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Giving back gala

EXPRESS PHOTO BY CORRINE EINARSSON

Gala organizers pose with the guests of honour's personalized cakes during the Riverton-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission's volunteer recognition gala at the Arborg Community Centre on Saturday, March 22. Seven volunteers, including youth recipient Emmalyze Barkman, were celebrated for their service to the community at the sold-out event, which also raised funds for local accessibility projects.

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Gimli gallery to showcase late Manitoba artist Kenneth F. Martin's work

By Annaliese Meier

A Gimli gallery is preparing to unveil a rare and extensive collection of original works by one of Manitoba's most prolific landscape painters.

Sigvaldason Fine Art will open an exhibition and sale featuring over 250 pieces by the late Kenneth F. Martin (1914–2010), beginning Friday, April 11 at 6 p.m. The gallery, located at 70 Centre St., will host the exhibition through April 26.

Martin, whose career spanned decades, was known for his meticulous oil, acrylic and watercolour depictions of the Manitoba and Ontario wilderness — including scenes from the Whiteshell, rural communities and the ever-changing shores of Lake Winnipeg. Many of the works on display originate from the estate of the artist.

"There are over 250 original works on sale, some framed, some unframed, with prices starting as low as \$50," said Nolan Sigvaldason, president of

Sigvaldason Fine Art. "There are oils, acrylics, watercolours and even artist sketchbooks showing how Ken studied and analyzed each piece."

Martin built a cottage in Ponemah in the 1950s, where he spent summers with his wife Fran and painted extensively. His work is held in both public and private collections across Canada, the United States and Europe.

Before turning to painting full-time, Martin apprenticed at Brigden's of Winnipeg in 1938 and rose to become its art director following his service as an aerial photographer with the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War.

He was deeply influenced by Lemoine Fitzgerald and the Group of Seven, often studying their work closely. A longtime member and past president of the Manitoba Society of Artists, Martin also shared his knowledge through workshops and sketching trips with artists such as Leo Mol and Spence Allison.



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Sigvaldason Fine Art in Gimli will have the late Kenneth F. Martin's art on display at the gallery from April 11 to 26.

The upcoming exhibition offers art enthusiasts a rare opportunity to view — and purchase — works by one of Manitoba's respected landscape artists.

Fisher Branch student earns prestigious \$16,000 BMO Indigenous Leader scholarship

By Patricia Barrett

A Fisher Branch Collegiate student in Grade 12 earned a prestigious scholarship from the University of Manitoba and has plans to pursue an engineering degree after high school.

Brandt Cochrane earned a BMO Financial Group Indigenous Leader of Tomorrow Scholarship worth \$16,000 that will help support him in post-secondary studies in engineering at the University of Manitoba.

Cochrane said he was "stunned" when he found out he was awarded the scholarship and was excited by the honour of becoming one of the recipients of the award.

"I got the email the day after my in-person panel interview and I was kind of stunned to get the decision that quick," said Cochrane. "My heart was pumping, but when I opened it to find out that I got the award, I was so excited and relieved because it wasn't just about the award — it was more exciting to join the community of past recipients, hard-working leaders and role models."

The BMO Financial Group Indigenous Leader of Tomorrow Scholar-



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Fisher Branch Collegiate's Grade 12 student Brandt Cochrane is the first student from his high school and the first from the Lakeshore School Division to earn a \$16,000 University of Manitoba BMO Indigenous Leader of Tomorrow Scholarship.

ship is offered by the University of Manitoba to recognize and support exceptional Indigenous high school graduates who demonstrate out-

Continued on page 10

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Tribute artist headlines Arborg Heritage Village dinner and dance fundraiser

By E Antonio

Fans of the Man in Black can take a step back in time next month at Arborg Heritage Village's Ring of Fire Dinner and Dance fundraiser.

The event, set for April 26 at the Arborg Community Hall, will feature a full evening of food, entertainment and dancing — all in support of the living history museum's ongoing projects.

The night kicks off at 5 p.m. and runs until midnight, with a headlining performance by Corny Rempel, a Johnny Cash tribute artist known for his high-energy storytelling shows that celebrate the legendary country icon.

Rempel, a radio announcer from Steinbach, has performed as both Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash for more than 25 years. He said what started as a simple tribute grew into something much more.

"My tributes took on a life of their own, and things have been rolling from there," he said.

Rempel, who takes the stage at 6 p.m., will guide guests through Cash's greatest hits, weaving in stories and personal memories along the way.

"The music is one thing, but the stories are what brings it together," said Rempel.

Cash holds a special place in his heart as he has been a fan since young. Throughout his performance, you will hear the history behind Cash's songs and some of Rempel's fondest memories.

He likes to define his concerts as being, "one handshake away from Johnny Cash."

Despite never meeting the real Cash, he has sung with his sister, Joanne Cash, and plays with a guitar signed by his guitarist, Bob Wootton.

Following the performance, guests will enjoy a 13-course buffet catered

by Arborg's Triple Bloom, featuring dishes such as herb-roasted chicken, honey-glazed ham, perogies and a dessert room "overflowing with every kind of sinful dessert imaginable," organizers say.

Live music continues with the Country Pride Band, who will keep the dance floor moving late into the evening.

Guests will also have the chance to win prizes throughout the night, including through a silent auction and a rainbow-raffle draw. Donated items from Interlake-area businesses include a children's motorized car, a Delta Black Superior Edition Drone, a cordless vacuum and a quartz men's watch valued at \$1,400.

One lucky attendee could go home with a 65-inch Samsung Smart TV. Seven guests will be randomly selected to try their luck at unlocking the TV with a mystery key — only one opens the chained prize.

The evening also includes one additional chance for you to take home some cash. For just \$2, you will be entered into a game of "heads and tails," where the last one standing takes home half of the pot. Among all the entries, each participant decides whether to put their hands on their head or on their bottom. When the host flips the coin, if it matches your action you move onto the next round. The game keeps going until there is one person standing and that one person wins the prize.

Eyolfson said they started this game a few years ago, and it's always well received. "It is a great activity to take a quick break," she added.

Proceeds will help fund ongoing projects at the Heritage Village including, replacing the siding of the church, the foreman's car exhibit and other seasonal operation costs.

Organizers say more than \$20,000 is needed to complete this year's plans.



EXPRESS SCREENGAB PHOTO

Johnny Cash tribute artist Corny Rempel will be performing at the Arborg Heritage Village dinner and dance fundraiser on April 26.

"We have an exciting evening planned for all ages," said Pat Eyolfson, co-chair of Arborg Heritage Village. "It's a fun way to support local history while having a great time."

Tickets are \$80 per person and available until April 25 at Arborg Phar-

macy, by phone at 204-671-0203, or by emailing admhv4007@gmail.com. Tables of eight can be reserved. Payment by e-transfer or cash is preferred, but a card reader will be available at the door.

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RM of Gimli's CAO resigns after three months on the job

By Patricia Barrett

The RM of Gimli lost its chief administrative officer who resigned after serving about three months on the job, and the municipality is unable to share details of why she decided to quit because of privacy considerations.

Trilbee Stirling-Kattler had re-located from Ontario where she served as CAO for the Municipality of Red Lake. She started in her new role in Gimli in mid-December 2024. It's unclear what date her resignation came into effect.

The *Express* reached out last week to assistant CAO Kelly Cosgrove, the mayor and council asking for information about the resignation.

Christine Payne, the RM's manager of community engagement, said that because of confidentiality requirements, the RM cannot share the reason for Stirling-Kattler's resignation nor share her resignation letter.

"The specifics of Trilbee's resignation remain confidential as is standard practice for personnel matters," said Payne.

The CAO of a municipality has a

great deal of responsibility as he or she is the manager of that municipality, overseeing day-to-day administrative affairs, providing leadership and advice, managing staff, overseeing budgets and responding to resident concerns, among a number of duties that are carried out in accordance with the provincial Municipal Act. The assistant CAO provides a high degree of support to the CAO and the municipality. Both positions work closely with the mayor and council, providing support and advice.

The RM started experiencing turnover at the CAO and assistant CAO levels after the new iteration of council was elected in October 2022.

Assistant CAO Doreen Steg resigned in 2023, but she took the director of finance job with the RM. She resigned from that position in either November or December 2024 and left the RM. Assistant CAO Kristin Strachan resigned her position in the summer of 2024 and left the RM altogether. CAO Kelly Cosgrove resigned in the summer of 2024 and took the assistant CAO job that had been left vacant by Strachan. CAO Jim Fenske

assumed the interim CAO role in July 2024 but resigned two months later. D. J. Sigmundson became interim CAO in September 2024 and served until Stirling-Kattler assumed the role in mid-December.

In addition to CAO and assistant CAO losses and shuffles, the RM saw people resign from its Gimli Community Development Corporation — including Coun. Richard Petrowski — or saw representatives removed from the corporation shortly after the new council was elected.

It's common to see some circulation of CAOs in Manitoba's municipalities, with some leaving for opportunities that might better suit their work-life balance and some looking for a different workplace culture.

The *Express* asked the RM of Gimli and council whether there's a particular workplace culture that's affecting the movement of their senior management staff.

"In 2025 the RM has invested in human infrastructure to ensure we have resources. New management hires included a position in finance, community engagement and public works,"



PHOTO SUBMITTED

The RM of Gimli's chief administrative officer Trilbee Stirling-Kattler resigned after three months on the job. She assumed the CAO position in mid-December 2024. Her resignation follows a number of resignations and shuffles at the senior management level.

said Payne. "The RM is actively recruiting, with a new payroll employ-

Continued on page 10

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Gimli's Evergreen Basic Needs considering new food-delivery model as need skyrockets

By Patricia Barrett

The Gimli-based Evergreen Basic Needs food bank is considering switching to a different model of food support for those unable to meet the enduring high cost of groceries, housing and bills.

Evergreen Basic Needs executive director Karen Bowman and board chair Larry Moore had met with Gimli council at its March 26 meeting to provide an update on the activities at EBN, the challenges it continues to face with an increasing number of people turning to food banks for help and the generosity of Gimli and area residents and businesses.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Bowman said food banks across Canada have seen an alarming jump in the numbers of people struggling to cope with the high cost of food, increasing mortgage and rent costs, household bills and other expenses. Paycheques are not keeping pace with the overall cost of living, forcing people to turn to food banks. Some people have been left with no choice but to move in with strangers to help cover housing costs and some people have become homeless.

"Food banks in general across the country are struggling and seeing their numbers skyrocket," said Bowman. "Our [EBN's] growth rate is around 11.5 per cent. And as I had said to council, food banks should not be in the growth industry. We should be working to make ourselves obsolete, but, unfortunately, the climate doesn't allow for that."

EBN is experiencing increasing pressure to purchase food for its hamper program. In 2019, EBN spent \$6,000 on food to supplement donations, said Bowman. In 2024, that more than tripled with EBN having to spend \$20,000 on food.

In Gimli, Bowman said EBN is seeing the "household" model change. People using the food bank used to be a family unit. Now they're seeing strangers sharing a single residence. That means a single food hamper for a family has now become multiple single hampers.

And to help control food bank costs and make the most of the purchased food and donations EBN gets, Bowman said the food bank is considering moving to a new food-delivery model called the choice model after research studies indicated cost savings to food banks.

"Instead of filling a hamper with a set list of food items, people would have an opportunity to select things they want and not take things they don't want. It's not quite a full shopping model, but it gives people more choice," said Bowman. "This would give our clients more autonomy. It's also an opportunity for them to



EXPRESS PHOTO BY BRETT MITCHELL

Staff from Crown Royal-Diageo collect food donations during a recent event in Gimli in support of Evergreen Basic Needs. The company partnered with Harvest Manitoba to deliver a truckload of food to help the food bank meet rising demand.

say they have enough, say, pasta from the last hamper and they don't need it again in a new hamper."

EBN is also responding to special dietary requirements and preferences to meet the needs of people with diabetes or people with certain cultural food preferences.

Although Bowman said EBN is 99 per cent compliant with national food bank standards from Food Banks Canada, she's working towards ensuring EBN is consistent with the national charitable organization's standards.

Food banks across the country are experiencing "record high demand," according to Food Banks Canada. Some food banks ran out of food in the past year and others had to cut back on the amount of food they were supplying.

Bowman said EBN receives a lot of support from the municipality and she thanked council for that support.

The months after Christmas are traditionally lean times in terms of donations to food banks. But EBN was taken aback by a number of sizable donations.

"We were just at the Crown Royal [Diageo] event [on March 26] and that was totally amazing and awesome and totally unexpected. They gave us lots of food. They partnered with Harvest Manitoba ... to support the food bank. Harvest came to Gimli with food to support EBN's clients in the RM and surrounding areas," said Bowman. "I was expecting half a dozen bags, but they had a cube truck full of food all boxed

up. I woke up this morning trying to absorb it all. There were 378 boxes of food, another three pallets of food plus about a dozen shopping bags full of food that local people had brought to the event. It was totally amazing and we are so thankful."

In addition to Diageo, the Gimli Sobey's store donated to EBN over \$8,000 worth of gift cards last week from its Joy of Giving holiday campaign. And the Gimli Red River Co-op store had given EBN \$2,000 worth of gift cards around the end of January. The gift cards are distributed to food bank clients.

"We have a whole lot of food to put onto our shelves, which we are so thankful for," said Bowman. "We were discussing putting another food order in. Now, I'm sure we won't have to put in another food order for a couple of months."

Given the uncertainty of the political situation in the United States and the impact tariffs could have on the cost of living and Canada's economy, Bowman said EBN "appreciates and values" the relationships it has with the community and donors and will continue to focus on creating positive experiences for clients.

