

Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald

VOL. 114 NO. 1 PMR #40007604

Thursday, January 8, 2026

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Generosity delivers 57 Christmas hampers to families



A large crew of volunteers helped pack the food bank's Christmas hampers on Dec. 19.

By JORDAN TWISS

Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The Christmas season is supposed to be the most wonderful time of the year. But with high grocery prices continuing to stretch household budgets to their limits, it's also, for some, a time of great stress, worry, and guilt.

Thanks to the volunteer work of the Shellbrook and Area Ministerial Food Bank, and the support of people, businesses, and community groups in Shellbrook and the surrounding area, those in need of a little help were able to experience some of the season's wonder, and sit down for a traditional Christmas meal with their families over the

holidays.

Each December, the Shellbrook Food Bank calls for donations for its Christmas hampers, filling them with staples like bread, milk, and eggs, as well as a turkey, another type of meat, and all the essentials for a Christmas meal (plus a little bit of whatever else is on hand in the moment).

And without fail, the community steps up to answer the call.

"The support from the entire area and the response to come out to help pack the hampers was fantastic," said food bank coordinator Linda Lundy. "People were very generous."

All told, when community volunteers gathered at the Shellbrook Pentecostal Assembly on Friday, Dec.

19, they had enough goods on hand to stuff 57 Christmas Hampers.

While it's good news that the community was able to meet the holiday season's demand for hampers, this marked an increase of 12 hampers over last year, pointing to a worrying trend of increasing need.

Indeed, according to Food Banks Canada's 2025 HungerCount report, usage of food banks in Canada has doubled since 2019. And in March alone, food banks recorded an unprecedented 2.2 million visits.

Along with the increased food bank usage, there has been a demographic shift in food bank users, with more people who are employed, seniors, and two-parent households with children under 18 making up

larger shares of the user base.

"It was up considerably, which was not unexpected," Lundy said, noting that the increased demand puts a strain on the food bank's resources, with meat being especially expensive to provide in monthly hampers. "And it keeps increasing on a monthly basis."

Without the community's support, Lundy adds, the food bank simply wouldn't be able to function.

This year, for the second year in a row, the food bank's efforts were supported in a big way by the Stuff the Bus campaign, a joint effort between the Shellbrook Kinettes, W.P. Sandin High School, and Shellbrook Elementary School.

Continued on page 2

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Wishing you all a happy

2026

Woodland Pharmacy

Ph: 306-747-2545

Main Street, Shellbrook

Generosity delivers 57 Christmas hampers to families

Continued from 1

For the campaign at the high school, classes compete against each other to collect the most food bank donations, and are incentivized in their efforts by the promise of getting to eat sooner at the school's annual Christmas Banquet.

Meanwhile, donation boxes are set up at local businesses around

the community, including Bigway, Tait Insurance, Woodland Pharmacy, Scotiabank, Affinity Credit Union, TJ Disposals, and Arnie's Grill, and the Shellbrook Kinettes use their annual Santa Fun Day as an opportunity to bring in even more donations.

Then, once collection day arrives, educational associate and

Shellbrook Kinette Kelly Herndier fires up the bus and drives it around the community to pick up the goods and shine a spotlight on the community's generosity, eventually parking it at the Richardson Pioneer Recreation Centre for the evening's Lucky 7 draw.

"Between the high school SLC and the Kinettes, we determined

there was definitely a higher need for food bank donations," Herndier said of the inspiration for the campaign. "Grocery prices continue to climb, and families are forced to choose between food on the table and paying bills that continue to increase in price as

well."

This year's Stuff the Bus campaign drove donations in a big way, with 1,100 items coming from the high school alone. The U18 AA Parkland Elks also got on board with the campaign this year, adding another 205 items to the total.

"Shellbrook is an outstanding community to be a part of. Every time someone reaches out and asks, the call is always answered," Herndier said.

"The fact that families struggle and still continue to assist others is something the community can be proud of."



The U18 AA Parkland Elks got in on this year's food drive, collecting 205 items.



W.P. Sandin High School collected 1,100 items for the Stuff the Bus campaign.



The Stuff the Bus campaign was a success in its second year, bringing in more than 1,300 items.

Spiritwood Lions support Pioneer Centre

By BEVRA FEE
Spiritwood Herald Reporter

Twice per year, the Spiritwood & District Lions Club awards \$800 to a deserving local charity. In December, Lion Megan Allard presented a welcome cheque to the Spiritwood Pioneer Senior Association for their planned improvements to the grounds at the Pioneer Centre.

Through an application process, a committee of Lions Club members evaluates the various requests for funding to recommend a recipient.

"With the pavement leading to the main door getting chips and breaking, it is hard for visitors who use walkers or wheelchairs — in fact, it is a tripping hazard for anyone," commented Pioneer Senior committee member, Helen Mack.

"We are planning to replace the trouble spots of concrete in order to make it more accessible getting to our front door."

The Spiritwood Lions make the biennial donation from an investment account that was established and managed by founding members. The next grant deadline is May 31, 2026, and is open to volunteer committees and clubs in the surrounding area, with criteria of having a service-related mandate.



Lion Megan Allard, centre, presents a donation to the Spiritwood Pioneer Seniors Association.

PICK OF THE WEEK

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1) Golf Clubhouse Restaurant Lease (May–September)
Seeking a leased operator for our fully equipped kitchen and restaurant facility.
Must hold valid Food Handler certification.
Operator will be responsible for all staffing and day-to-day operations of the restaurant and golf course.

2) Beach Concession Lease (June–September)
Seeking a leased operator for the beach concession.
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For more information or to submit an expression of interest, please contact **Martins Lake Regional Park** at **306-497-7111**, or email to **martinslake@sasktel.net**.

Appendix C

FORM H

[Section 66 of the Act]

NOTICE OF CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

VILLAGE OF MEDSTEAD

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that nominations of candidates for the office(s) of:

**Councillor: Village of Medstead
Number to be Elected: 1**

will be received by the undersigned on the 28th day of January, 2026, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Village Office, and during regular business hours on January 5th to January 28th, 2026, at Village Office.

Nomination forms may be obtained at the following location(s): Medstead Village Office, 209-2nd Street, Medstead, SK.

Dated this 19th day of December, 2025.

Lora Hundt
Returning Officer

Raiders extend perfect streak to 8 games

By JORDAN TWISS
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The Blaine Lake Raiders had a busy weekend of hockey to ring in the new year, playing three games over four days from Dec. 31 through Jan. 3, starting with home games against the Radisson Wheatkings and Hafford Mustangs and ending with a road game against the Perdue Pirates.

Boasting an unblemished 5-0 record heading into the trio of holiday season games, the Raiders were hoping to remain perfect on the season. With a big offensive showing in two of the three games, they managed exactly that.

Raiders (18) Kings (6)

Though goals didn't come right away for the Raiders when they hosted the Wheatkings on New Year's Eve, the opening of the floodgates led to a torrent of offense that saw the team score seven goals in the first period to end it with a 7-2 lead.

While a five goal advantage would be enough of a cushion in most instances, the Raiders kept their foot

on the gas through the second period, adding another six goals to their tally to end the period with a 13-4 lead.

And the Raiders didn't let up in the third period either, scoring another five goals while once again holding the Wheatkings to just two to claim a dominant 18-6 win.

The night was a big one for Kelly Friesen, who had four goals and four assists, while Tysen Smith had a goal and four assists and Brandon Lesko added three goals and two assists.

Elsewhere, Braiden Onishenko (one goal, three assists), Thomas Jean (two goals, two assists), and Gage Helm (three goals, three assists) had four-point nights, Adam Horner (one goal, two assists) and Dawson Horner (one goal, two assists) had three-point games, and Clay Casavant (two assists) and Kyle Schmidt (two goals) contributed two points each.

Rounding out the score sheet, Cole Brochu, Patrick Gauthier, Anthony Jean, Jay Daniels, and Lance Lamontagne each had an assist.

SaskPower requests two-year rate increase

By SASKPOWER
Submitted

SaskPower is seeking a 3.9% rate increase effective Feb. 1, 2026, and a further 3.9% rate increase effective Feb. 1, 2027.

The Crown Corporation requires additional funding to support record capital investments and continue providing reliable power for the people, businesses and communities of Saskatchewan.

Reliability and energy security are top priorities, and SaskPower will continue to make the necessary investments to ensure power is available for all customers whenever it is needed. In the coming years, SaskPower will continue to revitalize its fleet of coal-fired power plants, expand its transmission and distribution systems, and modernize the provincial grid.

"Utilities across Canada continue to face considerable rate pressures, and SaskPower is no exception," said Ruven Pandya, SaskPower President and CEO. "We will continue to pursue a strategy of balancing the need for moderate rate increases with our required capital invest-

ments to maintain reliability for customers."

