlier because once May and June hit, there's not really a lot of time for some great ideas."

The Moosomin CIB committee has 15 members, but both Davidson and Schwean said more are always welcome.

As for advancing from the Provincial level to Nationals, there are no firm plans as of yet.

"You have the option to compete at the national level, or you can just do the regular level," Davidson said. "I'm sure they would, you got this far, you might as well try!"



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New pharmacy opens in Moosomin

BY ASHLEY BOCHEK
Kari Meyers, owner of Moosomin's newest pharmacy, Kari's Pharmacy, opened on November 13. Meyers said she is beyond excited to be soft launching her new business in Moosomin this week.

"The last two weeks or so we have been working hard at getting the shelving installed, we have all of our stock in, so we are just working on stocking the shelves and putting tags for prices.

"We have to have approval from the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacy Professionals, so I had that meeting with them Tuesday, and they have given me verbal approval. I don't have official written approval yet, but I do have the verbal approval, which is exciting and so we can open on this Wednesday, November 13, so soon. I am planning on just having a soft opening—I can't have any of my third-party accounts or drug plans set up until the day that I actually open. So, the first week is just going to be about making sure everything is working properly, fixing any glitches that might come up. Hopefully it is smooth."

Grand Opening later in November

Meyers plans to have a grand opening for Kari's Pharmacy later this month. "I am planning to have a grand opening, but I haven't picked an exact date yet. I am hoping to plan that for fairly soon after I open—by the end of November I would like to have a grand opening just to keep the excitement going. I feel like if I wait too long I will get busy and



The staff of Kari's Pharmacy, which will open this week. From left are Laurika Fourie, Leanne Cook, Paige Lowe, Karla Bell, Kari Meyers, Julie Bell, Kayla Farquharson, and Kobielle Locke.

won't do it."

Meyers says the feeling is amazing to be finally close to opening day.

"It feels amazing. I can stand in the store now and look around and think 'Wow this is what we put together, we have worked so hard, and it is finally coming to the end of the renovations and preparations, and we're close to a new beginning as the pharmacy opens."

"There is a very little bit of work left to do on the building. We had quite a delay on getting our doors and windows in, it was plywood instead of glass for the longest time so we

couldn't finish the vestibule until we knew what we were doing with the glass and the doors so that is just getting fixed up right now. It will be completed before opening."

New staff

Meyers says the pharmacy has a staff of eight employees.

"To begin with, includ-

ing myself, I have eight employees in total.

"I have myself and Karla as pharmacists. Karla is joining the team as both a pharmacist and business partner. I trust and respect her and am very lucky to have her. And then I have three full-time staff, two part-time staff, and one high school student. I can't wait for everyone to meet

my staff because I am very happy with them.

"We are going to have a really good, strong team in here and that makes me excited."

Looking forward to a new beginning

Kari says she is excited to begin working again as a pharmacist. "I am most

looking forward to being a pharmacist again because I haven't been practicing for a few months now and I am starting to miss it. I am looking forward to that," she said. "And I'm looking forward to the new beginning of owning my own business!"

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Winner of Mom's Choice Award Karen Berglund Local author pens second children's book

BY JOEY LIGHT

Karen Berglund of Moosomin had big dreams for her second children's book entitled *Amos the Famous*. Released in early September, Berglund's book has already earned #1 Best Seller Status in several categories on Amazon.

Where does Berglund find her inspiration?

"I always tell my students to write about what they know and what they love, so the inspiration for my first book was my three Pomeranians which of course are all quirky in their own way. *Amos the Famous* came to me at 4 o'clock in the morning, I just woke up and could not sleep, so I got up and sat down at my computer and started typing, I went until about noon and got about 80 per cent done. At that point I had to choose what manuscript to go with, I found *Call me Quirky* was more challenging so I decided to go with that one first. I was working with Miriam Laundry Publishing and their editor is Sharon Jennings, she is the lady that took over the Franklin books, she became the ghost writer for the rest of the books and the TV series. When I heard that Miriam Laundry had Sharon Jennings as their editor I decided to go with them and have her be my editor too. I thought my first book was so much fun to do so I went ahead with my second one. It was when I took my manuscript out from almost a year ago I realized it was going to take more work than I thought. I rewrote the whole story in prose and still couldn't make the ending work out so I went back to doing it in rhyme and finished it. After many drafts and editing again I was able to complete the manuscript and send it into illustration."

Teaching background

Berglund said her teaching background is part of the reason she started writing children's books.

"My teaching background, I was mainly a grade 3 teacher and I used picture books and rhyming books in my classes all the time and it just seemed like something I could do. I do have a junior novel in the works but I started with this, so I do think I will branch out from Children's Books. My favorite part about being a Children's Book Author is being in the schools. I just really like going into schools now, I get to share my story with the kids and I wrote certain things in there and I can share that message with the kids. Also just seeing their faces, sometimes people send me pictures of their kids reading my books and it just really makes me happy. My biggest dream is to read in schools in every province in Canada. Now that both of my books are done I do want to start doing more visits to schools and libraries, starting in Saskatchewan and branching out further."