"I'm always amazed by the support we get from this community and the surrounding communities when we need help," she said. "I feel so fortunate to work for this organization and I appreciate how people respect and respond to the needs in our community."



Gimli Community Gardens Registration Date

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Canadians head to polls for federal election April 28, 2025

By Lana Meier

Prime Minister Mark Carney has called a snap federal election for April 28, 2025. This decision comes amid escalating trade tensions and sovereignty threats from U.S. President Donald Trump, which have significantly impacted Canada's political landscape. Carney, who succeeded Justin Trudeau as the leader of the Liberal Party and Prime Minister earlier this month, seeks a strong mandate to address these challenges.

The election will determine the

composition of the 343-seat House of Commons, with key political figures including:

Mark Carney: Leader of the Liberal Party and current Prime Minister, known for his financial expertise as a former central banker.

Pierre Poilievre: Leader of the Conservative Party, a career politician advocating for a "Canada first" approach.

Jagmeet Singh: Leader of the New Democratic Party, focusing on social democratic policies.

Yves-François Blanchet: Leader of the Bloc Québécois, promoting Quebec's interests and sovereignty.

Jonathan Pedneault and Elizabeth May: Co-leaders of the Green Party, focusing on climate action, Indigenous reconciliation and electoral reform.

The campaign is expected to center on Canada's response to U.S. trade actions and threats to national sovereignty, with voters evaluating which leader is best equipped to navigate these complex issues.

letter to the editor

Letters to the Editor: news@expressweeklynews.ca

Canada must stand strong

It is heartwarming to see how Canadians from coast to coast are pulling together in the face of threats of tariffs — and even annexation — from the Trump administration.

Boycotting U.S.-made products and businesses, particularly those with strong ties to Trump, avoiding travel to the United States and expressing our utter disappointment with his policies are important actions that send a strong message to the bully south of the border.

Electing a prime minister who is able and willing to stand up to Trump is another critical message. Canadians are not interested in becoming the 51st state, and we definitely do not want a prime minister

who subscribes to, or is sympathetic to, Trump's ideology.

However, if all these measures fail and Trump remains determined to annex or otherwise dominate Canada, we as citizens must be ready.

The Second World War provides some important lessons.

When Nazi Germany occupied Western Europe, resistance groups such as the Maquis in France and the Ondergrondse in the Netherlands sprang up to fight against the German occupation. These groups played a significant role in the ultimate defeat of Germany in 1945. In the case of Holland, Canada played a key role in the liberation, and for that, the Dutch are eternally grateful.

At this stage, Canada should begin organizing resistance groups across the country to be ready to take action if — and when — Trump decides to occupy Canada.

I was born in the Netherlands during the Second World War, and I remember vividly the stories, experiences and sacrifices of my parents and grandparents who fought against the German occupation.

I am confident that many in my generation — and scores of younger people — will answer the call to defend our country.

I sincerely hope this letter not only generates interest in something like a "Canadian Defence League" but will in fact lead to the formation of such an organization. We have the Canadian Rangers in the North; we need something like that across the country — now.

Sincerely,

Frederik Veldink, Silver Harbour

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Province allocates \$5.3 million to begin design and construction of new Arborg PCH

Province to provide free hormone replacement therapy

By Patricia Barrett

The provincial government allocated \$5.3 million to start the design and construction work for a long-awaited new personal care home in Arborg.

The Town of Arborg and the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton began jointly advocating for a new PCH about 10 or so years ago, citing a need for more beds in the area, and both municipalities had submitted various proposals to former governments for approval. Arborg currently has a 40-bed PCH.

With the funding commitment outlined in its Building One Manitoba: Budget 2025, the NDP is proceeding with a new 60-bed PCH for Arborg. The \$5.3 million won't cover the entire cost of constructing the new facility; it will cover the design work and the start of construction.

Provincial health minister Uzoma Asagwara told the *Express* the government is excited to get Arborg's new facility underway.

"I know the community is very excited that this is finally moving forward, and I have to say as a government, we're excited to move forward with our plans to build a new personal care home in Arborg. It makes sense for the community. It makes sense clinically," said Asagwara last Friday. "We've assessed where we need to make investments, and Arborg is an obvious and important place to do so."

A new model of PCH called the small-house model may be implemented in Arborg, said the minister.

The model consists of small groups of people sharing a single household that has its own dedicated kitchen, dining room and living room. Each person has his or her own private room. Public fundraising efforts for a new PCH in Stonewall notes a desire for a small-house model.

"It's a very cool model. And it's exciting because it's a model that's not common in Manitoba and a model that people have been asking for," said Asagwara. "The \$5.3 million that has been set aside [for Arborg] is to do that design work in the best way possible. And we're going to engage with the community to get their input and get the construction work going."

The NDP is looking at undertaking some sort of community consultation whereby it can hear directly from the Arborg and area community regarding the new PCH, they added, so that the government can deliver a PCH that best serves the area for generations to come. The government doesn't want to "assume" that what

ever may have been decided in the past regarding the design of the facility should go forward now.

"We're looking for the best ways to hear directly from the community. We are a listening government and we value being able to hear from those who will be directly impacted by investments like this," said Asagwara. "... people have been advocating for this and fighting for this [PCH] for many years, and we want to honour their advocacy."

In addition to providing funding to build PCH capacity in the Interlake half of the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority, the NDP is also providing \$17.2 million for construction of a new PCH in Lac du Bonnet in the eastern half of the health region. The Lac du Bonnet PCH had originally been announced by the NDP government in 2012, cancelled by the Conservative government in 2017 then re-announced by the Conservatives in 2023.

A few months after the NDP assumed power in the fall of 2023, it put all PCH plans on hold in order to undertake a review of the previous government's projects and spending. In earlier interviews with the *Express*, Interlake-Gimli MLA Derek Johnson (PC) said his government had approved funding for the new Arborg PCH via the treasury board prior to the 2023 election and had questioned the NDP's need to review PCHs.

Johnson said last Friday that the \$5.3 million in the NDP budget was already part of \$15 million the former Conservative government had promised in 2023.

"This money is inclusive of what we had already committed," said Johnson. "We announced in July 2023 that \$15 million would be committed for the planning and design of three PCHs, including Arborg."

The *Express* reached out to the Town of Arborg and the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton for comment on the government's approval of and



EXPRESS FILE PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

Arborg's 40-bed PCH is shown. The province set aside \$5.3 million in its 2025 budget to begin design and construction work on a new 60-bed PCH in Arborg.

\$5.3-million funding commitment for the new 60-bed PCH.

Arborg Mayor Peter Dueck said on Saturday that he's waiting for a letter from the health ministry to inform the town of the next steps before he offers comment. The Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton did not respond by press time.

OTHER HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS FROM BUDGET 2025:

The NDP ran on a platform that emphasized fixing the "chaos" in Manitoba's health-care system that arose after funding cuts and facility closures.

In addition to having already added 1,255 net new health-care workers to the frontlines, the government has made a number of health-care commitments in its 2025 budget, which was released on March 20. It includes measures for rural areas as well as urban centres. Those commitments include the following:

- Investing \$770 million for frontline health-care staff.
- Providing \$500,000 to begin the consultation, design

and first phase of construction of a new ER in Eriksdale. The initial design phase is scheduled for completion by July 2025.

- Providing annual funding for staffing and operating space at the Selkirk Regional Health Centre that will add 686 more hip and knee surgeries annually towards a goal of 800.
- Boosting funding to provide annual support for 30 acute care beds at Selkirk Regional Health Centre.
- Addressing rural diagnostic staffing shortages by creating for 20 new seats in the laboratory and X-ray technology program and 20 new seats in the medical laboratory technology program at Assiniboine College.
- Facilitating rural recruitment drives for licensed practical nurses by adding more rural training sites.
- Improving nurses' work-life balance.
- Bringing nurses back into the public system by expanding the provincial travel nurse team and limiting

Continued on page 8

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Local piano students earn provincial medals for excellence

By Annaliese Meier

Three young pianists from the Interlake region have been recognized for achieving the highest provincial marks in their respective piano exams with Conservatory Canada.

All three students are private piano students of Brenda Gulay of Arborg and are alumni of the Music for Young Children program.

Tessa Barkman of Arborg earned a Medal for Excellence for achieving the top provincial mark in Grade 6 Contemporary Idioms Piano.

Siblings Lucia and Nate Borkowsky of Gimli also received provincial medals. Lucia earned the Medal for Excellence in Grade 5 Classical Piano, while Nate was recognized for his top mark in Grade 2 Classical Piano.



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Left photo: Tessa Barkman of Arborg received the Conservatory Canada Medal for Excellence in Grade 6 Contemporary Idioms Piano; Right photo: Lucia Borkowsky, left, and Nate Borkowsky, both of Gimli, received Medals for Excellence for top provincial marks in Grade 5 and Grade 2 Classical Piano, respectively.

Community Support Service

A.A Meeting in Ashern

Location: #11 2nd Ave North
- Pioneer Manor
(beside the main door entrance
of Pioneer Manor)
Contact Jackiem.lwrc@gmail.com

AA Arborg

Thursdays - 7:30 pm
Arborg Support Centre
327 Main Street
Contact 204-376-5861

AA Eriksdale

Eriksdale United Church building
#7 Main Street, Eriksdale (side door)
Meetings are Mondays
at 6:30 p.m.

AA Winnipeg Beach

Lady of the Lake RC Church
Corner of Hwy. 9 and Lake Ave.,
Winnipeg Beach
Meetings are Saturdays
between 7 and 8 p.m.
Contact Ann J 204-389-3417

Gimli Group AA

Bldg 18 Municipal Rd
Industrial Park
Fri & Sun Mtgs at 7:30 pm

Al-Anon

Gimli and Winnipeg Beach

Join us at 17B Loni Beach Road, next
to New Horizon building... Gimli at
7:00 pm Wednesday evenings for an
hour of support, strength, guidance
and Hope. Contact 204-389-4777.
All ages welcome.

AA Riverton Group

12 Main St. at the
Riverton Senior Centre
Mondays 7:30 p.m.

Manitoba minimum wage to rise to \$16 on Oct. 1

By Lana Meier

Manitoba's minimum wage will increase by 20 cents to \$16 per hour on Oct. 1, the province announced this week.

The adjustment is based on the

province's 2024 inflation rate of 1.1 per cent, rounded to the nearest five cents.

Minimum wage increases are reviewed annually and regulated

through Manitoba's Employment Standards Code.

For more information on employment standards, visit www.gov.mb.ca/labour/standards.

> PERSONAL CARE HOME, FROM PG. 7

the number of private agencies that can contract in Manitoba.

- Adding hundreds of flexible child-care spaces to hospitals in Winnipeg and Brandon to accommodate health-care workers.

- Adding 20 more residency seats for doctors to address the physician shortage.

- Providing ongoing funding to expand the University of Manitoba's health campus to train more doctors.

- Retaining and recruiting paramedics through financial support for advanced care paramedic training and providing opportunities for career advancement, especially in the rural areas.

- Recruiting nurses and doctors to rural and northern Manitoba.

- Increasing surgical capacity and reducing wait lists.

- Adding more emergency room capacity to the health-care system as a whole and reducing pressure on existing ERs by re-opening the Victoria Hospital's emergency room that was closed by the previous government in 2017.

- Investing in Indigenous health-care initiatives.

- Creating an Independent Seniors' Advocate to ensure seniors have access to quality services.

Supporting the unique health-care needs of women by re-opening a Mature Women's Centre (at the Victoria Hospital) that was closed by the previous government.

- Providing free hormone replacement therapy.

The budget says the provincial government, in partnership with the federal government, committed \$10 million in funding for free hormone replacement therapy for menopause.

Menopause is a natural process that typically arises in the middle years of life and has a range of symptoms. It can also be medically induced by the surgical removal of both ovaries. For some women, the symptoms can be debilitating and continue for several years.

Minister Asagwara said the NDP government recognizes the need to enhance, protect and restore health services for women and others of all ages with specific needs, eliminating any barriers around reproductive health care. It would be up to each individual to decide whether or not they want to try HRT.

"As a government we want to make sure hormone replacement therapy is available to women and those who need it when they need it. It would be for a woman and her doctor or prima-

ry care provider to decide what the best time is for her to choose HRT and what kind of HRT could best meet her needs," said Asagwara. "We want to make sure we make HRT as accessible as possible and free."

Given the movement in America towards undermining women's health-care needs and their agency over their own bodies, Asagwara said it's important for the public to know that the Manitoba government stands with women.

"We have to do better by women in this province and in this country, and invest in their health care in a way that shows we respect and understand their needs, especially when we see what's happening south of us in this area of health care," said the minister.

In addition to providing free HRT, Asagwara said the government intends to re-open the Mature Women's Clinic because it was a vital resource that had the expertise to provide specialized care to women. The clinic will re-open in conjunction with the restored Victoria ER.

The province is expecting to launch the free HRT program sometime this month.

The government's Building One Manitoba, Budget 2025 is available online. Visit gov.mb.ca

Gimli man waits seven days for ambulance transfer to St. Boniface for angiogram

By Patricia Barrett

The wife of an RM of Gimli man who was admitted to Gimli hospital's emergency room a few weeks ago with chest pain said they had to wait seven days before they could get an ambulance to take him to St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg for an angiogram.

Heather Klyne said her husband Greg arrived at the Gimli hospital's ER on March 18. The hospital thought the pain was related to his heart and tried to transfer him to St. Boniface for an angiogram — a specialized X-ray that determines whether there are narrowed or blocked blood vessels in various parts of the body including the heart — but had two ambulances cancel. Greg was finally transferred by ambulance to St. Boniface on March 24.

