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Fun hits full throttle

EXPRESS PHOTO BY CORRINE EINARSSON

Fisher Powersports owner Donovan Plett (centre) poses with his daughters, Nora (left) and Saige, during the dealership's Open House and Demo Day in Fisher Branch on June 6. The event attracted about 250 visitors from across the Interlake region for Kawasaki vehicle demonstrations, test drives, family activities and community club displays.

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25th annual Breast Cancer Pledge Ride raises awareness and support

By E. Antonio

Hundreds of motorcycle riders gathered in Manitoba communities on Sunday, June 14 for the 25th annual Breast Cancer Pledge Ride, continuing a tradition that has raised more than \$1.5 million in support of breast cancer initiatives.

The annual fundraiser, founded by Georgette Paradoski Jhass in 2001, began at the TC Energy Centre in Île-des-Chênes before travelling to Stonewall and Winnipeg Beach. Riders made stops along the route, with the Winnipeg Beach portion drawing a large crowd as the community welcomed participants and showed its support.

Paradoski Jhass, who grew up in St. Andrews, was inspired to launch the Breast Cancer Pledge Ride after taking up motorcycling as a hobby and wanting to do something that would promote and support women. Knowing breast cancer was a prevalent issue, she initially set a goal of raising \$10,000 through a one-time pledge ride.

She and fellow participants ended up raising \$24,000, and the event has since grown into a major annual fundraiser, raising a total of \$1.5 million.

Between 300 and 500 motorcycles typically take part each year. The ride even continued virtually during the pandemic.

“Looking back, I am shocked — and humbled — by the support we’ve received and the impact we’ve made over the last 25 years. I can’t believe I have been doing this as long as I have,” she said. “We have always emphasized fun. We want to make sure everybody has a great time and that they are doing the ride for themselves. It’s not my ride — it’s their ride.”

This year’s event marked a significant milestone for organizers, celebrating 25 years of fundraising, awareness and community involvement. Prior to the ride, organizers said fundraising for this year’s event was already nearing \$100,000.

Compared with the inaugural ride, Paradoski Jhass said not much has changed other than the number of participants and the amount of donations received. The vision has remained the same: to make an impact in the lives of those touched by breast cancer and to bring communities together.

Over the years, she has heard many stories from individuals affected by



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Riders participating in the 25th annual Breast Cancer Pledge Ride roll into Winnipeg Beach on June 14 as hundreds of motorcyclists from across Manitoba gathered to raise funds and awareness for breast cancer initiatives. The milestone event attracted a record 370 riders and raised \$215,000 in support of CancerCare Manitoba programs and services.

breast cancer — stories filled with both triumph and hardship.

The ride has become known for its strong visual display of support, with participants decorating motorcycles, wearing pink and finding creative ways to raise awareness about breast cancer.

Funds raised have supported nu-

merous initiatives, including clinical trials, a mobile mammography unit, a voice-recording system, medical equipment, educational programming and reconstructive services.

Paradoski Jhass has seen the impact of that equipment firsthand. Her sis-

Continued on page 3

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> BREAST CANCER PLEDGE RIDE, FROM PG. 2

ter was diagnosed with breast cancer and was able to use the recording device during an appointment. This came after her mother's diagnosis who left her appointments unable to share her treatment options with her family because she couldn't fully remember what her doctor said.

Winnipeg Beach resident Tina Case is a committee member with the Breast Cancer Pledge Ride and serves as the liaison between Winnipeg Beach and the organizing team.

She and her husband first participated in the ride about 12 years ago and decided to become volunteers four years ago after organizers put out a call for help in Winnipeg Beach. She said she plays a prominent role in promoting the ride in town, including organizing silent auctions and coordinating with town staff, local businesses and residents. She described the support she has received from the community as "absolutely amazing."

"Their support is imperative," she said. "If Winnipeg Beach didn't shut down the town, we wouldn't be able to bring the ride there. Them welcom-

ing us is amazing — their support means everything."

Case has also been personally affected by breast cancer, with her mother having been diagnosed twice. She ensures she gets a mammogram every year and emphasized the importance of fundraising to support research and diagnostic services.

"It is evident there is a need for fundraising," she said. "Having raised more than \$1.5 million through this ride alone is outstanding. It shows how much fundraising helps when you listen to survivors speak and hear how much CancerCare has helped them. Supporters bring a level of dedication you didn't know was possible — they know when to step up when there is a need."

"LOOKING BACK, I AM SHOCKED — AND HUMBLLED — BY THE SUPPORT WE'VE RECEIVED AND THE IMPACT WE'VE MADE OVER THE LAST 25 YEARS."

Describing 2026 as the "best year yet" for the Breast Cancer Pledge Ride, organizers said a record-breaking 370 participants took part and the event raised \$215,000.



A highlight of the day was sending riders off beneath the Chemo Savvy dragon boat team paddle arch in Îles-Chênes.

Organizers said the continued success of the Breast Cancer Pledge Ride reflects the dedication of those who participate each year and the ongoing importance of supporting individuals and families affected by breast cancer.

Looking ahead, both Paradoski Jhass and Case hope the ride contin-

ues to thrive for years to come.

"If it can continue forever, I would be ecstatic," Paradoski Jhass said. "It might be a small community ride, but it makes a big impact."

She encouraged individuals to get regular mammograms, perform monthly self-examinations and speak with their doctor if they have any concerns.

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Local author to showcase fantasy novels at inaugural Canada Fiction Fest

By Jessica Eblie

A Matlock-area fantasy author is set to join more than 100 writers from across the country at the inaugural Canada Fiction Fest, a two-week virtual event celebrating Canadian fiction and connecting authors with readers nationwide.

Interlake native Trinity Cunningham will be among the 121 authors featured during the online festival, running from June 21 to July 4. The event will include panel discussions, author readings and a virtual bookstore showcasing works from independent, traditionally published and hybrid-published Canadian writers. Readers can attend the free online event through the Canada Fiction Fest website, where registration and the full schedule are available.

Two of Cunningham's novels, *Blood Bound* and *Inherent Bound*, will be featured during the virtual festival. Both books are part of her fantasy trilogy series, *The Guardians of the Weldafire Stone*.

The book series centres on a magical stone that serves as a source of magic in the land, with each novel following a different guardian appointed to protect it from falling into the wrong hands.

Geared primarily toward adult readers, though suitable for readers aged 16 and older, the series combines quests, battles between good and evil and action-driven storytelling. Cunningham said the books also explore themes of fear, forgiveness, healing and hope.

"The Guardians of the Weldafire Stone is an easy introduction into fantasy if readers are newer to the



Cunningham's book series *The Guardians of the Weldafire Stone*.

genre," she said.

For Cunningham, being selected to participate in the inaugural Canada Fiction Fest is an opportunity to connect with fellow writers and readers from coast to coast.

Cunningham learned about the festival through an online Discord community that includes festival founder N.P. Thomson, an Ottawa-based fantasy author. After seeing a call for Canadian writers to participate, she completed the registration process



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Local Author Trinity Cunningham will be participating in the inaugural Canada Fiction Fest, beginning June 21.

Continued on page 11

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Fisher Powersports hosts open house and demo day

By Nadia Schultz

Fisher Powersports welcomed about 250 visitors from across the Interlake region to Fisher Branch on June 6 for the dealership's Open House and Demo Day, generating strong interest in Kawasaki's off-road lineup and creating a community event that drew riders, families and first-time buyers alike.

Visitors travelled from communities including Gimli, Winnipeg Beach, Teulon, Stonewall and Stony Mountain. Interlake clubs affiliated with the All-Terrain Vehicle Association of Manitoba (ATVMB) were also on hand to provide demonstrations and information throughout the day.

Donovan Plett of Fisher Powersports said the event was designed to increase awareness of both the dealership and the Kawasaki brand, which he said often receives less attention than larger competitors such as Polaris and Can-Am.

Visitors had the opportunity to view and test-drive several Kawasaki machines while enjoying a free barbecue lunch, children's inflatables and one-day-only sales promotions.

"I think events like these are crucial. Not only from a business point of view, as we sold quite a few units on Saturday, but also from a community involvement point of view. Especially in a smaller town like Fisher Branch, where there already is not very many things going on for the residents to participate in," said Plett.

Plett said local businesses often play an important role in attracting people to smaller communities.



"If we can involve our own town in events like this where people from other towns are coming out and mingling, it's great," said Plett.

Among the most popular machines were the Kawasaki Ridge side-by-side lineup and the midsize Brute Force 450 ATV. Plett said the Ridge's enclosed, air-conditioned cab was particularly appealing during the hot and dusty weather conditions.

Fisher Powersports opened in 2016 with an inventory of just a few machines.

"Now if our inventory drops below 45 units, we feel like we are running out of machines," said Plett.

He attributes part of the dealership's growth to its customer-focused approach and the staff's passion for off-road riding.

"We're not the stereotypical 'suit and tie' salesmen. Everyone in our shop either owns a machine or loves to ride in the evenings and weekends," said Plett.

He added that seeing customers on local trails and connecting with them



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY CORINNE EINARSSON

Powersports enthusiasts and families gathered at Fisher Powersports in Fisher Branch on June 6 for the dealership's annual Open House and Demo Day. Visitors had the opportunity to test ride a variety of Kawasaki models, take advantage of one-day-only discounts and enjoy giveaways throughout the day.

outside the dealership helps build lasting relationships.

In addition to carrying Kawasaki's full off-road lineup, Fisher Powersports employs Kawasaki-trained technicians who service and maintain the machines they sell.

Looking ahead, the dealership hopes to expand into a larger showroom to accommodate additional inventory and display space, as well as future Kawasaki models.

Plett also hopes the open house becomes an annual event.

"We were so happy with the way this event

turned out. We won't be changing anything and would love to do it again in the years to come ... bigger and better," said Plett.



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Mantario Trail reopens following massive volunteer-led restoration effort

By Haley Cvar

One of Manitoba's premier backcountry hiking destinations is welcoming visitors once again after an extensive restoration effort following last year's devastating wildfires.

The 64-kilometre Mantario Trail in Whiteshell Provincial Park has officially reopened after volunteers and park staff completed months of recovery work to repair damage caused by a 2025 wildfire that spread from northwestern Ontario into the Mantario Wilderness Zone.

"The Mantario Trail offers a one-of-a-kind backcountry experience across the rugged granite ridges, lakes and forests of the Precambrian Shield," said Environment and Climate Change Minister Mike Moyes. "I am incredibly grateful to all the volunteers and organizations who helped restore Manitoba's signature backcountry trail after the devastating wildfires of last year."

The trail was closed in May 2025 after the wildfire burned through portions of the wilderness zone. A detailed assessment completed later that year helped guide a comprehensive restoration plan aimed at reopening the trail for the 2026 hiking season.

Working in partnership with the South Whiteshell Trail Association, Manitoba Parks coordinated an ambitious volunteer effort to restore the route.

In total, 23 volunteers travelled 1,885 kilometres by foot and paddle while carrying out critical repairs and safety upgrades along the trail.

Their work included clearing and brushing the entire 64-kilometre route, establishing a new 100-metre connector to the West Caribou Lake campsite, removing hazardous trees from campsites and creating 11 new emergency-access helipads. Volunteers also cleared nearly nine kilometres of portages, installed approximately 700 new trail markers, repurposed another 500 markers from fallen trees, built 12 log bridges and installed a new climbing rope at the challenging Rae Creek section.

"The Mantario Trail has been a special place to me for a long time," said Aaron Webb, a board member with the South Whiteshell Trail Association.

"While I was aware of a larger number of people and organizations who felt the same way, the silver lining to last year's devastating wildfire was to unite these partners in a shared goal to rehabilitate and reopen the trail."

Webb said the response from volunteers and partner organizations exceeded expectations.

"It has been truly inspiring to see these partnerships grow quickly and bring together dedicated volunteers who have a seemingly endless amount of energy to pursue this goal

in a surprisingly short timeframe," he said. "We look forward to continuing to grow these relationships in the future to maintain stewardship of the trail and help it realize its full potential as a world-class backcountry hiking experience."

The work completed this spring focused primarily on safety and navigation improvements to allow the trail to reopen as quickly as possible. Manitoba Parks is now planning additional upgrades, including enhanced campsite amenities, improved way-finding signage and updated mapping resources.

The province has also introduced a new free, voluntary online backcountry registration form for hikers using the trail and other backcountry areas. The registration system is designed to help officials locate trail users in the event of emergencies or unexpected closures.

Officials note the registration form does not replace the need for hikers to leave a trip plan with a trusted family member or friend before heading into the backcountry.

The Mantario Trail is widely regarded as Manitoba's most challenging hiking trail, attracting outdoor enthusiasts from across the province and beyond with its rugged terrain, remote campsites and scenic Canadian Shield landscape.

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A close call serves as reminder about tire safety

Submitted by Patricia Witzke

A routine trip to Winnipeg turned into a frightening lesson in vehicle safety for Patricia Witzke after a tire came off her SUV while she was driving on Route 90.

Witzke said she was travelling at a moderate speed on May 25 when she suddenly heard a loud thumping sound coming from her vehicle.

