



U13 Parkland Wildcats top Westerns



The U13 Parkland Wildcats won gold at Westerns in Prince George, B.C. Back Row, left to right: Bowdyn Dufour, Maddox Simonar, Coleby Rose, Jaron Ens, and Kael Bick. Middle: Jase McAleese, Paul Loiselle, Kaleb Poirier, Kai Nordquist, and Reed Martens. Front: Rylan Fraser and Lucas Buswell.

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

When Shell Lake's Dillan and Allison Simonar started the Parkland Predators girls' softball program in 2019, and the Parkland Wildcats boys' softball program in 2022, they had a clear purpose and vision in mind for their own kids, and for other children in the community.

"Our goal was to provide a rural-based option for competitive softball, so kids wouldn't have to travel to the city," said Allison. "There are so many talented athletes in our area. It is nice for them to have the opportunity

to play higher-level ball closer to home and create a sense of community that only small towns can provide."

Both of the programs, which are based out of Shell Lake, have succeeded in building the community spirit Dillan and Allison had hoped for, with parents and community members ensuring that games are well attended and players are well supported.

In turn, this community support has allowed for the rapid expansion of both programs. Starting with a U12 C Parkland Predators team in 2019, the past two seasons have seen the Predators' ranks swell to include teams in each of the minor girls age categories, includ-

ing U11 'B', U13 'C', U15 'B', and U17 'A'.

Meanwhile, the Parkland Wildcats started with a single U11 team in 2022. Now, there are two U11 teams (Wildcats Green and Wildcats Blue), a U13 team, and a U15 team (a new addition this season).

Along with the steady growth of the program, there has been an equally steady growth in the success of the players on the diamonds.

The original Parkland Predators group won the "BW" provincial title in 2023 and has represented Saskatchewan at the Western Canadian Championships twice.

As for the Wildcats, they started

strong in 2022, claiming silver medals at the U11 Boys Open Provincial Championship that year, then upgrading to gold medals in 2023.

In 2024, the U11 Wildcats Blue successfully defended their provincial title, while the U13s won bronze and were able to represent Saskatchewan at Westerns in Brandon, Man., also winning bronze at that tournament.

This year, both teams went undefeated and captured gold at their respective Provincial championship, paving the way for the U13 to compete at Westerns in Prince George, B.C. from Aug. 7-10.

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Local athletes wrap up Canada Summer Games

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The 2025 Canada Summer Games are still going strong in St. John’s, Nfld., and will continue until Sunday, Aug. 24. But for the three local athletes who were representing Team Saskatchewan, the games have come to an end.

Shellbrook’s Marcail Philp had originally hoped to represent Saskatchewan in Triathlon, but when the sport was removed from the roster for this year’s game, she chose to compete in Road Cycling instead. Being relatively new to cycling as a sport, her goals were to do her best

and learn as much as she could about cycling to further improve her performance in triathlon events.

Competing against the top female cyclists from across Canada, the majority of whom had far more experience on their bikes, Philp began her Summer Games outing on Aug. 11 with a 29th place finish in the 15 kilometre time trial. Two days later, she scored another 29th place finish in the 80 kilometre road race.

Finally, on Saturday, Aug. 16, she competed in the 30 kilometre criterium (a multi-lap circuit race), placing 27th.

Over in female softball, Debden’s Rhyan Amundson was excited for the

opportunity to represent her community and province, and hopeful that her team could do well against the nation’s best. Though Team Sask opened the Summer Games with a tight 1-0 loss to Alberta, it rallied to close out the round robin with a 2-2 record — good enough for third place in its pool.

Team Sask stumbled in its qualifier round match against Team Québec, losing 12-6 to be relegated to a placement game for either 7th or 8th place. There, the team couldn’t get its bats going against Team PEI’s defence, losing 4-0 to finish in 8th place.

Last but not least, Marcelin’s Felicity Pinay was representing Saskatche-

wan on the female box lacrosse team. Team Sask came out strong, playing to a record of 3 wins and 1 tie to finish at the top of its pool alongside Manitoba.

In the quarterfinal, Team Sask was unable to keep up with Team Ontario’s fire power, falling by a score of 8-1 to be pushed into the consolation round. There, in a hardfought battle against Team Manitoba, Team Sask came out on the wrong side of a 3-2 score and was left to play a placement game for either 7th or 8th place.

Facing Team New Brunswick in that game, Team Sask kept their opponents off the board to take a 4-0 win and 7th place.

U13 Parkland Wildcats top Westerns

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Given the team’s successes in previous seasons, expectations for the team were high throughout this season.

“They are a very talented group and many of them have played together since the program started,” Allison said. “Although they are young, they are quite experienced, with each player having previously won a provincial title in previous seasons. Not only are they good athletes, they are also great kids and teammates.”

Facing a smaller contingent of opponents in Prince George, the U13 team was up against three squads from B.C., including a team made

up of the Provincial gold and silver winners from Terrace, the Provincial bronze medallists from Prince George, and a host Prince George team. Unfortunately, a second Saskatchewan team from Dundurn had to pull out at the last minute due to roster issues, and Manitoba wasn’t represented due to the ongoing wildfire evacuations in the north of the province.

Regardless of who they were facing, the Wildcats came out ready to meet and exceed expectations, going undefeated through the round robin.

“Their pitching was fastest in the field and dialled in, only allowing

a handful of hits in all the games combined,” Dillan said.

The Wildcats’ success through the round robin earned them a bye into the gold medal game. After a win in a tight semi-final game, the Terrace team earned the right to meet them and were eager to end their undefeated run.

The Wildcats had no intention of making it easy, going up 5-0 after the first two innings. Terrace rallied through the third and fourth innings, however, shutting out the Wildcats while scoring four runs to bring the core to 5-4.

Unfazed, the Wildcats’ bats came alive in the fifth inning, scoring five runs to take a commanding 10-4 lead.

Needing six runs to keep playing, Terrace was shut down by the Wildcats’ defence, allowing the Wildcats to claim Westerns gold.

This year’s U13 Wildcats roster featured Paul Loïselle (Leoville), Lucas Buswell (Spiritwood), Maddox Simonar (Shell Lake), Coleby Rose (Shell Lake) Jase McAleese (Shellbrook), Kai Nordquist (Canwood), Kaleb Poirier (Debden), Kael Bick (Debden), Rylan Fraser (Big River), Bowdyn Dufour (Laird), Jaron Ens (Rosthern), and Reed Martens (Rosthern).

Of these players, six will be moving up to U15 next year, and six will remain in U13.

“There’s a strong

group of players moving up from U11, so we expect the U13s to be quite strong again next season,” Allison said. “The goal for the U15 team will be to qualify for Nationals. National championships start at the U15 age division, so this is a goal the team has been striving towards for a number of years.”

Looking ahead to the future, Allison and Dillan say the big thing that’s needed as the Predators and Wildcats programs continue to grow is more coaches.

“This season, the U13 Predators team was coached by three players from the U17 girls team,” noted Alison. “It was a great opportunity for these young women to give back to the program and the sport, while serving as mentors and role models.”

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COUNCILLOR FOR DIVISION NO. 6

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Nomination forms may be obtained from the municipal office.

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Donna Goertzen
Returning Officer



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NOTE: Any parties interested in performing ONLY Seasonal grounds maintenance, either snow removal, and/or summer grounds maintenance should also submit their application, indicating in which work they are interested.

In addition, the maintenance contractor must be able to:

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Submit applications by August 31st, 2025 to:

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For further information please call Linda Raby at 306-497-2824



Highlights of a Shellbrook Town Council meeting

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

(The following council highlights are not the approved minutes of council for Aug. 11.)

Shellbrook’s Town Council held its regular meeting in person and via teleconference on Monday, Aug. 11.

In attendance were Mayor Amund Otterson, Councillors Pam Boettcher, Cheryl Ledding, Brent Miller, Kathleen Nording, Arlette Segberg, and Tim Settee, and the town’s CAO, Sigourney O’Halligan.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Otterson, and council began with its customary Treaty 6 land acknowledgement in recognition of Truth and Reconciliation. Then, it approved the meeting’s agenda, adopted the minutes of its July 14 meeting, and moved on to welcome delegates Jake Boettcher and Brody Anderson, who were in attendance on behalf of the Junior B Prince Albert Timberjaks.

With the team set to play a home game in Shellbrook during the upcoming hockey season, and its roster consisting of a number of former U18 AA Parkland Elks (including Boettcher and Anderson) the players had been hoping to use the Elks’ new dressing room for the game. However, they recently learned that this request had been denied.

Noting that the upcoming Tim-

berjaks game in Shellbrook could be the first of many, and that this could be beneficial to the town, Boettcher asked for the decision to be reconsidered.

Once the delegation had departed, council resumed its regular business with the reports of administration and committees. In Public Works, Councillor Miller suggested it could be a good idea to touch base with the Mesa Way condo organization to renew discussions about paving the cul de sac. If the town is unable to afford the work, Miller said it should gauge the residents of Mesa Way’s interest in financing the project.