"The ambulance service is horrid here. Just horrible," said Heather Klyne. "On Friday, Greg was supposed to go and no ambulance showed up. We waited the whole day and they kept taking blood about every four hours because [the results] have to be current. But the ambulance was cancelled."

Klyne said she became aware that there were a "couple of other people" at Gimli hospital waiting for ambulances to transfer them to various locations, but none showed up.

Having to endure long delays for health-care service when people are sick and stressed only compounds that stress and that of their loved ones.

"When they're sick, what does this [delay] do to their mental condition? It causes stress. It's detrimental to patients," said Klyne. "Shared Health's service has been awful. I've heard other reports from people who've waited and waited and waited for an ambulance at home because their [loved one] was really, really sick and they couldn't get anywhere [on their own]. Something needs to be done about our ambulance service here. It's not fair for people in the Interlake to have unreliable ambulance service."

Klyne said she was dismayed to read about the hockey player in Arborg who had to lie on the ice for over an hour waiting for an ambulance. When centres such as Gimli and Arborg managed their own ambulance service, there were hardly any problems. Given the fact both communities have their own ambulance garages, Klyne thinks it might be more efficient to give the control of ambulance services back to the rural areas.

Despite the lengthy delay in getting her husband the diagnostic test he needed, Klyne said she doesn't blame the paramedics. And the health-care staff at Gimli hospital went the extra distance in the care they provided all week long to Greg.

"The staff at the hospital went over and above to make Greg comfortable. They really did a super job," she said. "And this is not the paramedics' fault: it's who's managing them. I think more complaints should be made to Shared Health because they're making a mess of this."

Klyne said she wrote to Premier Wab Kinew to let him know about the long delay in getting an ambulance.

According to information shared a few months ago by the Manitoba Association for Health Care Professionals — the union representing paramedics employed by Shared Health in the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority — paramedic staffing across the province is below baseline. Data available from 2022 (there was no data available

for 2024) for the IERHA, specifically, showed the health region as having the "worst response time" of Manitoba's five regions.

Before and after the provincial election in October 2023, the NDP said it recognized there's a paramedic staffing crisis and would immediately start to hire them.

Klyne said she read the government's recently released Budget 2025 and was disappointed there was no specific mention of the ambulance shortage in the IERHA.

The budget does refer to pledges to hire more paramedics for the rural and northern regions, which can experience "dangerously long wait times" for ambulances, and to helping paramedics ascend the career ladder by financially supporting advanced care paramedic (ACP) training.

Provincial health minister Uzoma Asagwara told the *Express* they're sorry to hear about Heather and Greg Klyne's experience and appreciates their reaching out to Premier Kinew, which was "the right thing to do." The government is taking steps to address serious health-care deficits in a number of areas and it will take time to fix the damage wrought by years of under-funding and facility closures.

"I understand and I certainly echo [the Klynes'] frustrations with the current state of health care in rural communities. What we're seeing, and what people are experiencing, is the direct result of the previous government's lack of investments in health care in rural Manitoba," said Asagwara. "Their cuts to ambulance services in rural Manitoba have really done significant damage to our communities. Our government from Day 1 has been working hard to fix that damage and taking steps to better staff that aspect of the health-care system, [as well as other] aspects of the health-care system."

Paramedics were "forced out" of Manitoba because they had had their wages frozen for years over two terms of the former Conservative government. There was a net loss of 90 paramedics in rural Manitoba, which was a "devastating loss of paramedicine capacity," said the minister. The previous government also closed 23 EMS stations.

The PC government told media in 2017 that the EMS stations slated for closure were "low-volume" stations and that what was important was where the ambulances were rather than where the stations were located. Riverton's ambulance station was among the stations closed.

Asagwara said the delay in ambulance service experienced by the Klynes and the long wait for an ambulance for the hockey player injured on the ice in Arborg a few weeks ago can really "shake" communities and the government is working on restoring people's confidence in being able to get EMS service when they need it.

"We recognize so much damage was done that it will take us significant time to fully fix it. But we are taking steps in the right direction and we appreciate hearing from Manitobans who had have challenges so we know exactly where to focus our attention and make investments to better serve communities," said the minister.

When asked if there are alternative services to ambulances such as stretcher services that could perhaps be used while in the process of recruiting paramedics to the rural areas, Asagwara said in the case of the Klynes' particular medical situation, an



EXPRESS FILE PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

An ambulance is shown on Highway 68. An RM of Gimli man with chest pain had to wait seven days in Gimli hospital to get an ambulance to transfer him to Winnipeg's St. Boniface Hospital for an angiogram.

ambulance was the "appropriate" service.

To help address the paramedic deficit, the NDP has expanded the scope of advanced care paramedics, who are now allowed to practise as ACPs (and also paid as ACPs) outside of Winnipeg. It has added rural and northern paramedic training seats to encourage local people to train in their communities and remain there after graduation. And it's also hiring clinical service leads with ACP training. The construction of a new ER in Eriksdale will also help free up paramedic availability as they won't be tied up on the highway travelling long distances to an open ER.

"We're increasing access right now to critical emergency services by employing what's called clinical service leads. These are folks with ACP training that are strategically located throughout rural Manitoba, including in the Interlake," said the minister. "These folks will be done their training about mid-April and they'll be able to respond on scene to emergency calls alongside EMS services to make sure folks are getting the right care in their community."

Some of the upcoming clinical lead graduates with ACP training are going to be placed in Ashern and in Lac du Bonnet, said the minister.

So far, the government has added 101 net new health-care workers to the Interlake, and the minister said the government knows there's a lot more workers required.

The government wants people to reach out when they experience difficult or critical situations with health-care services, said Asagwara. And they were also happy that Heather Klyne also took the time to read the government's budget to understand the health-care challenges and how the government is working on addressing them.

"I know it's not easy when folks have experiences like [the Klynes], but then to reach out to make the government aware of it and ask us what can we do to prevent this from happening to other Manitobans was really generous of the Klyne family," said Asagwara. "I welcome folks to reach out to my office ... so we can take the right steps to address it."

In response to the Klynes' experiencing a long delay for an ambulance, Interlake-Gimli MLA Derek Johnson (PC) said the NDP's promise to address the human resource issues in health care is "not materializing" and that the government should be looking at other ways to transport patients who don't have the means or ability to get themselves or a

> RESIGNS, FROM PG. 4

ee starting soon and interviews underway for the HR position.”

When asked how council is addressing the unprecedented turnover of senior management staff, Payne said the RM engages and supports its staff and remains committed to creating a positive work environment.

“From a human resource perspective, the focus has been on engagement and support: enhancing internal communications, including monthly digital newsletters, implementing an employee-first communication strategy, supportive of the first All-employee Town Hall to discuss strategic plans and boost engagement, and continuing to support and value current staff members,” said Payne. “The RM remains committed to fostering a positive work environment and ensuring smooth transitions during this period of change.”

The *Express* reached out to Coun. Richard Petrowski for comment on why he voted against the awarding of a design contract for the new fitness centre during council’s March 26 meeting and also asked whether he could comment on Stirling-Kattler’s resignation.

Petrowski said he was unable to speak to the circumstances around the loss of their CAO but offered a general comment on what he thought of Stirling-Kattler’s tenure with the RM.

“Trilbee was doing an amazing job. She was moving things along to advance the RM’s goals,” said Petrowski. “I’m disappointed she had to move on. I wish her the best of luck in her future endeavours.”

The *Express* also reached out to Coun. Andy Damm for comment on why he voted against the awarding of a design contract for the new fitness centre and asked if he could comment on the CAO’s resignation.

> AMBULANCE, FROM PG. 9

loved one to hospital.

“It’s completely unacceptable for the Klynes [to wait that long],” said Johnson. “There are different services around the province that provide non-urgent patient transport. We need to expand that across the entire Interlake. I’ve met people offering this service. It’s a matter of getting a reliable service set up for rural Manitoba. And patients would have to meet certain criteria and we might have to have an RN [registered nurse] available on these transports.”

Many Interlakars are feeling uneasy about living in their rural communities because of unreliable EMS services, he said. Some have left for urban

Damm said he was unable to comment on the details of Stirling-Kattler’s resignation but said he was sorry to see her leave.

“In my estimation, it’s certainly a loss to the RM,” said Damm.

The *Express* provided other opportunities for comment. It also confirmed that Cosgrove will assume the role of acting CAO.

OTHER COUNCIL NEWS:

- A majority of council awarded a contract for the conceptual design of the Gimli Fitness Centre, which a majority of council had approved last year.

Mayor Kevin Chudd, Deputy Mayor Kurt Reichert and Coun. Thora Palson voted in favour of hiring LM Architectural Group Environmental Space Planning. Councillors Petrowski and Damm voted against it.

Payne said the cost of the contract is \$24,790, which is less than the previously approved maximum of up to \$40,000.

“On April 17, 2024, with Resolution #2024-142, council approved the budget of \$950,000 for the development of the community fitness centre. In the RFP tender, it was noted that it was anticipated that \$1.5 million to \$2 million was a more likely budget in these unprecedented tariff and trade wars,” said Payne. “The conceptual design allows for a more informed budget and scalability with determining an appropriate building size, ideally between 7,000-10,000 square feet with consultation from key stakeholders and the community.”

When asked if council had considered the future costs of operating the fitness centre after it’s built, Payne said the conceptual design is the “first step.” That will then determine the operating costs and feasibility of the centre, as well as construction and operating-cost projections and a long-term lifecycle management plan to

centres or other communities where health care is more accessible.

“I do know people that have left the Interlake for medical security, and by medical security I mean where there are doctors nearby and reliable ambulance service because they may have higher than average medical needs. They’ve left the Interlake to pursue comfort in knowing they’ll have someone who can respond in a timely manner,” said Johnson. “That has a compounding effect in rural Manitoba; when you have fewer people utilizing your facilities, whether it’s schools, hospitals and other government services, the government thinks those services aren’t needed as much.”

inform budget decisions.

Coun. Petrowski said he voted against the hiring of a firm to create a conceptual design because of questions around funding for the facility, the uncertainty around tariffs and their impact on Canada and more pressing infrastructure needs in the RM.

“In these uncertain times, with the struggles with [U.S. president] Donald Trump, it makes me feel uneasy to take a project forward without having a business plan for it and without a clear understanding of where the funds are coming from. Even if we obtained grants for the fitness centre, we’d still need to come up with matching municipal funding,” said Petrowski. “We do have an existing fitness centre [in the Gimli Recreation Centre], and although it’s not perhaps the most desirable spot for it, the RM is providing that service. There are more pressing issues to spend taxpayer dollars on.”

Coun. Damm said he voted against the hiring of the firm because of the unknown cost of constructing it, lack of business plan regarding its operation and current vision of the centre.

“I am not opposed to the fitness centre and what it will provide, but I voted against this because a budget for construction has not been reviewed by the RM. Costs could go up into the millions. Can the RM afford that? We’d be putting taxpayers on the line. And there’s no business plan going forward as to the operation of this fitness centre, which would include staffing, costs to operate it, the number of people projected to use it and so forth,” said Damm. “I had also asked for a consideration of a different form of fitness centre, a model that could perhaps combine fitness with medical rehabilitation, somewhat along the lines of the [Winnipeg-based] Seven Oaks Wellness Institute. We didn’t explore other options.”

> SCHOLARSHIP, FROM PG. 2

standing leadership potential and academic giftedness, according to UM’s website. Students must have a high school average of at least 90 per cent in English, math and other core courses including science, have demonstrated leadership qualities and a high level of communication skills, among other qualities.

One of the first things Cochrane said he did after he learned of his award was call his teacher, Donna Gislason, because “I couldn’t have gotten this without her.”

Gislason, who is also the Fisher Branch’s vice-principal, said the school is “very proud” of Cochrane for having earned the prestigious scholarship.

- The RM was the successful recipient of a provincial grant called the Manitoba Growth, Renewal and Opportunities Municipalities Program. The RM was approved for “up to” \$1 million in funding for the Gimli Recreation Centre campus.

“I am pleased to inform you that your municipality has been approved to receive a funding contribution of up to \$1,000,000.00 for the Gimli Recreation Centre Campus Plan and Renewal of Centennial Road and Autumnwood Drive Project, under the Manitoba Growth, Renewal and Opportunities for municipalities program (Manitoba GRO), administered by the Department of Municipal and Northern Relations,” said MNR minister Glen Simard in a March 20 letter to Mayor Kevin Chudd.

Payne said the campus plan renewal is to “help with traffic flow and parking and pedestrian safety for the areas down Autumnwood and Centennial and including all the schools.”

The exact amount the RM has received from the province is “up to \$1 million or 50 per cent of the total project costs, as it’s based on cost sharing,” she said.

When asked if the fitness centre would receive any funds from this grant, Payne said the fitness centre’s location [i.e., a stone’s throw from the Gimli Recreation Centre] is “considered within the plan; however, the construction is not included.”

- Evergreen Basic Needs provided an update to council on the continuing rise in the number of people needing food bank support. Executive director Karen Bowman, who presented alongside board chair Larry Moore, said EBN spent \$6,000 on food [in addition to donations] in 2019. That ballooned to \$20,000 in 2024.

EBN is considering a new model of food support to control costs (see EBN story this edition).

“Brandt will not only be the first Fisher Branch Collegiate student to be awarded this scholarship, but he is also the first student from Lakeshore School Division,” said Gislason.

Cochrane said he’s a long way away yet from a decision about where he wants to pursue an engineering career after graduation, but he has some ideas of what he’d like to do.

“I’m looking at specializing in either water resource or environmental engineering,” said Cochrane. “Right now, my dream is to be part of the work to secure long-term clean water for all communities.”