"I knew something was wrong," she said. "My heart was pounding as I tried to figure out what was happening."

Fortunately, there was a small area along Route 90 where she was able to pull over safely. After bringing her vehicle to a stop, she discovered her left rear tire had completely detached and

was nowhere in sight.

"I felt sick wondering where it had gone," she said.

As she assessed the situation, several strangers stopped to help. Four young men offered assistance, while another motorist arrived carrying the missing tire.

The man explained he had watched the tire roll diagonally across the road before coming to rest against a parked vehicle.

"He told me I was very lucky," Witzke recalled. "The tire could have struck another vehicle or caused significant damage."

The incident left her reflecting on what might have happened if she had been travelling at a higher speed.

"My vehicle could have rolled, and I could have been seriously injured," she said.

It was then that Witzke realized what had likely caused the problem. After recently having her all-season tires installed, she had forgotten to return for a recommended tire re-torque.

Many automotive service providers recommend that wheel lug nuts be re-torqued after approximately 100 kilometres of driving following a tire change to ensure they remain properly tightened.

"I forgot to have my tires re-torqued after they were installed," she said. "Looking back, I believe the accident could have been prevented."

After the Good Samaritans depart-

ed, Witzke contacted Manitoba Public Insurance and waited several hours for a tow truck before making arrangements to continue her trip.

Although the experience was stressful and resulted in damage to her vehicle, she considers herself fortunate that no one was injured.

Witzke said she hopes sharing her story will remind other drivers to schedule and complete recommended tire maintenance after seasonal tire changes.

"If this story prevents even one similar incident, it will be worth sharing," she said. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Local students to receiver exergaming room thanks to \$25,000 grant

By E. Antonio

Students at Dr. George Johnson Middle School will soon have a new space to play, thanks to a \$25,000 grant from Access Credit Union's Focused Funding program.

Principal Nicole Young said the new exergaming room and program will make a big difference for middle years students, providing additional opportunities for inclusive, engaging and accessible physical activity options.

"Receiving this grant is a fantastic opportunity for our school," she said. "It will provide the opportunity to promote healthy, active lifestyles and allow for an innovative way to engage students in physical education, regardless of their ability or interests."

She explained exergaming combines

technology with movement, marking a new and exciting alternative to traditional physical activities. She said it encourages social interaction and teamwork as students collaborate, compete and celebrate together and she hopes the program will have an impact on students who may not participating in phys-ed classes.

"It offers an exciting and inclusive way to help students stay active, build fitness skills and enjoy physical activity in a modern, motivating environment," she added. "By integrating movement with technology, we are meeting students where they are and turning something they love, gaming, into a positive, health-focused experience."

No timeline is currently set for the addition.

Access Credit Union awarded a total of \$250,000 to 10 public schools across Manitoba this year to support projects that promote student wellness and nutrition. Each school received \$25,000 for initiatives ranging from nutrition programs to upgrades that encourage physical activity.

"Access Credit Union is proud to partner with local schools across the province and the strong response from schools reflects how much these partnerships matter," said Curt Letkeman, board chair of Access Credit Union. "We're especially encouraged to see participation from all regions, reinforcing the meaningful impact of the Focused Funding Grant in bringing communities together."

Other 2026 Focused Funding Grant recipients include Dugald School,

Ecole Neil Campbell, Ecole Power-view School, Ecole Tache, Lowe Farm School, Niverville High School, Parc La Salle, Schevchenko School and Starbuck School.

Young said she is extremely grateful for Access Credit Union's support.

"Their support will make it possible for us to bring an exciting and innovative exergaming program to our students," she added. "We are incredibly grateful for their investment in the health, well-being and future success of our learners."

Access Credit Union will announce details for the 2027 Focused Funding Grant early next year. Each year's focus and eligibility criteria are designed to address evolving community priorities.

Winnipeg Beach Residents Association hosting election forum July 4

By Patricia Barrett

With the municipal election scheduled for July in Winnipeg Beach, the Winnipeg Beach Residents Association is hosting an election forum a few weeks before property owners go to the polls.

The residents association will be inviting all candidates to take part, according to a notice on Facebook. It will take place on Saturday, July 4 at 2 p.m. at the Winnipeg Beach Legion.

There are three candidates running for the office of mayor: Terry Calof, Stan Potten and Sig Trautwein.

There are nine candidates running for the office of councillor: Andrea McCann, Christine Sokaluk, Anjali Schludermann, Kim Trobinski, Doug Jarvis, Barry Hoel, Darcy Gilkes, Linda Campbell and Ravi Shukla.

The general municipal election will be held

in Winnipeg Beach on Friday, July 24 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. at the Winnipeg Beach Recreation Centre at 32 Hamilton Ave.

Advance polls will be held on Friday, July 10 and Saturday July 11 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Winnipeg Beach Recreation Centre. An advance poll in Winnipeg will be held on Tuesday, July 14 from noon to 8 p.m. at the Dakota Community Centre at 1188 Dakota St.

People wishing to vote by sealed envelope must make arrangements with the senior election officer in person or by mail or email by July 21.

For more information about the election, email the senior election officer Leah McIsaac at seo@winnipegbeach.ca or call her at 204-782-2146.

Dunnottar and Victoria Beach will also go to the polls on July 24. For other communities, the 2026 municipal elections will be held on Oct. 28.



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Gimli Veterinary Services marks 30 years of care



EXPRESS PHOTOS FROM DEREK JOHNSON FACEBOOK

Staff members at Gimli Veterinary Services recently celebrated the clinic's 30th anniversary. Founded by Dr. Lisa Taylor in 1996 as a small veterinary practice operating from her garage in Komarno, the clinic has grown into a trusted animal care provider serving families, farmers and pet owners throughout the Interlake.

By Lana Meier

Gimli Veterinary Services is celebrating 30 years of serving pet owners, farmers and animal lovers throughout the Interlake.

The milestone marks three decades since Dr. Lisa Taylor launched the veterinary practice from her garage in Komarno. What began as a small operation has since grown into a well-established clinic serving clients from across the region.

According to Interlake-Gimli MLA Derek Johnson, the clinic's growth reflects years of dedication to animal care and community service.

The practice later expanded to a location on Centre Avenue in Gimli, where it operated for many years before moving to its current facility.

Johnson said the anniversary recognizes not only Taylor's vision and commitment but also the efforts of the veterinarians, veterinary technicians and support staff who have contributed to the clinic's success over the past three decades.

Over the years, Gimli Veterinary Services has pro-

vided care for companion animals and livestock while supporting families and producers through both routine and difficult situations.

Johnson noted that the clinic has become a trusted resource for pet owners and farmers throughout the Interlake, offering professional advice, treatment and compassionate care.

The 30-year milestone highlights the important role veterinary services play in rural communities, supporting animal health, agricultural operations and the well-being of local residents.

Johnson congratulated Taylor and the entire Gimli Veterinary Services team on the anniversary and thanked them for their contributions to the region.

"Thank you for your contributions to our region and for the exceptional service you continue to provide," Johnson said in a social media post recognizing the occasion. "Wishing everyone at Gimli Veterinary Services a very happy 30th anniversary and continued success for many years to come."



Dr. Lisa Taylor, founder of Gimli Veterinary Services, and Interlake-Gimli MLA Derek Johnson mark the clinic's 30th anniversary in Gimli.

Manitoba donates graders to support Ukraine rebuilding efforts

By Haley Cvar

Premier Wab Kinew met with Ukraine's ambassador to Canada this week as Manitoba reaffirmed its support for Ukraine through a donation of heavy equipment to assist rebuilding efforts in the war-torn country.

Kinew welcomed Ambassador Andrii Plakhotniuk to Manitoba following the province's commitment to donate two road graders to the Kherson region of southern Ukraine.

"Our province has always had a strong connection to Ukraine," Kinew said. "When we get the chance to discuss how we can continue to work with each other in the future and strengthen our relationship, we seize

that opportunity."

The graders will be used to help rebuild and maintain roads and prepare land for infrastructure projects as Kherson continues to recover from damage caused by Russia's invasion and occupation.

The donation builds on an agreement signed in June 2025 between the Manitoba government and the Kherson Regional Military (State) Administration. The partnership focuses on co-operation in agriculture, economic development, education, health care, sport, culture and environmental sustainability.

Kinew said the agreement reflects Manitoba's long-standing ties to

Ukraine and its large Ukrainian community.

"Manitoba is home to a vibrant Ukrainian community and culture that we cherish," he said. "The agreement we signed builds on the Ukrainian influence that runs so deeply in our province and shows our commitment to nurturing this relationship and supporting Ukraine in these trying times."

Since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, more than 30,000 Ukrainians have settled in Manitoba. The province has provided support services including housing assistance, health care, education, social assistance, language

training and employment services.

During his visit, Plakhotniuk was also scheduled to participate in a business roundtable with representatives from the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the Manitoba Business Council. He was also expected to meet with members of Manitoba's Ukrainian community during an evening event in Winnipeg.

The Manitoba government says the equipment donation is part of its ongoing efforts to support Ukraine's recovery and strengthen ties between the two regions.

Ten emergency medical responders starting in Interlake-Eastern RHA, one new paramedic

By Patricia Barrett

As the Interlake continues to experience a severe paramedic shortage, the provincial government has stepped in to help maintain emergency services and reduce wait times by training and placing emergency medical responders (EMRs) in several communities while it recruits paramedics.

The government funded EMR training and guaranteed employment for graduates, placing 10 EMRs within the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority.

St. Laurent received three EMRs; Ashern, three; Arborg, one; and Lac du Bonnet, three, according to a provincial communications spokesperson. One additional EMR is working in Minnedosa in western Manitoba.

An EMR training program recently concluded in Arborg. The program was offered through a partnership between the provincial government and Winnipeg-based Criti Care EMS Academy, which trains paramedics and EMRs.

Manitoba began losing paramedics around 2018 due to several factors, including delayed contract negotiations, stagnant wages, rising emergency call volumes, burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic and the previous provincial government's decision not to hire advanced care paramedics for rural communities.

Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care Minister Uzoma Asagwara said EMRs are a "necessary step" the NDP government is taking to address immediate paramedic shortages in rural and northern communities across the province. EMRs will also be able to gain valuable experience on ambulances before potentially transitioning to primary care paramedic (PCP) positions.

The NDP campaigned in 2023 on a promise to hire 200 paramedics to restore emergency medical services in Manitoba's rural and northern communities.

Under the previous government, Manitoba lost 90 paramedics and "refused" to give advanced care paramedics jobs in rural areas, Asagwara said. The minister added that rural communities asking for EMRs to be reinstated were ignored, which was "devastating" for emergency services in rural and northern Manitoba.

Two and a half years into its mandate, the government says it is building capacity within Manitoba's rural emergency medical system.

"We have taken a completely different approach. We are now in a place where we're ensuring these folks (EMRs) are not only fairly compensated, but that they have jobs and are being trained across rural and northern Manitoba," Asagwara told the *Express* following a news conference at Selkirk Regional Health Centre last Friday.

"In two and a half years, we have completely changed the trajectory of EMS services in Manitoba. There's a lot more work to do; there's a ways for us to go yet to make sure rural and northern Manitobans have the services and are fully operating in the ways they deserve. And we're committed to delivering that and work with our partners to get there."

To help accelerate the training and recruitment of paramedics, the province introduced incentives for EMR training. These include bringing training programs to rural communities, providing a \$5,000 training bursary and guaranteeing employment upon graduation. In exchange, graduates sign a

return-of-service agreement.

Paramedic shortages in rural areas have resulted in ambulances being taken out of service because two paramedics are typically required to staff them.

However, the minister can issue exemptions under the Emergency Medical Response and Stretcher Transportation Act, allowing ambulances to be staffed by a paramedic and an EMR.

Placing EMRs on ambulances alongside paramedics helps maintain emergency medical coverage in chronically understaffed areas while reducing excessive workloads that can contribute to physical and mental burnout among paramedics.

Asagwara said exemptions have already been signed for some communities.

"The idea here is we can get EMRs experience on an ambulance ... and then, as quickly as possible, get those folks skilled up to be full PCPs," said the minister.

"The objective is let's get folks introduced to the profession, get them some on-the-ground experience, make it as easy as possible for them to fall in love with this as a career and get them the pathway to become a full PCP as soon as possible. There are a good number of folks going into EMR knowing they want to be PCPs. And that's what we're hoping for."

The province worked directly with municipalities to identify residents who would be well suited to become EMRs and who simply needed additional support to enter the profession, Asagwara said. That support included a \$5,000 bursary and a guaranteed job after graduation.

"We're making it as easy as possible for folks to get trained, to know they have a job and where that job is," said Asagwara, "and, ideally, in a community that they've been a part of for many years already."

Although they do not work to the same scope of practice as paramedics, EMRs are regulated by the College of Paramedics of Manitoba.

According to the college's website, EMRs conduct patient assessments, take vital signs, provide trauma management and deliver basic care for medical conditions. They may also assist patients with prescribed medications and administer certain medications under specific conditions. EMR training consists of approximately 300 hours.

While Asagwara did not have wage information available, the minister said the province is committed to fair compensation.