Message to children

Berglund says she uses animals to help get her message through to her young readers.

"In both books I used animals to get my messages across to children. In my first book I wanted kids to understand perspective, how to see something from somebody else's point of view.

"It's very natural when kids are growing up that they are very egocentric when they are small it's always me, me, me and they gradually grow out of that. So I used animals to get that point across to kids, I also learned from this story that it's important to always follow your dreams because you never know who you are going to help. However the



Children's author Karen Berglund of Moosomin has written her second children's book, *Amos the Famous*.

teacher in me had to include a few more things, I have vowels, consonants, and syllables in the clues and I also included some social skills and manners in there as well."

Positive reactions

Berglund said she is thrilled with the response to her books.

"My first book I was really thrilled that people were very receptive to me announcing I was going to become an author. That was very out of my comfort zone for me, my identity has always been as an elementary school teacher and to become an author was a scary step to take but I did it and I was so very thrilled that so many people were so happy for me."

Coaching new authors

Berglund has now been contracted by her publisher, Miriam Laundry Publishing, to coach other aspiring authors.

"One of my favourite things about teaching was reading stories and poetry to children. But I was always so curious about the author, their motivation, and inspiration behind their books. Now, in my new role as author coach, I get to witness this process full circle—from inspiration, to writing, editing, illustrating, and book design. It's so rewarding to watch new authors hold their book in their hands for the first time. When I started this process of writing a book I really had no idea where to start, I had no idea what was involved in writing a children's book. I looked online and started taking a children's books master class. They walk you through the process of the writing, editing, and illus-

tration. They introduced me to so many things I never even dreamed were a part of writing a book, like a Book Designer, who takes the manuscript and the artwork and puts it all together. I took this master class through Miriam Laundry Publishing, she also taught a program where she could use her team to publish your book, so I was able to use her editing and her book designer. Her team did all of the things that are a part of the book. Every month I got to meet with a one-on-one coach, we would talk through some of the issues, struggles, and questions I would have. It was a very pleasant way to do it, I enjoyed it so much it was very easy to say yes and do my second book with the same company. I was able to go to Niagara Falls and meet with my publisher, she put on an event with the community and I met many of the other author coaches and authors. It's a community that I still have today, it was at that point that Miriam approached me and asked if I would become an author coach, because her business is growing now too. So now I get to meet with other authors who are in the shoes that I was in a year and a half ago, not knowing what to do, so helping them get through that same process. Now when I meet with my clients I start with them from the very first notion of writing a book and I help them through the entire process of writing and finding an illustrator, it's just very rewarding at the end of the program I can see them holding their books too. The most challenging part to me was marketing and putting yourself out there. I don't think people realize when an author writes a book it's not just automatically out there in the world, you have to do your marketing. That's pretty challenging for someone like me, it's a step out of my comfort zone and going out to places and promote my book. So that's definitely my personal challenge, putting myself out there and going out of my comfort zone."

Gold Medal

Berglund recently received word that *Amos the Famous* has also been awarded a gold medal from the Mom's Choice Awards.

"That was really something because I find it challenging to promote myself but when I'm promoting my books it's all about only my book, but when you win an award it's like you have to promote yourself and that's hard for me, so I'm just learning to process something like that and go with it. It's very exciting, I will get more exposure now because of this award, the book will be featured on their website and blogs and I will be doing an interview with them so I'm very excited."

Advice for authors

Berglund shares her advice to aspiring authors.

"Do it, you must do it. Just keep writing and don't put it off," she said, "because if you put it off the days, weeks and months go by and all the sudden a year has gone by.

"Surround yourself with like-minded people and find your writing community and it will take off from there."

Where to buy books

Karen Berglund will be at the MVAC Christmas Market on Nov. 2 at the Armoury in Moosomin, SK.

Both Karen Berglund's books are currently on Amazon as well.

Playfair Daycare launches trip of the month fundraiser

Continued from Page 5

"There's been lots of purchases through our website, which seems to be quite easy for people," she said. "It's really good to see, hopefully ticket sales stay strong. And the feedback we've got is that everyone's pretty excited. They think the prizes are very good and well worth the ticket price—hopefully that sentiment stays!"

The new building project has a \$4.4 million total budget, with \$1.5 million coming from the provincial government, \$1.5 million being self-funded, and another \$1.4 million needing to come from the community through fundraising. The daycare recently picked up their first Vision

Maker Sponsor last week as MNP donated \$25,000 toward the new daycare building in Moosomin.

"We were getting calls every week looking for open spaces, and unfortunately, we're busting at the seams at our current daycare," Jones explained of the need. "So, a new building would really benefit the community."

Currently, there's a waiting list in Moosomin with a new building seen as essential for those with small children considering a move to Moosomin.

"Right now, we have about 37 kids that would start tomorrow," Jones said. "So with a 90-space daycare, that would defi-

nately take care of them. There's probably also some other parents that would love to enter the workforce if they did have childcare that we just aren't aware of."

In a town well-known for its volunteerism, there's still room at Playfair Daycare for those who'd like to help out.