Interlake-Gimli MLA tables bill to protect property owners

By Annaliese Meier

Opposition House Leader and Interlake-Gimli MLA Derek Johnson has introduced legislation aimed at protecting property owners from lawsuits filed by criminals injured while trespassing.

Bill 222, the Occupiers' Liability Amendment Act, would prevent property owners from being held legally responsible if someone unlawfully enters their property with the intent to commit a crime and is injured or killed.

The bill acknowledges that rural properties and farms can present unique risks and seeks to ensure owners aren't unfairly targeted by legal

action from individuals who break the law.

However, property owners could still be held liable if their actions are deemed intentional, excessively forceful and result in a criminal conviction.

Bill 222 would also amend the Limitations Act to pause the time limit for filing a civil claim until any related criminal charges have been resolved.

"This bill strikes a fair balance for property owners by protecting them from lawsuits filed by criminals who trespass," said Johnson. "At the same time, it ensures accountability in cases of clear wrongdoing and excessive force."



Interlake-Gimli MLA Derek Johnson

Top hypnotist James Grant to perform in Lundar

By E Antonio

Manitoba's top hypnotist is set to take the stage in Lundar next month as part of a fundraiser to help keep the community pool open and affordable.

James Grant, a seasoned performer with more than 35 years of experience, will headline an evening of laughter and entertainment at the Lundar Arena Lounge on April 11. Doors open at 6 p.m., with the show scheduled to begin at 7.

The 18+ event is being organized by the Lundar Pool board to raise funds for seasonal maintenance and supplies.

"People don't know how much it takes to get the pool up and ready," said Tara Law, Lundar Pool board member.

She explained that with the costs of set up, tools, chemicals and other outlying costs, board members are looking to raise \$10,000 this year. The more money they raise prior to their seasonal opening means lower admission prices for you to use the pool in the summer.

"We want to keep our admissions low so people can enjoy the pool without hurting their wallets," Law added.

Law said costs such as chemicals, tools and start-up labour continue to rise, and events like this are essential to ensuring the pool remains accessible for local families.

While the board typically hosts raffles and barbecue fundraisers, this will be their first adult-focused entertainment night.

Grant, who holds 17 degrees in hypnotherapy, said his comedic show thrives on audience participation.

"I invite as many people on stage as possible," he said. "The people on stage will have even more fun than those watching."

With transforming the Lundar Arena Lounge into a lively celebration, getting involved in Grant's show gets rid of stress, anxiety and tension. You also will feel like you have gotten a full eight hours of sleep because hypnosis suppresses eight hours into one.

He said attendees can expect to laugh, dance and maybe even impersonate their favourite celebrity — no experience required.

"You could turn into your favourite singer, win the lottery or go on a cruise — anything is possible with hypnosis," Grant said. "It's all about creating a fun, stress-free night."

He emphasized that the show is meant to entertain, not embarrass.

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EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

James Grant, Manitoba's top hypnotist, is set to perform at the Lundar Arena Lounge on April 11 in support of the Lundar Pool.

"We're here to put smiles on people's faces," he said. "No one will be humiliated."

You can expect to be involved in the show whether you are hypnotised or not. So don't be surprised if Shania Twain or Elvis Presley shows up asking you to sing a song with them.

Tickets are \$25 and are available at Deals for Days in Lundar or through any Lundar Pool board member. Payment can be made by cash or e-transfer. If still available, tickets will also be sold at the door.

Food and beverages will be available for purchase throughout the evening.

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Sunday April 13, 2025

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Doors open at 5pm,
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Fisherton Horse Club hosts skijoring demo



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

The Fisherton Horse Club held a skijoring demonstration on Saturday, showcasing winter fun on horseback. Left photo: Scott McKay, on a sorrel, pulls Clint McKay with enough speed that he caught air on skis. Right photo: Tanya McKay pulled the children on a GT snow racer, while others — including August, Miles and Wilder — enjoyed sleigh rides in a calf sled. The club says it plans to host more skijoring events next winter.

Camp Stepping Stones seeks volunteers and campers for 2025 session

By Annaliese Meier

Camp Stepping Stones will return in person from May 30 to June 1, 2025, and organizers are currently accepting applications for both campers and volunteers.

The camp is designed for children and youth aged seven to 17 who have recently experienced the loss of

a parent or someone close to them. It provides a supportive environment where participants can connect with peers who are also grieving.

“Volunteers are welcome to come for the weekend or for a few hours,” said Barb Ramsay, palliative care volunteer co-ordinator. “We are looking for volunteers to come to camp to

help the campers with craft activities on Saturday and Sunday morning.”

There are a variety of volunteer roles available, including cabin leaders and activity support. Those interested are asked to fill out an application form.

Camper applications are also being accepted.

For more information or to ap-

ply, visit <https://www.ierha.ca/programs-services/palliative-care/camp-stepping-stones/>

To get in touch directly, contact Barb Ramsay at bramsay@ierha.ca, 1-855-494-7369 or 204-785-7542.

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Grade 4 students at SSES give back to HSC Children's Hospital

By Becca Myskiw

A group of Grade 4 students at Sigurbjorg Stefansson Early School (SSES) has turned kindness into action, raising more than \$450 for the HSC Children's Hospital's child life department.

The Terrific Kids group at SSES includes more than 25 students who meet during lunch breaks with teacher Stephanie Mills. Together, they explore ways to help their community and the wider world, while also setting personal goals for self-improvement.

In the past two years, the group has organized a blanket drive annually — collecting about 450 blankets last year alone. When it came time to choose this year's major fundraiser, Mills asked whether they wanted to continue that tradition or try something new. The students opted for change.

Mills guided the class through a brainstorming session about who and what they'd like to help. Two causes came out on top: animals and children. The group then decided to run two separate fundraisers — one for each cause. The first took place on March 6, in support of HSC Children's Hospital's child life department.

The child life department offers support, expertise and engaging activities for infants, children, youth and their families as they navigate the challenges of acute or chronic illness. The Terrific Kids chose to support the

department to help brighten the days of young patients.

To raise funds, the students decided to sell hot chocolate and handmade bracelets. The school's parent council donated all the hot chocolate supplies, while each student in the group contributed by making loom bracelets. They taught each other — and even Kiwanis volunteers — how to use the looms. One student, who had never made a bracelet before, committed to creating one every evening after school.

By March 6, the Terrific Kids had crafted more than 250 bracelets. On the day of the fundraiser, they split into teams and visited every classroom in the school to sell the bracelets and hot chocolate. There was no set price — students were simply asked to donate what they could. Those who weren't able to contribute still received a bracelet and hot chocolate so that every student could participate.

Mills said the original fundraising goal was \$100. By the end of the day, they had collected \$458.30.

"It's lovely to see them grow and learn what it takes to help others and that they can actually do it," said Mills. "It was quite a neat moment."

The Terrific Kids are now preparing for their second fundraiser — a "bubbles and lemonade" event in the coming months to raise money for the Gimli Humane Society.



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED
Students in the Terrific Kids group at Sigurbjorg Stefansson Early School work together to make loom bracelets for their fundraiser in support of the HSC Children's Hospital's child life department.

Correction

Staff

In the March 27 edition of the *Express Weekly News*, in the article "Eriksdale Curling Club wraps up its first season with geothermal plant," we wrote the plant was geothermal, but it is actually an ice plant with heat recovery.

The *Express* apologizes for the mistake.



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Community comes together to recognize local volunteers

By Becca Myskiw

The Riverton-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission celebrated the spirit of giving back this past weekend, recognizing dedicated community members at its fourth annual volunteer recognition gala.

More than 220 people gathered at the Arborg Community Centre on Saturday, March 22, to enjoy one-of-a-kind cocktails, candy bar, a charcuterie board, live music, a delicious meal, a silent auction — and to recognize the contributions of seven outstanding local volunteers.

Riverton-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission board chair Kyle Foster said the event was created to solve two main challenges: ensuring volunteers receive the recognition they deserve and raising funds for accessibility improvements in the region.

“We need to recognize volunteers in the community and celebrate volunteerism as a whole,” he said. “Volunteers can be hard to come by, so we wanted a way to celebrate them and everyone else.”

The gala also serves as a fundraiser to support accessibility projects throughout the Riverton-Bifrost area. Every dollar raised — from the \$125 ticket sales and silent auction proceeds — goes directly toward the cause. Over the past three years, the gala has raised more than \$70,000.

Past projects funded by the gala include:

- Landscaping around local facilities
- Installing accessible doors in several locations
- Installing a wheelchair lift in a curling club
- Installing an accessible wash-room in a curling club

“I think it’s just fair for everybody to have access to our facilities,” said Foster. “Making our facilities more accessible, we feel, makes them usable for everyone.”

Each year, six or seven volunteers are recognized at the event. The board selects community groups, and each group chooses a volunteer to honour. Last year, the commission introduced a youth volunteerism award — the only award that requires a formal application and vote by the board.

“We get the easy part of picking the groups,” said Foster. “It’s the groups that have the hardest part of picking who to recognize.”

He said the board aims to rotate recognized groups annually, so different individuals and organizations get the chance to be appreciated.

“Year after year, it’s just people



Linda Wotton of the Riverton-Bifrost Recreation Commission.

that do so much for the community,” added Foster. “It’s very nice to see. They’ve all been long-time contributors to whatever organization they’re a part of.”

This year’s honoured volunteers were:

- Tim Reimer, Rural Municipality (RM) of Bifrost-Riverton
- Tammy Ciemny, Town of Arborg
- Donna Gislason, Arborg Curling Club
- Linda Wotton, Riverton-Bifrost Recreation Commission
- Janet Helgason, Arborg Legion Ladies’ Auxiliary
- Heather Einarson, Evergreen School Division
- The 2024 Youth Volunteerism Award went to Emmalyze Barkman, representing the Arborg Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission.

Barkman, 19, is only the second recipient of the award. She was nominated by the Arborg Skating Club, where she’s volunteered for the past 10 years — assisting skaters of all ages as a personal coach and helping out in the canteen. She continues to travel home from college on weekends to volunteer.

The honourees were celebrated for their long-standing service and deep commitment to the community. Each received a plaque along with a thoughtful handmade cake for them by Dawnett Oshway.

Reimer, principal at Moweena School, is involved in numerous community events such as the New Year’s Eve fireworks and bonfires. Known for his humility, he’s described as someone who “prefers to serve his community out of the spotlight.”

Ciemny is active in multiple local groups and events, supporting the Arborg Street Festival, the cheer board and more. She is praised for being friendly, efficient and passionate.

Gislason has volunteered with many



EXRESS PHOTO BY CORRINE EINARSSON

Gala organizers and Arborg Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission, left to right, Kyle Foster, Cory Koomen, Bailey Sigvaldason, Gordon Klym, Jan Larkin, Ron Johnston, Emily Weik, Dimitri Caldiera, Cindy Standsell and Rachel Orbanski.



Janet Helgason, right, of the Arborg Legion Ladies’ Auxiliary.



Tim Reimer, right, of the RM of Bifrost-Riverton.



Tammy Ciemny, right, of the Town of Arborg.



Donna Gislason of the Arborg Curling Club.



Heather Einarson of the Evergreen School Division.



Emmalyze Barkman, youth volunteerism of Arborg Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission.

organizations over the years, dedicating decades to the Arborg Curling Club. A bonspiel winner and coach, she shares her love of curling with the community.

Wotton, a retired teacher, is known for her dedication to keeping the

community beautiful. She picks up litter, maintains town flowers, tends the memorial garden and helps protect piping plover habitat at Sandy Bar. She also serves on the Ladies

> GALA, FROM PG. 14

Djorfung Ladies Aid and the Riverton Transportation & Heritage Centre Board.

Helgason has been the secretary of the Arborg Legion Ladies' Auxiliary for 43 years, tirelessly fundraising and supporting the group through her deep passion for helping others.

Einarson recently retired after 35 years of volunteer coaching. She worked with more than 450 volleyball players in Arborg and Riverton, sharing her enthusiasm for sport, sportsmanship and mentorship across two generations.

This year, the commission hoped to raise around \$20,000 from the gala to continue improving accessibility in the community. Foster said the evening is always a highlight and encourages other communities to host similar events.

"Volunteers do not get recognized as



Bailey Sigvaldason and guest speaker Paul Hamm.

they should," he said. "And they're the backbone of our communities."



Heather Einarson and her family.



Tim Reimer and his family.



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Young people's theatre spreads joy of Métis culture



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY JO-ANNE PROCTER

Manitoba Theatre for Young People (MTYP) is on the move. *Blue Beads and Blueberries* hit the road on March 3, stopping at Interlake Schools, bringing a unique blend of laughter and cultural celebration to schools across the province. By the time this tour wraps up in May, over 20,000 Manitobans will have experienced this heartwarming tale that transforms an ancient fairy tale into a vibrant ode to Métis culture.

The story begins with a heartfelt question from a father to his daughters: how much do they love him? This innocent inquiry quickly spirals into conflict when he feels slighted by the eldest daughter's response. In a moment of hurt, he sends her away, catapulting her into an unexpected journey. What follows is not just an adventure but a rich exploration of identity. As she navigates this world, beaded earrings and woven sashes come alive, symbolizing connection to heritage. Traditional jigs add rhythm to her quest for self-discovery.

MTYP proves that theatre has the power not only to entertain but also to educate. With their commitment to bringing impactful stories to children and youth, they are paving the way for future generations where young minds can explore the richness of theatre tailored specifically for them.

Selkirk RCMP respond to a fatal single motor vehicle collision

By Annaliese Meier

Selkirk RCMP responded to a report of a single vehicle collision on Highway 8 and Road 85 North in the RM of St. Andrews at approximately 1 a.m. on March 19.