"What I can say is we believe in paying our health-care workers fairly and making health care an attractive profession," said Asagwara.

According to Job Bank, hourly wages for EMRs in the Interlake range from \$18.50 to \$24, with a national median wage of \$24 and a high of \$28.84.

A full-time position earning \$24 an hour would generate approximately \$49,920 annually before deductions.

After gaining experience and confidence on ambulances, the government hopes EMRs will continue their education and move into paramedic roles.

"If you're an EMR, we want you to be a PCP then an ACP. If you ... want to be a nurse, you can go from being an LPN to an RN or RPN. Or you can start out as a health-care aide ... and become a nurse," said Asagwara.

"Our goal is to ensure people can dream big as to what their health-care careers can be, and they can have support every step of the way and be success-



EXPRESS PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT
Manitoba Health Minister Uzoma Asagwara speaking at a news conference at the Selkirk Regional Health Centre on July 19.

ful. That's what this EMR program is all about."

The Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals (MAHCP), which represents allied health workers including rural paramedics, expressed concern last year about the province's use of EMRs because they do not work to the full scope of a paramedic.

The union released a scope-of-practice comparison last November based on Shared Health patient-care maps. The comparison showed EMRs cannot, among other duties, insert airway devices, perform ECGs, remove foreign bodies, start intravenous lines, administer controlled medications or prescribe medications required during patient transport.

Asked about those concerns, Asagwara said the province views EMRs as an entry point into the paramedic profession and welcomes MAHCP as a partner in strengthening emergency medical services.

EMR training was introduced in response to requests from municipalities that had been "pleading for a government to take their urgent needs around emergency response services seriously," said the minister.

"But we cannot accept — and we cannot normalize — people living in rural and northern communities going without emergency response services in their time of need," said Asagwara.

More EMRs are expected to graduate in the coming months, the minister added.

In addition to the EMRs, one new primary care paramedic will be stationed in Gypsumville within the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority. Four additional PCPs have been assigned elsewhere in Manitoba: one in Erickson, two in Minnedosa and one in Glenboro.

CEC recommends Harbour colony wastewater lagoon be approved by province

By Patricia Barrett

After about six years of residents raising concerns about possible environmental contamination to Lake Winnipeg from a Hutterite colony's proposed sewage lagoon, a provincial advisory body recommended that the lagoon be approved.

The Manitoba Clean Environment Commission (CEC) was tasked last year by the province's environment minister to review and make recommendations regarding the proposed lagoon.

The CEC posted its report online last week, recommending the lagoon go forward.

The Harbour Hutterite colony (formerly called Crystal Spring) asked the province for approval to operate a wastewater lagoon on its new colony in the RM of Armstrong. The lagoon is situated on the RM of Gimli border, and the colony will be discharging lagoon effluent into a drain linking to Willow Creek, which flows through residential subdivisions into Lake Winnipeg.

Opponents of the lagoon, which include Lake Winnipeg commercial fishers, environmental groups and the RM of Gimli, have said in letters to the province and to the CEC, as well as during a CEC public hearing in April, that Lake Winnipeg already receives excessive amounts nutrients such as phosphorus, and that more wastewater will only contribute to the ongoing eutrophication of the lake and potentially cause damage to Willow Creek.

Phosphorus accelerates the formation of algal blooms, which deplete oxygen, create dead zones in the lake and kill fish and other aquatic organisms.

All wastewater treatment facilities, including lagoons, must meet a phosphorus limit of 1 mg/L or have a demonstrated nutrient-reduction strategy under provincial legislation. Harbour colony's submission to the province and the CEC show it's compliant under provincial law.

However, that discharge limit of 1 mg/L is higher than Lake Winnipeg's .05 mg/L target under the Water Protection Act, something the panel considered.

"The panel ... heard evidence that the Nutrient Target Regulation under The Water Protection Act gives Lake Winnipeg a target phosphorus level of 0.05 mg/L and that a discharge standard of 1 mg/L is incompatible with those goals," states the panel in its report (page 16). "In the RM of Gimli's expert report and in testimony, they spoke of Ontario which has established a phosphorus limit for wastewater discharges of 0.5 mg/L to address cumulative loading goals in Lake Erie."

The CEC noted in the forward of its report that lake's nutrient target is an "overall goal and is not the same as the wastewater treatment limits."

The panel said it can't hold Harbour colony to a

RECOMMENDATION: The Manitoba government should develop an overall strategy to help achieve the nutrient target for Lake Winnipeg and other water bodies, including measures relating to the effluent discharge limits.

RECOMMENDATION: Amend The Environment Act to explicitly include cumulative effects as part of environmental assessment and project evaluation.

CLEAN ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

Two of 15 recommendations from the CEC's report titled "Clean Environment Commission Report on the Harbour Colony Wastewater Lagoon Project."

higher standard than others because that would be "fundamentally unfair."

"This is why we have recommended that the licence be issued to the proponent, with conditions, and that the [environment] department undertake steps to monitor impacts on the waterway and make adjustments as necessary to help ensure the ongoing health of the Willow Creek Watershed and Lake Winnipeg," states the panel.

In addition to incompatibility, the CEC also considered a number of other issues, including emergency discharges of the lagoon, drainage and overland flooding in the immediate area of the colony's lagoon, air quality and odours, the lagoon's impact on groundwater, lack of public reporting of discharge dates and testing results, "effluent dominance" whereby Willow Creek would flow with effluent rather than water from upstream at times, and damage to fish habitat.

Despite approving the colony's lagoon, the CEC said it has commented in the past on lagoons and thinks they should be phased out as many of them — as well as other systems such as septic fields and holding tanks — are contributing nutrients and contaminants to the watershed.

Citing provincial data, the CEC says Manitoba has nearly 350 licensed wastewater treatment lagoons. Since about 2009, the province has issued 130 licences for lagoons with roughly half of them discharging into the Red River or Lake Winnipeg watersheds.

"Lagoons have not been phased out but rather continue to be a common means of wastewater treatment, and a regularly licensed activity in Manitoba," states the panel.

Although there's strong public contention that the provincial government's regulations for wastewater are not strong enough to protect the environment, the CEC said it cannot comment on that.

"The panel cannot make comment if current wastewater treatment standards would allow Manitoba to reach the nutrient targets established for Lake Winnipeg, but this is an appropriate consideration that the government must monitor and make regulatory and/or policy changes if required," states the panel. "We recommend that this process takes place publicly. The cumulative effects and dynam-

ics of nutrients on Lake Winnipeg are an important public concern, and Manitoba must act diligently to ensure accountability on this important issue."

Harbour colony's lagoon will discharge into the Malonton Drain, which runs along Road 15E. It will then flow into Willow Creek and eastwards to Lake Winnipeg.

The CEC provides advice and recommendations to the provincial environment minister. Regarding Harbour colony's lagoon, the CEC made 15 recommendations for the government to consider.

They include a method of limiting or controlling maximum flow rate of discharge, emergency plans to address non-compliant effluent discharges, communicating when the licence is implemented, not permitting commercial wastewater, and that the government develop and implement a monitoring program for Willow Creek to assess effluent impacts.

"Standard lagoon discharge limits should apply. However, some additional monitoring should be required for the project to proceed," states the panel. "Our reasoning is that the potential impacts to the receiving watercourse, Willow Creek, are not well understood. A straightforward monitoring program implemented by the department can quantify these impacts and identify required changes, should they warrant additional conditions or limits."

The CEC also recommends that the government achieve the nutrient target for Lake Winnipeg.

"The Manitoba government should develop an overall strategy to help achieve the nutrient target for Lake Winnipeg and other water bodies, including measures relating to the effluent discharge limits," it said.

The CEC's recommendations have no force; they are simply suggestions for the province to either implement or disregard.

The RM of Gimli had presented its opposition to the lagoon at the CEC's public hearing in April. It issued a response last week to the CEC's decision, saying it had advocated for stronger protections for Willow Creek and Lake Winnipeg.

"The commission's report recognizes that uncertainty remains regarding the potential effects of lagoon discharges on Willow Creek and downstream waters. In response, the commission recommended ongoing upstream and downstream monitoring of Willow Creek, together with the ability for regulators to require operational changes if adverse impacts are identified," states the RM in its June 16 post. "This is a significant recommendation that, if adopted by the provincial regulators, will assist in safeguarding the health of both Willow Creek and the downstream watershed, including Lake Winnipeg."

The RM added that it "remains committed" to protecting the lake and local waterways.

Although Harbour colony has met all the provincial regulations, that doesn't mean the province's environmental laws are effective at protecting watersheds and Lake Winnipeg, says RM of Gimli resident Andy Damm.

He wasn't surprised by the CEC's report as its mandate was "quite narrow" even though it made comments on items outside its scope, he said.

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> FANTASY NOVELS, FROM PG. 4

and was accepted into the event.

"It's really cool to be part of something so big and across the entire country," she said. "It feels very uniting of the author community we have in Canada and getting to be part of that is really an honour."

Cunningham's path to becoming an author began long before her first novel was published. Raised in a musical household, she grew up surrounded by storytelling. Her parents are both musicians and songwriters, and her mother wrote children's stories, rhymes and poems.

"I've always loved writing," she said. "It's such a great way to express ourselves."

Initially, Cunningham studied screenwriting because she wanted to tell stories through film. However, she found the format limited the level of detail and character development she wanted to explore, leading her to pursue novel writing instead.

"I love world-building. I love diving deep into these worlds and bringing them to life," she said.

In 2020, Cunningham decided to take her writing more seriously and began working on what would be-

come *Blood Bound*. About halfway through the first draft, she realized she wanted to pursue publication rather than leave the manuscript unpublished.

She began her publishing journey through hybrid publishing before moving into independent publishing, a process she says taught her valuable lessons about the industry.

Despite participating in a national event, Cunningham said her roots in Manitoba remain an important part of her identity as a writer.

While many aspiring authors picture literary careers unfolding in major city centres such as Toronto, New York or London, Cunningham said living in a smaller community has never felt like a disadvantage.

"I've had so much support around me from friends and family and everybody within this community," she said. "I've found a really great support system, and I don't think I would have that if I was in a big city."

Cunningham said Manitoba has also influenced aspects of her writing. In *Unbound*, the third novel in The Guardians of the Weldfire Stone trilogy, she loosely based the climate of

one of the stories' countries on Manitoba's long summer days and harsh winters.

"I'm proudly Manitoban, and I love that our province has such beauty to draw inspiration from," she said.

The virtual nature of events such as Canada Fiction Fest also helps level the playing field for writers living outside major urban centres.

Cunningham will participate in a panel discussion titled Diversity in Fiction: Seeing Ourselves and Others in Our Writing on June 27. She will also take part in a fantasy author reading on July 4.

She said she is particularly looking forward to exchanging ideas with other writers and discovering new Canadian authors.

"I think events like this are fantastic because they really give us an opportunity to network with the reading community and the writing community," she said.

Beyond entertaining readers, Cunningham hopes her books leave audiences with a sense of optimism.

"I hope to leave readers with hope," she said. "Life is a series of choices and consequences and actions, and I hope people come away willing to step forward and take chances."

Locally, Cunningham's books are available at Chapters Polo Park, Wishme and The Cozy Fox in Selkirk, and Only Local in Altona. Her books are also available through the Selkirk Library, while e-books can be purchased through her website and through Amazon.

Looking ahead, Cunningham will make several local appearances, including The Marketplace at Pineridge Hollow on June 28 and the Gimli Christmas Market on Dec. 5.

She is also contributing a short story to The Rings of Adventure, an international anthology featuring more than 30 independent fantasy, science-fiction, horror and romantasy authors that is scheduled for publication later this year

"I'M PROUDLY MANITOBAN, AND I LOVE THAT OUR PROVINCE HAS SUCH BEAUTY TO DRAW INSPIRATION FROM."

> LAGOON WASTEWATER, FROM PG. 10

Manitoba's weak environmental laws are the real issue, he said, and that's what the opponents of wastewater lagoons should have focused on.

"From the onset, it was apparent the target should have been the provincial government's environmental laws, regulations and compliance monitoring," said Damm. "Targeting the Crystal Spring/Harbour colony was at best a shot in the dark as [the colony] built to today's environmental standards."

Damm attended the CEC's hearings on the colony's proposed wastewater lagoon in April. He said he thinks Gimli council — which had a consultant — could have made better use of taxpayer resources by targeting and challenging the phosphorus-loading limits under the current government.

"Total accumulated nutrient-loading to our watersheds is what needs to be reduced," said Damm.

Although the recommendation that the lagoon proceed is a setback to those who oppose it, Damm said there was one good thing that emerged from the CEC's hearing: the 15 recommendations as those will hopefully apply some pressure on the provincial government to address phosphorus targets.

"Hopefully, on a go-forward basis, this will be the foundation to chal-

lenge the province for the protection of our aquifers, tributaries and, ultimately, Lake Winnipeg which we all depend upon," said Damm. "We

should not have to wait until our lake is dead [similarly to] Lake Erie before we respond. A phosphorus-loading target of 0.5 mg/L is achievable today. Water is life, and our life in Gimli revolves around water."



