

# Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald



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## Shellbrook to borrow up to \$7.6 million for water treatment plant project



**Council for the Town of Shellbrook in considering borrowing up to \$7.6 million to upgrade the town's water treatment plant.**

Barring a tidal wave of concerns from ratepayers, council for the Town of Shellbrook will go ahead with an application to borrow \$7.6 million to upgrade the municipal water treatment plant after its next regular meeting on Monday, Aug. 17 at 6:15 p.m.

So says a public notice from the town, which arrived with monthly utility bills starting late last week and only gave ratepayers until noon on Thursday, Aug. 13 to submit their written comments. So, too, declares the same public notice that went up on the town's website on July 29.

But no such public notice appeared in

the pages of the *Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald* for readers and ratepayers to see.

With Shellbrook's municipal office working on limited hours and some employees working from home during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Town of Shellbrook CAO Kelly Hoare explains the office is "flying by the seat of its pants."

And, having just returned from a holiday, she adds that the newspaper was overlooked in favour of informing as many ratepayers as possible through their utility bills.

While it's unclear if any ratepayer

feedback will impact council's final decision next Monday, what's clear is that the water treatment plant project has undergone some changes since the *Chronicle* last reported on it.

For starters, the \$7.6 million the town is planning to borrow is a significantly greater sum than the \$6 to \$6.5 million it estimated the project would cost in October of 2019. It's also higher than the total sum of \$6.8 million Hoare said the town would need to borrow at council's regular meeting in July, after the town failed to qualify for federal grant funding.

When asked about the discrepancy,

Hoare explained that the town won't know how much the full project will cost until the contracts are awarded. Because of this, and because grants aren't a sure thing, the town needs to make sure it borrows enough money to complete the project.

Hoare added, however, that the town will only borrow as much as it needs.

As for what the project itself will entail, Shellbrook Mayor George Tomporowski says that, in the absence of grant funding, the town will be staging the project in two parts and going it alone for at least the first stage.

*Continued on page 2*

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The advertisement features a blue background with various school-related icons like scissors, a backpack, and pencils floating around. A young boy wearing a blue shirt and a blue surgical mask is shown sitting at a desk, writing in a notebook. The text "Stop in for all your back to school needs" is prominently displayed in large pink letters. Below that, a list of items is provided: School Supplies, Lunch Boxes, Sanitizer, and Masks. The brand name "Woodland Pharmacy" is at the bottom in yellow letters. A Facebook logo and the text "Find us on: facebook.com" are in the bottom left corner. The address "9 Main Street" and phone number "Ph: 306-747-2545" are in the bottom right corner.

# Shellbrook to borrow up to \$7.6 million for water treatment plant

**Continued from 1**

Stage one of the project will focus on the installation of a third greensand filter, the servicing of the two existing filters, and upgrades to the piping within the plant. This work is expected to cost \$1 million and take about two to three months to complete, depending upon the availability of the selected contractor and materials.

Tomporowski says the filters and the pipes were identified as critical pieces of the project because the pipes are 25 years old, and the existing filters have never been serviced. Most importantly, though, the third greensand filter will ensure the continuity of the town's water supply.

"We want to get this stuff done, so that we're not in a crisis mode," Tomporowski said. "When the pandemic hit, and everybody's at home, we were just able to meet demand. That's how close we are [to capacity]. We definitely need to get this third filter in the plant."

While stage one is essentially set to go ahead, Tomporowski says the hope is

that the town will qualify for grant funding when the next intake window opens. The other options, he adds, would be to delay the later stages of the project, or borrow the money to complete them.

"We'll make that application, because it's quite a process to go through to get that. And if we don't need it, that's great," he said, noting that the onerous application process makes it easier to just apply for the money once, rather than apply for it separate chunks.

Work for later stages of the water treatment plant project will see the town focus on upping its storage capacity.

Currently, says Tomporowski, the town doesn't have adequate storage to meet the Water Security Agency's (WSA) fire protection guidelines, which state that municipalities requiring fire protection should have storage equal to at least double the average daily consumption.

The town will also look to address the WSA's concerns over bromide in municipal water, which Tomporowski says is a problem caused

by the amount of chemical needed to treat the town's hard water supply.

As part of the solution to this problem, the town is eyeing a switch to a blended reverse osmosis system, which will allow the water to be treated through a safer injected chlorine process. As of October 2019, that part of the project was expected to cost as much as \$1.5 million.

As an added bonus, Tomporowski says the blended reverse osmosis system

could mitigate the need for water softeners, and make the water more palatable for drinking. Just as important, it should also make a significant difference on taps, water heaters, and municipal infrastructure.

"It'll improve the general quality of the water," he said.

"Certainly, when you look at it, it's one of the criticisms we get from a lot of people. If you get it to a point where it's a non-issue, it's one of those things, in terms of commu-

nity development, that an outsider coming in looks at."

With as much as \$7.6 million in work at the water treatment plant coming down the pipeline, and the potential for the town to have to cover the entire project, one question that remains is how ratepayers' bills will be impacted.

Tomporowski explains that the town recently entered year two of its five-year Water and Sewer Utility Rates & Fees bylaw, which sets

out water rates until 2023. That means, for the next two years, at least, that there should be no unexpected changes in rates.

"At this point, there certainly hasn't been any discussion about changing that," Tomporowski said.

"Initially, I don't think there'll be any significant impact. If we are able to go ahead with the whole project, it will depend on whether or not we're able to access federal money or not."

## Shellbrook rail station safe for public group, mayor

The group leading the fight to preserve Shellbrook's CN Railway Station is hoping to clear up the misconception that the old building isn't safe for public use.

The supposed safety of the station — and the estimated \$300,000 to \$400,000 cost to fix it up — were among the main reasons the Town of Shellbrook began questioning the building's future, and eventually landed on the decision to repeal its heritage status and potentially demolish it.

More recently, however, Shellbrook Mayor George Tomporowski clarified that the building is perfectly safe for public use.

Indeed, rather than being the price to get the station up to usable condition, the \$300,000 to \$400,000 cost estimate would be for a major renovation to bring the building up to the standards set out by modern building codes.

Currently, the group fighting to save the station has a proposal before Shellbrook's town council that would see the building turned into an artisan's cooperative.

Under the terms put forth in the proposal, Nancy Carswell and Marlene Fellows would establish a non-profit membership corporation to oversee the station and help raise funds to maintain the building.

The proposal asks that the town give Carswell and Fellows until June 1, 2021 to establish the non-profit and develop a viable business plan. Once that's done, the non-profit would purchase the station from the town for \$1, and the proposal also asks that the town consider exempting the station from paying property taxes in its first year of operation.