The company plans to move forward with a rate application to the Saskatchewan Rate Review Panel. The Feb. 1, 2026 increase will be implemented on an interim basis but will still be subject to the public rate review process.

The average residential customer will see increases of \$5/month in 2026 and \$5/month in 2027, while the average farm customer will see increases of \$11/month in 2026 and \$11/month in 2027.

SaskPower's most recent rate increases were 4% each in 2022 and in 2023. Prior to that, SaskPower had not increased rates for four years.

SaskPower is committed to keeping rates as low as possible for customers and maintaining affordability while ensuring the financial health of the company. Programs and tips to help customers reduce power use and lower bills can be found at saskpower.com/power-savings-and-programs.

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PHONE (306) 832-4528
FAX (306) 832-4525
northern.dore@sasktel.net

Raiders (11) vs. Mustangs (2)

While the Raiders were just as dominant when they returned to action on home ice against the Hafford Mustangs on Jan. 2, it took them longer to build their lead, as they tallied just two goals in the first period to take a 2-1 lead.

The offensive dam burst in the second period, as the Raiders scored six unanswered goals to surge ahead by a score of 8-1. Another three goals in the third period allowed the Raiders to skate off with an 11-2 victory.

Once again, Kelly Friesen led the offensive charge with a goal and four assists on the night, while Kyle Schmidt had four assists, and Brandon Lesko had a goal and three assists. Contributing three points on the night were Tysen Smith (three goals), Patrick Gauthier (three assists), and Gage Helm (two goals, one assist).

Finally, Ryan Smith, Thomas Jean, Anthony Jean, and Jay Daniels all had a single goal on the night, and Clay Casavant, Braiden Onishenko, and Cole Brochu each had one assist.

Raiders (3) vs Pirates (2)

Travelling to Perdue to meet the Perdue Pirates the following night, the Raiders found themselves in the unfamiliar territory of being behind, when the Pirates struck first on a goal from Mason Lammers,

assisted by Ethan Perillat and Erik Ehrmantraut.

With the help of a power play, the Raiders tied the score at 1-1 on a goal from Patrick Gauthier, assisted by Brandon Lesko and Clay Casavant, but the Pirates stole the lead right back when Lyndon Lipinski scored on assists from Luke Gray and Magnus Pearson.

Still behind after a goalless second period, the Raiders once again found success on the power play, tying the score at 2-2 on a goal from Kelly Friesen, assisted by Thomas Jean and Lesko.

With another power play later in the period, Lesko put the Raiders up 3-2 on assists from Kyle Schmidt and Friesen.

The lead held until the buzzer, giving the Raiders a perfect 8-0 record.

This weekend, the Raiders are busy on home ice, hosting the Meota Combines on Friday, Jan. 9, and the Battleford Beaver Blues on Saturday night.

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We're planning ahead for the 2028 Provincial Election. The first step is hiring our Returning Officers.

Hours for training and projects over the next few years will be minimal (but we're always ready for an unexpected by-election). As 2028 approaches, hours will increase as you hire workers, organize your returning office, and find voting locations.



OPINION

New year means new chance for our leaders to change

And just like that, we've somehow completed another orbit around the sun, bringing about the beginning of a brand-new year.

For some, the coming of a new year is just that. There's no greater symbolism to it; all it really means is spending the next month or so accidentally writing 2025 instead of 2026.

For others, a new year is like a cosmic reset button, an opportunity to change, improve, and accomplish the tasks and goals that were put off for the past year (or maybe even longer).

As well as being promises to ourselves, new year's resolutions are expressions of hope, of a belief in new beginnings and second chances.

Some may scoff at such starry-eyed optimism, but all too often our lives are what we think. When we focus on the clouds, our lives become nothing but storms. But when we focus on the single ray of sunshine feebly poking through the darkness, our lives become just a little brighter.

Politically speaking, 2025 was a year of uncertainty and upheaval, with the Sask Party government continuing the first year of a new (albeit smaller) four-year mandate from voters, the Liberal Party experiencing a miraculous resurgence under the leadership of (still relatively new) Prime Minister Mark Carney, and Donald Trump embarking on his second attempt to "Make America Great Again" (at the expense of the rest of the world).

The uncertainty and upheaval of 2025 is certain to bleed over well into 2026, as Mr. Carney's government is one vote shy of a majority and fighting to stave off a non-confidence vote and another election, and Mr. Trump is ramping up his political, economic, and military threats against Canada, Venezuela, Greenland, and anyone else he perceives as an enemy on any given day.

To not only get through 2026, but turn it into a better year than 2025, here's what our elected officials should resolve to do this year.



JORDAN
TWISS
~
News Editor

When Mr. Carney stepped into the role of prime minister in place of a profoundly unpopular Justin Trudeau, the shift in tone couldn't have been more stark.

Mr. Trudeau was often mocked for his brief stint as a drama teacher. And fittingly, based on this professional background, his government was big on performance, on wanting to be seen doing good things for Canadians.

By contrast, Mr. Carney's background as governor of both the Bank of Canada and Bank of England automatically gave him a degree of legitimacy and seriousness that Mr. Trudeau never had. But with Canadians facing a legion of challenges, Mr. Carney shouldn't expect he'll be able to sustain his government based solely on this.

This year, Mr. Carney needs to show Canadians who he is, what he stands for, and what his government can do to make their lives more affordable.

For instance, Mr. Carney's opponents have tried to label him as one of the architects of the divisive environmental policies enacted by Mr. Trudeau's government, and there's no denying his past record of pushing investment in green energy and climate change initiatives.

And yet, his first act as prime minister was to axe the consumer carbon tax.

Mr. Carney then signed an MOU with Alberta to explore the development of a pipeline and suspend the federal oil and gas emissions cap (with some environmental concessions from Alberta). And, in a year-end interview with CBC's Rosemary Barton, he said there'd been "too much regulation, not enough action" on climate change during Mr. Trudeau's tenure.

At the same time, as Mr. Trump spent 2025 dancing the tariff Hokey Pokey with Canada ahead of the upcoming review of the Canada-United-States-Mexico free trade agreement (CUSMA), Mr. Carney framed



himself as the man to get a deal done with the ever-erratic president.

When his summer deadline came and went without a new deal for Canada, Mr. Carney clarified that he wouldn't "settle for a bad deal" for Canada. And as 2025 came to an end, he said a deal wasn't likely to happen anytime soon.

On the one hand, a bad deal for Canada would be worse than no deal, given that 85 per cent of Canadian goods are still spared from Mr. Trump's tariffs under CUSMA.

On the other, the lack of a deal is yet another example of the seeming contradictions in Mr. Carney's character.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the aisle, Conservative Party Leader Pierre Poilievre started 2025 as the presumptive prime minister in waiting, only to end it facing questions about his leadership after losing three MPs and falling far behind Mr. Carney in most polls about Canada's preferred prime minister.

Though he's highly likely to survive his leadership review at the end of the month, Mr. Poilievre will have to spend 2026 charting a new course to victory – one that gives Canadians more to support and hope for than snappy slogans, silly legislative stunts, and speeches about how "broken" Canada is.

Going into the new year, Mr. Poilievre must answer two questions with more than just promises to undo every Liberal policy of the past decade: What is your vision for Canada's future?; and how do you plan to get there?

In Saskatchewan, 2025 should have been a year in which Premier Scott Moe and his Sask Party government lived up to their post-election promise to reflect on their shortcomings and change to better represent the people of Saskatchewan.

But Mr. Trudeau's resignation at the beginning of the year left Mr. Moe and his government without a scapegoat and boogeyman to pin the blame on, and in the midst of Mr. Trump's trade bluster, the Sask Party was able to quietly fade into the background.

To be certain, Mr. Moe and his cabinet ministers popped up from time to time throughout 2025, whenever there was a policy to announce or a photo op to pose for.

However, when it came to answering questions about its decisions and taking accountability for its mistakes or failures, the Sask Party government consistently failed to deliver on Mr. Moe's promise.

In 2026, it's time for Mr. Moe and the Sask Party to deliver for all of Saskatchewan.

Shellbrook Chronicle

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Spiritwood Herald

Serving the Communities of Spiritwood, Shell Lake, Leoville, Chitek Lake, Mildred, Rabbit Lake, Medstead, Mayfair, Bapaume, Belbutte, Glaslyn

Publications Mail Registration #07621

Published Every Thursday Morning

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Office Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.;

Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.;

Advertising Deadline: Fridays at 4:00 p.m.

Websites: www.shellbrookchronicle.com
www.spiritwoodherald.com

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Shellbrook Kinettes announce Twinkle Tour winners

By JORDAN TWISS
Shellbrook Chronicle
Reporter

For the sixth consecutive year, residents of Shellbrook lit up the Christmas season for the Shellbrook Kinettes' Twinkle Tour, hoping to foster Christmas spirit and maybe win a little cash prize (donated by the Shellbrook Chamber of Commerce and BID Committee) as an early Christmas gift.