Miller also suggested the same could be done for Sanjun Drive (though, this would be more difficult to arrange, as it would mean dealing with individual homeowners rather than a condo organization).

In other Public Works discussion, council received an update on a pilot project to lift the concrete in a number of areas, including at the post office and on Cardinal Court. CAO O’Halligan noted that the project is currently in the “wait and see” phase to determine whether it will be an effective (and less costly) solution.

Moving to discussion of plans to upgrade the town’s water treatment plant, the town continues to wait for a more favourable grant (such as one that sees the town and the provincial

and federal governments split the cost three ways) before any further steps are taken.

Noting that other small communities seem to have no problem getting grants, Councillor Miller wondered why the town isn’t, and suggested the town may want to talk to Premier Scott Moe and apply more political pressure to get movement on the project.

Finally, in a rare update from the airstrip committee, CAO O’Halligan noted that the group taking responsibility for the airstrip is working in tandem with the R.M. of Shellbrook to apply for a grant to put an oil surface on the runway. It’s also looking to build a storage shed at the airstrip.

Returning to unfinished business, council once again discussed the idea of expanding benefits for municipal employees by offering a lifestyle spending account to improve health and wellness and employee retention.

Currently, town employees’ benefits include health, dental, and life insurance, all of which are fully covered by the town (at one time, employees had paid 50 per cent of the associated coverage costs). A tiered lifestyle spending account benefit program, if adopted, would be offered only to permanent, full-time employees, and could include coverage for anything from fitness memberships to daycare, to household expenses, as determined by council.

For the time being, however, council decided not to proceed with the idea, but left the door open to exploring it in the future.

Under new business, the majority of council’s time was devoted to simple housekeeping items, including appointing Councillor Miller to a four-month term as deputy mayor, reversing erroneous charges on accounts, and updating town policies for the Richardson Pioneer Recreation Centre and the curling rink lounge, and the user agreement for town-owned facilities.

Council also reviewed and approved a new Community Engagement communications policy, which aims to improve the town’s communication with community groups. In pursuit of this, CAO O’Halligan said the town will hold meetings with user groups in August to get feedback from them on the previous year.

The policy also calls for bi-annual roundtable meetings with user groups, but CAO O’Halligan noted there will be some “trial and error” to determine what works best for the town and the different groups.

Closing out the meeting council discussed expanding the \$50 levy for Shellbrook Fire and Rescue to non-taxable properties. Council was largely in agreement that this should only be applied to properties with a structure on them.

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Pronoun policy continues to harm Sask. students

It's been nearly two years since the Sask Party government introduced its Parents' Bill of Rights, imposing the law by pre-emptively enacting the notwithstanding clause to thwart legal challenges filed by LGBTQ+ advocacy groups.

Last week, the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal made it clear that this won't fly, voting 4-1 to uphold a previous Court of King's Bench ruling that said the legal challenges of the bill's constitutionality can proceed – even if the courts have no authority to strike the law down.

The Parents' Bill of Rights, also known as Bill 137 or the pronoun policy, requires schools to seek parental consent to use the preferred name and pronouns of students who are under the age of 16.

Unlike a similar bill passed by the government of New Brunswick, the Sask Party government's Parents' Bill of Rights takes matters further.

First, it mandates that parents or guardians be informed about the sexual health education curriculum and have the option to decline their children's participation.

Second, it indefinitely bans third-party organizations from presenting sex education materials in classrooms, pending a review of the sexual health education curriculum by the Ministry of Education.

Though the Sask Party has been warned by LGBTQ+ advocacy groups about the potential harms its law may do to vulnerable youth, Saskatchewan's Human Rights Commission, and the province's child and youth advocate, the government continues to double down on the law.

And it's done so in the most disingenuous way possible, framing the issue as one of parental rights, when that has nothing to do with the concerns that have been raised about the pronoun policy.

Responding to the Court of Appeal's decision last Tuesday, Premier Scott Moe continued to spin the same yarn.

"It is the government's position that



JORDAN
TWISS

~
News Editor

parents do have a right to be involved in their children's education, the classes they choose, the decisions that they're making," Moe said in a statement.

"It's not about putting anyone's rights over the other. Parents are there to support their kids."

In an ideal world, Mr. Moe would be right, and every child in the province would have loving and supportive parents they felt safe confiding in. In said

world, those same parents would also be actively involved and engaged in their child's education, ensuring they're thriving both academically and socially.

But such a world doesn't exist; for some children, home is the place where they feel least safe.

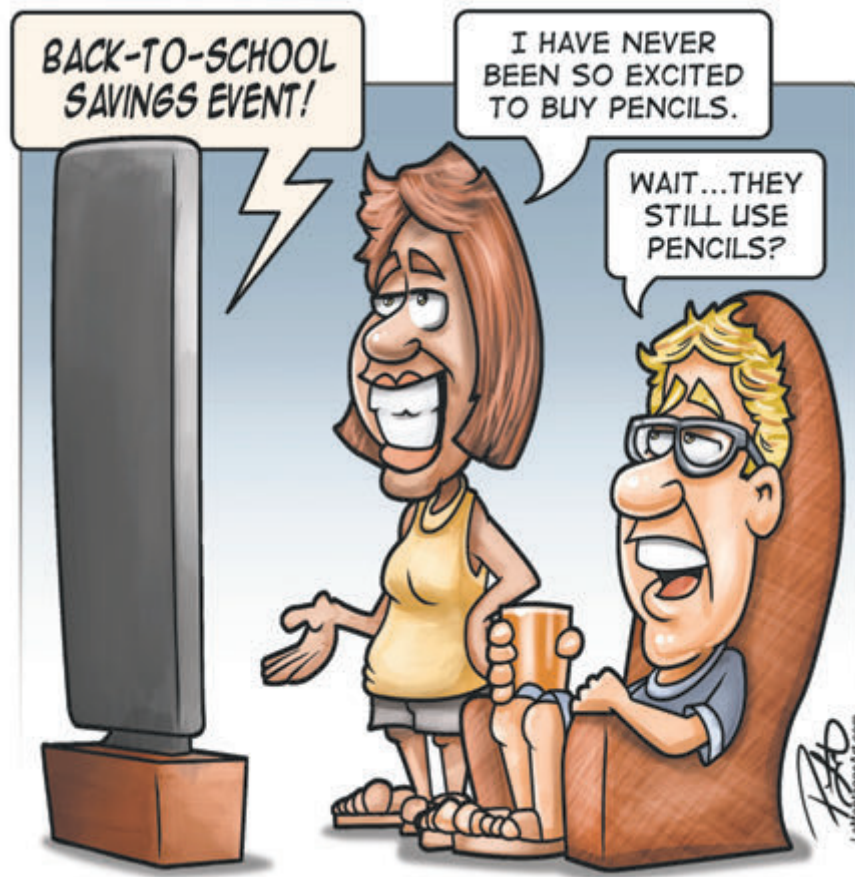
So, when Mr. Moe states his Parents' Bill of Rights doesn't "put anyone's rights over the other," even though the bill literally does just that, it's easy to see the words for the deflection they are.

Whether it's stubbornness, or an unwillingness to admit when it's wrong – both have been problems for this government – the Sask Party refuses to budge even an inch from its position, to compromise in a way that would balance the rights of vulnerable youth with the right and responsibility of parents to be involved in their children's education.

Vague assurances that schools will work with students to get them to a place where they're comfortable communicating with their parents aren't enough. There needs to be clear guidelines and plans in place to ensure vulnerable children are protected.

But of course, the Sask Party government is leaving the hard part to the province's school divisions, having seemingly only been interested in hastily passing the law to appeal to a small but very vocal minority.

In the meantime, students have been left to navigate the uncertain waters the Sask Party government has left in its wake.



In 2024, Bu Wells-MacInnis, a Grade 8 student from Saskatoon, highlighted the effect the Parents' Bill of Rights has had in classrooms.

Speaking to the *Globe & Mail*, Ms. Wells-MacInnis said the school year had included only one sexual education lesson – a *Jeopardy!* game focused on healthy relationships, led by a school counsellor. Students had also learned nothing about consent, dating violence, gender discrimination, sexually transmitted infections, the harms of pornography, and intimate image sharing.

"I am concerned because youth need to be educated in this," she said. "[Without proper guidance] people could carry unhealthy patterns for the rest of their life."

Prior to the introduction of the Parents' Bill of Rights, Saskatchewan already had some of the worst sexual health outcomes in the country, including the second highest rate of teen pregnancies, some of the highest case rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis, and new HIV diagnoses quadrupling the national rate. The province also has significantly higher rates of sexual violence than the national average.

Now, the province's students have lost two full school years of vital sexual health education that could have protected them. And there's still no

indication that the Ministry of Education is any closer to finalizing changes to the curriculum or opening classrooms back up to third-party educators.