Finally, should the arrangement prove to not be viable by June 1, 2022, the non-profit would be dissolved and the station would be returned to the Town of Shellbrook to do with as it wishes.

Though the proposal doesn't outline exactly what's meant by an artisan's co-operative, Fellows explained that the building would serve as a year-around place for local artists and artisans to gather and sell their works. In return, the non-profit would take a percentage of any sales.

While this is the main idea put forth in the proposal, Fellows says there are plenty of ideas being pitched for attractions and events that could be hosted at the station to bring in funds for the building.

Council discussed the proposal at its July meeting. And, while it was mostly in favour of the idea, it decided it needs more information from the group before it could proceed.

As for what would become of the Shellbrook & District Heritage Museum, the proposal says that the station would continue to display parts of the museum's collection. And, thanks to the Town of Shellbrook, any items not on display will be temporarily stored in the Shellbrook Community Hall.

The Shellbrook Tourist Booth has also been suggested as a temporary location for pieces of the museum's collection.

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**DG Domain Sales Inc.** is seeking rental proposals from potential tenants for N 1/2 36-49-7 W3 (267 ac) in the RM of Canwood. The land is fenced and cross fenced (fences are in fair condition, but will require repair). The land has not been pastured in the past 2 years. There is an ample water supply. There are no corrals. The tenant will be responsible for fence repair / maintenance. Proposals should state the number of cow/calf pairs that the tenant intends to place in the pasture.

Rental proposals will be considered for a 3-5 year term beginning in 2021. The pasture could be used yet this fall (at no cost) if the selected tenant was able to repair the fence in time.

For additional info, contact **Gerald Muller** at **306-570-7743**.

Please submit proposals by Friday, Aug. 21 to DG Domain Sales Inc., Box 40, Mont Nebo, SK S0J 1X0.



#### Community Health Nurse Home Care Nurse, Home Community Care

Indigenous Services Canada is offering two motivated, First Nation culturally aware Registered Nurses the opportunity to serve 12 First Nation Communities in Central Saskatchewan.

These positions are for full-time days, weekdays only. Vehicle provided. Education benefits and multiple fully-funded, learning opportunities, along with excellent supervisory support. **The position can be based in Prince Albert or Spiritwood and Telework could be considered.**

To apply for this position and to view the full list of required qualifications, please refer to the Government of Canada employment website: [jobs.gc.ca](http://jobs.gc.ca)

**Deadline for applications is September 06, 2020**

Indigenous Services Canada Services aux Autochtones Canada



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# Papa Rene's feels effects of pandemic

"Before COVID, we would sell 12-15 pots of coffee in a day and as soon as COVID hit, we were down to 1 pot. Some days, on a good day, you would make 2 pots," said Sally Turgeon when discussing how the pandemic has affected business at Spiritwood's local pizza and sub shop, Papa Rene's.

At the onset of government restrictions, business was very slow, causing local business owners, Sally and Rene Turgeon, to have to lay off most of their full-time staff and transition to operating their business by themselves. There were a few people who would come in for something almost every day, according to Sally, but once the grocery store closed, Spiritwood would become a ghost town.

Indoor seating had to stop, and Rene's usual trips into Saskatoon to sell his home-made jerky and sausage slowed from weekly to monthly. The shop had to start ordering more supplies to get shipped in on the truck which increased ingredient cost. This was



**Sally and Rene Turgeon (left) and some of their staff were hard at work on Monday filling orders.**

slightly offset by wages not being paid out for staff. Having to order accordingly was initially a challenge, according to Sally, but has become easier overtime. With the reduced quantities of supplies needed, they have been able to buy some supplies locally in smaller quantities. The menu and

its prices have remained the same, as the shop hasn't had trouble sourcing its main ingredients.

Hours were reduced from 8 AM to midnight daily to 10 AM to 10 PM daily making scheduling a little easier to deal with.

The transition to doing take out only was a bit easier for Papa Rene's, as takeout was already a large part of their business model and having to deal with fewer people both staff and patrons reduced some of the stress. "I miss the people, but I don't miss the work involved having inside seating," said Sally.

Like many others, life slowed down for Sally and Rene at the beginning of the pandemic.

"We stopped to breathe for a little bit." Said Sally. "Because life in here is very hectic on a day to day basis."

When relief funding became available, business started to pick back up with most sales happening around the lunch and supper hours.

Papa Rene's did not start to see their normal volume of takeout orders coming in until the end of May and early June when some restrictions were lifted, and people were on the move again. Scheduling is a nightmare, according to Sally, who says there is no

rhyme or reason to the days and hours they might end up with a high volume of orders.

The start of the golfing season generated some extra business with more families hitting the greens, as swimming lessons, soccer, and minor ball have not been running. Additionally, the usual influx of lake and cabin people has brought in more orders.

Apart from the usual increase in orders during the summer months, Sally speculated that people are in general travelling less and travelling shorter distances, with many opting to stay home. With people sticking around, there are more orders coming in from people who might usually have a bite to eat in the city, or those working on projects around their own home.

Although business is back up to a bustle at the pizza shop and indoor seating is allowed, Sally says they don't anticipate re-opening for seating at least until the fall. "I'm a little apprehensive about when school starts," she said, wondering whether a second wave or a local outbreak might come along with that. With current restrictions and the set up of the shop, only a few tables could be seated to follow the 2m physical distancing requirements. Sally estimates an additional 3-4 people would be required in a day to monitor and sanitize the tables.

It will certainly be an interesting few weeks as the province plans to reopen schools in September and everyone will have to wait to see the outcome of that decision.

## Provincial ball tournaments cancelled in Shellbrook

Plans for Shellbrook to host both the u14 and u16 provincial ball tournaments have officially be axed, thanks the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

After Saskatchewan entered phase 4 of the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan near the end of June, and softball activities were able to begin for what would have been a truncated season, there was some hope that provincial tournaments might get off the ground late this summer.

However, in communications to its members and an Instagram post, Softball Saskatchewan officially announced last week that all tournaments scheduled for Aug. 7 through 9, the Shellbrook tournaments included, had been cancelled.

"Our Board has went[sic] to great lengths to develop Protocols and Guidelines that have allowed our members to play some softball this year, unfortunately there are some limitations," the communication said, explaining that provincial guidelines and restrictions don't allow for tournaments.

"Given the size of some of the categories of Provincials and the number of teams that would be in one location,

tion we feel it is just not in everyone's best interests to proceed with Provincials."

Softball Saskatchewan says final decisions on any remaining provincial tournaments on the schedule will be made on a weekly basis going forward.

In league-related announcements, the organization also urged its members to continue following guidelines and restrictions during league play and practices.

And, in response to questions from members about tournaments, it's also mandated that no event that includes more than three teams in a single location in one day will be permitted.