Officers responded immediately and discovered a vehicle in the west ditch of Highway 8 with a lone male occupant.

Clandeboye Fire Department and EMS also responded to the scene where a 44-year-old male from Fraserwood was pronounced deceased. The driver was not wearing his seatbelt.

Selkirk RCMP, along with a forensic collision reconstructionist, continue to investigate.

Gimli Yacht Club to host Sail West Regional Championships July 17-20

By E Antonio

Gimli Yacht Club (GYC) is preparing to host the Sail West Regional Championships July 17-20. This regional competition will host athletes from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia as they try to claim victory in one of the six categories, with winning sailors qualifying for the Sail Canada National Championships later this year.

Charlie Burns, a long-time member of GYC, is serving as co-chair on this year's organizing committee for the Sail West Championships. A master sailor, Burns has extensive experience sailing the ILCA (commonly known as the Laser) 7 at numerous major competitions and was a coach at the 1992 Olympic Games.

"I have sailed all my life," said Burns. "Sailing is a life-long sport that everyone can grow to learn and love."

GYC is no stranger to world-class sailors, and around 60 boats are expected to race on Lake Winnipeg throughout the weekend.

Sailors of all ages will compete in four-kilometre races, with competitors under 15 participating in the Optimist class, while more experienced sailors will race in the ILCA 4, ILCA 6, ILCA 7, Club 420 and 29er categories.

During the event, talent scouts will be on the lookout for rising stars in the sailing world.

"During the first two days of the championships, athletes will work with national team coaches," Burns said. "They will work on drills, boat handling, tackling boat speed, wind shifts. ... Sailing is a self-policing sport and every individual needs to know the sport."

He explained that sailors must be aware of themselves and their surroundings at all times. This includes staying keen to their mental readiness, weather and atmospheric conditions.

Races will commence in the second half of the championships on July 19 and 20, with four races scheduled each day. An exact racing schedule will be released closer to the event.

Despite Lake Winnipeg being frozen for much of the year, the GYC and other Team Manitoba sailing athletes train and compete year-round. Jackie Spear, the head coach and executive director of Sail Manitoba, conducts dry-land training sessions throughout the winter for Team Manitoba athletes. Team members also participate in national training camps and have opportunities to compete in mid-winter regattas in Florida and California.

Spear hopes to organize a high-performance training camp for athletes before the Sail West Championships,



Black Sturgeon sailing member Liam Cox.

featuring national high-performance coaches.

"By the time ice is off here, they've already been sailing and are ready to go. There is no disadvantage coming from a snowy place," said Burns.

This year's Sail West Championships will celebrate Sail Manitoba's 60th anniversary, with many national coaching staff members, including Ryan Kelly, CEO of Sail Canada, in attendance for the celebration.

GYC opened in 1967, just two years after the establishment of Sail Manitoba, and has hosted many prestigious sailing competitions in the past.

"Gimli Yacht Club was started as a legacy sports facility after the Pan Am Games finished. Since then, it has hosted the World Wind Surfing Championships in 1994 and another Pan Am Games in 1999," explained Burns, adding that "it is a little gem right in the middle of the prairies." GYC has also hosted events for the Canada Summer Games and previous Sail West Championships.

In December 2024, GYC was designated as Sail Canada's fourth national training centre, and the Sail West Championships will also commemorate this significant achievement.

"Getting this status is huge for us as there are only four centres in all of Canada. We have been doing a lot of fundraising to make sure we have all the right equipment in place to host national team events right here in the Interlake. It is such a great accomplishment for the Yacht Club to be able to host these."

The Sail West Regional Championships will take place at the Gimli Yacht Club July 17-20 and spectators are invited to watch any day of the event.

Burns says the best time to catch the sailors is between 9 and 10 a.m. when they leave shore or around 3 p.m. as they return for the day.



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Gimli Yacht Club will host sailors from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia for the Sail West Regional Championships July 17-20.

You can watch all the action take place at GYC, 95 1 Ave.

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It's that time of year again! The season of tax forms, and that overwhelming feeling of "Did I do this right?" You could spend hours wrestling with complicated deductions, or you could do yourself a favour and let a tax professional handle it. After all, you're a pro at your job, so why not let the experts be pros at tax filing?

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Lakeshore School Division approves 2025–26 operating budget

By Becca Myskiw

Lakeshore School Division (LSD) has approved its budget for the 2025–26 school year.

Serving the communities of Ashern, Eriksdale, Fisher Branch, Inwood, Lundar, Moosehorn, Broad Valley Colony and Marble Ridge Colony, the division had 1,010 students as of Sept. 30, 2024.

Donald Nikkel, superintendent of human resources, policy and alternative programming for LSD, said the board takes a “student-first approach with an overarching question of “Where will funding have the greatest positive impact for kids?”

“From that starting point, we then begin a process of gathering data and input,” he said. “We involve our school leadership directly in determining what areas are priorities, and we also engage the broader community through surveys and our annual Vision and Voice meeting.”

One survey asked respondents to rank subject areas in order of priority for the upcoming school year. Among the highest priorities were literacy, numeracy, hands-on skills, critical thinking, character traits, physical education, and career preparation and work experience. Indigenous ways of knowing and arts were rated among the lowest.

Another question asked which aspects of the education system mat-

ter most to respondents. Class size ranked first, followed by in-person university entrance courses, hands-on programming, school buildings, arts, second language courses and bus routes.

Fifty-seven per cent of respondents said they wanted the board to “adjust property taxes to maintain current programming,” while 25 per cent wanted the board to “increase property taxes to expand programming,” and 18 per cent favoured decreasing taxes and cutting programming.

INCLUDED IN THE 2025–26 BUDGET BASELINE EXPENDITURES ARE:

- Maintaining 2024–25 teacher and clinician staffing levels
- Maintaining educational assistant, custodian and secretary staffing
- Maintaining division office staffing
- Maintaining 26 bus routes
- Adding \$200,000 to the bus reserve

“Some key points from this budget are that we are maintaining our staffing and services across the division,” said Nikkel. “There have been small increases in certain areas, but overall, it is a ‘status quo’ budget in terms of

most budget items. With the exception of last year, our division is coming out of a decade of steady cuts to staffing, and reaching a point of stability will be greatly beneficial to our students.”

The division has prioritized providing stable services to its students and communities, with a local tax increase Nikkel described as in line with inflation. Due to changes to the provincial education tax rebate system, Nikkel said most homeowners with assessed values below \$300,000 will pay little to no education property tax.

“This means most local homeowners will see significant savings in the year to come,” he said.

Although the 2025–26 budget closely resembles last year’s, it includes some increases:

- Teacher wage increases of three per cent plus one per cent
- Support staff and division office wage increases of three per cent plus adjustments
- Insurance cost increases of two to three per cent
- An additional \$7,000 for science curriculum
- Expansion of the employee assistance program for support staff
- An additional half hour of secretary time at schools

Uncertainty around future tariffs is a concern for the division. Nikkel said most, if not all, school buses are man-



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Don Nikkel, Superintendent of human resources, policy and alternative program for LSD.

ufactured in the U.S., meaning potential tariff impacts and cost increases could significantly affect future budgets.

“While our board was able to maintain services with a moderate increase to total local taxation rates, we know there is a significant amount of instability in the current political landscape,” he said. “We are also currently heavily relying on reserve funds to keep taxation rates low, and at some point, these funds will be depleted — which will, in effect, reduce the options our board has.”

‘Grandparent scam’ targets Interlake woman

By Gloria Thomas

A local woman is warning others after nearly falling victim to a “grandparent scam” that’s been making the rounds in communities across Canada.

On the afternoon of March 26, Ann Bezdiety of the Interlake region received a phone call around 2:30 p.m. from a person claiming to be her grandson.

“Hello Grandma, how are you?” said a raspy voice on the line. Bezdiety responded, “I’m fine,” though she didn’t recognize the voice.

When the caller asked if she knew who it was, she guessed, “Richard?” — the name of her actual grandson.

“Yeah Grandma, it’s me. I got sick overnight and can hardly speak,” the voice replied. “Do you have a few minutes? I have something embarrassing to talk to you about.”

What followed was a story Bezdiety found difficult to believe — but her concern for her grandson kept her

listening.

The caller claimed he had asked a friend to drive him to the hospital, but on the way, they were involved in a minor collision. Police responded and, upon searching the vehicle, allegedly discovered drugs in the trunk. The caller said he was arrested along with his friend and was now being held at a detention centre.

“They want \$6,000 for bail,” the voice said. “You can talk to my lawyer, Samuel Smith. He’s right here. Don’t hang up — I can’t make another call.”

A man identifying himself as “lawyer Samuel Smith” then came on the line, outlining several ways to send the money, including wire transfer, certified cheque, direct deposit or via a “processing agent,” which he said was the quickest option. He told Bezdiety she had until 6 p.m. to arrange the payment and left a phone number: 1-250-457-3493.

Before the call ended, the raspy-voiced caller came back on the line and warned Bezdiety not to speak to anyone about the situation, claiming there was a gag order in place.

Distressed, Bezdiety began preparing to withdraw the money. Her husband, Richard, grew suspicious and decided to call their grandson on his cellphone. When there was no answer, they feared the worst — until Richard soon called back, saying he had just left the gym and was on his way home.

“I was so relieved,” Bezdiety said. “Who knows what would have happened? I guess I would have been out \$6,000.”

Her grandson was shaken by the incident but grateful they checked with him before taking action.

Bezdiety hopes sharing her story will prevent others from being taken in by similar scams.

“I would do anything for my grand-

kids, and I was ready to get money out for those jerks,” she said, her voice trembling. “I don’t want this to happen to anyone.”

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM GRANDPARENT SCAMS:

- Be suspicious — Scammers can be convincing. Don’t assume a caller is who they claim to be.
- Don’t be afraid to say no — If something feels off, hang up and verify the situation with someone you trust.
- Ask questions — Verify the caller’s identity by asking for personal details only your real family member would know.
- Guard your information — Never give out personal, financial or government ID information.
- Report it — If you suspect a scam, contact your local police department.

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Pauls helps Bobcats make history with national title

By Kieran Reimer

The Brandon Bobcats were never supposed to win it all. Not as the eighth seed. Not against the top teams in the country. But led by outside hitter Liam Pauls, the host team pulled off a stunning Cinderella run to capture their first-ever U Sports men's volleyball national championship.

"Winning was everything to us," said Pauls, 20, following the victory. "We weren't just here to compete — we came to win."

The Bobcats knew that though they were the eighth seed, they had a group capable of beating any team in the country.

And Pauls and the Bobcats made good on their opportunity.

"We were definitely viewed as an underdog," Pauls said, "but we knew we could beat all those teams. We had just an unreal amount of faith and trust in one other. That's been our motto since the start of the year - belief, because at the start of the year a lot of people didn't think we were going to win Nationals or even make it out of the quarterfinals so whatever it says on paper, doesn't tell the full story."

The Bobcats' improbable journey began at home during the 2025 U Sports Men's Volleyball Championship, held March 21-23 at the Healthy Living Centre in Brandon. Their opening

match - A showdown with the top-ranked Winnipeg Wesmen — the very team Pauls' father once helped lead to back-to-back national titles in the 1980s.

Brandon stunned their provincial rivals in straight sets (25-19, 25-19, 25-22), sending shockwaves through the tournament and igniting belief that the underdogs might just be for real.

After that came a gritty semi-final comeback against No. 5 Saskatchewan. Down two sets, the Bobcats clawed back to win the next three, sealing the match 3-2 (21-25, 20-25, 25-23, 25-15, 15-10) and punching their ticket to the final.

"WINNING WAS EVERYTHING TO US."

Their opponents: the defending national champions and No. 2-ranked Alberta Golden Bears.

After splitting the first two sets, Brandon surged ahead, taking the third in extra points and dominating the fourth to win the title (25-20, 22-25, 28-26, 25-17) in front of a raucous home crowd.

The moment was years in the making for Pauls, a native of Balmoral, who joined the Bobcats in 2022 after standout performances with the Junior Bisons and Stonewall Collegiate. His father, Henry Pauls, won national titles with Winnipeg in 1986 and 1987 — and Liam had long dreamt of following in his footsteps.



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY AIDAN FROESE PHOTOGRAPHY

Balmoral's Liam Pauls hoists the national championship trophy after leading the eighth-seeded Brandon Bobcats to a historic U Sports men's volleyball title on home court.

"It's a feeling you'll never forget for the rest of your life," said the elder Pauls. "He's won a championship with a club team before, but not at the university level — and to do it in Brandon, where the whole city is behind them, it's something really special. Kudos to Brandon."

For Henry, watching his son lift the trophy was as emotional as it was unforgettable.

"It was just euphoria," he said. "The fans were crazy the whole weekend, and we were right in there with them — loud and proud. I think we had a little something to do with them doing well. The fans helped carry them." "I knew Brandon was hosting when I committed," Pauls said. "That opportunity to win it all at home was in the back of my mind from day one."

After Brandon failed to qualify for nationals in his first two seasons, the 2024-25 season brought a sure fire chance to play in the tournament at the end of the season.

Pauls made the most of it. He led the Bobcats with 12 kills in the final and was named to the Championship All-Star Team alongside teammate Phillip Lauter, who earned tournament MVP honours. Brandon's J.J. Love and Alberta's Isaac Heslinga were named Mikasa Players of the Game.

Pauls also had a breakout 2024-25 campaign, setting career highs across multiple statistical categories and earning Canada West Player of the Week on Nov. 12. But for him, it's never been about personal accolades.