And students aren't just worse off in their classrooms; they're also worse off within their school communities.

As Regina student Kimberli Koldy-Watt told CBC, some of her fellow students have spent the past two years concerned for their safety.

"When the bill came out, I had a lot of kids come up to me saying they were afraid that they were going to die, basically, because of their homes being unsafe," she said.

"Everyone was more silent, more secured. No one was really hanging out with each other anymore."

Good policy demands time, thoughtful consideration, and thorough consultation with affected parties (particularly the groups and individuals whose rights will be impacted.)

On every metric, the Sask Party's government's hastily passed and unnecessary Parents' Bill of Rights continually fails to meet these requirements.

Schools should be where our youth learn and discover themselves. But the Sask Party government's stubbornness is leaving them unprepared, uncertain, and unsafe.

Shellbrook Chronicle

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Sask NDP sounds alarm on healthcare closures

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

For the second time in the past three months, the Saskatchewan NDP is touring communities in the north of the province, including Shellbrook, to sound the alarm on what it calls a worsening trend of service disruptions in healthcare facilities across Saskatchewan.

The tour, led by the Saskatchewan NDP’s Rural and Remote Health Shadow Minister Jared Clarke, coincided with the release of new internal SHA data for the most recent 18 months (November 2023 to May 2025).

Looking first at the period of February 2018 to July 2019 — the first 18 months of Premier Scott Moe’s administration — the data shows there were 86 disruptions to healthcare services in the province, totalling 808 days of unavailable services.

By contrast, the period of November 2023 to May 2025 saw 643 service disruptions, lasting 3,362 days.

Taking a local look at the numbers from February 2018 to May 2025, Shellbrook’s Parkland Integrated Health Centre experienced 18 disruptions totalling 33 days, the Spiritwood Health Centre saw 40 disruptions totalling 94 days, and the Big River Health Centre had four disruptions totalling 6 days.

“That is nearly an eightfold in-

crease,” Clarke noted during his stop in Shellbrook. “And it’s not just more frequent, it’s more widespread. What started as ER and surgery closures has now expanded into almost every part of our healthcare system.”

“Make no mistake: we’re in a healthcare crisis, and the Sask Party government is making it worse,” he added.

Increasingly, Clarke says, the Saskatchewan NDP is hearing stories of moms giving birth on the side of the road, of patients in crisis being rerouted because the closest ER was closed, and of care being delayed until it’s too late.

Making matters worse, is the fact that closures often aren’t communicated, meaning people show up to their local healthcare facilities to find them closed when they need them.

“These aren’t isolated incidents. They’re part of a dangerous pattern that’s putting care further and further out of reach for rural and remote communities,” Clarke said.

“Ask yourself: do you have a family doctor? When you pull up to your local health centre, do you know it’s going to be open? If you, or your sister, or your friend, are having a baby soon, do you know if you’re going to be able to deliver that baby in your community at your health centre?”

Along with calling on the Sask Party government to better communicate service disruptions, Clarke also im-

plored it to listen to frontline healthcare workers, who haven’t been given a pay raise in three years and have just been left with “more pressure and more burnout.”

Clarke also called on the Sask Party government to make good on its election campaign commitment to implement a nursing taskforce, re-establish community Health Advisory Networks to give communities more of a



Jared Clarke, Saskatchewan NDP Shadow Minister for Rural and Remote Health, speaks during a stop at Parkland Integrated Health Centre on Monday, Aug. 11.

voice in how healthcare is delivered, and adopt a “grow your own” strategy that will allow frontline healthcare workers to upgrade their skills.

“If the Sask Party won’t listen to the people holding the system together, they can’t be trusted to fix the problems they’ve created,” Clark said. “Every time a service closes, it puts even more pressure on surrounding communities and on already over-stretched urban hospitals. It’s unsustainable and unacceptable.”

“Viable healthcare isn’t a luxury. It’s a basic human right. And it’s absolutely essential to building a strong future for every community in this province.”

In recent months, lab services disruptions at Parkland Integrated Health Centre have been a common point of discussion for Shellbrook’s Town Council, as the facility has been forced to go on bypass multiple times due to inadequate staffing.

In hopes of remedying the challenges the facility is facing, the Parkland Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee has launched a program to sponsor a combined x-ray and lab technician as they complete their post-secondary education. Currently, the committee is planning to offer up to \$12,000 over three years, and will require the prospective student to sign a return for service agreement to work in the community.

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Saskatchewan Blue Cross is also a visible supporter of local **Pride celebrations** in Saskatoon and Regina, and proudly honours inspiring women through the **Women of Distinction Awards** in communities like Estevan, Regina and Saskatoon — uplifting local leaders who make a difference in their hometowns.

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Sask. RCMP seeks most-wanted offenders

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle
Reporter

The Saskatchewan RCMP has released a list of its 10 most-wanted offenders, in hopes the public can assist it in tracking them down.

Some of the offenders on this month's list are known to have connections to the Shellbrook and Spiritwood areas.

Police note that this is not a complete list of all persons wanted by the Saskatchewan RCMP. Offenders appearing on this list are determined by a data-driven scoring system using the Crime Severity Index, a Statistics Canada measurement that looks at both the number and the relative severity of crimes. Factors such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, sexuality or disability are not considered in the scoring process.

Up first on this most-wanted list is 57-year-old Eldon James Cone, who faces a list of charges, includ-

ing sexual interference (three counts), sexual exploitation of young person (three counts), and failure to attend court or surrender.

Cone is described as 6'0" and 161 lbs., with brown hair and brown eyes. He is known to have a scar on his right hand and police believe he could be in Saskatoon, Mistawasis First Nation, or Shellbrook.

Up next is 37-year-old Brennan Harold Sakebow, who's wanted for: assault (two counts), mischief under \$5,000, public mischief, failure to comply with undertaking (two counts), aggravated assault, breaking and entering, possession of prohibited weapon, pointing a firearm (two counts), careless use of firearm, disguise with intent, discharging firearm with intent, forcible confinement, and possession of prohibited firearm.

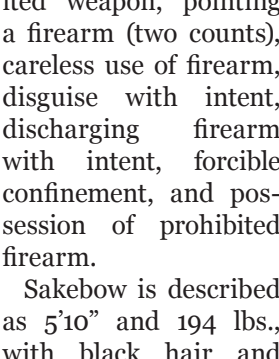
Sakebow is described as 5'10" and 194 lbs., with black hair and brown eyes. Police believe he may be in Sas-



Eldon James Cone.



Brennan Harold Sakebow.



Allison Anne Bear.

katoon, Meadow Lake, or Pelican Lake First Nation.

Finally, police are looking for 32-year-old Allison Anne Bear, who's wanted for: aggravated assault, breaking and entering, possession of prohibited weapon, pointing a firearm (two counts), careless use of firearm, disguise with intent, discharging firearm with intent, forcible confinement, and failure to comply with order.

Bear is described as 5'7" and 170 lbs, with black hair that may be dyed red. Police believe she may be in Big River First Nation, Pelican Lake First Nation, or Shellbrook.

As always, police urge members of the public to not attempt to contact, approach or apprehend any wanted individuals on their own. If you recognize any of these offenders and have information regarding their whereabouts, activities or associations, call 310-RCMP (310-7257) or 911 in an emergency.

Op-Ed: Sask. government can't ignore its debt problem

By **GAGE HAUBRICH**
CTF Prairie Director

Bluster spun up by staffers won't help the Saskatchewan government dig out of its debt hole.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation took our Debt Clock around the province, raising the alarm about the province's increasing debt.

The Debt Clock is a digital jumbo screen bolted to the side of a cube truck that shows the debt rolling up in real time.

It's a big, bright reminder to provincial politicians that the debt is a problem that must be dealt with.

In response to the tour, the provincial government told media that Saskatchewan "maintains the second lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in Canada and remains a national leader in economic growth."

That statement is the bureaucratic equivalent of sticking your head in the sand. That's because every other province in the country is also racking up debt. If all your friends decided to max out their credit cards on VIP tickets to Craven, that doesn't make it a good idea for you to follow suit.

Saskatchewan isn't doing as bad as other provinces, but the provincial debt is still growing and it's costing taxpayers more every year.

Every minute, the provincial debt increases by about \$3,300. Every day, it jumps up by almost \$5 million.

The provincial debt will be about \$23.5 billion by the end of the year, or more than \$18,000 per Saskatchewanian.

The money the government borrows isn't free. Every dollar borrowed must be paid back plus interest.

And every year the government fails to pay back debt it gets one step closer to going broke. And that's something that Saskatchewan has been through before.

In the 1990s, former premier Roy Romanow hiked the gas tax, provincial sales tax and business taxes while his government closed 52 hospitals. And it happened because the government had piled on so much debt, year after year, that the prov-

ince had essentially gone bankrupt.