Since the Kinettes launched the Twinkle Tour during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a means to bring the community together for the holidays while safely social distancing, the event has become a hallmark of the season

alongside other events like the Kinettes' Santa Fun Day, Moonlight Madness, and the Shellbrook and District Arts Council's long-standing Carol Festival.

This year's tour con-

tinued to foster that feeling of togetherness, with participants joining the tour convoy in decked-out trucks or lit up tractors pulling inflatables to take in the lights all around town.

"The Twinkle Tour is such a fun way to bring the community together during the holidays," said Shellbrook Kinette Kim Lamotte. "It gives families something festive to do, encourages

people to decorate and spread some cheer, and helps create that small-town Christmas feeling we all love."

Though many houses in the community were decorated for Christmas, this year's Twinkle Tour saw 22 houses entered into the competition. And as always, the competition between them was fierce. Giving the community two weeks to get their votes in, the Kinettes announced the big winners just before Christmas.

This year, first place and a prize of \$300 went to 206 2nd Avenue East, followed by 107 3rd Street East in second place for a \$200 prize, and 500 4th Ave-

nue East in third place for a \$100 prize.

"We feel the Twinkle Tour went really well," Lamotte said. "It was great to see so many houses lit up and families out driving around enjoying the displays. The community support was amazing and it really felt like everyone was getting into the holiday spirit."

"The displays were very creative, and it was fun to see so many different themes and ideas and new houses added to the list," she added.

With the Twinkle Tour cemented as a community tradition, Lamotte says the Kinettes are always open to ideas to improve it in the years to come.



206 2nd Avenue East was the Twinkle Tour's big winner, with a flashy, synchronized display.



107 3rd Street East placed second, with some creative and colourful snow sculptures.



500 4th Avenue's grand display earned it a third place finish.

Shell Lake Legion celebrates Christmas

By CAROLYN LALONDE
Shell Lake Legion

Attendance at this year's Shell Lake Legion Christmas Banquet was down due to a local flu outbreak, but those in attendance were treated to a feast.

Following the meal, MC Jack Klassen presented life-time memberships to two members, Faye Brewer and Don Weiers, who have each been members for upwards of 50 years.

Door prize draws were next on the agenda. Laurie Empey took home the Santa Treat Bag. Traditionally, the winner of this draw takes home the bag, but refills it with treats in time for next year's party.

Stephen Cornielson won the gingerbread house, constructed by Anita Weiers.

The monthly \$100 draw was won by Desire Hatch — for the third time since June!

Chris Lindsay rounded out the evening by leading us all in a Christmas Carol sing-along.

All-in-all, it was a joyous end to a very busy Legion year.



Faye Brewer (left) and Don Weiers (right) accept life-time memberships from Jack Klassen.



Chris Lindsay sings carols at the Shell Lake Legion's Christmas Banquet.

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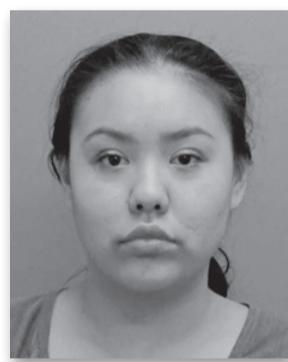
RCMP releases December offenders list

By JORDAN TWISS
Shellbrook Chronicle
Reporter

The Saskatchewan RCMP has updated its list of the province's most wanted offenders, in hopes the public can assist it in tracking them down.

The updated list includes four wanted individuals with known connections to the area.

Police note that this list 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.



Wionna Katcheek.

Factors such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, sexuality or disability are not considered in the scoring process.

Still wanted as of December was 25-year-old Wionna Katcheek (also known as Wynonna Katcheek, or Wynona Katcheek), who is wanted for attempted murder, intimidation of a justice system par-

ticipant, kidnapping, robbery with a firearm, and failure to comply with a release order (2 counts).

Katcheek is described as 5'4" and 161 pounds, with brown hair and brown eyes. Police warn that she could be in Medstead, North Battleford, Moosomin First Nation, or Saulteaux First Nation.

Also still on the list is 37-year-old Brennan Harold Sakebow, who's wanted for: assault (two counts), mischief under \$5000, 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 Saskatoon, Meadow Lake, or Pelican Lake First Nation.



Brennan Harold Sakebow.

Though she has dropped off the most wanted offenders list, police continue to search for 32-year-old Courtney Kaye, who's wanted for: assault with a weapon, forcible confinement, robbery, and possession of a weapon for dangerous purposes.

Though police have no photo of her, Kaye is described as 5'5" and 130 pounds, with red hair and green eyes and a scar on her left middle finger. She has known connections to Canwood, Debden, and Ahtahkakop Cree Nation.

This month brings only one new addition to the most wanted list in 23-year-old Darnell Lafond.

fond, who's wanted for sexual assault, assault with weapon, pointing a firearm, forcible confinement, uttering threats, possession of a weapon for dangerous purposes, unauthorized possession of a firearm, failure to comply, and careless use of a firearm (two counts).

Though a photo of him is not currently available, Lafond is described as 6'0" and 154 pounds, with brown hair and brown eyes. It is unknown if he has any notable scars or tattoos.

Lafond has known connections to Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Mistawasis First Nation, Ahtahkakop Cree Nation, and Blaine Lake.

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 Hours: Tuesday 9:30am - 4pm; Wednesday 10:30am - 5pm; 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)

SHELLBROOK: Shellbrook Boreas Pickleball (Formerly Prairie Pickleball Club) - Come out and try the fun & social sport of Recreational Pickleball in Shellbrook! New Players: Free Play and Beginner Lesson for the month of January! For more information or to register, phone/text: Rhonda Martin at (306)468-7770.

SPIRITWOOD: Wichekan Wildlife Federation Annual Awards & Banquet Night - Saturday, January 31, 2026, Spiritwood Civic Centre. Cocktails - 5pm; Supper - 6pm; Adults \$30; 12 & Under \$15; Preschool Free. Tickets available until January 28 - please call: Lyla 306-841-8284; Pearl & Eric 306-883-2835; Darcy 306-883-8641. Photo Contest - Categories include: Scenery, Hunting, Fishing & Wildlife. Pictures must be printed on 8x10 Kodak paper & can be submitted the day of banquet. Bring any unused 2025 hunting tags to be entered into a draw!

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*Senior Elks start
new year with two wins*

By JORDAN TWISS
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The Shellbrook Elks Senior Hockey Club kicked off 2026 with a busy weekend of hockey, playing host to the Rosthern Wheatkings on Saturday, Jan. 3, before heading out to Clavet to face the Clavet Cougars the following afternoon.

After a mixed bag 2025, the Elks needed wins to start the new year to get themselves securely into playoff contention. With solid offensive outings in both games, they were able to skate away with two crucial victories.

Elks (5) vs Kings (3)

The Elks wasted little time getting on the scoreboard against the Wheatkings on Saturday night, going up 1-0 just over 30 seconds in on a goal from Ethan Beaulac, assisted by Rylan Moe and Tyler Rock.

The goal kicked off a back and forth scoring match between the Elks and Wheatkings, with the Wheatkings striking back a few minutes later, and the Elks quickly reclaiming the lead on a goal from Levi Logan, assisted by Payton Kachur and Cole Tanchuk.

Though the Wheatkings had the last word in the first period, the Elks climbed back on top early in the second on a goal from Cole Duperreault, assisted by Matthew Flodell. Once again, however, the Wheatkings had a response, and the second period ended with a 3-3 tie.

Continuing their pattern throughout the game, the Elks once again reclaimed the lead with an early goal from Kachur, assisted by Kaiden Couture and Rock. Tightening up their defences, the Elks kept the Wheatkings off the board until Duperreault secured a 5-3 win with a late empty netter. Rock earned the only assist on the goal.

Elks (7) vs Cougars (3)

Back in action less than 24 hours later, the Elks got out to an equally strong start against the Clavet Cougars, when Cole Duperreault scored just over 90 seconds into the game on an assist from Rylan Moe.

The Cougars struck back a few minutes later, but Levi Logan put the Elks back on top with the help of a power play, scoring on assists from Cole Tanchuk and Duperreault. Shortly after, Matthew Flodell made it 3-1 Elks, with assists from Ethan Beaulac and Duperreault.

Though the Cougars struck late in the first period, closing the gap to 3-2, the Elks made sure they would get no closer by scoring two unanswered goals in the second period. Talon Sandry struck first, on assists from Shayden Smith and Ashton Miller, and Kaiden Couture scored exactly a minute later with assists from Payton Kachur and Logan.

As the action moved to the third period, the Cougars scored on the power play to cut the Elks' lead to two goals. Once again, the Elks responded with two goals, securing a 7-3 victory. Moe scored first, with assists from Flodell and Duperreault, and Duperreault followed up on assists from Tavis Galloway and Moe.