"Just getting better each time I touch the volleyball. That's my whole goal is, I'm not really too fixated on individual awards and stuff, but just getting better. I just have fun doing that, playing volleyball, and just trying to be the best I can be. When that stuff comes along it's nice, but just working hard in practice, we've got great coaches here in Brandon and a lot of good teammates that can help me out so I'd say it's a combination of those."

Now a national champion, Pauls still has two years of eligibility remaining. If this season proved anything, it's that he and the Bobcats won't be overlooked again.

But before Pauls gets ready to go for a repeat next season, he will hope to represent his country in volleyball on the national stage.

In May, Pauls will tryout for Volleyball Canada's Next Gen Program in Gatineau, QC.

If selected, Pauls will represent Canada at the XVIII Pan-American Cup this summer in Mexico.



Championship All star, Liam Pauls goes high for a kill at the men's national volleyball championships. The Bobcats stunned top-ranked opponents en route to their first-ever U Sports crown.

Interlake trio helps Cougars capture second at national championship

By Annaliese Meier

A trio of Interlake hockey players helped the Assiniboine Community College Cougars cap off a dominant season with a second place finish at the American Collegiate Hockey Association's (ACHA) Women's Division II (W2) Championship in St. Louis, Mo., on March 25.

Goaltender Rachel Halldorson, along with sisters Keely and Kylee Emms-Finnsson of Arborg — a forward and a defenceman, respectively — were key contributors on a Cougars roster that finished the regular season with a 22-2-2 record. Assiniboine entered nationals as the top-ranked team in the West Region and backed up that seeding with a strong showing at the tournament.

The Cougars opened the event on March 21 with a 4-1 win over Providence College. After a scoreless first period, Madison Haliuk and Payton Malchuk scored in the second to take control. Haliuk added another in the third before Kasey Fouillard closed out the win. Goaltender Payton Murray made 18 saves.

In Game 2, the Cougars topped Central Michigan University 5-2, with Kylee Emms-Finnsson collecting two assists. Gracie Carels opened the scoring, followed by goals from Mya Pearce, Brooklyn Franklin and Kasey Fouillard in the second period. Lexy Waddell added one more in the third, while Murray again earned the win with 18 saves.

In their final round-robin game, Assiniboine overpowered Eastern Michigan University 7-1. The Cougars jumped out early and never let up, with four different players scoring. Malchuk led the way with four goals, while Halldorson earned the win in goal, allowing just one.

The semifinal against the United States Naval Academy was a tighter contest. The Cougars relied on strong defensive play and goaltending to edge out a 2-1 win and punch their ticket to the national final.

"We faced a lot of adversity, particularly against a good Navy team in the semifinal, but we never let up, and you have to respect athletes who never say quit," said coach Charles Tweed.

In the championship game, Assiniboine met a strong Sault College squad and fell 6-2 despite a competitive effort. The loss marked the Cougars' first of the tournament and just their third regulation loss of the season.

"We felt good going into the championship final, but we knew it was going to be tough against Sault," said Tweed.

"We beat them earlier in the season, but in the championship final it was their day."

Still, the second-place finish was an impressive capstone to a year that saw the Cougars climb to national contender status. The team finished among the top 16 programs out of 82 eligible schools competing across the U.S. collegiate system.

Halldorson, a former Interlake Lightning AAA goaltender, appeared in 12 regular-season games and finished with 10 wins, two losses and a .963 save percentage. She added two playoff wins and posted a .900 save percentage in tournament play. She balances hockey and her early childhood education studies.

"Nationals was a great experience," said Halldorson. "I was able to play a higher level with Team Manitoba, but this tournament was a whole new experience."



From the Interlake, left to right, Kylee Emms-Finnsson, Rachel Halldorson (goaltender) and Keely Emms-Finnsson.

Halldorson was proud to be a Cougar but nervous stepping onto the ice in the finals.

Tweed had high praise for his first-year goaltender. "Rachel had an awesome year for the Cougars, and she has that intangible skill as a goaltender to make the big save at the right moment. She was named the top goaltender in the league, and she earned that through hard work and dedication in practice. Every time Rachel takes the net, you know she is going to give it her best and give your team a chance to win. She's a great teammate, an incredibly kind person and knows how to make people laugh."

Kylee Emms-Finnsson had six goals and eight assists in 25 games and is studying agribusiness.

"Once she graduates Kylee plans to go into human resource management, which is a one-year course. She is working with the athletic and Peters School of Business staff to spread the course over two years so she can continue in the hockey program."

"I'll definitely remember the family I have made during my college experience."

Kylee has so many great memories from this season, and doesn't have one specific moment but said the family the team created is memorable along with playing on the national stage.

"The feeling of being in the top 16 teams out of 82 in the whole league is something I can't even describe. It is just such an unreal feeling being there to compete for a national championship and it's such an accomplishment to even be there at all," said Kylee.

"Kylee was one of our best players on defence this year and played some of her best hockey at nationals when it mattered most," said Tweed.

Sister Keely, also in the agribusiness program, added five goals and 10 assists in 24 games. She wore an "A" for the team this season, and according to Tweed, her leadership was key during difficult moments.

"This group was special," said Keely. "From bus rides and being in the rink, to all the time we spent together on off days or in the gym. I've played with some of these girls for three years now. We came in

together and have created such special bond. Getting this amazing opportunity with my sister, it's been lots of fun playing together and it's going to be a really cool memory to look back on."

Coach Tweed shared a few comments about his star forward.

"Keely is the ultimate competitor, and she will be successful in anything she chooses to do in the future," said Tweed. "At big moments in the year, Keely came through for our team and she led by example on and off the ice all season."

Tweed was proud of how the team grew and evolved throughout the year.

"We trusted, respected and supported each other on and off the ice. We always stuck up for each other and made sure that no one came between us and our goals as a team. I'm incredibly proud of the season we had on the ice, but, more importantly, I'm proud of the growth and love that our group showed throughout the season. There are always going to be challenges within a season, but we stuck together, never quit and showed the heart of champions."

Tweed is already looking ahead to next season with the addition of Brook Cyr, who played for the Interlake Lightning this past season.

"The Cougars are lucky to have an abundance of talented athletes in Manitoba, which means we never rebuild — we reload. We're excited about a new group of skaters coming to Assiniboine. When you attract good athletes — but, more importantly, high-character people — you know that the program will always be in good hands."

For Keely Emms-Finnsson, the championship game marked the end of her competitive hockey career.

"It was surreal to be on the ice for the final," she said. "I knew it was going to be the last time I laced up my skates with the Cougars — and competitively — so I was proud of everything we accomplished. We worked so hard to get there, and even though we came up short, I wouldn't have wanted to play that last game with anyone else."

The team's success drew strong support from fans who followed them to St. Louis. And in an unexpected postscript to their trip, the team crossed paths with country music star Kane Brown at the Minneapolis airport. Brown, en route to Winnipeg for a concert, surprised the team with 16 tickets to the show.

When we asked Keely to share what happened at the airport with Kane Brown, she said, "It was a very quick interaction," said Keely Emms-Finnsson. "He walked past our terminal and a couple of us second-guessed ourselves like, 'Was that actually him?' Once we realized it was, some of the girls went and asked for a photo, and the rest of us followed. When we landed in Winnipeg, he came over while we were going through customs and his manager asked if anyone was going to the concert. A couple of girls were going to buy tickets until he said, 'No — you're all going.' There were lots of happy faces. After coming so far and falling just short, it felt like good karma for the sportsmanship and hard work we'd shown all year."

While the Cougars fell just short of a national title, their 2024-25 campaign set a new benchmark for the program — one built on depth, consistency and contributions from across the roster, including a strong Interlake presence.

LSD hockey academy program expanding for 2025–26 school year

By Becca Myskiw

After a successful pilot year that boosted student engagement and attendance, Lakeshore School Division (LSD) is expanding its hockey academy for the 2025–26 school year.

The academy launched in September 2024, introduced by teacher Tyler Medeiros, who approached the board with a proposal to share his passion for hockey through a specialized program. After researching similar initiatives across the province and gauging interest in the Eriksdale area, LSD moved forward with a pilot.

“We know that when kids are passionate about what they’re learning in school, often we’ll see things like attendance and engagement go up, which is important,” said Donald Nikkel, superintendent of human resources, policy and alternative programming with LSD. “And we’ve seen that play out over the last year.”

Eriksdale School had a large Grade 5/6 cohort for the 2024–25 school year — enough to require three separate classrooms. As a result, LSD offered the academy to that age group and 20 students enrolled. Since then, they’ve spent much of the year learning at Lundar Arena, with nearly an hour on the ice each day and the remainder of their time in a classroom at the facility, following the regular curriculum

taught by certified teachers.

“That’s where a lot of the value is,” said Nikkel. “They’re able to see the person on the ice working, coaching them, and they’re also to see that person in a different light when they’re back in the classroom when they get excited about a book they’re reading.”

Daily on-ice sessions include drills focused on skill development, skating, puck control, passing and scrimmages. Academic lessons are often linked to hockey-related content — students estimate how many boards circle the rink in math class or research the history of NHL players in language arts.

“Those types of things bring the hockey piece right down to the academics,” said Nikkel. “It’s about literacy and numeracy too.”

Medeiros said he’s seen each student grow both on and off the ice this year. He wanted to give them the same opportunities other students in the province have through similar academies — and said the program’s first year has been a success.

“These teachers bring a passion to it and the kids get a sense of that too,” said Nikkel.

Although the academy students are based at the arena, LSD has made efforts to keep them connected to the larger school community. They



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

The LSD hockey academy program is expanding for the 2025-26 school year after a successful first year.

continue to take part in the annual Christmas concert, extracurricular sports and school-wide events. Eriksdale students also visited the arena recently to see what their academy classmates do each day.

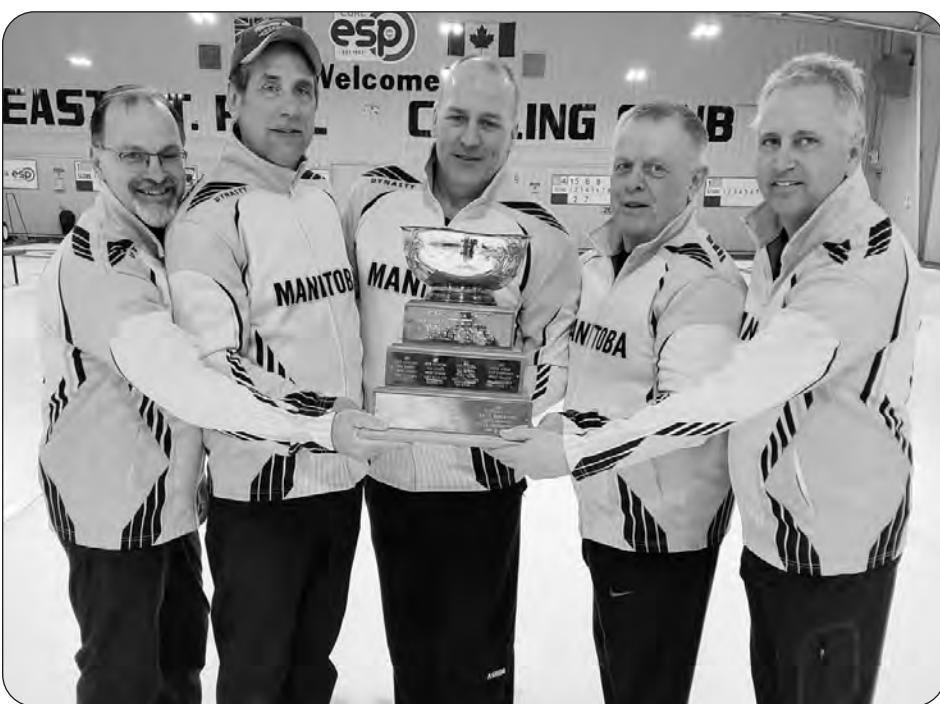
Because of the program’s success, LSD will expand the academy to include students in Grades 5/6 and 7/8 in the 2025–26 school year. Students from across the division can apply, regardless of which school they at-

tend. The scope of the expansion will depend on demand, and more details will be released as enrolment numbers are finalized.

“It really is about being able to engage the students,” said Nikkel. “That’s what it’s all about when it comes down to it, because they won’t learn unless they’re engaged.”

Applications are now open through the division’s website.

Provincial champions



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Team Boehmer of the Petersfield Curling Club won the 2025 Strathcona Trust Senior Men’s provincial championship. Pictured left to right are skip Dave Boehmer, third Dale Lott, second Sean Bracken, lead George Hacking and alternate Scott Szydluk. The team will represent Manitoba at the 2025 Canadian Senior Curling Championships in Ottawa from Nov. 29 to Dec. 6.

Eagles soar to regional win



EXPRESS PHOTO BY TANYA JOHNSON

The Riverton Eagles celebrate after winning the 2024–2025 Interlake Minor Hockey U11 ‘B’ Regional Championship. The Eagles defeated the Arborg Falcons in a best-of-three final series, taking Game 1 with an 8–7 win in Riverton and securing the banner with a 10–8 victory in Game 2 in Arborg. Pictured left to right: Wyatt Sigurdson, Finn Knutson, Mays Dueck, Jaxx Parada, Greyson Charrier, Nash Cooper, Lincoln Kaltack, Carl Barkey, Reid Johnson, Jack Kornelsen, Prestly Dubois, Porter Egesz. Missing from picture: Aynsley Sigurdson, Autumn Owen, Lennox Kornelsen. Coaches, not shown, include Ross Cooper, Mike Johnson and Ryan Barkey.

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FARMLAND FOR RENT

Ukrainian Farmers Co-operative Ltd.