Taxpayers are stuck paying the interest charges on the debt every year. Since the government has been consistently spending too much, it keeps adding to the debt and the interest bill keeps increasing.

When Premier Scott Moe first took over in 2018, debt interest charges cost taxpayers about \$414 million per year. This year, debt interest will cost taxpayers \$878 million, or more than \$700 per person.

And every year the government increases the debt, more money is wasted on these interest charges instead of being spent on services.

Other province's debt problems are bigger than Saskatchewan's, but that doesn't mean we should ignore the problem. It means we should use this opportunity to pay down the debt faster and stop wasting hundreds of millions of dollars on interest charges.

And it can be done. Alberta previously paid off all its debt in 2004. And former premier Brad Wall paid off about 40 per cent of Saskatchewan's debt in a single year. At the time, Wall said his goal was to pay back the debt to completely to stop wasting money on interest payments.

"I'd like Saskatchewan to have a debt clock with exactly one digit – zero," Wall said.

Saskatchewan can start to get its Debt Clock ticking down by controlling its spending and not blowing its budget every year. The government blew past its planned spending by \$970 million in 2024. The government spent more than it said it was going to in nine out of 11 of its main departments. But the government also took in \$994 million more in revenue than projected.

If the government hadn't blown its budget on almost every line item, it could have reduced the debt by almost a billion dollars and saved taxpayers millions on debt interest payments.

Saskatchewan can't afford to let the debt go any higher. The government needs to stop blowing its budget and pay back the debt to get the province closer to a Debt Clock with one digit, not 11.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SPIRITWOOD: Wapiti Regional Library - Tuesday 10am - 5pm; Wednesday 10am - 5pm; Thursday 1pm to 5pm; Friday 10am - 5pm
LEOVILLE: Wapiti Regional Library - Wednesday 10am - 4pm; Thursday 10am - 4pm
SHELL LAKE: Wapiti Regional Library - Tuesday 11am - 4pm; Wednesday 12 pm - 5 pm

~

BLAINE LAKE: Wapiti Library - Wednesday 1pm - 6pm; Thursday 1pm - 6pm; Friday 1pm - 6pm; Saturday 10am - 3pm. Contact us for more info 306-497-3130, www.wapitilibrary.ca.
BIG RIVER: Wapiti Library - Tuesday 11:30am - 4:30pm; Wednesday 11:30am - 4:30pm; Thursday 11:30am - 4:30pm. Phone # 306-469-2152
CANWOOD: Canwood Branch of Wapiti Regional Library Summer Hours (as of July 2): Tuesday 9:30am - 4pm; Wednesday 9:30am - 4pm; Phone: 306-468-2501
DEBDEN: Wapiti Library hours: Tuesday 10am - 4pm; Wednesday 12pm - 6pm. Librarian: Aline Hannon
LEASK: Wapiti Library & Legacy Gallery Hours - Tuesday 9am - 2pm; Wednesday 2pm - 8pm; Friday 9am - 12pm
MARCELIN: Wapiti Library - Saturday 10am - 2pm; Thursday 2pm - 8pm. For information on all your library needs, please contact 306-226-2110.
SHELLBROOK: Shellbrook Branch of the Wapiti Library located at 105 Railway Ave., West (Provincial building). Library Hours: Monday 2pm - 6pm; Tuesday 2pm - 8pm; Wednesday 2pm - 8pm; Thursday 12pm - 6pm; Friday 10 am - 5pm (Story Time 10:30am - 11:30am); Saturday 10am - 4pm.

~

BIG RIVER: Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting – Every Wednesday, 7:30 pm @ Train Station in Big River (Railway Avenue)

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Prairie agriculture history must be preserved

Mixed in among the static tractor displays at the recent Threshermen's Show and Seniors' Festival in Yorkton were two tractors that seemed out of place yet were also to my mind a herald of what Western Development Museums must jump on.

The line of equipment was generally old and rusty with near forgotten company names such as Rumely Oil Pull.

The old iron is great to see, more so if you are of a certain age. My grandfather would have been most familiar with most of tractors there.

My dad less so but interested. For myself, it is as a reader and journalist that I maintain a level of interest. My son simply has no reference point past what I may have told him.

That holds even for younger adults growing up on a farm these days.

But then, there were the two anomalies in the line-up — a pair of old four-wheel drive Versatile tractors.

Versatile is a Canadian agricultural machinery manufacturer. The company was founded in 1963 by Peter Pakosh and Roy Robinson in Winnipeg, and at one

time it had some 70 per cent of the 4WD tractor market.

It is significant in terms of Canadian Prairie agriculture history that Versatile was founded in Manitoba and highly successful in the farm marketplace.

But consider for a mo-



CALVIN DANIELS

ment a tractor rolling off the production line in the mid 1960s —that is some 60 years ago — and wonder how many still exist at all, knowing even fewer are still operational.

Why is the WDM not actively gathering such tractors before they are lost forever?

And, of course, Versatile are hardly the only example of Canadian Prairie agriculture implements which should be preserved.

Where are the early Morris rodweeters, Bourgault cultivators, Schulte rock pickers, Brandt augers, or the Roto Thresh combine?

The last one is of some added interest, as it really was a combine ahead of its time.

The first Roto Thresh combine harvester rolled off the production line in Saskatoon in 1974, offering higher harvesting capacity and reduced grain loss. Only fifty machines were built, however, before production ceased in 1978.

And it doesn't take much of a leap to ask where the now near forgotten pull type combines are. The same goes for the earliest direct seeding equipment, as agricultural technology has leapt

forward and Canadian Prairie manufacturers have often been leaders.

If museums are a repository of history and in the WDM's case Prairie agriculture history is of particular importance, then collecting can't stop. That means gathering as we move forward, and there seems much that should be added that is out-of-date today but of significance in terms of our farming past.

In the process another generation might walk the line with a new level of interest based on actual experience.

Crop Report: Aug. 5 to 11

By **MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**
Submitted

Widespread rainfall in the province last week had varying impacts on crops. The rain was timely for later seeded crops as they continue to fill, but some producers are concerned about the potential impact on quality for early seeded crops.

Additionally, rainfall slowed desiccation operations and other field work in many areas. Most producers welcomed the rainfall but are waiting for warm and dry weather to support crop development.

Most of the province received plenty of rain last week. The Beatty area received the most with 105 millimetres (mm), followed by the Calder area with 103 mm and the Star City area with 102 mm. The Bruno, Prince Albert and Saskatoon areas all received 90 mm of rain or more.

The abundance of rain dramatically increased topsoil moisture levels last week. Provincial cropland topsoil moisture now sits at 11 per cent surplus, 75 per cent adequate, 11 per cent short and only three per cent very short. For hayland, topsoil moisture is eight per cent surplus, 68 per cent adequate, 16 per cent short and eight per cent very short. Pastures have topsoil moisture levels at six per cent surplus, 67 per cent adequate, 19 per cent short and eight per cent very short.

Some producers made harvest progress this week, with two per cent of crops harvested, which is behind the provincial five- and 10-year averages. The combination of rainfall and slow crop development last week prevented more crops from being harvested, but it is still early in the harvest season. Most of the progress has been made in the southwest, but some producers in the southeast and east-central are starting to take crop off. No producers in the west-central and northern regions have started harvesting yet, but they anticipate crops to be ready within the next couple of weeks if conditions are favourable.

Winter cereals continue to lead harvest progress, with 16 per cent of winter wheat and 14 per cent of fall rye harvested. Producers also made progress in pulse crops harvesting, with three per cent of lentil and pea crops off. Finally, the first acres of spring cereal and oilseed crops were harvested last week. Two per cent of barley and one per cent of spring wheat and canola have been combined in the province.

Most producers are either done or finishing their last haying and silaging efforts. Provincially, dryland alfalfa yields are 1.10 tonnes per acre and greenfeed yields are 2.09 tonnes per acre. For irrigated hay crops, alfalfa yielded 1.95 tonnes per acre while greenfeed yielded 2.95 tonnes per acre. Silage yields for the province this year are

estimated to be 5.25 tonnes per acre.

Environmental conditions were the main sources of crop damage last week. Excess moisture in crops caused the most frequent crop damage, but damage was minor and not widespread. Also, hard rainfall paired with strong winds caused minor crop lodging in parts of the province. There was also grasshopper and bertha armyworm activity in certain areas which required some producers to spray for these pests.

Harvest is a busy time in Saskatchewan, and everyone is reminded to prioritize safety this fall.

The Farm Stress Line is a toll-free number that producers can use to help manage their stress during this busy time, which can be reached at 1-800-667-4442. Producers should be aware of physical hazards, such as fire and powerlines, and take preventative measures to avoid incidents. The public is reminded that there is more

heavy equipment traffic on roads during harvest and to be patient by giving machinery extra time and space.

Northwestern Sask.

Much of the northwest had modest to high levels of rain last week, but it is likely too late to significantly impact yields. Livestock producers are glad their pastures received much needed moisture and are hoping for more.

