

# Empire-Advance

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SEPTEMBER 6, 2024 | EMPIRE: VOL 120 NO 3 / ADVANCE: VOL 139 NO 5 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS

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## Bumper crop harvested for the hungry



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

There's excitement in an atmosphere filled with the dust of harvest and the roar of combines, the whirl of their chaff spreaders and the growl of tractors hauling gigantic grain carts out to take wheat 'on the go'.

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

As drivers, many with excited passengers, climb up into the combine cabs there's a sense of organized urgency to finally harvest this field of standing wheat. There's a lot riding on this day - Wednesday, Aug. 28.

It's a sunny afternoon in the Kola farm district after

all, but Don Neufeld, the farmer who organized a team that included 13 combines, six highway grain haulers and four grain carts had his doubts in the morning with dense fog and rain in the forecast. However, he'd postponed this day once already. It was go time.

*read more about the Kola Harvest on page 9...*

## Inside...



**GOLF MEMORIAL**  
*P7*



**ARTS MOSAIC DISPLAYS NEW ART**  
*P2*

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# Beauty is on display at CPR Station

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Laura Stenhouse, a self-taught artist from Elkhorn, is the featured artist in the CPR Station Historic Centre art gallery. This, her third show with Arts Mosaic is titled "Beauty Is Where You Find It." Her work will be on display until Sept. 19. Here, you will see a mixed-media show with various styles of painting, drawings and even a bit of pottery.

She drew inspiration for the show from her goal to always find the bits of beauty in everyday life, even where you wouldn't expect it.

The evening reception welcoming Stenhouse to the Virden gallery was held on Aug. 29. Vocalist Darrell Corbell, accompanying himself on guitar, entertained the crowd. Snacks were available, people visited and enjoyed the surrounding art.

Arts Mosaic administrator for the summer, Daelyn Fefchak, has returned to Brandon University for the 2024 fall term.

Alix Potrebka the new Station Manager at Arts Mosaic said of the reception, "We had an amazing turn out." Alix is originally from Winnipeg but moved to the Westman area last year. She says, "I started at Arts Mosaic in August and am very excited to get to know the town of Virden."



TOP: In the Station gallery, Laura Stenhouse stands beside several of her pieces featuring birds.



Darrell Corbell entertains at Arts Mosaic's reception for artist Laura Stenhouse



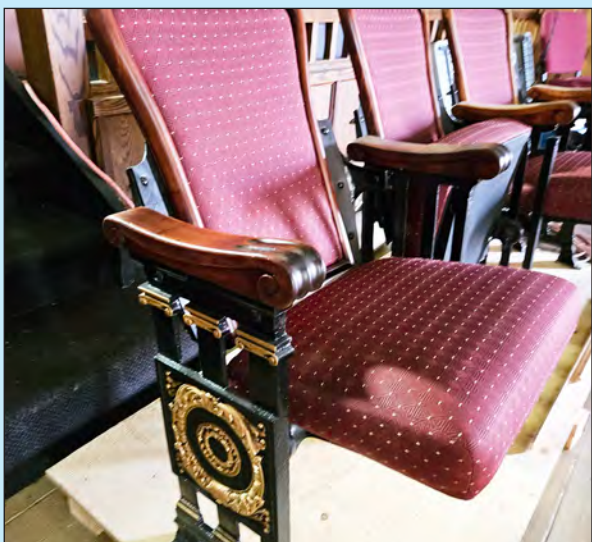
PHOTOS BY ALIX POTREBKA

The crowd enjoys a snack at the reception welcoming "Beauty Is Where You Find It"

## CORRECTION:

Aud Theatre in Threes of Renovation, page 1, Aug. 30 edition

In error we listed the budget for Phase 1 renovations in the Aud Theatre at \$100,000. The Budget for Phase 1 is actually \$450,000.





## ELKHORN ELKS

# WESTERN WEEKEND

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The **Elkhorn Elks # 381** would like to thank ALL the community groups, and volunteers that helped us with ALL aspects of our **Western Weekend 2024.**

**Big Shout Out to the Manitoba Pro Chariot & Chuckwagon Association for again bringing their teams and families to town for some GREAT racing (wish we would have been able to get Sunday races in).**

**A special thanks to our sponsors and calcutta buyers for helping us to ensure we have the funds to pay for the prize money to ensure a successful weekend!**



# HELEN DRYSDALE

## OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

"Sharing the fruits of one's labor with neighbors and friends is the heart of gardening."

My mom introduced me to gardening when I was young. As we gardened the stories she told of what her parents/ grandparents grew connected me to gardening and certain plants. There was some of the not-so-fun stuff too, like the weeding, which seemed never ending. That aspect seemed to be soon forgotten when you ate your first meal of fresh corn, tomatoes etc. People often say to me "why do you put so much work into gardening when you can buy the fruits and veggies at the store." Well, gardening is a journey filled with challenges, surprises, fresh air, vitamin D, exercise, and connecting with nature every day. It's about getting your hands dirty, nurturing life, and the satisfaction of growing your own fruits and vegetables that are chemical free. It's about the pleasure I feel when I pick a ripe tomato or bite into a freshly harvested cucumber.

When it comes to eating vegetables, your mom was right. They're good for you. Vegetables are a staple food across the world and are an important part of agriculture. They're low in calories, high in nutrients however no single fruit or vegetable provides all of the nutrients you need every day. Variety in vegetables is the key.

