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# Fort Times

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## Pasqua seeks resort village status

➤ \$110 million in taxable assessment



ALAN HUSTAK | GRASSLANDS NEWS

### New resort village

Residents along the north shore of Pasqua Lake are applying to have their properties become a resort village. If accepted, the new municipality would be the fourth largest resort village in the province with a population of 325 residents. The hamlet would have a taxable assessment of \$110 million.

## If approved, it would be fourth largest resort village in the province

By Alan Hustak  
Grasslands News

Residents who live along the north shore of Pasqua Lake in the Rural Municipality of North Qu'Appelle 187 have begun the drive to have their hamlet become a resort village.

A committee has spent the last 18 months reviewing the possibility. A public meeting of ratepayers is expected to be held in May or June to consider the option, once people are allowed to gather in greater numbers again.

"Before we apply to the Minister of Municipal Affairs to transition to a resort village, we would like to have a public meeting at Lutherland. With COVID we could not," said Stan Powell, chairman of the committee that has done the preliminary studies.

"We got along with the municipality of North Qu'Appelle for years. It has only become an issue for the last five or six years. We used to cover 25 per cent of the RM's costs, then after it went from 25 to 40 per cent, there was lots of dissatisfaction among rate payers, and we've come to the conclusion we would be better off looking after our own affairs."

Once residents began investigating the various options, the RM reduced the share to 34 per cent but that sparked a movement "to decide what people were thinking," Powell explained. A petition that was circulated among residents gathered 369 signatures in a permanent community of about 325 people.

The hamlet has \$110-million in taxable assessment and would have to develop a restructuring agreement with the Rural Municipality of North Qu'Appelle. If approved, the Resort Village of Pasqua Lake would be the fourth largest in the province, after Candle Lake, Katepwa and Manitou Beach.

Also noted, if approved, the resort community of Pasqua Lake would have to enter into a number of reciprocal agreements with the Town of Fort Qu'Appelle for such things as fire protection and emergency sewage lagoon services. In a letter to council, the planning committee asked the Fort council to support its application which will "grant us the authority, by way of own elected council, to participate in a long standing working relationship for the betterment of Pasqua Lake and surrounding area."

Lee Carlson, Reeve of the Rural Municipality of North Qu'Appelle 187, says it would be premature to

say anything until the RM knows "In what direction the process unfolds. It will be up to the ratepayers and the department of municipal affairs to make the final decision."



ALAN HUSTAK | GRASSLANDS NEWS

### Pasqua Lake

The Resort Village of Pasqua Lake will be the name of a new community in the province if the hamlet is granted resort village status.



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# Firefighting program gets back to class in July

By Emily Jane Fulford  
Grasslands News

Over the past year, the Parkland College Firefighting Program held just outside of Melville, Saskatchewan has had a terrible run of luck. However, it looks like things are back on track after what was a difficult year for most of the world.

“On Easter weekend 2019, a fire damaged an under-construction classroom building at Parkland College’s Emergency Services Training Site, east of Melville,” said Brendan Wagner, Coordinator, Corporate & Internal Engagement for Parkland College. “The charred structure had to

be demolished and a new facility was built in its place.”

It wasn’t long after that terrible bout of irony that COVID-19 made its debut, throwing most of the globe into upheaval and crisis. The pandemic was also responsible for the closure of many educational institutions across the world, the country, and the province. While some programs that focus mostly on bookwork were able to be done online, programs that required on-site training, vocational training, lab work and group projects were not able to continue as per the normal routine.

The 14-week program, which is conducted in

association with the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, offers a thorough combination of theory and hands-on skills required for entry into a firefighting career. Part of this training requirement is set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and incorporates practice runs and practical activities. NFPA 1001 training provides the basic training required for many industrial safety positions and is considered to be the starting program for a full-time firefighter career.

The results of both blows to the program in such short succession resulted in the college having little choice but to postpone the last year’s scheduled course and wait out the storm. However, that time has now come and the new classroom is finally up and running again as the program is set to get underway in the summer of 2021.

“There are 18 students from 10 different communities in Platoon #17,” said Wagner. “They’ll learn the theory and get hands-on training at the Emergency Services Training Site until the end of June. Platoon #18 begins training in late July.”



SUBMITTED | GRASSLANDS NEWS

## Class resumes

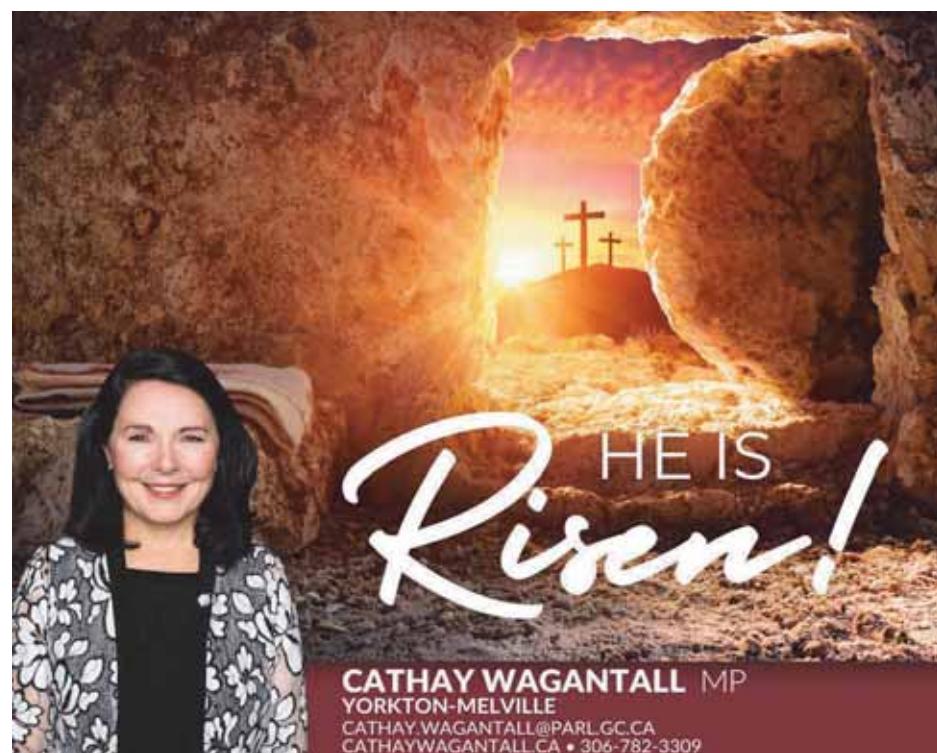
Firefighting classes are set to resume this July at Parkland College after two devastating blows left the program unable to operate for a year.



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# Auto body shops forced into new regulations

By Elaine Ashfield  
Grasslands News

Auto body repair shops have until July 1, 2021 to meet the new minimum accreditation requirements or lose their accreditation with Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI).

SGI states that the primary goal of the program changes is to ensure customers' vehicles are repaired properly so that they will provide the same level of crash protection in the event of a subsequent collision.

Auto body shops are saying they are being forced into the new regulations involving training and the expense to update equipment or they lose customers and possibly their businesses.

Grasslands News first reported on these changes being developed in May of 2019 and SGI extended the deadline to March 1, 2021 and recently to July 1, 2021 to give shops more time to complete the required training.

"COVID-19 restrictions impacted the availability of in-person training last year, so SGI extended the deadline to give repair shops the time they need to meet all requirements, which must be met by July 1 to maintain their accreditation," Ryan Smith, SGI Vice President, SK Claims and Salvage Operations confirmed with Grasslands News.

"Improvements in vehicle automation and fuel efficiency have resulted in significant advancements in vehicle construction and driver safety technologies, impacting the auto repair industry worldwide. SGI is amending the requirements for SGI accreditation to match the minimum training, tools and equipment needed to safely and properly repair customers' vehicles, as traditional repair techniques and tools are no longer sufficient to repair many of today's newer vehicles to adequate safety standards."

The upgrade in equipment could be costly to some autobody shops as it would require things such as, for example, enhanced welding equipment that utilizes 3 phase power to be installed.

SGI confirmed that in order to be accredited by SGI, repair shops must meet minimum equipment and training requirements, which includes:

- Having the tools, training and equipment needed to repair a majority of customer vehicles safely and properly, including equipping themselves with welding equipment capable of properly joining the high-strength steels used in the construction of today's vehicles.

- Follow the vehicle manufacturer repair procedures and recommendations

when making repairs; • Engaging in a system of continuous professional development through an internationally accepted collision training program.

"Tooling and equipment standards for accreditation were updated last in 1991. The current accreditation requirements are no longer sufficient to repair many of today's newer vehicles to manufacturer standards," Smith commented.

"Simply put, with new, more sophisticated vehicles and technology, repair shops need the right tools, equipment, and training to undertake safe and quality auto repairs to return vehicles to their pre-collision condition."

While SGI did not provide incentives for the shops to upgrade to the requirements, they will be paying for the software system that shops must use for estimates for SGI, which previously was the responsibility of the business.

Grasslands News contacted Ken Wolfe of Dorel Auto Body at Whitewood, and he stated that his cost for the program runs at over \$700/month at present.

"It would have helped to know this sooner (that SGI would be paying for the system after the new regulations are implemented) as that was a large factor in deciding what would be affordable and what we would consider as a viable business to continue investing in," Wolfe stated. Initially this

payment by SGI was not announced.

With the loss of the level of accreditation to some of the auto body shops, people in those communities will also lose.

"There will not be any appraisals done for SGI anywhere unless there is an accredited shop in the community," Wolfe explained.

"This means that any vehicle will have to be taken to a community that has an accredited shop. Either the vehicle would be driven there or would need to be towed elsewhere for assessment, an expense that would have to be paid by SGI or the owner. The shop doing the estimate does not get paid for the estimate so undoubtedly would want to keep the vehicle there for repairs and the owner will probably not want to pay the expense to have the vehicle towed or driven elsewhere for repairs.

"SGI pays for the towing of vehicles that are towed and written off during the assessment but if they are deemed repairable, SGI does not pay for the towing," Wolfe also explained.

"All of these new regulations will cut our business down and our incomes result in being cut in half or more. Also, all this (training) will make

a difference where to get a job.

"Hopefully, people will continue to use their local auto body for repairs not

under SGI that don't require high tech training. All repairs through SGI after the July 1 deadline will probably go to the accredited shops."

Wolfe also stated that shop owners know enough what they can safely fix and what needs to be written off. It has always been that if the repairs are out of their scope, they refer the repairs elsewhere to a qualified auto body. These new regulations are a heavy hit to especially the smaller rural auto body shops as now they will not see even the smallest of repairs as only the shops spending the funds to update to the new accreditation levels will receive the majority of vehicle repairs.

With the expectation there will be a loss of the auto body shops in the smaller communities due to the changes in the government regulations for accreditation, it will be important after July 1st for people to speak with their local shops as they may still be able to help do your repairs. "Keep



**"The current accreditation requirements are no longer sufficient to repair many of today's newer vehicles to manufacturer standards."**

- SGI VP Ryan Smith



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Rebate amounts vary based on premiums paid on vehicles registered between January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2020. If you're an eligible customer, a rebate cheque will be mailed your way in May.

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**SGI**

Saskatchewan

# \$6.1 million for local infrastructure and rec. projects

*Cowessess First Nation, Balcarres and Indian Head benefit*

By Chris Ashfield  
Grasslands News

Canadians everywhere have felt the impact of COVID-19 on their families, their livelihoods, and their way of life. Canada and Saskatchewan have worked together to ensure health and safety, support families and businesses, and sustain local economies. Investments in Saskatchewan's infrastructure during this extraordinary time provide an opportunity to make communities more sustainable and resilient in the long run, and to further develop our renewable energy resources.

On March 31 it was announced that residents of several Saskatchewan communities will benefit from recreational facility upgrades, improved water and wastewater infrastructure, and clean energy projects. Funding through the Investing in Canada plan will support 24 infrastructure projects in Saskatchewan, with the Government of Canada investing more than \$31.1 million in these projects and the Government of Saskatchewan providing over \$22.7 million. Contributions by municipal governments toward their respective projects are more than \$7.2 million. In total, this represents a combined infrastructure investment of more than \$61 million. Funding recipients are responsible for any additional project costs.

Included in the projects announced are investments in a recreational project in Indian Head and water and clean energy projects in Balcarres and Cowessess First Nation worth a combined \$6.1 million.

The Awasis Solar Project on land

owned by Cowessess First Nation south-east of Regina is one of two solar energy projects receiving \$3.4 million in funding, split evenly between the federal and provincial governments. The money will help supply clean energy directly to the Saskatchewan electrical grid. SaskPower is also set to implement a battery energy storage project that will help to balance the power system during power demand spikes and support intermittent generation options such as wind and solar.

"Cowessess First Nation strives to be an economic self-sustaining partner in the growth of the province and country," Cowessess First Nation Chief Cadmus Delorme said. "This goal becomes a reality when the plan includes investment from the government. As the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action provide us all direction to bridge the gap, Cowessess First Nation will help this province and country in renewable energy to assure our seven generations ahead may have a sustainable place to call home."

Balcarres is one of 17 Saskatchewan communities that is receiving an investment in water and wastewater infrastructure that will improve capacity to meet current and future demand while ensuring continued compliance with provincial and federal regulations. The town will construct two new wells and replace the raw water pipeline. Estimated to cost \$980,000, the federal government will provide \$392,000, the provincial government \$326,634 and the municipal government \$261,366 for the project.

Indian Head will also benefit from the Investing in Canada plan with funding

to help build a new outdoor swimming pool with lap pool, leisure pool, water-slide feature and beach entry area. The \$1.762 million project will see \$704,813 funded by the federal government, \$587,285 funded by the provincial government and \$469,94 by the municipal government.

"From swimming pools to solar projects, the Government of Canada is taking actions to support families, businesses, and the economy in Saskatchewan and across the country now, so that we can build resilient communities for years to come," said Jim Carr, the Prime Minister's Special Representative for the Prairies, on behalf of Catherine

McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities. "The funding announced today will help communities build back better, create jobs, and build cleaner, more inclusive communities."

"The Government of Saskatchewan is investing more than \$22.7 million toward these important projects, which will improve recreational facilities, upgrade water systems, support renewable energy and help protect the environment," Saskatchewan's Government Relations Minister Don McMorris said. "It is infrastructure that will help build better communities, create jobs, and improve quality of life for those who call this great province home."

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# Manitoba Hydro set to market power to SaskPower by 2022

By Elaine Ashfield  
Grasslands News

A new \$70-million transmission line has been completed from the Birtle South Hydro Station to the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border so that energy surplus can be sold to SaskPower from Manitoba.

The 230-kilovolt connection was constructed from October to mid-March and as Greg Nesbitt, MLA for Riding Mountain in Manitoba stated in South Mountain Press' weekly edition, "This line will provide Manitoba Hydro with another revenue stream for years to come."

Nesbitt added that this sale of clean,

green hydroelectric power to Saskatchewan is hopefully the start of many more sales of electricity by Manitoba Hydro.

The section of the new transmission line that travels into Saskatchewan is supported by SaskPower and has been connected to the station in Tantalton, SK.

Action to start the transmission line will take place after needed site cleanup and minor construction oversights are resolved. Energy supply is set to flow into Saskatchewan by

2022.

Following a \$180 billion plan 'Investing in Canada', Manitoba has been able to initiate projects throughout the province to modernize and develop infrastructure for a greener tomorrow.



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# Essential travel recommended to Regina area

By Alan Hustak  
Grasslands News

People who have friends and relatives in Regina are being asked to stay away from the city during the long holiday weekend and to avoid Easter and Passover family gatherings this week and Ramadan gatherings next week.

The capital has been inexplicably hit with a marked rise in cases of COVID-19 and by a wave of new variants of the virus which are causing more serious infections.

Ten people died last week of COVID, eight of them in Regina. As of Wednesday, March 31 Saskatchewan has recorded 1,955 active cases, the highest since last February. More than half of those cases are in the Regina area.

"It is a different demographic. We are now seeing otherwise young, healthy individuals with COVID. All of the cases we've seen in Regina this month are caused by variants. Cases are up among people anywhere from their mid to late 20's up essentially through their '30s and '40s, with no pre-existing medical conditions and they are crazy sick," said Regina infectious disease specialist Dr. Alex Wong. "As the proportion of

variants in all of Canada is gradually increasing, with the exception of the Maritimes, we are going to see an increase in transmissibility and presumably going to see an increased number of people being admitted to hospital because these variants do tend to cause a more severe illness as well.

"We didn't see this proportion of young, otherwise healthy individuals back in the first and second waves. Virtually all the cases we see now are caused by variants. There is a lot of angst among health care workers."

Electronic signs posted along highways leading into Regina advise motorists to avoid driving into the Regina zone which includes communities such as Belle Plaine, Pense, Grand Coulee, Lumsden Beach, Regina Beach, Craven, Lumsden, Edenwold, Pilot Butte, Emerald Park, White City, Balgonie, Kronau, Davin, Gray and Riceton.

An exception has been made for patients who have medical appointments in Regina. In a media release the Health Authority says travel for compassionate reasons is necessary. "It is safe to attend medical appointments, but advises against making other stops or visits in the city."



ALAN HUSTAK | GRASSLANDS NEWS

## Travel restrictions urged

People are being asked to only travel to and from the Regina area as necessary with the current increase of COVID-19. Currently Regina and area is reporting over half of the total active cases in Saskatchewan.

## APAS annual meeting held virtually

By Chris Ashfield  
Grasslands News

A farmer from the RM of Martin has been elected to the board of directors for the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS).

APAS held its 2021 Annual General Meeting virtually on March 30 during which the APAS Board of Directors re-elected Todd Lewis, representative for RM of Lajord #128, as President for 2021. A farmer from Grey, Lewis was first elected to the position at the end of 2016. Ian Boxall of Tisdale and Bill Prybylski of Willowbrook were re-elected as Vice Presidents.

APAS representatives also elected six directors to the APAS board for a two-

year term. They are Steven Donald of the RM of Martin #122 (District 1), Todd Lewis of the RM of Lajord #128 and Bev Pirio of RM of Laurier #38 (District 2), Don Connick of the RM of Carmichael #109 (District 3), Ian Boxall of the RM of Connaught #457 (District 4) and Scott Owens of the RM of Eldon #471 (District 6). There is also one position to be elected in District 5. That election will take place in April.

Six resolutions were considered and passed during the virtual Annual General Meeting. Delegates approved a motion calling for the rejection of the Grains code of practice and adopted 43 recommendations developed by the APAS Rural Connectivity Task Force on internet and cell service.

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### Council Comment

With the province's COVID-19 vaccination program now under way, please consider getting vaccinated as soon as possible. Help protect yourself and members of our community. Stay safe and look forward to spring and a brighter future!

### Elm Tree Trimming

From April 1 to August 31, pruning elm trees is prohibited as the fresh cuts can attract the Elm Bark Beetle increasing the chance of a Dutch Elm Disease infection. The insects spread the disease and are most active during the spring and summer.

### Transit Van Operating

The Transit Van began operating again on Monday, Feb. 1, 2021. Please see the Fort Qu'Appelle website or Facebook page for Rules and Procedures.

#### New Transit Van Fares

<u>In Town</u>	One Way	\$5.00
	Second Stops (per stop)	\$2.00
<u>Out of Town</u>	Less than 25 kms	\$10.00
	from Fort Qu'Appelle, Plus	75¢ per km
<u>Out of Town</u>	More than 25 kms	\$20.00
	from Fort Qu'Appelle, Plus	75¢ per km
	Plus	\$30.00 per hour
	Minimum 150 km charge	wait time

### Council Meeting

The next Town of Fort Qu'Appelle Council meetings will be held on: Thursday, April 8, and Thursday, April 22 at 7:00 p.m.

### Assessment Roll Notice

The Assessment Roll for the Town of Fort Qu'Appelle for 2021 has been prepared and is open to inspection in the office of the assessor from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday by appointment only.

### Gopher Baiting

The Town will be placing gopher bait out in the hope of reducing the number of gophers in Town this year. The product being used is called Rozol Pocket Gopher Bait. For full details about this product, please go to the Town's website, [www.fortquappelle.com](http://www.fortquappelle.com).

### Upcoming Recycling Dates

Upcoming recycling dates are slated for April 27 and 28.

### Contact Information

To ensure you receive all Town correspondence, please make sure you provide your correct contact information (phone, email, and mailing address) to the Municipal Office.

# OPINION

"For the cause that needs assistance; for the wrong that needs resistance; the future in the distance and the good that we can do."

## O'Toole is losing ground; where is Scheer?

Political conventions normally give a boost to a party's popularity, but following the recent Conservative convention, it is hard to tell where opposition leader Erin O'Toole is leading his party or whether anyone apart from die-hard, right wing conservatives are prepared to follow him.

O'Toole called for change. He told the convention that he wants to address policies in a new way, and communicate conservative principles in a new way, and wants to make sure he communicates those conservative principles in new ways to new people.

Which conservative principles does he wish to change, and in what ways? He didn't say. It is far from certain that the membership wants change.

There has been no uptick for O'Toole or the Conservatives in the polls following the virtual convention.

They now trail the Liberals by 7 to 10 points; 28 to 30 per cent does not win elections.

While Trudeau would be foolish to call a threatend snap election, the Conservatives would have the most to lose. O'Toole would do much worse than former leader Andrew Scheer who collected more votes than the Liberals in the last election and reduced Trudeau to a minority government. One has to wonder why the party didn't allow Scheer enough time to build on his strengths but dumped him as opposition leader after only three years.

According to the most recent opinion polls, the Conservatives could lose as many as eight of their 48 seats in their prairie stronghold – four in Saskatchewan (three to the NDP - in Regina Saskatoon and the far north - and one in Regina to the Liberals,) and four in Alberta ( two to the Liberals in Calgary and two to the NDP in Edmonton.) Even worse, only 20 per cent of Canadians have a favourable impression of O'Toole compared to a 37 per cent approval rating for Justin Trudeau and 34 per cent for Jagmet Singh.

No one expects the Conservative party to adopt Liberal policies. But it won't be a contender if it continues to spout Regressive-Conservative ideas. At the moment the party appears to be a rural, right wing, movement made up of dyed-in-the-wool social conservatives, libertarians, and dogmatic Christians with an agenda supported with meaningless buzz phrases.

The more O'Toole attempts to accommodate the hard core, the more he scares the voters in urban centres away. Every poll since he became leader has shown the Tories in a worsening position, worse than they have been for decades. Brian Mulroney was able to build a governing party with his steely charm; Stephen Harper was respected as a cold-blooded strategist who survived two minority governments before winning his majority. O'Toole remains an enigma to most voters, especially to those in the conservative heart land. Can anyone remember the last time he's been in Saskatchewan to court voters?

Even some members of his caucus are now grumbling about his leadership. Climate change is real, but delegates to the convention don't want it included in the party's election platform or acknowledge that the transition away from fossil fuel dependency has begun.