"As we move further into August we continue to ask our members to put the health and safety of all players, coaches, umpires and volunteers as everyone's first priority," the organization said.



### Town of Blaine Lake INVITATION TO TENDER

#### Roof Replacement

**Town of Blaine Lake Municipal Office  
301 Main Street**

- Supply and Install trusses for a peaked roof
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Interested parties are invited to submit their tenders prior to **2pm on Friday August 21, 2020**

All tenders must be submitted via mail or email:

Town of Blaine Lake  
Box 10  
Blaine Lake SK S0J 0J0  
Email: blainelake@sasktel.net

Lowest or only Tender not necessarily accepted.

**For more information contact Town of Blaine Lake at (306) 497-2531 or by e-mail blainelake@sasktel.net**

### ➤ Annual General Meeting

# Join us!

Join us on Tuesday, **September 8, 2020** from the comfort of your home!

Due to COVID-19, we rescheduled our AGM to a virtual format to ensure the health and safety of our members.

**6:30 pm Meeting and vote**

#### PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGES

As part of this year's agenda, members will be asked to vote on proposed bylaw changes. Voting will take place at the AGM and throughout the voting period that will be available to members from **September 9 - 15 at 4 PM**.

**Please note:** You'll be required to pre-register by September 1 in order to attend the virtual AGM. You can pre-register by visiting [affinitycu.ca](http://affinitycu.ca).



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# OPINION

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August 13, 2020

## Sask.'s initial 'Safe Schools Plan' gets passing grade — but just barely

To some, the true measure of our leaders is in their ability to admit when they don't know something, and defer responsibility to those with more expertise in the matter at hand.

This seems to be the philosophy of the Sask. Party government, which has sagely concluded that a bunch of Ministry of Education suits in Regina don't necessarily know what's best for schools in small communities like Shellbrook and Spiritwood.

For this reason, the province has provided guidelines to allow students and teachers to return to school in September, but left much of the responsibility for crafting detailed COVID-19 procedures to individual school divisions.



JORDAN  
TWISS  
~  
News Editor

In turn, those school divisions are setting their own guidelines, along with a few ground rules for schools, but leaving the finer details of the plans up to the schools.

When compared to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's

government, which believes it knows what's best for everyone and isn't afraid to use policy to enforce its beliefs, such humility from a government is a breath of fresh air.

That said, there's a razor-thin line between deferring responsibility and passing the buck. And the Sask. Party government's Safe Schools Plan dangerously flirts with the latter.

The province's plan arrived later than the plans of most jurisdictions. But, despite being late for class, the plan ends where other provinces began their discussions.

The plan is the baseline, a foundation that other provinces built upon with further guidelines. And, while it was smart of the Sask. Party to

refrain from enacting policies some schools might be incapable of enforcing, there was more it could have done.

For starters, it could up the rate of COVID-19 testing, which is currently well below the national average, even after a spike in cases over the past few weeks.

The plan could also dedicate more funding to schools, to allow for adequate staffing to shrink class sizes.

The province has announced \$2.3 million in spending to buy 6 million masks for schools. But, even if it didn't want to make masks mandatory, it could have, at the very least, provided clear guidelines on mask use.

It's true that classes of more than 20 rowdy children will



SIGNAGE

STRESS

be hard to police, making a mandatory mask policy almost impossible to enforce. It's true, too, that children have thus far been less susceptible to the worst effects of COVID-19 than adults and the elderly.

However, the best way to ensure this remains the case is through good planning.

Individual schools are in the best position to have the final say on which policies work for them. But the province must do its part as well.

The Safe Schools Plan is a starting point, and a low bar.

But to its credit, the Sask. Party government at least seems open to making improvements.

## Conservatives are fighting for answers on WE Scandal

By Andrew Scheer  
MP, Regina-Qu'Appelle

Over the last few weeks Canadians have heard a lot about Justin Trudeau's \$900 million scandal. New details emerge every day that paint a concerning picture of corruption at the highest levels of government.

While there are many facts we still don't know, one thing is crystal clear – the program at the heart of this scandal, the Canada Student Service Grant – was never about helping students. It was about bailing out Justin Trudeau's friends at the WE group of organizations.

The cozy relationship between Justin Trudeau, his Finance Minister Bill Morneau, the Liberal Party and WE Charity dates back over a decade. During that time, Justin Trudeau and his family have attended more than 50 WE events. The Morneau's have taken two illegal luxury vacations paid for by WE. WE employs a member of Morneau's family.

And since Justin Trudeau became Prime Minister, WE has paid members of the Trudeau family more than half a million dollars.

In the past five years, Justin Trudeau's government has given WE millions of taxpayers' dollars and he has personally acted as a prominent booster for the organization. In exchange, WE has given Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party a platform to promote their policies and to speak directly with millions of young people – all potential future Liberal voters.

When the pandemic hit, Justin Trudeau saw an opportunity to help his friends at WE. Under the guise of helping students, he handed almost a billion dollars of your money to a real estate shell company, that had no experience delivering youth programming.

The excuses that Justin Trudeau rattled off when he testified at Finance Committee last week were just an attempt to deflect blame and avoid responsibility.

The timeline in his version of events doesn't

add up. The Canada Student Service Grant was announced on April 22nd. A member of the Prime Minister's Office spoke with WE about their proposal on May 5th, the same day WE was allowed to start charging expenses for administering the program. But cabinet didn't approve the proposal until May 22nd – two and a half weeks later!

So who told WE that they would be approved? And why were they allowed to start charging expenses in advance?

Justin Trudeau claims he pulled the WE proposal from the May 8th cabinet agenda and sent it back for further scrutiny. But it's clear that additional scrutiny didn't take place. A quick Google search would have shown the many problems facing the organization and should have disqualified them from receiving government funding. No one is buying that members of the public service recommended them unprompted. Trudeau's 'explanations' sounds like the 'dog ate my homework,' kind of

last-minute excuses.

So where does that leave us? And who is being held accountable?

Trudeau has already been found guilty of breaking ethics laws twice. Now he's under investigation for the third time. His Finance Minister Bill Morneau is also under investigation. And Conservatives have written to the RCMP and the Lobbying Commissioner asking them to investigate.

Since Justin Trudeau shut down Parliament until at least the fall, there is no way currently for Opposition parties to take down the government. But Liberal MPs have a choice to make. They can sacrifice their personal integrity to protect corruption, or they can take a stand and demand that Trudeau and Morneau step aside.

Rest assured that Conservatives will continue to hold Justin Trudeau and his government accountable. We will keep fighting for the answers that Canadians deserve.