### Garden harvest casserole

- 3 cloves crushed garlic
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1/4 cup oil
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper

1 tsp. Dash or fresh herbs of choice like dill, basil or cilantro

Mix together in a large greased casserole dish your choice of vegetables: quartered potatoes, carrot pieces, pieces of prepared squash, onions, red peppers, cabbage wedges, zucchini slices, green beans, eggplant slices, celery sticks and turnip pieces. In a small pot add the garlic, broth, oil, and seasonings. Pour over vegetables. Cover with foil. Bake at 350 F for one hour or until tender. Stir once during cooking.

### Vegetable stew

- 1 Tbsp. oil
- 1 onion, peeled and sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely diced
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 small red pepper, diced
- 2 potatoes, washed and diced
- 2 cups hot vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 tsp. fresh basil or 1/2 tsp. dried
- 1 tsp. fresh oregano or 1/2 tsp. dried
- 398 mL can diced tomatoes
- 540 mL can kidney beans, drained
- 3 Tbsp. chopped parsley

Heat the oil in a large pan, add the onion and garlic and sauté for 5 minutes. Add the other vegetables. Pour in the stock, basil and oregano, canned tomatoes; bring to a boil, cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Stir in the beans and cook for another 5 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. Sprinkle the vegetable stew with chopped parsley and serve.

**FAITH &  
FAMILY**  
**TARA  
KAUENHOFEN**



"Wow! Four boys! You have your hands FULL", something I hear almost every time I am in public, their faces a mix of fascination and shock! Sometimes there is pity in the mix, sometimes there is joy and happiness for me; and other times yet; My personal favourite. People ask if we had them all just to get a girl. So I muster up a smile and try to come up with a polite response that will satiate their curiosity about this one moment of my life.

So much of which they don't see and never will. This is the iceberg effect.

People see you starting something new that you've never talked about before and are shocked and think you're a completely different person than you were before, or see you road raging in your vehicle and think you're unkind, they see you lose your cool on your kids and think you're a bad parent, or they see you with your four boys and wonder if you know how they are made and if you had that many simply to keep trying for a different gender. But what they don't see is the hundreds of feet below the surface of the iceberg of your life. They don't see that the choice you didn't share until you made it, took countless months, prayers cried out, worrying and wondering and waiting for God to show you the right path for your family, they don't see that maybe you just got off a phone call where you found out your loved one isn't coming home from the hospital before you started driving and were angry, they don't see that you're spouse works 2 weeks on and 2 weeks off and you've been a single parent for two weeks and you are at the end of your rope with your fighting kids, they don't see that you've found out the gender of every baby you've had with brief moments of disappointment only to realise you can't imagine your life with anything but boys and are blessed beyond measure to have them.

We see one moment. We see a wave crashing over the surface that is the iceberg of someone's life and We make a snap judgement based on that one wave. Without knowing the depth of the situation, the weight and strength of the undercurrents of life, threatening to pull us deeper.

We. see. One. moment.

I want to challenge you with this.

The next time you see someone's 'wave' crash, Remember all the below the surface experiences YOU have tread water through to get where you are, and choose in that moment to give grace upon grace as Jesus gave us.

# Letter to the Editor

RE: Air Training site, Empire-Advance, Aug. 30, by Kate Craig

In June, of 1944, we moved to our new farm location in the RM of Woodworth. The Air Training site was still quite busy, training new pilots for the RCAF.

Although none of the original buildings remain on site, many of the buildings were salvaged through War assets and homes were established in Virden.

In 1948-49, I worked for FA France Construction, who was one of the builders involved. Other buildings were bought by farmers and used as sheds, animal shelters, etc.

The Central Hotel in Virden has a wonderful display of Airport memories (from 80 years ago).

Virden also had Air Cadets, (Nov. 1942 - Aug. 1948) called the Tiger Squadron.

Gone, but not Forgotten.

John Fefchak  
Virden, MB

**Greg NESBITT**  
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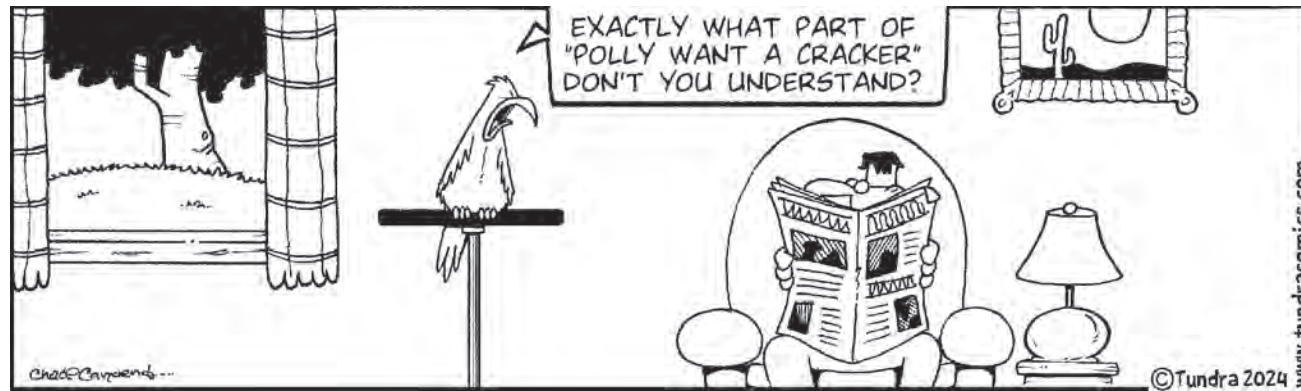
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# Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



## The old outhouse...

The reality is that not many truly remember the regular use of an outdoor bathroom. I am truly feeling my age! There are those of you who recall the privy at the cottage, or one at a rest stop while traveling, but I'm thinking about the one that was used every day, many times a day, before indoor plumbing.

