



Studio 747 dancers leave it all on the stage



The senior jazz group closed out the first act with a high-energy number.

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

The young and aspiring dancers of Studio 747 kicked off their performance season in thrilling fashion on Saturday, March 7, as they took to the stage at the Shellbrook Theatre for their mini showcase.

The mini showcase was introduced when long-time instructor, and now owner and artistic director, Kelly Woodley, took over the studio from the former Rhythm Works Dance Studio and rebranded it as Studio 747.

The performance gives the dancers an opportunity to get some valuable on-stage experience before they head off to competitions, while also offering family, friends, and the community a sneak peek at the hard work

they've been putting into the dance season.

It also ensures solo and small group routines get their own moment in the spotlight, rather than sharing it at a single year-end recital.

"Our dancers have been preparing their routines all season. Some of them started learning them in the summer and have been practicing and refining since then," Woodley said.

"I feel it is so important to hold the mini showcase as it is the community's opportunity to send us off to competition with lots of support. It is also the community's only chance to see the solos, duets, and trios aside from competition, as they do not perform them in recital."

Though called a mini showcase, Saturday's performance was any-

thing but mini. The evening included 28 routines in a variety of dance styles, all tightly packed into a nearly two-hour package. And as always, the dancers left everything they had on the stage and the audience rewarded them with raucous applause and cheers.

The show kicked off with a slew of solos, starting with Hayley Van Hereweghe's jazz solo, Kyra Parsons' lyrical solo, Amaya Archibald's lyrical solo, and Brienne Grenier's acro solo. Freya Johnson's hip hop solo, Airionna McQuillan's contemporary solo, and Myla Henry's lyrical solo followed, before Kyra Parsons returned to the stage for her ballet solo.

Tessi Caswell and Sabbeth Lajouenne's lyrical routine brought the night's first duet, then Kelsea Haduik took the stage for her jazz solo. Up

next, Kaydence Booth and Georgia Rudolph delivered energy with their jazz duet and Shaelyn McAleese and Aubryn Olson performed their lyrical duet, before the senior jazz dancers — Zara Gosselin, Brienne Grenier, Myla Henry, Airionna McQuillan, Emersyn Nahorniak, Kyra Parsons, Embree Schmitz, and Hayley Van Hereweghe — closed out the show's first act.

After a brief intermission, Ava Chmil, Mekenna Swystun, and Aria Warkentin started off the second act with a high-energy hip hop trio. Then, it was back to the solos, as Kyra Parsons (jazz), Hayley Van Hereweghe (lyrical), Bria Horricks (jazz), Brienne Grenier (contemporary), Kambry Knaus (hip hop), Myla Henry (tap), and Tessi Caswell (jazz) all performing numbers.

More photos on page 8



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Blaine Lake launches Hockeyville campaign

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle
Reporter

Hoping to keep the community's skating rink alive for generations to come, the Town of Blaine Lake has partnered with the Blaine Lake Community Association (BLCA), the Blaine Lake Raiders Senior Hockey Club, and the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation to launch a Kraft Hockeyville campaign.

Now in its 20th year, Kraft Hockeyville sees communities across Canada enter their community rinks into the running for a chance to win \$250,000 and host an NHL game. Entries into Hockeyville are supported by their communities through submissions of photos and stories, which earn communities all-important points before the judging phase commences.

"The spirit of Blaine Lake lives in the Blaine Lake Skating Rink, and for me, it's deeply personal," wrote Cole O. in one of the many stories shared on the community's Hockeyville page.

"This is where I first learned how to skate, holding onto the boards and slowly finding my balance. It's where I grew up playing hockey, spending countless hours practicing, competing, and building friendships that still mean so much

to me today. That rink is where my love for the game truly began."

Administration for the Town of Blaine Lake says the town decided to enter Hockeyville in hopes of securing funds to retrofit the Blaine Lake Skating Rink so that artificial ice can be installed. The retrofit is something the town is exploring as part of its 2025 to 2030 Strategic Plan, as the switch to artificial ice would allow for a longer season that isn't so dependent upon the weather.

Like most small-town rinks, the Blaine Lake Skating Rink was the product of good old-fashioned volunteer fundraising and construction, beginning as a dream held by the Blaine Lake Co-operative Rink Association in 1953.

After holding many meetings with other community groups throughout the spring of that year, it was decided that a covered, non-profit skating rink should be built for skating, hockey, figure skating, and other community events.

The community got to work quickly to make the rink a reality. By Oct. 4, 1954, the first arch for the rink was erected. And a little over a month later, the building was sheathed with shiplap. And finally, in February of 1955, the rink celebrated its grand opening.



The Town of Blaine Lake is hoping to win \$250,000 through Kraft Hockeyville to make much-needed upgrades to the 71-year-old Blaine Lake Skating Rink.

Now, at 71 years old, the Blaine Lake Skating Rink continues to be the product of community fundraising and support, and is operated year-round by the BLCA.

In 2023, the community group carried out a major renovation of the facility.

With an estimated price tag of \$60,000 — \$10,000 of which was provided by Manitoba-based Red River Mutual's Spruce Up Your Story grant — the project included the installation of new flooring and demolition of the old flooring, demolition of some walls to build a new seating area in the lobby, construction of a bar and ticket sales area, replacement of the arena lighting, and boiler upgrades and maintenance.

At the time, BLCA member Jenna Englot said there was still plenty of work to do, including a full boiler replacement and the expansion of seating in the rink to

accommodate the larger crowds coming out for Blaine Lake Raiders' games.

Given that the needs of a community rink often outweigh the funds available to address them — especially for a rink that's 71 years old — a successful Hockeyville campaign would go a long way to keeping the rink and the community thriving.

"In Blaine Lake, the hockey rink is more than a building with ice — it's

the heart of our community," wrote Rick B. in a story on the community's Hockeyville page.

"The rink keeps our town connected when the cold could keep us apart. It represents belonging, resilience, and community spirit. If it ever went dark, Blaine Lake would lose more than ice — we'd lose a place where memories are made and where our town truly comes alive."

Hockeyville is current-

ly in the judging phase, with the provincial and territorial winners scheduled to be announced on March 14. If Blaine Lake is among those winners, it will be in the running to be one of the two finalists.

Should Blaine Lake be named one of the top two communities, Hockeyville then goes to a nationwide vote, which will be held from April 3 to 4. The winner will be announced April 4.



Volunteers have been vital to keeping the Blaine Lake Skating Rink alive, helping complete \$75,000 in renovations in recent years.

R.M. OF SPIRITWOOD NO. 496
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The R.M. of Spiritwood No. 496 is accepting applications for **Seasonal Full-Time Heavy Equipment Operator** positions to begin approximately mid-late April and ending on or about October 31st, depending on weather, and or as mutually agreed. The duties and responsibilities of the positions include, but are not limited to the following:

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- manual labour as required for sign installation, culvert maintenance, general shop and yard maintenance;
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- have WHMIS or be willing to achieve;
- possess a valid Class 5, Class 3 or Class 1A drivers license;

Salary will be negotiated based on experience and qualifications. The RM offers a health and dental plan as well as a pension plan.

Interested individuals should submit their resume, including qualification, work experience, drivers abstract & three work related references by **4:00 p.m., Thursday, March 20, 2026** to the RM of Spiritwood No. 496 at Box 340, Spiritwood, SK. S0J 2M0 or via email to admin@rmofspiritwood.ca.

Only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

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Phone: **306-747-2158**

Ski Timber Ridge hosts Meadow Lake students

By **MAISIE KRIENKE**
Submitted

Meadow Lake's Jubilee Elementary School's Grade 4 students recently embraced Saskatchewan's winter spirit with two exciting ski trips to Ski Timber Ridge on Feb. 11 and 25.

Travelling from Meadow Lake to Big River, students spent two action-packed days enjoying fresh air, physical activity, and hands-on learning on the slopes. The trips provided an opportunity for many students to try downhill skiing for the first time, while others were able to further develop their skills

and confidence.

Throughout the experience, students demonstrated perseverance and teamwork as they encouraged one another and celebrated personal achievements. Laughter echoed across the hills as friendships grew stronger and winter fun took centre stage.

Staff members shared that the outings were a wonderful success, with students representing Jubilee with enthusiasm and positive attitudes. From mastering new techniques to simply enjoying the thrill of the ride, it was truly a memorable winter adventure for everyone involved.



Meadow Lake students enjoyed two action-packed days at Big River's Ski Timber Ridge.