"The community has been so great, they've reached out to us for lots of fundraisers, really looking to us to help with those fundraisers too," Jones said. "So we've got a small board, and so far, we've been able to rely on a lot of volunteer hours from them. But of course, if we can make that pool a little bit bigger and get some volunteers from the rest of the community,

that would be so great too!"

Time is of the essence in fundraising as the daycare anticipates breaking ground at their new location in the spring with sights set on being operational by the end of 2026.

"There will definitely be a large need for fundraising efforts, corporate donations, things like that," Jones said. "Through the winter here, we'll just be working with our architecture firm to really nail down all of the design aspects of the building, and then also working with all the other trades that are involved in putting together the site plan so when spring does come, we're ready to break ground and start construction."



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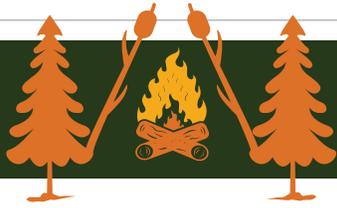
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New play structure opened at Whitewood

BY NICOLE TAYLOR

On Thursday, October 17, Whitewood School celebrated the opening of a new accessible playground with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. This project was made possible through the collective efforts of local sponsors, volunteers, students and parents. Following the ribbon cutting, there was a barbecue sponsored by Borderland Co-op.

The fundraising campaign included initiatives where students sold flowers, pizza, ice cream and more. Landscaping for the new playground began on August 20, 2024. Macey Raiwet, a teacher at Whitewood school and member of the playground board committee, expressed appreciation to sponsors for their contributions, which

varied from donations of \$5,000 to \$30,000, and a significant grant of \$130,000 from Borderland Co-op.

Raiwet emphasized the role of volunteers, stating, "Volunteers don't get paid, not because their contributions are worthless, but because they are actually priceless." Raiwet says this project would not have been possible without the community's generosity.

The total cost of the project was approximately \$273,192 which was \$85,000 less than the initial estimate of \$367,002.

The playground committee is still seeking an additional \$10,000 to cover the remaining expenses for rubber paving. Students, particularly the grade 2 class, were enthusiastic to use the new playground. The Grade 2 class got



Left: Sophie Heikkila and Kendall Adams trying out the play structure.

Above: The ribbon-cutting.

to try out the playground first as a reward for selling the most pizza during Fundraising.

After the ribbon-cutting, the community enjoyed a barbecue of burgers, chips and beverages provided by the Borderland Co-op.

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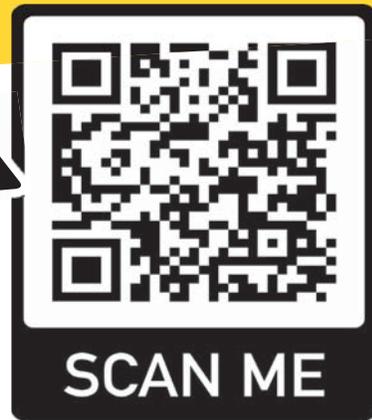
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Grade 4 students learn about provincial election

**Moosomin Grade 4 mock vote results:
Sask Party 21 votes, NDP 1 vote, SUP 1 vote**

Continued from page 15

"The overall vote for all the schools that participated was, students elected a narrow NDP majority government, and the Saskatchewan Party formed the official opposition, with 39.2% voting NDP, 37.4% voting Saskatchewan Party, 8.4% voting Saskatchewan United Party, and 10.5% voting for the Green Party."

Fregin explains she also used Civix during the last federal election and really enjoyed the program and interactive process.

"The last federal election there was a poster put up in our staff room and we thought it would be a great fit for our curriculum, but also for students to understand the importance of voting and that is how you make your voice heard."

It brings that learning in a more fun and interactive way because sometimes sitting and learning about government in the classroom is not the most exciting thing, so just making it more hands-on experiential for them."

The Grade 4 social studies curriculum includes information about the provincial government and how it works with other levels of government.

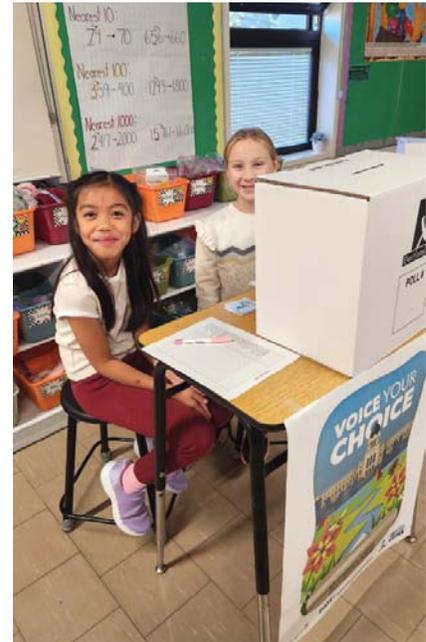
"I taught Grade 2 last year and we focused on community and municipal, so we learn about what it means to be urban and rural, what a municipal government does, who is in charge, all the things they do, and our social studies builds on itself as we get older, so in Grade 4 we learn about the provincial side of things," Fregin said.