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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.
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Alf Cuthbert School marks 55th anniversary with celebration

By E. Antonio

Former students, retired teachers and community members gathered at Alf Cuthbert School on May 27 to celebrate the school's 55th anniversary and reflect on its lasting role in Moosehorn.

The event welcomed 83 guests, along with current students and staff, for a day of tours, performances and reconnecting with former classmates and educators.

For teacher and co-organizer June Galaluk, the celebration carried personal significance.

Originally from Moosehorn, Galaluk began kindergarten at Alf Cuthbert School in 1980 before returning to teach at the school in 2007 after earning her teaching degree from Brandon University.

That connection between past and present was evident throughout the celebration. Four of the school's five homeroom teachers once attended Alf Cuthbert School as students and now teach in the same classrooms where they learned as children.

Galaluk said the anniversary was especially meaningful because many staff members have lifelong ties to the school and community.

Throughout the day, guests toured the school while current Grade 7 and



June Huska, the only surviving child of Alf Cuthbert, holds a bouquet of flowers presented to her during the afternoon program.

8 students acted as guides.

Galaluk said one of the most enjoyable parts of the celebration was not knowing who might walk into classrooms during the tours.

"You didn't know who was going to walk in next," she said. "Someone who still lives around here or someone who hadn't been back for decades."

Staff members also appreciated the opportunity to reconnect with former teachers who helped shape their own careers in education.

"We all agreed that while there wasn't any one teacher who inspired us to go into the teaching profession, each of the teachers we had along the way influenced what kind of professional we wanted to be," Galaluk said.

She added that returning to work in the same school they once attended has created some unique experiences for former students now teaching there.

"We all agreed that the strangest thing about returning to work in the school you attended is working alongside your own former teachers because calling them by their first



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Pictured left to right: Current Alf Cuthbert School teachers June Galaluk (Grades 1/2), Melisa Koch (kindergarten), Victoria Metner (Grades 3/4) and Katlyn Bittner-Taylor (grades 5/6) stand behind retired teachers Darlene Hanlon, Gerry Hanlon and Barb Yanke during the school's 55th anniversary celebration on May 27. The three retired educators taught all four of the teachers now working at the Moosehorn school.



Lakeshore School Division board chair Donny Thorkelson shares congratulations on behalf of the school board.



Former teacher Louis Couté, who taught in Moosehorn in 1970, shares stories and memories with guests during the celebration.



Alf Cuthbert School principal Alann Fraser MCs the afternoon program and shares a letter from former director of student services Annette Holowka.

names takes some getting used to." Following the tours, lunch was pro-

vided by the hospital guild before guests gathered in the gym for a program featuring guest speakers and performances by each class.

A particularly meaningful moment came when June Huska, Alf Cuthbert's only surviving child, was recognized during the afternoon program and presented with a bouquet of flowers. Her presence offered a direct link to the man whose name has been associated with the school and community for more than half a century.

Huska said it was a "fantastic day all

A colorful advertisement for "Oh CANADA!" celebrating Open Canada Day 10-6. The ad features various Canadian-themed merchandise including t-shirts with "CANADA", "TRUE NORTH CANADA", and "EXPLORE THE WILDERNESS Canada SINCE 1847 DISCOVER THE ADVENTURE" designs. There are also red and white Canadian hats, a red and white Canadian flag, and a white paper lantern with a red maple leaf. The text "Oh CANADA!" is written in large, bold, red letters with a white outline. Below it, "OPEN CANADA DAY 10-6" is written in black. At the bottom, "BIG DOLLAR" is written in large, bold, white letters with a red outline. The address "439 MAIN ST., SELKIRK North of Manitoba Ave." and the hours "HOURS MONDAY - THURSDAY 10-6 FRIDAY 10-6 SATURDAY 9-6 SUNDAY 12-5" are listed. There are also logos for Visa and Mastercard.

Province continues upgrades at highways 7 and 68

By Patricia Barrett

The provincial government is continuing upgrades to the Silver Drain at the junctions of highways 7 and 68 just south of Arborg.

Paving of the highway was scheduled last week and is expected to be completed by July 3, weather permitting.

"Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI) continues the con-

struction of a box culvert at the Silver Drain at the junction of Provincial Trunk Highway (PTH) 68 and PTH 7. The final grading and paving of the highways will be completed by July 3, weather permitting," said a department spokesperson. "Construction works will be staged in order that a minimum of one lane of traffic on PTH 7 and PTH 68 will be open in all directions. Gislason Drive remains

closed at PTH 68 and will open with the highways by July 3."

In the RM of Grahamdale, flooding from the June 9-10 storm is still covering sections of PR 325 in both directions and motorists are required to reduce their speed. The flooded section is about six kilometres east of Ashern and Highway 6.

Continued on page 17



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY LANA MEIER

Construction continues on the new box culvert at the Silver Drain south of Arborg at the junction of highways 7 and 68. Final grading and paving are expected to be completed by July 3, weather permitting, as part of ongoing provincial infrastructure upgrades. Traffic remains open in all directions with lane restrictions in place during construction.

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DETAILS AT SOUTHBEACHCASINO.CA

New six-storey assisted living facility and PCH coming to Gimli

By Patricia Barrett

With Gimli's older age demographic, a new assisted living facility and new personal care home are expected to meet the growing demand for care.

Nordic Development Corporation held a meeting a few weeks ago in Gimli to provide people with information about the assisted living and PCH it intends to build at 16 Centennial Rd., just west of Highway 9.

The land is owned by Baldur Nelson and his wife, who struck an agreement with Nordic Development.

The two new health-care facilities will be built in two phases starting with the assisted living facility followed by the PCH.

Nordic Development CEO Donald Benson, who also owns a management company called Nordic Canada Ltd., provided an overview of the project at a June 11 open house at the Gimli Lakeview Resort. He was joined by Nordic Development president Arsenio Pagunuran of AGP Architects.

Nordic Development had carried out a feasibility study for Gimli and that provided the company with a suggested number of units to meet the demand.

"Now that the demand for assisted living has been restored, we are moving ahead with Phase 1 of the development, which is a 66-unit assisted living building," said Benson during the presentation. "The second phase will consist of a 66-unit personal care home."



Recreation and wellness rooms.



Assisted living resident suites.



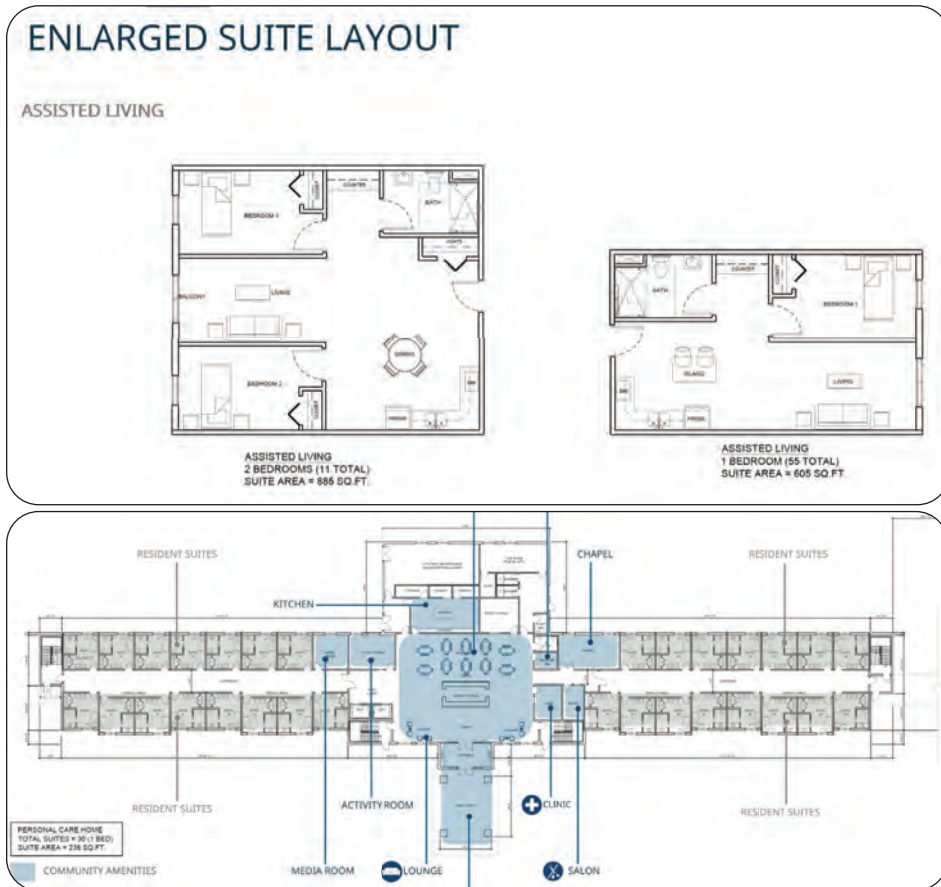
Assisted living laundry and mail room.

According to Statistics Canada's 2021 census profile, 37 per cent of the population in Gimli is aged 65 and over. The average age is 52.

Having available aging-in-place facilities will keep people in their community.

Nordic's project was already in the works in December 2019 after the developers signed an agreement with the Nelsons, said Benson. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the following year set back their planning, as did the construction of the new Stefanson Hus assisted living facility near the Waterfront Centre.

Approvals for Nordic's project along with a development agreement have already been secured. The developers will complete architectural and engineering drawings this summer, with the foundation of the assisted living



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Main floor of the personal care home, which will be built after the assisted living facility is completed.

expected to be completed by winter.

The six-storey assisted living building will have 66 units and 88 parking stalls. From the east side of the building, residents on floors 3 to 6 will be able to see Lake Winnipeg.

Pagunuran has been involved in a wide range of architectural projects across Canada and internationally for the past 25 years. He showed attendees the layout and exterior and interior finishings of both facilities.

The assisted living building will include meals, cleaning and laundry services, and transportation to attend appointments.

"We are planning a premium care facility with chef-prepared meals. Residents of the assisted living building will be bringing their own furniture. The suites will be furnished with a fridge, stove and microwave oven. Meals will be provided at breakfast and dinner. People will want to stock their fridge with their favourites for lunch and snacks," said Pagunuran. "Cleaning and laundry services are included. We plan to have a bus or van to drive people to outings and appointments."

The new personal care home will have 66 units on two storeys. Some units will be multi-person rooms. The PCH will include a dining room, chapel, medicine room, activity room, lounge, media room, salon and medical clinic.

Pagunuran said the PCH will be

specializing in memory care as cases of dementia continue to become more prevalent.

"We intend to have a dedicated wing of the development, which will serve the needs to these patients. The assisted living building will be able to assist people with the early onset of dementia," he said.

When asked how far the bus/van service would be travelling, Benson said Nordic has yet to determine its extent.

Admission to the assisted living and PCH is based on a limited partnership agreement, which requires occupants to purchase a unit. As limited partners, Pagunuran said people will own the assisted living and the PCH.

Benson added that they're prepared to accept rental commitments to a certain number of units in the facilities, but "all others will be required to become limited partners."

The completion and occupancy of the assisted living facility is expected in the fall of 2027.

Nordic Development Corporation is intending to hold another information session in Gimli on Monday, June 29 at 7 p.m. at the Lakeview. Please call to confirm as the date may change.

For more information about Nordic's assisted living facility and personal care home, call Donald at 204-955-5042.

Nordic is in the process of building a website.

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Persons interested in attending a meeting on June 29 at 7 pm at the Lakeview Hotel should text 204-955-5042

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CENTENNIAL RD, GIMLI, MB.

Fisher Branch gardeners invited to embrace yellow theme in annual garden contest

By E. Antonio

The Town of Fisher Branch's Best Garden Competition is back this summer, and this year's theme is the colour yellow.

First launched in 2021 with support from a yard beautification competition grant from Communities in Bloom and Miracle-Gro, the contest has helped bring colourful blooms to the community each season. According to Fisher Branch chief administrative officer Kelly Marykuca, the Best Garden Competition has become an annual tradition that residents know and love.

"This competition is a great way to showcase our town," she said. "It helps with beautification and demonstrates community pride."

Residents living within the Local Urban District (LUD) of Fisher Branch are eligible to enter and are encouraged to design their gardens to reflect the yellow theme, although flowers of any colour are welcome. Residents and visitors will also notice yellow flower baskets hanging throughout the community.

Properties will be judged July 27

Continued on page 17



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Pictured are winners from a previous Fisher Branch Best Garden Competition.



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JULY 01

GIMLI PARK PAVILION EVENTS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| FREE ZUMBA WITH JAN | 9 - 10AM |
| KIWANIS PANCAKE BREAKFAST | 9 - 11AM |
| CANADA DAY PARADE | 11AM |
| FREE KIDS INFLATABLES | 11AM-4PM |
| FREE FACE PAINTING | 1PM-4PM |
| FUSED GLASS NECKLACE MAKING | 1PM-4PM |
| GIMLI BARVINOK UKRANIAN DANCERS | 1PM |
| SUNRISE BAND | 1:15PM |
| ROMANNA KLYMKIW MUSIC STUDENTS | 2:45PM |

GIMLI HARBOUR STAGE EVENTS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| WELCOME CEREMONIES | 7 PM |
| BAND: TWO CROWS FOR COMFORT | 7:10PM |
| BAND: FREE RIDE | 8PM |
| FIREWORKS | 11PM |

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Canada Day

5 fun ways to celebrate Canada Day

Do you want to celebrate Canada on July 1? On top of participating in local events, you could observe the day with family and friends. Here are some inspiring ideas.