### Shellbrook Chronicle

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### Member of



# VIEWPOINT

August 13, 2020

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## Report from the Legislature

A safe return to school has been the top priority of your Saskatchewan Party government ever since our in-school programs came to a halt this past March.

Recently, our government released a plan that will allow for our staff and students to return safely to school this fall. We have evaluated best practices and emerging research that has been provided by public health and have worked alongside our Chief Medical Health Officer to develop this plan.

Our government has developed an eight-step guideline for general operation. All steps will be tailored by their school division to fit the needs of local students and staff. We trust local autonomy, as we understand that a cookie-cutter plan will not work across our province. By laying out the foundation, school divisions will develop plan that is practical for their area. In close consultation with public health officials, the Education Response Planning Team has reviewed and approved each plan to ensure alignment with Saskatchewan's Safe Schools plan.

Safe attendance and safe classrooms are part of these new operational guidelines. All staff and students are encouraged to stay home if they are feeling unwell. Protocols will be put in place for a staff member or student who falls ill while at school. In the classroom, procedures to limit physical contact and promoting hygiene will be implemented.

The third priority within the guidelines is safe transportation. Where possible, parents are encouraged to transport their own children to and from school. Recognizing this isn't an option for many, there will also be protocols in place for those who will utilize transport such as:

- Assigned seats and a



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record of this seating plan on school buses;

- Students who live in the same household should be seated together;
- Partitions around drivers can be considered; and
- Cleaning and sanitation of buses or other vehicles used to transport students is required between each run.

The fourth and fifth priorities are safe access and safe facilities. Safe access will focus on the daily flow of students and staff within the building. Safe access includes school-level considerations such as dedicated entrances, staggered start times and controlled flow of students and staff in common areas.

Safe facilities will focus on the cleaning and sanitation of school buildings. Each school has been asked to increase sanitation measures and continue to promote proper hygiene practices. This includes the availability of hand sanitizer wherever possible and establishing clear protocols for bringing supplementary school materials such as backpacks and school supplies in and out of schools. If needed, the ministry will provide Personal Protection Equipment, or PPE to students and teachers at the request of the Chief Medical Health Officer.

The sixth guideline focuses on safe classrooms. This measure will ensure the safe sharing of space

in the classroom between students and staff. Safer classrooms will include increased personal sanitation measures and proper hygiene practices, as well as minimizing contact among students and staff as much as possible. Many students and teachers across our province are missing their classrooms and classmates, so we must ensure that they are able to return to these spaces as safely as possible.

The seventh guideline includes safe supports. Our physical health has been threatened by this pandemic, but we understand that our mental health has taken a toll as well. This measure will ensure that support for our staff and students' mental health is readily available when needed. Support for the learning needs of intensive needs or immune-compromised students will also be put in place. I encourage you to read through your school divisions' tailored plan to become familiar with the various supports that will be available in this area.

The eighth guideline focuses on safe activities. This protocol focuses on policies governing group activities including:

- Extra-curricular club activities;
- Participation in athletic events/competitions; and,
- School assemblies.

Our plan includes four levels of safe alternatives that focus on our province's contingency plan at the advice of our Chief Medical Health Officer. These four scenarios may be activated regionally or provincially.

- Level 1: Primary and Secondary Educational Guidelines – as close to 'normal' as possible, with some additional measures.
- Level 2: will involve mask usage as determined by the Chief Medical Health Officer.
- Level 3: will involve reducing classrooms ca-



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WILSON  
MLA**  
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pacity. This may include establishing cohorts and hybrid learning models as considerations.

• Level 4: would take us back to suspending in-class learning and moving back to a similar model we saw this past spring, with divisions working at the local level to ensure learning continues. In this model, school would continue to be mandatory, albeit remotely.

As it stands, our government is planning on our classroom return to be at a Level 1. As the situation

with COVID-19 in Saskatchewan is evolving, plans may be updated and adjusted as needed. Again, our government is trusting the advice and direction of our Chief Medical Health Officer and we will monitor our provinces potential outbreaks closely.

Through increased investment in our 2020 Budget, initial estimates show school divisions are planning to hire more than 225 additional staff. School divisions were able to save about \$40 million due to the in-school suspension earlier this year. Divisions have indicated to our government that they will use their savings for costs associated with a safer return to school. While the costs may not be finalized yet, divisions have identified over \$3 million in expenses so far. No school division has identified the need for funding outside of their savings at this time.

For parents with questions or concerns regard-



**HON. JEREMY  
HARRISON  
MLA**  
~  
*Meadow  
Lake  
Toll Free:  
1-877-234-6669  
jharrisonmla@sasktel.net*

ing your child's return to school we encourage you to first contact your local school division as they have created the detailed guidelines and protocols for local school. Our government has given our local school divisions autonomy to tailor their return to school plan to the best interest of their students, and we thank them for their cooperation during these unprecedented times.

For more information please contact your local school division or [www.saskatchewan.ca](http://www.saskatchewan.ca).

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# Shellbrook's Playground Program offers summer fun

It's not quite all fun and games as usual, but the Town of Shellbrook's Summer Playground Program did manage to get off the ground this summer and lend a little normalcy — and much-needed outdoor activity — to local kids during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year's program kicked off in July, and is expected to continue through to the end of August. Due to COVID-19, the program is limited to 15 children, and two program supervisors to oversee each week's themed activities.

Despite these limitations, Town of Shellbrook recreation director Jessica Kernohan says the program is going as well as can be expected in the current climate.

"It was off to a slow start, but everything is in the COVID world because everyone's a little leery. Other than that, it's been going

great," she said, noting that the program just reached its max capacity in the last week of July.

In the interest of keeping kids and program supervisors safe, Kernohan says the Playground Program is abiding by the same rules as any other location in the province, and discouraging anyone who's been out of the country, anyone who's been told to self-isolate, and anyone displaying cold and flu-like symptoms from attending.

Additionally, staff has been ensuring that cleaning and sanitizing practices are adhered to.

"They do all sorts of hand sanitizing and hand washing with the children, and encouraging them to keep their distance from each other, and not do 'kid things,'" Kernohan said.

While certain "kid things," such as games of tag, have been off the table at the Playground Program, there's still been plenty of ways for the kids to have fun and learn.

The program kicked off with a Disney-themed week, then had weeks focused around science and water. This week, the focus is supposed to be on sports.

"Really there are so many activities they can do that don't involve contact," Kernohan said.

Anyone interested in having their child participate in the playground program, must pre-register at [www.townofshellbrook.ca](http://www.townofshellbrook.ca). The cost to participate is \$40 per week.

The program is hosted at the Scout Building in Kinsmen Park, located on 5 Avenue West, and runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday to Friday.