With the wins, the Elks now sit at 6-5-0-0 on the season. This Friday, Jan. 9, the team welcomes the Waldheim Warriors to Shellbrook. Then, on Sunday afternoon, they travel to face off against the Cudworth Tricky Maroons.

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AGRICULTURE

January 8, 2026

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Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald 7

What's in a food label?

What should be included on food labels tends to be a topic which can be a hotly contested one, depending on who one asks about it.

Certainly, it is probably safe to say a sizeable number of consumers pay scant attention to food labels.

There is an assumption — and yes some will argue the assumption is folly — that food on store shelves is safe, so reading labels is not a huge priority.

It is also a reality that, for many, the key thing when it comes to purchasing groceries is looking at price tags

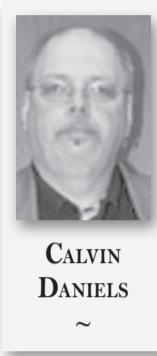
to ensure what they are buying is affordable — a situation made keener as living costs, such as property taxes, water bills, food costs, etc., rise far faster than wage increases to keep pace.

For others, though, they want as much information as possible on labels.

Ingredients, of course, are rather crucial.

We know, for example, that nut allergies can be quite severe for some, so being able to check a label to be sure there are no nuts is a must.

But what about broader information, from



CALVIN
DANIELS

country of origin to whether the food is organic, produced ethically, is genetically modified, or whether the meat is lab grown?

On the surface, it makes some sense to just say yes to all of the above, with some no doubt wanting to add

more. But such broad labelling soon raises some rather serious questions.

For example, what exactly constitutes 'ethically produced'.

Through the years, definitions of organic have not all been in lockstep. And even if one settles on a single definition, does it mean anything besides an assumption of peace of mind?

If we feel the rules and regulations of our food system ensure safe food, things like organic and GMO are simply farm operation choices at one end and consumer choices at the other.

One could make the same argument about lab grown foods too, since the nutritional aspect of food is on labels already.

Of course, it is also rather obvious that some consumers fear how crops are grown with crop protection products, so they actively seek out alternatives. This means an organic label is a marketing tool.

And, given the trade upheavals caused by tariffs recently, many are more adamant about buying Canadian. So again, country of origin labels are a marketing tool.

But country of origin isn't always so clear. For instance, what would be the country of origin for beef from a calf that is born in Canada, fed in the U.S., then sold to a third country where the beef is made into sausage and then shipped back to be sold in Canadian stores?

One fears that too many labels might do little more than confuse, with limited consumer benefit.

Finding that middle ground of needed information, without "consumer overload," will increasingly be a more difficult juggling act.

Minutes of a Shell Lake Council meeting

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

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Council held in Council Chambers on Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2025 commencing at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Wendy Penner, Councillors Greg Ardagh, Al Sulymka, and Wayne Reddekopp, Administrator Tara Bueckert, and Foreman Jim Mayo.

Absent: Councillor Louise Fisher.

The meeting was called to order at 6:20 p.m. by Mayor Penner.

Reddekopp: That the agenda for this meeting be amended by adding the following items under 7. Delegation and 9. Correspondence: 7.1 Ryan and Mandy Sarrazin @ 6:45 p.m. 9.6 Manoj Kurup 9.7 Rosemarie Falk, M.P. Carried

Sulymka: That the minutes of the regular council meeting of Oct. 21 be adopted. Carried

Ardagh: That the minutes of the special council meeting of Nov. 3 be adopted. Carried

Sulymka: That the Village of Shell Lake refunds KF the business license of \$50. Carried

Sulymka: That the Village of Shell Lake Council hires Casa Boldt Consulting to update the Village's Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw for a cost of \$46,050. Carried

Delegation: 6:30 p.m. to 6:42 p.m.: Ryan and Mandy Sarrazin.

Reddekopp: That we pay for three sewer pump outs for Darrel Krekewich when the sewer line was frozen. Carried

Reddekopp: That the bank reconciliation for the month of October be accepted as presented. Carried

Sulymka: That we look at cleaning up some of the Term Deposit Sewer accounts, that we combine them into two (2) Term Deposit Accounts. Carried

Ardagh: That the Financial Report

for the month of October be accepted as presented. Carried

Reddekopp: That the list of accounts totalling \$29,461.51, cheques numbered 372 to 390, EFT payments and online payments numbered 2025229 to 2025245, be approved. Carried

Sulymka: That the Village of Shell Lake Council has reviewed the results of recent environmental testing and determined that the truck-hauled lagoon facility does not meet the standards required under the acute lethality test and therefore, as of April 30, 2026, we cannot continue accepting the hauled sewage from the surrounding area and that the hauled sewage service will be limited to the Village of Shell Lake and the Memorial Lake Regional Park until further notice. Carried

Reddekopp: That the administrator sends a letter to Department of Highways, asking them to back off a bit on the salt coming into town. Carried

Ardagh: That the Village of Shell Lake does an agreement with R. Zawada for the purchase of buying back Lot 2 Block 11 Plan #102386112 at a cost of \$28,000. Carried

Sulymka: That the verbal Maintenance, Administrator, Councillors, Mayor and Fire Chief reports be filed as presented. Carried

Ardagh: That the verbal Water/Sewer reports be filed as presented. Carried

Ardagh: That the Village of Shell Lake Council accepts the donation of a motion Christmas light from the Sip N Shop to put in front of the big tree by the park on the end of Main Street. Carried

Reddekopp: That the list of correspondence, having been read, now be filed. Carried

Sulymka: That the administrator contacts the Bylaw Officer about the returned registered letter for CE.

Carried

Sulymka: That the administrator sends a registered letter to VD that the Lot 2 Block 10 Plan #102049365 will be returned back to the Village of Shell Lake for not meeting the requirements for not building within the three (3) years. Carried

Sulymka: That we switch auditors and go with Jensen Stromberg for

the 2025 Audit. Carried

Reddekopp: That we hire Melissa Lukan to help with year-end. Carried

Reddekopp: That this meeting be adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

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**JUNIOR
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Over the past four decades, the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association, in partnership with SaskPower and the Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, has recognized the youth of Saskatchewan through the Junior Citizen of the Year Award.

These prestigious awards are given to youths who:

- Have a positive lifestyle
- Volunteer within their community and school
- Has overcome a personal life challenge (physical, emotional or environmental)
- Have a strong sense of caring and responsibility
- Are between the ages of 8 and 18

This year, four deserving youths will receive a \$3,000 bursary, provided by SaskPower, to use towards their post-secondary education.

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**JUNIOR CITIZEN OF THE
YEAR STEM AWARD**

Introduced in 2025. The Junior Citizen of the Year STEM Award will recognize a Saskatchewan youth who contains all the same qualities of a Junior Citizen of the Year but has an aptitude for science, technology, engineering, or mathematics. This award is eligible for all students, including but not limited to, young women, and underrepresented communities.

This year, one deserving youth will receive a \$3,000 bursary, provided by Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan, to use towards their post-secondary education.

Building a Strong Saskatchewan through the Crown Sector

Visit www.swna.com for further information and nomination forms
Nominations close March 31, 2026

Spiritwood Library activity highlights

By HEATHER GATZKE
Branch Librarian

The Spiritwood Public Library was pleased to host Author Laurie Lynn Muirhead on Friday, Dec. 12, to share her latest published work.

Laurie has previously published two other works, *Bone Sense* – a collection of poetry – as well as *Lullaby Lilly* – a children's book.

This time she was sharing her new collection of poetry called *Coyote Snow*. Laurie would give a brief background story of the poem, explaining her thoughts and feelings and what inspired her to create her poem, then reading it aloud.



Megan Allard was the winner of December's Dessert of the Month grand prize.