Premier Moe announces healthcare plan

By **MINISTRY OF HEALTH**
Submitted

Premier Scott Moe has announced the Patients First Health Care Plan — a comprehensive, province-wide strategy to improve access to care and ensure everyone in Saskatchewan receives the right care in the right place at the right time.

"We have been listening to Saskatchewan residents and the two main concerns we have heard are that people want access to a primary care provider, and they want diagnostics and surgeries in a timelier manner," Premier Moe

said. "That's what the Patients First Health Care Plan will do — deliver the right care in the right place at the right time."

Across Canada, healthcare is facing increasing pressure from rising demand, aging populations, and workforce shortages. Saskatchewan's plan accelerates work already underway to improve access to health services by increasing the number of health care providers and giving patients more health care options.

The Patients First Health Care Plan outlines over 50 actions to ensure patients are receiving the right care in the

right place at the right time. Some of the key actions are:

- Increasing the number and expanding the scope of practice for all health care professionals;
- Expanding access to virtual care;
- Increasing the number of and access to Urgent Care Centres throughout the province;
- Continuing to recruit, train and increase the number of doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners;
- Expansion of diagnostic services like MRI, CT and PET-CT scans.

To see all the actions included in the Patients First Health Care Plan, read

the complete plan at saskatchewan.ca/patientsfirst.

"The Patients First Health Care Plan builds on steps we are already taking to improve access to health care, like the introduction of virtual care, the creation of urgent care centres and the expansion of nurse practitioner services," Moe said. "It also recognizes there are still people in Saskatchewan not receiving the care they need when they need it, so there is a lot more work to be done."

"Our government will continue listening to Saskatchewan people to ensure everyone is getting the care they need when they need it."

Area rural municipalities receive road funding

By **MINISTRY OF HIGHWAYS**
Submitted

The Ministry of Highways and Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) have announced more than \$46 million for planned road, bridge and culvert projects to keep rural Saskatchewan and the province's export-based economy moving.

Under the Rural Integrated Roads for Growth (RIRG) program, the provincial government will invest more than \$16.9 million toward the 41 projects and rural municipalities (RMs) will fund the remaining more than \$29.1 million.

Two projects in the R.M. of Blaine Lake are among those selected. The Blind Line Road - 1 project will see the road resurfaced at a cost of \$350,000, while the Blind Line Road - 2 project bears a price tag of \$115,000.

Meanwhile, in the R.M. of Shellbrook, White Star Road will see work done on a base and sub base at a cost of \$200,000, and in the R.M. of Big River Bridge 307-56-07 will be replaced at a cost of \$2,075,375.

"Saskatchewan's rural road network is the starting point for many agricultural products and other goods on their way to destinations throughout the province, across the country and around the world," Highways Minister Kim Gartner said. "This infrastructure program enhances the connectivity of Saskatchewan rural roads to the rest of the transportation network, which supports our export-based economy."

"SARM is pleased to see funding support for these important projects," Saskatchewan Association of

Rural Municipalities President Bill Huber said. "Rural Saskatchewan faces substantial transportation infrastructure needs, as many of the goods and resources driving our provincial economy originate in rural municipalities. Investing in RM roads, bridges, and culverts delivers strong economic benefits across Saskatchewan, and SARM looks forward to continuing our partnership with the Ministry of Highways to deliver the Rural Integrated Roads for Growth Program in the years ahead."

The RIRG program is funded by the Government of

Saskatchewan, administered by SARM and invests in RM road infrastructure.

The program contributes up to 50 per cent per project to a maximum of \$500,000 for a road and to a maximum \$1 million for a large culvert or a bridge. RMs fund the remainder and are responsible for managing their approved RIRG projects, along with any additional costs.

RIRG is overseen by a joint SARM and Ministry of Highways Program Management Board.

**R. M. OF LEASK NO. 464
NOTICE OF PREPARATION
OF ASSESSMENT ROLL**

Notice is hereby given that the Assessment Roll for the Rural Municipality of Leask No. 464 for the year 2026 has been prepared and is open to inspection by contacting the Office of the Assessor from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the following days: Monday to Friday, March 13/2026 to May 13, 2026.

A bylaw pursuant to section 214 of *The Municipalities Act* has been passed and the assessment notices have been sent as required.

Any person who wishes to appeal against his or her assessment is required to file his or her notice of appeal, accompanied by \$100.00 appeal fee per roll number with The Assessor, R.M. of Leask, Box 190, Leask, SK, S0J 1M0, by the 13th day of May, 2026.

Dated at Leask, Saskatchewan, this 13th day of March, 2026.

Donna Goertzen
Assessor

**VILLAGE OF PARKSIDE
NOTICE OF PREPARATION
OF ASSESSMENT ROLL**

Notice is hereby given that the assessment roll for the Village of Parkside for the year 2026 has been prepared and is open to inspection in the office of the assessor from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the following days: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, March 13th, 2026 to April 14th, 2026.

A bylaw pursuant to section 214 of *The Municipalities Act* has been passed and the assessment notices have been sent as required. All fees must be submitted to the local assessor at the Village of Parkside. All appeals must be filed with the Secretary of the Board of Revision, Nicole Hoskins, which can be sent electronically to: secretary@westernmunicipal.ca, or via post/mail to Village of Parkside, Box 48, Parkside, Sask., S0J 2A0, and forwarded to the Secretary of the Board of Revision.

Any person wishing to discuss the notice of assessment or potential appeal may contact the assessor at the Village of Parkside. A notice of appeal, accompanied by a \$200.00 per appeal which will be returned if the appeal is successful, must be submitted by April 14th, 2026.

Dated this 13th day of March, 2026.

Hugh Otterson
Assessor

Nebulous war will make world more dangerous

In 2011 (and again in 2012 and 2013), before his lofty political ambitions became clear, current U.S. President Donald Trump suggested then-President Barack Obama would begin a war with Iran to distract from sagging poll numbers and his alleged failings as a negotiator.

Instead, in 2015, it was Mr. Obama's administration that succeeded in reaching an agreement with Iran, called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, that would curtail Iran's efforts to develop nuclear weapons.

And three years after this, it was Mr. Trump's first administration that walked away from agreement in favour of reinstating sanctions on Iran, effectively leaving the country to resume its nuclear program (because sanctions never have the intended effect of hurting those in power).

All of this, of course, presupposes that the Iranian government has ever been pursuing the development of nuclear weapons with any vigour.

After all, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has spent the past three decades warning the world that an Iranian nuclear arsenal is "imminent," and yet, somehow, no arsenal has ever materialized.

That's not to say Iran is an innocent victim. It's brutally oppressive, boasts one of the world's worst records on human rights, and has been a near-constant source of instability and supporter of terrorism in the Middle East and beyond. And yet, it's also the product of a global system that has given it almost no reason to trust or work with countries like the United States.

In 1953, as the United States and the Soviet Union were jockeying for global dominance, the U.S. and the United Kingdom backed a coup against the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq, strengthening the autocratic rule of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. The move was made to counter Soviet influence in the region, and to prevent Iran from nationalizing its oil indus-



JORDAN
TWISS
~
News Editor

try.

Just a few years later, the U.S. would help Iran establish its nuclear program, and it would spend the next few decades meddling in the country's affairs.

After Iran's U.S.-backed leadership was overthrown in a revolution in 1979, the Iran-Iraq war kicked off, lasting for eight years (1980 to 1988) and resulting in as many as 2 million deaths.

Seeking once again to counter Soviet influence in the region, the U.S. supported Saddam Hussein and Iraq in the bloody conflict, supplying him with arms, money, and even chemical and biological weapons (which he would eventually use on his own people).

It took a little over a decade for the U.S. to turn on Hussein and use him as a convenient scapegoat in the War on Terror (once again, in the pursuit of oil), which only further destabilized the already volatile region.

Again, none of this excuses the Iranian regime. It does, however, provide vital historical context for understanding how Iran's relationship with the U.S. devolved to the point it did by the time Mr. Trump began his second stint as president in 2025.