"It leads into one of our curriculums based on Saskatchewan history, so we are looking at provincial government, outcomes on traditional forms of government, and Métis forms of government, so we are learning all the different ones. It is very tailored to our province, so having that provincial election was a good opportunity to talk about what is important, what does our province need, and what would you guys like to see, and we actually did that activity in the newspaper from last week

that has all the questions about if you wanted to be premier, what would you do first and what is good advice for a leader."

Fregin says she enjoyed the student vote as did her students.

"Understanding that we are very lucky to live in a place where we all have the right to vote and we talked about other places where they can't vote and how long it took certain demographics of people to be able to vote, so we have talked about that and just getting them to understand they have a voice, this is the proper way to do things, these are the steps, and why sometimes things take a little longer than we think they are going to. We can't fix everything right now, it takes time and there are steps to go through, and just understanding how it all works and getting them more actively involved and asking more questions, and understanding because we talked about campaign signs and what they mean, and why they do that. We really enjoyed participating in the vote, it was a great learning experience for my students."



Election volunteers Alora & Layla.

Martensville-Blairmore	Jamie Martens (Saskatchewan Party)	8	8	651
Meadow Lake	Miles Nachbaur (New Democratic Party, Sask Section)	3	2	220
Melfort	Todd Goudy (Saskatchewan Party)	11	8	430
Melville-Saltcoats	Warren Kaeding (Saskatchewan Party)	10	7	589
Moose Jaw North	Tim McLeod (Saskatchewan Party)	7	6	394
Moose Jaw Wakamow	Megan Patterson (Saskatchewan Party)	8	6	476
Moosomin-Montmartre	Kevin Weedmark (Saskatchewan Party)	10	8	559
Prince Albert Carlton	Carolyn Brost Strom (New Democratic Party, Sask Section)	8	7	1,045
Prince Albert Northcote	Nicole Rancourt (New Democratic Party, Sask Section)	11	6	587

Student vote totals for ridings across the province, showing the winning candidate in each.

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Plain & Valley

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Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba

Students learn about agriculture

BY NICOLE TAYLOR

Elementary school students from Moosomin and Wawota learned about agriculture at an Experience Agriculture field day at Hebert Grain Ventures recently.

Kristjan Hebert of Hebert Grain Ventures said he believes events like this are important to let young people know about agriculture, and he hopes some of the students on the tour consider agriculture as a career when they grow up.

"Some of these kids grow up in town and don't know a lot about farming, so this is a chance for them to see what it's like on a farm, and for some of them it might spark an interest."

The students toured four different stations to understand more about farming.

Valuable experience

MacLeod School Grade 5 students all went to the farm for the event.

MacLeod Vice-Principal Scott Sully says it's valuable for the students to get first-hand experience with agriculture outside the classroom.

"Getting out of brick walls is important," he says. "We can do Ag in the Classroom and things like that, and talk about agriculture resources in class, but getting out to see people out in the field, do the job, hear from professional experts beyond the teachers is pretty valuable to them."

He says he hopes the students learn more about agriculture by getting out of the classroom.

"Hopefully they can learn a little bit about the farm lifestyle and the importance of farming in our agricultural province here, and see agriculture in action. It's really nice to see people they know, people who are hockey coaches and parents of their friends working in that environment."

AgraTactics

One of the companies presenting at the event was AgraTactics. Maria Stachura, an agronomist at AgraTactics, says their business takes a different approach to soil sampling. "The unique thing with our company, is with

other companies there's not as many soil samples per field and they're divided into bigger sections, whereas with us, it's very specific, and done in smaller sections. Every 5 acres, we do a soil sample. We also do a lot of scouting in the summer, that's a big part of our job."

AgraTactics has been working with Hebert Grain Ventures for nearly two decades, says Katie Borkell.

"We've been sampling for Heberts for close to 20 years probably, so they can look back on the data and see how their soil has changed since we've started sampling."

Hannah Nagy with AgraTactics said the students were eager to use the hand probes.

"They were pretty occupied and interested in the soil probes and seeing the sampler truck. We showed the kids our sampler, and the equipment that we use, and let them try out the little hand probes, which is kind of funny because it's really dry right now so the soil is very hard."

She said kids in different areas have different levels of agriculture knowledge.

"We're from Yorkton and it's a bigger city than Moosomin. I think Moosomin kids kind of get it a little bit just because it's a small town, everybody knows someone from a farm," said Nagy.

Katie Burkell of AgraTactics says the students were curious to learn about their jobs. "The students asked how many samples we did in a year, which is around 13,000."

"It was nice to show them how hand probes are used to sample, compared to what we use now. It used to be a lot more difficult than it is now. With technology and a GPS system, it makes everything a lot easier for us," Stachura explained.

Stachura says she enjoys how every day at work is a little bit different. "I like the variability of the job, it's not always the same thing throughout the year, it's nice to go scouting in the summer, getting to go out to all the different fields, and seeing different parts of the countryside. It's nice to get out, it definitely beats sitting in the office some days."

Continued on page 35



Students from MacLeod Elementary School and Wawota School learned about agriculture at Hebert Grain Ventures Wednesday. **Above:** Eliette Taylor, Dawson Dyke, Zee Dodds, Presley Setrum and Josie Skulmoski. **Right:** Joshua Kopacz Knelsen from Wawota School. **Below:** Soryn McWhirter, at left, and Colt Hall (in red), along with other students at the field day.