- 1. Forehead name game.** Write the names of famous Canadians, like politicians, athletes and musicians, on sticky notes and stick them to each other's foreheads. Each person must try to guess who they are by asking yes and no questions.
- 2. Canadian potluck.** Buying local is essential to your community's economic vitality. Invite your family and friends over for a potluck that exclusively features food and drinks produced in the country.
- 3. Crafts contest.** Enjoy some friendly competition with arts and crafts done in small teams. The goal is to create artwork symbolic of Canada, such as a beaver, the Rocky Mountains or a maple leaf. Take a vote to decide on the winner and hand out little prizes — made in Canada, of course!
- 4. Sing or dance to local music.** There are plenty of Canadian music artists whose songs inspire the urge to cut a rug or sing along at top volume. Make a winning Canadian playlist and crank it up!



5. Typical Canadian sport. Work off that extra energy in good company by organizing a lacrosse or hockey mini-tourney — make it ball hockey if you don't have access to a rink. After the games, gather around a barbecue to celebrate.

How will you celebrate Canada Day?

CANADA DAY

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2026

8:00 AM- 1:00 PM	Riverton Elks Fishing Derby Derby at Riverton Docks prizes will be at Riverton Memorial Arena
11:00 AM- 3:00 PM	Riverton Fireman BBQ at Riverton Memorial Arena
2:00 PM	Cake and Coffee provided by Riverton & District Friendship Centre (RDFC) at Riverton Memorial Arena
2:00 - 6:00 PM	RDFC X FIFA Community Celebration At Riverton Early Middle School Grounds
4:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Djorfung Ladies Aid BBQ & Entertainment at Riverton Memorial Arena

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Canada Day BBQ

1 JULY 2026 5PM-DARK

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BEER GARDENS! \$\$

SMOKIES FROM THE MEAT STATION \$\$

FIREWORKS AFTER DARK

Come for the food, stay for the fun!

> ANNUAL GARDEN CONTEST, FROM PG. 15



The LUD of Fisher Branch is encouraging residents to showcase their best yellow blooms as part of this year's Best Garden Competition.

by LUD committee members Dave Plett, Allan Lindal, Tannis Chudy and Darcy Plett. Judges will be looking for yards that help make the town its most beautiful.

The top three properties will be announced on Facebook July 31. Winners will receive a gift card valued at \$100, \$50 or \$25 to a local Fisher Branch business of their choice.

Those interested in entering are encouraged to call the municipal office at 204-372-6393 to ensure their property is not missed on judging day.

Marykuca added that judges will be looking for clean, well-maintained properties featuring trimmed trees and vibrant flowers that showcase natural beauty. Property owners do not need to be home during the evaluation, as judges will be touring the community and viewing properties from the street. However, personal garden tours can be arranged by contacting the municipal office.

Rural Municipality of Armstrong

Box 69, 1094 Hwy #17
Inwood, Manitoba R0C 1P0
Phone: (204)-278-3377



Happy Canada Day!

Derek Johnson
MLA for Interlake-Gimli
interlakegimli@mla.com
Gimli 204-641-8525 | Arborg 204-376-3401

> UPGRADES, FR. PG. 13

The province will assess any damage once the water recedes.

"On Provincial Road 325, motorists are advised that water is present on sections of the roadway. Drivers need to drive to conditions, use caution and follow any signage present," said the spokesperson. "Motorists are reminded that conditions may change rapidly and are encouraged to monitor Manitoba 511 for the latest information on road conditions, incidents and closures. All flood related damage will be assessed for repair once water levels recede and ground conditions allow."

Flood recovery, security upgrades discussed by council

By E. Antonio

Security improvements, flood recovery efforts and future water-retention opportunities were among the key topics discussed during the Rural Municipality of Grahamdale's regular council meeting on May 28.

Council approved the installation of additional security cameras at the municipal office following a break-in

on May 21.

Assistant CAO Devan McCoubrey said the municipality already had security cameras in place but identified areas requiring additional coverage to eliminate blind spots.

The decision follows the theft of a utility task vehicle (UTV) and trailer used by the Moosehorn Fire Department. The trailer was later recovered,



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Flooding and washouts caused by this spring's heavy rainfall damaged infrastructure across the RM of Grahamdale, including this washed-out crossing at Road 43W and Hudson Bay Line. Municipal officials estimate that approximately 80 sites throughout the municipality will require repairs and plan to access Disaster Financial Assistance funding to help cover recovery costs.

but the UTV remains missing.

Council approved spending \$3,176.32 plus taxes for the purchase and installation of the additional cameras.

The municipality is also dealing with the effects of unusually heavy rainfall this spring.

McCoubrey said some areas of Grahamdale have received as much as 12 inches of rain, resulting in widespread infrastructure damage.

Although the municipality did not declare a state of local emergency, it plans to access Disaster Financial Assistance funding. Approximately 80 sites across the municipality have already been identified for repairs.

Road infrastructure remains a major priority. Council discussed the municipality's 2026 gravel program, which will see approximately 144 miles of road resurfaced using roughly 22,000 tonnes of gravel.

Council also approved an amendment to its gravel-hauling contract to account for rising fuel costs.

Water management was another topic of discussion as representatives from the West Interlake Watershed District and the GROW Committee met with council.

The groups provided information about water-retention projects, including the installation of three weirs designed to help refill marshes and wetlands while slowing spring runoff. McCoubrey said the presentation was informational, although similar projects could potentially be explored

CELEBRATIONS AT GREEN ACRES PARK & TEULON ROCKWOOD ARENA

TEULON CANADA DAY JULY 1st 2026



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ACCESS OUTDOOR STAGE - 12-4PM

- Country Pride Band
- Teulon Veselka Ukrainian Dancers
- Green Acres Art Centre Dancers

GRASS WEST OF STAGE CANTEEN - 12-4PM

- July 1st Silent Auction
- June 30th & July 1st 50/50 raffles
- Inflatable Bouncers & Axe Throwing
- Fire Trucks

RODEO & MUSEUM AREA

- Teulon Rodeo Club
- Pancake Breakfast 9AM-12PM
- Green Acres Art Centre Bands & other local musicians Performances 9:30AM-11:30AM
- Teulon & District Museum- 10AM-1PM
- Teulon Sunset Riders Performances 11:30AM, 1PM & 3PM

TEULON ROCKWOOD ARENA - 10AM-4PM

- INSIDE
- Miniature Golf - 9 holes
- Make a Glider Plane
- OUTSIDE ARENA/HARD BALL DIAMOND - 12-4PM
- Hot One Transport/ Load cool bus on the west side of arena
- Hand Crafted Carnival & Prizes
- TEULON & DISTRICT HANDI VAN
- FREE rides in Teulon
- Book a ride 204-886-3566

SOCCER FIELDS - 12-4PM

- Variety of fun interactive soccer activities
- Inflatable soccer field
- Soccer Dart Target shooting

INTERLAKE ORIOLES DOUBLE HEADER GAME

- Diamond #5
- Game 1 at 1PM
- Game 2 at 4PM

LIONS CANTEEN 12-4

- Burgers,
- Hot Dogs,
- Fries,
- Snacks
- & Drinks



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Lundar Fair celebrates 99 years of agricultural society

By Nadia Schultz

Heavy rains and difficult conditions may have challenged local farmers this spring, but they did little to dampen community spirit at the 72nd annual Lundar Fair.

Held June 12 and 13, the fair marked the 99th anniversary of the Lundar Agricultural Society and brought together exhibitors, volunteers, sponsors and families for a weekend celebrating agriculture, community and tradition.

While beef show entries were down from previous years, organizers said participation remained strong considering the circumstances facing producers across the region.

"With all the recent rain in the area and challenges farmers are facing, we were happy with these numbers," said Lundar Agricultural Society secretary Cynthia Wirgau.

A total of 65 head of cattle from 27 exhibitors took part in the beef show, while participation in the Home Living section increased from previous years.

"This year's Home Living section was a wonderful success," said Tina Ducharme of the Lundar Agricultural Society.

One of the highlights, she said, was the number of multi-generational entries.

"It was wonderful to see families of different generations coming together to share their skills, traditions and love of creating. These entries truly showed the importance of passing knowledge and creativity from one generation to the next."

Lynda Capner was named Grand Aggregate winner for her achievements across the Home Living classes.

The youth cattle shows remained a major attraction throughout the weekend, with nine-year-old Bexley McIntosh of McIntosh Ranch enjoying an impressive showing. McIntosh captured Grand Champion Overall Steer, Grand Champion Yearling Heifer and Champion Jackpot Heifer honours while also winning the fair's popular \$1,000 Jackpot Heifer Show.

Big Sig Cattle placed second in the Jackpot Heifer Show, followed by



Berts NR Simmentals in third.

"We would like to thank all the buyers and sponsors for coming out and supporting the youth of agriculture," said Ducharme. "It is a lot of hard work and dedication these kids put into their animals."

Additional top beef show results included Champion Simmental Female, McIntosh Ranch; Reserve Champion Simmental Female, Big Sig Cattle; Champion Mixed Breed Female, Jaymarandy Livestock; Reserve Champion Mixed Breed Female, Keira Duguid; Champion Commercial Female, Orla Duguid; Reserve Champion Commercial Female, Greenridge Farms; Champion Simmental Bull, Berts NR Simmentals; Champion Mixed Breed Bull, Maple Grove Gelbvieh; and Reserve Champion Mixed Breed Bull, Jaymarandy Livestock.

In the Peewee Horse Showmanship competition, Paislee Grandmont claimed first place, followed by Corbin Kinkead in second and Olivia Flood in third.

The annual Baby Show showcased some of the community's youngest residents. First-place winners were Aurora in the six- to 12-month-old girls category, Canyon in the six- to



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY NADIA SCHULTZ AND LANA MEIER

Families enjoyed midway games, rides, food and entertainment during the 72nd annual Lundar Fair, held June 12 and 13. The event brought together residents and visitors from across the region to celebrate agriculture, community spirit and the Lundar Agricultural Society's 99th anniversary.

During opening ceremonies, Interlake-Gimli MLA Derek Johnson reflected on the importance of the fair as a community gathering place.

"We gather at the fair overall these years to support families and join our friends," Johnson said. "There's family members that we don't get to see for almost a whole year and then we reunite here at the fair."

them at all. They just kept on showing the steers, showing the heifers, showing the cattle."

He also acknowledged the many volunteers working behind the scenes.

"There's a lot more that are in the background pulling everything together here, pulling the strings and making this event happen," Johnson

Continued on page 21



said. "Without them, it collapses."

Beyond the livestock competitions, fairgoers enjoyed a full slate of attractions throughout the weekend. The midway featured rides, games and food vendors, while activities inside the arena included face painting, mini-golf, crafts and a bouncy house.

As the Lundar Agricultural Society looks ahead, attention is already turning toward a significant milestone. Founded in 1927, the organization will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2027.

After nearly a century of bringing people together through agriculture, competition and community spirit, organizers say the fair remains as important as ever — a place where generations reconnect, traditions are passed on and rural Manitoba is proudly celebrated. During opening ceremonies, Interlake-Gimli MLA Derek Johnson reflected on the importance of the fair as a community gathering place.

"We gather at the fair overall these years to support families and join our friends," Johnson said. "There's family members that we don't get to see for almost a whole year and then we reunite here at the fair."

Johnson also encouraged fairgoers to recognize the efforts of volunteers and sponsors who help make the event possible.

"Without the volunteers, this fair wouldn't be as great as it is," he said. "Please consider supporting the sponsors. It's really what holds the community together."

RM of Coldwell Reeve Virgil Johnson praised the commitment shown by young exhibitors despite less-than-ideal weather conditions.

"While we were sitting in the bleachers with a nice cover over us, there was squalls of rain off and on, and the kids are in their T-shirts that represent their clubs," he said. "It didn't bother them at all. They just kept on showing the steers, showing the heifers, showing the cattle."

He also acknowledged the many volunteers working behind the scenes.

"There's a lot more that are in the background pulling everything together here, pulling the strings and making this event happen," Johnson said. "Without them, it collapses."



Beyond the livestock competitions, fairgoers enjoyed a full slate of attractions throughout the weekend. The midway featured rides, games and food vendors, while activities inside the arena included face painting, mini-golf, crafts and a bouncy house.

The annual Baby Show once again highlighted some of the community's youngest participants. Winners included Aurora in the six- to 12-month-old girls category, Canyon in the six- to 12-month-old boys category, Amelia in the 12- to 18-month-old girls category and Beaudin in the 12- to 18-month-old boys category.

The Lundar Antique Tractor Pull attracted 62 pulls across 12 classes despite rain on Friday, while Saturday's parade drew crowds of families lining the streets.

Parade winners included Tiki Beach Bike for Best in Show, Gospel Light House in the local organizations category and Maple Grove for family floats.