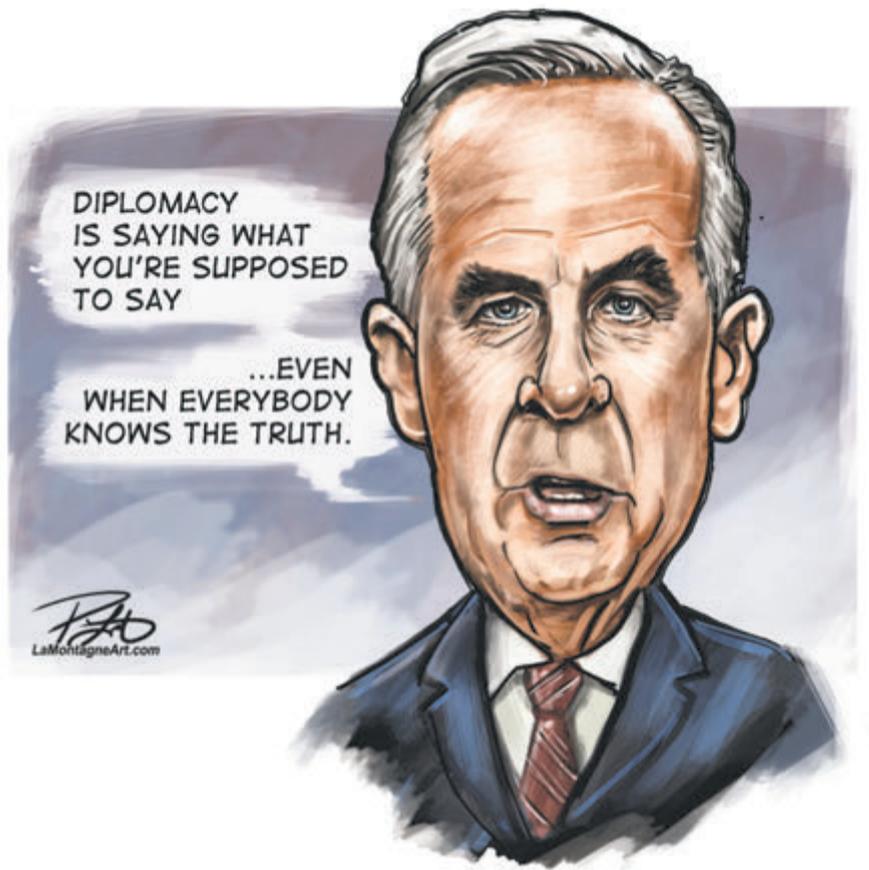
Throughout the election campaign in 2024, and in the initial days after he returned to office, Mr. Trump repeatedly billed himself as the president of peace.

And yet, in the first year of his term, Mr. Trump has ordered military strikes on eight different countries (a fitting number, given his incessant, non-factual boasts about stopping eight wars).

Iran was one of the first countries Mr. Trump turned his weapons on, joining Israel in a 12-day campaign that allegedly "completely and totally obliterated" Iran's nuclear facilities.

Imagine the rest of the world's surprise when U.S. Special Envoy Steve Witkoff claimed in late February that Iran was "a week away from having industrial-grade bombmaking material."

Around the same time, Mr. Trump



stated he'd prefer to resolve nuclear tensions with Iran through diplomacy. But, apparently unable to negotiate a deal with the country, the so-called president of peace joined Israel in striking the country for the second time in just eight months.

In the initial days of the military operations, the U.S. succeeded in killing Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei. Meanwhile, seven U.S. soldiers were killed in Iranian counterstrikes.

As the face of the war (or non-war, depending on which member of Mr. Trump's administration you ask), Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth has been comporting himself with all the bravado of a movie villain from a schlocky 1980s action flick.

He's bragged about it not being "a fair fight" and "punching the enemy while they're down," while rejecting notions like "stupid rules of engagement," "nation-building quagmires," "democracy-building exercises," and "politically correct wars."

What has been lacking in all of Mr. Hegseth's bluster is any clear articulation of why the war (or non-war) is necessary, or what a successful outcome looks like.

While Mr. Hegseth has framed it as retribution for 47 years of Iranian belligerence and stubborn refusal to make a deal, Secretary of State Marco Rubio suggested it was a preemp-

tive strike, because it was "abundantly clear" the U.S. would be targeted if Iran was attacked by another power.

At the same time, despite multiple denials about it being a regime change war, Mr. Trump has stated that he expects to have a say in who becomes Iran's next leader, and Israel's Defense Minister, Israel Katz, has said any leader not approved by Israel will be "an unequivocal target for elimination."

Equally nebulous as the motives for the conflict, is its projected timeline. Mr. Trump has suggested the war (or non-war) could go on for four or five weeks, but he's also suggested the U.S. has a "virtually unlimited" stockpile of munitions and could "fight a war forever" (despite his campaign promise of no more foreign "forever wars").

What makes the situation more alarming is Prime Minister Mark Carney's response, which has been to abandon the principled stand he took in his Davos speech and refuse to rule out Canadian involvement.

Tying Canadian military resources or troops to an operation headed by an administration whose strategy is "Bomb first. Plan later." is not in Canada's best interest.

It's only certain to make the Middle East and the whole world less safe, just like every other recent American intervention in the region has.

Shellbrook Chronicle

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Local author finds hope, healing through book

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

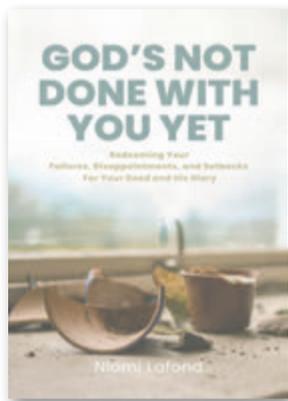
After she unexpectedly lost her job in ministry, Shellbrook's Niomi Lafond says she was in a dark place of feeling worthless, rejected, and unusable.

Then, in the midst of prayer, she heard God speak to her, sharing with her the exact six words she needed to hear: God's not done with you yet.

The words helped guide Lafond back to the light and rekindle her long-abandoned childhood passion for writing. They also became the title of her debut book, which she calls a "Christian inspirational story about God's extravagant grace and re-

demption in the middle of broken dreams, major setbacks, and heart wrenching disappointment."

"It is a story of God taking a messy situation and turning it around for my good and His glory," she said. "I touch on topics such as: how to find hope in the midst of disappointment; ways to overcome church-inflicted wounds; strategies for



recognizing your true worth in Christ; and steps to embrace God's ongoing work in your life."

Saying that God told her to write *God's Not Done With You Yet*, Lafond adds that the process of writing the book led her through middle of her hurt, confusion, doubts, and heartbreak, to place of healing.

This, she says, made it the most effortless piece of work she ever written, allowing her to complete the first draft in just three months.

When she finished writing, Lafond had no plans to publish or share her story. However, God had other plans, and wanted her story to help others find the healing she did.

"I had no idea how I

could possibly ever get published. All I knew was that if God wanted me to share my story, He would make a way," Lafond said.

"The message I share of God's love, grace, and redemption is so worth sharing because I want everyone to know that just because they have fallen short or feel unworthy, God's love and grace for them never runs dry."

A door opened for Lafond in 2024, when she attended a Christian writing conference in Chicago, and took the opportunity to have a one-on-one meeting with a publisher. This connected her with a representative from Redemption Press, who expressed interest in her manuscript.

Lafond submitted *God's Not Done With You Yet* upon returning home, and soon after received an invitation to publish through Redemption Press.

From start to end, the process took about a year, and Lafond says it

was far more extensive than she'd ever imagined, allowing her to learn a lot about editing, design, marketing, and more.

With her book released on Jan. 29, Lafond hopes it will help others find their own faith.

"While life is full of challenges, uncertain-

ties, and disappointments, God is constant, reliable, and forever faithful," she said. "I hope readers will be encouraged to know that if their situation looks bleak, God is not done writing the story."

For more about Lafond and *God's Not Done With You Yet*, visit: <https://www.niomi-lafondauthor.com/>



Local author Niomi Lafond.

Shellbrook Girl Guides support P.A. SPCA

By **JORDAN TWISS**
Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

Shellbrook's inaugural Girl Guides group learned an important lesson about giving to others by taking part in a nearly month-long donation drive to support the Prince Albert SPCA.

While there's no shortage of worthy causes to support, group leader Kori Sansom says the girls in the unit have shown a real love for animals. As such, she felt it was something the girls would enjoy doing for their service project.

"As members of the Girl Guides of

Canada organization, part of what we do at the unit level is participate in service projects to build better communities around us," Sansom said. "It helps the girls to learn leadership skills and caring for others."

Between Feb 2. and 27, the Girl Guides unit collected 50 items for the Prince Albert SPCA, ranging from staples like dog and cat food and toys (pre-packaged and homemade) to vital supplies like brooms, paper towels, gloves, masks, and dish soap.

"Community support means that if we all give what we can, everyone can get what they need," Girl Guide leader Lora Gallimore said.



Members of Shellbrook's Girl Guides group recently made a donation of food and supplies to the Prince Albert SPCA.

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Shellbrook Chronicle & Spiritwood Herald



ADVERTISING DEADLINE IS FRIDAY 4:00 P.M.