Being in opposition requires constructive opposition, something that the Bloc Quebecois leader Gilles Duceppe understood when he was leader of Her Majesty's Opposition in 1997. There has been plenty of opportunity for O'Toole to exploit the governing party's shortcomings, especially its fiscal and ethical failings, income inequality, its equalization and health care policies, especially the confusion that has resulted from vaccine delays. In spite of Trudeau's failings, critics acknowledge that the pandemic has forced the prime minister to mature. He is no longer the featherbrain he was during his first term in office.

Andrew Scheer was often compared to being something of a Howdy Doody character because of his always cheerful good nature. O'Toole is shaping up to be another character from the same television show: Flub a Dub.

He will have to raise his game or his national profile, or the conservatives will be looking for another leader sooner than they expected.

Is Andrew Scheer still available?

- Alan Hustak

## Sask. Party gov't must rise to challenges

Murray Mandryk  
Political columnist

If you are continually losing battles in politics, maybe you are picking the wrong fights.

Or at least, maybe you are picking the wrong approach.

Those of you who follow Saskatchewan politics will recognize how this has done in the NDP.

For decades, the NDP (and its forerunner, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation) was the natural governing party in this province for three basic reasons.

First, coming out of the Great Depression and the Second World War, a destitute rural-based Saskatchewan was more inclined to accept its social-democratic philosophy bolstered by the co-operative movement.

Second, NDP governments did find ways to, in later years, adjust philosophies just enough to maintain a big tent that could accommodate the more free-enterprise-minded.

And, third, Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives in this province usually split the right-of-centre vote at election time.

Then along came the merger of the provincial Liberals and PCs in the late 1990s into the new Saskatchewan Party – a home for business and rural people that long felt abandoned by the NDP.

Rather than change and evolve, the NDP has maintained its philosophies. In fact, under the leadership of current leader Ryan Meili, they seem even more firmly entrenched in a left-wing perspective rural and much of what the rest of Saskatchewan has long-ago abandoned.

This is a cautionary tale for any political movement ... perhaps even the Saskatchewan Party.

Let us be clear that it's unlikely the same fate awaits the Sask. Party juggernaut ... at least, not any time soon.

However, there was a time not so very long ago when many assumed this could never happen to the NDP, either.

But the NDP slowly began losing some battles, even when it seemed to be on the right side of some issues like the fight over the National Energy Program.

That scenario might sound a bit familiar today as Premier Scott Moe's government is also now losing battles with the federal government.

Of course, losing the carbon tax fight before the Supreme Court of Canada isn't exactly hurting the Sask. Party government's popularity. The tax is rightly seen for what it is – something unlikely to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It just hasn't proven to be effective policy.

That said, the provincial government is now burdened with having



to follow the law and do something. It seems ill-prepared to do so.

What Moe offered as an alternative — at the-pump rebates similar modeled after what New Brunswick — was something the Sask. Party said was unworkable when it was introduced in that province more than a year ago.

What shouldn't be lost in this conversation is that the reason Saskatchewan lost in the courts (it also lost at the local federal Court of Appeal level) is the courts' recognition that man-made global warming is a reality.

To not offer something — to not compromise at least a little until legally forced to do — is to be too rigid.

And being too rigid in its beliefs and approach is becoming a familiar Sask. Party government pattern.

Consider its slowness to react to COVID-

19 — especially, the spread of new variants from Regina to other parts of the province.

This, too, may not be an issue of the Sask. Party government's own making. But all governments are judged on how they do handle a crisis and that usually means having to be smart and nimble.

Being popular isn't enough in the long run.

When the Grant Devine PCs came to power in 1982 with the biggest majority in the province's history, many thought it would last forever.

But then it began losing fight ...

In less than a decade, the PC government became massively unpopular because of its daily handling of issues and its rigid approach to things like privatization.

Governments can only afford to lose so many fights.

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# Survey illustrates the effect of today's social media

By Sarah Pacio  
Grasslands News

Interacting with social media platforms has become a normal part of life for many people in today's society. It enables companies to reach a broader clientele and keeps families connected across vast geographical distances. However, certain impacts of social media use have become a topic of concern over the last few years.

A documentary released by Netflix in 2020 called, "The Social Dilemma" featured testimonials from key figures in the technology industry who highlighted dangers associated with various online platforms. A similar study conducted in 2018 by Insigtrix, a Saskatchewan-based research firm, revealed that one third of the people surveyed felt that other peoples' behaviour on social media had negatively impacted their lives. Fifty-five per cent of them had seen other people harassed and 21 per cent had personally experienced harassment on social media, leading 34 per cent to consider discontinuing social media use.

Data released by Statistics Canada last week supports these indications that widespread social media usage

could be harmful and youth should exercise particular caution.

A Canadian Internet Use Survey was conducted from November 2018 to March 2019 and gathered information from nearly 14,000 Canadians. It served as the basis for a study titled, "Canadians' assessment of social media in their lives," that was released on March 24, 2021. Social media was defined as "digital platforms that allow users to create and share content (e.g., text-based posts, photos and videos) and online profiles, and to interact with other users." It includes platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and others.

The report focused solely on the negative effects of social media usage, assessing its impact on individual's sleep, physical activity and emotions. Feelings of anxiety, depression, and envy were particularly noted. Similar research has previously been done regarding social media impact on youth, but this study included participants age 15 to 64.

Nineteen percent of all those surveyed reported they had lost sleep, 22 per cent had exercised less, and 18 per cent had difficulty concentrating because of social media use. Twelve to fourteen percent reported that they felt negative

emotions as a result of using social media.

Decreased physical activity and feelings of frustration or anger did not vary significantly across the different age groups. However, youth seemed to be particularly at risk for other harmful impacts, which could be linked to their higher usage rate of social networking accounts. According to the Stats Canada study, more than 90 per cent of Canadians age 15 to 34 regularly use social media, and over 50 per cent of participants age 15 to 24 used three or more platforms. This was compared to only 68 per cent of people in the age 50 to 64 range who regularly use social media.

Nearly half of youth age 15 to 19 reported lost sleep associated with social media use.

Another common problem was negative emotions relating to social media use; this was particularly true among individuals age 15 to 24.

"Overall, age and intensity of social media use are strong themes," the report concluded. "The relatively high incidence of lost sleep and trouble concentrating among individuals under age 25 stands out, as do reports of anxiety or depression and envy among individuals under age 35."

**Canadians' reported experiences using social media 2018/2019**

Over 90% of Canadians aged 15 to 34 regularly use social media.

Youth are the greatest and most intense social media users.

More than 50% of social media users aged 15 to 24 used three or more social media apps or websites, compared with less than 25% of those aged 30 and older.

Canadians report negative experiences associated with social media use.

Lost sleep was the most common negative experience associated with social media use. It was most prevalent among youth.

About one-fifth of youth experienced negative emotion-related outcomes.

Intensity of social media use is associated with these negative experiences. Three times as many users with three or more accounts reported negative experiences as those with one account.

Age Group	Lost sleep	Felt anxious or depressed
15 to 19	47%	23%
20 to 24	28%	22%
25 to 29	21%	19%
30 to 34	20%	15%
35 to 49	16%	12%
50 to 64	7%	6%

Source: Schimmele C., J. Fonberg and G. Schellenberg. "Canadians' assessment of social media in their lives." *Economic and Social Reports 2021*; 1(3). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/36280001202100300004-eng>.

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# Canadian Taxpayers Federation calls for MP salary increase freeze

By Elaine Ashfield  
Grasslands News

Members of Parliament were to receive their yearly wage increase on April 1st, a move that is being highly criticized as an unpopular move that should have been stopped during the COVID-19 struggles that many are suffering.

Legislation was passed in 2005 making it that salaries paid to MPs and senators would automatically increase on April 1 of each year. The legislation was made to depoliticize the parliamentary pay debated each year.

The increase is based on the average increase negotiated by major bargaining units in the private sector and MPs could see raises up to \$6,400.

A MP makes a basic salary of \$182,600 and Ministers receive \$269,800. The prime minister receives \$365,200 annually according to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF). Members may also receive additional salaries in right of other offices they hold (for instance, Speakership).

The last wage freeze for Parliament took place in 2010 and 2013 in response to the 2008 financial crisis in what was called the Expenditure Restraint Act.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation

circulated a petition stating "Millions of Canadians have lost their jobs and lost income as a result of the coronavirus crisis. All Canadians are making sacrifices as we go through this crisis together. Government must do its part. And elected officials need to lead the way.

"Accordingly, we the undersigned call on you to reduce the salary of Members of Parliament."

"MPs should know that a pandemic and severe economic downturn is the worst possible time to be padding their pockets with a pay hike," said Franco Terrazzano, the CTF's Alberta Director (quote from the Post Millennial).

"Millions of Canadians have been struggling with COVID-19 for more than a year now, so it's long past time for our MPs to get off their butts and put an end to their automatic pay increases.

"This shouldn't be rocket science: our MPs should be able to figure out a way to stop the automatic pay hikes during a severe economic downturn," said Terrazzano. "This second MP pay raise during COVID-19 is a slap in the face to the many taxpayers who have taken a pay cut, lost their job or their business."

According to Statistics Canada, Canada lost over 700,000 private-sector jobs over the last year.



## Secret gardening tips

By Patricia Hanbidge

### Snow Mold

When we go into winter with a heavy snowfall before the ground is fully frozen, we expect to see more snow mold in the early spring. Snow mold is a fungal condition that affects lawn or turf areas in early spring and appears in the early spring while the snow is melting and the surface temperature of the ground approaches 0 C. This fungal issue is tough on the lawn but also bad news for allergy sufferers.

Early spring is always a dirty time – with lots of dust blowing around and especially this year we expect to also enjoy lots of mold spores. Itchy watery eyes and respiratory symptoms in early spring are often in response to snow mold on our lawn areas. If you have sensitivity to spores, then as our collection of snow is disappearing and all you want to do is go outside, you may need to take some precautions. The spores which are the tiny reproductive particles of fungi/molds can cause more problems than pollen as they are smaller particles and can get deep into the lungs.

Not only does snow mold make allergy sufferers miserable, it can also cause some quite severe damage on lawn areas. There are a number of fungi that can be involved including: Typhula spp., Microdochium nivale, Sclerotinia borealis, non-sclerotial low temperature basidiomycete (LTB), and sclerotial low temperature basidiomycete (SLTB). While the snow is melting you may see patches of spider web like material on the turf surface. This is the mycelium which is the vegetative part of a fungus that hugs the lawn as the snow recedes. Damage shows up on the turf as circular dead patches that are anywhere from a few inches to a foot in diameter. When damage is severe it often appears like the whole lawn area is affected.

The greatest damage will be in the more shaded damp areas where the snow takes a little longer to melt away. This year, due to the heavy snow cover the snow mold will likely be especially bad. The fungi are able to grow at temperatures right around the freezing point but the spores will survive over the summer and are easily spread through mowing or foot traffic. It will not usually kill off the entire turf areas but it may take most of the summer for affected turf to recover.

You can reduce the amount of snow mold that occurs by ensuring you do not over fertilize your lawn later in the summer. High levels of nitrogen make plant tissue soft and succulent and more susceptible to injury. Using a slow release fertilizer is generally a better idea than a quick-release fertilizer late in the season. It is also important to continue to mow the lawn until all growth has stopped and to clean up leaves that have dropped on lawn areas. Reduce excess thatch by mowing correctly, aerating and power raking if necessary. Avoid compaction by avoiding walking on lawn areas – even on top of the snow.

Snow mold injury is often superficial and only affects leaf blade tissue. However, when infestation is severe, the entire plant may die. On areas that have been affected, lightly rake to encourage drying. Try not to breathe in the spores or the dust that will be present even if you do not generally get allergic reactions. As the season progresses you may want to overseed larger areas to help hasten the recovery.

Hanbidge is the Lead Horticulturist with Orchid Horticulture. Find us at [www.orchidhort.com](http://www.orchidhort.com); by email at [info@orchidhort.com](mailto:info@orchidhort.com); on facebook @orchidhort and on instagram at #orchidhort

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# Plans for new funeral home in Grenfell die following zoning bylaw concerns

By Sarah Pacio  
Grasslands News

A new business that was proposed last fall will not be opening in Grenfell.

Gail Kuhn and her daughter-in-law Jenelle Blancher desired to establish a family-owned and operated funeral home in the town.

"I grew up in Grenfell so the community seemed like something that we were looking for, and the location provincially was quite attractive," Kuhn told to Grasslands News.

They had purchased the old Ellis Hall at 723 Anderson Street with this in mind. The town's zoning by-laws required Kuhn and Blancher to obtain a discretionary use permit in order to operate a funeral home at the selected location. This applies specifically to their proposed business and would allow them to operate a funeral home there, but it would not change the property's residential zoning designation.

They presented their business proposal to Grenfell town council in Oct. 2020. They described plans for minor renovations, along with their intention to provide compassionate services to families in the community and surrounding area.

A public hearing was subsequently held as part of the regular process. At the hearing, several neighbors strongly objected to a funeral home being established in a residential area, citing concerns about increased traffic and the embalming processes. Others felt the funeral home would be an unpleasant and conspicuous reminder about the end of life.

Following the public hearing, council discussed the matter. "The funeral home's motion for change of use was tabled for more information from the owners to see if they wanted to continue with the zoning amendment changes," CAO Brenna Ackerman stated. "Town council was enthusiastic to see this type of business come to Grenfell because it is needed in the community."

Kuhn and Blancher were told

that they could proceed with the rezoning process or select a property that was already in a commercial zone. However, the commercial properties did not suit their purpose. "We want to preserve the dignity and privacy of the deceased and their family, and you can't do that in a commercial area," Kuhn explained.

Although there was some support for the business as initially proposed, Kuhn felt there was little hope of successfully completing the rezoning process due to significant objections from local residents.

Under the circumstances, Kuhn and Blancher have relisted Ellis Hall for sale. They have not abandoned their plan to open a family-owned and operated funeral home, but are now looking at other options for a location.

"It was disappointing that it didn't get the support that it needed (in Grenfell)," Kuhn commented. "It's really unfortunate; we would have brought some new families into the community, but that's how it went."

Gene Hauta

## It's A Strange World

The pandemic may still be issue No. 1, but another topic — **the border — is fast becoming a major issue** for both American political parties. Republicans say looser immigration policies under President Biden have created a crisis, while Democrats blame Donald Trump for leaving behind a broken system. GOP critics spew comments like, "There's no other way to claim it than a Biden border crisis." The Democratic pushback: Democrats dispute any Republican allegations about terrorists sneaking across the border. While the Biden honeymoon is over, this is strategy by the Republicans to turn immigration into a hot topic. Biden is getting generally high marks for his handling of the pandemic better than "the Former Guy." According to Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, Central Americans "see Biden as the migrant president." Illegal crossings are apparently way up since Biden became president.

A Florida woman was arrested after she **shot her estranged husband in the testicles** for trying to take an air conditioner she was trying to sell on Facebook. The victim and his brother showed up at Kimberly Dunn's home in Lake City. She sat on the AC to keep him from taking it, and when he tried to move her, that's when things got violent. Dunn first used a stun gun, and then she

picked it up a notch by switching to a handgun. After she shot the victim, his brother then choked her out. The brother got the victim to the hospital, and he will live. Although she argued that she was just trying to scare him, Dunn was arrested and made things worse when she failed to show up for court.

In Richmond, Virginia, a woman who caught her husband having sex with her grandmother had a violent reaction, running over him with her vehicle multiple times. Police arrested Samantha Warrens, 28, who was infuriated and kept screaming obscenities. That was when her grandmother came out of the house in her best lingerie to explain. The police stated that it was the "sickest adultery" they had ever experienced, but what Warrens did was illegal. Unbelievably, Eric Leonard, 30, was in critical, but in stable condition with **57 or more bone fractures, including a fractured skull**. Warrens is facing a total of 57 criminal charges, including assault and battery, aggravated assault, and attempted murder. If found guilty on all charges, she could face the death penalty or a sentence of 215 years in prison.

Reacting to the news that **Pepe Lepew is now a cartoon non grata**, due to the way he treated females, somebody quipped, "I'm glad he's cancelled and my children are safe. Now my son can get back to playing Grand Theft Auto where he just set a hooker on fire so he didn't have to pay her." Now, I don't know the game, but I know the cancel culture is out of control.

This next one, I find absolutely unbelievable. For some people, **men opening doors for women** is a symbol of aggressive patriarchy. It's like men saying to the women, "You may enter or leave this place but only on my say so." There are those who actually believe that feel a man opening and holding a door open for a woman is him subconsciously reminding her that men are in control of a woman's choices. The way I was raised, that **is simple courtesy that earned praise**. That new explanation is ridiculous.

Cops in Schwelm, Germany, said the **DNA found on a half-eaten piece of sausage** matched that of a man who was arrested in France for an unrelated crime. The piece of meat belonged to the victim of the burglary, and allegedly the 30-year-old suspect chomped a piece out of it during the March 2012 break-in. The suspect may escape punishment in the burglary case as the statute of limitations has expired.

A man from Texas really wanted to **buy a special BMW**. He used a loaner car from a dealership to drive to a bank and rob it, then returned to the dealership to buy a car with the newly (illegally) acquired cash. While he was finalizing the paperwork, the dealership learned of the bank robbery. An employee realized the company's loaner vehicle matched the description of the robber's car. Dion Warren, 50, was arrested and has since been sentenced to 20 years in prison after pleading guilty to bank robbery.

April Fool's Day has been cancelled this year. No prank could possibly top what 2020 has thrown at us. Ain't that the truth? Keep reading between the lines...



# Elm tree pruning ban now in effect

The annual ban on pruning elm trees in Saskatchewan to help curb the spread of Dutch elm disease (DED) began on April 1 and will continue until August 31. During this period, it is illegal to prune elm trees.

The ban occurs at the time of year when the elm bark beetles that spread DED are most active. Fresh cuts from trimming your trees can attract the tiny insects, increasing the chance of an infection.

There are more things you can do to help protect your community's elm trees:

- Prune your elms before or after the ban period to keep them healthy and better able to resist all

types of disease, including DED.

- Remove unhealthy and dead elm wood cuts, reducing places for beetles to breed and the risk of infection.

- If you see an elm showing signs of DED - wilting, yellowing leaves on one or several branches near the top of the tree, usually beginning in late June - report it to your local municipality.

- Remove and dispose of DED-infected elms promptly, including during the ban period.

Transporting wood can spread DED, as well as other insects and diseases. It is illegal to use, transport, store or sell elm firewood. Regulations also restrict the use, transport, storage and sale of elm

logs. Dispose of all elm wood promptly and properly, at the location designated by your municipality. Often, this is the local landfill, but confirm this with your local municipality.

Improper pruning can damage your trees and spread diseases. If you hire someone to prune your trees, check their qualifications. In Saskatchewan, those who prune elm trees commercially must have completed a recognized training program or be under the supervision of someone who has.

For more information, contact your local municipality or the Ministry of Environment Inquiry Centre at 1-800-567-4224, or visit [www.saskatchewan.ca/forestry](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/forestry).

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# Mature living

## Staying connected with loved ones in assisted living facilities



Decisions surrounding assisted living facilities are not always easy. Men and women may be reluctant to leave their homes while family members may be worried about how their aging loved ones will adjust to life in an assisted living facility. Though modern assisted living facilities cater to residents with an array of needs and interests, the hesitation about whether or not to move into such a facility is understandable.

One of the concerns seniors and their families may have about assisted living facilities is how to remain in touch with loved ones. Thankfully, staying connected is easier than ever before. That ease of connection has been on full display throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, during which aging men and women have been urged to limit contact with people outside their households in an effort to reduce their risk of contracting the virus. When the pandemic is in the rearview mirror, seniors can continue to employ various strategies to stay connected with their families after moving into an assisted living facility.

- Embrace technology. It's understandable that se-

niors are sometimes hesitant to utilize technology. Having spent much of their lives without smartphones and Zoom calls, it may seem like adjusting to a world where such things are now widely utilized will be incredibly difficult. However, modern technology is user-friendly, meaning seniors won't need much, if any, technical expertise or experience to utilize an assortment of devices that can help them stay in touch. Ask a relative to show you the ropes of a new device or request that staff at the facility teach residents the basics of using devices to stay connected with family. Staff may help set up Zoom calls or help residents learn the ropes of texting.

- Make a weekly communication commitment. Work with family members to set up a time each week when you can communicate directly with them. If family lives nearby, this might take the form of a weekly family meal at a loved one's home. If family lives too far away for routine in-person meals, set up a time each week for a family Zoom call.

- Continue to engage with your interests and fellow hobbyists. If you were an avid reader who loved to discuss and recommend books to your loved ones, then continue to do so after moving into an assisted living facility. Sports fans who bonded with their loved ones over a shared passion for a favorite team can keep following their team and discussing the latest big game with their friends and family via email, texts or video calls. Various studies have discovered the positive effects that hobbies can have on long-term physical and mental health. Staying engaged with your passions can keep lines of communication open with friends and family and benefit your overall health.

Keeping the lines of communication with loved ones open can help aging men and women as they transition to life in assisted living facilities.



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Photo taken prior to COVID-19.

# Historic Saint Michael's to close April 25



By Alan Hustak  
Grasslands News

What is expected to be the last service in Grenfell's historic St Michael's and All Angels Anglican church will be held on Sunday, April 25.

The building has been a centre of worship in the area for 135 years but its congregation, which once numbered more than 100 families, has dwindled down to four.

The last funeral was held in 2017 and the last baptism in 2018. Because of the COVID pandemic there haven't been any services since.

"So many have passed away or moved away," said Marguerite Ward who has been a member of the parish for 70 years. "I'd like to see it stay open, but we don't have enough people to keep it up."

The parish has already sold the rectory and the Capt. Percy Ellis memorial church hall. What money is needed to maintain the building is held in trust by the diocese. "The bishop is coming next month, and after the service there will be a meeting to decide what to do," said one of the last church wardens, Jim McKee. There have been suggestions that it could be converted into a community centre or made into a museum, but in all probability it will be put up for sale.

The first pioneers from England worshipped in Grenfell's CPR station for three years until Saint Michael's and All Angels was consecrated on Oct. 25, 1885

by Bishop John Robert Anson.

The tower was added in 1891; the chancel in 1898.

The exquisite stained glass memorial windows on either side of the altar were donated by Richard Stuart Lake, who was then a member of the North-West Territories Assembly and who later would go on to become Saskatchewan's Lt. Governor. The Lake family also donated the oak altar and the altar screen. All the other windows are memorials to pioneer families. The choir stalls honour Rev. John Leach Porter, the rector who died in 1920 after ministering to victims of the Spanish Flu epidemic. The gold processional cross was donated as a memorial to Arthur Prentice, a soldier who was killed in action in WW II.

Chimes were installed in the bell tower in 1951. In 1967 it became the mother church to nine parishes, including Broadview, Wolseley and Sinaluta which amalgamated to form the Pipestone Parish. Only St. John's in Fort Qu'Appelle, which is also facing an uncertain future, is as old an Anglican church in southern Saskatchewan as the one in Grenfell.

Marguerite Ward is resigned to the fact that St. Michael's will have little choice but to close.

"We've got lots of churches around here, Lutheran, United, Apostolic, Presbyterian; so many we don't know what to do with them all. It's sad, but it is only the older people who go to church anymore."