As the Lundar Agricultural Society looks ahead, attention is already turning toward a significant milestone. Founded in 1927, the organization will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2027.

After nearly a century of bringing people together through agriculture, competition and community spirit, organizers say the fair remains as important as ever — a place where generations reconnect, traditions are passed on and rural Manitoba is proudly celebrated.



Gimli group reflects on unforgettable Antarctic cruise

By Lana Meier

A month-long Antarctic cruise gave four Gimli travellers the opportunity to experience towering glaciers, remarkable wildlife and some of the most remote waters in the world.

Don and Gail Hurak, along with Randy and Chris Swanson, recently returned from an extensive South American and Antarctic voyage that took them through Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, the Falkland Islands, Antarctica and Chile.

The journey began with a lengthy series of flights from Winnipeg to Toronto, New York and finally Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The group intentionally built extra time into their schedule before boarding the cruise ship to allow for potential travel delays and to explore Rio's famous attractions.

"We allowed an extra day in Rio in case we ran into issues with connections, flight cancellations or delays," explained Swanson following the trip.

While in Rio, the group visited landmarks including the world-famous Copacabana Beach and the Christ the Redeemer statue, while also taking in panoramic views of the city from a cable car excursion.

For the travellers, Christ the Redeemer was one of the most memorable highlights of the entire trip, rivalled only by Antarctica itself.

"Kind of a tie between Christ the Redeemer in Rio, the gigantic and immense ice formations and the sanctity of land and sea so amazingly sequestered from human contact," Swanson said. "Of course, walking among penguins was unbelievable."

From Rio, the cruise travelled south along the Atlantic coast with stops in Brazilian ports including Ilha Grande, Sao Paulo and Balneario Camboriu before continuing to Montevideo, Uruguay, Buenos Aires and Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands.

The travellers then crossed the infamous Drake Passage twice while making their way to Antarctica.

"Bring Gravol or something stronger if you have a queasy stomach," they noted. "The passage can be 'lumpy' to say the least."

Despite the notoriously rough wa-

ters, none of the four travellers experienced motion sickness.

"The biggest challenge was avoiding stepping on deposits made by those that did have motion sickness,"

Swanson joked. "You knew rough seas were coming when the ship's crew started putting barf bags in stations all over the boat in common areas."

Although strict environmental protections prevented passengers from setting foot on the Antarctic mainland, the group still spent more than three days cruising among islands and along the northwestern Antarctic Peninsula.

"As the various countries that govern Antarctica are strict and guarded about who can set foot on the lands, we had to settle with watching all the wildlife and other sites from our ship," they said. "Still, we were treated to spectacular sights."

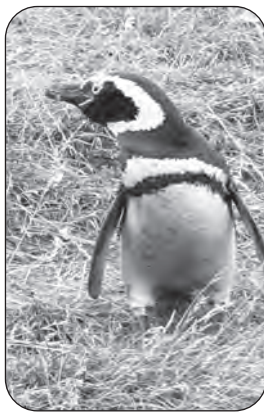
Seeing Antarctica for the first time left a lasting impression on the travellers.

"Words we used to describe it were spiritual, goosebumps, again land untouched, free of human contact," Swanson said.

The cruise also included stops in Ushuaia, Punta Arenas, Puerto Chacabuco, Castro, Puerto Montt and San Antonio before the group disembarked and travelled inland to Santiago, Chile.

Not every stop went as planned. Weather conditions shortened the group's time in Port Stanley and resulted in the cancellation of a stop in Ushuaia.

"For those considering this cruise, bear in mind that you are in Cape Horn and the Drake Passage environs, meaning weather and heavy winds will have a lot to do with what you see and experience," they noted.



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Cathedral of San Francisco. Famous for its extensive wooden construction, including the vaulted wooden ceiling and columns.

One of the highlights for many passengers was a series of onboard seminars led by experts on Antarctic wildlife, birds, penguins and the region's geography.

"Nothing can replace seeing wildlife in its own environment," they said.

The travellers were fascinated by what they learned about the region's wildlife, particularly the incredible journeys made by birds and penguins.

"Albatrosses have been known and tracked flying completely around the globe, and penguins can travel such long distances to eat and bring food back for their young," Swanson said.

The group also reflected on the practical realities of international travel, noting that larger cities throughout South America shared many similarities with urban centres around the world.

"People on the street were generally very helpful," they said, adding that Google Translate became a valuable tool while travelling through Portuguese- and Spanish-speaking regions.

The voyage around the southern tip of South America and into Antarctica had long been a bucket-list adventure for the group.

"Why this trip? The adventure of going around the southern tip of South America, and it was a bucket-list item," Swanson said.

While the travellers expected some similarities to previous trips to Iceland, Antarctica's vast scale offered a different perspective.

"All of us having been to Iceland, the land forms, ice and lack of foliage were expected, but seeing it all from



The statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro. It stands 30 metres tall, and the arms stretch 28 metres wide.

the deck of our ship gave for more panoramic experiences," Swanson said.

The travellers also shared several tips for others considering a similar adventure, including researching vaccination requirements, packing carefully for varying climates, limiting luggage where possible, preparing for changing weather conditions and beginning travel planning well in advance.

"We would advise anyone going on this trip to do their research ahead of time, check weather forecasts, plan for

Continued on page 24



Province expands surgical capacity, adding 200 more hip and knee surgeries, 7 arthroplasty surgeons

By Patricia Barrett

Manitoba completed a record number of hip and knee replacement surgeries last year, thanks to provincial investments, the dedication of surgeons and other health-care professionals, and a surgical partnership with the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority.

Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care Minister Uzoma Asagwara visited the Selkirk Regional Health Centre on June 19 to announce the addition of 200 more hip and knee replacement surgeries this year.

Selkirk's surgical program completed more than 800 hip and knee replacements last year, accounting for a significant share of the provincial total of 7,056 procedures.

The province invested in 1,000 net new surgeries last year. The remaining 200 surgeries will be distributed to centres across Manitoba that have the capacity to perform them.

Selkirk's contribution to the hip and knee replacement program was lauded by the health minister, who called the made-in-Manitoba capacity-building effort "awesome" and thanked Selkirk for "delivering real results for Manitobans." Selkirk helped reduce provincial wait times for people suffering from pain and decreased mobility.

"That is going to make a huge difference for Manitobans who need this care every single day. And I want to thank all of you for making that a reality in this province," said Asagwara, who was joined by the IERHA's chief executive officer, surgeons from Selkirk and Concordia hospitals, nurses, Shared Health's surgical lead, a knee replacement recipient and Justice Minister Matt Wiebe.

"This additional investment of over 1,000 new hip and knee surgeries in Manitoba contributes to our province setting a record. Our province last year was able to do 7,056 hip and knee replacement surgeries. That is



Knee replacement recipient Melanie Shumilak from Selkirk with Dr. Thomas Turgeon, who performed her surgery at the Selkirk hospital.

the largest number we have ever been able to do, and I'm looking right at you folks on the team. You know how hard you worked to get that done. That is a record for Manitoba."

Asagwara said they met with Dr. Edward Buchel, Shared Health's provincial surgery specialty lead, a few years ago to discuss what the government needed to do to ensure Manitobans could receive hip and knee surgeries in Manitoba "so that we're not sending people out of the province, out of the country to get this essential health care."

Out of the country is exactly where Selkirk resident and knee replacement recipient Melanie Shumilak wants to go — after she receives her second new knee — to climb waterfalls.

Shumilak said she suffered from arthritic knee pain for 10 years and had to be "talked into" getting a knee replacement after hearing reports of people experiencing difficulties after surgery.

She loved to walk and hike, but those activities declined as her condition worsened, and she found herself



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY PATRICIA BARRETT

Manitoba Health Minister Uzoma Asagwara and Justice Minister Matt Wiebe with Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority doctors and nurses, and CEO Marion Ellis, along with orthopedic surgeons and knee surgery recipient Melanie Shumilak (centre), who had a knee replaced in the morning and was walking out of Selkirk hospital by afternoon. The province has added 200 more hip and knee surgeries, with a whopping 800 completed last year, and recruited seven new arthroplasty doctors.

"unable to climb any waterfalls when I travelled to Iceland two years ago."

She had a consultation with orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Thomas Turgeon, who works out of Concordia and Selkirk hospitals, and she was scheduled for surgery in Selkirk six months later.

"I was working out with two braces for over 10 years, using walking sticks and, of course, taking pain medication daily," said Shumilak. "After I was referred, I started hearing more and more happy stories, successful stories, and my trepidation subsided somewhat. One friend had both knees done eight months apart and was back Ukrainian dancing. So I agreed."

She underwent outpatient surgery in April. By about 3:30 p.m. on the day she received her new knee, she walked out of Selkirk Regional Health Centre.

"I have a new appreciation for the importance of mobility. Through my recovery, I've graduated from a walker and crutches to minimal use of a cane, and now I'm preparing for round two. I'm 68 years old and I want my mobility back in both knees, so I'm looking at having my second knee done in Selkirk in September. Thanks to the expansion of the hip and knee program, the wait time is reduced," said Shumilak. "I'm not a Ukrainian dancer, but there are still many waterfalls I want to climb."

Shumilak's surgeon, Dr. Thomas Turgeon, said developing Selkirk into a successful hip and knee surgical centre was a "team sport" that has reduced surgical wait times and changed lives "one joint at a time."

"The creation of the hip and knee replacement program here in Selkirk

has been a significant undertaking. To take a facility that had no orthopedic procedures being performed at it and convert it into a high-volume arthroplasty centre providing world-class service and outcomes in just over a year is no small feat," said Turgeon, who briefly left Manitoba for specialized training in the United States and was nearly recruited to a position in a desirable coastal city before deciding to return home.

"And it was no accident. This required coordination and commitment from surgeons and anesthesiologists, nurses, rehabilitation professionals, administrative staff, support services and the leadership team all working together toward a common goal. The expansion here in Selkirk demonstrates what can be achieved when health-care professionals across disciplines collaborate to improve access to care. Health care is a team sport, and I'm so proud of what this team has accomplished and continues to accomplish."

When asked whether diagnostic wait times have affected hip and knee replacement surgery wait times, Turgeon said surgeons do not require CT scans or MRIs for the vast majority of cases. An X-ray is generally all that is needed.

Buchel said it was "amazing" that Selkirk exceeded its surgical targets while staying on budget and was "one of the few places in our province" to do so for high-acuity, highly complex surgeries in such a short period of time.

That success has helped Manitoba



Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care Minister Uzoma Asagwara speaks with health-care staff at Selkirk Regional Health Centre.

> EXPANDED, FROM PG. 23

lead the country in the number of hip and knee replacement procedures completed on an outpatient basis.

"This change has allowed us to deliver care here and free up space in our main trauma centre so that we can do acute care in those areas and continue to provide the care that's desperately needed," said Buchel. "What does this do? It improves our wait times. In March 2025, our median wait time for hip replacement surgery was 39 weeks. A year later, that has dropped to 22 weeks. That means half of our patients are waiting 22 weeks or less, with the Canadian Institute for Health Information standard being 26 weeks."

Fewer than four years ago, the province was completing about 3,500 arthroplasty surgeries annually. That number has now doubled to more than 7,000, he added.

With hip and knee surgical wait times reduced, the province has

also recruited more than seven new arthroplasty surgeons.

"Recruitment of surgeons is very difficult. It takes many years," said Buchel. "But I can tell you that right now we have recruited more than seven arthroplasty surgeons over the last two years."

The 200 additional hip and knee surgeries will be distributed among surgical centres including Concordia Hospital, Health Sciences Centre, Selkirk Regional Health Centre and Brandon Regional Health Centre, he said.

Showing medical residents that Manitoba has the capacity to support their careers will help recruit those who leave the province for specialized training, Buchel added.

"When they go away for one or two years, other people can poach them from us. We want them back. The number is seven who have come back, and four residents are going away for

> RECOVERY, FROM PG. 18

in the future.

Council also approved the hiring of Ryan Banman to conduct fire safety inspections within the municipality as required under provincial legislation.

Local fire departments continue to stay busy. The Gypsumville Fire Department responded to four grass fires during the previous two weeks, while the Moosehorn Fire Department reported three fire calls, one mutual-aid fire call and one mutual-aid EMS assist.

In development matters, council held a public hearing regarding a

proposed amendment to the municipal development plan involving land near Steep Rock.

The amendment would redesignate a portion of land from Parks, Recreation and Open Space to Lake Residential to accommodate a proposed 47-lot private subdivision, while redesignating another parcel from Lake Residential to Parks, Recreation and Open Space.

McCoubrey noted no concerns were raised during the public hearing. She explained the redesignation was necessary because land designated as Parks, Recreation and Open Space cannot be subdivided.

Council also approved a subdivision application that would create a 5.01-

training — and we want them back. We're telling them we want them back. We're giving them commitment letters to come back, and we're building the capacity so they can come back and do something."

IERHA president and chief executive officer Marion Ellis thanked everyone involved in the health-care system — from surgeons and registration staff to rehabilitation and allied health professionals — for contributing to Selkirk's success as a hip and knee surgical centre.