SARM calls for rural emergency supports

By SARM
Submitted

The Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) is calling on the provincial and federal governments to strengthen funding and partnership commitments for Emergency Response Services that support healthcare, safety, and disaster preparedness across rural Saskatchewan.

Rural municipalities (RMs) are the backbone of community safety, ensuring that rural residents are protected before, during, and after emergencies. From managing infrastructure and volunteer fire services to maintaining readiness for wildfires, flooding, and droughts, RMs carry significant

responsibility but often face resource and personnel challenges in delivering these vital services.

"Rural municipalities are on the front lines when disaster strikes," said Bill Huber, SARM President. "Every day, our local responders are called upon to protect lives and property, yet they often work with outdated equipment and limited financial support. Strengthened and predictable provincial and federal investment would give our communities the tools they need to stay resilient."

SARM's advocacy for 2025 underscores the need for sustainable support that empowers local leadership and planning. Key priorities include:

- Predictable and flexible funding to support local emergency preparedness efforts, including equipment, operations, and workforce development.
- Support for civic addressing and NextGen 911 implementation, ensuring accurate emergency response across Saskatchewan's rural regions.
- Lower radio licensing fees to make critical communication systems affordable and effective during times of crisis.
- Increased investment in wildfire prevention, disaster readiness, and proactive infrastructure improve-

ments to strengthen long-term community resilience.

- Expanded funding for volunteer fire departments, including training, fire halls, and equipment, to sustain safe and reliable emergency response across rural Saskatchewan.

As extreme weather events and natural disasters continue to intensify, SARM stresses that proactive investment now will save lives and reduce costs in the future.

"Rural communities want to do their part, but they need fair cost-sharing frameworks and reliable funding to make that possible," added Huber. "We're asking our provincial and federal partners to step up and recognize the critical role of rural emergency services and ensure they're equipped to respond when our people need them most."

SARM also continues to advocate for sustained federal-provincial collaboration

that supports long-term disaster mitigation and improved rural safety outcomes. Strengthening community resilience starts with empowering local governments to plan, prepare, and protect effectively.

Team Ledding scores 8-ender



Left to right: The team of Wesley Ledding, Gary Thiel, Ron Helm, and Robert Svendsen scored eight points in the fifth end of the Second Event semi-final of the Shell Lake Open Bonspiel on Feb. 1. Submitted by WESLEY LEDDING

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)

BIG RIVER: Ice Fishing Derby on Cowan Lake in Big River, SK - Saturday, March 21. \$18,000 in prizes! Entry fee: \$50/Hole; 2nd Hole \$20. Tickets available by phone 306-469-7990 or @ Timberlost Outfitters in Big River and @ The Fishin' Hole in Saskatoon.

SHELLBROOK: St. Patty's Stew Night - March 17, 2026 @ Shellbrook Legion #111 (101 2nd Ave E), 5:30pm. Join us for Irish stew and green beer! All beer and spirits \$5. Meal by donation - cash or etransfer shellbrook111@hotmail.com

SHELLBROOK: You are invited to Skate Shellbrook's *Champions in the Making: An Olympic Year-end Ice Show!* Sunday, March 15 - 1 pm at the Richardson Pioneer Rec Centre. Admission by donation. Raffle prizes available.

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Sask. most wanted offender arrested

By JORDAN TWISS

Shellbrook Chronicle Reporter

One of the province's most wanted offenders with connections to the area has been apprehended by police.

Twenty-seven-year-old Chance Smith (alias: Swaby Koa), was wanted by police for robbery, uttering threats, possession of weapon for dangerous purpose (two counts), carrying concealed weapon, aggravated assault (two counts), break and enter, failing to comply with release order, and being disguised with intent, and was known to have connections to the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation, Prince Albert, the Muskoday First Nation, and Saskatoon.

On Thursday, Feb. 26, Saskatchewan RCMP's Prince Albert Warrant Enforcement Suppression Team (WEST) located and arrested Chance Smith at a residence on the Muskoday First Nation. Smith was arrested on his outstanding warrant from Prince Albert RCMP in relation to a stabbing that occurred on Muskoday First Nation in January 2026.

During the arrest, officers located and seized brass knuckles that Smith had in his possession. As a result, he was additionally charged with one count each of: unauthorized pos-

session of a prohibited weapon or restricted weapon, carrying a concealed weapon, failure to comply with release order condition, and weapons possession contrary to order

Smith made his first appearance in Prince Albert Provincial Court on Feb. 27, 2026. He was scheduled to make another court appearance on March 5.



Most wanted offender Chance Smith has been arrested by police.

Rangelands vital to agriculture's future

It's always good to pause to think about the future of farming.

In the face of American tariffs, increasing U.S. president Donald Trump-led tensions in terms of peace, and the changes science shows are occurring in terms of climate change, seeing a future at all can be something that seems less ensured than it should be at this point in human history.

But we have to hope cooler heads will prevail in spite of the likes of Trump, and we need to make sure agriculture continues to utilize best practices.

That is particularly important when considering rangelands, which can be easily damaged

by mismanagement.

So it's good to see the Government of Saskatchewan joining the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association (SSGA) and the Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (SK PCAP) in recognizing 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) in the province.

"Saskatchewan's rangelands support a sector that helps drive our economy," Agriculture Minister David Marit said in a release. "This is our opportunity to recognize the hard work and stewardship of Saskatchewan's ranchers."

Of course the key word there is steward-



CALVIN DANIELS

ship, because rangelands provide more than just grazing for the livestock industry. While livestock feed is paramount for producers to manage rangelands well, in doing that those lands also provide habitat for wildlife.

As the release notes, these working landscapes stay productive thanks to the ranchers and land managers, also

known as pastoralists (a term I admit was new to me), who care for them.

"Saskatchewan's rangelands are more than wide-open spaces — they support biodiversity, store large amounts of carbon, increase climate resilience and sustain rural livelihoods," Environment Minister Darlene Rowden said in the release. "Ranchers and land managers play a key role as stewards of the land, and their work helps to preserve native prairie, as well as the many species that rely on these important habitats."

"Since our founding, SSGA has stood for conserving grasslands and protecting the pastoral-

ist way of life through strong, united advocacy," SSGA General Manager Chad MacPherson said. "The IYRP recognizes the same principles by which Canadian Prairie ranchers live: stewardship of the land, economic sustainability and the freedom to produce food responsibly. SSGA is proud to advocate for ranchers as global attention turns to the value of healthy rangelands and the people who manage them."

Therein lies an important lesson moving forward, livestock producers can be the friends of wildlife too, even while it might be thought that is not the case — it usually is.

That is why the range-

lands are so important and we need to assure the public appreciates the importance.

"We are excited about the IYRP and raising public awareness of the vital role rangelands and pastoralists play," SK PCAP Manager Carolyn Gaudet said in the release. "Rangelands are ecosystems that support cultures and livelihoods, and ranchers are essential environmental stewards in maintaining healthy rangelands. Through collaboration with our partners, we are celebrating by hosting events and using the international spotlight to bring attention to Saskatchewan's native prairie and rangeland ecosystems."

Sask. to support pulse centre in India

By **MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**

Submitted

As part of his trade mission to India, Premier Scott Moe along with officials from Canada, India, and the University of Saskatchewan have agreed to explore the creation of the Canada-India Pulse Protein Centre of Excellence at the National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM) in Kundli, India.

"Our province is essential for global food security," Moe said. "This announcement represents an opportunity to bring Saskatchewan's expertise and ingenuity in pulse production to the people of India. By working together, we will accelerate innovation, expand processing capabilities, and help meet growing demand for affordable, high quality, sustainably grown foods."

Pulses, which include lentils, chickpeas, peas, and beans, are central to both Saskatchewan and India's agri-food sectors. They are also incredibly healthy and are high in protein. Over 80 per cent of all pulses exported from Canada to India are grown in Saskatchewan, providing food for hundreds of millions of people every day.

The governments of Canada and India have

named the University of Saskatchewan and NIFTEM in Kundli the co-chairs that will lead the creation of the centre.

"The University of Saskatchewan has a strong history of developing agricultural innovations that have real world impact," University of Saskatchewan Research Vice President Baljit Singh said. "With groundbreaking discoveries in crop development, phenotyping, disease resistance, and excellence in food processing, USask researchers have greatly shaped modern farming advancements that have benefited both consumers and producers. We are committed to addressing the global demand for plant-based proteins and applying our world-class researchers, labs and infrastructure to address these needs. We look forward to working alongside our partners in India and the Government of Saskatchewan to create sustainable solutions through the new India-Canada Joint Pulse Protein Centre of Excellence."