## End to an era

Marguerite Ward and Jim McKee are two of the last parishioners at Grenfell's St Michael's and all Angels Anglican church, which was built in 1885.

ALAN HUSTAK | GRASSLANDS NEWS

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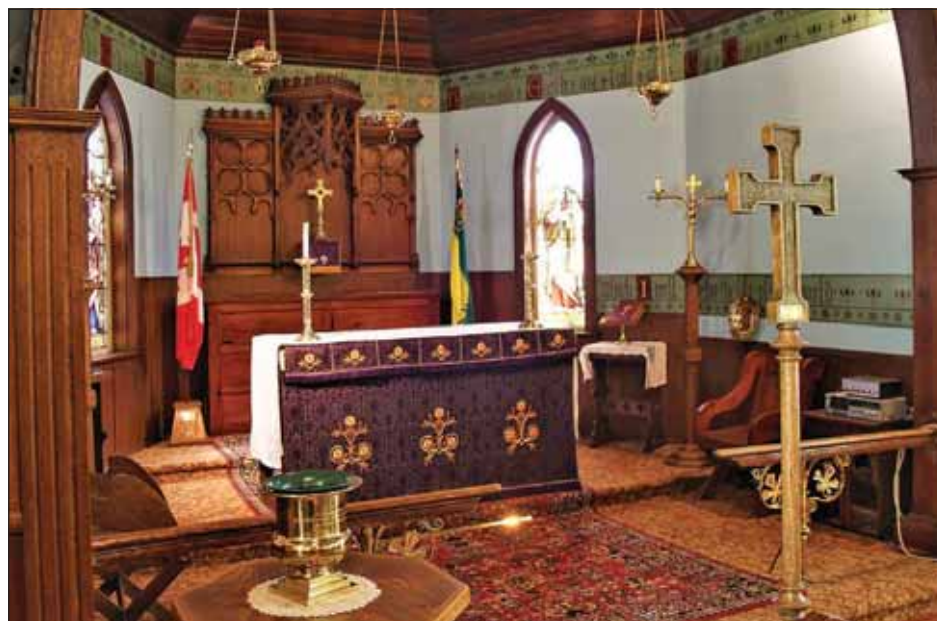
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## Ornate altar

The interior of the church was richly endowed by the families of pioneers who came from England.

ALAN HUSTAK | GRASSLANDS NEWS

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# Poor roads cost Canadians \$3 billion annually: CAA study

**National News**  
Grasslands News

Canadians are paying \$3 billion every year in higher vehicle operating costs due to poor road infrastructure, says a new study by the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA).

"Canada's roads are vital for commuters, business and connecting communities," says Ian Jack, vice-president of public affairs, CAA National. "This study shows for the first time the hidden cost to drivers of below-average roads. And it demonstrates that governments would save money in the long run if they brought roads up to – not perfection – but a good standard. That should be attainable."

This study is the first in Canada to show the cost to vehicle owners of poor roads, rather than focusing on how much it costs to build or repair them. CAA's analysis revealed the average Canadian driver incurs an extra \$126 in costs annually due to the poor quality of roads – a total of \$3 billion for drivers collectively. That cost comes in the form of more vehicle repairs, higher maintenance and other operating expenses.

"A vehicle is the second-largest expense for the average household," states

Jack. "And when Canadians are paying higher vehicle operating costs due to poor roads, that is money they no longer have to spend on everyday wants and needs."

The study uses self-reported data from provincial and municipal agencies, who indicated that close to half (43 per cent) of Canadian roads are rated below average. Using the most recent data available from Statistics Canada, the study calculates how much more drivers pay in maintenance and other costs when they drive on poor roads as compared to good roads. Good doesn't mean brand new, just consistently well-maintained.

"Repairing roads before they are allowed to deteriorate is a win-win proposition: it saves governments money and it saves drivers money," says Jack. "The study finds that spending one dollar on pavement preservation eliminates or delays spending \$6-\$10 on costly repairs later."

The analysis in this report corresponds to a typical or "normal" year using the most recently available data. The report assumes a steady use of roads and kilometres driven by Canadians, as opposed to the unusual drop in traffic volumes that has accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Drivers be aware

A study done by the Canadian Automotive Association shows that Canadians are paying \$3 billion in operating costs due to poor infrastructure.

SUBMITTED | GRASSLANDS NEWS

# Book your camping online starting April 12 - Sask. Prov. Parks

Saskatchewan Provincial Park campers are now able to browse the new reservation website and create an account in preparation for the 2021 campsite reservation launch beginning April 12.

"After many months of preparation, we are pleased to be able to release our new campsite reservation system to the public," Parks, Culture and Sport Minister Laura Ross said. "This reservation system offers new amenities to customers, and is quite different than past years. This is a great opportunity for campers to become familiar with the new system making their reservation process a smooth one in the coming weeks."

The new reservation website can be accessed at [www.parks.saskatchewan.ca](http://www.parks.saskatchewan.ca) beginning April 12. Customers who prefer to make a reservation via the call centre will still be able to do so by calling 1-833-775-7275.

Reservations begin at 7 a.m. each day - there is no longer a need to log on to the system 20 minutes early in order to be placed in the queue. The complete reservation schedule is as follows:

- Seasonal campsite reservations:**
- April 12 - Seasonal campsites for all parks offering seasonal camping
- Nightly, camp easy, group, equestrian and rec hall, reservations:**
- April 14 - Pike Lake, The Battlefords, Narrow Hills, Blackstrap
  - April 16 - Bronson Forest, Meadow Lake, Makwa Lake, Lac La Ronge
  - April 19 - Saskatchewan Landing, Douglas, Danielson
  - April 20 - Buffalo Pound, Rowan's Ravine, Echo Valley, Crooked Lake
  - April 21 - Cypress Hills
  - April 22 - Duck Mountain, Good Spirit Lake, Greenwater Lake
  - April 23 - Candle Lake, Great Blue Heron, Moose Mountain

Prior to reservations, campers can create a new account and review changes to the 2021 camping season. Campers can find tutorials and an overview of what will be offered this camping season at [www.parks.saskatchewan.ca](http://www.parks.saskatchewan.ca).

New this year, all vehicle entry permits are available for purchase online and through the call centre. Campers will see vehicle entry permits automatically added to their carts when they

make their camping reservation. Campers that purchase daily or weekly entry permits can now print permits from home and annual permits can be picked up in-park. By purchasing entry in advance, campers will be able to proceed directly to their campsite once they arrive in the park with Sask Parks' auto check-in function. This improvement will keep traffic moving through the entry gates on busy weekends.

Have a fun and safe summer!



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\* NATIONAL POST

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# SPORTS

## Standing 'On the Rail' as a Rodeo Cowboy

Turnin' and burnin' in Birtle back in the summer of 2005

The Canadian Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame is honouring the history of the legends in the sport

*Editor's Note - Crossroads This Week Staff Writer and Photographer, Darrell Nesbitt, has stood 'On the Rail' telling stories of the life of a cowboy, from little britches to professional. This article is the second in his "On the Rail" series, touching on various aspects of the sport, action, and people. Grasslands News thought it would be a series of interest to our many readers.*

By **DARRELL NESBITT**  
from Crossroads This Week

Rodeo... the uniquely western tradition has seen the rise of renegades refusing to be tamed and ageless wonders providing it's never too late.

From the pasture to the arena, rodeo has grown into one of the most popular sports in North America, but before the gold buckles or trophy saddles, cowboys rode solely for bragging rights.

Today, bragging rights are kick-started at Little Britches events, onward to Junior High and High School, amateur associations, semi-professional, and professional. Websites can be tracked down, however, in terms of professional more than 10 million visitors from around the world have sought out the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Okla-

homa City, OK which collects, preserves and exhibits an internationally renowned collection of western art and artifacts.

Closer to home the Canadian Rodeo Historical Association, also known as the Canadian Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame, honours the history of rodeo; by paying recognition to the cowboys, animals and builders of the sport who achieved excellence in their field.

But in reality, if it wasn't for the men and women deeply interested in the sport, sitting on committees, operating stock contracting businesses, or lending hours of mindful blessings and back staking labour as a committee member, no museums or halls would be required.

Throughout history, dating back to 1981, plenty of contestant names have been inducted into the Canadian Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame including Glen Keeley, one of Canada's top bull riding talents, who passed away tragically in Albuquerque, NM in March of 2000, at the Ty Murray Invitational PBR. Keeley qualified for numerous CFR, NFR and Professional Bull Riders (PBR) World Finals and was inside the top five in the PBR World Standings when he passed. For his excellence in his field, Keeley was inducted in



**Turnin' and burnin'**  
Jennifer Pugh competing at the Birtle High School Rodeo in 2005, has a look of determination in her eyes as she rounds one of the barrels.

2017.

Among the females inducted in the "Builder" category in 2015 was Pearl Mandeville, a Manitoba cowgirl, who along with winning a number of barrel racing titles out west, her passion for rodeo also saw her as a flag bearer, timer, Miss Rodeo Canada judge, introduced the Canadian Rodeo News, and served as the promotional director for the first year that Alberta had a High School Rodeo Association. She passed away in January 2016 at the age of 84.

The sole Manitoba community to host and promote pro rodeo action

is Morris. Other jurisdictions are still held in a number of communities, but within the immediate area that number has dwindled. The towns of Birtle, Hamiota, Keeseekoowenin, Miniota, Onanole, Rosburn, Shoal Lake, Solsgirth and Strathclair from a high school, amateur or semi-professional viewpoint, have vanished from the rodeo trail. Why not today? Volunteers and costs, is the mere answer!

The photo accompanying this column was taken at the one and only Birtle high school rodeo, held back in 2005. On behalf of the Manitoba High School Rodeo Association

(MHSRA), it was submitted to Manitoba Lotteries, in lieu of sponsorship. The representative commented on how barrel racer, Jennifer Pugh's eyes, made the photo so much more appealing than simply a rider and a horse turnin' and burnin'. At the time, she was among the dedicated high school athletes, to uplift the sport of rodeo from a timed or rough stock event perspective. Today, there are more girls than guys competing and earning scholarships for future schooling.

Rodeo is more than just a sport... a sport that is not without controversy. Rodeo events encompass core skills that those working with livestock traditionally require in order to safely and effectively manage their animals day to day. Each passing year, naysayers in terms of those who frown on how an animal including bucking horses, and bulls are treated in the rigors of going and up down the road to compete, voice their displeasure. Studies have shown stock contractors take exceptional care of the animals, which provide in part a critical component of a business plan.

To understand that viewpoint, one must truly enrich the sport by coming in close contact with stock and stock contractors. You know, smack dab in the middle of excitement behind the chutes, where bullropes

and bullsh\*t is common. With the use of electric prods being eliminated, the '8' second performer is still an explosive competitor for all the right reasons. True, horses, bulls, steers, and calves found in the sport may have to be put down humanely from time to time, but in reality accidents take more human lives than animals living the rodeo dream.

Over the years, the names of Lee Bar N Rodeo, Prime Time Rodeo, Top Line Rodeo, Seven Cross Ranch, Midnight Rodeo Co. and Whiteline Rodeo brought their show, their passion, and their outstanding stock to many communities. A number of owners, themselves, competed before carrying on a passion for the western lifestyle from a different perspective. Four of those names are still vivid in the rodeo kingdom, sharing a passion for the sport, on their terms and conditions including standing behind high school rodeo athletes.

The open road forgives and forgets, but the bond between travelling partners or family, is uplifting sharing wisdom versus worry. Competitors are here for a good time, not a long time, so sit back and enjoy, where the opportunity presents itself, as rodeo can become addictive with each nod of the head, fling of the rope, and an appreciative fan base.

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Sports Column – Darcy Gross

# Gross Misconduct

## Penalizing the referee

The National Hockey League will often penalize players – put them in the penalty box to sit and feel shame or suspend them so they have to sit in the press box and feel that same shame – but they rarely do anything that would adversely affect an official.

The last time an NHL referee lost his job was in 2009, and while we, as fans, think the job they're doing should be fairly cut and dried, and should result in more refs losing their employment, for whatever reason, the league usually stands behind its officials no matter what.

That is until last week, when veteran referee Tim Peel was sat down for the rest of what would have been his final campaign as an NHL official.

The reason for Peel's dismissal wasn't that he was a terrible official, although some members of more than one team thought he was indeed terrible at his occupation.

Peel was effectively fired as an NHL official for remarks caught on an open microphone, and the remarks were more about Peel's own version of gamesmanship than it was about the game itself.

After calling a penalty against Nashville in a game against Detroit, Peel said, loud enough for the video to pick up, that he wanted to give the Predators a penalty early in the game and even admitted the call was weak.

"It wasn't much, but I wanted to get a (expletive) call against Nashville early," were Peel's words on the video replay.

Now, there are two schools of thought on how an NHL official should govern himself when it comes to calling penalties. Some folks believe that the game should be called by the rules – no exceptions. Others think that there's some room to set up some ground rules for every game and that it's okay to work outside the traditional framework of the laws of the ice.

Peel was well known as the kind of referee who would make a call to keep the game under control – he'd make a few phantom calls to ensure that the game didn't get out of hand and escalate into violence.

Those types of referees are often known as 'scoreboard refs', guys who like to dictate the pace of the game to ensure both teams play good, clean hockey.

Maybe a call, or lack of one, could temper the emotion of one team or the other and diffuse what could be an awful situation.

Referees have been doing this sort of thing since the beginning of the sport, I would assume, so why is it such a crime now?

Is this another example of the cancel culture bandwagon that everyone has been jumping on and off of for the last few years?

For whatever reason, the powers that be couldn't wait until the end of the season to suspend Peel, when he was set to retire anyway.

Perhaps the league needs to set new standards for its officials, or, better yet, take the mics off the officials altogether.

When we've already got two people in the broadcast booth and another between the benches, did we really require Tim Peel to be responsible for announcing penalties?

It wasn't three days after Peel was canned that another referee was seen covering his clip-on mic during the heat of an NHL game.

It's interesting that this transgression didn't draw more attention than it did, with everyone looking harder than ever to find something to be outraged about than at any other time, at least during this scribe's lifetime.

I guess players are allowed to live up to 'the code' that's been talked about in hockey circles for decades, but referees aren't allowed to have anything in their arsenal to diffuse situations on the ice other than a rule book and a whistle.

It doesn't really seem fair, does it?

# Youthful Bedard living up to hockey hype

Hey, hockey fans, there's another Connor Superstar lacing up his skates, ready to show up on your Hockey Night in Canada TV screens in oh, about four years.

This will be no shock to those who have more than a passing interest in hockey, but the occasional fan may have not yet heard of Connor Bedard, a 15-year-old from North Vancouver who is playing major junior this year with the Regina Pats.

Bedard is the first Western Hockey Leaguer given 'exceptional player' status, allowing him to play before the age of 16. And how is he doing so far? Well, in his first eight games, in which the Pats scored 26 goals, Bedard had a team-leading 13 points, six goals and seven assists. NHL scouts, who were drooling before, now carry a bucket whenever they observe Bedard in action.

Is he ready for the big time? Last season, as a 14-year-old playing in the under-20 Canadian Sports School Hockey League, Bedard was dominant, scoring 43 goals and 41 assists in 36 games to lead the league. One of his summer on-ice workout partners of late has been Matt Barzal of the New York Islanders.

John Paddock, the general manager and vice-president of the Pats, says Bedard, who won't turn 16 until this July, "can do a little bit of everything" — unable to isolate one aspect of Bedard's game as his most outstanding. Paddock, who played parts of five seasons in the NHL and was head- or assistant coach for three NHL teams during another eight campaigns, has seen a lot of hockey players in his day and says, if he has to pick a comparative player, Tampa Bay's Steven Stamkos comes to mind, considering how he gets the one-timer blast away from the left circle.

Is Bedard your best player? A 15-year-old? Paddock demurs. "Well, we have a 19-year-old defenceman who would probably be our best player, but it's close," he said.

Paddock says he knows he'll have Bedard for only two seasons beyond the current COVID-19-truncated season before the NHL comes calling, and hopes he can build a winner around his young superstar during that period. "We're going to try," he said.

All the attention the 5-foot-9, 179-pound Bedard has garnered since being identified as a hockey prodigy around the age of 12 has not gone to his head, said Paddock. "He was really brought up the right way," he said. "He's one of those rare players who's been preparing for this his whole life. He's ready mentally."

Meanwhile, the NHL's best player, the Oilers' Con-

nor McDavid, won't be the league's only Connor Superstar for long.

• Comedian Argus Hamilton, via Facebook, on the Rover's search for water on Mars: "They should've sent me there with my golf clubs. I'd have found water by my third tee shot."

• Colour commentator Ray Hudson of beIN Sports TV, after Barcelona's Lionel Messi put on a one-man show to score against SD Huesca: "He needs help like a shark needs a dentist."

• Jack Finarelli, from sportscurmudgeon.com, on one of five new sports at the Olympics in Japan this summer: "Sport Climbing: Athletes here will scale a vertical wall. I guess this is like the hundred-metre dash staged at right angles to one another."

• RJ Currie of sportsdeke.com: "A New Yorker is selling an ultra-strong coffee called Death Wish, which carries the warning 'many sleepless nights'. Hey, it's cheaper than Jets tickets."

• Currie again: "A brawl reportedly broke out at a New Hampshire retirement centre during a bingo game. It looked like a hockey fight, except with more teeth."

• Greg Cote of the Miami Herald: "New Zealand defeated Italy in the final of America's Cup sailing in Auckland. Home-water advantage?"

• Posted on the Lethbridge Hurricanes' scoreboard during a fan-less hockey game: "Free beer for all in attendance."

• Dwight Perry of the Seattle Times: "Ohio State safety Marcus Hooker was arrested on DUI charges after he passed out behind the wheel while waiting in a McDonald's drive-thru line. Defence lawyers can't decide whether to enter a plea of guilty, not guilty or 'I deserve a break today.'"

• Another one from RJ Currie, on marine biologists' claim that many sharks take a break each spring to focus on eating, mating and swimming in warm water: "If we're talking San Jose Sharks, add golf."

• Another one from Perry: "Evander Holyfield, 58, and Mike Tyson, 54, are scheduled to meet once again in the ring on May 29. Winner becomes the first boxer in history to boast all four belts — WBA, WBC, IBF and AARP."

• Troubled ex-big-leaguer Lenny Dykstra, via Twitter, not making anyone forget Cal Ripken Jr.: "Guess who hasn't been arrested in now 34 consecutive months."

Care to comment? Email [brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca](mailto:brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca)

Sports Column  
By Bruce Penton

# Weightlifting, breaking records is way of life

By Travis Longman  
Grasslands News

When it comes to feats of strength, there isn't much Mel Topinka hasn't accomplished. The Whitewood native has been lifting weights since 1974 when he was 12 years old. The 59-year-old construction worker continues to impress and practice his craft daily. He also continues to set records.

Most recently back in November 2020, he set a world record in the class 5 (50 and over) 87 kilogram class (190 lbs.) bench press competition. Topinka bench pressed 440 lbs. In addition to this world record, Topinka still holds a record for doing 92 push-ups in one minute.

Topinka has a daily routine that he does four-five times a week. He gets up at 5 a.m., then does push-ups. After that he has a protein or two, then a workout. This helps keep Topinka in shape. He encourages everyone to live a healthy lifestyle and to quote Hulk Hogan "take your vitamins, say your prayers."

When Topinka began weightlifting in 1974, Vasily Alekseyev from the Soviet Union had won Olympic gold in 1972 and Arnold Schwarzenegger

was dominating the Mr. Olympia competition. Another person who inspires him is Canadian Lewis Cyr, the Canadian strongman from the 1800's who is known as the stron-

gest man who ever lived. These three men inspired Topinka and made him want to do his best.

Topinka lives in Regina but he frequently returns to Whitewood to

visit his parents, Grace and Willie Topinka. Topinka is proof that no matter where you come from, you can accomplish anything you set your mind to.

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### Whitewood gymnastics

The Whitewood Gymnastics Club finished their season, which ran this year from November to March at the Whitewood Legion Hall. The gymnasts work on all levels and skills under the supervision of coaches Jolene Paice, Martina Mon and helper Kaci Jones. The participants were (clockwise from top left) Group 1 - Jovi Giroux, Kendrix Mavin, Miia Aldous; Asher Westberg; Group 2 - Gemma Westberg, CJ De Jager, Judd Maki; Group 3 - Kelbree Page, Sofi Aldous, Brayleigh Mavin, Meika Bear, Sarah Young; Group 4 - Heidi Paice, Sydney Hanlin, Delaney Hanlin, Tasia Wills, Camdyn Sparvier.

# Quest for Men's Worlds Curling to begin on April 2

By Travis Longman  
Grasslands News

After three consecutive losses in the Brier Championship game, team Brendan Bottcher proved that the fourth time is the charm. The tandem recently won the Tim Hortons' Brier and will be representing team Canada at the Men's World Curling Championships in Calgary.

Team Bottcher has a new member for the world championships. Marc Kennedy joins the group as an alternate. With Darren Mouldings status up in the air due to a back injury suffered at the Mixed Doubles National Championship, Kennedy could play a pivotal role for the team. The team's regular alter-

nate Patrick Janssen will stay with the team in a supporting role.

"We know World's will be tough," second Brad

Thiessen says. "Every team here is really good. There are no free spots on the bingo card. We'll have to bring our A game

every time. If we play our A game, I'm expecting to make playoffs and then we'll see what happens from there."

Team Canada begins its quest for gold on Fri-

day, April 2 at 11 a.m. (EST) against Scotland. Other countries at the event are the United States of America, the Russian Curling Federation, China, Japan,

Denmark, Italy, Korea, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the 2019 Champions from Sweden. The top six countries at the world championships qualify for the Olympics.

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# Unknown three-year tale for cat named Spooky

By Elaine Ashfield  
Grasslands News

Some may recognize the line “The Cat Came Back” as a popular children’s song from over the years but to a woman in Whitewood, it is a true story of her cat Spooky who has returned to live with her after being missing for three years.

The story of their adventures together makes one believe that they were destined to be together. It was in April 2009 when Deb Karol-Croteau was outside her home that is located on the edge of town when she heard a distressing cry from what sounded like a small animal. Upon investigating, she found a 4 to 6-week-old kitten that probably was abandoned near their home and had sought refuge in the trees. She tried to capture the kitten but it was very untamed and skiddish. Always spooked whenever Deb came near, he soon became known as Spooky and the relationship began.

A cardboard box became a fortress for Spooky and food was faithfully carried to him daily. The fortress and food were slowly moved closer and closer towards the house as efforts were made to tame him but for years, Spooky preferred to stay outside in the shelter of a house built for him and being fed by the kind people he became to know.

“It was the winter of 2017-18 that was so cold that Spooky finally came in for the nights to sleep,” Croteau told Grasslands News. “It was February 18, 2018 that he wanted out and that was the last time I saw him.”

“He usually always came back every night and when he didn’t return, I kept calling and calling. Living so close to the highway, I thought possibly he had been hit by a vehicle, so when spring came, I walked the ditches and the open fields nearby searching to



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**Storybook ending**  
**A cat named Spooky was reunited with his owner Deb Karol-Croteau in Whitewood after being gone for three years.**

possibly find his remains.”