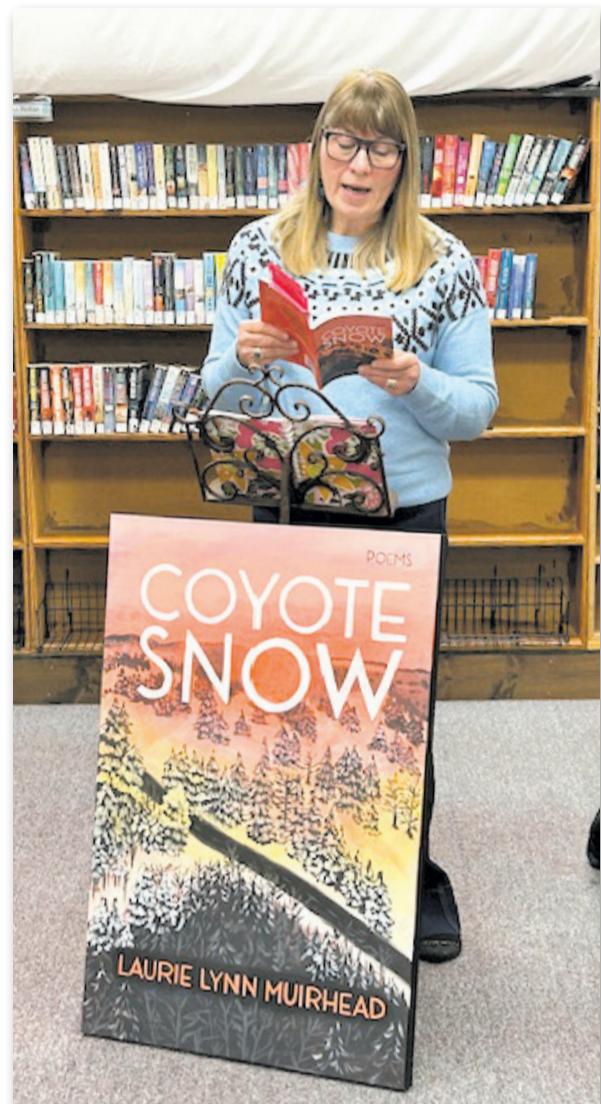
You could easily imagine it as she read. Her poetry is based on the land and the connections of humans with animals in the cycles of nature.

The Spiritwood Public Library congratulates the winner of the winter raffle basket, Shirley Dauvin. It was jam packed with all kinds of goodies from puzzles to books to snacks and so much more.

The lucky grand prize winner of the Spiritwood Library's Dessert of the Month for December was Megan Allard. Megan received eight different kinds of desserts made by the Board members. The Dessert of the Month fundraiser helps the library put on programs throughout the year.



Shirley Dauvin was the winner of the library's winter raffle basket.



Author and poet Laurie Lynn Muirhead reads from her latest published work, *Coyote Snow*.

A new year in your landscape

By PATRICIA HANBIDGE
Orchid Horticulture

This past year flew by! It is hard to believe that we are once again bringing in a brand new year. How was the last year and what might the new year bring? Have you taken the time in your life to "stop and smell the roses" and enjoy the really important parts of life? What if we lived as our grandparents or great grandparents and spent our days growing food and living a simpler life. We would be closer to our roots and in fact may likely be living a happier life.

If you are a gardener in a colder climate that allows you to garden inside, perhaps you are closer to "living the dream" as you are definitely more immersed in horticulture. The wonder of a flower opening, a seed sprouting or dead looking twigs miraculously sprouting green leaves is just a daily occurrence if you surround yourself with growing. But just think, what if everyone had this opportunity to live with the glory of growing plants? Would we cure world hunger? Could we achieve world-wide harmony?

I am personally one of the growing trend of people wishing to grow their own food and to make our world a more sustainable place to live. The changes we have seen in our climate are foretelling of future distress, destruction and death. If you are reading this article, then this is your call to take action. It doesn't matter how small your effort is - it will make a difference. Collectively, we can alter

the path that is leading the world as we know it to destruction.

It is always a good idea to grow food to share with those who are less fortunate. Just prior to Christmas,

I harvested large amounts of fancy leaf lettuce and fresh herbs. I know that this valuable harvest brought smiles to many faces. I survive the winter season by growing intensively

inside. Think about the space around you. If you have an area that is not doing anything but growing weeds, then why not change the landscape and grow food in that area? It is amazing how a very small bit of land can harvest a lot of food. For example, on a boulevard a few years ago, a group of us harvested around 1000 pounds of food off of this small little area. We grew corn, potatoes and onions, enjoyed a corn roast and donated the rest of the produce to The Friendship Inn. They graciously accepted our gift and many people who are less fortunate enjoyed a number of very good and nutritious meals as a result of our selfless labours.

While the weather is less hospitable, it allows us more time to pause and reflect about what we wish to change in the garden as spring approaches. Think about trying to grow at least a little bit of the food that you consume. Think about the things that were not working well so you can now begin planning on a better outcome. Most people want a landscape that is beautiful, requires only a small amount of maintenance and of course does not require endless amounts of money while providing food for your table! If your landscape did not fulfill all your dreams, then right now is the time to start to make changes.

All the best to you and yours...

Hanbridge is the Lead Horticulturist with Orchid Horticulture. Find us at www.orchidhort.com; by email at growyourfuture@gmail.com on [facebook @orchidhort](https://www.facebook.com/orchidhort) and on [instagram at #orchidhort](https://www.instagram.com/orchidhort).



Spiritwood Senior Centre happenings

By ARMAND SMITH
Spiritwood Seniors

The Senior Center is busy every week with activities. Every Wednesday, the seniors enjoy bingo. Friday afternoons we play cribbage. Anywhere from 4-6 tables play every afternoon. We enjoy the Leoville and Shell Lake seniors that come & take part in our card games.

Following bingo on Nov. 19, birthdays and anniversaries were celebrated for October and November. Leo and Dot Gaboury celebrated their 69th anniversary in November. Birthday celebrants were John Del Ferrai, Armand

Smith, Paul Durette, Roberta Wasden, and Helen Mack. All enjoyed chocolate cake and ice cream.

On Dec. 16, 70 seniors enjoyed our Christmas supper. The Leoville Junior Mennonite Choir entertained guests before the supper. The three-part harmony of the choir singing "O Holy Night" and "Silent Night," amongst others, was enjoyed by all. Guests were served a beautiful supper of roast turkey, mashed potatoes, three salads, stuffing, and three trifles for dessert.

Following supper there were many door prizes won by those in attendance. It was a very nice evening to cap the Christmas season.



The Leoville Junior Mennonite Choir provided entertainment at the Christmas supper on Dec. 16.

SGI applies for two-year rate increase

By SGI
Submitted

SGI is applying for its first rate increase since 2014 and has submitted a two-year proposal to the Saskatchewan Rate Review Panel (SRRP).

The two-year proposal includes rate increases of 3.75% in June 2026 and 2027. The June 2026 increase will be implemented on an interim basis but will still be subject to the public rate review process.

One of SGI's key operating philosophies is to keep rates as low as possible. Over the last 20 years, the Saskatchewan Consumer Price Index has increased by 57.7%, while the Auto Fund's rates, including capital amounts, increased by only 5.0%.

Rate increases would be capped to reduce the impact on vehicle owners. Motorcycles and urban taxis will be excluded from year one of the rate program while SGI consults with these groups to address industry-specific concerns.

Saskatchewan drivers benefit from some of the lowest auto insurance rates in Canada, and this would continue to hold true even with the proposed rate increases. SGI is committed to maintaining this value for Saskatchewan drivers into the future.

If SGI receives approval for the two increases with rate

rebalancing, the 2026 rate change would mean:

- Rate increases for about 98% of Saskatchewan vehicles with an annual average increase of \$38,
- Rate decreases for about 1% of Saskatchewan vehicles with an average annual reduction of \$8 and,
- No rate change for the remaining vehicles.

Rate rebalancing considers the number of claims and average cost of claims, including damage, injury and liability costs, for each class of vehicle. This means each customer's rate change would depend on the type of vehicle they own.

"Inflation and advanced technology in newer vehicles have caused a sharp rise in

the cost of vehicle repairs, and the Auto Fund is no longer taking in enough revenue to cover the cost of claims," said Penny McCune, President and CEO of SGI. "The Saskatchewan Auto Fund operates on a break-even basis over time, but premiums haven't been enough to cover costs in recent years."

The average cost for vehicle damage claims has increased 25% from \$4,880 per claim in 2019-20 to \$6,101 per claim in 2024-25.

The Rate Stabilization Reserve has allowed SGI to keep rates stable as claim costs have risen, but that's not a long-term solution.

"SGI hasn't had a general rate increase in over 10 years.



Leo and Dot Gaboury celebrated their 69th anniversary with their fellow Spiritwood seniors in November.



Birthday celebrants for October and November. Back row, left to right: John Del Ferrai, Armand Smith, and Paul Durette. Front row: Roberta Wasden and Helen Mack.

With the sharp jump in auto damage costs, it's not possible to keep rates flat," McCune said. "Recognizing the financial pressures Saskatchewan residents are also facing, SGI is proposing two modest increases over two years."

Rate changes would take effect in June 2026 (interim) and 2027. Proposed rates for all vehicles can be found on SGI's website at <https://sgi.sk.ca/2026-rates>.

The rate proposal will be available on the SRRP's website at www.saskratereview.ca. Comments on the rate proposal can be provided to the SRRP through its website or Facebook account, by calling toll-free 1-877-368-7075 or emailing feedback@saskratereview.ca.

New year brings income tax cut

By MINISTRY OF FINANCE
Submitted

As of the start of 2026, the second step of the provincial government's four-year income tax reduction plan coupled with indexation means a family of four in Saskatchewan will pay no provincial income tax on their first \$65,000 of income in 2026. That's the highest tax-free income tax threshold in Canada.