The Hafford area received 71 millimetres (mm) of rain which was the most in the region, followed by the Speers and Rabbit Lake areas with 52 mm and 35 mm, respectively. North Battleford area received 33 mm while the Canwood and Meeting Lake areas received 32 mm. The rainfall did improve topsoil moisture conditions, but conditions remain the driest in the province. Cropland topsoil moisture levels are one per cent surplus, 66 per cent adequate, nine per cent short and 24 per cent very short. Hayland topsoil moisture is even lower with one per cent surplus mois-

ture, 38 per cent adequate, 22 per cent short and 39 per cent of soils being very short of moisture. Pasture topsoil moisture levels are one per cent surplus, 37 per cent adequate, 23 per cent short and 39 per cent very short.

Harvest has not started yet, but pulse crops are reportedly getting close to maturity. The rains will help later seeded crops as many are still filling. Haying is complete in the region and yields vary. On average, dryland alfalfa yielded 1.10 tons per acre, tame hay yielded 0.79 tons per acre and greenfeed yielded 2.11 tons per acre. Silage yields were also low relative to the rest of the province, with an average yield of 4.50 tons per acre.

Most crop damage reports are still from dry conditions, but damage in the last week alone was not widely reported. There are also a few areas with localized grasshopper activity feeding on crops.

A complete, printable version of the Crop Report is available online.

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Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald

Mystery stranger spreads joy in Parkside



In recent weeks, the village of Parkside has been gripped by a mystery. To brighten the days of community members, an anonymous person has been leaving rocks painted with artwork and messages on people’s properties. The stones (pictured here) have been widely shared in the Parkside Community Events Facebook group, spreading cheer and positivity to the whole community. *By JORDAN TWISS, Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter*

Shellbrook Library activity highlights

By **EDDIE HOEHN**
Branch Librarian

On Monday Aug. 11, Kale Goodwin from the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, as well as Smokey the Bear, came to the library to present about wildfire prevention.

Bear story and ad campaign which ran for 81 years as well as how to avoid accidentally starting forest fires. He stressed the importance of always supervising a campfire or fire in a fire pit, pouring lots of water, snow, or dirt on it to put it out, stirring everything up well, and making sure

that the fire is out before leaving the area. It is important to never have firewood, sticks, leaves, and gas cans outside near one’s house or near an outdoor fire because they can easily start on fire. Kale demonstrated how to call 911 in an emergency with a cell phone. He told the kids to

write down their address and land location on a paper and keep the information on the fridge in case of an emergency. Kale gave out free rulers to the kids. Smokey the Bear greeted the kids after the presentation to give high fives and pose in pictures.

Volunteer and local library board member Samuel Schafer hosted Trivia Night on Tuesday, Aug. 12. Samuel presented nature themed trivia with questions about animals, plants, flowers, fruit, metals/minerals, and ecology. The attendees also participated in music and literature rounds where they named the songs/books and their artists/authors.

The attendees split up into three teams — a kids’ team, a parents’ team, and a grandparents’ team. The kids’ team won against all the adults in the fruit round and tied with

them in the ecology round. There was a secret theme tying all of the answers together. The teams needed to use their previ-

ous answers to guess the theme. The kids’ team and the winning team of adults correctly guessed the secret theme.



Kale Goodwin from the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency taught kids fire safety alongside Smokey the Bear.

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Trivia Night participants work together to answer thematic questions.

SHS Class of 75 celebrates 50 years

By **JIM BEDI**
SHS Class of 1975

July 26, 2025, saw 9 out of 23 of the original Spiritwood High School graduating class of 1975 gather at the farm home of Charles & Claire Schira to commemorate the 50th anniversary of their high school graduation. A total of 24 people, among them former teachers, spouses, and early graduates of the original class that departed for greener pastures before graduation or moved with family and graduated at other locations, all enjoyed a delicious meal prepared and served by Ed Sawatsky and staff from Eddie's Twisted Grill.

The afternoon and evening were filled with lots of visiting, photos, laughs, and reliving many memories shared. The last reunion was held some 30 years ago so a whole lot of catching up was done. Many could not attend for various reasons but some travelled from afar to be there. The farthest being from Golden, BC. Soon, it was time to say farewell again, with a commitment to not let 30 years lapse before meeting again.



(Above) Twenty-four attended the 50th anniversary celebration. Back row, left to right: Randy Wildman, Jerry Houle, Charles Schira, Brian Smith, Guy Steinborn, Harvey Franson, Gene Suteau, Brian Hrynkiw (Teacher), and Darryl Garrison. Middle: Claire Schira, Arlene Smith, Valmarie Steinborn, Sandra Walter (T), Sylvia Hrykiw (T), and Beverly Garrison. Front: Jim Bedi, Dona Bedi, Dave Hyndman (T), Elaine Kolenosky, Connie Wildman, Diane Franson, Lynne Etchverry, Sheldon Goller, and Sharon Goller.

(Right) Spiritwood High School's Class of 1975 at their graduation.



The science of saving seeds

By **PATRICIA HANBIDGE**
Orchid Horticulture

The ancient practice of saving seeds has in recent years become a feasible and in some cases encouraged practice. There is a science to saving seeds; one that requires patience, vigilance and dedication but the rewards and satisfaction outweigh the labour costs.

There is far more to saving seed than going out into the garden and selecting one or two plants from each vegetable variety you grow to serve as seed producers. The ancient people, who began to save seed, observed the plants and paid special attention to how the plants grew, when they flowered and the quality and quantity of fruit produced. Seed was selected from plants that showed natural disease resistance, high yields, good to excellent quality and growth that suited the growing environment. The home gardener can take a similar approach. Plants that show these qualities have the potential to be excellent seed sources.

Although the ancient seed savers had no knowledge of plant biology, the home gardener will benefit from a little of this knowledge. The concept that is most important to know is pollination. Pollination differs with each plant family. Some require wind while others are mainly pollinated by insects and still others utilize a combination of the two. Pollination occurs when the pollen from either male flowers or male flower parts (called stamens) is transferred to female flowers or female flower parts (called pistils). The pollen may be from the flower of related plant or it may be from a flower of a plant in the same family. For example, cucumbers and zucchini are part of the squash family. They have monoecious flowers which means they have both male and female flowers on the same plant. Some plants are dioecious which have male and female flowers on different plants. Some of the most common plants that come to mind are poplar and ash trees. Dioecious plants are

extremely important as there might be strong preferences to one sex or another due to allergies or other landscape concerns like poplar fuzz! Still other plants contain perfect flowers which contain both the male and female parts in each flower itself. For example, our dwarf sour cherries have perfect flowers so there is no cross-pollination with another cherry to produce fruit which means that gardeners will only require one plant for fruit production.

There is one thing that the ancient seed gatherers did not have to contend with and that modern seed gatherers do: hybridization. Many plant varieties are hybrids meaning the flowers of two related species have been cross-pollinated to pro-

duce a new flower or vegetable variety. The seed from hybrid varieties will likely be sterile, however, if it does germinate, it is unlikely that the flowers or vegetables will be like the parent plant. In fact, the plants may be sterile and not produce flowers at all.

We have covered the basics of pollination but there is still more to know about seed saving. Pollination is the key to either having fruit or not but it is also the key to whether or not the fruit will be like the fruit of the parents. When a seed is described as "coming true", it will grow, flower, and produce fruit that looks exactly like the parent plants. Seed that does not 'come true' will often be seed that has two different

parents from the same plant family. For example, green beans will cross-pollinate with yellow beans resulting in beans that can be either green or yellow. When planting a garden to use for seed production, remember that it is important to plant single varieties of those plants you plan to save seed from. Planting only non-hybrid green beans will mean that you will have green bean seeds that will produce true green beans the following year. Keep in mind that if your neighbour is growing vegeta-

bles, there can also be cross-pollination between their varieties of vegetables and yours. Maybe you can go together and each grow different types of vegetables but then share the produce. You'll have double the garden space, more vegetables and new friends for life. *Hanbridge is the Lead Horticulturist with Orchid Horticulture. Find us at www.orchidhort.com; by email at growyourfuture@gmail.com on facebook @orchidhort and on instagram at #orchidhort.*



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SCAN ME

Minutes of a Blaine Lake Council Meeting

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

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council for the Town of Blaine Lake held at the Blaine Lake Community center located at # 301 Main St, Blaine Lake, SK S0J 0J0 on Monday June 16th, 2025.

Council Present: Mayor Tom Mayer, Councillor Jack Androsoff, Councillor Melissa Johnson, Councillor Karleigh Warkentin, and Councillor Barry Glencross.

Staff Present: Louanne Roschuk, Assistant CAO.

Regrets: CAO Jim Puffalt, Councillor Tonya Koal, and Councillor Melvy Sanchez.