Deb says she prayed many nights that he would come home and her mother, who passed away in Oct. 2019, told her “Keep praying, he’ll come home.”

Well, as of last Saturday, March 27, Spooky is back home with Deb.

It appears that somehow Spooky had made his way to Broadview. He was captured as a stray cat and was taken to stay at a house in Percival where a Whitewood woman shelters stray animals until they can be taken to a group who will put them up for adoption. A friend of Croteau’s also lives in Percival, near this house and one day was visiting with the woman who

shelters the strays and he recognized Spooky.

The cat was described to Deb and she was sure it sounded like her Spooky but the cat by now had been transferred to Angels of Hope Animal Rescue at Esterhazy. The cat was spayed, treated for ear mites and received medical care at Twin Valley Veterinary Services so he could be adopted through the Angels of Hope.

“I couldn’t afford to pay for the adoption and the fees involved for the veterinary services, and especially when I wasn’t completely sure it was Spooky,” Deb told the Grasslands News, “but miraculously, a big, white fluffy puppy with the same name as the pup of my friends’ Michelle and Scott, had apparently paid for the cat’s release and last Saturday, he came home!”

Well, Spooky is happy and so is Deb. She is sure it is her Spooky as he has the same distinctive marks and her Spooky, when he wagged his tail, only wagged the end section, not his whole tail and this cat does exactly the same.

“He hasn’t asked to go out of the house yet and is very content to lay looking out the window as if he knows the area of the surroundings outside. He eventually went upstairs and when I reached my hand under the railing from on the stairs to play ‘patty paws’ like we used to, he became enthused and playful right away.”

“Our Shitzu dog knew him right away when he came home and was ready to play. I am sure it is Spooky and I am so blessed to have him back,” Croteau said.

Spooky is almost 12 years old now and since ‘the cat came back,’ the reunion has shown that sometimes it is fate when things happen in this world and the result often is a very happy ending.

## Unidentified Husky remanded by RCMP

**Sgt. Travis Adams**  
Melville / Ituna Detachment

*Reporting period:*  
March 24 to March 31

Melville and Ituna detachment area had 85 occurrences over the past week.

### Traffic

During this time, Melville and Ituna detachment responded to 46 reported traffic occurrences or traffic stops that resulted in 22 Charges and 22 Warnings.

RCMP responded to a report that a train had backed into a semi while it was crossing. The train had passed through the crossing, and as the tractor-trailer went through, the train backed into his trailer. No injuries resulting from this accident.

### Mischief/Theft/Fraud

A report to local RCMP that there was an attempt to break into a storage unit near Melville. RCMP continue to investigate.

A person contacted the RCMP to report a break and enter to an ATCO trailer near Ituna. Medication inside the trailer was reported stolen. RCMP continue

to investigate.

RCMP responded to a call that reported a fire at a residence in Melville. No injuries as a result of the fire. RCMP continue to investigate.

RCMP were informed that a man found a large 5 h.p. General Electric induction motor and other items on his property near Neudorf. RCMP continue to investigate.

A report from a woman to RCMP that two of her 8-foot gates were stolen from her property in Lemberg. RCMP continue to investigate.

A man contacted the RCMP to report that two radiators and a battery were stolen from his trucks parked on his land near Grayson. RCMP continue to investigate.

A woman contacted the RCMP reporting that she found a Husky dog in her yard unknown to whose it is, posted it on Facebook but received no response. Members attended and arrested Husky for Cause Disturbance. The vet checked Husky and determined no tag or chip. Husky was booked into Paws and Claws.

If you have information related to these mischiefs, thefts, or frauds please contact your local RCMP Detachment, call 310-RCMP for immediate response, or you can call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

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Neighbourly Advice According to ED - Ray Maher

# You can have any color, as long as it's black

Ed, my old neighbor, in Saskatchewan favors black for the color of his truck. He likes to quote Henry Ford and his Model T cars coming off the assembly line in 1908.

Ford said, "You can have any color as long as it's black."

The first mass-produced Model Ts in their black color were mysterious, a drastic change from travel by horses. Many could not wait to see one, a Tin Lizzie, or Leaping Lena as the Model T was called. People would wait and watch if they saw a Model T coming down the street. It was worth a good gaze or gasp, a flinch at its speed and sound.

The color black has been a sign of modest dress in clothing or clothing that denotes power or authority as in a business suit. Black is often associated with death, sin, evil, suffering and sorrow. If someone is beaten, they are described as having bruises of black and blue. A black eye results in everyone asking what or who caused it. People will wait, gaze, gasp, perhaps flinch at a black eye because it calls for attention.

Black is the color associated with Good Friday, which is the remembrance of the death of Jesus by crucifixion. After his arrest, Jesus received black treatment,

beginning with the Sanhedrin.

The high priest asked Jesus if He was the Christ, the Son of God. When Jesus answered, "Yes, it is as you say." (Matt. 26:4)

The high priest proclaimed that Jesus had spoken blasphemy, and the council agreed that Jesus should die for His offense. They spat in Jesus' face, and struck him with their fists, and slapped him.

In the morning, Jesus was taken to the Roman Governor, Pilate, so that the Romans would put Jesus to death by crucifixion.

Not convinced that Jesus deserved the death penalty, Pilate tried to suggest Jesus could be set free at the Feast by himself as the governor. The crowd demanded Barabas, another prisoner, be pardoned instead of Jesus.

Pilate released Barab-

bas and had Jesus flogged - that is whipped 39 times. The whipping was intended to weaken a criminal and hasten death during the agonizing torture of crucifixion. After 39 lashes of the whip, Pilate handed a bruised and bleeding Jesus over to his soldiers to be crucified.

The soldiers decided to humiliate and abuse Jesus as one unworthy of any respect. The soldiers gathered around Jesus, mocking him by dressing him in a scarlet robe and placing a crown of thorns on his head. They ridiculed him, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" They spat on Jesus and struck him on his head again

and again with his staff. After they grew tired of their cruelty, they led Jesus away to crucify him.

On Good Friday, Christians remember Jesus at the cross. Spectators waited to see him nailed

hands and feet to a cross. They gazed at the soldiers executing their torturous tasks.

Lifted up before them, many mocked the black and blue Jesus lingering in pains torment between two other men on

crosses.

Not all the spectators there had hardened unbelieving hearts. Like Mary, his mother, we came to his cross to gasp, flinch, and weep at the mystery of God's love for us there.

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Pastor Doug Lancaster

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Sunday Service - 10:30 a.m.  
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Pastor Samuel Jung

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\*April 2 - Good Friday, 3:00 p.m.  
\*April 3 - Easter Vigil, 6:00 p.m.

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Friday, April 2: 11:00 a.m. Worship at First United  
Sunday, April 4: 9:30 a.m. Worship at All Saints'  
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Thursday, April 1: 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday Service at St. Paul's  
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## Obituary Alfred John Timmerman

Nov. 25, 1938 – March 24, 2021

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Alfred Timmerman on Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at the age of 82.

Alfred was born on Nov. 25, 1938 in Lake Lenore Sask. He married Joan Puetz on July 2, 1962 and they settled in Englefeld, Sask. Alfred began his career on the CNR in July 1955. His railroad career took him to Watson, Weyburn and eventually Melville where he retired in May 1993. He began a "second career" working for St. Henry's Church finally retiring for good in 2003.

Alfred was very involved in the community. He was a member of The Knights of Columbus, active within St. Henry's Church and was on the Senior's Board. Alfred was an avid golfer and a member of the Melville Golf Club. He also participated in seniors curling and bowling. He was a passionate Saskatchewan Roughriders fan and a season-ticket holder with the Melville Millionaires.

Alfred will be lovingly remembered by his wife Joan; children: Stan (Michelle) Timmerman, David (Marivic) Timmerman, Jackie (Mike) Hickie, Colleen (Lyle Zimmer) Timmerman and Brian (Stacy) Timmerman. He will be deeply missed by his 11 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren; as well as his siblings, Jack (Judy), Sylvia (Burt), Pat, Edna, Linda (Larry) and Judy (Ken). He was predeceased by his parents; his son Kevin; his great-grandson Spencer; his sister Rita; and his brothers, Ron, Ed and Leo.

Prayer service were held on Sunday, March 28, 2021 at 7 p.m. from St. Henry's Roman Catholic Church in Melville. Funeral mass was celebrated on Monday, March 29, 2021 at 10 a.m. from St. Henry's Roman Catholic Church with Rev. Fr. Andrew Sowa, OMI, as the Celebrant.

Arrangements were by Bailey's Funeral and Cremation Care, Melville.



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## Obituary Otilia (Tillie) Wiwchar

April 24, 1928 – March 9, 2021

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Otilia (Tillie) Phyllis Wiwchar (née Hahn). She is survived by her three children, Rosemarie Thompson, Ron (Sherry) Wiwchar, and Margaret (Ralph) Woloschuk; her six grandchildren, Heather (Eli) Buzila, Adam (Lacey) Thompson, Blair (Kaye) Wiwchar, Keith (Tracy) Wiwchar, Tara Woloschuk, and Brandon Woloschuk; and her three great-grandchildren, Alys Buzila, Dawn Wiwchar, and Emma Wiwchar.

Tillie was predeceased by her parents, George and Eleanor (née Geib) Hahn; her husband, William (Bill); and numerous family members.

Tillie was born in Lestock, SK, on April 24, 1928. Her family lived on several farms and finally settled in the Melville, SK, area.

Tillie and Bill married on Feb. 5, 1949. Tillie loved cooking, baking, gardening and sewing; she also loved visiting with family at get-togethers. While their children were young, Tillie and Bill took them camping every summer to visit relatives and see interesting places. As the years passed and the children left home, the couple's travels became more exotic: cruises and trips to the continental US, Cuba and Hawaii. Tillie and Bill enjoyed doing many things together: watching current affairs and sports on TV and playing cribbage, dominoes, beanbag toss and golf.

Tillie was taken wonderful care of by the staff at Foyer Lacombe in St. Albert, AB, for the last four months of her life. She passed away very peacefully with Rosemarie and Margaret by her side.

Memorial donations may be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation in your province.

There will be no funeral, by request of the family. The viewing and cremation were entrusted to Connelly-McKinley Funeral Home in St. Albert. Tillie's remains will share the niche with Bill's remains at St. John's Cathedral in Saskatoon, SK.



## Memorium

ISSEL – In loving memory of our dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather, Louie, who passed away April 2, 1989. Those we love don't go away They walk beside us every day, Unseen, unheard, but always near Still loved, still missed and very dear.  
–Forever loved and remembered by Arnold and Jane, Gladys and Don, Carol and Art and families. 9-1p



KOŁODZIEJAK – Adeline, April 2, 2015.

Six years have passed since we said goodbye to a special woman who's smile lit up the room while her laugh filled it.

We find comfort in the memories – the milestones, helping each other through tough times, proud moments and the laughter that we shared.

Even though she is no longer here, she continues to be part of each new memory as we always think about what she would have said or done and how much shopping she would have been able to pull off with social distancing.

We miss her dearly and cherish each memory we share. We know she is that bright light that shines down on us.

"Perhaps they are not stars, but rather openings where our loved ones shine down to let us know they are happy." –Inuit Proverb  
–Love, all your family. 9-1p

POPIUK – Gerry, June 1, 1958 – April 4, 2018.



### I'm Still Here

I may be gone, but please don't cry  
Death is not the last goodbye.  
Death releases me of my pain  
There will come a day we will meet again.  
Don't be blue and don't be sad  
Think back to the fun we had.  
I am always here, I hear you speak  
In time of trouble, it's me you seek.  
You don't see me, but I see you  
I will do my best to pull you through.  
Speak to me and I will hear  
Never far, I am always near.  
Be brave my love, do not cry  
See you again, it's not goodbye.  
–Love Always, Rhonda and Spike. 9-1p

Visit us online at  
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306-728-5448

## Card of Thanks

A heartfelt thank you to all who sent cards, phone calls, and condolences after the passing of Gray's mother and my partner, Elvira.

We give special thanks to Dr. Eshawesh for his personal care over the years. A tip of the hat to the staff of St. Peter's Hospital for the loving care they supplied the times when Elvira was in and out of the hospital and to Kim Rutzki and the health nurses that did so much.

To Rev. Mee who stopped into her room at the hospital and officiated at the graveside service. Thank you again to the pallbearers. To Carmen from Carmen's Elegance in Flowers – the roses were beautiful. Bailey's Funeral Home who handled everything – very professional and with compassionate guidance.

To each of you, your thoughtfulness will remain in our hearts forever.

–Gray and Bev Lysechko and family; Bob Martin and family. 9-1p

## For Sale

FOR SALE – Hubcaps, \$5 and up; dog dishes, beauty rings, bumpers, 60s, 70s, 80s, like new; center pieces. Big YARD SALE in April. Goodeve, 306-876-2106. 9-2p

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ABERNETHY HOUSING Authority has one 2 bedroom seniors suite and two 1 bedroom duplex apts available for rent. For more information contact Anne Marie Moulding, housing manager, at 306-335-7638. 2-12tfc

FOR RENT – Balcarres Housing Authority has a 1 bedroom seniors suite available for rent. For more information contact Anne Marie Moulding at 306-335-7638. 52-12tfc

## Help Wanted

MANAGEMENT POSITION at Broadview Housing Authority. A contract manager is required for the management of the Broadview Housing Authority. The successful candidate will report to the board of directors and be responsible for the day to day operations of the housing authority. The housing portfolio consists of 26 senior housing units and 3 family housing units.

**Required Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:** Financial analysis, accounting and budgeting; good computer skills (Word, Excel, Email); property management experience; good oral and written communication skills; good interpersonal skills; well organized; ability to maintain confidentiality.

**Required Duties:** Application management; rent collections, including arrears and other charges; income verification and rent calculation; supervising and co-ordinating caretaking and maintenance services; preparing scopes of work, obtaining quotes for work and administering contracts; preparing budgets and monitoring financial results; preparing reports and recommendations to the board of directors; attending board meetings and training sessions.

As a contract manager the successful candidate will be responsible for operational costs and have use of their own vehicle, computer and software equipment.

**Closing Date: April 23, 2021**

Please provide a cover letter with your resume outlining how your knowledge, skills and abilities match those we are seeking and forward in confidence to: Myles Norbeck, chairperson, Box 747, Broadview SK, SOG 0K0; email: cil01613@sasktel.net 41-2c

## Happy 65th Anniversary



Happy 65th Anniversary  
John and Mary Williams  
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## Happy 75th Birthday



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1-844-GNG-NEWS

# City of Melville combines two committees

By Emily Jane Fulford  
Grasslands News

The City of Melville will be combining the Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services Advisory Committee and the Tourism Advisory Committee into one committee.

The reason behind the merger is that the Tourism Advisory Committee had not had enough volunteers in the last few years. The City plans to add a tourism position to the Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services Advisory Committee.

They are also doing away with the term "leisure services" and a revised committee is now named "The Recreation, Culture and Tourism Advisory Committee."

"Over the past few years, we have had challenges filling board member positions on the Tourism Board," says Jeniffer Stein, Communications, Community

Development and Events Manager.

"We have recognized the challenge and have decided to move forward in a new direction. I did not want to lose the tourism representation in our community. I approached the Recreation Manager, indicating the challenge of attaining board members and proposed merging a tourism member into the Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services Advisory Committee. After some discussion, it was agreed this merge would be a good fit due to the fact that the Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services Advisory Committee consists of members representing youths, seniors, parks, community organizations, surrounding rural areas, school councils/boards and heritage."

According to the City of Melville, the Tourism Advisory Committee has been, for a time, inactive. Combining the two committees into one will give

Tourism the opportunity to operate without the whole board. The manager of Recreation and Programming and the manager for Communications, Community Development and Events were notified about the bylaw.

"Recreation, culture and tourism go hand in hand. Some of the main reasons people visit Melville are because of recreational and cultural activities so it really is a natural fit," says Stein. "Therefore, we have drafted an updated bylaw for the Recreation, Culture and Tourism Advisory Committee."

It is often the case that when a new bylaw is created which combines two previous bylaws, then the previous two bylaws are no longer in effect because the new one replaces them both.

"Essentially, this merger was done between the Tourism Advisory

Committee and the Recreation, Culture and Leisure Services Advisory Committee, due to lack of interest in the Tourism Committee as of late," says Amber Orr, executive assistant, office of the City Manager.

"Merging the two boards into the "Recreation, Culture and Tourism Advisory Committee", adds a Tourism position to the existing Recreation Committee

to allow for tourism concerns to be discussed without the need for a separate board. There is no change of offices, as the boards do not have their own dedicated offices.

The Recreation, Culture and Tourism Advi-

sory Committee meets at the Horizon Credit Union Centre; but due to COVID the meetings are being held online."

Because the committees are volunteer-run, there are no financial implications to the merger.

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### VILLAGE OF ABERNETHY

#### PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN

Notice is hereby given under *The Tax Enforcement Act* that unless the arrears and costs appearing opposite the land and title number described in the following list are fully paid before the 4th day of June, 2021, an interest based on a tax lien will be registered against the land.

Note: A sum for costs in an amount required by subsection 4(3) of *The Tax Enforcement Act* is included in the amount shown against each parcel

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY					Total Arrears	Costs Advert-ising	Total Arrears and Costs
Part of Lot	Lot	Blk	Plan	Title No.			
Part of Sec	Sec	Twp	Range				
	22-24	2	61948	153004407, 153004418, 153004429	\$1,192.48	\$21.57	\$1,214.05
	9-10	3	61948	151128985, 151129043	\$943.37	\$14.38	\$957.75
	22	3	61948	152454258			
	37	3	101244990	152454247	\$1,178.46	\$14.38	\$1,192.84
	13-14	4	61948	143860079, 143860091	\$574.38	\$14.38	\$588.76
	15-17	4	61948	151700903, 151700914, 151700925	\$1,307.61	\$21.57	\$1,329.18
	9-10	5	61948	151700936, 151700947	\$1,183.93	\$14.38	\$1,198.31
	13	8	61948	145419509	\$510.11	\$7.19	\$517.30
	19	11	C4566	151609585	\$830.14	\$7.19	\$837.33
	6-7	12	C4566	152871835, 152871857	\$610.16	\$14.38	\$624.54
	11-13	12	C4566	151976133, 151976111, 1519760032	\$557.84	\$21.57	\$579.41
	14-16	12	C4566	152871868, 152871891, 152871903	\$568.86	\$21.57	\$590.43
	11-12	5	61948	136522166, 136522133	\$2,479.04	\$14.38	\$2,493.42

Dated this 2nd day of April, 2021.

Sheree Emmerson, Treasurer



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# Three youth damage vehicle with water balloon

By Sabrina Bailey

Fort Qu'Appelle Detachment

Reporting period:

March 23 to March 29

Fort Qu'Appelle detachment dealt with 109 occurrences over the past week.

## Traffic

A speedster was issued a \$843 fine for driving more than 50km/h over the speed limit. He also received a \$150 fine for using the shoulder as a passing lane.

Members located an intoxicated driver after receiving a tip. The driver was arrested and charged. The vehicle has been impounded for 60 days.

Tickets issued: Drive without a licence, speeding, disobey stop sign, licence plate on wrong vehicle, fail to wear seatbelt, excessive damage to windshield and drive while using cellphone.

## Mischief

Police are investigating a report of a vehicle damaged while parked at the ski hill during the day.

Police used discretion and are applying alternative measures instead of involving the courts for three youth. The youth

agreed to replace a windshield after smashing it with a water balloon. The youth were warned about stunting and abiding by licence restrictions.

## Crimes Against the Person/Property

A female reported being assaulted, prevented from leaving a residence and prevented from calling the police. Investigations determined that the female was highly intoxicated and told to leave. She started hitting and scratching an individual so she was kicked out. The person she reported stopped her from calling the police was not at the residence at the time.

The investigation of an assault complaint has led to charges of sexual assault, assault, and resist arrest being laid. The accused will also be charged with breaching conditions on another file.

A male called 911 after an intoxicated female damaged some of his belongings. He locked her out of the house and she left. Members patrolled looking for the female; she was located and arrested. She was released on conditions once sober and will need to appear

before the court.

## Other Incidents

Police were quick to respond to the report of a missing youth. The youth was located walking along the highway trying to make his way to a friend's house. While on route to his house members crossed paths with the youth's grandfather who was also out searching. The youth was returned to his family.

An individual phoned 911 to find out information about his charges. They were advised to call

310-rcmp instead in the future.

A company was advised to not cash a cheque they had received as it came with suspicious circumstances. The cheque came with a request to clean a property, but to also use the extra cash to pay movers. The cheque came from BC and the envelope was stamped in France. A male was arrested for breaching his conditions after contacting an individual on snapchat.

The RCMP assisted the Saskatchewan Health

Authority in issuing a COVID non-compliance ticket to an individual for \$2,800.

Police have received a

report of insurance fraud involving a damaged truck reported stolen. The matter is under investigation.

## ASSESSMENT ROLL NOTICE

RM of Stanley No. 215

Notice is hereby given that the Assessment Roll of the Rural Municipality of Stanley No. 215 for the year 2021 has been prepared and is now open to inspection at the office of the Assessor from 9:00 a.m. to Noon and from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on the following days during normal office hours: Friday, March 26, 2021 – Friday, May 21, 2021.

A Bylaw pursuant to Section 214 of *The Municipalities Act* has been passed and the assessment notices have been sent as required.

Any person who wishes to appeal against his or her assessment is required to file his or her notice of appeal, along with a \$75.00 appeal fee which will be returned if the appeal is successful, with:

The Secretary of the Board of Revision  
RM Stanley No. 215

P.O. Box 70, Melville, Sask. S0A 2P0  
by the 21st day of May, 2021

Dated at Melville, Sask., this 26th day of March, 2021.

Dawn Oehler, Assessor

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## NOTICE ASSESSMENT ROLL 2021

Village of Killaly

Notice is hereby given that the assessment roll for the Village of Killaly for the year 2021 has been prepared and is open to inspection in the office of the assessor from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday's from March 26, 2021 through May 25, 2021.

A bylaw pursuant to Section 214 of *The Municipalities Act* has been passed and the assessment notices have been sent as required.

Any person who wishes to appeal against his or her assessment is required to file his or her notice of appeal along with the required appeal fee by the 25th day of May 2021 to:

The Secretary of the Board of Revisions

P.O. Box 69

Killaly, SK S0A 1X0

Dated this 26th day of March, 2021.

Crystal Campbell  
Assessor, Village of Killaly

## TOWN FOREMAN

Town of Broadview

The Town of Broadview is accepting applications for the position of Town Foreman. This is a permanent full-time position which is directly responsible to the Town's Public Works Committee and is responsible to direct, control and administer all operational aspects of Public Works.

Applicants must possess a minimum Grade 12/GED, valid Class 5 Driver's License and have or be willing and able to obtain their Water Treatment and Distribution Level II Certification and Wastewater Collection and Treatment Level I Certification.

Individuals that are self-motivated with organizational, supervisory, communication and management skills are encouraged to apply. Previous experience in operating and maintaining large equipment also preferred.