Nicole Taylor photos



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Jeff and Carolin St. Onge installing the lights.



A homemade cable plow to pull the wire.



Dr. Schalk Van der Merwe and Henriette Van der Merwe installing the lights.



Carolin and Jeff St. Onge with Carly and Avi Smith taking a selfie when the lights were first turned on.



The lights lining the runway at the Moosomin airport.

Lights installed at Moosomin airport

Runway can now be used 24 hours a day

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

"We're now a 24-hour airport for Sask Air Ambulance," confirmed Jeff St. Onge of the Airport Expansion Committee, recalling the moment when he watched the temporary lighting system illuminate the Moosomin Airport runway. "When the lights lit up, I had a tear in my eye!"

It's a huge advancement for the Moosomin Airport to be accessible at night as the newly-paved runway could only be utilized during daylight hours previously, but a little ingenuity helped advance the ability for the local runway to be used at night.

"It is temporary winter lighting to get us through the winter," St. Onge said. "An electrical tender is out, but for a variety of different reasons, it's been extended so that by the time it closes, there's no time to conduct the actual installation before winter."

The committee researched several options before landing on an idea.

"What ended up happening was my daughter Carly—who is seven months pregnant—her husband Avi, my wife, myself, Dr. Van and his wife ended up installing them," St. Onge said of the temporary lights. Using light gauge wire buried a few inches underground, the crew installed LED lights on posts spaced along the edges of the runway.

For now, the lights are powered by a generator, which requires someone to go to the airport and turn the lights on each time an aircraft wishes to land.

"SaskPower is bringing power in probably within the next month, and at that point we'll be able to leave the lights on permanently, or on a dusk-to-dawn timer type of deal," St. Onge said.

For the time being, a nighttime arrival will mean going to the airport, firing up the generator, and turning

the lights on, but St. Onge doesn't see that as an inconvenience in the least.

"In reality, if I get a phone call at two in the morning and it is minus whatever—the wind blowing—that is not much of a pain for me compared to whoever is getting onto that airplane," he said. "They're having a worse day than I am, so I'm happy to do it."

The temporary setup was estimated to cost around \$10,000, according to St. Onge, who also noted that the temporary system could be sold once a permanent lighting system is in place.

"If you save even one life, it's not even a significant cost to put this through the next six months," St. Onge said. "This is how we do stuff on the prairies. That's how we build the place. People roll up their sleeves and come up with creative, cost-effective solutions that help us do what we want."

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Bekevar Wind project comes online

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

After years of planning and construction, the Bekevar Wind and Power Line Project southeast of Kipling is at the energize stage, officially going online Nov. 14.

"There are 36 turbines up, and they should all be fully operational shortly after the event," said Rebecca Acikahte, Business Development Manager for Cowessess Ventures. The Cowessess First Nation (through their Awasis Nehiyawewini Energy Development Limited Partnership) partnered with Innagreen Investments back in 2019 to develop a facility in the RMs of Hazelwood and Kingsley, just north of Moose Mountain Provincial Park.

Five years later, the 202 MW project will be adding enough electricity to the SaskPower grid to power an average of 100,000 Saskatchewan homes. In order to make the connection from those three dozen turbines to the grid, a new 230kV single circuit power line was constructed, nine kilometers in length to connect the Kennedy Switching Station.

The Bekevar project is the largest of its kind in the province, part of an ongoing green commitment for Cowessess as Acikahte explained.

"We have the Awasis Solar Project in Regina, just 10 megawatts, and then originally on that same site, we have a wind/solar battery storage project, which is the first commercial scale project of its kind in the world," she said. "That started in 2013 and finished in 2018 with the addition of the solar. That brings in some revenue every month, and my office is out of the cabin there. It's run off of the project, so it's net-zero—it doesn't use up any energy off the grid."

That project is just outside city limits, between the scissors shape created by the TransCanada to the north and Highway 33 running southeast and consists of an 800kW wind turbine, a 500kW solar array, and 400kWh battery system.

The Bekevar project received \$173 million in investments from the Canadian Infrastructure Bank, \$50 million from Natural Resources Canada via the Smart Renewables and Electrification Pathways Program, and \$98 million in debt financing from German-based Norddeutsche Landesbank. The wind energy project spans 20,000 acres of land through the RMs of Hazelwood and Kingsley, and over 500 acres (three quarter-sections) on the Cowessess First Nation.

Energizing the future

Looking to the future, Acikahte is excited for what projects are yet to come, and what that means for Cowessess.

"We have a partnership newly formed called the Seven Stars Energy Project, and it's with Enbridge and six nations from Treaty Four, including the Métis Nation, which they don't really get Indigenous participation on," she explained. "So that will be 200 more megawatts of wind by Weyburn."