"When we were asked to be part of the provincial surgery initiative — every year we get an opportunity to develop a plan and we submit it to government — we're sometimes cautious and sometimes ambitious. But this time it was government that came to us," said Ellis.

"And we wanted to make sure we didn't disappoint patients and didn't disappoint those who were putting confidence in all of you, the team, whose everyday efforts make this

happen. So we thank you for that as well. Sincerely."

> ANTARCTICA, FROM PG. 22

various modes of dress, be prepared for excursions being cancelled due to weather and start planning at least a year in advance," Swanson said.

"The walk from the plane to the baggage claim in Rio was roughly three kilometres," he added with a laugh.

While the group was awed by Antarctica's beauty, they also observed evidence of environmental change.

"It is sad to see glaciers retreating knowing that it is because of us," Swanson said. "The evidence of retreat is easily visible as it is in Iceland."

Despite occasional weather disruptions and long travel days, the Gimli travellers described the journey as an unforgettable opportunity to witness some of the world's most unique landscapes and wildlife firsthand.

acre farmstead from a larger agricultural parcel.

Among other business, council approved seasonal grass-cutting and garbage collection contracts for Moosehorn, Gypsumville and Steep Rock, authorized a two-day trapping workshop in Moosehorn and supported Assistant CAO Devan McCoubrey's nomination to the Interlake Tourism Association board of directors.

Council heard an update from the Age in Place working group, which is partnering with Access Credit Union to help seniors travel to Ashern for banking services.

McCoubrey described the initiative as "incredibly important," noting

some residents do not have access to personal transportation and rely on such services to maintain their independence.

"I know this is hard for some people to imagine in rural Manitoba, but this is absolutely a reality for some of our residents," she said. "While our Moosehorn seniors are fortunate to have many services close at hand, not everything is available locally. The loss of our local branch creates very real limitations for some of our residents, and senior assisted travel is a vital service to help residents maintain their independence and remain in the RM of Grahamdale for as long as possible."

> 55TH ANNIVERSARY, FROM PG. 12

around" and she couldn't have been prouder of the event that was hosted. She recognized the outstanding contributions made by organizers, students and teachers that made the event a success.

"My dad would have been very, very proud of the entire day," she said. "He was a very community-minded person and he would have done possibly anything for the children — the day would have meant a lot to him."

She hopes his legacy continues to live on for many more years to come.

"I encourage students to be open minded and work hard for their school, job, community and church — that's what life is all about."

The celebration concluded with guests sharing a cake decorated with a picture of the school.

Throughout the event, organizers emphasized the importance of remembering Alf Cuthbert's contributions to the community and encouraging students to recognize the impact individuals can have, regardless of where they come from.

"By learning about him and celebrating his contributions to our school and community, we hope students realize that coming from a small town in the middle of nowhere doesn't mean you can't do big things or be successful in the life path you choose," Gagaluk said.

Looking ahead, organizers hope the school continues serving the community for generations to come.

"Our hope for the future is that the school is still here for a long time to come. After all, the centennial is only 45 years away."

Students mark milestone with anniversary poem

Grade 5/6 students presented the following poem during the celebration. The poem was written by teacher Katlyn Bittner-Taylor and refined with input from the students.

*In a small town where the gravel roads wind,
Where faces are familiar and kindness you find,
Stands a school with stories to share,
Built on hard work, community, and care.
Where parents once sat, now their children do too,
Learning and growing in classrooms they knew,
Teachers who've guided for many a year,
Still welcoming each new class with cheer.
From chalkboards and books to screens*

*that glow,
From pencils to tablets, we've watched learning grow,
Smartboards and laptops have all found their place,
Yet some things remain we cannot replace...
Yes, we type and we click, and technology's great,
But handwriting still matters, yes, we still teach it just to be straight,
Because here in these halls, both old ways and new,
Help shape who we are and all that we do.
For 55 years, through change and through time,
Through laughter and learning, through reason and rhyme,
One thing stays constant, strong and true,
This school is our family, me and you.
Alf Cuthbert School, we proudly say,
Happy 55th Anniversary today!*

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Lundar-born brothers inducted into Baseball Manitoba Hall of Fame

By Kieran Reimer

It's now been 16 years since the dominant run of the Winnipeg South Chiefs AAA minor baseball team.

From 2008 to 2010, the Chiefs were what kids today would call a "wagon."

Their dynasty saw them go undefeated in league play for three consecutive seasons, from the peewee to bantam levels, with much of the same roster remaining together throughout that span.

The team was built primarily of Winnipeg players. However, a pair of brothers from the Interlake found themselves on the roster after their family moved from Lundar to Oak Bluff, which fell within the Chiefs' catchment area.

The Millar brothers, Derrick and Chad, previously played community baseball in the region before making the move.

Derrick went on to play all three years with the team, while Chad played two seasons, winning a championship in each year he was with the club.

The team not only captured city and provincial titles, but also made trips to national championships, including one appearance in the medal round.

Each year, a Chiefs player was named Baseball Manitoba Player of the Year for their age group, including Derrick, who earned the honour in 2010.

The team was also a two-time recipient of Baseball Manitoba's High Performance Team of the Year award.

Now, all these years later, the team was officially reunited on June 13 when it was inducted into the Baseball Manitoba Hall of Fame's Class of 2026.

"Just to see these guys — a couple of them I haven't seen in a good 10, even 15 years — it was really nice to catch up with them and kind of rekindle that connection," Derrick Millar said on Friday.

Derrick was one of six members of the 2008-10 Chiefs in attendance at the induction ceremony.

Another attendee was former Chief and 2026 Montana's Brier champion curler Matt Dunstone, who was a part of the team during its dynasty run.

Another notable former Chief who was unable to attend was Madison Bowey, a member of the Washington Capitals' 2018 Stanley Cup championship team.

Bowey was a standout during his time with the Chiefs, earning Baseball Manitoba Player of the Year honours at the 13U level in 2008.

Another top player from the team was Nelson Quark, who went on to play for Campbellsville University following high school.

"It was an honour. The team that I was on, with our success, we had a lot of good players on the team," Derrick Millar said. "Just to stand out on that team alone gave me a very big boost of confidence. I was happy to make my family and everyone else proud, along with my teammates, because for the three years that we got inducted for, there were three players on my



Members of the 2008-10 Winnipeg South Chiefs AAA peewee/bantam baseball team reunite after being inducted into the Baseball Manitoba Hall of Fame on June 13. The Chiefs went undefeated in league play during all three seasons of their dynasty run and included Lundar-born brothers Derek and Chad Millar. Pictured, back row (left to right): Doug Quark (coach), Matt Dunstone, Chad Millar, Derek Millar and Geoff Crawberger (coach). Front row: John Anderson, Bryan Ezako (coach), Nelson Quark, Taeron Lewis and Mike Anderson (coach).

team who won Player of the Year in Manitoba."

He also credited the Chiefs' coaching staff for keeping the players humble throughout their years of dominance.

"With our success, it would have been very easy to kind of get on a high horse, but it was our coaching that kept us humble and kept us happy and respectful toward the other teams," Derrick Millar said.

In 2026, Derrick is playing senior

baseball with the Stonewall Blue Jays alongside many of the players he grew up with in the Interlake.

He joined the team a few years ago after taking time away from the game following Grade 12, a year he spent playing at a baseball academy in St. Albert, Alta.

The 31-year-old now works as a power line technician for Manitoba Hydro and is nearing journeyman status.

Storm FC move into second with 4-1 win over Fratelli

By Kieran Reimer

Another week, another win for Storm FC.

The Arborg-based club's offence was once again a key factor as it extended its unbeaten streak to four matches.

Last Monday, Storm defeated Fratelli Di Calabria FC 4-1 at Buhler Recreation Park in its lone match of the week.

Storm received goals from four

different scorers as Rogan Dueck, Zachary Friesen, Zach Kornelsen and Tristan Penner all found the back of the net. Fratelli's lone goal came from Joshua Danylchuk.

By collecting the full three points, Storm moved into second place in the Manitoba Major Soccer League Division 5 standings with a 4-2-1 record, 13 points and a plus-nine goal differential.

Storm now trails only Prairie United (5-0-2), a team it will face later this week.

Before that matchup, Storm will take on the third-place Red River Rovers (3-0-2).

Storm and the Rovers will meet Tuesday at Buhler Recreation Park, with kickoff scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

The match against Prairie United follows Sunday at Republic of Man-

itobah Park, with kickoff set for 7 p.m.

UPCOMING GAMES:

- Tuesday, June 23 — vs. Red River Rovers, 7:30 p.m., Buhler Recreation Park
- Sunday, June 28 — vs. Prairie United, 7 p.m., Republic of Manitoba Park

Record-setting throws highlight Interlake performances at Athletics Provincials

By Kieran Reimer

It was a podium-filled finish to the high school season for the many local athletes who compete in throwing events in track and field.

Interlake throwers took centre stage at last weekend's Manitoba Provincial Track & Field Championships, where double-digit numbers of local throwers reached the top-12 finals across the various events.

Headlining the results were Gimli High School's Jencie Henry and Jerika Samborski, along with Riverton Collegiate Institute's Hudson Charrier and Arborg Collegiate Institute's Jayden Hibbert, who each secured podium finishes.

The pair from Gimli both found themselves on the podium in discus, as Henry captured gold in varsity girls while Samborski collected silver in junior varsity girls.

Both throws marked personal bests, while Henry's 45.15-metre heave also set a provincial record. She additionally claimed gold in the varsity girls shot put event.

Hudson Charrier, meanwhile, took silver in the varsity boys shot put with a 15.13-metre throw in the finals following a personal-best 15.37-metre mark in the qualifying round, while Hibbert took home bronze in varsity boys discus with a 36.14-metre heave.

"The nice thing was just the number, even if it's not a podium finish, just the number that advanced to finals," said Justin Charrier, who coaches the Interlake throwers outside of school time as part of Predator Athletics Club's satellite program.

"Those were the ones who medalled. Along with them were a whole bunch who finished top 10 and top five and things like that. To see them pull it together, it really shows kind of where the season started and where it progressed. They did what they had to do on that weekend."

Justin said he expects some of the throwers to continue their seasons into the summer with the upcoming Western Canada Team Challenge and U16/U18 Nationals.

One who will certainly be on Team Manitoba's radar is Henry, who is already committed to the Uni-



Arborg Collegiate Institute's Jayden Hibbert earned a bronze medal in varsity boys discus with a throw of 36.14 metres.

versity of Lethbridge.

"She's got very high potential," said Justin Charrier. "Right now we are at U20 Nationals, so she finished her shot put the other day and she finished seventh. Sunday, we have discus and she's ranked third coming in. Next year, she's committed to going to Lethbridge on a throwing scholarship. In Lethbridge, she's going to work with Larry Steinke, who is a national throws coach, and part of our conversation with Larry has always been it's not what she's going to do at the university level, but it's kind of what's going to follow the university level. He sees that potential as well, and I see lots of things happening still."

Henry will also compete at the Athletics Manitoba Age Class Provincial Championships this summer



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Gimli High School's Jencie Henry (left) and Jerika Samborski celebrate their podium finishes at the Manitoba Provincial Track & Field Championships. Henry captured gold medals in varsity girls discus and shot put, while Samborski earned silver in junior varsity girls discus.

before heading to Lethbridge, Alta.

Her training there gets started once she heads down in the fall.

"They have a great throwing program and Larry is just an awesome coach, and he's been talking to Justin for quite some time," said Henry. "I have had the chance to talk with him before I committed, and he's just awesome. He knows so much."



Riverton Collegiate Institute's Hudson Charrier earned a silver medal in varsity boys shot put. Charrier recorded a 15.13-metre throw in the finals after setting a personal-best mark of 15.37 metres in the qualifying round.

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Please be advised that a Municipal General Election will be held on **October 28, 2026**.

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:

For the office of Head of Council:
Between May 1, 2026 and September 22, 2026

For the office of Councillor:
Between June 30, 2026 and September 22, 2026

at the Town of Arborg office, 337 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, or visit the Town of Arborg office at 337 River Rd during regular business hours.

Jan Larkin, SEO
Town of Arborg
204-641-0329
janlar5001@gmail.com
Dated at Town of Arborg on June 25, 2026

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TOWN OF WINNIPEG BEACH WE'RE HIRING!

The Town of Winnipeg Beach is actively recruiting election workers for the next municipal election, July 24, 2026. Interested individuals are invited to apply.

Roles: Information Officers, Registration Officers, and Voter Record Officers and other election workers. Multiple positions available over 4 election event dates. There are 3 Advanced Poll dates between July 10 and 14th, in addition to the general election on July 24, 2026. One of the Advanced Polls is in the City of Winnipeg.

Requirements:

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Election workers will remain non-partisan
- Basic literacy skills (reading, writing and comprehension)
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- Must be able to travel to Advanced Poll polling places
- A valid Manitoba drivers' licence and access to a reliable vehicle is an asset
- Experience working election events is an asset and not a requirement
- Training will be provided to all successful candidates

How to Apply: Interested individuals can apply directly by contacting the Town of Winnipeg Beach Senior Election Officer (SEO), B. Leah McIsaac through email SEO@WINNIPEGBEACH.CA

Deadline to apply, July 4, 2026



Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION OF PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE FOR GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Please be advised that a general municipal election will be held on October 28, 2026.