The proposed centre will be a hub for food innovation in India with a focus on advancing pulse protein processing and fortified foods development. The centre will also help strengthen the longstanding relationship between partners.

"The Centre of Excellence underscores the long-term partnership between Saskatchewan and India in pulses," Sask Pulse Growers Chair Stuart Lawrence said. "This collaboration between academia and government can help ensure more pulses are included in large-scale food applications and enhance the role pulses play in delivering nutritional security for the benefit of Indian consumers and Saskatchewan farmers."

Through innovation and expanding value added opportunities, the centre will support economic growth in both countries. It will also contribute to global efforts to improve nutrition, reduce environmental impacts, and advance sustainable agriculture.

Saskatchewan and India have a strong trade relationship with over \$18 billion in exports since 2007. The province is proud to be the consistent ally and reliable supplier India needs to ensure food and energy security.

Saskatchewan has had a trade and investment office in New Delhi since 2021. The province has built a network of nine international trade and investment offices to prioritize strengthening existing trade relationships while exploring new markets.

Sask. advances national energy corridor

By **SASKATCHEWAN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Submitted

The Government of Saskatchewan has entered into a new agreement with provinces and territories to advance the development of a National Energy Corridor. This partnership between Saskatchewan and Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Yukon, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and the Northwest Territories marks a historic step toward strengthening Cana-

da's energy security.

This agreement builds on the discussions at the Connecting Canada - Building an Energy Superpower Summit in September 2025, where provinces identified strengthening electricity transmission connections between provinces as a key priority.

For Saskatchewan, improving east-west transmission connections will unlock new economic opportunities, supports growing demand and improves grid reliability for industry and communities.

"Strengthening transmission con-

nections will ensure that Saskatchewan families, communities and industries continue to have access to reliable and affordable electricity, while giving us export opportunities as a jurisdiction with allocatable base-load power production to contribute to the energy security of our neighbours," Crown Investments Corporation Minister Jeremy Harrison said. "Saskatchewan has been working closely with partners, including Ontario Minister of Energy and Mines Stephen Lecce, to advance practical solutions that strengthen electricity

infrastructure and improve connections between provincial grids."

The Government of Saskatchewan will continue working with provincial partners to advance projects that expand transmission connections and support reliable, affordable power for Saskatchewan residents and businesses, consistent with the province's Saskatchewan First Energy Security and Supply Plan, which focuses on ensuring Saskatchewan has a strong, safe and secure energy system while supporting long-term economic growth.

Studio 747 dancers leave it all on the stage

Continued from 1

Following this, Airionna McQuillan and Kyra Parsons performed an emotional lyrical duet, Aubrielle Booth (tap) and Sabbeth Lajeunesse (jazz) performed solo numbers, and Emily Jepsen and Alaina Nelson teamed up for a tap routine.

Solos from Brienne Grenier (lyrical), Hayley Van Hereweghe (ballet), and Kyra Parsons (hip hop) closed out the show.

With the mini showcase behind them, Studio 747 is diving right into competition season, starting with the Kindersley Konnection

Dance Festival from March 13 to 15.

After this, they compete at SOARinYXE from March 25 to 29, with the senior jazz group competing in the Group Elevation Challenge for a top prize of \$1,000, and then senior dancers and select solo numbers will be showcased in North Battleford at the Collective Dance Challenge from April 9 to 12.

Last but not least, dancers will take part in the Prince Albert Festival of Dance from April 15 to 19, before finishing off their season with their year-end show at the beginning of May.



Shaelyn McAleese and Aubryn Olson perform their lyrical duet.



Brienne Grenier performs her acro solo.



Kelsea Haduik had fun with her jazz solo.



Kyra Parsons performs her lyrical solo.



Freya Johnson performs her hip hop solo.



Kaydence Booth and Georgia Rudolph strike poses in their jazz duet.



Airionna McQuillan performs her contemporary solo.



Tessi Caswell and Sabbeth Lajeunesse paired up for a lyrical duet.



Hayley Van Hereweghe performs her lyrical solo.

Canwood Seniors host District Olympics

By **LORRAINE THIBEAULT**
Shellbrook Senior's Association

On Friday, Feb. 27, more than 40 members of the District 4 - Saskatchewan Seniors Association Inc. (SSAI) met at the bowling alley in Canwood for an afternoon of bowling, cards, and visiting as the 4th event in their District 4 Olympics.



After a busy day, attendees enjoyed time for visiting.

A wonderful lunch was provided by the Canwood Seniors Club. Seniors came from Big River, Blaine Lake, Shellbrook and Canwood to enjoy the afternoon. Other communities in District 4 include Marcelin, Shell Lake, and Chitek Lake.

SSAI's mission is to bring senior citizens together in one strong association that will work for the welfare of senior citizens in Saskatchewan, to of-



Shellbrook's Jessie Dion winds up, looking for a strike.

fer programs and activities that benefit seniors, and to work with other organizations with similar objectives.

SSAI at the provincial level meets with ministers and MLAs/MPs of government to pursue issues regarding senior housing, health standards, accommodations and other issues to benefit seniors.



Attendees enjoyed an afternoon of card games.

Spiritwood Library activity highlights



Spiritwood Public Library's February winner of the Dessert of the month is Jim Anderson. He received a cherry cheesecake made by Board Chair Dana Doucette.

By **HEATHER GATZKE**, Branch Librarian



Lego Club was on Feb. 25 and Lego Masters came up with some super builds for the challenge of making something with a music theme. Disney's Aristocats were playing the piano and xylophone, there was a custom guitar and a dance studio with speakers on the stage.

Big River Métis Local hosts Music Bingo

By **MAISIE KRIENKE**
Submitted

The Big River Métis Local #59 hosted a Dancing Divas Music Bingo event on Friday, Feb. 27.

The Mardi Gras theme was well presented, with many folks clad in themed attire. Sweet treats were awarded to all those who were in costume.

With over \$5,000 worth of prizes displayed to be given away, everyone was carefully listening for the right tune to mark off on their cards. Tunes from the 60s, 70s and 80s were played.

During a brief intermission Brynn Arcand and Maverik Martel entertained the crowd.

Raffle prize winners were: Ryan Bergen, Arlene Gilbert, Olie Arcand and Celynne Morin.

The lucky winner of the \$365

dollar 50/50 jackpot was Maverik Martel.

Following the bingo, entertainment by the "Beautiful Disasters"

was enjoyed by all.

All proceeds from the Music Bingo will go to Big River's Old Theatre.



Bingo Players got in the Mardi Gras spirit with colourful clothes and beads.



Brynn Arcand and Maverik Martel entertained the crowd during the intermission.

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Spiritwood Herald**
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Minutes of a Village of Leask Council meeting

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

The Minutes of the Village of Leask held at Village Office on Jan. 21, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

Present at the meeting were Mayor Eugene Verbonac, Deputy Mayor Zach Waldner, Councillors Valerie Priestley, Roger Straf, and David Petriew, and Administrator Yvette Hamel.

Mayor Verbonac called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Straf: That the agenda be approved as presented. Carried

Waldner: That the minutes of the December 2025 Regular Council be approved as presented. Carried

Petriew: That the Village of Leask accept the maintenance report as presented by Kelley Smith. Carried

Waldner: That the Village of Leask agree to purchase snow bucket from Jon Jonassen for the amount of \$1,400. Carried

Priestley: That the Village of Leask accept the Water Treatment Plant and Lab Testing report as presented. Carried

Petriew: That the Village of Leask approved the attached list of Accounts Payable:

On Line Banking 2026000-074 to 2026000-077;

Auto Withdrawal 2026000-198 to 2026000-014;

Cheques 10678-10702 totalling \$113,911.53; and

Cheques 00135-00139 being Council Indemnity totalling \$1,187. Carried

Straf: That the Village of Leask accept the December 2025 bank reconciliation as presented. Carried

Priestley: That the Village of Leask

acknowledged renewal of Term 22 Infrastructure Flex term, which was updated the rate to reflect Specialty Tier 3 pricing, no changes to auto PAT of \$4,000 per month noting new rate is 2.20%. Carried

Petriew: That the Village of Leask authorized the following 2026 monthly payments: SaskTel, SaskPower, SaskEnergy, CRA, SETS, SUM Benefits, MEPP Benefits, Alarm API, Konica Minolta Lease, and Text em All. Carried

Waldner: That the Village of Leask accept the General Office Service Fees as presented. Carried