The descriptions of homes on the market these days often advertise two full baths, one and half bath at the more modest, right up to as many bathrooms as there are bedrooms. The full definition of privilege. I'm thinking about back when having a solid wooden structure in the back yard that had a door that could be latched-hook and eye or swivel block of wood- frequently a crescent shaped opening in the door, and a place to perch, fairly securely depending on the size of your bottom, and paper to finish up the procedure. A two seater, one hole child sized, was the deluxe model. My generation has countless tales to tell of outhouse adventures. Being locked in by a sibling, or a less than well thought out manoeuvre, being accompanied by flies and even worse, wasps, being scared to make the journey in the dark but it was summer and there was no other option!

Again, not even all of my generation lived with the outdoor biffy. Some of you were town kids. We have stories of outdoor toilets being tipped on Halloween, creating some smelly scenes. We recall the wonder of store bought toilet paper replacing torn up newspaper pages and the wonder of the soft green tissue used to wrap Christmas oranges as we called them. Always dreading them when one needed to resort to catalogue pages or smooth paper!

Couple of personal stories. I was under the age of eight, had just had mud bath and hair washed and I needed to use the bathroom, perhaps thirty yards from the house, near the tree line. As I was on my way, a swallow, protecting her nest, swooped down and used my head as her outhouse. Needless to say there were tears and shrieks of horror, and a repeat of the hair washing. One of my uncles was a rather strong willed gentleman-heck, a lot of them were! But this one decided one summer Saturday morning that, as was their custom, they (he and his wonderful wife) would be emptying the outhouse reservoir. He would be dipping and scooping and all she had to do was carry the buckets away, empty them and repeat the process. One problem, there was a wedding that afternoon that they were planning to attend. No problem for my uncle! They had time to get it done, bath and socialize. Did I mention it was a hot summer day? My aunt, bless her soul and spirit, complied, but all the bathing and additional fragrances could not completely mask the underlying odour. With that wonderful deep laugh of hers, she told, and retold that story for years.

So I have a three bedroom, one bath home, and every day I am thankful for the water running into the home, and out!

## Fixing the problem

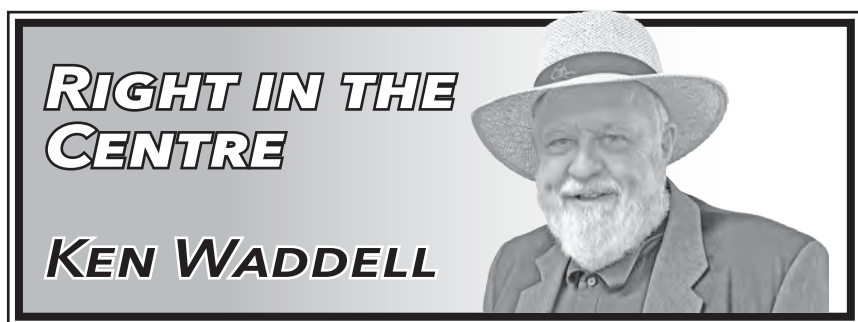
Twice a year, we can be assured that food and nutrition shortages are raising their ugly head in communities across Manitoba. Each Christmas season, we are reminded of an ever increasing need for food and money donations to the local food banks and hamper programs. Now that schools are back in session, we are reminded of an increasing number of students who go to school hungry. To both these situations, I say let's wholeheartedly support them and make sure no one goes hungry. It's just the right thing to do.

In a food exporting province, that scenario is a bit ironic. But it's not the supply that is wanting, it's the affordability that seems to be the problem. There is no doubt that food has become much more expensive.

However, while we are feeding the needy, it's important that we look at the way family or individual budgets are not meeting the nutritional requirements.

Genuine shortages of money may be the problem but it's not the whole answer. Let's take a look at how these tough situations can be made better. Maybe "tough situation" is a wrong description, perhaps tough decisions might be a better response. Making financial decisions can be tough, but maybe not as tough as we think.

I believe there are a lot of kids' situations that could be improved by families spending money a bit smarter. How many cups of take-out coffee are being bought, or take-out food for that matter? Is the grocery cart loaded with good food and ingredients to make good food? I truly hope that grocery carts for homes that need to have their kids fed by school programs and food banks,



don't have bags of dog and cat food in them. Hopefully, there aren't cases of bottled water, pop, cigarettes and alcohol in the shopping cart either. In addition, take a walk up and down the store shelves and make a list of what we can really use and it will likely be a lot shorter list than what is available.

While sitting around the kitchen table and pondering how to afford more and better food, is there an expensive vacation bill among the various bills and payments due. Are there two car payments or one. Are the chosen vehicles fancier and decked out beyond family needs.