"We want to ensure Saskatchewan remains the most affordable place to live in Canada," Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance Jim Reiter said. "That is why our government is raising the personal,

spousal and child tax exemptions, as well as the seniors' supplement, by \$500 each year over four years."

Tax credits aimed at helping with affordability are also increasing, including the Low Income Tax Credit, the Disability Tax Credit and supplement, the Caregiver Tax Credit, Personal Care Home Benefit, Active Families Benefit, First-Time Homebuyers Tax Credit and the Graduate Retention Program.

To protect taxpayers from automatic increases caused by inflation, the Government of Saskatchewan is once again indexing personal income tax to the national rate of inflation. This preserves

the real value of the amount all taxpayers can earn without paying tax, particularly benefiting those on fixed incomes.

"We recognize that rising costs are challenging, and we remain committed to providing affordability relief for residents," Reiter said. "Annual indexation, combined with the income tax measures in this year's budget, help to keep Saskatchewan among the most affordable places to live in Canada."

The level of indexation in 2026 will be 2.0 per cent, which will provide Saskatchewan residents \$42 million in tax savings in the coming year that would have occurred as a result of inflation.

Sask. NDP highlights government waste

By SASK NDP
Submitted

As 2025 drew to a close and the province racked up another \$3.7 billion in debt, the Saskatchewan NDP issued a list of the top 10 examples of Sask. Party waste and mismanagement over the past year.

According to the Fraser Institute, Moe is Saskatchewan's highest spending premier since 1965, delivering deficit after deficit and doubling the province's debt to a record \$40 billion.

"Scott Moe has turned waste into an art form," said Aleana Young, NDP Shadow Minister for Jobs & Economy. "Another \$3.7 billion piled onto the debt, millions

flushed away on failed projects, and not a single Saskatchewan family better off for it."

Number 10: Moe paid a European company \$300,000 to write his Facebook posts, apparently because no one in Saskatchewan is capable. While young, qualified people desperately look for work, this premier has no problem giving a lucrative contract to *Emplifi* in the Czech Republic.

Number 9: Moe allowed two thousand social housing units to sit empty, resulting in \$10 million in lost revenue and costing \$9 million in taxes, utilities, and administration expenses.

Number 8: While those units sat empty, the Sask.

Party spent \$1.5 million to house homeless people in hotels — \$613,570 at the Country Inn and Suites Saskatoon and \$960,662 at the Travelodge Suites Regina Eastgate.

Number 7: Moe's Social Services Minister paid a deplorable bug-infested Regina motel more than 60 percent above its advertised rate to house social services clients, despite warnings from his Ministry officials not to use the hotel.

Number 6: Moe's GTH Minister started a bidding war with the City of Regina for a new Costco, costing Regina taxpayers \$6.8 million.

Number 5: Moe's Health Minister defended sending hundreds of women to Cal-

gary for mammograms at ten times the cost of providing the service here in our public system.

Number 4: That same Minister oversaw the doubling of costs for two major government computer systems — \$325 million over budget. AIMS is \$195 million over-budget and still not working, while EBMPS is \$130 million over-budget.

Number 3: Moe allegedly spent \$100 million more than necessary on four fire-fighting planes.

Number 2: Moe's Crowns Minister drove SaskPower into nearly \$300 million in losses and over \$800 million in unbudgeted debt, making a SaskPower rate hike all but certain.

Number 1: Premier Scott Moe handed out pay raises to 13 more undeserving Sask. Party MLAs while Saskatchewan people borrow money to buy food and pay rent this Christmas.

"At a time when people are skipping meals and cutting back on essentials, Scott Moe's answer is pay raises for Sask. Party MLAs who created this mess. It's insulting," said Young. "Giving yourself a raise while families can't afford Christmas isn't leadership — it's arrogance."

"Saskatchewan people deserve a brighter future and a government that respects their money and puts it to work for them — not one that burns it and calls it leadership."

Minutes of an RM of Blaine Lake meeting

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

The Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Council of the Rural Municipality of Blaine Lake #434 which was held in the RM Municipal Office, on Tuesday, Nov. 18.

Present at the meeting were the following Council Members and Administration: Reeve Glenn Lamontagne, Division 1 — Michael Chudskov, Division 2 — Lee Dolezal, Division 3 — Courtney Swystun, Division 4 — Alan Lavoie, Division 5 — John Priestley, Division 6 — Lionel Casavant, Administrator Linda Klimm, and Assistant Administrator — Alan Tanchak.

The meeting was called to order by Reeve Glenn Lamontagne at 9 a.m.

Chudskov: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 approves the agenda for the Regular Meeting of Council held on Nov. 18. Carried

Lavoie: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 approves the Oct. 21 Regular Meeting minutes as presented. Carried

Swystun: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 approves the Oct. 30 Special Meeting minutes as presented. Carried

Chudskov: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 approves the Nov. 3 Special Meeting minutes as presented. Carried

Dolezal: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 accept the October 2025 Statement of Financial Activities, Income Statement, Budgetary Control, Chequing Account Statement and Bank Reconciliation as presented. Carried

Lavoie: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 approves the List of Accounts for Approval for November 2025, including cheques #7584 to #7635 with the total payable amount being \$232,578.88. Carried

Dolezal: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 approves the Additional Accounts for payment as presented by Administration in the amount of \$4,077.35. Carried

Priestley: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 approves the presented Council indemnity totalling \$2,488.34. Carried

Mark Curry presented his lead hand re-

port from 9:17 a.m. to 9:36 a.m.

Swystun: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 appoint Nor-Sask Board Services as the board of revision for the 2026 taxation year. Carried

Dolezal: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 appoint Elizabeth Torrents Professional Corporation to complete the 2025 audit of the Blaine Lake Fire Board books. Carried

Priestley: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 follow the winter weight policy of the Ministry of Highways for the 2025-2026 winter season. Carried

Councillor Courtney Swystun declared a Conflict of Interest and left Council Chambers at 9:46 a.m.

Dolezal: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 acknowledge the Certificate of Approval received from Community Planning with respect to File #SUBD-005056-2025 at SW 18-43-06 W3. Carried

Councillor Courtney Swystun returned to Council Chambers at 9:47 a.m.

Lamontagne: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 approve the Munisoft 2026 EMA Account Billing Review as presented by the Administrator. Carried

Priestley: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 direct Administration to send a letter to North Central Transportation Planning Committee (NCTPC) to address the poor road conditions with respect to Highway 40. Carried

Dolezal: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 acknowledge the Certificate of Confirmation for the 2025 assessment roll received from SAMA. Carried

Dolezal: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 acknowledge the 2026 property review fee increase notification from SAMA to \$50 per property effective Jan. 1. Carried

Lavoie: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 approve renewal of SARM Liability Self-Insurance Plan (LSIP) coverage of \$3 million for 2026. Carried

Lavoie: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 approve renewal of SARM Excess Liability of \$5 million and \$2 million of errors and omissions coverage for 2026. Carried

Swystun: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 approve SARM Proper-

ty Self-Insurance Program (PSIP) renewal per PSIP Schedule presented by Administration. Carried

Lamontagne: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 break for recess from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. to hold public hearings to discuss leases. Carried

Lamontagne: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 reconvene at 10:38 a.m. Carried

Swystun: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 move in camera to discuss long range planning compliant with s. 120(2)(b) of The Municipalities Act, the time being 10:42 a.m. Carried

Priestley: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 move out of camera, the time being 11:02 a.m. Carried

Chudskov: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 authorizes payment to Blaine Lake Community Association of a donation for \$7,000. Carried

Lavoie: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 authorizes payment to 102051721 Sask Ltd. for invoice #945937 in the amount of \$7,236.36. Carried

Councillor Alan Lavoie declared a Conflict of Interest and left Council Chambers at 11:18 a.m.

Chudskov: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 authorize payment to Neil Lavoie for 760 cubic yards of clay at \$2 per yard, or \$1,520. Carried

Councillor Alan Lavoie returned to Council Chambers at 11:20 a.m.