Farmland for rent by tender, SW 19-24-1W, approximately 110 crop able acres, tender will be for the 2025 cropping season only, lease agreement can be viewed at our office after April 10th, sealed tender to be delivered to Sandra Lappage, General Manager no later than 6PM April 23rd, highest tender not necessarily accepted.

**Ukrainian Farmers Co-operative Ltd,
Box 160, Fisher Branch, Mb, R0C-0Z0**

MORTGAGE SALE

The land and building known as 21 Aileen Avenue, R.M. of Gimli, Manitoba, as described in Certificate of Title No. 2682044/1, will be sold by public auction by a Licensed Auctioneer on, April 23, 2025, at 10:30 a.m.

The auction sale will be held by way of video or teleconference.

There will be no in-person attendees at the auction.

In order to participate you must pre-register at least 24 hours prior to the auction by contacting Keith A. Senden at either (204) 957-8382 or auctions@fillmoreriley.com

The Vendor is informed that the property consists of a 2 storey seasonal cottage approximately 945 square feet, with living room, kitchen, 4 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, on a lot approximately 90 feet x 200 feet. The property is serviced by a well and holding tank, particulars unknown. The property is located at the corner of Lakeshore and Aileen. Take Hwy. 9, which turns into Hwy. 222, for approximately 10.5 miles North of Gimli to Rudy's Road, East on Rudy's Road to Lakeshore Drive, South on Lakeshore Drive to Aileen Avenue.

Realty taxes (excluding any accruing water charges) are paid to December 31, 2023.

Prior Charges: NIL.

TERMS OF SALE

A deposit of \$15,000.00 by way of cash, certified cheque or bank draft payable to Fillmore Riley LLP, and the balance according to conditions which will be available for public view at the Auctioneer's address above prior to the auction. The property will be sold subject to a Reserve Bid of \$93,000.00 plus such other additional and incidental costs which may be incurred by the Vendor from the 26th day of March, 2025 to the date of auction and which costs will be announced prior to the commencement of the sale.

The auction sale will be conducted pursuant to an Order for Sale issued by the District Registrar. Certain parties may be prohibited from purchasing the property, including but not limited to, parties who by virtue of their employment or relationship to a person involved in the sale process would have special knowledge of the circumstances pertaining to the sale. For more information and a list of prohibited purchasers please visit: www.teranetmanitoba.ca

Should the successful bidder have attended by teleconference and/or video conference, the bidder will have 24 hours to execute the Auction Sale Conditions and to provide them together with the deposit to our office as set out below.

Further information may be obtained from:

FILLMORE RILEY LLP
Barristers and Solicitors
1700 - 360 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3Z3

File No. 416881-49/KAS /sw (mca)
Attention: KEITH A. SENDEN
Phone: 204-957-8382
Email: auctions@fillmoreriley.com

EMPLOYMENT

- **CHEF OR COOK** (\$20-25/HR W/EXPERIENCE)
 - **CASHIER • BARTENDER**
 - **MANAGER**
 - **KARAOKE DJ WANTED** (equipment supplied)
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-Above Average Wages



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Email: office@narrowsunsetlodge.com
Phone 204-981-2831
or 204-467-8507

News Tips? call the Express 204-467-5836



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Where: Fisher Branch Location

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- Under the direction of management, to service an existing book of insurance business including Personal Lines, Farm, and Commercial Insurance, among others.
- Procuring new business across all lines.
- Travelling between locations for work when required, including site visits to clients' premises.
- Completing Autopac transactions when required.

Skills & Requirements:

- A valid class 5 Driver's license and access to a vehicle.
- A punctual, professional demeanor and a high level of personal integrity.
- A valid level 1 Insurance Broker's license is preferred but not required. A commitment to obtaining a level 2 Insurance Broker's license in a timely fashion will be required.
- Experience working within a customer service-based industry, office, or sales environment is preferred.
- An aptitude for learning and can lead by example.
- Fluent with Microsoft Office (Outlook, Word, Excel) and other Windows based programs, as well as experience troubleshooting computer/networking issues is highly important.
- A criminal record check will be required.

Freedom West Insurance Solutions would like to hire a new member who enjoys small town life and is eager to serve their local community by joining our family run and team-based brokerage. We offer competitive wages, a health care spending account, and mileage reimbursement for site visits, with paid sick days included as well. We are willing to work with new hires to help you obtain the pertinent licensing and begin your career in the insurance industry! For more information on our brokerage, please visit our website at www.freedomwestinsurance.com. We ask that applicants submit their resume with three references by April 30, 2025.

If you believe yourself a good fit for this position, please submit your resume to dsmith@freedomwestinsurance.com

Dwayne Smith - Owner/Manager

We thank all applicants for their interest, however only those under consideration will be contacted.

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LIVESTOCK

Black Angus yearling bull sired by Hamco Homegrown for sale. Birth weight 82 lbs. Moderate frame, growth and performance. Semen tested. Parent Verified with CAA. Red Angus yearling bull, birth weight 88 lbs., recommended for cows. Delivery available. For more info. call 1-204-861-0126.

APARTMENT FOR RENT

Tollak Place has 1 & 2 bedroom suites, located at 40 Eveline Street. Spacious suites, with F/S, A/C, storage areas and large balconies; utilities are included, parking is extra. Tollak 2 is a 55 plus bldg., river view apts. with central air, F/S, DW & microwave; large storage area off the kitchen and a balcony; utilities and parking extra. Call the onsite office 204-482-2751 for AVAILABILITY.

FARM MACHINERY

For sale: 4 of 18.4-38 Kelly Springfield Tractor Tires mounted on heavy duty 9 hole rims, excellent condition. Ph. 204-781-7937.

LIVESTOCK



SPRUCE RIDGE STOCK Farms at Ashern has a good selection of 2 yr old and yearling Angus bulls on offer. These are big growthy bulls developed on TMR silage based ration in 15 acre runs to ensure longevity. Perfect feet, strong joints, moderate birth, combined with top of the breed growth. These are hard muscled bulls sired by some of the top A. I. bulls in Canada. Semen tested, delivered when needed, guaranteed. Call Ross and Helen Jerney and Family. 204-768-0333

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Round hardcore bales, 1st & 2nd cut, alfalfa & brome grass. Call 204-461-0722.

For sale: wrapped haylage/mixed grass dry bales. Nutrient tested. No rain. Call 204-643-5541.

FISHING

Lake Winnipeg channel area fishing quota for sale. Spring quota \$7/lb. Call 204-223-5897.

PESTICIDE NOTICE

Public Notice is hereby given that the Lunder Co-Op Golf & Country Club intends to conduct the following Pesticide Control Programs during 2025.

1. To control noxious weeds & turf grass diseases. The projected dates of application will be from May 1, 2025 to November 1, 2025. The herbicides & fungicides to be used include:

- Instarata
- Banner Maxx
- Vantage Plus Max II
- Renovo
- Heritage
- Par III
- Eagle Wsp
- Secure

The public may send written submissions or objections within 15 days of the publication of the notice to the department below. Environmental & Climate Change Environmental Approvals Branch 14 Fultz Boulevard (Box 35) Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3Y 0L6

Classified booking deadline is Monday at NOON prior to Thursday's publication Please Call 204-467-5836

Classifieds



WATER TREATMENT

Pentair softeners. Iron removers. Reverse osmosis systems \$310. All sizes water housings and filters. Well-rite 20 gallon pressure tank \$295. Res Care softener cleaner \$30. All Seasons 204-661-8581.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dauphin Gun & Hobby Show April 12th, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. & April 13th, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. 8th Avenue Hall. For info. call Victor 204-444-4690.

HELP WANTED

Isfeld Villa, 34 Church Bay Lane, in Winnipeg Beach hiring p/t cleaner 9 hours a week, all equip. provided for common areas (not suites). Areas incl: hallways, stairwells, common bathrooms, laundry, at \$16/hour. Please send a resume with references and cover letter to dennis@lifelease.ca

HELP WANTED

Chef or Cook (\$20-25/hr with experience), Cashier, Bartender, Manager, Karaoke DJ (equipment supplied). Full-time seasonal positions, living quarters, above average wages. Contact Irv 204-981-2831 or 204-467-8507 or email: office@narrowssunsetlodge.com

WANTED

Firearms wanted. Looking for all unwanted firearms. Fully licensed for both non-restricted and restricted. Anywhere from individual items to estates. Cash buyer, paying top dollar. Please call or text Adam at 204-795-2850.

Wanted - varmints/coyote gun, preferably a 223 semi automatic or .22 calibre Winchester mag WRM. Call 204-643-5134, leave detailed message.

NOTICES

URGENT PRESS RELEASES - Have a newsworthy item to announce? An exciting change in operations? Though we cannot guarantee publication, MCNA will get the information into the right hands for **ONLY \$35 + GST/HST**. Call MCNA 204-947-1691 for more information. See www.mcna.com under the "Types of Advertising" tab for more details.



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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Vac Truck Operator

Gimli Septic Service Ltd. has an opening for a vac truck operator for our Waste Water removal team. We currently have 1 full-time opening starting mid-April. The shop is located in Sandy Hook and will be the shift start location. Experience is welcome but willing to train the right candidate.

Starting wage for Class 5 \$20/hr with a per tank premium

Applicants must: -Maintain a Class 5 license -Demonstrate good truck driving ability with a clean driving record -Have the ability to lift 65lbs as the position requires some recurring physical labor -Ability to work independently -Be willing to work Saturday as part of regular scheduled shifts -Working cell phone for daily task updates -Other duties as assigned

Benefits are offered after 3 months worked.

For all inquiries please reply by email to:
gimliseptic@gmail.com

LIQUOR LICENCE APPLICATION PUBLIC NOTICE HONEY SHEEP MEADERY INC.,

operating as **HONEY SHEEP MEADERY** at **6130 ROAD 108 NE FRASERWOOD, MANITOBA R0C 1A0**
has applied for **MANUFACTURER'S LICENCE WITH RETAIL ENDORSEMENT**
to sell liquor from **8:00 A.M. to 12:00 MIDNIGHT MONDAY TO SUNDAY 1:00 P.M. to 12:00 MIDNIGHT REMEMBRANCE DAY**

Citizen and community input is an important part of the application process.

Please contact the Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba at 204-927-5300, if you have questions about this application.

Please contact your municipality if you have questions about zoning bylaws and requirements.

If you want to make a formal objection to this application, please send us your objection in writing by 4:30 p.m.

14 DAYS FOLLOWING THE PUBLICATION OF THIS ADVERTISEMENT

You can email, mail or fax your objection. Please include your contact information.

Email: objection@LGCAmb.ca
Mail: LGCA Objections
1055 Milt Stegall Drive
Winnipeg, MB R3G 0Z6
Fax: 204-927-5385

- We respond to all formal objections and will work to resolve objections before issuing a licence.
- A copy of the objection, including the name of the person who submits the objection, will be provided to the licence applicant.
- Each person who submits an objection will be advised in writing of the outcome to the licence application.



MUNICIPALITY OF BIFROST-RIVERTON NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

OF PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE FOR MUNICIPAL BY-ELECTION Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton

Please be advised that a Municipal By-election will be held on June 18, 2025 for

COUNCILLOR Ward 1

Prospective municipal election candidates must register with the Senior Election Official (SEO) during the registration period before they may begin to accept contributions, incur expenses, fundraise or borrow money for their campaign.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I will be receiving candidate registrations:

Between April 11, 2025 and May 13, 2025

at the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton office, 329 River Rd, Arborg, during the regular hours of business.

To obtain a registration form contact the SEO at the email or telephone number listed below.

Jan Larkin, SEO
Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton
204-641-0329
janlar5001@gmail.com

Dated at Bifrost-Riverton on April 3, 2025



MUNICIPALITY OF BIFROST-RIVERTON PUBLIC NOTICE 2025 Financial Plan

Public Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 162(2) of *The Municipal Act* that the Council of the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton shall hold a Public Hearing to present the Financial Plan for the fiscal year 2025 on:

Thursday, May 8th, 2025 at 9:15 A.M.
Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton Municipal Office
329 River Road, Arborg, MB

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to allow any interested person to make representation, ask questions or register an objection in respect to the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton's 2025 Financial Plan.

Copies of the Financial Plan will be available Monday, May 5th at the Municipal office.

Dated this 31st day of March, 2025.

Larissa Love
Chief Administrative Officer
Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton

THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF ARMSTRONG PUBLIC HEARING

REGARDING THE 2025 FINANCIAL PLAN

In accordance with Section 162(2) of *The Municipal Act* the Rural Municipality of Armstrong shall hold a PUBLIC HEARING to present the 2025 Financial Plan for the Municipality on:

Thursday, April 10, 2025 at 7:00 P.M.
FRASERWOOD HALL
10140 PR 231 Fraserwood, MB

The Rural Municipality of Armstrong 2025 Financial Plan consists of:

- 1) The 2025 Operating Budget,
- 2) The 2025 Capital Budget,
- 3) An estimate of the Operating Revenue and Expenditures for the following fiscal year (2025), and
- 4) A five (5) year Capital Expenditure Program (2026-2030)

The purpose of the PUBLIC HEARING is to allow any interested person to make representation, ask questions, or register an objection in respect of the Rural Municipality of Armstrong 2025 Financial Plan.

Copies of the Financial Plan will be available for review and may be examined by any person on the RM of Armstrong website at www.rmofarmstrong.com or at the Municipal Office at Lot 55 Highway 17, Inwood, Manitoba during regular office hours.

Following the Financial Plan presentation and dependent on time, Council will open a discussion regarding ward boundaries and possible changes to council structure.