**Playground Program kids got to test out a tried and true classic during science week, as they made their own erupting volcanoes.**

## Minutes of a Town of Spiritwood Regular Meeting

*(Where necessary, the following minutes may have been edited for clarity or brevity)*

The regular meeting of the Council of the Town of Spiritwood was held on April 14, 2020 at 7:00 PM via Sasktel Teleconference.

In attendance were Mayor Gary von Holwede, Councillor James Bedi, Councillor Debbie Allan, Councillor Bryan Wingerter, Councillor George Pretli, Councillor Brad Nemish, Councillor Shannon Beaulac, and CAO Rhonda Saam.

A quorum being present, Mayor von Holwede called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

George Pretli: That the agenda be adopted as presented. Seconded by Bryan Wingerter. Carried.

Debbie Allan: That the Accounts for Ratification, Cheque No. 30692 to 30729 in the amount of \$103,039.71 be approved as presented. Seconded by Bryan Wingerter. Carried.

Jim Bedi: That the Accounts for Approval, Cheque No. 30730 to 30752, and CAFT Payroll Advance payments 1-7, in the amount of \$76,047.66 be approved as presented. Seconded by Debbie Allan. Carried.

Jim Bedi: That Bylaw No. 528/20, a Bylaw to Amend Bylaw No. 486/13, known as the Zoning Bylaw be read a second time. Seconded by Brad Nemish. Carried.

Bryan Wingerter: That Bylaw No. 528/20, a Bylaw to Amend Bylaw No. 486/13, known as the Zoning Bylaw be read a third time and finally adopted. Seconded by George Pretli. Carried.

Jim Bedi: That we offer to

sell the lane between Lot 1 Block 6 and Lots 10-13 Block 6 to Lake Country Co-operative Association Ltd. in the amount of \$11,000 plus GST, and Lake Country Co-operative Association Ltd. would be responsible for the costs of surveying, registering title with ISC, as well as costs associated with the lane closure process; and, whereas, Lake

Lot 1 Block 6 Plan BH2038 to Lot 10 Block 6 Plan BK2112 and Lots 11-13 Block 6 Plan 63B06663. Seconded by Bryan Wingerter. Carried.

Debbie Allan: That we approve the renewal of the rental agreement for heated storage lease with Northview Ventures Ltd. effective March 1, 2020 to Feb. 28, 2021. Seconded by Brad Nemish. Carried.

Jim Bedi: That we ratify the decision to set up the CAFT System with the Prairie Centre Credit Union to allow for direct deposit of payroll. Seconded by Brad Nemish. Carried.

Jim Bedi: That we ratify the decision to set up the CAFT System with the Prairie Centre Credit Union to allow for direct deposit of payroll. Seconded by Brad Nemish. Carried.

Debbie Allan: That we ratify the decision to approve Brenda Beaulac and Kristen Klassen to take the online Part 1 Theory Training from

Jim Bedi: That we do not shut off the water at Lot 13, Block 11 Plan CA5071 during the COVID-19 Pandemic State of Emergency as we are not certain that the property is vacant; and, that we advise the property owner to contact Saskatchewan Municipal Advisory Services to find out more information about Landlord rights and responsibilities and The Residential Tenancies Act. Seconded by Shannon Beaulac. Carried.

Debbie Allan: That we ratify the decision to approve Brenda Beaulac and Kristen Klassen to take the online Part 1 Theory Training from

SaskAlert. Seconded by Jim Bedi. Carried.

George Pretli: That we approve Kristen Klassen to take the LG200 Local Government Authority online course offered through U of R in May 2020 and the Town pays for the LGA course expenses. Seconded by Shannon Beaulac. Carried.

Bryan Wingerter: That we submit an Infrastructure Investment Plan to the Gas Tax Program for a Main Street Sidewalk Reconstruction Project and for a Sewer Line Upgrade Project. Seconded by Jim Bedi. Carried.

Shannon Beaulac: That this meeting be adjourned at 7:30 PM. Seconded by Debbie Allan. Carried.

following town employees as part of our municipal response to the COVID-19 public emergency: Kristen Klassen effective April 16, 2020; Kaeli Cross effective May 1, 2020. Seconded by Shannon Beaulac. Carried.

Bryan Wingerter: That we submit an Infrastructure Investment Plan to the Gas Tax Program for a Main Street Sidewalk Reconstruction Project and for a Sewer Line Upgrade Project. Seconded by Jim Bedi. Carried.

Shannon Beaulac: That this meeting be adjourned at 7:30 PM. Seconded by Debbie Allan. Carried.

## Minutes of an RM of Spiritwood meeting

*(Where necessary, the following minutes may have been edited for clarity or brevity)*

The Regular Meeting of the Council of the Rural Municipality of Spiritwood No. 496 was held on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 via web conference. In attendance were Reeve, Shirley Dauvin, Division 1, Doug Johnson (Deputy Reeve), Division 3, Terry Wingerter, and Division 6, Bevra Fee, Administrator, Colette Busiere and Foreman, Darcy Laventure. Absent were Division 4, Dennis Laventure, Division 2, Alan Steinhilber, and Division 5, Jerome Tetreault.

A quorum present via teleconference, Reeve, Shirley Dauvin called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

Doug Johnson: That the agenda be adopted as presented and that the following agenda item be added: Building Official Services Agreement Invoice – Don Caffet. Carried.

Bevra Fee: That we authorize Mike Morris, SARM Director of Legal Services, to respond to Mill Creek's request, dated April 15, 2020, and advise that the municipality cannot agree to their proposal to hold off on litigation

proceedings in exchange for approval of Phase 2 & Phase 3 of the proposed development; and that the municipality compel Mill Creek to proceed with the litigation and provide an Affidavit of Documents; and that the municipality is not in favor of initiating the process to consider amendments to the Zoning Bylaw to accommodate Phase 2 & Phase 3. Carried.

Bevra Fee: That Invoice No. 12 dated April 2020 from Don Caffet for catwork be declined, as the work in the right of way was not authorized; and That the "List of Accounts" as listed on the attached Schedule "A" forming part of these minutes be passed for payment. Cheque No. 12373-12412, Payroll File No. 0286 & 0288. Carried.

Bevra Fee: That the audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2019 present fairly in all material respects in accordance with public sector accounting standards and that we have reviewed the disclosures, understand and agree with the comments & recommendations. Carried.

Terry Wingerter: That the audited financial statements, for the year ending

December 31, 2019, including the Trial Balance and Adjusting Journal Entries be approved as presented by Sensus Chartered Professional Accountants Ltd. and there have been no significant events to date to disclose. Carried.

Doug Johnson: That Bylaw No. 2020-2, being a Bylaw of the Rural Municipality of Spiritwood No. 496 to Amend Bylaw No. 4-2015 Known as the Zoning Bylaw be read a first time. Carried.