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, fund raise or borrow money for their campaign.

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

For the office of head of council:
Between May 1, 2026 and September 22, 2026

For the office of councillor:
Between June 30, 2026 and September 22, 2026

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

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

Chris Fulsher
204-376-2391
seo@bifriv.ca

Dated at: 329 River Road Arborg, Mb. on April 28, 2026

Chris Fulsher Municipality of Bifrost- Riverton
Senior Election Official (SEO)

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TOWN OF WINNIPEG BEACH NOTICE OF ELECTION

Notice is hereby given that a vote of the Town of Winnipeg Beach will be taken to elect Mayor and Councillors from the following duly nominated candidates:

For the offices of Councillor (4):	For the office of Mayor (1):
Linda Campbell	Terry Calof
Darcy Gilkes	Stan Potten
Barry Hoel	Sig Trautwein
Doug Jarvis	
Andrea McCann	
Anjali Schludermann	
Ravi Shukla	
Christine Sokaluk	
Kim Trombinski	

VOTING PLACES

Voting places will be open for voting on Friday the July 24th, 2026, between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 pm. at the Winnipeg Beach Municipal Recreation Centre, 32 Hamilton Avenue.

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 Winnipeg Beach Municipal Recreation Centre and will be open during each of the following days Friday, July 10th and Saturday, July 11th between 8:00 am. and 8:00 pm.

Advanced poles will also be available in Winnipeg on Tuesday, July 14th at the Dakota Community Centre, 1188 Dakota Street from noon to 8:00 pm.

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.

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, or by email to:

SEO, B. Leah McIsaac
Box 160, Winnipeg Beach, MB R0C 3G0
SEO@WINNIPEGBEACH.CA

If applying in person*, a voter may apply between June 26th and July 21st.

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

If applying by mail or email**, a voter may apply between June 12th and July 21st.

** A voter applying by mail or email will receive a sealed envelope ballot package by regular post, or by making alternative arrangements with the senior election official.

If the application is received less than 12 days (on or after July 12), the voter is responsible to make arrangements to pick up the ballot envelope as well as ensuring it is received by the SEO before 8 pm on Election Day, July 24, 2026.

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or drop it off in person: 139092 Hwy. 326 N, Arborg, MB, R0C 0A0

Rural Municipality of FISHER

Box 280, Fisher Branch, MB, R0C 0Z0
Tel: 204-372-6393, Fax: 204-372-8470

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

SUPPLYING, CRUSHING, LOADING & HAULING TRAFFIC MATERIAL

The Rural Municipality of Fisher invites proposals for the supplying, crushing, loading or stockpiling, hauling and depositing of traffic material onto municipal roads during the period ending August 24, 2026.

Proposal forms may be obtained at the Rural Municipality of Fisher Office, June 22, 2026, 30 Tache Street, Fisher Branch, Manitoba.

Proposals must be received by **9:00 a.m. July 6, 2026** at which time they will be considered by Council at a Special Meeting.

Envelope must be sealed and marked "Gravel Proposal 2026".

The RM of Fisher reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive irregularities and informalities therein, and to award the proposal in the best interest of the RM of Fisher in its sole discretion.

Kelly Marykuca, CMMA
Chief Administrative Officer
Rural Municipality of Fisher
Box 280
Fisher Branch, Manitoba R0C 0Z0
Phone: (204) 372-6393 Ext 4



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Please contact Derek or Darlene at 204 378-2251.

Job Applications is available upon request or submit your resume Derek at meatrivertoncoop@mymts.net or to Darlene at rivertoncoop@mymts.net

Thank you for your interest.



RM OF GIMLI – WE'RE HIRING!

Join us in building a strong, vibrant Gimli! Apply by June 30, 2026:

Facility Operator 3 (Recreation) - Supports operations at the Recreation and Aquatic Centres, parks, and public facilities—keeping spaces safe, clean, and welcoming.

- Full-time | \$25.08-\$28.72/hr
- Work in recreation facilities, parks & aquatic centre.

Operator B (Public Works) - Build and maintain the infrastructure that keeps Gimli moving—operating equipment and supporting construction and maintenance across the RM.

- Full-time | \$28.86/hr
- Operate equipment & support municipal infrastructure

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Scan the QR code or visit <https://www.gimli.ca/p/employment-opportunities> to view full job descriptions and application details.



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CARD OF THANKS

A sincere thank you to all who attended Einar's memorial service, to everyone who brought meals and baking to our house, for all the phone calls, visits, the beautiful cards and flowers, the donations to the LPCH guild, to Cindy for the lovely service, to Brian for the heartfelt eulogy, to Ethel and Barrett for their kind speeches, to the ladies for a lovely lunch, and to John and Karen Gray for helping us through this difficult time.

-Sylvia Thorgilsson and family

IN MEMORIAM

Jonas Einarson
January 27, 1930 – June 26, 2005

A special person.

-Forever loved and remembered and sadly missed by, wife Ollie and all the family

NOTICE OF INTERMENT



SANDRA MARILYN JOHANSSON

Notice of Interment

July 3, 2026, Friday, at 11:00 a.m.

Location: All Saints Cemetery,
4515 Main Street,
West Saint Paul, MB
Section D, Row 28, Plot 12.

All are cordially invited to attend.

OBITUARY

Russell Dean Einarson
November 4, 1968 – June 17, 2026.

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved son, brother, and uncle, Russell, who departed this life too soon.

Russell Einarson passed away peacefully at the age of 57 after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Born on November 4, 1968, Russell was the middle child of Bjarni and Beverly Einarson. He

attended school in Arborg, Manitoba, where his favorite subject was history, a passion that

remained with him throughout his life. Anyone who knew Russell knew of his remarkable

knowledge of history, family genealogy, birthdays, and anniversaries. Family and friends could always count on receiving

a thoughtful greeting from him on their special days.

Following graduation, Russell worked at the Arborg Co-op before dedicating his life to the family farm. There he grew and cleaned grain for resale and took great pride in continuing the legacy of a multigenerational family farm that had been in the family for over a century.

Russell had a lifelong love of animals and cared for many throughout the years, including chickens, pigs, cattle, leafcutter bees, cats, and dogs. He found great happiness in farm life and in the rich history of the land he called home.

Russell was predeceased by his father, Bjarni Einarson; his paternal grandparents, Gunnar and Malla Einarson; and his maternal grandparents, Jake and Osk Sigurdson.

He leaves to cherish his memory his mother, Beverly Einarson of Riverton; his sister, Sharon Poole and her husband, Vern, of California; his brother, Collin Einarson and his wife, Trina, of Winnipeg; his niece, Carla, and her husband, Jim, and their daughters, Charlotte and Everley, of Florida; his nephew, Darren, and his fiancée, Sam, of Colorado; his nephew, Jordan of Colorado; and his nephew, Brady, and niece, Tessa, of Winnipeg.

The family wishes to express their sincere appreciation to the staff of Arborg Hospital for their exceptional care, compassion, and kindness shown to Russell during his hospitalization. They are also grateful to the many family members and friends whose visits brought him comfort and strength.

Russell will be remembered for his kindness, his devotion to family, his love of animals, and his remarkable knowledge of history and genealogy.

A memorial service will be held at Geysir Community Hall on July 7, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.



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OBITUARY



Lillian Rannviig Firman (nee Hokanson)

Mom passed away peacefully on June 14, 2026, which sadly broke a link from our family chain.

Mom lived in our family home that she built with Dad until more recent years where she lived in Rotary Towers, Riverton Care Home, and Gimli Betel. Mom was born on September 06, 1934 to Evelyn and Carl Hokanson and was the third eldest of 10.

Mom leaves behind her children, Evelyn (Allan), Calvin (Brenda), Joann (Ronnie), Patsy (Rod), and Neil (Terri). Grandma will be missed by her grandchildren, Carla (Jeff), Ryan (Denise), Lana (Marc), Stacey (Al), Rob (Joanne), Erin (Troy), Hartley (Meaghan), Jordan, Sadie (Riley), Derek; her 10 great-grandchildren; her brothers, Lynn (Linda), Charles (Valerie); sisters-in-law Phylliss and Marilyn Hokanson, Anne and Shirley (Firman), and their families. Mom had far too many nieces and nephews to mention them all.

She was predeceased by her husband Arthur (2003); parents Carl and Evelyn Hokanson; brothers Ken, Roddy, Clifford, Dale; sisters Alice, Josephine and Inez; grandson Neil Roy; in-laws Paul and Florence Firman; brothers and sister-in-law Archie, Paul, Stanley and Margie.

Mom was born and raised in the Riverton area. At 17 she married Dad in 1951 and moved to Gimli where they raised five children. Mom did an amazing job keeping the household together while Dad worked two jobs to keep our family taken care of. Mom was an outstanding cook, baker, kept a spotless home and an immaculate yard. Our home always smelled of fresh bread, cinnamon buns and cookies. We had the best Christmases ever with Mom beautifully decorating the house and baking and cooking for several days preparing for the big day, often hosting 40 or more people for a sit-down meal.

Her door was always open to family and friends and they never left hungry. She raised us with love but, oh boy, you never wanted to get her mad! Out would come the wooden spoon or she would show us her fist!! Everyone knew her as being feisty with great come backs. Mom loved her flowers, birds, bingo, puzzles, walks, and playing the spoons.

We want to thank the wonderful nurses, health care aides, housekeeping, kitchen, and recreational staff at Betel for the care and compassion they showed Mom. Thank-you to all!

We will miss Mom, but know she is reunited with Dad, family and friends that went before her.

Shortly after Mom passed, a dragonfly appeared before us. The spirit world believes a dragonfly appearing shortly after one's passing is a sight of comfort symbolizing that the soul is at peace. For every time we hear a bird sing, we will think of you Mom. Rest in peace dear Mom.

Your memory will live forever Engraved within our hearts

OBITUARY

Susan Heathcote

It is with great sadness that the family of Susan Heathcote announces her sudden passing on Sunday, June 21, 2026, at the age of 78.

Sue was born in Newark, England, to Edward and Nora Graham. She worked as a nurse in training at Saxondale Hospital in Nottinghamshire, where she met the love of her life and best friend, Colin. Together, they embarked on a new adventure, immigrating to Canada and building a life filled with friendship, family, and cherished memories.

Their journey first brought them to Brandon, Manitoba, where they welcomed their daughter, Deanne. They then spent several years in Wabowden, where they welcomed their son, Mark. Eventually, Sue and Colin settled in Gimli, where they made their home on the shores of Lake Winnipeg. Sue dedicated many years of service to the Province of Manitoba, retiring as the Regional Manager of Employment and Training.

Sue had a passion for travel and found joy in spending time with friends and family. She enjoyed knitting, gardening, and cooking. Sue was also an active member of her church community, where she found friendship, purpose, and fellowship. Nothing brought her greater pride than celebrating the accomplishments and milestones of her grandchildren and great-grandson, all of whom she loved dearly.

Sue will be lovingly remembered and deeply missed by her daughter, Deanne; her son, Mark (Velika); her grandchildren, Gage (Kaite), Abbegayle (John), and Hannah; her great-grandson, Colin; her siblings, Di and Chris; her nephews, Simon (Kim) and Nick (Catherine); as well as many extended family members and dear friends.

Sue was predeceased by her beloved husband, Colin; her brother, David; her nephew, Paul; her parents, Edward and Nora; and many cherished family members and friends who passed before her.

A funeral service will be held at St. Bartholomew Anglican Church in Winnipeg Beach on Tuesday, June 30, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. A gathering to celebrate Sue's life will follow the service at Minerva Hall in Gimli.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Ade and Dr. R.C. Patel for their many years of dedicated care, kindness, and support. The family would also like to thank the Gimli RCMP and the paramedics whose professionalism, compassion, and kindness provided comfort and support during a difficult time.

Sue will be remembered for her kindness, strength, generosity, and unwavering love for her family. Her memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved her.



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OBITUARY



John Traa

It is with heavy hearts we announce the passing of John on June 8, 2026, at the age of 83 years. He is now at peace in the arms of his Savior.

He will be fondly remembered and loved by his wife of 29 years, Anne-Marie; children, Veronica, John (Arlene), Carol (Guy); stepchildren, Jenn (Brad), Viola (Logan), Sophia (Nolan); 15 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

John was predeceased by his parents, Regina and Hendrikus; sisters, Hendrika, Wilhelmina, Riek; brothers, Ted, Gerry, and Martin.

In accordance with John's wishes, cremation has taken place. A celebration of John's life will be held at a future date.

In- lieu of flowers please consider a

donation to Siloam Mission.



204-886-0404

OBITUARY

Nettie Kiesman (nee Thiessen)

February 6, 1943 - June 20, 2026

Nettie, formerly of Ashern and Moosehorn, MB, passed away peacefully at the Whitemouth Personal Care Home at the age of 83.

Funeral service will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 4, 2026 at the Moosehorn Community Hall in Moosehorn, MB with Pastor Luke Tully officiating.

Longer obituary to follow.

Arrangements by:
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