The Seven Stars Energy Project will encompass a 200 square km area southeast of Weyburn with engagement between Enbridge and the Cowessess First Nation, George Gordon First Nation, Kahkewistahaw First Na-



Left: Cowessess youth signing a turbine blade.
Above: The wind turbines at sunset.

tion, Pasqua First Nation, the Métis Nations-Saskatchewan, and White Bear First Nation. That project is targeted to be operational in 2027, and Acikahte noted there's yet another 200 MW wind project plus a couple 100 MW solar projects also in very early development stages.

"So we potentially have a lot more coming up in the next year or two," she said.

"I think for Cowessess to participate in that, it's a way that we can continue to be stewards of the land as original people, and help to take care of the province and share resources in a sustainable way, not creating waste," Acikahte concluded. "Something like a wind project still allows us to farm and have the migratory paths of animals and it's not very disruptive if done in the right way."



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Transforming mining with automation

Nutrien's network of potash mines has reached a significant milestone of 25 million ore tonnes cut using automation

BY MEGAN ADAMS

In the ever-evolving world of mining, the integration of advanced automation technologies has paved the way for remarkable improvements in safety and operational efficiency. During Nutrien's transformative journey of mining automation across their network of mines in Saskatchewan, they have reached a significant milestone of 25 million ore tonnes mined using automation.

"Reaching 25 million ore tonnes cut through our automation program is an outstanding achievement," says Shannon Rhynold, Vice President, Engineering, Technology and Capital & Operations Strategy, Potash. "We are now on a journey of significant growth, having doubled our tele-remote ore produced each of the last three years. We are on pace to achieve this goal again in 2024 and aim for 40-50% automated ore mined by the end of 2026."

Lanigan: The starting point

Nutrien's tele-remote (TR) journey began at Lanigan in 2017, where a simple camera was mounted on a two-rotor mining machine. This early phase was marked by excitement, followed by a steep learning curve which drove the collaborative spirit of the teams involved.

"This project has truly been a collaborative effort. Early on, our technical



team greatly benefited from the expertise and insights of our operators. Their feedback was foundational, and it ultimately shaped the development of the tele-remote system," says Owen Gunther, Automation Project Lead, Lanigan. "We also relied on our skilled tradespeople, whose

practical experience proved vital in adapting the technology to the mining machines for long-term sustainability."

Cory's replication efforts

The Cory potash mine began its tele-remote replication journey in 2020, following extensive collaboration with the Lanigan team. During this period, Cory focused on upgrading existing mining machines with TR technologies while building new TR-enabled miners to expand

our fleet. These ongoing initiatives aim to operationalize the technology to support production needs, ensuring the safe and efficient production of potash.

"Collaboration within the tele-remote project is essential for achieving our shared goals and maximizing the impact of our work. By leveraging the diverse expertise and perspectives within our network, we can tackle complex challenges more effectively and drive innovation," says Tyler Zimmerman, Automation Project Lead, Cory. "Open communication, mutual respect, and a commitment to collective problem-solving are the cornerstones of our approach, ensuring that every voice is heard, and every contribution is valued. Together, we are not just working on a project; we are building a dynamic, synergistic environment that propels us toward success."

After the successful implementation at Lanigan, Cory replicated the technology, further refining and expanding its application. This replication set the stage for broader adoption across other sites.

Scaling to other sites: Vanscoy and Allan

Taking lessons learned from Lanigan and Cory, Vanscoy and Allan embarked on their own journeys to replicate tele-remote technology. This phase involved intricate application processes and adaptation to site-specific conditions.

Continued on Page 33

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SIMSA holding meeting in Esterhazy

BY RYAN KIEDROWSKI

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

On Nov. 20 the Saskatchewan Industrial and Mining Suppliers Association will be in Esterhazy for a meeting with members.

SIMSA is a non-profit that represents over 350 Saskatchewan-based businesses that supply goods and services to the industrial, mining, and energy sectors. With Esterhazy being a community closely linked to mining, and having businesses linked to the industry, it seemed a natural fit to host SIMSA for such an event.

"We make connections, and we continue to grow off of them," said Derek Paidel, General Manager at Parkland Manufacturing, who used a golf analogy to explain his view on working with others to improve skills. "I like golfing, so I always say you want to golf with people that are better than you because that's how you're going to get better. SIMSA is just growing and doing better every year. Since we've joined, we've seen significant change—and they were already good."

To date, SIMSA is the only group that represents suppliers and has a physical presence in the province. They promote and represent the interests of Saskatchewan-based suppliers, favouring collaboration, diversity, and an inclusive workforce.

"We've got members all over the province, and so we try to connect with them where they live every now and then if we can," said Eric Anderson, SIMSA's Executive Director. "We can come and talk to them in their region and find out what they're doing or a little more about it, and get an even better understanding of the town."

Anderson noted the importance of meeting in person and gaining feedback from members in the locations where they live and work.

"I have a simple phrase, it's that we help our members sell stuff, and part of that then is we connect them face to face with buyers and events, which we do a lot of," he said. "But we also provide some educational opportunities, like how to negotiate or how to read contracts."

Another huge area SIMSA will be exploring is member benefits through their Protective coverage, which can provide a valuable opportunity for entrepreneurs.

"Within our membership, there's 34,000 employees," Anderson said. "So we qualify as this big company, and what we did is we found an insurance underwriter to create a health benefits plan."