Doug Johnson: That the Public Hearing to hear comments on Bylaw No. 2020-2 be set for July 14, 2020 at 1:15 PM in Council Chambers located at 218 Main Street in Spiritwood, SK. Carried.

Terry Wingerter: That Bylaw No. 2020-3, being a Bylaw to Provide for General Election Procedures be read a first time. Carried.

Bevra Fee: That we recommend approval of the proposed subdivision application for a single, non-farm residential parcel located on NW 03-53-11-W3. The subdivision application complies with the District Plan and the RM Zoning Bylaw. There are no land uses in the

vicinity that are incompatible with the intended use. The applicant will be required to construct anew approach access from Rge Rd 3113 that will provide a more suitable location for access to the new parcel. Carried.

Terry Wingerter: That we approve of and accept SAMA's Project Service Charter for the fiscal years 2022-2025. Carried.

Terry Wingerter: That we send letters to the residents of The Cove asking if they are in favor of a locked garbage container. Carried.

Bevra Fee: That the RM of Spiritwood confirms funding in the amount of \$68,000 will be allocated to SARCS for 2020. Carried.

Doug Johnson: That the main focus for the RCMP Annual Performance Plan is rural crime & theft. Carried.

Bevra Fee: That we replace the old rug in the municipal office with a more suitable flooring. Carried.

Terry Wingerter: That the budget & mill rate be tabled to the next meeting. Carried.

Terry Wingerter: That the meeting be adjourned at 10:08 AM. Carried

# AGRICULTURE

August 13, 2020

[www.shellbrookchronicle.com](http://www.shellbrookchronicle.com) | [www.spiritwoodherald.com](http://www.spiritwoodherald.com)

Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald 7

## Rural connectivity is key for farmers

Regular readers will know that technology advancement in agriculture is a favoured topic of mine.

It is the area which holds out the greatest potential for advancements in crop production, at least in the short to mid-term.

Varietal development, whether through traditional means or through more advanced techniques that may be controversial for some, will ultimately impact production on a grander scale perhaps, but those steps in breeding take time.

Technology, as we know from almost every facet of

our lives, is leaping ever-forward at a rapid pace. The computing power of the cellphone, and the vast array of apps which are specific tools to almost anything we can imagine these days being a microcosm of that tech progress.

It stands to reason that farming too will change as new technology comes on stream.

Sit in the cab of a new high clearance sprayer or combine and the array of technology in its monitors

is something that frankly reminds of the bridge of some sci-fi space ship

bridge.

The key in all the monitors is that a massive amount of data is being collected as the machine traverses a field.

But, data only becomes truly useful once it is fully analyzed, and in that process compared



CALVIN  
DANIELS

and gauged against established norms created from a vast cross section of material gathered over time and over a number of fields.

The process of analyzing date takes massive amounts of computing power, and immediate access to varied databases, which has been something of a sticking point for on-the-fly analysis of field gathered data.

Accessing the Internet, the highway to information, and uploading data to the computing power needed is not easy, if possible at all, when the combine, sprayer, or air-drill

is in the middle of a farm field which can be a long way from hotspots.

Many in rural Saskatchewan are still struggling to find a way to have 'Net access that allows easy downloads of YouTube videos, let alone analyzing real-time spray applications as their machine floats across a field.

Ultimately, agriculture on the move requires access to the Ethernet as a way of connecting computers together. Multiple computers have access to the ethernet and can send data at any time. Today's ethernet supports speeds up to 1,000 Mbps, and

businesses on the cutting edge of the tech will soon access speeds up to 10,000 Mbps. That massive flow of data means it can be used to allow a machine in a field to make decisions as it goes.

Like the potential to only spray a weed identified by a camera on the unit, leaving surrounding crop plants not sprayed. Imagine the cost-savings and the in-field benefits of such tech.

Technology is growing, farming can benefit, but it will need connectivity to work, and that is just now starting to really come on stream for the sector.

## GOOD NEWS

### OH THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF JESUS

By Daniel Mooseely  
Parkside Pentecostal  
Church

Revelations 12:11 "Our brothers conquered him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony."

Every day I apply the Blood of Jesus on myself, my children, my family and on all aspects of my

life. We also have to add faith to it. The Blood of Jesus Christ reminds Satan of his defeat on the Cross of Calvary and that he lost his dominion on God's children.

1 Peter 1:18-19 "For you know that it was not with perishable things like silver or gold that you have been ransomed from

the worthless way of life handed down to you by your ancestors, but with the precious blood of the Messiah, like that of a lamb without blemish or defect."

Whenever we apply the Blood of Jesus, we remind Satan that we are no longer under his command and that we belong to

Christ.

One day, while on a mission trip abroad, a missionary received threats from sorcerers that they would send foxes to kill his children. However, he knew the power found in the Blood of Christ and he prayerfully applied It onto his children and his house.

The next day, his brother-in-law reached out to him, saying "I saw five dead foxes around your house..."

Apply the blood of Jesus on your children, on your loved ones, your business. But do it in faith. Let the devil know that you are aware of his defeat on the Cross of Calvary and that

sin and sickness has no power over you.

Hebrews 10:19 "My friends, the blood of Jesus gives us courage to enter the most holy place."

Romans 5:9 "And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation."

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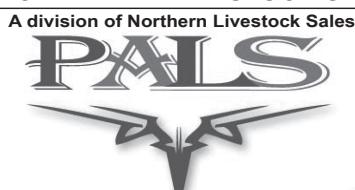
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# SPORTS

8 Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald

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August 13, 2020

## Duvernay-Tardif puts humanity before football

Laurent Duvernay-Tardif is the poster boy for the definition of the word 'selfless.'

The Quebecker, a starting guard with last February's Super Bowl winning Kansas City Chiefs, is also on the verge of becoming a full-fledged medical doctor. So while COVID-19 rages around the world, what does Duvernay-Tardif do as National Football League teams get ready for training camp? He takes a \$150,000 payment from the Chiefs (instead of his \$2.75 million salary) and opts to skip the 2020 season, preferring to stay in Quebec and be a front-line medical specialist in the fight against the deadly pandemic.

Besides being a doctor,

Duvernay-Tardif is one of the best football players on the planet. He's 29 years old, which means his playing days are limited (the average NFL tour of duty lasts less than four years), but he's living up to the Hippocratic Oath: Put patients first and treat them to the best of one's ability.

Definition of 'selfless'? Look it up in Webster's Dictionary and not only will you see a photo of Duvernay-Tardif, but you'll see the following words: "Having little or no concern for oneself, especially with regard to fame, position, money, etc.; unselfish."