Priestley: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 direct Administration to pay ratepayer refunds of \$1,010.40 for tax over payments per the list prepared by Administration. Carried

Priestley: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 authorize a payment to the Town of Blaine Lake for funds received from a town ratepayer in error for \$698.98. Carried

Swystun: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 hire M.R. App & Web Development Studio at a cost of \$85/hour for website maintenance. Carried

Swystun: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 authorize payment of \$500 to the Town of Blaine Lake for fireworks with respect to the 3rd Hometown Christmas on Dec. 5. Carried

Dolezal: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 direct Administration to

purchase Christmas hams for employees. Carried

Chudskov: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 direct Administration to purchase a \$250 gift card for Autumn Parchewski for her outstanding employee service. Carried

Lamontagne: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 accepts the road maintenance agreement for Venture Construction Inc. as prepared by Administration, and that the Reeve and the Administrator be authorized to sign the agreement on behalf of the municipality. Carried

Swystun: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 make a Clearing the Path (CTP) Incremental Maintenance Statutory Declaration for the 2025 tax year for CTP Corridor (Grid #781) of 12.14 kilometers for annual grant funding of \$18,210, and that the Reeve and the Administrator be authorized to submit this declaration on behalf of the municipality. Carried

Chudskov: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 direct Administration to purchase pest control supplies. Carried

Lamontagne: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 direct Administration to renew SARM Benefits at Level 5 coverage for employees for 2026. Carried

Lamontagne: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 direct Administration to renew SARM Benefits for group coverage for elected officials at \$40,000. Carried

Dolezal: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 authorize payment to MGB Trucking Ltd. for invoice #274746 for culvert cleaning in the amount of \$1,221. Carried

Lavoie: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 hire Gerald Fehr to do mulching within the RM as per the completed maps submitted by Councillors. Carried

Swystun: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 accept the public disclosure statements submitted by the Councillors. Carried

Lamontagne: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 apply for funding for the Shell Lake Grid to the Canada Community-Building Fund. Carried

Lavoie: That the Council of the RM of Blaine Lake #434 adjourn, the time being 12:20 p.m.

Looking back at the best from 2025: Part 2

The best of 2025's notes, quotes and anecdotes (Part 2 — July through December):

• Globe and Mail columnist Cathal Kelly, on the lengthy contract awarded defenceman Morgan Rielly 'that lasts until he's about 80': "Toronto should rehire Kyle Dubas so they can fire him again for agreeing to that."

• Comedy writer Alex Kaseberg: "Joey Chestnut once again won the 4th of July hot dog eating contest, eating just over 70 hot dogs in six hours. The real loser in this? Joey Chestnut's plumber."

• Another one from Kaseberg: "Chicago native Pope Leo wore a White Sox hat. Or as Cubs fans call it: the seventh sign of the apocalypse."

• Mike Bianchi of the Orlando Sentinel: "By the way, can you imagine a negotiating session between Urban Meyer and a sports agent? You'd need a referee, a priest, a federal investigator and a tenuus shot."

• Headline at theonion.com: "White Sox Fans Asked To Remove Polish Sausage From Mouths During National Anthem"

• Golf writer Joel Beall, after Day 1 of the Open Championship: "Would be cool to see Phil contend this weekend, if only for the chance he uses the 'Champion Golfer of the Year' speech as a plea to 'release the (Epstein) files."

• Jack Finarelli at sports curmudgeon.

com: "Braves' bullpen had a 'Bummer' (Aaron) and a 'Blewett' (Scott) at the ready. Not exactly a great vibe."

• RJ Currie of sportsdeke.com: "When James Harden of the Clippers finally quits basketball, he might be the first retiree to spend less time travelling."

• Vancouver comedy guy Torben Rolfsen: "Water on Mars has been 100 per cent confirmed, with year-round ice. Get ready for Bettman to start sniffing round."

• Another fark.com headline after the Mets acquired lefthanded pitcher Gregory Soto from Baltimore: "Mets decide two Sotos are better than Juan."

• The late Bob Uecker, Mr. Baseball: "The biggest thrill a ballplayer can have is when your son takes after you. That happened when my Bobby was in his championship Little League game. He really showed me something. Struck out three times. Made an error that lost the game. Parents were throwing things at our ear and swearing at us as we drove off. Gosh, I was proud."

• 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."



BRUCE
PENTON

• Mike Bianchi of the Orlando Sentinel, on the 'massive mess' in U.S. college football: "Fixing it is like trying to stop a tornado with a 'no trespassing' sign."

• Former MLB pitcher Jim Boutin: "Baseball players are smarter than football players. How often do you see a baseball team penalized for too many men on the field?"

• Another one from fark.com: "SF Giants manager Bob Melvin talks about how the team can pull out of its current mess. Surprisingly absent: Firing Bob Melvin."

• Another one from RJ Currie: "Elks QB Tre Ford was benched for Cody Fajardo after a week-six loss when he completed only four of 12 attempts for 34 yards with no touchdowns. I have a higher rate of passing kidney stones."

• Norman Chad again: "The New Orleans announced Spencer Rattler as their starting quarterback. Thoughts and prayers."

• Steve Simmons of the Toronto Sun: "Give Tyson Barrie credit for a sense of humour on his retirement an-

nouncement. He said his decision was made 'in tandem with the 32 NHL teams.'"

• Another one from Rolfsen: "The Blue Jays sold a record 92,221 hot dogs at their recent Loonie Dog night. Thankfully, nobody choked, other than Jeff Hoffman."

• Rolfsen again, after Bill Belichick's North Carolina team lost 48-14 in its opening game: "Belichick is about one week away from appointing his girlfriend as defensive co-ordinator."

• Another fark.com headline: "Vikings quarterback JJ McCarthy out 2-4 weeks due to paucity of talent."

• Michael Rosenberg of SI.com after the U.S. fell far behind Europe on Saturday in the Ryder Cup: "I can think of some ways for the U.S. to win this, but they all involve food poisoning."

• From fark.com: "The NBA takes a brief pause from its DraftKings and FanDuel sponsorship to lament the fact that it had to fire three more players for betting on their own games."

• Rolfsen again: "People are asking if (Blue Jays' reliever) Jeff Hoffman has earned John Schneider's trust in October? Are you kidding?"

• Norman Chad again: "I wouldn't trust him taking my kids out trick or treating."

• Norman Chad again: "The Falcons lost 30-0 to the Panthers last week. Not scoring against the Panthers is like Ryan Gosling not scoring in a college bar."

• Another one from

Norman Chad on Twitter: "I hate to pick on Joe Flacco, but he's 57 years old, has Metamucil for breakfast and has the mobility of a fire hydrant."

• Headline at theonion.com: "Victor Wembanyama Reports To Training Camp Having Added 25 Pounds Of Hair"

• Cathal Kelly, on Mariners' fans booing Blue Jays' George Springer: "They hate him because he was a mezzo-soprano in the Houston Astros' garbage-can choir."

• Another one from Torben Rolfsen:

"There's talk of a third 'Goon' movie. The producers said they'd need a budget of about \$20 million. Connor McDavid said he could do it for \$12.5 million."

• A groaner from RJ Currie: "I hear police in Canada doubled radar patrols from Thanksgiving Monday to Thursday. No surprise — many folks exceeded the feed limit."

• Kelly again, on Seattle's poor post-season baseball record: "The Mariners are the Leafs on grass."

• Eize Basa, on Bluesky: "Hockey would be better if the players had to write a short essay about what they did wrong before they could leave the penalty box."

• Norman Chad again: "The Canadiens' Brendan Gallagher, with an on-ice chirp to Florida's Brad Marchand: "Oh, my God, your nose is even bigger in person than it is on TV."

• Columnist Norman Chad, on X, on cries that gambling should be banned. "That's like legislating that the sun could not rise. Trust me, the sun will still rise."

• Columnist Norman Chad on X: "True story: I was watching Trey Yesavage as an 18-year-old freshman at East Carolina in 2022. He had a 4.50 ERA and a 1.731 WHIP, with 13 wild pitches and 15 walks in 26 innings. I told my bar buddy, 'He's working at Best Buy by year's end.' So once in a while I'm wrong."

• Headline at fark.com: "Giannis Antetokounmpo walks from midcourse to the rim on one dribble, refs are like 'hey, that's cool.'"

• Super 70s Sports back when O.J. Simpson was a football broadcaster: "Let's go down to the sideline for a report from O.J. who appears to be wearing his murder gloves now so everybody be careful down there."

• Torben Rolfsen again: "I'm not sure about the NHL's Frozen Frenzy (when all 32 teams played on the same night). It sounds like margarita night at an all-inclusive resort in Cancun."

• Greg Cote of the Miami Herald: "Tom Brady cloned his dog: Is the Super Bowl legend-turned-Raiders part owner and mediocre broadcaster quirky, eccentric or just plain weird?"

Care to comment?
Email brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca

U18 Elks begin 2026 with tough loss

By JORDAN TWISS
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The U18 AA Parkland Elks eased into the new year with a single game over the weekend, travelling to Martensville to face off against the Martensville Marauders on Sunday, Jan. 4.

After a shaky first half of the 2025-2026 season, the Elks were hoping to begin 2026 on a positive note. And after a goalless first period, they got off on the right foot by drawing

first blood on a goal from Boston Gagnon, assisted by Logan Fisher.

Though the Marauders struck back just 50 seconds later, with Mason Schierling scoring on an assist from Reid Wotherspoon, the Elks promptly reclaimed the lead on an unassisted goal from Davin Hart. But the Marauders were able to tie it up again late in the second period thanks to Ryer Hagel. Lucas Schell earned the lone assist on the goal.