Mayor Mayer called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

Delegations:

4:05 p.m. Kelley Caron Foreman Update on Month Outside Activities

4:25 p.m. Triant Steuart Blaine Lake Chamber of Commerce

Council: That the following items be added to the agenda.: 8 (e) Shellbrook Chronicle Grad Advertisement, 8 (f) Pickle Ball Court, and 8 (g)

BLCA Request.

Johnson: That the agenda be adopted as amended. Carried

Androsoff: That the following Minutes be accepted as circulated: May 13, 2025, Special Meeting as amended May 20, 2025, Regular Meeting. Carried

Warkentin: That Town Council approves the Quote from Cowan Graphics for sign Replacement at The Centennial Stook in the amount of \$275.00 plus taxes. Carried

Glencross: That the April and May Financial statement be tabled until next meeting. Carried

Androsoff: That Town Council approve the Cheque 3441 to 3451 in the amount of \$110,166.05. Carried

Johnson: That Town Council approve the Accounts for Ratification in the amount of \$26,682.52 as presented as well as include Council payroll of \$1,592.08, Staff Payroll in the amount of \$19,768.85 and Mastercard in the amount of \$3,541.71. Carried

Mayer: That Town Council acknowledged the committee

reports as presented verbally. Carried

Glencross: The Town Council accepts the Chief Administrative Officer Strategic Plan Update. Carried

Mayer: That the Town Council authorizes Administration to send a letter to Lynae Gauthier and Kelti Puffalt that currently we are not amending the bylaw to allow backyard hens. Carried

Glencross: That Town of Blaine Lake table discussion until next Council Meeting. Town Council would like CAO to have a more detailed report on current rates prior to authorizing a SUMAinvest account. Carried

Johnson: That Town Council authorizes a purchase a cast mini status control from Xylem In the amount of \$597.48 plus taxes for the lift station. Carried

Androsoff: That Town Council tables the recommendation of a three-year service contract and purchase of pump until next council meeting. Quotes are being obtained from another company regarding purchasing a spare pump. Carried

Glencross: That Town Council Request Administration to contact Wapiti Library in regards to this expense as council feels it should be an expense paid by them for the library. Existing SaskTel lines are currently at the Community Center to be utilized. Carried

Androsoff: That Town Council authorize Administration to contact Shellbrook Chronicle that we approve a Graduation Congratulation in the 2025 Grad edition. Carried

Mayer: That Town Council investigate a possible place for pickle ball in the 2026 budget. Carried

Glencross: The Town Council Authorization administration to contact the RM of Blaine Lake and set up a meeting with the Town to discuss the BLCA request for funds to share the cost of \$25,000 with the Skating Rink kitchen renovations. Carried

Androsoff: That Town Council authorize administration to also discuss the Blaine Lake Fire Board operations at the joint spe-

cial meeting with the RM of Blaine Lake. Carried

Johnson: The Town Council acknowledge the correspondence as presented. Administration to write a letter to Wade Fiala acknowledging his concern and that we will be looking into the matter further. Carried

Glencross: That Bylaw 04-2025, Bylaw to Extend Time Required to extend the Audit, be read a first time at this meeting. Carried (Editor's note: the bylaw was unanimously read three times and adopted at the meeting.)

Glencross: That Bylaw 05-2025, Bylaw to Amend Bylaw 03/2025 Mill Rate Bylaw, be read a first time at this meeting. Carried (Editor's note: the bylaw was unanimously read three times and adopted at the meeting.)

Glencross: That CAO attend the office of Grant Thornton and give them two week notice to complete the 2023 Financial Audit and that we are not in favour of paying the full invoice due to all the delays in this completion. Carried

Glencross: That Council Adjourn at 7:20 p.m.

Province releases mid-year policing stats

By MINISTRY OF CORRECTIONS, POLICING & PUBLIC SAFETY
Submitted

On Thursday, Aug. 14, Legislative Secretary Responsible for Corrections, Policing and Public Safety Michael Weger joined with Prince Albert Police Service Chief Patrick Nogier and local representatives in Prince Albert to discuss the mid-year results from provincially funded policing teams. In the first six months of 2025, officers from Saskatchewan's municipal Crime Reduction Teams (CRTs) and Saskatchewan Trafficking Response Teams (STRTs) seized 73 firearms, more than 14 kilograms of cocaine and over 2.7 kilograms of methamphetamine from the cities of Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina. Overall, officers charged 91 people with 445 criminal offences.

"The results from our municipal specialized policing teams show the province's coordinated, targeted

approach to tackling illegal drugs, weapons and human trafficking cases is making a difference," Weger said on behalf of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety Minister Tim McLeod, K.C. "Our government is proud to support these officers as they work tirelessly to protect the safety and security of Saskatchewan families and communities."

Currently, there are three municipal CRT and STRT teams operating out of Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon. CRTs target street gangs and prolific offenders, while responding to urban and rural crime surges as needed. STRTs focus on investigating illegal weapons, drugs and human trafficking cases.

"The continued success of our CRT and enhanced policing initiatives underscores the ongoing need for specialized investigative capacity within the Prince Albert Police Service," Prince Albert Police Service Chief Patrick Nogier said. "Illicit drugs and firearms remain a persistent threat to

the safety and wellbeing of our community, and our frontline officers are increasingly confronted by the complex, organized networks that facilitate their distribution. These provincially-funded positions are critical to our ability to target high-risk offenders, disrupt drug trafficking operations, and remove illegal weapons from our streets. Sustained investment in these specialized resources is essential to maintaining momentum in our enforcement efforts and safeguarding our community."

Between January and June 2025, municipal STRTs opened 62 human trafficking files and initiated 59 human trafficking interventions.

In February 2025, members of the Prince Albert CRT, supported by their STRT and other police agencies, concluded a few months long investigation into illicit drug trafficking. The investigation led to multiple search warrants being executed at properties within the city and surrounding area, resulting in the seizure of:

- more than three kilograms of cocaine;
 - nearly nine kilograms of marijuana, including an active grow operation;
 - five grams of MDMA;
 - 75 grams of psilocybin;
 - \$1,505 CAD;
 - an assortment of ammunition and five firearms;
 - multiple cell phones; and
 - other paraphernalia consistent with a drug trafficking operation.
- As a result of the investigation, two individuals are facing charges related to drug trafficking, as well as firearms and possession of proceeds ob-

tained by crime offences.

"Our officers remain committed to taking dangerous weapons and illicit drugs off our streets," Regina Police Service Acting Chief Lorilee Davies said. "Working together with our policing, community and government partners is key to continuing this important, life-saving work."

On June 5, 2025, following ongoing concerns from the community, the Regina CRT executed a Controlled Drugs and Substances Act search warrant at a residence in the city, with assistance from the Specialized Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team and the Aerial Support Unit. The property was known to police, with frequent drug-related activity and high traffic volume. Officers seized nearly 600 grams of methamphetamine, over \$7,000 in cash, and a loaded handgun from the basement. In an upstairs bedroom, police seized 10 long guns, additional ammunition and several prohibited weapons. As a result of this investigation, two individuals were arrested and multiple charges were laid.

"Specialized policing teams continue to be a key part of our enforcement and prevention strategy," Saskatoon Police Chief Cameron McBride said. "In the first half of 2025, their work has resulted in the disruption of criminal activity, the seizure of illegal firearms and drugs, and meaningful outreach to individuals at risk. These outcomes are made possible through ongoing collaboration with the Government of Saskatchewan, and they reflect our shared commitment to safer, healthier communities across the province."



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McIntosh, Mboko both steal the show

It was Summer's summer of domination until Vicky came along with victory after victory to steal the show.

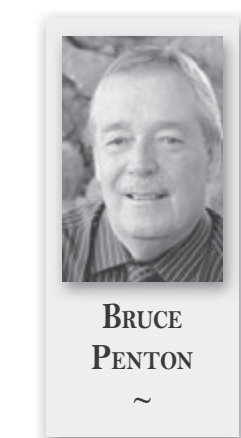
Overall, Canadian female athletes shone on centre stage at two important athletic championships as the summer reached its halfway point..

Summer McIntosh, of course, is arguably the best swimmer in the world, even though she finished third in the 800-metre freestyle behind Katie Ledecky of the United States at the world aquatic championships in Singapore. Despite that one-off defeat in the 800, Ledecky's specialty in which she has been virtually unbeatable for the past five years or so, Toronto's McIntosh was the star of the championships. The 18-year-old wunderkind won four gold medals —the 400-metre freestyle, the 200-metre butterfly, the 200-metre medley and the 400-metre individual medley. Her five medals boosts her total to 13 at the world championships, including eight golds.

But while Canadians were ready to concede the national female athlete of the year award to McIntosh, along came a virtually unknown tennis player from Toronto who stunned Canadian sports fans by winning the National Bank Open in Montreal. Televised matches played by Victoria (Vicky) Mboko, whose family moved to Canada from the Congo via North Carolina in the late 1990s to avoid political unrest, became must-see TV as she slowly moved through the draw and won the title by beating four-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka in three sets.