A statement on social media posted by Duvernay-Tardif said: "This is one of



BRUCE  
PENTON

the most difficult decisions I have had to make in my life but I must follow my convictions and do what I believe is right for me personally," his statement read. "Being at the front line during this off-season has given me a different perspective on this pandemic

and the stress it puts on individuals and our healthcare system."

So was Chiefs' coach Andy Reid fuming with anger over the decision by Duvernay-Tardif, who played every offensive snap in last year's playoffs for Kansas City? Far from it. Reid told Sports Illustrated: "I'm a huge Larry Duvernay-Tardif fan, and I was also raised by a doctor. I understand the dedication that it takes to be a doctor, and we're all blessed to have doctors in our lives. They're givers. They're not takers. They're givers. They're healers. They want the best for you, so Larry has that quality. And you're seeing it to the utmost here. I just think it's tremendous dedication to his

profession, what his future is going to be, and mainly to the people that he gets to help."

Duvernay-Tardif said if he's going to risk coming down with COVID-19, he'd rather it be while treating patients than from a football rival breathing hard in his direction on an NFL scrimmage line.

Proud to say it: The footballer's decision is such a Canadian thing to do.

- Dwight Perry of the Seattle Times: "Lakers reserve guard Alex Caruso skipped his sister's wedding in Texas because he would've likely faced a 10- to 14-day quarantine upon his return to the NBA bubble. In other words, she said I do; he said I won't."

- Janice Hough of leftcoastsportsbabe.com, on Texas delaying the start of major high-school football seasons: "In Texas this is like temporarily closing churches."

- Tim Hunter of Everett's KRKO Radio: "As a soccer fan, I had a scary thought. What if we get to the end of 2020 and we're then told there are six months of stoppage time?"

- Sean McIndoe, in the Athletic, surmising how a decision may have been made about how the Columbus Blue Jackets were named: "As if a toddler was asked to name a team based on the first thing he saw on the floor in his front hallway."

- McIndoe again, on the Mighty Ducks name: "You let a monster media company like Disney into your league, and they thank you by using

their team name to advertise a bad movie. ... worst team name ever."

- RJ Currie of sportsdeke.com: "The Jays released left-handed reliever Marc Rzepczynski. He was hampered by a high pitch count and a low vowel count."

- Headline in theonion.com: "Rob Manfred Frustrated MLB Season Falling Apart Despite All The Energy He Put Into Wishing It Wouldn't"

- Another onion.com headline: "Closed ballpark forces thousands of Phillies fans to be content verbally threatening friends and family."

- Dwight Perry again: "Several Saskatchewan kid-hockey teams changed their team names, withheld player names on game rosters and forbid parents to post on social media so that they could leave the province in the midst of a pandemic to play in a tournament in Winnipeg, the CBC reported. Nervous team officials sense a delayed penalty coming."

- Another one from Janice Hough, on the Cubs' Anthony Rizzo giving the Brewers' Orlando Arcia some hand sanitizer after Arcia wound up at first base with a hit: "Talk about a clean single."

- Brewers slugger Christian Yelich, to MLB.com, shrugging off his 2-for-23 showing with 12 strikeouts in his team's preseason intrasquad games: "I wasn't struggling. I was just doing my best Bob Uecker impression."

Care to comment? Email brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca

### OBITUARY

#### *Raymond Walter Blakeney*



Raymond Walter Blakeney, born December 20, 1938, passed away peacefully on the afternoon of July 29, 2020 with his wife Hope and sons Kerry and Vada at his side.

Raymond grew up on the farm at Lily Plain, SK. And he and 5 sisters attended Lily Plain School. The family decided to move to a business on Highway 2 North in the Red Wing Area and later into Prince Albert. There were two more sisters born into the family, so now there was 1 boy with 7 sisters. Raymond was employed at the Cooke Municipal Golf Course and during the winter he worked at the Minto Arena.

Raymond continued working in Prince Albert for a while after the move to the farm but then decided full time farming was the life for him. He enjoyed the outdoors and although there would be frequent breakdowns of older machinery, he always took it in stride,

never really complaining. He had patience, and excellent mechanical skills which enabled him farming up until late September 2019 when his health began to fail. If someone needed help, mechanical or otherwise, he was always willing to help.

Raymond was a member of the Shellbrook Wildlife Association for many years and held many positions in the organization. He especially enjoyed hunting and

fishing with his many friends throughout the years.

Raymond was not a traveller, more of a homebody with a good sense of humour. He enjoyed visits with family, friends and neighbors and time for a cup of coffee. He will be greatly missed by his family and those who knew him.

Arrangements have been entrusted to the care of Beau "Lac" Funeral Home, Shellbrook SK. 306-747-2828.



#### Missing: Danita Bigeagle

Date of Birth: Mar 6, 1984      MISSING SINCE: Feb 11, 2007  
FROM: Regina, SK      Height: 5' 6"  
Weight: 118 Lbs.      Hair: Dark Brown  
Eyes: Brown      File: 3195 SR

CHARACTERISTICS: Danita is known to be shy, but friendly and at times can seem restless.

PARTICULARS: Danita was last seen in the 800 block of Victoria Avenue, at approximately 10:00 P.M.

Anyone with information, please contact Local Police or Child Find at 1.800.513.3463 or 306.955.0070  
All calls are confidential - you do not have to leave your name



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August 13, 2020

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS  
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## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Regular services, Sunday school and special services will be listed.

### LUTHERAN CHURCH

Re-opening delayed until further notice. Follow us on Facebook at St. John's Lutheran Church, Shellbrook/Zion Lutheran Church, Canwood. Live-stream worship service Sundays - 9:00 a.m. Rev. Emmanuel Aristide

### PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

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Pastor Daniel Mooseely 306-747-3572  
Shellbrook (starting July 5)  
Sun., 10 a.m. - Worship  
Pastor David Bodvarson 306-747-7235  
Canwood  
10:00 a.m. - Sunday School  
11:00 a.m. - Worship  
Pastor Glenn Blazosek 306-468-2138  
Leask Gospel Tabernacle  
Sunday 11 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.  
Pastor Lorne Valuck

### SOVEREIGN GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Leask 306-466-4498  
Marcelin 306-226-4615

### PRESBYTERIAN

Mistawasis  
Sunday worship 11:00 a.m.  
Rev. Katherine Bretzlafl

### IMMANUEL LUTHERAN

Parkside  
11 a.m. - Worship  
Pastor Chris Dean

### ANGLICAN CHURCH

Leask - All Saint's Sunday, 9 a.m. - Service  
St. Andrew's - Shellbrook Sunday, 11 a.m. Service  
Canwood - Christ Church Sunday, 11 a.m. - Service  
2 p.m. Service 2nd Sunday of the month  
Rev'd Eyad Ajii 306-980-5916

### SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

407-2nd Ave E, Shellbrook  
Sat., 9:45 a.m. - Sabbath School  
Sat., 11:00 am - Worship Broadcast on VOAR 92.1 FM  
Pastor Liviu Tilihi 306-747-3398

## PRAISE & WORSHIP

Regular services, Sunday school and special services will be listed.