Submit resumes stating experience, certifications, salary expected and references by Friday, April 9, 2021 at 4 p.m. to:

Town of Broadview

P.O. Box 430, Broadview, Sask. S0G 0K0

Phone 306-696-2533

Fax 306-696-3573

email: town.of.broadview@sasktel.net

The Town of Broadview would like to thank all who apply, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

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## Fun things to do and keep active!

During this month we offer suggestions and a few event activities for you and your family to do. Some of the dates are actual observances, while others are just ideas you can use. Feel free to add your own to the list. Have fun and enjoy April!

# APRIL 2021

## All Month

### Melville Legion Chase the Ace - Fridays

Draw made at 6:15 p.m. 136 - 3rd Ave. W, Melville, SK

## April 1

### April Fools Day

April Fool's Day is an opportunity for playing jokes or tricks on one another. The challenge is to carry out a trick that is believable, if only for a little while. Tricks are most successful if played earlier in the day before a person is wise to what is going on. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))



## April 2

### Good Friday

On Good Friday, Jesus Christ died on the cross. He died for us. But he only died in human form. He then arose from the dead on Easter Sunday morning to show us that there is life after death in heaven. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))



## April 4

### Easter Sunday

The real meaning of Easter, is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To Christians, it is the most special day of the year. Easter also is celebrated with the Easter Bunny, colored eggs, jelly beans, and lot's of chocolate. There is a famous Easter game called the Easter Egg Hunt. Early morning kids go outside to find the many colored Easter eggs that the Easter bunny has hidden the night before. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))



## April 6

### National Tartan Day

National Tartan Day celebrates Scottish heritage and the distinct pattern "tartan", which is commonly seen in clothing and many other items. When we see this tartan pattern, we think of Scotland, bagpipes, kilts and other things "Scottish". ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))

## April 8

### Draw a Picture of a Bird Day

Draw a Picture of a Bird Day is a special day for young bird lovers who like to draw. It doesn't matter whether you are young, or not so young. If you like to draw, then today is a day to draw pictures of a bird. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))

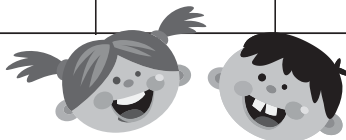


Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				★ 1	★ 2	3
★ 4	5	★ 6	7	★ 8	9	★ 10
★ 11	★ 12	13	★ 14	15	★ 16	17
★ 18	19	★ 20	21	★ 22	23	24
25	★ 26	27	★ 28	29	30	

## April 10

### National Sibling Day

Celebrate National Sibling Day in a variety of ways. It's a great time to be thankful for your sibling. But, most importantly get in touch with your siblings. Visit them if they live nearby. Call them, if they live far away. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))



## April 11

### National Pet Day

Today is a day about the both of you. Undoubtedly, there is a special bond between humans and pets. We're talking about any and all pets. Celebrate today by spending time and playing with your pet. Give your pet a special treat or a toy. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))

## April 12

### Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day

What do you need to celebrate Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day? The ingredients are cheese, sliced bread, a little butter, and your appetite. Any cheese will do. If you are looking to be a little daring, add a couple slices of tomato or tuna fish to it, then grill it in a frying pan. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))



## April 14

### International Moment of Laughter Day

The objective of this day is to get people to laugh, and to laugh more often. After all, "laughter is the best medicine". Simply tell jokes or do funny things that cause people to laugh. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))

## April 16

### National Eggs Benedict Day

A day to enjoy eggs with hollandaise sauce, Canadian bacon and English muffins. Make some and enjoy! ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))



## April 18

### Husband Appreciation Day

The objective of this special day is for wives to show appreciation to husbands. It should be very easy to show appreciation o your husband, for who he is, and for the many great things he does. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))

## April 20

### Look Alike Day

Today's a day to find someone you really look up to, and try to look like them. Its a way you can have fun with the kids, or vice-versa, by dressing and acting like the other person. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))

## April 22

### Earth Day

A day to show your support for the environment and the harmful environmental practices we do to our favourite planet. A day to bring greater awareness that our planet has limited resources, and our fragile eco-system needs to be taken care of. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))



## April 26

### National Pretzel Day

How do you like your pretzel? Thick or thin? Straight or twisted? Crisp and crunchy, or soft? Salted, unsalted, mustard flavored, perhaps? There's no shortage of types of pretzels. Why not get some and give them a try. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))

## April 28

### Kiss Your Mate Day

Kiss Your Mate Day is a perfect chance to smooch with your partner, as if you need an opportunity to share a kiss or two with the one you love. With spring in the air, April is an appropriate time for Kiss Your Mate Day. ([holidayinsights.com](http://holidayinsights.com))



## Melville Community Works RE-OPENED TO THE PUBLIC!

- Thrift Shop open - Tuesday and Thursday 12 - 4 p.m.
- Gift Shop open - Tuesday and Thursday 1 - 3 p.m.
- Kidsville opening to be determined
- Canadian Mental Health Association - Melville Branch - Meeting 1st Wednesday of every month 7 p.m.
- Magic Moments Playschool is currently full and accepting names for the 2020 - 2021 school year wait list. Please contact Chantel Fahlman for more info at 306-730-6272 or via Facebook messenger.



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# Eagle Women Tribunal first of its kind in Canada

Launched March 22 - Cowessess First Nation

By Sarah Pacio  
Grasslands News

linked to the Chief Red Bear Children's Lodge (CRBCL) established by the *Miyo Pimatisiwin Act*, which will launch on April 1. The Act provides guidelines for the First Nation to exercise jurisdiction over its children in the welfare system. The tribunal will review cases and make decisions relating to child welfare and other concerns raised by Cowessess citizens. It was established because both the Truth & Reconciliation Calls to Action and the MMIWG Calls to Act direct the First Nation to create a judicial system founded on traditional Indigenous laws and healing practices.

The tribunal's launch was celebrated during a special zoom meeting with the chief, councillors, and other dignitaries.

"Today is a new day; we are taking back what



was always rightfully ours," FSIN Vice Chief Dutch Lerat affirmed when he addressed the others during the online session. "We always wanted to ensure that our children retained their culture, retained their language and retained their kinship values and lines, and most importantly their ties to our home communities. The tribunal and CRBCL will

work together to ensure the children of Cowessess continue to know who they are as Indigenous people."

After a year and a half of diligent work, Cowessess assembled the nine-member group comprised of people from on and off the reserve, as well as non-Cowessess citizens. The board consists of a panel of qualified individuals with experience in a variety of fields.

Councillor Denise Pelletier is the chairperson for the tribunal and has been extremely instrumental in its founding. "It establishes that our Cowessess constitution is recognized and states every Cowessess First Nation citizen has a right to a process to appeal or review administrative decisions of the Cowessess First Nation insti-

tutions," Pelletier said during the launch.

The tribunal will be accessible, respectful and helpful, collaborating with concerned parties to make decisions. It provides a group within the First Nation to deal with disputes rather than turning to an external judicial system. They will use talking circles, healing circles, and mediators to

resolve issues.

"For far too long our human relations have been somewhat broken because of a justice system that has been enforced upon us for almost four generations," Chief Delorme noted. "We have been somewhat colonized and this is a part of our journey and an important role in helping us to achieve self-government.

March 22 was a historic day for Cowessess First Nation as leaders launched the Eagle Women Tribunal, the first of its kind in Canada.

"Eagle Women Tribunal is a step forward to self-government," Chief Cadmus Delorme wrote in a statement. "Eagle Women Tribunal will be our own justice system, one which will reflect our laws, our values, and what is important to the citizens."

The tribunal is closely

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# Ag NEWS

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## Fort inventor to be honoured into H of F

By Alan Hustak  
Grasslands News

An entrepreneur based in Fort Qu'Appelle is about to be inducted into the Canadian Western Agribition Hall of Fame as one of the 50 most influential agricultural industry leaders in the country.

Brian Olson, who invented a hitch that is now a standard feature on most large tractors is being recognized for his exceptional contribution to improving safety standards in the fields. It is the latest in a number of honours that Olson has received for inventing the Drop Pin hammerstrap 30 years ago when he was farming near Tompkins, SK. His invention standardized the way agricultural equipment is hitched.

"The recognition comes at a great time as I am retiring and am moving into the next chapter of my life. I'll be totally gone from Power Pin in a month,"

Olson, 68, told Grasslands News. "This is the icing on the cake; I am humbled, and thankful for this recognition. I need to thank my original investors, my children and all of our customers and valuable employees over the years. Especially my partner of 30 years, TJ Batke. She is my rock."

Olson recalled the struggles he went through to get his invention off the ground. "At the time, if you had a piece of equipment you'd line up two holes and use a bolt or whatever you could throw in the hole as a hitch. There was no consistency," He almost went bankrupt trying to develop his drop pin hammerstrap and he mortgaged his farm.

"I thought my invention would be the ticket to buy back the farm, but 44 patents and patent applications later, my life took a different turn."

It wasn't until 1989 when John Deere engineers came from Waterloo, Iowa, to a Farm Progress Show in Regina and liked what they saw that his invention took off. "At the time John Deere had come out with a line of new tractors, and they were getting all kinds of complaints because the hammerstrap hitch interfered with their

power take off. I was lucky enough to have been able to solve their problem."

Olson built a 20,000 square foot building in Fort Qu'Appelle 23 years ago to assemble the draw-bar hitching components for John Deere which over the years has brought in over \$100-million export dollars to the community.

"He is one of the best in an industry which continues to create endless opportunities to dream and grow and thrive," said Todd Klink, Farm Credit marketing officer.

Asked how he plans to spend his retirement, Olson replied, "I've done dumb things in my life, and I've done smart things, but always I have done something."



ALAN HUSTAK | GRASSLANDS NEWS

### Hall of Famer

Inventor Brian Olson of Fort Qu'Appelle will be inducted into the Agribition Hall of Fame. He is one of 50 people from across Canada considered an influential industry leader.

## Crop insurance changes for 2021

### Provincial

The Crop Insurance enhancements introduced in the 2021 year will continue to build on previous program enhancements. SCIC is pleased to announce the following Program changes for the 2021 season:

Coverage for the Native Forage Establishment Benefit Option is increasing from \$75 per acre to \$200 per acre. This option provides coverage on newly seeded

native forage acres. The Forage Establishment Benefit coverage for tame hay and sweetclover is also increasing.

Crop Insurance customers can now insure their tame hay acres under the Forage Rainfall Insurance Program (FRIP) or the Multi-Peril Crop Insurance Program. Under FRIP, payments will be calculated based on rainfall levels instead of overall yields.

New for 2021, SCIC is pleased to provide coverage for largescale

vegetable production through the Commercial Vegetable Pilot Program. Commercial operations have access to standalone coverage for damage to cabbage and pumpkin crops. A minimum of eight acres of cabbage and/or pumpkins is required to participate.

SCIC is updating the large-seeded Kabuli chickpea base grade to reflect current production and marketing patterns. This increases the insured price and quality coverage.



A Grasslands News agricultural supplement



Hall of Fame inductee

# Alanna Koch is first female deputy agriculture minister

By Alan Hustak  
Grasslands News

“What young women seek out in other women, for whatever reason, is a role model.”

- Alanna Koch

The first female to serve as Saskatchewan's deputy minister of agriculture is being inducted into the Canadian Western Agribition Hall of Fame as one of the 50 most influential leaders in Canada's agricultural industry.

Alanna Koch also served as deputy minister to Premier Brad Wall and almost became Saskatchewan's premier in 2018 when she collected 46 per cent of the vote on the final ballot in which Scott Moe won the Saskatchewan Party leadership race.

She believes Agribition has recognized her not for her political accomplishments but for her role as mentor with Next Gen, a federal provincial initiative which mentors prospective leaders in agriculture.

“I am fortunate. There are so many people in the industry, but I believe I was recognized because I was often the first woman

to be matched with young men and women looking for advice through the Next Gen program,” she told Grasslands News. “I was able to reflect upon my own life experience in a way that was helpful to others. Sometimes that meant I was just there to listen and commiserate.” At the moment she is mentoring a young woman from Saskatoon, “some one who is not in agriculture. Mentoring is vital for all of us. What young women seek out in other women, for whatever reason, is a role model. A model they can lean on in a mentoring relationship.”

Articulate and ambitious, Koch carries the shine of having been in the spotlight well.

“Mentors are important,” she says over a cup of strong coffee served at the island counter in her spacious kitchen. “I am who I am because of mentors like Lorne Hepworth, (the former MLA who held several cabinet portfolio's in the 80's) who saw something in me. And Pat Smith, who was Grant Devine's deputy premier. She had so many amazing qualities.”

Koch and her husband, Gerry Hertz, farm 4 1/2 sections near Edenwold, a property they bought 35 years ago. It is directly north of the farm where she grew up. She enrolled at the University of Saskatchewan but never graduated. Early in her career, “when agriculture in Saskatchewan was in a mess” she went to work for Premier Grant Devine, who also held the agriculture portfolio. Since leaving government Koch has been running her own consulting business KoHert Agri Inc. She is chair of the board for the Global Institute for Food Security and chair of CN's agriculture advisory council. Among her many awards is the Queen Elizabeth II jubilee medal.

So does she miss being out of government?

“I do miss it, being on the inside, the adrenalin rush of all the deadlines,” she said, “but what I really miss most are all the people I worked with.”



## First female and hall of famer

Alanna Koch is a hall of famer, former deputy agriculture minister and first female to hold the position in Saskatchewan.

ALAN HUSTAK | GRASSLANDS NEWS

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Yorkton Richardson

# Expansion at canola crushing plant to be largest in Canada

Provincial  
Grasslands News

The Government of Saskatchewan last week welcomed Richardson International Limited's announcement of a new investment to double processing capacity at its canola crush plant in Yorkton, which will make it the largest in Canada.

"This is a significant investment in our province that will create local jobs, support economic recovery and help our province continue to grow," Trade and Export Development Minister Jeremy Harrison said. "As the world recovers from the economic impacts of the pandemic, there remains a growing need for the food products Saskatchewan produces, such as canola oil and canola meal, and we appreciate this investment and expansion at Richardson's Yorkton canola crush plant, which will help meet that demand. Our government is committed to maintaining a competitive business environment to attract these types of investments, which will benefit all Saskatchewan residents, and we look forward to working with Richardson on this important project."

"Saskatchewan is a leader in agricultural production and we welcome this investment to increase canola crush capacity in the province," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "We know the world wants the high quality products Saskatchewan produces, with canola oil and canola meal our top value-added exports in 2020. This expansion of processing capacity will help Saskatchewan meet the goals outlined

in our Growth Plan, which includes a target to crush 75 per cent of the canola our province produces here in Saskatchewan.

"We opened the original Yorkton plant in 2010 and at that time, it was by far the largest capital investment Richardson had ever undertaken," Richardson International President and CEO Curt Vossen said. "Saskatchewan and Manitoba producers have responded effectively, providing growth in canola production over the years - this has given us the confidence to move forward with expansion once again. We have appreciated the encouragement and cooperation of the rural municipality of Orkney, the city of Yorkton, and the province of Saskatchewan."

The new expansion will double the canola crush capacity at the facility to 2.2 million tonnes of canola seed annually. The project will also optimize operational efficiencies and modernize the facility. The project will also upgrade infrastructure that will include a high-speed shipping system with three 9,500-foot loop tracks that will serve both major railways.

This project will help to achieve several of Saskatchewan's Growth Plan goals, including to:

- Grow private capital investment in Saskatchewan to \$16 billion annually;
- Increase the value of exports by 50 per cent;
- Grow Saskatchewan's agri-food exports to \$20 billion;
- Increase agriculture value-added revenue to \$10 billion; and
- Crush 75 per cent of the canola Saskatchewan produces in Saskatchewan.



RICHARDSON INT. | GRASSLANDS NEWS

## Major expansion announced

When the expansion project is completed in early 2024 the Richardson International facility in Yorkton will be able to crush 2.2 million tonnes of seed annually, making it the largest canola crush facility in Canada.

Saskatchewan's Growth Plan also includes a commitment to maintaining a competitive tax environment and providing incentives to help attract further investment. These include the Saskatchewan Value-Added Agriculture Incentive, the Saskatchewan Chemical Fertilizer Incentive, the Manufacturing

and Processing Exporter Tax Incentive and the Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box Program).

Richardson plans to begin construction on the expansion immediately and is expected to be completed in early 2024.

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# Career change both challenging and rewarding

By Brian Cross  
of the Western Producer

Saskatchewan grain and cattle producer Jocelyn Velestuk describes her first six years in farming as a whirlwind of activity.

"It's been a wild ride," says Velestuk, who farms with her husband and his parents near Broadview, Sask.

"There's always lots going on. There are times when we're going flat out and there are times when things slow down a bit but we're always very busy."

In 2016, Velestuk and her husband, Jesse, decided to make a career change and become full-time grain and livestock producers.

Jocelyn, previously an environmental consultant, and Jesse, an oilfield welder, were on the road frequently and began to yearn for a career that would allow them to set down roots, spend more time together and raise a family.

"We decided that to have the family life that we wanted to have and to see each other as much as we wanted to, that the farm life was for us," says Jocelyn.

"We got to a point where we knew we needed to make a change so we decided: OK, let's start farming."

That's when the whirlwind began.

After approaching Jesse's parents, who are also active farmers in the Broadview area, Jocelyn and Jesse rolled up their sleeves and got down to business.

In the past six years, the Velestuks have restructured the farming operation to accommodate two families.

The farm's land base has almost tripled since 2016 and most of the machinery has been upgraded or replaced to accommodate the extra acres.

The Velestuks constantly seek ways to increase their productivity, improve their soil health and ensure that the farm follows a sustainable path toward long-term profitability, says Jocelyn, who has a master's degree in soil science from the University of Saskatchewan.

Maintaining a diverse crop rotation is a big part of the farm's sustainability plan. The Velestuks produce as many as 10 different crops and are also experimenting with inter-cropping in silage and grain crops.

"We're a very diverse operation," Jocelyn says.

"It's something that's important to all of us, is to have that diversity."

Jocelyn has also parlayed her post-secondary education in soil science into a career as professional agronomy consultant.

When she's not working on her own farm, she works as a contracted consultant for Western Ag, producing customized soil fertility plans for other growers.

On their own farm, the Velestuks plan to seed about 3,500 acres this spring, both for feed and commercial grain production.

Feed crops are used to maintain a herd of approximately 350 cows. Calving is just around the corner so that will add to the farm's already heavy workload.

The Velestuks are also backgrounding another 300 cattle so even in the winter, the demands on their time are significant.

Somehow, between everything else, Jocelyn and Jesse have also found time to start a family.

Their children, aged four and six years old, live just a hop, skip and a jump from their grandparents, Jesse's mom and dad.

Jocelyn says the decision to settle down and become full-time parents and farmers was the right one, even though the workload can be demanding.

"We both grew up farming and we both loved it but we knew what we were getting into," says Jocelyn, who also serves as president of the Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association and is a director with the Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission.

"We knew that it wasn't necessarily the easiest career choice and that it would take a lot of hard work," she adds.

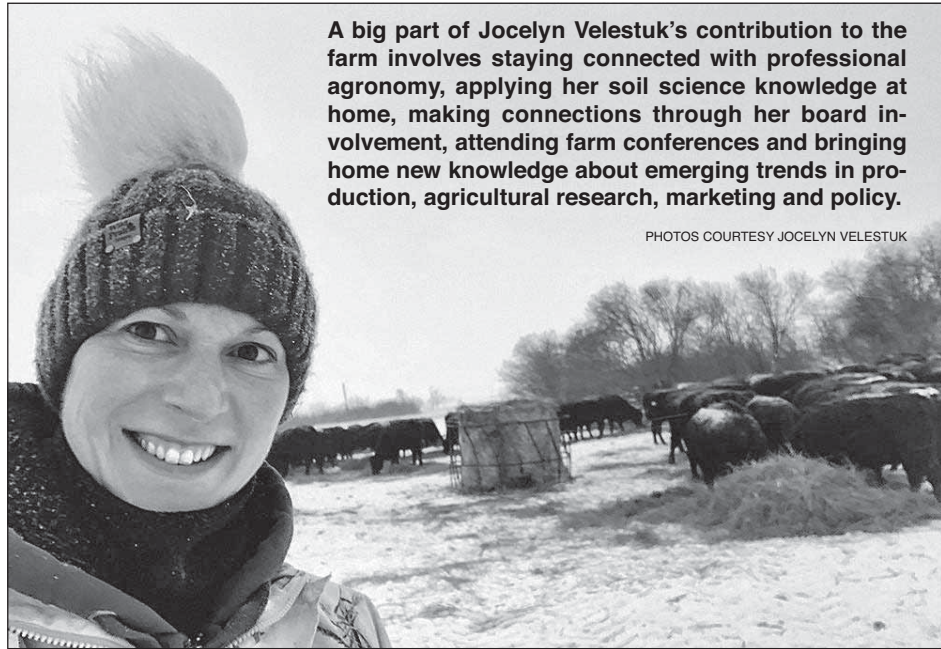
"But it was a well thought-out decision and it was definitely made for family reasons."

Jocelyn says each family member brings unique skills to the farm. She takes pride in the fact that her role as a woman on the farm doesn't necessarily conform with established industry expectations.

A big part of Jocelyn's contribution involves staying involved in professional agronomy, applying her soil science knowledge at home, making

A big part of Jocelyn Velestuk's contribution to the farm involves staying connected with professional agronomy, applying her soil science knowledge at home, making connections through her board involvement, attending farm conferences and bringing home new knowledge about emerging trends in production, agricultural research, marketing and policy.

PHOTOS COURTESY JOCELYN VELESTUK



connections through her board involvement, attending farm conferences and bringing home new knowledge about emerging trends in production, agricultural research, marketing and policy.

"We each do what we're best at and that's how we're going to be successful at our farm," Jocelyn says.

"It's kind of neat how everyone's role fits in," she adds.

"It doesn't matter if you're a woman or a man, you do what you're good at and I think that's something that's been a strength of our farm."

Jocelyn says it can be challenging as a woman to define your role on the farm.

"The industry, I think, has its own idea of what a woman should do on the farm but I think a lot of women today are kind of breaking that trend, or breaking from the norm...."

With such a busy operation and so

many moving parts involved in the farm's success, Jocelyn says it's also necessary to slow down occasionally, revisit priorities, communicate openly and focus on personal well-being.

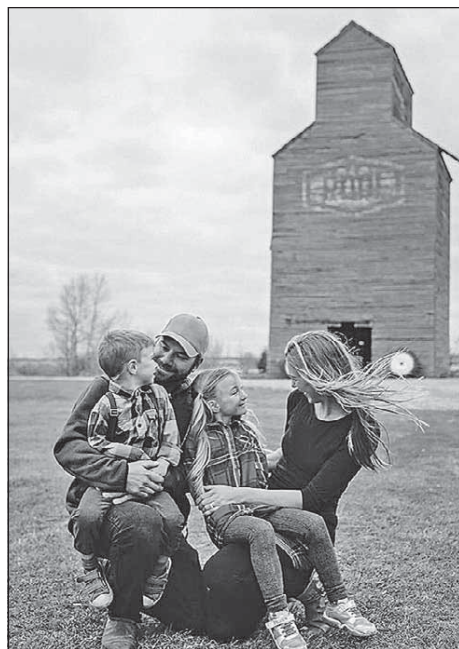
"Farming is not an easy thing. It can be very stressful and we've been through some very tough times....," she says.