The resulting plan can work for a company as small as three employees in all

manner of diverse scenarios.

"Whether above ground or below ground, or behind a desk or behind a steering wheel, the rates are all the same because it's this massive group program," Anderson says. "So these little companies that couldn't get decent benefits before now can, which then allows them to attract and retain employees and just have a better life."

SIMSA's nuclear connection

One huge opportunity that SIMSA has been leading for smaller businesses across the province is the emerging nuclear power industry. In fact, SIMSA just wrapped up a symposium with Westinghouse in

Saskatoon on Nov. 8. Westinghouse is a major leader when it comes to building reactors. Anderson estimates between one-half and two-thirds of all reactors globally are made by the company, and that includes the 300 MW small modular reactors SaskPower wants to place in the Estevan area.

"These projects are multi-billion dollar projects right there," remarked Anderson in conversation on nuclear power and Westinghouse's role. "They're enormous. The work ends up all over the place. There's more focused earthworks and crane working in Estevan, but the actual manufacturing work can be all over the place."

Continued on Page 36

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Transforming mining with automation

Nutrien's network of potash mines has reached a significant milestone of 25 million ore tonnes cut using automation

Continued from Page 30

"Over the past few years, Vanscoy has been able to leverage the lessons learned from other sites, including the development of new technologies and improvements on existing tele-remote technology," says Brian Holonics, Automation Project Lead, Vanscoy. "The sharing of successes between sites has helped Vanscoy expedite replicating their fleet and build additional confidence in operationalizing the equipment. We have clearly seen the benefits of utilizing the technology, including improved safety, additional tonnes, and improved performance on both the borer and continuous haulage system."

"Allan has benefited greatly from the development work that Lanigan and Cory did on the tele-remote system. We were able to quickly begin replicating the system to our mining fleet with only minimal modifications to meet site-specific requirements," says Mike Siourounis, Continuous Improvement Lead, Allan. "The strong collaboration across the network, including temporary transfers of Allan employees to the Lanigan Automation team, was a significant benefit. The collaboration between the sites continues to provide value as we find further improvements to the automation systems and how our workforce uses them."

Development at Rocanville

At Nutrien's Rocanville site, the focus has been on advancing from side pass Operator Not Present (ONP) technology to fully automating the first pass cutting process.



flexibility, efficiency, and safety."

Safety and efficiency: A dual focus

The primary objective of Nutrien's automation efforts has always been to enhance safety within their mining operations. By reducing the exposure of operators to hazardous conditions, their automation technology significantly improves workplace safety. Additionally, these systems bring substantial productivity benefits, such as eliminating downtime during shift changes and enabling safer mining in areas with challenging geology.

Nutrien has ambitious plans to further advance tele-remote, Operator Not Present (ONP), and other cutting-edge automation technologies. These future advancements are designed to transform the industry and set new benchmarks for operational excellence.

"I am incredibly proud of our teams for their dedication and hard work in reaching this milestone of 25 million ore tonnes cut using automation," says Trevor Berg, Senior Vice-President, Potash Operations. "By embracing advanced technologies and fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation, we are not only enhancing the safety and well-being of our employees, but also setting new standards for efficiency in the mining industry. Our journey doesn't stop here; We will continue to push the boundaries of what's possible by listening to the challenges our employees face and then focusing on thoughtful technological applications that solve those problems from a safety and efficiency perspective."

This journey, which began in 2018, aimed to revitalize automation technology that had seen little advancement since the early '90s.

"We embarked on revitalizing our side pass technology before moving on to the challenge of automating the manual aspects of our first pass cutting process," says Clayton Lawless, Automation Lead, Rocanville. "Our efforts have led to significant progress, including the deployment of our prototype Belt Builder and advanced steering systems. These achievements are a collaborative effort between our operations and maintenance teams, aimed at improving

cut using automation," says Trevor Berg, Senior Vice-President, Potash Operations. "By embracing advanced technologies and fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation, we are not only enhancing the safety and well-being of our employees, but also setting new standards for efficiency in the mining industry. Our journey doesn't stop here; We will continue to push the boundaries of what's possible by listening to the challenges our employees face and then focusing on thoughtful technological applications that solve those problems from a safety and efficiency perspective."

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Students learn about agriculture at HGV

Continued from page 25

"We hopefully try to teach them something. It matters as long as one of them took away something from what we said."

Nagy says she loves the clients she gets to work with on a daily basis. "We get to meet some really good people, all of our farmers are awesome."

Burkell says that working with AgraTactics means always learning new methods of farming. "It's interesting seeing so many different ways to do the same thing. There's not one right way to farm, so we get to see a lot of different approaches."

Parrish & Heimbecker

Kendall Pratchler from P&H who was there to give presentations to the students says there were hands-on activities for the kids to help them learn more about soil.

"They learned the difference between sand, silt and clay, and how water infiltrates between all the layers of soil. We have a little experiment going on where we had a couple kids per group, sand, silt, and clay. We set timers and let them run water through to see what soil is the best. They were pretty interactive actually. It got competitive!"