### PARTNERS IN FAITH

Lutheran/United/Christchurch  
Anglican,  
137-2nd St. W.  
Spiritwood  
Worship 10:00 a.m.  
Rev. Nora Borgeson

### UNITED / ANGLICAN

Worship Services  
Glaslyn  
Time is on the sign  
Rev. Kun Kim  
Rev. Don Skinner

### CATHOLIC SUNDAY

Spiritwood - 11:15 a.m.  
Leoville - 9:30 a.m.  
Chitek Lake - Closed for the Season

Shell Lake - 1:00 p.m.  
Everyone Welcome

### SATURDAY

Medstead - 6 p.m.  
Father Peter Nnanga MSP

### PARTNERS IN WORSHIP

Shell Lake - Sun. 10 am  
(Worship in Lutheran - United Church)

### SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

407 - 2nd Ave E,  
Shellbrook  
Sat., 9:45 am - Sabbath School  
Sat., 11:00 am - Worship Broadcast on VOAR 92.1 FM  
Pastor Liviu Tilihi 306-747-3398

### MENNOMITE BRETHREN

Glenbush  
10:00 am - Sunday School  
Worship 10:50 am

### FIELDS OF HOPE (HOFFNUNGSFELDER) MENNONITE CHURCH

Glenbush  
Worship - 11:00 am

### BETHEL

Medstead  
1st Sunday, 10 am - Worship  
Pastor David Jensen  
3rd Sunday - 10 am Worship  
Pastor David Jensen

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### EVANGELICAL FREE

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Sun., 10:30 am - Worship  
Pastor Bill Klumpenhower

### LAKELAND COMMUNITY CHURCH

Spiritwood  
Sun., 11 am - Worship Service & Sunday School  
Pastor Gerry Zak

### BELBUTTE FULL GOSPEL

11 am Worship Service  
1st Sun., 7:30 pm - Hymn Sing  
Pastor Floyd Berg

### COWBOY CHURCH

Spiritwood  
Every Wednesday Night 7 pm  
Spiritwood Legion Hall  
Pastor Rick Martin

### ANGLICAN CHURCH

Leask - All Saint's

### PRESBYTERIAN

Mistawasis

Sunday worship

11:00 a.m.

Rev. Katherine Bretzlafl

### IMMANUEL LUTHERAN

Parkside  
11 a.m. - Worship  
Pastor Chris Dean

### ANGLICAN CHURCH

Leask - All Saint's

### PRESBYTERIAN

Mistawasis

Sunday 9 a.m.

St. Henry's - Leask

### ANGLICAN CHURCH

Mass - Sunday 11 a.m.

### PRESBYTERIAN

Mistawasis

Sunday 11 a.m.

St. Agatha's - Shellbrook

### ANGLICAN CHURCH

Mass - Sunday 9 a.m.

### PRESBYTERIAN

St. Henry's - Leask

### ANGLICAN CHURCH

Mass - Sunday 11 a.m.

### PRESBYTERIAN

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Sunday 11 a.m.

### ANGLICAN CHURCH

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#ImpairedBoating

# Gov't, school divisions release back-to-school plans

With the 2020-2021 school year set to begin as early as Sept. 1, the Sask. Party government has released its "Safe Schools Plan" to ensure that students and teachers can return to school safely during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The plan, released last week, outlines protocols and recommendations for hygiene, limiting physical contact between students and staff, limiting the use of shared materials, extra-curricular activities and other in-school programs, transportation and facility configuration.

The plan also lays out four different scenarios, dependent upon COVID-19 trends, which range from returning to "as normal as possible" to schools returning to mandatory remote learning.

"Our guiding principle continues to be ensuring schools are a safe place for students and staff," Deputy Premier and Education Minister Gordon Wyant said.

While Alberta and Ontario have chosen to make masks mandatory for staff and students in Grade 4 through 12, Saskatchewan's plan includes no such mandate.

However, following backlash and concerns from parents, Premier Scott Moe says the province's chief medical officer is reconsidering whether or not masks will be required come September.

What's more, the province also announced that it has spent \$2.3 million to acquire 6 million masks for schools, and that it is obtaining access to free face shields through a Ontario-based company. The province could also dip into its \$200 million COVID-19 contingency fund to help schools meet cleaning and sanitization protocols.

"There's a large number of people that want mandatory masks in schools. There's also a large number of people that don't want mandatory masks in schools,"

Moe said in an interview Friday. "It's a very divisive conversation."

The province's Safe Schools Plan was also criticized for leaving the final decisions on COVID-19 protocols in the hands of school divisions.

Many of those divisions, including the Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (SRPSD) and the Living Sky School Division, have since released their own back-to-school plans.

However, they mostly echo the provincial guidelines, and, like the provincial plan, leave much of the responsibility in the hands of individual schools.

"It is important to note that this plan is intended to be a concise and clear guide and provide direction based on official documents, but it is not intended to provide exhaustive detail," the SRPSD wrote in its plan.

"Further details will be included in the plan and shared with staff, parents and the general pub-

lic by mid-August 2020."

The SRPSD's plan anticipates that all students will be required to participate in classroom-based learning, but makes allowances to accommodate students with "particular needs." Once finalized, the plan will also include contingencies to ensure the delivery of the full curriculum should schools be shut down again.

Following the province's lead, the SRPSD's plan won't require staff to wear masks unless they are coming into contact with a sick student. Students also aren't required to wear masks, and parents who want their children to wear masks at school will be responsible for bringing their own masks.

In the absence of masks, schools will be expected to promote and teach proper hand hygiene practices. Hand sanitizer, in bulk formats, for students will be supplied at schools, where possible, and students and staff will

be encouraged to bring their own.

Elsewhere, schools will be expected to develop plans to minimize large gatherings, either by staggering lunches and recesses, or through other strategies.

Students are also encouraged to only bring essentials to school, and store them separately from the belongings of other students. In the classroom, resources will be managed to reduce or eliminate sharing, and high-touch surfaces and objects will be

sanitized between uses.

On the transportation front, parents are urged to support their children in walking, biking, or getting to school through other means. Buses will be operating, and bus drivers are encouraged to develop seating plans to ensure students always sit in the same spot.

Finally, plans for extra-curricular activities will be developed once capacity limits are known. Similarly, no field trips or extra-curriculars will occur without permission from the SRPSD.

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