Petriew: That TAXervice, on behalf of the Village of Leask, be authorized to proceed under the Tax Enforcement Act to acquire title for the following described land: LOT 5-BLK/PAR A-PLAN 63PA00509 EXT 0, 115898057. Carried

Waldner: That the Village of Leask enter into a two-year lease agreement part of the building on Lots 8 & 9, Block 1, Plan S3969, known as Hair Salon, with Ria Martens for the term Nov. 15, 2025, to Nov. 14, 2027, as presented. Carried

Waldner: That the Village of Leask enter into a one-year lease agreement for the suite located at #14 Main Street, Leask, Saskatchewan, with 102220920 Sask Ltd. (Jae Hyuck Kwon), for the term Jan. 12, 2026, to Jan. 11, 2027, as presented. Carried

Priestley: That the Village of Leask appoint the following individuals to the Village of Leask Rink Board: Chair: Georgia Jonassen, Secretary/Treasurer: April Smith, Members: Jonathon Jonassen, Brittney Autet, Jeremy Brad, Nikita Alexander, Justin McCullough. Carried

Priestley: That, upon the advice of Glenna Frizzell, CPA, CMA, the Village of Leask proceed with restoring Leask Sports Centre Inc. with Information Services Corporation (ISC). Once restored, all outstanding GST reports will be filed with the Canada Revenue Agency and applicable refunds collected. In addition, T2 annual returns for the past four years will be completed. Following these steps, the Village will initiate the dissolution process with ISC and subsequently file a Certificate of Dissolution. Upon completion, Leask Sports Centre Inc. will formally cease to exist. Carried

Petriew: That the Recreation Board Bylaw be tabled to March 2026 meeting. Carried

Petriew: That the Village of Leask acknowledge the Dec. 30, 2025, email from Trevor Cross, noting that as his term as Chair draws to a close, he remains committed to the Emerald Lake Regional Park Board and will continue to serve in the role until such time as the Board elects a new Chair. Carried

Petriew: That the Village of Leask appoint the following candidate to the Emerald Lake Regional Park Board commencing March 2026: Chelan Green — two-year term.

All mandatory appointments required by the Village of Leask have been duly completed. Carried

Waldner: That Village of Leask correspondence be accepted as presented. Carried

Waldner: That the Village of Leask table the offer from Dillan Simonar, on behalf of Shell Lake Minor Sports, to purchase bleachers and benches from the Leask Sports Grounds at a rate of \$250 each for short benches and \$300 for the tall benches. Carried

Priestley: That the Village of Leask acknowledge the Jan. 14, 2026, letter introducing the new community initia-

tive, the "Kindness Project," a program designed to strengthen community connections, celebrate local spirit, and encourage acts of kindness throughout Leask and the surrounding area. Carried

Petriew: That the Village of Leask accept the Emerald Lake Regional Park Dec. 15, 2025, Minutes and report as presented by Councillor David Petriew. Carried

Priestley: That the Village of Leask accept the Shellbrook and District Health Care Foundation, Dec. 9, 2025, Minutes and report as presented by Councillor Valerie Priestley. Carried

Waldner: That the Village of Leask table the motion regarding attendance and voting delegate appointment for the 2026 SUMA Convention, to be held in Regina from April 12 to 15 to the Feb. 18 Council Meeting.

Straf: That the Village of Leask schedule a Ratepayers' meeting to be held on March 19, 2026, at 7 p.m. at the Leask Community Hall. Carried

Priestley: That the Village of Leask approve the Administrator's report as presented. Carried

Waldner: That the Village of Leask approve the SUMAssure 2026 premium in the amount of \$53,234.00, payable on Jan. 31, 2026. Further, that the Leask Golf Course and the Leask Happy Homesteaders be invoiced for their respective premiums as presented. Carried

Petriew: That the Village of Leask Council move in to camera at 6:54 p.m. Carried

Priestley: That the Village of Leask Council move out of camera at 6:58 p.m. Carried

Straf: That the Village of Leask accept wage increase for the Village of Leask office assistant as presented. Carried

Petriew: That this meeting be adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

NDP tables bill to axe rate hikes

By SASK NDP
Submitted

Carla Beck's team is bringing forward legislation to stop Scott Moe's planned rate hike on car insurance and to reverse a rate hike on power bills that is set to cost families, farms and small businesses \$136 million annually.

Bill 612, The Lower Power Bills and Car Insurance Act, was formally introduced Thursday after Scott Moe's House Leader played political games to try to block the legislation on Wednesday.

"Stop the political games and stop the rate hike," said Carla Beck, Saskatchewan NDP Leader. "Hardworking people are struggling to get by — they can't afford more Scott Moe rate hikes.

"The government cares

so little they tried to block our legislation. If they were listening to the people of Saskatchewan, they would pass our bill today and save people money."

The bill, if passed, would require both SaskPower and SGI to disregard their proposed rate increases in 2026 and 2027 until the Rate Review Panel can provide a recommendation to the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

The bill would also require the Minister of Crown Investment Corp. (CIC) to include a five-year projection for rate increases in its annual reports for each subsidiary Crown held by CIC.

Last Month, Leader Carla Beck, SGI Shadow Minister Darcy Warrington, and SaskPower Shadow Minister Aleana Young — who presented the bill — wrote to ev-

ery member of the Legislature, urging them to support the bill, stop the rate hikes, and make life more affordable for people across Saskatchewan.

"This legislation is common sense, and I expect Sask. Party MLAs to help people lower their bills, and provide their constituents some much-needed cost-of-living relief," said Young. "Nobody can afford a power rate hike at a time like this."

The Sask. Party's proposed rate increase means nearly every driver in Saskatchewan — 98 per cent — will see their premiums go up this June.

"Drivers should not be left footing the bill for this government's mismanagement," Warrington added. "Cars and trucks aren't luxuries in this province. We aren't in Toronto.

"It's time for change."

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

2026 Junior Citizen of the Year Scholarship

**JUNIOR
CITIZEN OF THE
YEAR AWARD**

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.

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*

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information and nomination forms
Nominations close March 31, 2026

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Hockey peak: U.S. women climb past Canada

It's time to admit it: The U.S. women's hockey team is better than Canada's.

Even though an outstanding performance in the Olympics gold medal game gave Canada a good chance, only to lose 2-1 in overtime, the evidence has been strong for about the past year that the U.S. women's program has surpassed our country's.

Based on population and the acceptance that there is strength in numbers, it's no surprise that Canadians can't compete with our neighbours to the south when it comes to major sports such as baseball, football, basketball and golf. But we could always brag about being No. 1 in men's and women's hockey.

We'd joke about having our first pair of skates dangling from the end of the crib, and while we didn't learn to skate before we could walk, saying that we did always made for a good chuckle. As for beating up on the U.S. in hockey, both men's and women's national

teams did it regularly.

While U.S. and Canada men's hockey is basically a coin flip when they meet in big tournaments, the women's game has tilted strongly to the south. The Canadian women's national team may have a significant edge over the U.S. through the years in head-to-head competition, but in 2026 at least, Canada is a distant second..

The gold-medal game showed Canada's grit, pride and determination, but the more powerful Americans came from behind to win in the end. Canada can still lay claim to having the best individual player in the world in Marie-Philip Poulin, but hockey is a 20-player team game.

In a four-game Rivalry Series leading up to the Olympics, the States went 4-0 and outscored Canada 24-7. The Americans' power was on even greater display at the Olympics when they outscored their Pool A opponents 20-1 in four games and then won their quarter- and semi-final games



BRUCE PENTON

by a combined 11-0 score to breeze into the final.

One stat Canada can still brag about: In nearly 200 games through the years in Olympics, world championships and 4 Nations Cups, Canada holds a 106-87 edge.

The sport where Canada is making the most progress against the U.S. is in basketball, a game whose reigning Most Valuable Player in the National Basketball Association is a Canadian, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander. Canada's starting five might be able to stay with the five best Americans for a while, but bench strength would be our downfall in the end.

In baseball, Canada has a number of well known stars (Josh and Bo Naylor, Tyler O'Neill to name three) but in the upcoming World Baseball Classic, we're going to have our caps handed to us by the world powers such as the U.S., Japan, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

Still, considering the U.S. has about 10 times the population of Canada, our athletes do amazingly well in head-to-head competition. But the falloff of our women's hockey domination hurts.

• James Colgan of golf.com after the gold medal hockey game between Canada and the U.S.: "3 on 3 overtime to decide the Olympic gold medal is like bringing in the TGL arena to decide the Masters."