On a side note, one of my sons says that he won't take climate change people seriously until there's clothes line being used regularly in every backyard. Using a clothesline would save a significant amount of electricity.

But back to the food chain. As we read this column, there a literally tonnes of apples falling on the ground that are not being made into canned apples sauce, pie filling or juice. There are likely more vegetables being left to rot in the ground than what are being harvested.

In towns and cities across Canada there are hundreds of thousands of 5-7 pound packages of meat strutting around our parks, lakes and fields.

They are called Canada Geese and it certainly can't be argued that we are short of Canada Geese.

The same could be said about white-tail deer. Autopac could save some collision money by putting a bounty on harvested deer if they are delivered to a food bank.

Not everybody can or should raise chickens but it can be done and is being done by many families. Too bad small towns won't let families have half a dozen laying hens. Oh, sorry, chickens smell bad.

If families could get rid of unproductive debt, there would be more money for food purchases, food preparation and even food production

How about farm yards, huge lawns and parks. Many of us older farm people can remember when front yards and gardens were small fenced areas and the horses, cows, sheep and pigs grazed the areas around a farm yard where we now grow and mow acres of grass. Those wide expanses of grassy areas are pretty but totally unproductive.

So what's the point of all this? First, feed the kids, feed the poor, but for the sake of all of us in our communities let's look at more economical, practical and productive ways of saving money, producing food and increasing economic and food security in all our homes.

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# How can people not be skeptical of a government that refuses to hear any argument for adding an MRI now?

**Submitted**  
JEFF BEREZA, MLA

Whether you believe the current government has made progress on the healthcare file or not, it's worthwhile to note that fixing healthcare is something every party running in every election promises to do.

In the same way no one political governing party is responsible for breaking the healthcare system, no one party will be able to fix it. But there are certainly things that any governing party can and should do to, if not fix, at least improve healthcare for Manitobans. One of those things is to shorten wait times for surgeries and diagnostic tests.

We've all heard many stories about the wait time for knee and hip surgeries in Manitoba. There is no doubt that the people waiting on these surgeries are in severe pain that affects their quality of life and ability to function.

Then there are the wait times for diagnostic tests like MRIs.

Currently, over 24,000 Manitobans are waiting for an MRI.

An MRI can find tumors that may or may not be cancerous, and is very good at pinpointing certain cancers.

An MRI scan can also help diagnose strokes, aneurysms, spinal issues and other injuries.

Delays in obtaining an MRI can negatively impact a patient's treatment plan and affect long-term outcomes.

The Government of Ontario is adding 100,000 more MRI and CT scans per year for this very reason – the equivalent of over 10 MRI scanners. Early detection of cancers and other conditions not only saves lives, but also reduces greater pressure on the healthcare system down the road.

Why then, does the NDP government refuse to install an MRI scanner in the brand new, \$450 million, state of the art Regional Healthcare Facility currently under construction in Portage la Prairie?

The NDP will tell you the former PC government chose NOT to include an MRI in the plan based on the number of scans required in the area each year, but it is the NDP that continue to say no, even after hearing from 35 local doctors.

The problem is that Manitoba Health has no idea how many people miss their MRI appointments. We don't know what the number is because it isn't tracked. But it is high enough that 35 local doctors have raised

their concerns about their patients' missed appointments with Manitoba Health.

According to these physicians, patients miss their appointments for a variety of reasons. Some people don't have a driver's license or a vehicle. Others are afraid to drive in poor weather conditions. Still more don't have anyone willing to take them to their appointment, or if they do, they can't afford to pay for gas. And then there are those who simply want to access healthcare where they live, rather than many hours away.

The NDP need to listen to the doctors and the residents of Portage. Adding an MRI scanner to a brand-new facility, a proactive measure that will ensure more Manitobans can access healthcare close to home, simply makes sense.

Additional capacity created by the MRI could also be used by the thousands of patients who are able and waiting in Winnipeg, with a shorter drive than being sent to Brandon or Winkler for a test.

Then there is the fact that Manitoba Health wouldn't have to pay for the scanner, because the Portage District General Hospital Foundation has generously pledged \$5 million to fund it.

How can people not be skeptical of a government that refuses to hear any argument for adding an MRI now? A government who refuses to even meet with local doctors, citizens, funders, or the elected MLA to discuss this urgent information? A government that ignores a \$5 million-dollar donation that would eliminate the cost to taxpayers?

Was the former PC government wrong to not include an MRI? Maybe. But, the NDP have the benefit of hindsight, steadfastly refusing to change course in the face of new information is irresponsible. They may be listening, but are they hearing?

I would suggest the 24,562 Manitobans waiting on



PHOTO BY METRO CREATIVE

an MRI don't care about the politics surrounding a new MRI machine. They just want to receive their test in a timely manner. An MRI in the Portage la Prairie Regional Healthcare Facility isn't a win for the NDP or the PCs, but it would be a win for Manitobans.

## Miniota News

**Submitted**  
BY LINDA CLARK

Beautiful weather had swathers, combines and balers running hard this Labour Day Weekend. I hope everyone enjoyed the long weekend.

Ross and Brenda Rowan are pleased to welcome a new granddaughter, Eloise Elizabeth Victoria on Aug. 28, born to Adrienne Rowan and Jared Hamelin and big brother Max at Brandon. Congratulations to you all!