Pratchler says she was surprised by some of the knowledge of agriculture the kids had. "One of them was asking about erosion, so that was pretty good. I didn't expect them to ask about erosion."

Kendall says she has been to Hebert farms the last few years to give presentations and host activities for the students. "Heberts usually ask us to come out every year. It's cool watching their faces, and they're pretty competitive about the activities, too. There's a lot of yelling and 'we're winning!'"

Pratchler says knowledge of agriculture is important for young people. "I think agriculture is a bit of a grey area for kids. I wish there were more people that taught them about this kind of thing. There should definitely be a course on agriculture at school."

Jade Jaenen from P&H says that even the schools that are fortunate to offer an agriculture class aren't able to teach in-depth lessons.

"One agriculture class is not big enough to carry everything, it's not just crop farming, you could go into multiple types of farming, the course just doesn't seem big enough."

Jaenen and Pratchler say that they were never given the option to take an agriculture class in high school. "We never had that option growing up, so it's cool that they are incorporating it now," said Pratchler.

More ag education

Kristjan Hebert, owner of Hebert Grain Ventures, says that although more farms are starting to host school field trips, he would like to see more.

"There's getting to be more and more farms that do this, but not enough," he said. "This is the biggest field trip. We always do one every year. This is the first one where multiple schools have come. We seem to find that once the teachers know we do it, they are interested in visiting the farm."

Hebert says that part of the reason there aren't a lot of farms that host schools is they don't know how to go about it.

"I think a lot of farms don't really have a template. They think it's a lot of work, which it is, but if you reach out to four or five of the companies, you don't have to do everything yourself, P&H and AgraTactics are doing presentations. We pull out all of the equipment for the

kids to see and provide the food and drinks for lunch."

Hebert says more schools should be taking their students to local farms to learn about agriculture first-hand. Blake Weatherald, a chaperone and parent of a student

visiting Hebert Grain ventures, says this is great opportunity for young kids to learn about Saskatchewan's agriculture. "It's good for the kids to see this sort of thing, especially the in-town kids."

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SIMSA meeting

Continued from Page 32

This means manufacturers anywhere in Saskatchewan have an opportunity to put their best foot forward into an industry that ordinarily would not be accessible. In general, much of the actual work is the same, but as Anderson pointed out, nuclear does come with more paperwork.

"It's the same supply chain for nuclear as it is for potash, except for maybe a couple of specific vehicles, like a mining machine," he said. "It's all welding and making great big things, or electrical systems, it's all the same stuff. It's just that with nuclear you add a whole pile more paperwork, because they want to track, they're more careful. There's a lot more safety."

That's the purpose of meetings like the recent event with Westinghouse, allowing for more insight to members in order to make an informed decision if the industry might be right for their individual operation.

That's why we do our events, is to give people the ideas and the timelines and the scale—the scope of what's available so they know what's available, then they can make their own decisions, whether they want to make the investment or not," Anderson explained. "An educated decision, how much work is there potentially for my company? When will it happen? That's usually the bigger one—you don't want to spend a bunch of money on accreditation now, find out you didn't get work for eight years, and you've wasted all this money, and you go broke because there's no money to pay for what you just did."

Intended for SIMSA members, the Esterhazy information meeting is slated for the morning of Nov. 20 at the SN Boreen Centre.

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Canadian farmland values rise 5.5% in first half of 2024: FCC report

Canadian cultivated farmland values rose by an average of 5.5 per cent in the first half of 2024, according to the mid-year farmland values review by Farm Credit Canada (FCC). Over the 12 months from July 2023 to June 2024, there was a 9.6 per cent increase, representing a slowdown compared to the previous 12-month period (January to December 2023).

"Farmland values increased at a slower rate, yet 5.5 per cent growth in six months is still a very strong number," said J.P. Gervais, FCC's chief economist.

For the second consecutive year, Saskatchewan and Quebec have recorded the highest average six-month increases in the country, at 7.4 per cent and 5.4 per cent, respectively. The rates in New Brunswick, British Columbia, and Alberta all settled in the same range, 5.2 per cent, 5.0 per cent, and 4.6 per cent, respectively. Manitoba recorded a growth rate of 3.9 per cent, closely followed by Nova Scotia at 3.8 per cent. Ontario recorded a lower increase at 2.1 per cent, with Prince Edward Island concluding the list at 1.7 per cent.

Elevated borrowing costs, lower commodity prices and the increased price of land hasn't deterred some buyers. Looking ahead, declining borrowing costs and a limited supply of available farmland should sustain the current high prices for farmland.

"The continued rise in farmland values highlights a positive and robust long-term outlook for the agriculture sector. As we move into the latter half of 2024, the trends in farm revenues and interest rates will be key indicators of where farmland values might head next," said Gervais.

Gervais noted that farm cash receipts are projected to decline overall in 2024 by 3.3 per cent as commodity prices show few signs of a quick rebound, possibly limiting farmers' willingness and capacity to assign higher valuations to farmland.

"Understanding economic and financial trends is essential for making informed decisions. FCC is committed to providing the industry with data-driven insights that can help producers and investors navigate the current economic headwinds," added Gervais.

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