• Arpon Bssu of the Athletic, on Canada's performance in the gold medal hockey game against the U.S.: "Canada dominated the final 40 minutes of regulation, outshot the USA 42-28, and if that game were played 100 times, Canada would

probably win 95 of them."

• Sean McIndoe of the Athletic, wrapping up his Olympic men's hockey coverage: "Good morning to everyone except whoever decided to hand out stuffed animals to hockey players who've just lost the biggest game of their lives."

• Former MLB commissioner and Brewers' owner Bud Selig, on Bob Uecker's initial job as a scout for Milwaukee before transitioning to broadcasting: "The first scouting report Bob sent back here had mashed potatoes and gravy all over it."

• The late Notre Dame football coach Ara Parseghian: "A good coach will make its players see what they can be rather than what they are."

• Cathal Kelly of the Globe and Mail, on Nathan MacKinnon's missed opportunity in the gold-medal game against the U.S.: "... Nathan MacKinnon, 10 minutes to go in the third, with the puck on his stick at the side of a wide open net with

enough time to fill out a mortgage application and somehow missing."

• Kyle Porter of Normal Sport, after the PGA Tour said its lift, clean and place rule meant you could move a ball no more than the size of a scorecard: "When Patrick Reed finds out about this rule shift, he's going to show up with a scorecard the size of a winner's cheque."

• Bruce Coxon on X: "Best quote I heard from the Olympic hockey final: 'I'd rather be a Canadian with silver than an American with gold.'"

• Comedy writer Torben Rolfsen of Vancouver: "The American figure skating champion and Olympic favourite, Ilia Malinin, crashed out of his event and finished eighth. Who knew the 'Quad God' meant four mistakes?"

• Headline at the onion.com: "NHL Launches \$800 Marketing Campaign In Major Push To Attract New Fans"

Care to comment? Email brucepenton2003@yahoo.ca

LOCAL MATTERS.





Remember that time when **Amazon** sponsored your church fundraiser?

Remember when **Facebook** bought a case of Girl Guide cookies to support your daughter?

Remember when **Google** provided free pizza to your child's soccer team when they won the championship?



Neither do we!

Local businesses live here. They play here. They invest here. They need our support, now more than ever.



Canwood Library news highlights

By BEV WYATT

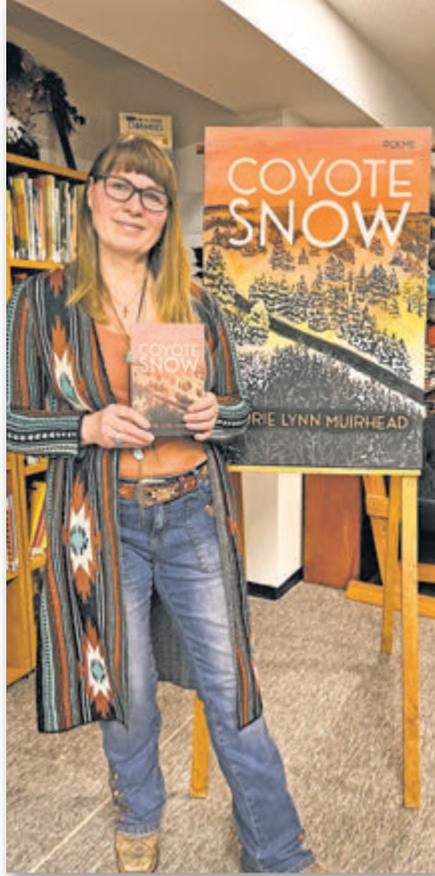
Canwood Library Board

Wapiti's Canwood Public Library was very busy throughout February.

Canwood Public School's Grade 5/6 students attended a very informative and educational Flag Day presentation at Canwood Library. Lester Wyatt, Legion service officer, spoke about the process used when deciding on a new flag in 1965 as well as many interesting facts about flags. Students left with more information about our history, Canadian flags, pins, and yummy snacks. An afternoon well spent!

The following week, Whispering Pine Place residents braved the cold and snow to attend another Flag presentation and watch the Parkland Fiddlers' "blast from the past" on video. A great time to reminisce.

Laurie Muirhead also graced the library with her readings from her latest book, *Coyote Snow*, at a very well-attended event in February. Many attendees could relate to her theme of winter on a prairie ranch and connections to the land. The library thoroughly enjoyed hosting this event!



Laurie Muirhead shared excerpts from her latest book, *Coyote Snow*.



Canwood students attended and enjoyed a Flag Day presentation.



Elders from Whispering Pine Place braved the cold and snow for a Flag Day presentation.

Shellbrook Library February activities

By EDDIE HOEHN
Branch Librarian

February was a fantastic month for the library. Participants exercised their creativity by making a foam heart at the Foam Valentine's Day Heart Craft on Thursday,



Drogen and Hazel with their construction paper hearts and cupcake toppers at the Cardstock Valentine's Day Heart and Cupcake Toppers Program.

Feb. 5. They glued the heart onto cardstock and made a picture with cotton balls, ribbons, discarded Battleship pegs, stickers, and sequins.

The kids were excited to participate in the Cardstock Valentine's Day Heart and Cupcake

Toppers Program on Thursday, Feb. 12. They made a cardstock and construction paper heart and cardstock heart shaped cupcake toppers with toothpicks and googly eyes.

The kids enjoyed creating a taxi or golf cart, an item of choice containing the majority of a random colour, and a pirate scene from legos at Lego Club in February. Volunteer Marj Bradley helped run Valentine's Day themed Lego Club on Tuesday Feb. 3. Participants created a Valentine's Day scene of choice.

In February, the kids had fun making valentines from construction paper, cotton balls, uncooked macaroni, stickers, and ribbons at Val-

entine's Day Storytime. Participants made Winnie the Pooh from a toilet paper roll and construction paper at Winnie the Pooh Storytime. One participant made a hef-

falump from playdough.

Volunteer Marj Bradley presented Luck Storytime on Friday Feb. 13th. Participants listened to Marj read "Amelia Bedelia Tries Her Luck," "The

Duck With No Luck," and "Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are?." They talked about lucky items, such as a penny on the ground, a wishbone, and four leaf clovers.



Participants with their valentine's creations for Valentine's Day Lego Club. Back row, left to right: Raelynn, Layla, Lizzy, Elijah, and Claire. Front row: Jordan and Theodore.

Knights of Columbus host free throw contest

By BRAD IVERSON
Knights of Columbus

The District Free Throw Competition was hosted by the Spiritwood Knights of Columbus Council #5353 on Monday, Feb. 23 at Spiritwood High School. A total of 38 youth from Spiritwood's three schools, along with students from Leoville school, participated for medals and the chance to go on to the Regional and Provincial competition in Prince Albert.

District Deputy, Mitch

Beaulac, was present to hand out the medals to the best score in each category. Participants ranged in age from nine to 14 years of age. Winners were as follows:

9 yrs (no girls entered);
Boys — Nathaniel Quilop
10 yrs: Girls — Tanille Rose;
Boys — Bennett Schmidt
11 yrs: Girls — Lacy Bovier;
Boys — Myron Crookedneck
12 yrs: Girls — Svea Hart;
Boys Drew Haggerty
13 yrs: Girls — Kasie Hoffman; Boys — Zayden Kotun
14 yrs: Girls — Jeil Rosal;
Boys — Hudson Schmidt.



Participants and winners in the District Free Throw Competition hosted by the Spiritwood Knights of Columbus.

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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
- PENTECOSTAL CHURCH**
Parkside
10:30 a.m. Worship
Pastor Lorne Valuck
306-747-3572
Shellbrook
Adult Study
9:30 a.m.
Sun., 10:30 a.m. - Worship
Rev. Jordan Clark
306-850-0429
Canwood
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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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- UNITED CHURCH**
Big River
Sundays
11 a.m. - Worship
at Anglican Church
Rev. Dave Whalley
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- ANGELICAN CHURCH**
Leask - All Saint's
Sunday Service - 9 am MP
St. Andrew's - Shellbrook
Sunday Service - 11 am MP
H.C. Service Nov. 30 with
Archdeacon Brody Albers
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11 a.m. in Shellbrook
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Big River
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- CATHOLIC CHURCH**
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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.
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St. Agatha's - Shellbrook
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St. Henry's - Leask
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Mistawasis
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Sat., 11:00 am -Worship
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- UNITED /ANGELICAN**
Worship Services
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Rev. Kun Kim
Rev. Don Skinner
- CATHOLIC SATURDAY**
Medstead - 6:00 p.m.
SUNDAY
Leoville - 9:30 a.m.
Spiritwood - 11:15 a.m.
Shell Lake - 2:00 p.m.
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- BETHEL**
Medstead
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Worship
Pastor David Jensen
4th Sunday, 10 am - Worship
Pastor David Jensen
- MENNONITE BRETHREN**
Glenbush
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- Gideons International of Canada**
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Shell Lake
Worship Services
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- LAKELAND COMMUNITY CHURCH**
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Minutes of an RM of Shellbrook meeting

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

Minutes of a regular meeting of Council of the Rural Municipality of Shellbrook No. 493 held on Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2026 in the Municipal Office Council Chambers at 71 Main Street Shellbrook, Sask.