"Every child deserves someone who loves them like crazy, celebrates them everyday, and is their lifelong cheerleader." -Eldon Dueck

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# Back-to-School TIME

## How families can get ready for a new school year

### Submitted

By METRO CREATIVE

Children will soon be trading in the chimes of neighborhood ice cream trucks for the bells of school as summer vacation gives way to the start of a new academic year. August through September is prime back-to-school season, with children all across the country stocking their backpacks and shopping for new school wardrobes.

There is more to getting ready for the start of school than making sure pencils are sharpened and tablets are charged. Parents and children can work together to ensure the transition back to the classroom is as seamless as possible.

### Adjust sleep and wake times

Summervacation often means letting loose of schedules for a while, and that may translate into later-than-normal bedtimes and rising a little later in the morning. Everyone in the household will have to reacquaint themselves with schedules that ensure kids get to school on time. A few weeks before the first day of school, start incrementally going to bed at an earlier time and start waking up earlier each morning. Try to plan out the increments so that by the time the last few days of summer vacation wind down, the family is on target with a waking schedule that mirrors the school schedule.

### Acclimate to being around people

Although summervacation may involve trips that bring children in contact with other people, it may have been some time since they've spent five or more hours per day around 20 to 30 people their age. It may take a transition period to get used to being around a bunch of peers, so families can visit places where there tend to be crowds of kids, such as zoos, aquariums, parks, and trampoline centers. These can be low-pressure locations to dust off social skills.

### Know the route or plan for school transportation

Students may be driven independently, ride the school bus, walk or bike, or carpool with others to and from school. Families can establish plans so that getting to and from school is not something kids need to worry about. Practice routes and timing, taking into consideration



PHOTO BY METRO CREATIVE

that when schools open there will be much more traffic. Parents can reassure children that there will be a learning curve, but all of the kinks generally get worked out during the first week.

### Avoid "summer slide"

Most students don't want to think about studying, homework and testing while on summer break, but it can be beneficial to stay current on some lessons. Summer slide refers to the loss of some of the learning achieved during the previous school year over the summer break. Some experts say summer slide is overstated, but it can't hurt for students to refresh their memories on some math, science and language arts concepts over break so that they will be

ready to hit the books when the new school year begins.

### Prep for school lunches

Children and adults can work together to map out healthy eating options for school lunch. Many school districts have lunch plans that can be purchased through an online account. Participating students simply enter a number or swipe a code at checkout. School lunches are built to be nutritionally diverse and have options that even picky eaters will like.

School is right around the corner, and families should get ready for the routine and needs that go with the academic year as the first day draws closer.

## One offender hits four locations

### Westman RCMP Service Report, Aug. 31, 2024

### Submitted

By WESTMAN RCMP

During this week Westman RCMP received a total of 108 calls for service. Of the 108, 28 were traffic related including 13 moving traffic – speeding violations. Also included in the calls for service were 3 disturbing the peace/cause disturbance files, 6 suspicious person/vehicle/property files, 8 false alarms, 3 mischief files, 5 wellbeing checks, 3 break and enter files, 3 assault files, 2 discharge firearm files and 4 mental health act files.

On Aug. 25 RCMP were dispatched to a report of a male sleeping in a bathroom stall at the rest top on Highway 1, near the Saskatchewan border. Police attended but did not locate anyone.

On Aug. 28 during a routine traffic patrol on Highway 1 in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 143 km/hr in a 110 km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted, and driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for speed-

ing, which carries a fine of \$482.

On Aug. 28 RCMP were notified about some damage to a fence in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, that had occurred on Aug. 21. There was an e-bike left at the scene of the damaged fence. The e-bike was later confirmed to have been stolen earlier in the day from the community of Cromer. The bike was returned to the owner. Later that evening police received a report of a stolen truck, taken from a farmyard in the RM of Pipestone. This vehicle was spotted in Virden

later that evening, but the driver fled from police. Video surveillance was able to confirm that these incidents were related. Police continue to investigate.

On Aug. 28 during a routine traffic patrol on Highway 1 in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 126 km/hr in a 100 km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted, and driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for speeding, which carries a fine of \$391.

On Aug. 28 RCMP conducted a check stop on Highway 21 in the RM of Sifton. Members checked over 40 vehicles ensuring sobriety and proper licensing. Through this check stop, 5 tickets were issued. Illegal tobacco and alcohol being transported illegally were secured and disposed of locally.

On Aug. 29 RCMP were dispatched to the settlement of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation for a report of a male who had been shot but was not bleeding. Police attended and through speaking to witnesses and reviewing surveillance, determined that the man had been hit by what police believe to be either a pipe or a hammer. A 19-year-old male was arrested and



charged with assault with a weapon and possession of a weapon for dangerous purpose. He remains in custody at this time.

To report a complaint or non-emergent incident to RCMP please call 204-748-2135. For general inquiries or administrative requests including criminal record checks please call the administration line at 204-748-2046 Ext. 3. If you are reporting an emergency please call 911.



# Ladies' golf club pay tribute to Ethel



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Ethel was born into the Barkley family. She had no children, but here her siblings, nieces and nephews, all from Virден area, are gathered on Hole No. 9 of Wellview Golf where her plaque is installed.