"But we've learned how to talk about the stress. We've learned that a big part of coping is learning how to talk about the white elephant in the room, even if it means having some very uncomfortable conversations.

"I think everyone has to know where everyone else is at so that the farm can move forward and be successful.

"Every farmer is different and every farm makes decisions for different reasons," she adds.

"But we are all in this high-risk game together."



Jocelyn and Jesse Velestuk moved to the farm partly for their children.

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# Parkland College program offered for farm hands

By Emily Jane Fulford  
Grasslands News

If you've ever been interested in working on a farm but grew up in town, or if you've recently acquired a farming operation and are not sure where to start when it comes to staffing and employee training, Parkland College may have the answer you've been looking for.

The institution announced on Monday, March 8 that they were launching a new program, Introduction to Farm Hand, which has been created in order to assist growing farm operations with the need for added labour. Some topics include field crops, Power Mobile Equipment theory, and hands-on training with various pieces of farm equipment. Basic farm safety, as well as instruction for safely moving equipment around work sites, will be covered as well.

Students will be taught both in the classroom as well as receive hands-on experience which is split up over the span of three Saturdays including April 17, April 24, and May 1. The Town of Lemberg agreed to assist the College and provide space for the training at the town office for classroom work and



at a nearby farm for the vocational components.

"This program is designed to meet the need for more skilled labour on Saskatchewan's farms," said Connie Brown, Manager of Business Development at Parkland College. "Farmers can send current or potential employees through the program to develop their skills. And it gives general labourers without a farm background the opportunity to

gain the experience needed to work in agriculture."

The short format course, which is taught over a three-day period, provides basic skills training and hands-on experience in a number of the areas required to perform work on a typical Saskatchewan grain farm. The first-course module is set to commence on April 17 and will focus on seeding in order to prepare employees for the upcoming spring season.

More good news for those re-entering the workforce after COVID-19, many applicants may be eligible for the Canada-Saskatchewan Job Grant and the Re-Open Saskatchewan Training Subsidy.

**This three-day course will cover:**

- Basic farm safety
- Overview of field crops
- Introduction to selected pieces of farm equipment
- Safe work practices for moving equipment in and around work sites
- Power Mobile Equipment theory

**Important Notes:**

- Participants are required to have steel-toed boots, work gloves and safety glasses.
- Please dress appropriately for outdoors.
- Bring a copy of a valid driver's licence on the first day of the course.
- They recommend you take a First Aid/CPR/AED course if you are not already certified. (First Aid/CPR A/AED training will be available in Melville – April 6 & 7, 2021; Fee: \$180 per person)
- Please bring your own lunch, snacks, and water.

For more information visit: [www.parklandcollege.sk.ca](http://www.parklandcollege.sk.ca) or call 306-786-2760.

## Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship Program supports industry's future

Provincial  
Grasslands News

Canadian Western Agribition's Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship Program welcomed the newest group of eight young agriculture leaders. This program matches young leaders in the agriculture industry with experienced professionals who provide them with skills and experiences to advance their careers. The Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan committed \$100,000 in funding through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership to support this intake of mentees.

"Canada's young people are key to the future success of our agricultural sector," said Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. "The government is working hard to ensure our youth are able to play an active role in building a stronger and more prosperous sector. The Next Gen program creates leadership development opportunities to give the future agriculture leaders the skills and experience they need to contribute and make a difference in our industry."

"Canadian Western Agribition's Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship program provides young industry leaders with valuable skills that will help them advance their careers and share the story of how our producers create safe,

high-quality food," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "I want to congratulate Canadian Western Agribition on matching their third intake of mentees with mentors and thank them for their efforts to engage young people."

The successful mentees and mentors chosen to participate in this intake are:

- Alexandra Clarke, paired with Gerry Hertz
- Sandra Hessdorfer, paired with Sara Shymko
- Megan Roger, paired with Brett Halstead
- Morgan Follensbee, paired with Kim Keller
- Blaine Lamontagne, paired with Danny Petty
- Grayson Berting, paired with Joe Barnett
- Ryan Garbarczyk, paired with Shelley Jones
- Anna Karlsson, paired with Heather Deobald

The Next Gen Program is an agricultural mentorship program for future leaders in Saskatchewan delivered by Canadian Western Agribition (CWA). The program accepts eight applicants into an 18-month mentorship experience. Mentees are paired with some of the strongest leaders in Canadian agriculture. During their mentorship, mentees will gain industry knowledge, board and governance training, business education and networking oppor-

tunities.

"It's been a pleasure watching the Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship program grow and CWA is proud to be part of the success of our industry's future," CWA President Chris Lees said. "Already, graduates from the program are filling leadership roles in agriculture all over the province."

This project is supported through

the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year, \$3-billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen the agriculture and agri-food sector. This includes a \$388-million investment in strategic initiatives for Saskatchewan agriculture.

More information about the program is available online at [www.saskatchewan.ca/CAP](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/CAP)



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# FCC sees opportunities for Indigenous agriculture

**Farm Credit Canada**  
for Grasslands News

Farm Credit Canada (FCC) is building a foundation of knowledge to better understand and support Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs to grow and thrive in Canada's agriculture and food industry.

"Diversification of Canada's agriculture and food industry is one of our top priorities and an integral part of FCC's mandate," said Michael Hoffort, FCC's president and CEO. "It begins with developing a deeper understanding of Indigenous agriculture – the history, barriers, aspirations and opportunities of today."

FCC recently commissioned an online survey of Indigenous producers and stakeholders, which indicated more than 70 per cent of producers plan to increase participation in the sector over the next five years, despite reporting a poor to average experience in the sector. Some of the biggest challenges cited were access to capital, equipment, labour and knowledge.

Most respondents believe growth is coming from multiple areas but tend to focus on crops and food processing.

In order to sustain the growth needed to re-establish Indigenous food security, respondents placed a high priority on the need to create agricultural and financial learning opportunities for Indigenous youth. They also want to see a deliberate approach for ensuring the next generation is prepared and excited to continue growing agriculture and food businesses, while fostering relationships with elders who offer a wealth of traditional knowledge.

"FCC is working to become a stronger partner in the advancement of In-

igenous agriculture in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration," said Shaun Soonias, director of FCC Indigenous relations. "As Canada's leading agriculture lender, we are uniquely positioned to contribute to the success of Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs in this diverse and dynamic industry."



**"FCC is working to become a stronger partner in the advancement of Indigenous agriculture in the spirit of reconciliation and collaboration."**

- Shaun Soonias,  
Director of FCC  
Indigenous Relations

To become a better partner, FCC is providing extensive Indigenous awareness and relations training to its more than 2,000 employees across Canada. The training is meant to help employees better understand the legislative and systemic barriers that prevent Indigenous communities from fully participating in Canada's agriculture industry, as well as the historic, social and economic challenges facing First Nations, Métis and Inuit across Canada.

"There is a rich history and traditions of Indigenous agriculture prior to European settlement, and we are now several generations removed from those practices and knowledge," said Soonias, who is also a member of the Red Pheasant Cree Nation near Battleford, Saskatchewan. "FCC not only has an opportunity to better understand the landscape of Indigenous agriculture in Canada but, more importantly, provide Indigenous entrepreneurs with learning opportunities about agriculture and farm management."

Most Indigenous producers and stakeholders surveyed suggested the key to overcoming the various challenges in Indigenous agriculture resides in training, education and mentorship opportunities, as well as access to capital to grow their businesses. There are also many Indigenous agri-food and agribusinesses that are well established, exporting their products internationally and expanding operations and others who

are integrating indoor farming with traditional plants and medicines.

"As we gain a greater understanding of how to best support their success in agriculture, we will work in partnership with Indigenous communities, stakeholders and entrepreneurs to develop solutions that work for them, as well as address their community priorities," Soonias said.

Almost half of those surveyed see significant opportunities in greenhouse operation, community gardens, Indigenous foods and food processing, although there is a wide range of other small-scale agriculture activities taking place on Indigenous lands.

"FCC is committed to building long-term relationships with key stakeholders in the Indigenous agriculture and

food sector with the aim of being a trusted partner to support Indigenous peoples' full participation in this exciting, dynamic and diverse industry," Hoffort said.

FCC is Canada's leading agriculture and food lender, with a healthy loan portfolio of more than \$41 billion. Our employees are dedicated to the future of Canadian agriculture and food. We provide flexible, competitively priced financing, management software, information and knowledge specifically designed for the agriculture and food industry. As a self-sustaining Crown corporation, we provide an appropriate return to our shareholder, and reinvest our profits back into the industry and communities we serve. For more information, visit [fcc.ca](http://fcc.ca)

## \$1.4 million aimed at farm safety

**National News**  
Grasslands News

Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, announced on March 15, an investment of up to \$1.4 million over two years to improve farm safety. The announcement helps kick off this year's Canadian Agriculture Safety Week by providing the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) with funding to provide valuable farm safety tools and advice to Canada's agriculture industry.

This funding through the AgriCompetitiveness program will also facilitate a series of initiatives that promote farm safety for producers, their families, and workers. Activities include awareness raising, community engagement, and

the development and maintenance of safety resources and tools to address existing and emerging safety needs at the provincial and national level.

In addition to outreach and awareness activities, CASA will continue to provide farm safety learning opportunities to rural emergency responders and firefighters, and provide online health and safety training courses to farm workers.

CASA will continue to provide essential training and tools to farmers and stakeholders relating to existing and emerging safety concerns at the farm level.

Farm safety is crucial to the overall health and wellbeing of Canada's farmers, ensuring farmers have access to tools to protect both their mental and physical health.

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# \$11 million more for RM roads and channel clearing

Premier Scott Moe's address to SARM

By Michael Oleksyn  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Though it was headlined by an announcement about vaccinations, Premier Scott Moe's address to the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) convention on March 10 included some specific announcements targeted at rural municipalities. This includes announcements of funding for roads and expansion of channel clearing.

"This morning I want to provide some details on how we are going to build a stronger Saskatchewan in the months and in the years to come," Moe said.

Moe also discussed previous funding initiatives such the Municipal Economic Enhancement Program (MEEP) and the fast tracking of revenue sharing during the beginning of the COVID before going into the roads announcement.

"That is why today I am announcing that we are going to invest an additional \$11 million into rural integrated roads for growth program."

The \$11 million announced was on top of \$28 million that is already budgeted and was announced in June 2020.

"This money we know will be used and used efficiently to construct and repair roads in your municipality, to construct and repair bridges and culverts in RM's right across this province and it's a partnership that we are very proud of," Moe said.

According to the SARM website, the RIRG programs funding is provided for roads, bridges and large diameter culverts. According to the province the RIRG is an important component of the province's plan to re-build 100 roads over the next three years and 100



bridges over the next four years.

Through the first two phases of funding, 89 road projects and 45 bridge projects have been provincially approved, receiving nearly \$38 million in support. Several of the bridge projects are still going through the federal approval process.

Moe said that making the announcement now will ensure projects will be ready for the next construction season. The province has committed to re-build 100 roads over the next three years and 100 bridges over the next four years.

As well, Moe announced \$2 million over two years in funding to expand channel clearing for rural municipalities across Saskatchewan. This matter has been a concern for a number of years in municipalities. He explained that MLAs had heard for a number of years about this issue and it was time to address it.

"I'm hoping that that investment is an indication that the Water Security Agency is going to be more responsive to some of the challenges that you have been facing and in the future we will be more responsive and be willing to work in partnership to deal with the water and drainage issues that you are experiencing in your community in a way that doesn't unduly hinder economic growth in this province and doesn't hinder the economic recovery that we all seek," Moe said.

The Water Security Agency originally budgeted \$600,000 over two years for channel clearing. This increase in funding will allow for the program to grow to \$500,000 for the 2020-21 fiscal year. In 2021-22, funding will increase

again to \$1.5 million for a total investment of \$2 million over two years. This is an additional \$1.4 million over two years to support RMs with channel clearing activities.

Channel clearing involves removing beaver dams, debris, trees and shrubs, and the removal of silt and blow dirt from and along natural channels, lessening the possibilities of blockages that can cause flooding and damage to infrastructure.

Obstructed creeks and channels cause flooding and erosion problems to many RMs and local landowners. This program supports RMs in the removal of these obstructions.

"Our members welcome the news of this timely additional support for a needed program, especially as we enter the spring season," SARM President Ray Orb said in a release.

"Our communities are concerned not only about proactively dealing with situations like flooding, but also practicing good water management that protects our ratepayers investments."

Clearing dense vegetation can also reduce unwanted nutrients from water bodies and is an essential component of any long-term water management plan.

Moe also discussed the meeting of campaign commitments such as the 10 per cent reduction on power bills, that the small business tax rate is temporarily cut to zero, the Home Renovation Tax Credit and the SGI rebate which is coming in May. The rebate is due to a decline in accidents and the performance of the SGI portfolio.

"In our view this money belongs to the people of Saskatchewan," Moe said.

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# Managing on-farm plastic waste and growing the bioeconomy

## National News Grasslands News

Canadian farmers are looking to reduce waste, and plant-based plastics are an increasingly popular alternative as part of a growing Canadian bioeconomy. Creating exciting new options for Canadian farmers, while supporting them in responsibly managing on-farm plastic waste, is helping to build a healthier economy and environment.

Late last month, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, announced funding of more than \$4.5 million for five new projects that will improve plastic waste management and on-farm sustainability, and advance bioplastics research. These green agricultural projects will help Canadian farmers remain leaders in sustainable, climate-smart agriculture.

"Canada's agricultural sector continues to develop innovative tools and approaches to ensure their operations are sustainable. Today's funding will support farmers looking for ways to better manage their plastic waste, and help advance the necessary work to turn crop residues and other agricultural by-products into renewable energy. This is a win-win for our hardworking farmers, the environment and Canada's bioeconomy," said Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

The minister made the announcement alongside Cleanfarms, a national non-profit industry stewardship organization. Cleanfarms will receive up to \$1.1 million through the Canadian Agricultural Strategic Priorities Program to develop a strategy to responsibly manage the estimated 60,000 tonnes of plastic waste generated on Canadian farms every year. Their project will increase farmer access to recycling programs and explore ways to deliver long-term, permanent programs that will help Canadian farmers continue to improve the sustainability of their operations.

"The Government of Canada is committed to sustainability and growing the bioeconomy. Today's announcement will not only create new recycling programs and opportunities, but it will improve sustainability and operations within farming. These new projects will help local farmers continue to be leaders in sustainable, climate-smart agriculture," said Yvan

Baker, Member of Parliament for Etobicoke Centre

### The other recipients are:

- EcoEnviro Labs Inc., which will receive up to \$1 million through Innovative Solutions Canada to advance testing of a new organic bioplastic mulch made from poultry feathers. This could serve as a lower-waste, fully biodegradable and compostable way to produce mulch needed in Canada's agriculture sector.
- Titan Clean Energy Projects Corp., which will receive up to \$1 million through Innovative Solutions Canada to test a food-grade quality bioplastic, ideal for fruit or prepared vegetable containers, that biodegrades more quickly and will result in less landfill and more sustainable options for grocery stores and shoppers.
- TerraVerdae Bioworks Inc., which will receive up to \$1 million through the Agricultural Clean Technology Program to develop a new generation of biodegradable

bioplastic film and injection molded products that target agriculture applications such as mulch film and seed trays. The project intends to displace conventional petroleum-based agricultural plastics.

- Red Leaf Pulp Ltd., which will receive up to \$495,000 through the Agricultural Clean Technology Program to support research and product trials for a straw pulp bio-polymer for use within the wood and pulp industry, and in the production of low carbon fuels and renewable natural gas. The project intends to displace plastic and Styrofoam packaging.

The announcement complements Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's broader commitment to Canada's bioeconomy. Together, these investments highlight the Government of Canada's commitment to sustainability while growing the bioeconomy and creating economic opportunities and jobs.

## NFU applauds Supreme Court GGPPA decision

### National News Grasslands News

The National Farmers Union (NFU) applauds the recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada to declare the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act (GGPPA) constitutionally valid. This decision confirms the federal government's jurisdiction to take strong national leadership action to curb greenhouse gas emissions and safeguard the future for all Canadians.

NFU President Katie Ward summed up the NFU's approach to the case: "The NFU became an intervenor in the Su-

preme Court case, not because our organization endorses the federal government's current greenhouse gas pricing measures, but because the NFU strongly supports the federal government's constitutional authority to create national policies to reduce emissions. This decision clears the way for strong federal leadership and enforcement powers coupled with ongoing federal, provincial, and territorial work rooted in the principles and traditions of co-operative federalism."

NFU members strongly

believe that the current climate emergency requires strong, swift Canadian government action. NFU member Glenn Wright stated: "The facts are clear; we must accelerate the transition to clean energy and efficiency in order to mitigate the severity of the Climate Crisis, safeguard our food supply, and protect biodiversity, and we must turn our attention to creating opportunities through collaboration across multiple jurisdictions."

The NFU and its coalition partners in Farmers for Climate Solutions

(FCS) have put forward a comprehensive list of government policies that can assist farmers in reducing agricultural emissions. "This decision clears the way for the federal government to expand efforts to support farmers in reducing emissions. Farmers want to lead in the struggle to safeguard the climate and food system and reduce emissions, but we need strong federal partnership. This decision paves the way for that federal action" said NFU Director of Climate Crisis Policy and Action, Darrin Qualman.

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# Sask. strikes partial AgriStability deal with feds

By Nick Pearce  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Saskatchewan has reached a partial deal with the federal government on the linchpin farm aid program AgriStability.

Federal Agriculture Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau announced Thursday that all the provinces have agreed to part of a plan to improve AgriStability, a business risk management program that protects Canadian producers from large declines in their farming income.

The parties struck the deal at a federal-provincial-territorial meeting last Thursday.

The deal makes it easier for farmers to trigger payments over lost income —

a change that will send about \$95 million more to producers nationally, a Thursday news release said. The deal with the provinces applies retroactively to the program's 2020 year, and will also extend the 2021 program deadline to enrol to June 30.

"Reliable business risk management programming is essential for the continued growth of the agriculture sector. Producers made it clear (the change) will help the AgriStability program function as intended and make the program more effective and equitable," said Saskatchewan Minister of Agriculture David Marit.

Lowering the trigger for payments covering lost income has been a long-standing point of contention for

Saskatchewan farm groups. Last year, they lined up to call for easier aid access for industries scrambled by COVID-19.

The provinces and the federal government share the costs for the program. However, a roughly \$170-million top-up proposed by Ottawa months ago has failed to secure the support of the Prairie provinces.

So far, Saskatchewan — along with Alberta and Manitoba — isn't committed to covering its share of the money. The offer is still on the table, Bibeau said.

A recent push from the Prairie provinces urged the federal government to cover its 60 per cent to boost the compensation rate, while leaving the provinces "flexibility" in their funding, a Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture statement said.

The overall changes to compensation will be a relief for farmers, particularly livestock producers, noted Thomas Linner, agriculture critic for the provincial Opposition NDP. However, he expressed concern that the agreement didn't also increase Saskatchewan's cost-sharing commitments.

"These changes have the federal government's support, but the Sask. Party government is blocking these changes from becoming a reality," he said.

In a news release on Thursday, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association welcomed the changes, but expressed disappointment that the parties couldn't strike a deal on compensation rates.

"(This) will go a long way in making AgriStability more predictable and equitable for our industry," the release said.

— With Calgary Herald files

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## Estevan looks to canola-based diesel for city's jobs transition

By Evan Radford  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Estevan Mayor Roy Ludwig hopes a proposed renewable diesel refinery in the area helps his city secure long-term jobs.

Two coal-fired units at SaskPower's boundary dam are to close down this year and in 2024. "We can't turn the clock back on that. Of course we're looking at how do we transition for jobs in our

area to keep the economic development moving forward?" he said.

To that end, Estevan is working with Covenant Energy CEO Josh Gustafson on his company's pitch for a large renewable diesel refinery in the area.

Thanks to a provincial funding pot of \$8 million over three years, the city and nearby communities have provided Covenant with \$200,000 to do a feasibility study for the refinery.

Gustafson projects the refinery would process 6,500 barrels of renewable diesel per day. He said renewable diesel is different from biodiesel.

Both use oil from crushed canola seeds, but renewable diesel refines the oil in a process resembling what's done with fossil-based crude. It means there's little oxygen left in renewable canola-based diesel, which allows it to be used in sub-zero temperatures.

The refining process uses hydrogen and a catalyst, Gustafson said.

By using canola oil as a starting point, there's "no ash or metals" left in a vehicle's engine when it burns the refined product, he said.

Based on Covenant's initial research, the company said in a media

release the facility will yield "greenhouse gas emission reductions in the range of 80 to 85 per cent when compared to fossil fuel diesel." It's also to use recycled hydrogen in the refining process.

The renewable diesel would be sold to fuel distributors like Husky or Shell or Co-op, who would blend it into their diesel products sold to consumers.

The projected start year is 2023, though Gustafson doesn't yet have a firm month or specific location nailed down. He hopes it will be in southeast Saskatchewan in the Estevan area.

Covenant suggests the facility's operation will create a maximum 60 permanent jobs.

Ludwig said Estevan's goal is to "create well-paying jobs in our community to make up for some of the potential job losses we see coming down the pike."

Gustafson is also predicting a boost to the province's agricultural sector, concluding based on his research the facility will create annual demand for 35 million bushels of canola seed.

Covenant Energy is based in Macoun, about 25 kilometres northwest of Estevan.

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# Researcher making strides in prairie agriculture

By Emily Jane Fulford  
Grasslands News

University of Manitoba (U of M) Ph.D. student, Callum Morrison, is only 25 years old but is making significant ground in the agricultural industry, specifically on the topic of cover crops in the Canadian Prairies. The research, which focuses on the use of cover crops by prairie farmers, is being done in conjunction with research focusing on the effects that cover crops have on yield, soil chemical, biological and physical properties.

"I grew up in Scotland with parents who were both in the agricultural industry," explains Morrison. "My father worked for a company which produced virus potato mini-tubers and horticultural plantlets via tissue culture and my mother was a research scientist researching pests of potatoes and fruit. My grandfather used to work on sugar cane and banana plantations in Trinidad and St Lucia. Over the summers I used to work at the Scottish Crop Research Institute."

Callum's family background is the reason for his growing interest in how farms can operate in a way that is more sustainable. Since cover crops have the potential to benefit the environment as well as the farmers, it is a topic that appeals to both the agricultural industry as well as environmentalists. With the use of the research and practice becoming more widespread in recent

years, studying cover crops in the prairies was a topic that came just at the right time for Morrison to incorporate into his studies at U of M.