Present at the meeting were Reeve Christine Strube, Councillors Levi Moore — Division 2, Kevin Bruce — Division 3, Jay Ferster — Division 4, Kris Moe — Division 5, and Ivan tenBos — Division, Administrator Duane Storey, and Administrative Assistant Alicia tenBos.

Absent was Councillor Tasha Cyr — Division 1.

Reeve Strube called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Delegations:

10 a.m.: Jay Meyer - RFNOW Internet

10:30 a.m.: Larry Kerr

Ferster: That the following item be added to the Agenda: 2026 Meeting Start Times. Carried

Bruce: That the Agenda be adopted as amended. Carried

tenBos: That the minutes of the Regular Meeting of Council held on Dec. 3, 2025, be approved as presented. Carried

Ferster: That the minutes of the Special Meeting of Council held on Dec. 3, 2025 be approved as presented. Carried

tenBos: That the Statement of Financial Activities for the month of December 2025 be accepted as presented. Carried

Bruce: That the List of Accounts for Approval dated Jan. 6, 2026, as attached hereto and forming part of these Minutes, being regular cheque numbers 15230-15245 in the

amount of \$57,735.09 and electronic fund transfers in the amount of \$113,484.73. Carried

Ferster: That the information in regards to the North Central Transportation Planning Committee workshop be received and filed. Carried

Councillor Ferster declared a conflict of interest and left the council chambers at 9:10 a.m.

tenBos: That the offer to purchase 3.13 Acre Parcel NW-21-50-03-W3 Blk/Par A - plan 101587710 Ext 12 in the amount of \$9,000.00 from Drew Ferster be approved. Carried

Division 4 Councillor Ferster returned to council chambers at 9:16 a.m.

tenBos: That the service agreement provided by RFNOW Internet be accepted contingent on lines being buried at minimum 2 meters deep. Carried

Ferster: That motion 327.12.25 Employee Wages 2026 be rescinded. Carried (*Editor's note: The motion called for council to approve the 2026 employee wage increases as recommended by the Human Resources Committee.*)

Bruce: That the updated Employee Wage increases for 2026 be approved as recommended by the Human Resources Committee. Carried

Jay Meyer RFNOW Internet joined the meeting by Zoom at 10:07 a.m. to discuss installing fibre internet in the municipality.

Jay Meyer left the meeting at 10:24 a.m.

Larry Kerr joined the meeting at 10:54 a.m. to discuss tax abatement.

Foreman Todd Lande entered the Council Chambers at 11:00a.m. to discuss municipal issues.

Larry Kerr left the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

tenBos: That pursuant to Section 113(1) of The Municipalities Act, it be noted that the Administrator's Bond was presented to the Reeve. Carried

Councillor Ferster declared a conflict of interest and left the council chambers at 11:44 a.m.

tenBos: That 3- High Speed Plow Blades be purchased from Sugarhill Farms Ltd at a cost of \$12,000.00 plus applicable taxes as per recommendation of the Equipment Committee. Carried

Division 4 Councillor Ferster returned to council chambers at 11:50 a.m.

Foreman Todd Lande left the Council Chambers at 12:15 p.m.

Ferster: That discussions in regards to Town Recreation be received and filed. Carried

Ferster: That a 2026 Sierra 2500 Pro Crew Cab be purchased from Shellbrook Chevrolet at a cost of \$71,914.50 plus applicable taxes as per recommendation of the Equipment Committee. Carried

tenBos: That the following be approved for the 2026 Beaver Control Grant: Travis Curran, Charles Schlitter, Timo Rudolph, Harvey Gosselin, Dallas Morrison, Terry Herzog, Ralph Harris, Wayne Diehl, Paul Slemming, and Erik Weberg. Carried

Ferster: That the information provided in regards to 3-year Tax Exemption be received and filed. Carried

Moore: That for the year 2026, the Reeve and each Councillor be insured under The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Act at the rate of \$39,170 per Council member. Carried

Ferster: That the purchase of a crimping machine be approved from

Peerless Engineering Solutions in the amount of \$5,485.38 plus applicable taxes. Carried

Ferster: That as per the recommendation of the Equipment Committee that the Theft of Vehicle Policy be adopted as presented. Carried

tenBos: That the Administrators Report for the month January 2026 be accepted as presented. Carried

Moe: That the Council Oral Reports for the month of January 2026 be accepted as presented. Carried

Moe: That the request for the tax's to be abated on NW-04-52-01-W3, Parcel B, Plan 101545084 be denied. Carried

Moe: That Laptop computer be purchased for all Council that request, to replace iPads. Carried

Moe: That Administration develop a Drug and Alcohol Policy. Carried

Moe: That the correspondence be received and filed. Carried

Moe: That the time being 2:02 p.m., Council close a portion of this meeting to the public to go in camera under the authority of Part III of The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, for strategic planning, the public gallery be vacated and those present for this closed session be Reeve Strube, Councillor Moore, Councillor Bruce, Councillor Ferster, Councillor Moe and Councillor tenBos. Carried

Administrator Storey and Administrative Assistant tenBos were excused from the meeting at 2:02 p.m.

Administrator Storey returned to the meeting at 2:37 p.m.

tenBos: That the regular Council meeting reconvene at 2:38 p.m. with all members of Council and Administration present.

Ferster: That the meeting be adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

How to start seeds

By **PATRICIA HANBIDGE**
Orchid Horticulture

The wonder of a tiny seed germinating and growing into a mature plant that gives us beauty or food. is simply amazing. It is an experience for everyone regardless of your age and level of experience. It is an even more important experience as it also gives the knowledge of how to grow at least some of your own food.

Growing your own plants from seed means that you can grow almost anything your heart desires. There is an amazing selection of different varieties and cultivars of plants that sometimes makes it rather difficult for us to decide what we should grow. It is easy to get carried away and grow too much as this time of year we are craving

green growth and those tiny little packets don't seem to hold that much! It is only once those plants get growing we see how a few seeds can easily grow into way too many plants! Instead of planting all the seeds in the package, only plant as many as you will need. Share the leftovers or store them in a cool, dry place.

In order to be successful starting seeds, it is useful to understand a little bit about the seed itself and what it

requires to germinate. Seeds are made up of an outer seed coat that protects the inner parts of the seed during dormancy. Inside the seed coat lies the endosperm which serves as the food supply that is essential for the early growth of the seedling. In the center of the seed is the embryo which is really a very minute undeveloped plant.

There are four things that seeds need to germinate. Water is essential for penetrating the

seed coat which causes the endosperm to swell. The water dissolves nutrients in the endosperm which are then available to the embryo and life begins! Some seeds need light in order to germinate while others do not. Oxygen is also necessary as the seed needs to respire in order to break down those nutrients in the endosperm. Last but not least, germination requires heat. Each seed will have an optimum germination temperature for the best rate of growth.

If you are new to starting seeds, then choose to grow those plants that are relatively easy to germinate and do not need special conditions. Most seed packages will give directions on how to plant those specific seeds. Generally, small seeds need not be covered

with soil but instead gently pressed into the media or soil. Medium seeds can be lightly covered and large seeds can be poked right into the soil. A good rule of thumb is to plant the seed to the depth of their diameter.

Keep the soil moist to ensure even germination whether you are seeding indoors or directly into the garden. Use a gentle spray to avoid washing the seeds around, or they may pool into dense clumps. Keep the humidity high until the seeds germinate by covering seed pots with plastic wrap. Once you see the plants germinate, uncover the seedlings to avoid conditions that are too wet for the new seedlings.

Once the seeds germinate those young seedlings will need adequate light in order to grow. Placing them direct-

ly under a fluorescent light fixture will ensure that the seedlings are strong and sturdy. If you find that your seedlings are tall and spindly it is because they are not getting enough light and are reaching for the sun.

As far as the time to plant any type of seed, it is most helpful if you look at when you might wish to put that plant outside. Do some research on how long that seed will take to germinate and look at the days until harvest? This will help you to estimate that best time to plant.

Hanbidge 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.



Basil seedlings.