**Submitted**

CHARLENE AUSTIN, LADIES GOLF CLUB

Golfers will see a plaque at the ninth hole on Wellview Golf course, a memorial to a dedicated lady golfer. It's been installed to memorialize Ethel Karwandy, a longtime member of the Wellview Golf Club and a dedicated member of Virден Ladies Golf Club who faithfully planted and tended the ninth hole flower bed.

Ethel passed away in 2023 and the Ladies Senior

Golf Club along with members of her family gathered recently at the location of the plaque to remember Ethel's enjoyment of and contribution to Virден's course.

A brief ceremony there included a speech:

"She was a longtime member of the Virден Ladies Golf Club; volunteering her time to phone the list of members, to let everyone know about meetings and collecting membership fees.

"She had lots of coffee shop stories and would always end by saying, 'Don't quote me on that.' She was very

sociable and could strike up a conversation with anyone, that ended with her laugh.

"She was very diligent at picking up all the broken tees off of every tee box. She believed that walking on the edge of the cups on the green gave the ball a better chance of dropping in the hole. (Sorry Jason [course groundskeeper] to tell you that.) Those were a couple of her idiosyncrasies that we have all had a chuckle over many times. There are still a few of us who do it to this day. She taught us well!

"We all noticed how she struggled after she had her cataracts done and her golf game suffered. She was not one to give up. Like most of us, she was just happy to be out here.

"This #9 flower bed was her pride and joy for many years. She tended it with loving care. She filled the trunk of her car with pails of dirt and flowers and was very faithful to keep them watered and weeded. We have two girls trying to fill her shoes, looking after this flower bed.

"When we tee off on #9, we aim for the pumpjack and Ethel's flower bed. It is the best position to be, on the fairway. So, we will continue to aim for this flower bed, for the rest of our golfing days.

# The Manitoba Wildlife Federation Begins Legal Proceedings Against Province

**Submitted**

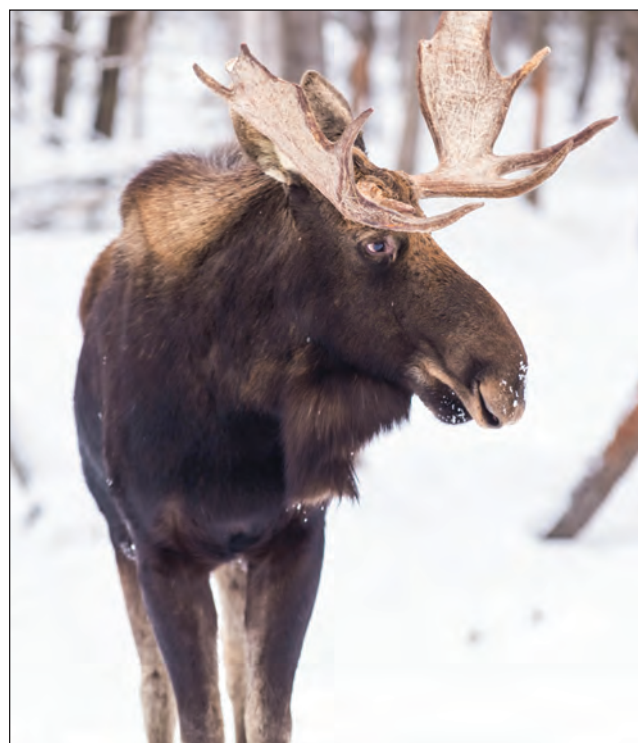
MANITOBA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

The Manitoba Wildlife Federation (MWF) has filed an application with the Court of King's Bench seeking to overturn the provincial government's decision to arbitrarily reduce moose hunting opportunities for licensed hunters.

On June 17, 2024, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakinak (MKO) representatives met with the Manitoba Premier and several Ministers, demanding a ban on the moose hunting "draw" seasons for licensed hunters in northern Manitoba, and that the Province order its Conservation Officers to cease enforcement of violations by Indigenous community members. By June 20, licensed hunters were notified that the provincial big game draw was halted and on July 11, the province announced a 75 percent reduction of moose tags available to licensed hunters in 4 Game Hunting Areas.

Chris Heald, MWF Senior Policy Advisor, says the process that led to the announcement was not transparent, inclusive or science-based. "The MWF represents Manitoba's licensed hunters, and we were not consulted on the decision. All Manitobans should be included in these kinds of discussions," said Heald.

Carly Deacon, Managing Director of the MWF stated that the decision appears to have been made for political, rather than scientific reasons: "What data was this decision based on? Does the Province have any data on how many moose are being harvested by Indigenous hunters?" We know there is no recent survey data for that region and only licensed hunters are required to report moose harvest data" added Deacon. MWF legal counsel sought answers to these questions and requested that the province provide justification for their decision but received no response.



FILE PHOTO

MWF will always take any steps necessary to defend all Manitobans' outdoor heritage and right to hunt in this province. As Carly Deacon explained: "The Manitoba hunters we represent are deeply invested in conservation, management, and outdoor traditions, and have always been at the table in discussions on sustainable big game management. We are hopeful that the courts will overturn this unjust decision, and that the provincial government will be forced to take a more collaborative and inclusive approach to managing our province's precious natural resources.