"I did my undergraduate thesis at the University of Arkansas, USA during a summer exchange. While there I traveled to see my pen pal who lived in Minneapolis. We decided that we should go to Fargo together and then decided we should go to Manitoba and attended the Winkler Harvest Festival," explains Morrison. "We had such a great time and made some friends. One farmer invited me back a month later to see the harvest (due to the realities of Arkansas cropping systems I would not get to see a harvest during my summer there). I enjoyed seeing the Prairies and a year later came back to Manitoba to do a working holiday visa. I worked on a rotationally grazed beef operation and a canola breeding company. I then returned home to study a masters researching a bacterium which infects potato. I knew I wanted to return to the Prairies and wanted to do something that was innovative and had the potential to benefit farmers and the environment. I connected with Dr. Yvonne Lawley (my now professor) and I decided that working with her was what I wanted to do!"

So what is a cover crop and how does this help farmers in Saskatchewan? Callum Morrison put together an explanation to help people, especially those who are not involved in agri-

culture, understand what this process is all about.

"Cover crops are grown at times when a cash crop is not growing, such as in the fall after harvest. The aim of cover crops is to benefit the soil, the environment, and improve the subsequent crop. A common example would be planting a fall rye cover crop in late August or early September following the



harvest of a cereal grain crop. This has been one way that farmers get around our short Prairie growing season. These types of fall shoulder season cover crops will grow through the fall until freeze up. If the cover crop can overwinter, they will also grow next spring until they are terminated using herbicides or tillage before planting next year's crop," explains Morrison.

"Full season cover crops have also been used to tackle problem soils. A full-season cover crop may involve a farmer taking an entire field or targeted areas within a field out of annual cash crop production to improve the soil. Fruit growers may use full-season cover crops in between rows of fruit crops. Farmers with fields that were too wet for planting may plant a cover crop to dry out a field and improve the soil for planting the following year. Full season cover crops are popular with cattle farmers as they can be grazed at the end of the season. This not only provides extra feed for hungry cows but also adds manure to feed hungry soil microbes."

The survey is designed to directly benefit Prairie farmers. Even though cover crops are becoming increasingly popular over the last few years, there remains limited information on how local farmers are using cover crops, and often is the case that farming is a small world where communication can make all the difference. Without access to that information, it made it difficult for local farmers to learn from each other what worked and did not. As a result, there was a limited use of cover crops, simply because of the limit of information about them available locally.

"Many of those adopting cover crops have had to look at data coming from the United States. Although this is helpful, the United States has a dra-

matically different climate and thus this information is not the best for Prairie farmers who need to make their decisions," said Morrison. "The report that the survey will help create can be used as part of farmers' decision-making process by allowing them to see how cover crops are being adopted by farmers like them. The survey also gives respondents a voice to highlight areas for future research."

After the research team gets the feedback they compile the responses into an annual report. That report is then distributed free of charge to any individuals who may be able to put it to good use. Doing the survey ensures that contact information is available and that a copy is sent out via email. The team also posts the results to a website and sends the information out to a number of commodity groups and growers' associations in an effort to make sure that it gets in the hands of farmers.

"The report will include a summary of the overall findings but also subsections where the results are broken down into farm type (organic, livestock, tillage type etc.) but also, for the major cash crops grown in the prairies (oats, spring wheat, canola etc.," said Morrison. "This is to make the survey as specific and relevant as possible to Prairie farmers thinking about growing a cover crop or those interested in how Prairie farmers are using cover crops."



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# Farm Stress Line sees an increase in calls

By Spencer Kemp

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Many producers have turned to the Farm Stress Line to help deal with some of the stress and feelings of isolation brought on by the job.

Acting Executive Director of Saskatchewan Mobile Crisis Services which oversees the Farm Stress Line, Jan Thorson, says that in the last quarter of 2020 the agency has seen an increase in calls, followed by a seasonal decrease.

"I can certainly say for the last quarter with what we have statistically available to us, yes we did see an uptake over the summer and into the fall. We don't have our early winter statistics back yet, but I would suggest that there's been a slight drop-off just because of the time of year and the stresses of farming aren't as great in the winter in many cases. We suspect that will turn around again in the spring and we will see more calls to the line," Thorson said.

The Farm Stress Line provides a service to producers in Saskatchewan who feel the pressure of their job and provides an opportunity to normalize their concerns.

"The Farm Stress Line is a gateway service. It's a place to bring your immediate concerns, talk with a professionally trained counselor who can help you normalize some of the things you're going through, and help you decide if you need more help. We have a resource bank of referrals that we can make for people if they feel they need more help. I think the main thing we do is provide

normalization, assure people that this is a normal response to a very difficult situation across the globe. We encourage them to call us at any time as often as they need to if that will be helpful for them," said Thorson.

Concerns raised by producers were largely around the stress of being isolated during the pandemic. Thorson noted that the increase in isolation due to the pandemic has led to increased depression amongst the producers who have contacted them.

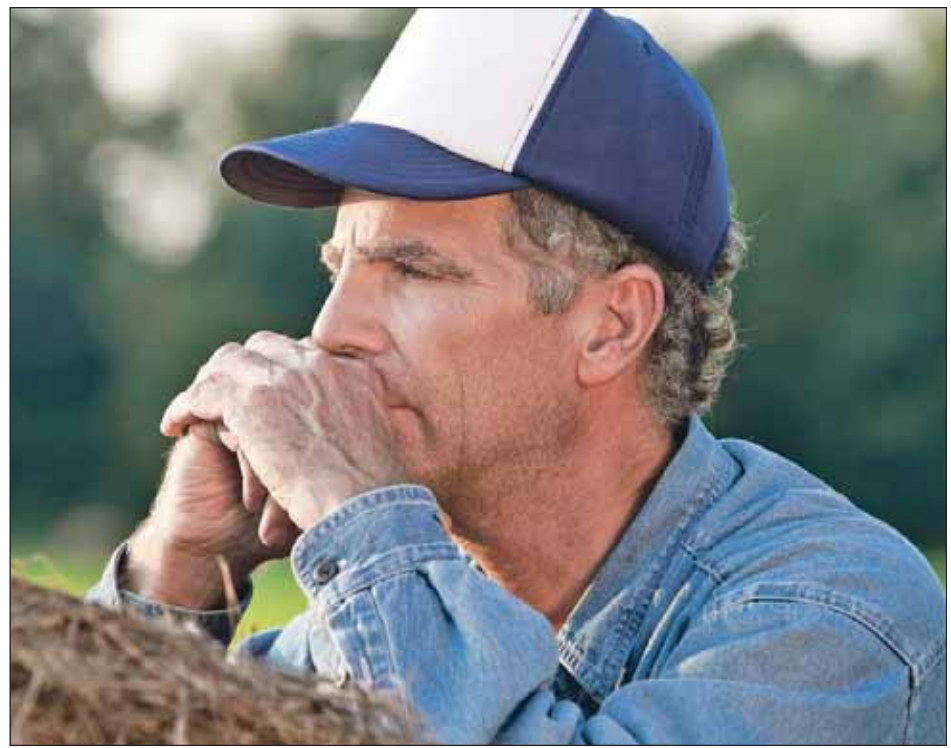
"The main issues brought up to us are around mental health concerns, concerns about depression, isolation, those kinds of things; family disputes and addictions too."

Thorson explained that they have been implementing a new system to help track COVID-19 related concerns from producers as they currently do not have a system in place.

This new system as it's implemented will provide Mobile Crisis Services with additional information and will better allow them to keep track of statistics.

"It's not something that we track specifically with our statistics, but we made some changes so we will be able to do that, but it won't be until down the road until we get that data back. But I think what's been hard for farmers has been the isolation that the current health orders have produced. And I'd say that across the board for all our clients, that's been very difficult for people, particularly people who live alone or do not have access to a friend or family group, don't have great wi-fi or internet access."

With the stress of COVID-19 at the



## Farm stress

The Farm Stress Line in Saskatchewan saw an increase in calls in the last quarter of 2020. Many of the concerns raised by farmers to the help line were largely around feeling isolated during the pandemic.

forefront of many producer's minds, Thorson reminds farmers of a few ways to deal with some of the stress.

"I would say, particularly during COVID, it's very important to maintain contact with your friends or family, whether that be through telephone calls or zoom meetings. I would really encourage them to reach out to someone they're close to at least once a day."

Thorson also reminds producers to participate in some self-care, which can help reduce stress.

"Go easy on yourself, everybody is suffering right now and it's okay to not be managing this as well as you may think you should be. Whatever you feel you need to do to make yourself feel better is fine unless it's destructive. Eat properly, get some rest, exercise, all

those things contribute to your overall well-being all the time and they're particularly important during a pandemic."

If a producer is feeling that they need additional help, Thorson says that they provide recommendation services to callers who feel they may need them. This service gets callers in contact with professionals who can better help them.

Thorson explained that they see seasonal increases and decreases in calls to the Farm Stress Line, but have been seeing more since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Farm Stress Line is available 24/7 and can be reached at 1-800-667-4442.

The Mobile Crisis Services also provides services for gambling addictions and a suicide hotline as well as a general crisis hotline for those who need it.

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# Saskatchewan ag exports hit a record high

Province produced \$16.9 billion in ag exports in 2020, a 31 per cent increase from 2019

By Rob Paul

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

2020 was a record year for agricultural exports in Saskatchewan, helping the province lead the nation in growth in overall export sales over the previous year.

Saskatchewan produced \$16.9 billion in agricultural exports last year, a 31 per cent increase from 2019 and a new high for the province. This represents more than 55 per cent of total provincial exports in 2020, which were valued at \$30.4 billion.

This helps bring the province closer to meeting its Growth Plan goals, which include growing agri-food exports to \$20 billion and increasing agriculture value-added revenue to \$10 billion by 2030. These strong export numbers also reinforce Saskatchewan's global reputation as a dependable source of safe, high-quality resources, goods and products.

Overall merchandise export sales in 2020 were more than \$30 billion, up 2.5 per cent over 2019, the highest percentage increase among the provinces. On a national basis, exports were down 12.2 per cent over the same period.

Leading agriculture exports in 2020 continue to be canola seed, non-durum wheat, lentils, canola oil and durum wheat.

"The global COVID-19 pandemic has hit all economies hard worldwide, but these export numbers are strong signs our province is in a positive position for economic recovery in 2021," Trade and Export Development Minister Jeremy Harrison said. "With our world-class and growing export base, we have what the world wants and needs, and it will continue to drive investment and jobs for communities right across Saskatchewan."

In 2020, major increases in exports were seen in farm and intermediate food products, forestry products and building and packaging materials, and industrial machinery, equipment, and parts. Saskatchewan's top international markets for 2020 include the United States, China, Japan, and India—top markets for Saskatchewan agri-food exports in 2020 were the United States, China, Japan, India and Mexico.

"Saskatchewan producers grow safe, high-quality food that the world needs and our agriculture exporters remain committed to providing the world with these products," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "I want to commend our producers on their hard work and resilience, which led to a new record in agri-food exports for 2020."

Increases in primary production as well as a growing value-added sector have contributed to the record agri-food export growth in Saskatchewan. In 2020, value-added exports were \$3.2 billion. Canola oil, canola meal and processed oats were Saskatchewan's top value-added products.

Currently, the Government of Saskatchewan is working to open three new trade offices in Singapore, Japan and India in 2021 to support increased export diversification. The new offices will complement the existing trade office in China, and continued access to Asian markets will benefit our key economic sectors.

Saskatchewan's 31 per cent increase in agricultural exports since 2019 has been in large part to increased demand which has led to increased prices of high quality products.

"In 2020, Saskatchewan had more product available to service international markets. In 2019 and 2020, Saskatchewan recorded its second and third largest crops ever, with both years producing over 38 million metric tonnes of crop," said a spokesperson for the Government of Saskatchewan.

"Many agriculture commodities experienced increased prices due to increased world demand and some production problems in other parts of the world (Australia and Europe) as a result of adverse weather conditions. Other factors include prices in canola, pulses, barley and other crops increasing, Canada's grain handling and transportation system performed well during the year, and all of Saskatchewan's main field crops saw exports increase in 2020, with cereal grains, oilseeds and pulses increasing 21, 42 and 78 per cent respectively."

As a result of the pandemic, the province saw increased demand in Saskatchewan produced agriculture products due to its strong reputations around the world.

"In 2020, Saskatchewan's reputation as a trusted, safe and stable supplier of high quality agriculture commodities and value-added products was strengthened," said the spokesperson. "There was an increased level of demand/dependence on Saskatchewan agriculture commodities as essential food staples in local diets around the world, including pulses and canola seed. The Saskatchewan government remains committed to supporting open and stable global supply chains by ensuring agri-food products can move efficiently, without disruption, through our transportation system."

With COVID-19 having a negative impact both in Canada and globally on economies, Saskatchewan's agriculture sector has been as important as ever in helping support the country as its backbone both through

creating jobs and bringing in money.

"Saskatchewan is an export-dependent province and agri-food production continues to be an important part of the province's economy, which is driven by fuel, fertilizer and food," the spokesperson said. "Saskatchewan's top exports are: fertilizer (\$6.1 billion), cereal grains (\$5.5 billion), mineral oil (\$5.3 billion), oilseeds (\$4.6 billion), pulses and vegetables (\$3.5 billion), and animal/vegetable oils (\$1.8 billion). The agri-food sector is a cornerstone of the Saskatchewan and Canadian economy, with agriculture and related activities accounting for approximately 10 per cent of Saskatchewan's GDP and 35,000 jobs. In 2020, the value of Saskatchewan's top 10 exports increased by 3 per cent from \$24.2 billion in 2019 to \$24.9 billion in 2020. The top ten exports accounts for 82 per cent of the total Saskatchewan exports and agriculture exports accounts for 56 per cent of the top 10 exports in 2020, an increased from 43 per cent in 2019 and accounts for more than 40 per cent of overall merchandise exports in 2020."

The success of Saskatchewan's record agricultural exports is expected to continue in 2021—though nothing is guaranteed in the sector because of a number of factors, the Government of Saskatchewan is optimistic they will hit their Growth Plan goals for 2030.

"Agriculture production is weather dependent and can therefore be difficult to predict, however, over the medium term, we expect agri-food exports to reach new record levels. In 2020, the Government of Saskatchewan released its new growth plan," said the spokesperson. "Two notable targets for 2030 include increasing agri-food exports to \$20 billion and crop production to 45 million metric tonnes. In 2020, Saskatchewan had additional product to service international markets and we expect that capacity to increase in the years ahead. In 2019 and 2020, Saskatchewan recorded its second and third largest crops ever, with both years producing over 38 million metric tonnes of crop. Global demand for food, due to a growing population and rising incomes, is creating additional export opportunities.

"There are many factors that influence exports from year to year, for example crop prices. The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to work on and nurture trade relationships in priority markets, as well as seek growth opportunities in the agri-food industry."

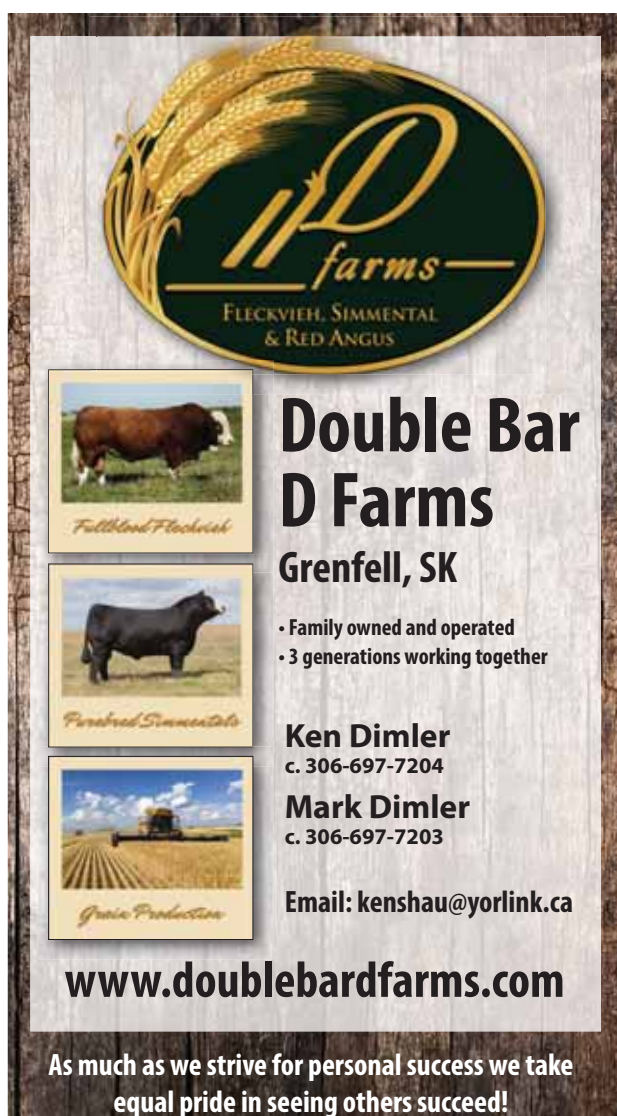
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# Bill may lead to exemption for grain drying: APAS

By Rob Paul  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A Saskatchewan farm group is optimistic that a private member's bill will lead to an exemption from the carbon tax for grain drying and heating on farms, which are dependent on natural gas.

Bill C-206 has passed its second reading and will be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food before returning to the House of Commons for its third reading. If the bill passes through the House it will allow for carbon tax grain drying exemptions.

The bill was introduced by Northumberland—Peterborough South MP Philip Lawrence and seconded by Provencher MP Ted Falk. It received support from all Conservative, NDP, Bloc Quebecois, and Green Members of Parliament.

The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) has supported the passage of Bill-C-206, which would exempt on-farm natural gas and propane use for grain drying and heating from the carbon tax. APAS has been pushing for carbon tax exemptions since the tax was introduced by the federal government.

"Our members have been very concerned about the impact of the federal carbon pricing system on unavoidable energy inputs like fuel to dry grain or heat livestock facilities," said APAS President Todd Lewis. "We have been calling for the federal government to recognize these impacts and provide relief through exemptions, or rebates at the very least. We would like to thank the members of the House of Commons that heard the concerns of producers."

Cost estimates developed by APAS in 2019 and updated in 2021 showed a \$1.04 per acre production cost increase for wheat, rising to \$4.44 per acre by 2030.

The APAS estimates were calculated using key indirect costs that are not exempt from carbon taxation,

such as rail and road transportation, electricity, and grain drying. These costs would be even higher in years like 2019, when most of the grain and oilseed crop required grain drying due to a wet harvest.

"We have argued for years that producers cannot pass these additional costs along to our customers, and that they further reduce our financial viability," Lewis said. "This additional cost of carbon taxation does not help to solve the problem of carbon emissions."

In December 2020, the federal government announced that the carbon tax will increase to \$170 per tonne by 2030. In January, APAS released updated estimates of the impacts the carbon tax will have on agriculture.

"Our updated numbers show that the cost of producing wheat could go up to over \$12.50 per acre in 2030 due to the carbon tax," said Lewis. "This cost increase is carried entirely by farmers and can't be passed along to our customers. We're looking at a reduction of net farm income by hundreds of millions of dollars in Saskatchewan alone, and the modest rebates provided by the federal government won't make up for these losses. It's unsustainable for our members."

"The carbon tax is designed to provide incentives to reduce energy consumption, but these dramatic cost increases will decrease our ability to adopt the new technologies that help us do just that. In some cases, producers will pay for efficiency gains like high-capacity grain hopper cars through their freight rates, and yet those cost savings will go to the railways. Our members expect us to stay on this issue until our concerns are heard."

Lewis isn't only worried about the economic impact of a carbon tax, but APAS has concerns that it will actually cause a negative environmental impact as well.

"When you add costs to a producer's bottom line it creates incentives for them to convert grasslands and other natural carbon sinks into cropland just to remain viable," he said. "That works directly against the goals of the policy. Agricultural producers have waited decades to see some recognition of our environmental stewardship, and we have seen a lot of lip service, but not much concrete action."

With the bill passing through its second reading in the House, Lewis sees it not only as a big step for the agriculture community, but a big step in members of parliament gaining a better understanding of grain drying and how impactful the carbon tax will be on it.

"The C-206 passing (second reading) is good news, especially with the people voting in favour of it being all the opposition parties and even one member of the Liberal caucus did as well," he said. "I think having support from all parties is pretty significant—even the Green Party is on our side with it."

"Obviously we've gained some traction and understanding around how important grain drying is and there really are no alternatives to using propane and natural gas to dry grain. I think that was a real positive and after the bill passed the government has said they're going to look at grain drying so there's been some move-

ment there as well whether it be with a rebate program or an exemption or whatever they're going to come up with. It's very positive on both sides and we've seen all political parties in Ottawa recognize that it's an issue."

Since the introduction of the carbon tax, Lewis and APAS have made lobbying for exemptions a priority and now they're beginning to see the hard work come to fruition.

"We've had a long sustained lobby on this and I know we'll continue to push it every chance we (get to) talk to decision makers," he said. "It goes to show with the passing of C-206—especially in a minority parliament—how important this is to be in touch with all parties down in Ottawa. You never know where support might be needed and it's always good to talk to opposition and government members and that's something we've really strived to do over the years. We want to approach everyone in Ottawa to tell them what we're lobbying on and what our concerns are and certainly in a minority parliament it's paid some dividends."

Seeing their efforts pay off has been huge for APAS says Lewis, and it only furthers their drive to continue to ensure there's a stronger understanding of agriculture and the negative impact a carbon tax can have on Canada's producers.

"Farmers support the ag groups and certainly our membership has given lots of feedback about Bill C-206 and also another bill about farm transport," he said. "Those are both good examples of long-term lobbying efforts that we've been doing for a number of years."

"Sometimes it seems like you're out there just spinning your wheels, but we're finally getting some traction—especially on the carbon pricing model. It's so important to get these exemptions right to start with and we look forward to continuing to tell agriculture's story when it comes to things like carbon sequestration and carbon sinks on both pasture land and crop land in Saskatchewan. We're world leaders and hopefully we'll see some traction on that—same thing with clean fuel standards. The carbon file is getting to be more and more relevant and of course agriculture is really part of the solution."

The environmental changes in modern agriculture over the last few decades have been vast and Lewis thinks there's starting to become a better grasp by decision makers of just how important these changes have been.

"I think there is a general understanding now," he said. "We saw last week, members of parliament from coast-to-coast—it's safe to say that two to three years ago they didn't even know the grain was dried—voting on this. There's more and more understanding around modern agriculture and what we have done for the environment and there's lot of opportunities for recognition of what we do. We're always trying to make improvements. Nobody is saying that agriculture can't improve its carbon management, but at the same time, we've been doing it for years and we will continue to with or without carbon pricing."

## A salute to Agriculture Producers

I would like to express my appreciation to our agriculture community for the enormous contribution you make to our province's economy.



**Steven Bonk,**  
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# Farmland value increases during pandemic

Canada's farmland market remained strong and stable during a year marked by economic turbulence caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the latest Farm Credit Canada (FCC) Farmland Values Report.

The average value of Canadian farmland increased by 5.4 per cent in 2020, slightly more than the 5.2 per cent increase reported in 2019.

In Saskatchewan, average farmland values increased by 5.4 per cent in 2020, following gains of 6.2 per cent in 2019 and 7.4 per cent in 2018.