Mboko defied the odds by winning the semi-final against Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina, a former singles champ at Wimbledon, after being down 5-3 in the third set. She battled back and eventually won the match in a tie-breaker.

It has been a remarkable run for Mboko, who was ranked 333rd in the world at the start of 2025 and is now in the top 25. Sloane Ste-



BRUCE
PENTON

phens, the U.S. Open champion in 2017, sees an extremely bright future for Mboko: "I think she can be a grand slam champion. I think she could probably be No. 1 in the world," said Stephens.

Canada has a great history of producing world-class female players. Eugenie Bouchard, Bianca Andreescu, and Leylah Annie Fernandez have all had their moments. Andreescu reached the highest summit by winning the U.S. Open singles title in 2019, beating Serena Williams. Bouchard's career highlight was reaching the women's final at Wimbledon in 2014.

Will Mboko surpass

those outstanding feats and become Canada's best-ever player? It's difficult to say, but the determination and skill she showed in winning the Montreal event would point in that direction.

McIntosh, meanwhile, will be aiming for a quartet of golds at the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles. Mboko will likely be part of the Canadian Olympic tennis contingent and a plethora of medals and headlines await the duo.

As for Canadian athlete of the year voting at the end of 2025, the two female stars and NBA superstar Shai Gilgeous-Alexander of Hamilton will be the top contenders. Male voting bias will likely anoint Gilgeous-Alexander as the winner, but why not three co-winners?

• Former MLB pitcher Tug McGraw: "Ninety per cent of my salary I'll spend on good times, women, and Irish whiskey. The other 10 per cent I'll probably waste."

• Comedian Tommy

Cooper, on the hazards of sports gambling: "Gambling has brought our family together. We had to move to a smaller house."

• Headline at fark.com: "Las Vegas A's stadium marked up to \$2 billion. Owner seen sweating at craps table."

• Comedy guy Torben Rolfson of Vancouver: "Toronto (Blue Jays) acquired Seranthony Dominguez from the Orioles. When was he knighted, and why?"

• Rolfson again: "The President of the United States is pressuring the Washington Commanders to change their name back to the Redskins. Why don't they just meet in the middle and call them the Washington Orangeskens."

• Headline at fark.com: "Ranking all 32 NFL home uniforms from worst to best. It's not just the politics that are ugly in Washington." (No. 1 was Los Angeles Chargers.)

• One more from Rolfson: "Indiana Fever guard Sophie Cunningham was fined \$500 for criticizing WNBA ref-

erees on TikTok. There goes her August salary."

• Mike Bianchi of the Orlando Sentinel: "Now that ESPN has acquired the NFL's popular Red-Zone Channel, are we now going to get Stephen A. Smith popping onto our screens every time a touchdown is scored just so he can scream, 'THIS DEFENCE IS AN ABSOLUTE DISGRACE!'"

• Headline at The Beaverton.com: "Nation's mothers hail 18-year-old tennis champion Vicky Mboko as new unattainable standard for you to live up to."

• Another one from fark.com: "Anthony Richardson could return to the Colts as early as Saturday, much to the dismay of Colts' fans."

• fark.com to finish up: "Remember when the NFL commissioner said 'We will strongly oppose legalized sports gambling.' Well, they now own 10 per cent of ESPN's sports book and will directly profit from gambling."

Care to comment? Email brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca

Prairie Spirit SD passes 2025-2026 budget

By **KEVIN BERGER**
LJI Reporter

Clark's Crossing Gazette

Despite a projected decrease in student enrolment and increasing operational costs, the Prairie Spirit School Division (PSSD) has managed to balance its books for the 2025-2026 school year by using some reserve funds set aside for specific projects and making some staff reductions.

As noted by PSSD Communication Manager Brenda Erickson, school divisions are required to develop and submit balanced budgets to the Ministry of Education.

For 2025-2026, Prairie Spirit anticipates total revenue and expenses of \$145 million.

A total of \$128 million of the division's funding comes from the provincial government, which equates to 93% of their revenue. Erickson noted this includes a \$1.1 million capital grant for the

new South Corman Park School.

Compared to 2024-2025, provincial funding has increased by \$10 million. Erickson said this increase recognizes the costs associated with the Provincial Collective Bargaining Agreement for teachers.

Nevertheless, Prairie Spirit is having to contend with a decline in overall student numbers for the second year in a row after many years of steady enrolment growth. This affects the amount of revenue in Prairie Spirit's coffers, as provincial funding is tied to projected enrolment numbers.

Erickson said the division is projecting a total enrolment in 2025-2026 of just under 11,500 students, which is roughly 100 fewer than last year.

Noting that this student enrolment is closely tied to population trends in the communities the division serves, Erickson said that

some schools will experience reductions in teaching staff while others may see increases due to rising enrolment.

However, the overall ratio of classroom teachers to students will remain unchanged in Prairie Spirit schools.

On the expenses side, instruction still accounts for 71.2% of all division expenses, with student transportation and division facilities coming in at 6.8% and 13.3% respectively.

The highlights statement posted by Prairie Spirit indicates that budget reductions of \$3 million were made across the division, with staff being reduced in the facilities and transportation departments as well as centralized supports.

The budget was also balanced through the use of designated reserve funds strategically set aside to fund the renovation of Practical and Applied Arts labs in schools and purchasing new

school buses. Through these cuts, this is the first time in many years that the budget has been balanced without dipping into the division's general savings.

Through a provision in the new provincial teacher agreement, Classroom Complexity teachers will be added to all schools with over 75 students.

"Classroom complexity is a term used to reflect the variety of factors in a classroom including, but not limited to, class size, student needs, student behaviours and learning styles," Erickson said.

In addition, Prairie Spirit has been funded for the addition of a Specialized Support Classroom. This is part of a broader initiative to introduce 50 of these classrooms to school divisions around Saskatchewan, though the Ministry of Education aims to have 200 of these classrooms in place within four years.

As noted in a provincial

release announcing the original pilot program in January 2024, the classroom is meant to help students practice self-regulation skills while also addressing the impacts of disruptions.

Erickson said Prairie Spirit's Specialized Support Classroom will use an itinerant/mobile model to provide support to a variety of schools, though with a focus on Kindergarten and Grade 1. This work will be led by a team consisting of a specialized teacher, a counsellor and a half-time occupational therapist, all working alongside staff, students and families/caregivers.

"This is Prairie Spirit's first Specialized Support Classroom, and we are looking forward to providing additional targeted supports for students," Erickson said.

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OBITUARY



Willie James Diehl



Willie James Diehl, formerly of Marcelin, passed away peacefully at Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert on Monday August 4, 2025 at the grand age of 97 years.

Willie was born on June 10, 1928 on the family homestead in the Moon Hills district of Marcelin, Saskatchewan. He attended Paddling Lake school and

at the age of 18, Willie married the love of his life, Irene Dagenais, at St. Joseph Parish in Marcelin. Willie and Irene came from local farming families and worked on farms in their early years. Willie had a number of jobs before becoming a stationary engineer for the City of Saskatoon that took him into retirement. Regardless of what Willie did for a living, he was above all else, a great outdoorsman. Few knew the trails and byways as well as he did. Hunting and fishing were in his blood. He was also an avid card player, playing with four generations in real time and over the internet. We knew he was near the end of his life when he could no longer play cards for more than 20 minutes.

Willie is survived by five daughters and two sons, 15 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren:

Louise Darou and her daughters Tisa (Gary Haesch) and their son Andrew; Glenna (Dan Ference) and sons Noah and Jesse; her son-in-law Lau Nguyen (Tannis Zimmer) and children Quaid, Taelynn, Dezlan, Phoenix, Archer, Ardyst and Cassian;

Robert (Judy Mansell) and children Lisa (Ira Roness) and their children Ben and Sophie; and Christopher (Tania Kraft) and their children Georgia and Luca;

Brian (Pat Tucker); Phyllis (Jim Fergusson) and sons Scott and Eric (Bethany Geddes) and their son Wolfrum;

Marlene (Don Park) and children Deena (Daniel Simair) and their children Willis and Lucia; Kyla (Robbie Golightly) and children Kinsey, Adelyn and Jamison; and Robert (Jennifer Wilson);

Judie Goplen, and children Katie (Matt Kachur) and their sons Connor and Logan; Michael (Monique Raubenheimer); and Laura (Miles Jespersen) and their children Stevie and Sunny;

Christine (Lionel Donohue) and children Sarah (Andrew Adshade) and their sons Oliver, Henry and Charlie; K.C.; and Devon (Shea Jones) and their children Nola, Jory and Kallie.

Willie is predeceased by his wife Irene in 2012, his sons-in-law, Murray

Darou and Craig Goplen, his grandchildren Kelly Diehl, Tracy Nguyen, and Kolan Tucker and his great-grandchildren, Adam Haesch, twins Anika and Grace Nguyen and Phynn Nguyen.