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# Elkhorn United Church enjoys outdoor picnic at Elkhorn Memorial Park



Elkhorn United Church held an outdoor service and picnic at the Elkhorn Memorial Park on Sunday, July 28. Ed Clayton played hymns on the violin and Cheryl Sisson performed the service. They sang old favourites and then had a fantastic potluck lunch. A good time was had by all.



## Roast beets, easy and tasty



PHOTO BY MORGANN HUNTER

Dillon Hunter of Kenton had an excellent beet crop this year and is ready for many beet recipes.



### Public Notice - Board of Revision

Public Notice is hereby given that the assessment roll for the R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth for the year 2025 is available at the R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth. It will be open for public inspection during regular business hours. The Board of Revision will sit to hear applications for revision of assessment on **Tuesday, October 8, 2024** commencing at **9:00 a.m.** at the **R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth Council Chambers, 154023 P.R. 257, Virden, Manitoba (corner of 83 Hwy & PR257).**

Applications for revision may be made in accordance with Sections 42 and 43 of the Municipal Assessment Act which in part, are as follows:

#### APPLICATION FOR REVISION

**42 (1)** A person in whose name property has been assessed, a mortgagee in possession of property under subsection 114 (1) of the Real Property Act, an occupier of premises who is required under the terms of a lease to pay the taxes on the property, the authorized agent of the person, mortgagee or occupier, or the Assessor may make application for the revision of an assessment roll with respect to the following matters:

- (a) Liability to taxation;
- (b) Amount of an assessed value;
- (c) Classification of property; or
- (d) Refusal by an Assessor to amend the assessment roll under subsection 13 (2).

#### APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

**43 (1)** An application for revision must

- (a) Be made in writing;
- (b) Set out the roll number and legal description of the assessable property for which a revision is sought;
- (c) Set out which of the matters referred to in subsection 42 (1) are at issue, and the grounds for each of those matters; and
- (d) Be filed by:
  - (i) Delivering it or causing it to be delivered to the office indicated in the public notice given under subsection 41 (2) or
  - (ii) Serving it upon the secretary, at least 15 days before the scheduled sitting date of the Board as indicated in the public notice.

The board shall not consider applications which do not comply with the above.

**The deadline for filing applications is 5:00 p.m., Monday, September 23, 2024.**

Dated the 3rd day of September, 2024.

R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth  
Board of Revision  
Box 2200, Virden, MB R0M 2C0

www.wallace-woodworth.com | 204-748-1239 | info@wallace-woodworth.com

### Submitted

EMPIRE-ADVANCE STAFF

It's time to start harvesting root crops, whether you eat them for dinner or want to prep these nutritional staples for future eating in the weeks and months to come. From soup or borscht to salads, pickles, and juices, beets are unbeatable for flavour and nutrition.

Beets are naturally low in calories but contain lots of nutrients. Renowned for their healthful properties, the beet root is rich in nutrients such as Vitamins A and C, calcium, iron, phosphorus, potassium, antioxidants,

folic acid, and fiber.

While hot buttered beets are a treat, roasted beets are simple and for those who love beetroots, you may also love this no-peeling-required roasted beet recipe. If you don't enjoy beets (yet), this roasting method just might change your mind.

These roasted beets feature lightly caramelized, tender-but-not-quite-crisp exteriors and deep, condensed flavor.

With this method, simply scrub the beets well before baking. No need to peel before

or after baking. The skin, which is perfectly edible, just seems to disappear during the baking process.

Pan-roasted beets need a moderate temperature of 375 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Cook Time: 40 minutes**

Start them early to make this beautiful side dish. Simply slice the raw beets and lay them out, preferably on parchment on a cookie sheet. For additional flavour add a tiny daube of butter to each beet piece and bake for 40 minutes.

These are nice served with goat cheese and fresh chopped basil.



# Bumper crop harvested for the hungry



Lucas Ens and children Stefan (hat) and Heidi climb into the combine where passenger seats await the youngsters.



PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

Don Neufeld thanks the many volunteers and sponsors. In the background BDO and Sunrise Credit Union crew are ready to serve lunch.

*continued from page 1*

Volunteers helping with the Cross Border Growing Project reaped 252 acres of what turned out to be a No. 1 grade, high protein wheat crop. The work of organizing this and the effort of those who brought their equipment and those who manned it was rewarded as 1888 bushels were hauled to the elevator. Neufeld said,

“We’re very thankful!” This was a bumper crop yielding 74.9 bu. per acre.

It was a race with the weather, but the last bushel was off before rain began at 6 p.m.

Traditionally, this harvest begins with a noon barbecue. The morning moisture dries from the crop while the collection of harvesting machinery assembles and dozens gather for a field picnic at

the Cross Borders Growing Project yard site near Kola, about 25 minutes west of Virden.

Jan Neufeld works alongside her husband Don in organizing the picnic and their sponsors. Don thanked the community businesses and individuals whose help provides the meal - what he called “the fun part.”

Picnic tables are courtesy of Tundra Oil & Gas

Virden office. A crew of cooks and servers are lined up, six staff from BDO and five staff from Sunrise Credit Union.

HyLife Pork supplied the meat, Renards Meat Services cooked it. There was a donation bucket nearby, but this is a free meal for the community and the volunteers to enjoy together before the work begins.

Before the meal began,

Don recognized the many farm service businesses, equipment dealers and local farmers whose contributions are behind this harvest for the hungry.