The report, which de-

scribes changes in Canada's farmland values from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2020, covers almost an entire year of disruptions caused by the pandemic. For Canadian agriculture, disruptions included temporary food processing plant closures, some displaced exports, sector-specific labour shortages and significantly altered consumer buying habits.

"Since land is the most valuable asset on any farm operation, the agriculture land market is a good barometer for measuring the strength of Canadian agriculture," said J.P. Gervais, FCC's

chief economist. "Despite having gone through a uniquely volatile year, farm income generally improved and the overall demand for farmland remained strong throughout 2020."

Despite important supply chain disruptions caused by the pandemic, commodity prices climbed in the last half of 2020 for many crops and interest rates kept close to historic lows. Domestic demand for food remained strong and global supply chains continued to have an appetite for Canadian food and commodity exports, Gervais noted.

"Producer investments in farmland are a reflection of their confidence and optimism," he said. "Agriculture presents opportunities as producers seek to expand, diversify or transfer their operations to the next generation."

The highest average provincial increase for farmland in 2020 was in British Columbia and Quebec, with averages of eight and 7.3 per cent, respectively. Alberta followed with a six-per-cent increase and Saskatchewan mirrored the national average increase of 5.4 per cent.

Ontario and Manitoba both reported increases that were lower than the national average at 4.7 and 3.6 per cent, respectively.

Farmland values across the prairies were mainly influenced by tenants purchasing land from landlords, neighbour-to-neighbour sales, producers buying or selling land to gain operational efficiencies and family farm purchases to support succession plans.

Atlantic provinces saw the smallest average farmland value increases in 2020. Prince Edward Island reported an increase

of 2.3 per cent, Nova Scotia's increase was 1.6 per cent and New Brunswick had a 1.3-per-cent increase. This follows more significant increases in 2019.

Weather played a significant factor in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, as well as other parts of the Atlantic provinces in 2020. The region experienced the worst drought in decades during the critical growing season, which significantly diminished the value of cash crops, as well as created hay and forage shortages.

There was an insufficient number of publicly reported sales in Newfoundland and Labrador to fully assess farmland values in that province.

Increases in farmland values reported across the country are as wide and varied as the factors that may have influenced them. Average farmland values have increased every year since 1993; however, increases were more pronounced from 2011 to 2015 in many different regions. Since then, Canada has seen more moderate single-digit increases in average farmland values.

Gervais said producers should have and main-

tain a risk management plan that takes into account possible economic changes, ensuring their budgets have room to flex if commodity prices, yields or interest rates shift. They also need to exercise caution, especially in regions where the growth rate of farmland values exceeded that of farm income in recent years.

"The pandemic has underscored the value of having a comprehensive risk management plan that covers all risks areas: production, marketing, financial, legal and human resources," he said. "Farm operators need to have the financial ability to protect their operations from the potential impact of risks that may not be on their radar. Fluctuations in commodity prices and interest rates and/or unforeseen variations in production can diminish the ability to safeguard and build equity in the operation and successfully meet cash flow requirements."

Given the uncertain economic environment, Gervais recommends farmers, ranchers and food processors continue to thoroughly evaluate their investments.

## Feds to sow a farm-based climate research hub in Sask.

By Nick Pearce

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The federal government wants to plant the seed of an open air climate change laboratory on Saskatchewan farmland.

Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Marie-Claude Bibeau wants the lab to act as a hub, bringing farmers and scientists together to find best practices for a sector facing the brunt of climate change.

"The aim of this program is for every province in Canada to have at least one hub of collaboration," she said on Thursday.

"Each hub will centre on real farms where farmers and researchers can co-develop and widely share their best practices."

The federal government has earmarked \$185 million over the next 10 years to kick-start the project. The first phase launches April 1 and aims to create proposals for the hubs, known as "living labs," by offering grants of up to \$100,000.

The second phase is slated to begin in the fall; up to \$10 million is to be spent per project.

Indigenous organizations and non-profit groups may also be considered for funding, a news release added.

The money is an expansion of the federal government's living labs program, which is currently active in Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island.

Some of the practices up for study

include cover crops, intercropping, conversion of marginal land to permanent cover, shelterbelts, nutrient management, and inclusion of pulse crops in rotations, a Thursday news release said.

Federal funding for farm research is positive, but "the devil is always in the details," said Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) President Todd Lewis.

If the projects are successful, it could reveal valuable information about farming in Saskatchewan, he said.

Saskatchewan producers are open to research opportunities and benefit from close ties with the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, he said. First Nations in Saskatchewan with large agricultural footprints may also be strong candidates, Lewis added.

Farm groups encouraging their members to participate could help uptake, but that also goes for individual producers looking to improve their best practices.

Lewis pointed to shelterbelts as an example of a strong possible research project. Many of the lines of trees and shrubs forming barriers on farmland have been removed in Saskatchewan, making them prime targets for study.

Ongoing issues with pollinators may also mean they're well suited to be re-established, potentially as a collaboration between researchers, canola growers and APAS members, Lewis said.

"Hopefully, the money's accessible and we're able to get some good projects up and running."

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# Ag investments are up since elimination of Wheat Board

The Western Canadian Wheat Growers is highlighting the significant increase in agriculture investment that has taken place with the elimination of the single-desk system, also known as the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB). Until August 1, 2012, Western Canadian grain farmers were forced to use the CWB to sell their wheat and barley. Since that date, when modernization took place, all Canadian grain farmers have been able to choose who to sell their grain to, based on price, quality, delivery dates, contractual terms and location.

"The government-mandated Canadian Wheat Board held western Canadian grain farmers hostage. Our free-market system has allowed farmers to choose what is best for their farm. As markets open up around the world, as a fellow farmer, I encourage all farmers to adopt a free-market system. The freedom to market helps increase a farmer's control over their on-farm decision making with regard to crops, rotation, inputs and varieties," said Daryl Fransoo, Chair.

Since 2013, there has been over \$3.0 billion in grain infrastructure improvements, including new inland terminals, elevators, grain buying companies, and port expansion. In addition, rail companies have poured billions into loop tracks, modern hopper cars and supporting infrastructure. This level of investment would not have taken place without a full free-market system for our grain and oilseed markets and all grain farmers have benefited. Individuals have had the freedom of diversifying their crops to meet global demands and better meet their crop rotation needs.

"The Western Canadian Wheat Growers worked for many years to achieve a fully free-market system for the sale of our wheat, barley, oats, and other grains. Farmers, private companies, consumers, and governments have all benefited," said Jim Wickett, Secretary-Treasurer.

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# U of S receives \$6.76 million to revive bison population

By Greg Basky

for USask Research Profile and Impact

The University of Saskatchewan (USask) has been awarded \$6.76 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) to help conserve bison and other threatened animal species and address challenges facing the beef cattle industry, including antimicrobial resistance which poses a global threat to animals and humans.

“Working with our partners in the livestock industry, Indigenous groups and other leading academic institutions, we will place Canada on the global stage of animal conservation and production,” said USask Vice-President Research Dr. Baljit Singh.

“This expert multidisciplinary team will apply genomics and other new technologies to the beef sector to enhance production, livestock health, and food safety, as well as reduce greenhouse gases for a more sustainable future.”

The wide-ranging research program, made possible through the CFI Innovation Fund, includes working with Indigenous communities to develop the world’s first bison genome biobank at the university’s Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence (LFCE).

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced more than \$518 million to support the infrastructure needs of universities and research institutions across the country.

“After the near extinction of bison 100 years ago, Canada has led the way in bison conservation, but due to small ge-

netically isolated herds and disease, bison remain at less than two per cent of their historic population. Without conservation efforts, bison as a distinct species would cease to exist,” said team leader Gregg Adams, a specialist in reproductive biology at USask’s Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVN).

Genome biobanks are used to store and redistribute genetic material to preserve genetic diversity. Adams and other researchers will use genomic tools to identify and restore the natural genetic composition and genetic diversity of Canada’s plains bison and wood bison populations, ensuring the species will survive for generations to come. The work has the support of the Assembly of First Nations and other Indigenous groups.

“A genome biobank provides one of the best opportunities to revitalize the bison species and will serve as an excellent model that can be applied to other threatened Canadian species, such as caribou,” Adams said, noting that more than 30,000 animal species are at risk of extinction worldwide.

New knowledge, technical expertise and genetic material will be shared with zoos around the world, including with the Toronto Zoo, a long-standing research partner with its own viable herd of wood bison.

Bringing together experts in areas as diverse as reproductive technology, beef cattle health and disease, genomics, microbiomics, and bioinformatics, the research program—“Integrated omics for sustainable animal agriculture and

environmental stewardship” or “IntegrOmics” for short—will include a fibre optics network linking on-campus labs with the LFCE to enable rapid transfer of large volumes of data.

A key benefit to beef producers will be development of new genomic tools to enable trait selection, enhance genetic diversity, and diagnosis of disease-causing microbes in herds.

“Our aim is to make it easier for cattle producers to identify and breed animals with desirable traits such as better meat quality, stronger immunity against disease, improved production efficiency (associated with reduced greenhouse gas emissions), and better adaptation to their environment,” said University of Alberta researcher and team member Graham Plastow, an internationally recognized expert in the use of genomic tools for selecting desirable traits in cattle and pigs.

“This work will lead to innovations that benefit a host of individuals and organizations, including livestock producers, veterinarians, and policy makers.”

To stay globally competitive, Canada’s cattle industry—which accounts for \$18 billion of the country’s annual gross domestic product—must reduce its environmental impact and battle antimicrobial resistance, said Adams.

“The cattle industry is under a lot of pressure to be more sustainable and eco-friendly, and we hope to be part of the solution,” he said.

The IntegrOmics program will make possible real-time diagnosis of disease and appropriate use

of antibiotics in both beef cattle and bison herds, thus reducing antimicrobial resistance. Adams and his team will develop better tools to test wildlife and domestic animals to identify and prevent spread of diseases, including those that can spread to humans.

With the new funding, a cow-calf and bull handling facility will be built at the LFCE’s Goodale Research Farm and will house the new genome biobank. The animal handling facilities at the LFCE’s Native Hoofstock Centre will be renovated and expanded to enable safer and more efficient collection, cryopreservation and transfer of genetic material among bison herds.

New equipment for high-performance computing and data handling, as well as for genetic sequencing, will be installed at an on-campus genomics lab for use by the WCVN and the university’s College of Agriculture and Bioresources (AgBio).

Some of the CFI funding will also be used to purchase and outfit a mobile lab for conducting time-sensitive testing of animals away from the USask campus, such as bison herds or potential disease outbreaks on farms.

Other USask researchers include WCVN scientists Cheryl Waldner, Janet Hill, Dinesh Dada-



rwal, and Jaswant Singh, as well as Matthew Links in AgBio. Other team members include Toronto Zoo reproductive biologist Gabriela Mastromonaco, University of Calgary evolutionary ecologist Jocelyn Poissant, and veterinarian and cryobiologist Muhammad Anzar of the Animal Genetics Resources of Canada program at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Building on an existing collaboration with Saskatchewan Polytechnic (Sask Polytech), research and technical training related to secure transfer and management of big data will be carried out, working with Terry Peckham, director of Sask Polytech’s Digital Integration Centre of Excellence Technology Access Centre

(DICE-TAC).

Adams said the program will also help train the next generation of wildlife veterinarians, biologists, and scientists with skills to incorporate new strategies in their species management plans.

With the CFI contributing 40 per cent of total program funds, the team will seek an additional \$10.1 million from other public and private sources.

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Column

# Life down on the farm continues even under COVID

By Donna Beutler  
Grasslands News

“Mmmmm good,” said the young fellow from the 4-H ‘podium’ as he rubbed his tummy and spoke about the very best day of the year on the farm.

It’s March, 2021, one year since COVID became a household name. It’s unarguably changed the way we do things, 4-H speeches included. This year, Whitewood 4-H beef club members were videoed by a family member in their own home — and judges (like me) — were delighted to be able to hear these speeches as they shared a bit about their life, be it life on the farm, their future aspirations, a warm vacation memory or whatever they chose to speak about.

Which brings me back to the ‘mmmm good’ speech. It was obvious the eight-year-old at the imaginary mic was enthralled with everything about farming, except perhaps the low water pressure when the cows are drinking from the watering bowl. But the day that was the highlight in his mind was castrating day! The menu? Prairie oysters of course. No one can make that procedure and outcome sound so delightful as this young speechwriter did, I assure you!

And so it was, as these promising young 4-Her’s shared everything from how ‘dad’s choice of a 4-H calf for a first-year 4-Her was less than stellar’ to an aspiring auctioneer’s desire to use his obvious talents for an ag-related career, that the judges watching them were left impressed. So impressed in fact that it was a rude realization that they had to grade these speeches. No matter what these kids do in the future, delivering speeches can only be an added bonus to what real life will be for them somewhere down the road.

With a year of COVID under our belt, I am guessing no one could have predicted that we would be in some sort of lockdown for the better part of a year with continuing uncertainty about future waves despite the vaccine making its way into our lives, or rather, our arms.

March 12, 2020 is forever etched in my mind. Yes, it was the day the first COVID case was announced in Saskatchewan but it was the day I travelled to Regina to have my staples removed following my hip replacement two weeks earlier. As the nurse prepared to remove the first staple, she looked up at another nurse close by and said, “I’ve never done this before.” So, if you can be calm, cool and collected when you go under the knife, why was it that comment made me a tad nervous? As it was, the nurse did a really good job (once she was shown) but I have always wondered if questions like that should perhaps be asked out of the hearing of the patient lol!

One thing that hasn’t changed for me during all this has been caregiving for my grandchildren when needed. Especially noon on Tuesdays. That’s crepe day with whipped cream and strawberries for the grandkids who come over from school to join us for lunch. Yesterday (being Monday), our trek to the grocery store netted us zero fresh strawberries so when one of the twins phoned last night to confirm Tuesday’s lunch plans, I had to break it to him — no fresh (and they must be fresh) strawberries.

Of course, I had some choices to suggest to the kids. Spaghetti. Hot Dogs. French toast. But the response was negative to each suggestion. “I think beaver tails,” said the young man on the other end of the phone. “Can you

make beaver tails?” Prairie folks may know them as elephant ears but to someone raised in the east (moi), beaver tails it is. And so it will be — deep-fried hunks of flattened dough, sugared up to perfection will be served promptly at 12:09 today. Sorry about the smoke lingering in the air kids; I may have heated the oil a tad too much.

One of the highlights of our month (February) was a weekend in Regina where we were caring for our two youngest grandchildren (six and four). These two youngsters were so excited to spend a night and go swimming at the hotel with us. And we were just as excited as they! Since it was my husband’s birthday, I gave him a big hug and kiss the next morning and then off I went to do my hair. When I came back into the room, my husband was killing himself laughing at our grandson’s question (in reference to my kiss) to him, “Did you like that, Grandpa?”

With that, I took my grandson and gave him a big hug and kiss. I thought his happy grin was a good sign until he marched off to the bathroom and came back wiping his face with a dry face cloth. What!?! He had wiped my kisses off, the little rotter!

I was pretty excited to have a ‘beyond-the-front-door’ visit with my “farm” grandchildren the other day, actually sitting at their counter and chatting with them, bull sale catalogues spread out across the counter. I flipped through them, absent-mindedly as I chatted until one of the twins stopped me midway through one of the catalogues. “Didn’t you notice that one?” he said pointing to one in particular (as if they don’t all look the same to me). “Yeah,” I said, “cool name for a bull.” The boys looked at each other with a slight roll of their eyes. “The bull,” they said, “look at the bull, not the name!” Well, alrighty then, I guess it is a mighty-fine looking bull.

I continued with my chat, “How’s calving going?

Done?” “Nope, 62 have calved, two more to go,” the twins tell me. “Any losses?” I continued. “Nope, 100%,” they say. And I don’t doubt they are anything but exact.

From there we ventured out to play a little street hockey. Okay, so on a gravel laneway, you get a few stones with your “puck,” as you shoot the little orange ball toward the net. And then, just like that the ball is gone, snatched up by the very nimble, ball-loving, ball-thievin’ border collie. That is a futile exercise, trying to play hockey with that dog. She doesn’t understand English either when you tell her to drop it. Her ears do however perk up to the word ‘chicken’ — I am not sure if that’s a good thing or a bad thing but I am sure I’ll figure it out when I get my RV settled on the grassy knoll next to the shop a couple of weeks down the road.

I am getting pretty excited for a change of scenery, as in, “green.” You know, green leaves, green grass, green zero-turn mower with which to cut that grass — all things green. I am ready and I am going to enjoy every outdoor moment I can. Once the camper leaves machinery row for its spot with the view of the chicken house, the fire pit will be set in place for those cool spring evenings while the kids and I await the return of the men from the field. And I, the one who hates cooking, will have adapted to that nasty chore as I set up my ‘pallet’ deck and barbeque outside the RV. Ah yes, spring is in the air and despite this COVID fatigue I am sure we all have, we will carry on stronger than before, soaking up some sun, swearing at that darn wind, watching for the first sign of budding trees, calves bouncing around in the pasture and tiny wheat shoots sprouting up through the earth.

Ahh yes, spring is just around the corner — bring it on! I plan to welcome it (and the vaccine) with open arms!

**Don McMorris**  
MLA for Indian Head-Milestone  
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*Best wishes for a safe, productive and prosperous growing season!*

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## 4-H Council hosts first virtual speaking contest

The District 13 4-H Council hosted the first ever virtual SE 4-H Regional Public Speaking Competition on March 27.

The event went extremely well with no technical issues which was their main concern. The 4-H speakers were amazing as usual with some very inventive speeches. The Cloverbuds and Juniors were held in the morning and Intermediates and Seniors in the afternoon.

Congratulations to 1st place Claire Galli (Melville Town ‘N’ Country 4-H Club-Dst 13) CB, 2nd place Maura Stellak (McQuibe Multiple 4-H Club-Dst 14) CB, 3rd place Jessa Martens (Serath Multiple 4-H Club-Dst 37) CB. 1st place Mara Ward (Elcapo Light Horse 4-H Club-Dst 39) JR, 2nd place Brock Dorrance (Wawota 4-H Beef Club-Dst 5) JR, 3rd place Darian Beattie (Melville Town ‘N’ Country 4-H Club-Dst 13) JR. 1st place Isabelle Erickson (Elcapo Light Horse 4-H Club-Dst 39) INT, 2nd place Grace Woytas (Springside 4-H Beef Club-Dst 12) INT, 3rd place Kaleigh McLaughlin (Riders & Wranglers 4-H Club-Dst 5) INT. 1st place Kate Axten (Radville 4-H Field Crops Club-Dst 7) SR, 2nd place Emma Bonk (Candiac 4-H Beef Club-Dst 5) SR, 3rd place Lindsay Daniels (Milestone 4-H Variety Club-Dst 14) SR.

Best of luck to the 1st and 2nd place winners as they proceed onto the Provincial Competition being held in May.

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# Group advocating for carbon offset for farmers

Saskatchewan farm organizations, the Soil Conservation Council of Canada and the Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association (SSCA) are encouraging farmers to participate in a review of the Government of Canada's proposed Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Offset Credit System regulations. The proposed regulations are open for a 60-day comment period from now until May 5, 2021.

A coalition of Saskatchewan farm group representatives are united in

ensuring that Saskatchewan farmers are recognized and compensated for carbon sequestered from conservation practices, including zero-till and continuous cropping. The groups represented include Sask Wheat, SaskCanola, SaskPulse, SaskBarley, SaskFlax, SaskOats, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Agriculture Producers Association of Saskatchewan, the Soil Conservation Council of Canada and the SSCA.

"The carbon seques-

tered each year by Saskatchewan farmers is a critical asset to help both the federal and provincial governments meet their climate change goals. That value should be recognized and returned to the farmgate," said Jocelyn Velestuk, a Sask Wheat and SSCA director, and member of the SSCA's Carbon Advisory Committee.

At this critical juncture, the SSCA's Carbon Advisory Committee is committed to working with the federal and provincial governments to develop a science-based offset protocol for the sequestration of carbon in agricultural soils. As Support Group Members of the Carbon Advisory Committee, Saskatche-

wan farm organizations support the Committee's efforts.

"Each year, through no-till practices, Saskatchewan farmers sequester about 9-million new tonnes of carbon dioxide. We are committed to achieving a regulatory environment that recognizes this significant positive impact," added Velestuk, citing the Government of Saskatchewan's Prairie Resilience Paper.

While details on what farming and ranching practices will be eligible to earn offset credits through the federal protocols are still being developed, the draft regulations indicate that land-management practices will have to go above

and beyond "business as usual."

"Even though the federal government has recognized the annual contribution of new and incremental sequestration in agricultural soils, the federal proposal could disqualify the majority of Saskatchewan crop producers from participating in an offset trading system," explained John Bennett, Chair of the SSCA Carbon Advisory Committee.

The SSCA Carbon Advisory Committee and Support Group Members will continue to advocate for separate regulations for agricultural carbon sink protocols that would not be subject to non-scientific factors such as "business as usual." Any

offset program must also include farmer ownership of soil carbon credits, a registry that allows farmers to "bank" their credits, an effective price discovery mechanism, and full transparency of basis costs.

To get involved in the federal consultations visit: [www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/pricing-pollution-how-it-will-work/output-based-pricing-system/federal-greenhouse-gas-offset-system.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/pricing-pollution-how-it-will-work/output-based-pricing-system/federal-greenhouse-gas-offset-system.html)

For more information on the positioning of the SSCA Carbon Advisory Committee and Support Group Members see: [www.scca.ca/carbon-initiative](http://www.scca.ca/carbon-initiative).

## Ducks launches a new farmer-focused website

Farmers looking for practical solutions to make their operations more sustainable have a new resource to turn to with Ducks Unlimited Canada's (DUC) – [ag.ducks.ca](http://ag.ducks.ca) – a new website that builds on DUC's long-time relationship with the agricultural industry.

The new website is easy to navigate and provides users with information about DUC's conservation programs that offer financial incentives. It also features several success stories that demonstrate how farmers and ranchers on the Prairies promote environmental and economic sustainability through conservation.

To recognize the power of partnerships, the website features several agriculture industry leaders which DUC is engaged with on its Partners page. When it comes to national, sustainability discussions, DUC is often the only conservation group asked to speak to issues relating to conservation and Canadian agriculture. From crops to cows, DUC is proud to be involved in several important industry initiatives.

In support of the Canadian beef industry, the new ag website is also home to Beef Belongs – a page dedicated to explaining how beef production benefits the environment.

As more research demonstrates the connectivity between agriculture and the environment, DUC is pleased to play a role in helping the agriculture industry find economically and environmentally sound solutions that are based on science.

Explore the new website at [ag.ducks.ca](http://ag.ducks.ca) or contact your local DUC office to learn about eligible programs near you.

## Hands-on training for Saskatchewan's farms

Introduction to Farm Hand is a three-day course that provides the basic training and hands-on skills needed to work on a grain farm this spring.



The course includes:

- basic farm safety
- overview of field crops
- introduction to selected pieces of farm equipment
- safe work practices for moving equipment
- Power Mobile Equipment theory

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