His lone surviving Diehl in-law is his sister-in-law Rita Diehl of Carrot River and of his wife's siblings and in-laws, he is survived by his brother-in-law Maurice Dagenais of Saskatoon. His parents were Jim and Ellen Diehl, his two brothers and six sisters and in-laws were Leo (Lil) Clarence, Myrtle (John) Coroy, Florence Patterson, Ella, Eva (Don) Patterson and Marjory (Bill) Haleschuk. His wife's siblings and in-laws were Cecile (Roland)

Pelletier, Florence Pelletier, Ernest (Ida), Raymond (Irene), Teresa (Edwin Rutten; Ernest Coates), Lucy (Leo Willick) and sister-in-law Angeline Dagenais.

His family and many friends were very dear to him. He was well loved and will be deeply missed by all; he was truly one of the last men standing of his generation.

Funeral mass will be celebrated on Saturday, August 23, 2025 at St. Joseph Parish in Marcelin, Saskatchewan at 2:00 p.m. Interment of ashes in Marcelin Cemetery followed by lunch and fellowship at the Marcelin Community Hall. Memorial donations may be made to the Marcelin Cemetery Fund.

Minutes of an RM of Spiritwood meeting

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

The Regular Meeting of the Council of the Rural Municipality of Spiritwood No. 496 was held on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, in Council Chambers located at 218 Main Street in Spiritwood, Sask.

Present: Reeve — Shirley Dauvin, Division 2 — Dale Wasden, Division 3 — Terry Wingerter, Division 4 — Steve Buban, Division 5 — Heather Warkentin, Division 6 — Dennis Laventure, CAO — Colette Bussiere, and Foreman — Darcy Laventure.

Absent: Division 1— Vacant.

A quorum being present the meeting was called to order at 8:01 a.m. by Reeve Shirley Dauvin.

Warkentin: That the Foreman's report having been read now be filed. Carried

Foreman Darcy Laventure left the council meeting at 8:59 a.m.

Wasden: That the minutes of the June 10, 2025, Regular Meeting of Council be approved as presented. Carried

Wingerter: That the Administrator's report having been read now be filed. Carried

Warkentin: That the verbal reports of council be accepted as presented. Carried

Foreman Darcy Laventure returned to the council meeting at 9:28 am.

Delegation: Terry Allchurch joined the council meeting at 9:33 a.m. to discuss the application of dust suppressant and concerns regarding shoulder pulling of the Meeting Lake Grid.

Delegate Terry Allchurch left the council meeting at 9:58 a.m.

Delegation: Delegates Tammie & Randolph Burak joined the council meeting at 10:03 a.m. to discuss the

road easement located on SW 21-51-12-W3.

Delegates Tammie & Randolph Burak left the council meeting at 10:21 a.m.

Foreman Darcy Laventure left the council meeting at 10:38 a.m.

Delegation: Big River First Nation Delegation (Land Managers — Shalean Morin & Hubert Whitefish, Band Council Members — Larry Keenatch, Mike Crookedneck, Wally McAdam, Euclid Morin & Cliff McAdam) joined the council meeting at 11:32 a.m. for open discussion & collaboration regarding the addition of lands to reserve status.

Big River First Nation delegates left the council meeting at 12:33 p.m.

Wingerter: That the bank reconciliation for the month ending June 30, 2025 be accepted as presented. Carried

Wasden: That the "List of Accounts" as listed on the attached Schedule "A" forming part of these minutes be passed for payment: Cheque No. 15222-15255 (\$115,476.77), EFT No. 2025-0104-2025-0118 (\$60,358.66), Payroll File No. 0027 & 0029 (\$55,177.65). Carried

Warkentin: That the Statement of Financial Activities for the month ending June 30, 2025 be approved as presented. Carried

Laventure: The Rural Municipality of Spiritwood No. 496 (RM) hereby agrees to engage NorthWest Community Safety Services (NWCSS) to provide the RM with Community Safety Officer (CSO) services which includes bylaw enforcement and provincial statute enforcement authority, and such other services as the RM and NWCSS may agree upon from time to time. Carried

Wingerter: That we enter into em-

ployment contracts with Carly Shields and Wyatt Youst. Carried

Laventure: Whereas, approach development accessing NW 24-52-12-W2 from Rge Rd 3121 was constructed to RM standards that the RM of Spiritwood No. 496 will not remove the approach. Carried

Wasden: That Bylaw No. 2025-5, being a Bylaw to Provide for a Minimum Tax be read a first time. Carried (Editor's note: The bylaw was unanimously given three readings at the meeting and enacted.)

Warkentin: That Bylaw No. 2025-6, being a Bylaw to Provide for Mill Rate Factors be read a first time. Carried (Editor's note: The bylaw was unanimously given three readings at the meeting and enacted.)

Wingerter: That we enter into a servicing agreement with the applicant for the development of municipal improvements for the proposed subdi-

vision located on NW 02-50-08-W3. Carried

Warkentin: That we become a member of the Agriculture Health & Safety Network & pay the required membership fee. Carried

Council: That the council meeting be closed to the public at 2:22 p.m. under the authority of Part III of The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, to go in camera to discuss Human Resources. Carried

CAO Colette Bussiere left the council meeting at 2:22 p.m.

CAO, Colette Bussiere returned to the council meeting at 2:52 p.m., and the regular meeting of council was out of camera and resumed.

Warkentin: That the correspondence, having been read, now be filed. Carried

Buban: That the meeting be adjourned.

Sask. lifts provincial fire ban

By SPSA
Submitted

The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA) has lifted the provincial fire ban as of 11 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 13, 2025 due to improved conditions.

The provincial fire ban will be lifted on all Crown lands located north of the provincial forest boundary up to the Churchill River, along with the Northern Saskatchewan Ad-

ministration District.

The public is reminded that provincial parks, municipalities and R.M.s may still have their own local fire ban, restriction or advisory in place. A list of fire restrictions in provincial parks and recreation sites can be found on the SaskParks website and the SPSA interactive fire ban map.

Municipalities and provincial parks should continue to monitor

local conditions and implement fire bans or burning restrictions as required.

Anyone who spots a wildfire can call 1-800-667-9660, dial 9-1-1 or contact their closest SPSA Forest Protection Area office.

An interactive map of fire bans in the province, fire ban frequently asked questions, fire risk maps and fire prevention tips can all be found at saskpublicsafety.ca.

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11 a.m. - Worship
(in-person and online via Facebook Live)
10 a.m. - Sunday School

PRESBYTERIAN

Mistawasis
Sunday worship
11:00 a.m.
Rev. Stewart Folster

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Debden
Sun. Mass - 9:30 a.m.
Fr. Mariusz Zajac
Big River - Sacred Heart
Sun., 11:30 a.m. - Mass
Whitefish
Sun., 2:30 p.m. - Mass.
Victoire
Sat., 7:30 p.m. - Mass.
Fr. Mariusz Zajac
St. Agatha's - Shellbrook
Mass - Sunday 9 a.m.
St. Henry's - Leask
Mass - Sunday 11 a.m.
Mistawasis
1st & 3rd Sundays 1:30 p.m.
Fr. Tuan Doan

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

407-2nd Ave E, Shellbrook
Sat., 9:45 a.m. - Sabbath
School
Sat., 11:00 am -Worship
Pastor Myshan Irving
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 9:00 a.m.
Rev. Sarah Urano

UNITED /ANGELICAN

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

CATHOLIC

SATURDAY
Medstead – 6:00 p.m.
Shell Lake – 8:00 p.m.
SUNDAY
Spiritwood – 9:00 a.m.
Leoville – 11:00 a.m.
Chitek Lake – 1:00 p.m.
Everyone Welcome
Fr. Ramel Macapala

COWBOY CHURCH

Spiritwood
Every 1st & 3rd Wed. 7 pm
Spiritwood Legion Hall
Pastor Rick Martin

FIELDS OF HOPE (HOFFNUNGSFELDER) MENNONITE CHURCH

Glenbush (May thru Sept)
10:00 am Worship
Rabbit Lake Mennonite
Church (June thru Sept)
2nd Sunday - 10 am Worship

BETHEL

Medstead
2nd Sunday, 10 am -
Worship
Pastor David Jensen
4th Sunday, 10 am - Worship
Pastor David Jensen

MENNONITE BRETHREN

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

Gideons International of Canada

Battlefords Camp
Phone Art Martynes
(306) 389-4633

PARTNERS IN WORSHIP

Shell Lake
Worship Services
Sunday 11:00 a.m.
Pastor Sarah Urano
306-841-7333

LAKELAND

COMMUNITY CHURCH
(Corner of 1st Ave. and 4th St., Spiritwood)
Sun., 11 am - Worship
Service & Sunday School
Pastor Michael Kluthe
306-883-2380

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