Dated this 11th day of March, 2025

Colleen Mayer

Chief Administrative Officer
Rural Municipality of Armstrong

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Man Cave Auction
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McSherryAuction.com
204-467-1858
 or **204-886-7027**
mcsherryltd@gmail.com



MUNICIPALITY OF BIFROST-RIVERTON TENDERS

The Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton invites tenders for each of the following;

Traffic Gravel Supply Tender

- 1" down crushed limestone traffic gravel, Class "A". Preference will be given to a supply location's near the North East, South West and the Vidir / Rosenburg areas of the Municipality.

The above tenders are to be supplied and to be on site and available for distribution by May 23, 2025.

- 1 year or 3 year agreements will be accepted as per the tender details.

Gravel Hauling Tenders

The Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton invites tenders for the following;

-Loading, hauling and depositing of traffic gravel of app. 55,000 Cubic Yrds.

Roadside Mowing Tenders

The Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton requires approximately 600 miles of roadway to be cut on both sides (1200 miles total) (per Tender).

Right of Way Mowing Tenders

The Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton requires approximately 600 miles of Right of Way to be cut on both sides (1200 miles total) (per Tender).

Each tender should be individually marked. All TENDER documents are available from the Municipal Office or on the Website. Sealed and clearly marked submissions will be accepted by the undersigned at the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton office, located at 329 River Road, Arborg, until 12:00 p.m. on April 9, 2025.

The Municipality reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive irregularities and informalities therein, and award the tender in the best interest of the Municipality in its sole discretion.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Regarding the 2025 Financial Plan

Public Notice is hereby given pursuant to Subsection 162(2) of *The Municipal Act*, that the Council of the R.M. of Grahamdale intends to present its Financial Plan for the fiscal year 2025 at a Public Hearing being held at the RM of Grahamdale Municipal Office, 23 Government Road, in Moosehorn, MB on Wednesday, April 23, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

The purpose of this Public Hearing is to allow any interested person to make representation, ask questions or register an objection to the Financial Plan as provided.

Copies of the Financial Plan will be available for review on Monday, April 14, 2025 and may be examined by any person during regular office hours at the Municipal Office or on our website at www.grahamdale.ca.

Public participation can be met through interactive technology or by written submission. Please contact our office for more information Ph: 204-768-2858 or email: info@grahamdale.ca

Dated this 17th day of March, 2025.

Shelly Schwitek, CMMA
 Chief Administrative Officer
 R.M. of Grahamdale

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Winnipeg Condo Corp. #20 - Gimli, MB

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

We are seeking an enthusiastic and motivated **Summer Student** to join our team.

This position is ideal for individuals looking at gaining practical work experience. Duties to include grass cutting, trimming, painting and assisting with various projects and tasks in the complex.

Please submit resume with work experience to shorepointev@gmail.com

Winnipeg Condo Corp. #20 - Gimli, MB

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Winnipeg Condo Corp. #20 in Gimli is looking for a **seasonal maintenance person**.

The successful candidate should have basic knowledge of building maintenance, various yard equipment, and lawn tractors.

Key responsibilities will include:

- Mowing and trimming lawn
- Performing minor landscaping tasks
- Painting and basic repairs as needed.
- Operating and maintaining lawn tractors and yard equipment
- Assisting with general building maintenance
- Training will be provided for pool and hot tub maintenance.

Salary will commensurate with experience.

Please submit resume with work experience to shorepointev@gmail.com

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RM OF WEST INTERLAKE NOTICE OF BY ELECTION

Notice is hereby given that a vote of the RM of WEST INTERLAKE will be taken to elect a Councillor for by election of Ward 1 from the following duly nominated candidates:

For office of Councillor:

WARD 1

Janice Anderson
Walter Whiteside

Voting place will be open May 2nd, 2025 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. for voting at: Eriksdale Recreation Centre

IDENTIFICATION MAY BE REQUIRED BEFORE BEING ALLOWED TO VOTE. A person may be required to produce one piece of government issued photo identification (for example driver's license or passport) or at least two other documents that provide proof of identity.

ADVANCE VOTING

For the purpose of accommodating persons who are qualified to vote, but who have reason to believe that they will be absent or otherwise unable to attend their proper voting place on Election Day, an advance voting opportunity will be located at:

Eriksdale Recreation Centre

on **Wednesday April 16th, 2025 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

MOBILE VOTING

For the purpose of accommodating persons who are qualified to vote, but reside at a health care facility or senior's complex, a mobile voting station will be visiting on site at the following facilities on Monday April 21st, 2025. Times will be posted in each facility.

Eriksdale PCH Friendly Villa
 Leisure Lodge Lindell Manor

APPLICATION TO VOTE BY SEALED ENVELOPE

A voter who is unable to go in person to the voting place or vote in advance, may apply in person, in writing by fax or email to the SEO at :

Box 10, #10 Main Street, Eriksdale, MB R0C0W0
 Fax 204-739-2073 email seo@rmofwestinterlake.com

If applying in person, a voter may apply between April 7th, 2025 and April 29th, 2025.

- A voter applying in person may pick up a sealed envelope ballot package at the time of application.

If applying by mail, fax or email, a voter may apply between March 29th, 2025 and April 18th, 2025.

- A voter applying by mail, fax or email will receive a sealed envelope ballot package by regular post, or by making alternative arrangements with the SEO.

Once you have applied to vote by sealed envelope, you cannot vote at another voting place.

Myrna Little
 Senior Election Official
 RM of West Interlake
 1-204-941-0156
seo@rmofwestinterlake.com

Classified booking deadline is Monday at NOON prior to Thursday's publication Please Call 204-467-5836

Classifieds Announcements

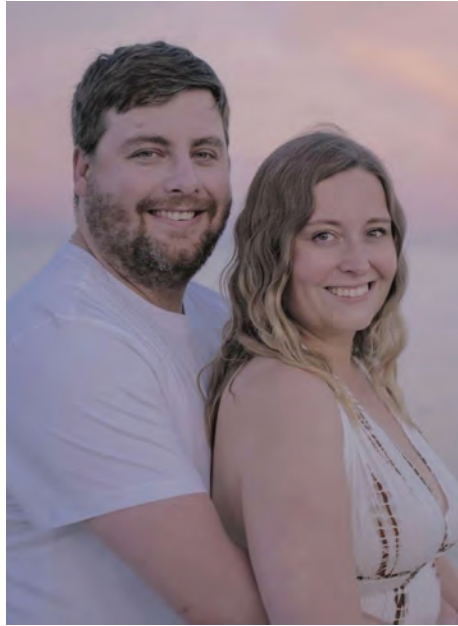


CARD OF THANKS

The family of Tracy Smolinski wishes to express their heartfelt gratitude for the overwhelming kindness and support received during this difficult time. Whether through your presence, kind words, or the wonderful food, flowers, cards, and donations to ACL, your thoughtfulness will never be forgotten. Please know that we are deeply grateful for living in such a caring community and sincerely appreciate all of the support and love you've shared with us.

-Thank you so much,
Norma, David and family

WEDDING SHOWER



Please join us for a come and go bridal shower in honour of Heida Johnson, bride elect of Cory Pochailo. Sunday, April 13th, 12-3 p.m. Aspen Park Community Centre Heida and Cory are registered on myregistry.com Password: Ourregistry1! Donations can be dropped off at Head Over Heels in Gimli or Arborg Home Hardware

OBITUARY

Luella Erickson

It is with sad hearts and cherished memories the family announces the passing of Luella Erickson on March 26, 2025 at the age of 95.

Luella is survived by daughter Selena Hogue; son Don Erickson (Kathy Harlos); sister Doreen Duncan; daughter-in-law Linda Erickson; grandchildren Dan, Cheryl, Tammy, Ian, Jason; great-grandchildren Teri, Alexis, Haley, Jordan, Laura, Andrea, Vanessa, Christian, Zachary; great-great-grandchildren Kayden, Aurora, Milani, Blake and many nieces and nephews.



Luella was predeceased by husband Sigurdur Erickson "Heide"; parents Juliette and Bjorn Thorkelson and Juliette's second husband Bogi Jonasson; son Carl; brother Edwin (Doris); sisters Ruth Clark (Tom) and Ruth's second husband Bud Jeffers, Evelyn Richaud (Hermus); brother-in-law Ray Duncan; son-in-law Victor Hogue. Also, Heide's family, parents Gudjon and Gudridur Erickson; siblings Johnnie Erickson (Rakel), Sigurlin Pentland (Bob), Jonina Nelson (Philip).

We would like to thank the nurses, doctors and staff at the Lundar Personal Care Home and E.M. Crowe Hospital for the "above and beyond" care she received.

Cremation has taken place and a graveside service and gathering for family and friends will take place at a later date in Lundar, MB.

Arrangements by:
ARNASON FUNERAL HOME
Ashern - Lundar
PO Box 672, Ashern, MB R0C 0E0
1.204.768.2072
1.866.323.3593

OBITUARY

Vaughan Valgardson

On Sunday, March 23, 2025 with family by his side at the St. Boniface Hospital, Vaughan Valgardson, aged 78 years of Gimli, MB, passed away.

Cremation has taken place and a service will be held at a later date.

Tributes: www.gilbartfuneralhome.com

Gilbart Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements

Gilbart Funeral Home, Gimli in care of arrangements.



Your memory will live forever Engraved within our hearts

OBITUARY

Keith Douglas Fisher

Keith passed away March 20, 2025 at the Betel Home in Gimli, Manitoba at the age of 86, where he resided for the past year. He was born on March 17, 1939 in Winnipeg.

Keith will be lovingly remembered by his wife of 66 years, Charleen; his son Douglas (Barbara) Fisher and grandchildren Chad (Shasta) and Jenna (Braden); daughter Audrey (Michael) Dupre and grandchildren Darrell (Cheryl), Ian (Ashley) and Michelle; great-grandchildren Tiara, Tavin, Tylyn, Leland, Brynlee, Trinity, Faith, Wesley and Evelyne; brother Douglas Fisher and sister Diane Papineau; as well as family and friends.

He was predeceased by his parents Roy and Marguerite, brother Ron, sister Valerie, sister-in-law Shirley Fisher, brothers-in-law Murray Anderson and Robert Papineau, and grandson Jordan.

Keith had a long career in the trade industry. He began working for his father in the foundry business prior to starting his own company in the early 1970's (Saturn Industries) with his partner, John Lang, in trailer manufacturing and later slings. Upon retirement, he moved to his lakeshore home in the South Beach division at Grindstone Provincial Park.

Keith enjoyed many pastimes, including hunting and fishing (especially the annual May long weekend fishing trip to Jim's Sand Beach cabin at Caribou Lake), snowmobiling, boating, gardening, and travelling with Char throughout the States, Mexico and Cuba, along with Doug and Shirley. A highlight of his travels included renting a motorhome for a 6-month road trip throughout Alaska.

The family would like to thank the staff at Betel Personal Care Home in Gimli for the compassionate care they gave Keith the past year. Also, a special thank you to Char's brother, Wayne, who continuously travelled back and forth from Edmonton to help out, and drive them to visit family, attend appointments and run errands.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Keith's memory may be made to the Parkinson Society or the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Winnipeg South Osborne Legion, 426 Osborne Street, Winnipeg on April 26, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

Condolences may be sent to Gilbart Funeral Home, Selkirk: www.gilbartfuneralhome.com.

Gilbart Funeral Home, Selkirk in care of arrangements.



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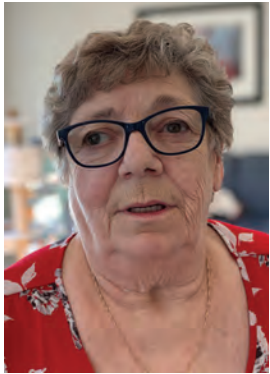


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OBITUARY



Carroll Helene Thickson Robak
May 9, 1945- March 23, 2025

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Carroll Thickson Robak on March 23, 2025 formally of Riverton and East Selkirk, Manitoba. Carroll passed away after a lengthy battle with COPD.

She will be longingly remembered by her husband Martin Robak; sister Betty Chartrand (Roland); daughters Kara, Elisa; son Kyle (Valerie); grandchildren Evan, Breann, Ethan, Lucas; great-grandchild Kaycen; step children and grandchildren and many other extended family members.

Carroll was predeceased by her parents James and Lea Hall. In Carroll's free time she would care for her large flower garden, paint, bake for her family and birdwatch. She loved good cooking, baking and trying new things. Spending time with Carroll was

always a special treat.

Carroll was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend. Her generosity and endless love knew no bounds. We will miss her dearly.

As per Carroll's wishes, a private family gathering has already been held.

Tributes: www.GreenAcresFuneralHome.com

Dignity Memorial
Green Acres
Funeral & Cemetery
1 Green Acres Lane, Winnipeg
204-222-3241

OBITUARY



Ella Erna Cook
August 31, 1925 - March 28, 2025

It is with great sadness that the family announces the passing of Ella Cook on Friday, March 28, 2025 at Golden Door Geriatric Centre in Winnipeg at the age of 99 years.

She was predeceased by her loving husband Arthur, her son Ronald, three brothers and one sister.

Ella is survived by her children: Elaine (Dave), Judy (Rosaire), Gary (Colleen), Kevin (Lisa) as well as seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

A celebration of Ella's life will be held Friday, April 11, 2025 at 1:00 p.m. at the Peace Lutheran Church, Moosehorn, Manitoba with Dawn Tober officiating. Interment to follow in the in the Peace Lutheran Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Peace Lutheran Church Memorial Fund Box 68, Moosehorn, MB R0C 2E0.

Special thanks to the staff at Golden Door Geriatric Centre for the care they provided.

Arrangements by:
Arnason Funeral Home
Ashern - Lundar
1-204-768-2072
1-866-323-3593

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