Taking a 2-2 tie into the third

period, both teams had their chances to score the deciding goal. In the end, it was the Marauders who had the last laugh, taking a 3-2 lead on an unassisted goal by Schierling. Despite their best efforts, the Elks were unable to get on the board again and took the loss.

The Elks now sit at 3-14-0-1 on the season. This Saturday, the team will host the North West Stars at the Richardson Pioneer Recreation Centre. Puck drop for the game is 8 p.m.

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**Shellbrook Chronicle
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OBITUARIES

~
Leslie (Les) Arthur Schmalz

Leslie (Les) Arthur Schmalz
July 29, 1942 – Shellbrook, Saskatchewan
December 12, 2025 – Calgary, Alberta

Leslie “Les” Schmalz of Calgary, AB, passed away on Friday, December 12, 2025, at the age of 83 years.

Les was born on July 29, 1942, in Shellbrook, SK. He was predeceased by his beloved wife Anne in 2021 and will be greatly missed by his son Kevin (Colleen) Schmalz, and daughter

Andrea (Gil) Whisner. He leaves behind his grandchildren, Victoria (Landen) Klein, Eden Schmalz, Keil Schmalz, and Reid Schmalz.

He will also be remembered by his brother Alan Schmalz, sisters, Rita Kneller and Arlene (Don McIver) Schmalz; as well as many nieces, nephews, and friends.

Les was predeceased by his parents, Arthur and Charlotte Schmalz.

Les grew up on a farm outside of Shellbrook, which fostered his strong work ethic and love of horses. He served in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for 25 years, and his passion for horsemanship enabled him to be

selected for the RCMP Musical Ride directly after graduating from their recruit training academy. While working for the RCMP, he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science

from the University of Manitoba, as well as his private pilot’s license. Les then joined the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and later created and operated a private investigation company, L.A. Schmalz and Associates, with Anne.

Les was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather. He had a passion for spending time with his children and grandchildren and loved driving his RV on holidays with Anne. He enjoyed trail riding on horseback, camping, storytelling, and spending time with family and friends.

A Celebration of Les’s Life will be announced once finalized.

*“Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there; I do not sleep.”*

*“I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glints on snow,*

I am the sunlight on ripened grain,

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning’s hush

I am the swift uplifting rush

Of quiet birds in circled flight.

I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry,

I am not there; I did not die.”

Les will be remembered for his love for life and his ability to bring a smile to everyone’s face. He will be greatly missed, but his memory will live on in the hearts of those who knew and loved him.

If friends so desire, memorial tributes may be made in Les’s memory directly to a charity of your choice.

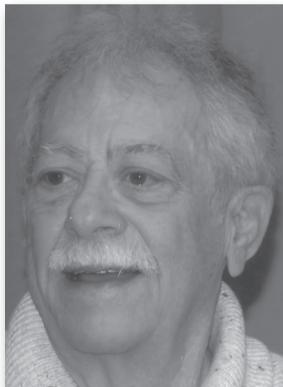
Condolences, memories, and photos may be shared and viewed with Les’ family here: <https://www.mhfh.com>.

[com/obituaries/Leslie-Arthur-Schmalz?obId=46728740](http://www.shellbrookchronicle.com/obituaries/Leslie-Arthur-Schmalz?obId=46728740).

In living memory of Les Schmalz, a tree will be planted in the Ann & Sandy Cross Conser-

vation Area by McInnis & Holloway Funeral Homes, Fish Creek, 14441 Bannister Road SE, Calgary, AB T2X 3J3, Telephone: 403-256-9575.

James Henri Van Der Haegen



man Catholic Church, Shellbrook, SK. In lieu of tributes, donations may be made in memory of James to the Prince Albert Food Bank (64 11 St E, Prince Albert, SK S6V 0Z9 or <https://pafoodbank.ca/>). Family and friends wishing to send online condolences are welcome to visit www.beaulacfuneralhome.com. Arrangements have been entrusted to the care of Beau “Lac” Funeral Home and Crematorium, Tammy Smart Funeral Director, Shellbrook, SK 306-747-2828.

James Henri Van Der Haegen passed away on Saturday, December 20, 2025, in Prince Albert, SK. Memorial Mass will be held at 11:00AM on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at St. Agatha’s Ro-

GOOD NEWS

~
THROUGH A CHILD’S EYES

By DAVE BODVARSON
Submitted

In 2006, we moved to north central Saskatchewan, more specifically Shellbrook.

We were able to secure a one bedroom apartment, which we were grateful for. I recall telling the owner at the time we would be there for some 6 months or so. We intended to eventually buy our own place. Well, we lived in the apartment for some 8 years.

Eventually with the Good Lord’s help and help from others we developed an acreage very close to Shell-

brook.

Marlene and I are blessed with seven grandchildren.

One day, one of our granddaughters came for a visit in Shellbrook. She was about three years old at the time (by the way, she is now in her second year of university).

I’ll never forget what she said to me as she stood outside in front that six-apartment building: “Grandpa big house.”

I guess seeing through her eyes we lived in a big house!

That got me thinking about what do young eyes see and what do they teach

us?

1. Well, not to give up. I read recently “A child learns to walk and falls down 50 times. He never thinks to himself, “maybe this isn’t for me.”

2. To live carefree.

It has been said, “A child can teach an adult three things: To be happy for no reason, to always be curious, and to fight tirelessly for something.”

3. To never stop learning.

A preacher told of receiving a letter that was signed “Your, eighty-three years old and still growing.”

I have always been inspired by Caleb. Caleb’s big challenge in life came

when he was 85 years old. No longer a young man, yet he tells Joshua “Give me this mountain.” (Joshua 14:12)

It has been pointed out, “This old man, who should have been pulling on his slippers, was talking of binding on shoes of iron so that he could ascend the mountain and rout out the giants before whom the Timorous Ten had quailed.”

4. To show emotion

Children love to express their feelings, knowing that it is important. A good reminder to us adults.

May see you see life through the eyes of a child.

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St. John's - Shellbrook
Sunday School,
Worship Sunday, 11 a.m.
(in-person and online
via Facebook live)
Rev. Emmanuel Aristide

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Rev. Jordan Clark
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11 a.m. - Worship
Pastor Lyndon Petten
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Leask Gospel Tabernacle
Sunday 11 a.m.
Pastor Josh
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at Anglican Church
Rev. Dave Whalley
306-747-2804

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St. Andrew's - Shellbrook
Sunday Service - 11 am MP
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11 a.m. in Shellbrook
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Rev. Stewart Folster

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Big River - Sacred Heart
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Whitefish
Sun., 2:30 p.m. - Mass.
Victoire
Sat., 7:30 p.m. - Mass.
Fr. Mariusz Zajac
St. Agatha's - Shellbrook
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UNITED / ANGLICAN

Worship Services
Glaslyn
Time is on the sign

Rev. Kun Kim
Rev. Don Skinner

CATHOLIC

SATURDAY

Medstead - 6:00 p.m.

Leoville - 9:30 a.m.

Spiritwood - 11:15 a.m.

Shell Lake - 2:00 p.m.

Everyone Welcome

Fr. Phinh Do

COWBOY CHURCH

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

Pastor Rick Martin

FIELDS OF HOPE

(HOFFNUNGSFELDER)

MENNOMITE CHURCH

Glenbush

11:00 am Worship

BETHEL

Medstead

2nd Sunday, 10 am -

Worship

Pastor David Jensen

4th Sunday, 10 am - Worship

Pastor David Jensen

MENNOMITE 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

www.shellbrookchronicle.com

www.spiritwoodherald.com

blanket classifieds

The SWNA and its Member Newspapers cooperatively deliver your message to more than half a million readers every week.

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Make mealtime family learning time.

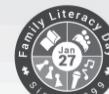


Follow recipes, make shopping lists, and share stories at the dinner table.

Preparing for mealtime is a fun (and tasty) way for families to learn together!



Find fun family activities at: FamilyLiteracyDay.ca



ABC
LifeLiteracyCanada

The Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald

are proud to serve as your trusted local newspaper and advertiser!

Let your community know about the services you offer!

2 x 2 (Bus. Card Size)	\$69.00
2 x 4	\$138.00
1/8 Page	\$189.75
1/4 Page	\$350.00
1/2 Page	\$650.00
Full Page	\$950.00
<i>Colour is an additional \$90</i>	

*All rates are subject to applicable taxes (5% GST)

Is your community group or non-profit organization holding an event?

**Take advantage of our
COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

With the purchase of a 2 column x 2 inch display ad, we will advertise your community event in our Community Calendar **FREE** for two weeks prior to the event!

\$60 + GST - A savings of over 30%

Don't miss out on letting your community and others know about your event!

We are also your local supplier for:

- Business Cards
- Rubber Stamps
- Posters
- Paper Supplies
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