Gordon Janzen, regional representative for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, was called upon to provide information to the public about how this growing project helps mitigate world hunger, and to offer up a prayer

before the meal.

Families lined up, neighbours visited, and as soon as they’d swallowed their last bite, children set off to explore.

When the harvest crew headed for their equipment, family members follow, taking photos and even getting a ride. The yearly Kola harvest is an occasion that kids in particular will not forget.

## Manitoba Youth Job Center

Submitted  
By BRIANNA DEAN

The Manitoba Youth Job Center has 11 locations throughout the province. Virden’s location is located here at the Virden Employment Skills Center (VESC). The MYJC serves all communities within the RM’s of Pipestone, Wallace Woodworth, and Sifton. They are open from May-August for youth 13-29. They are here to help with all your career and employment needs. They offer a variety of job application services including assistance in job searching, resume/cover letter building, and interview prep.

The Manitoba Youth Job Center (MYJC) helps employees find jobs, and employers find new hires. They offer workshops focused on career development and improving essential skills needed in the workforce. Some of the workshops include topics on working memory, team building, how to do successful group projects, how to communicate professionally, and what to expect on your first day of work.

Virden’s MYJC location prides itself on the success and accomplishments of the Odd Job Squad (OJS). The OJS gives opportunities to youth who have had little-to-no-experience working, or volunteering. They are a group of 13-16+ year olds doing various paid and voluntary jobs throughout the summer. Whether it’s for an hour or an afternoon, the OJS are willing to go far and wide to get the job done. Think of them as your local neighbourhood kids, ready to help you when you need them.

The Odd Job Squad program highly encourages initiative and leadership in its members. The youth plan and organize the events. They decide when and where they want them to happen. The Youth Engagement Leader challenges the OJS members to advocate for themselves and encourages them to express their ideas and opinions during meetings.

The Odd Job Squad has volunteered with Oak Lake’s Ag Society for their annual fair, painted benches and picnic tables at Eternal Springs, and joined forces with the Valleyview Co-op and Border Regional Library to do an Under-the-Sea Arts and Crafts event. They are always ready to lend a helping hand. Ask the OJS to volunteer at your next community event.

The Odd Job Squad has completed over 18 events this summer and is planning on coming back next summer. Some of the most successful events have been painting, yard work and window cleaning. They’ve painted benches, decks, and siding. They can help you plant and maintain your garden, by weeding, raking and transplanting flowers when needed. Dirty windows? They have you covered. The OJS has their own supplies which means one less thing on your plate. With their squeegees that can reach the highest windows in your house, and microfibre cloths to leave them streak-free, the OJS is ready for anything. For all your odd jobs, the Odd Job Squad has got you covered. Available for business or personal hire. Keep the Odd Job Squad in mind for next summer. They are available for hire May-August.

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# SPORTS

## LOCALS HELP U13 MAGIC AT HISTORY-MAKING TOURNAMENT

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Four area athletes competed with the host Westman Magic in the history making U13 AAA Western Canadian Softball Championships.

The event, held in Brandon Aug. 1-4, was the first ever of its kind for that age group. Virden's Hadley Robertson and Georgia Koop as well as Zaree Routledge of the Rural Municipality of Wallace-Woodworth and Evie McAdam from the R.M. of Sifton suited up for the host Magic. Former Kenton/Lenore area resident Kari Ellis was the team's manager and part of the organizing committee.

"I was most proud of our mental resilience," head coach Stewart McMillan said of the team's performance at the event. "Every time that we lost a game, the girls did a good job of moving on from that and came back to the next game with a positive attitude and ready to play. Our strong hitting and aggressive baserunning scored us a lot of runs as well over the weekend."

The Magic was 3-3 in the round robin portion of the event. They were knotted with the Moose Jaw Ice for fourth place with the top four teams making the playoffs. The Magic and Ice played a tiebreaker contest. The Moose Jaw team won and advanced to the playoffs, while the Magic finished fifth.

Robertson was the team's top pitcher. McMillan said she won the Magic many games throughout the season. "She's also extremely fast and got on base well all season,"



SUBMITTED PHOTO

the coach said. "She did a great job wherever she was asked to play this year, including pitcher, centrefield, or second base or shortstop."

Koop was the team's main shortstop. She also saw time at third base.

"At Westerns, she did a really great job of getting on base and being patient at the plate and drawing a lot of walks," McMillan said.

Routledge was the team's leadoff hitter. She was one of its three main catchers.

"She is one of those really smart and athletic players that can play anywhere on the field and you're confident she

will get the job done," McMillan said. "She is a great contact hitter that can also surprise you with a bunt to get on base. She had the most hits all season of anyone on the team."

McAdam was another one of the Magic's main catchers. McMillan said she is "one of those players that really rises to the occasion in pressure situations." He noted she was one of the team's best hitters during the provincial and Western Canadian tournaments.

"During Westerns, I saw her at first base almost every time she stepped up to the plate," McMillan said. "She also has the fastest bat speed of anyone on the team. She hits the ball very hard."

## SPORTS NOTES: OIL CAPS HOST FALL CAMP



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

Garry Remple, holding the Garry Cup, is standing with Team Black the winners of the intra squad game that is played at the conclusion of the Oil Caps fall camp.

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

About 50 hockey players were in town last weekend putting their skills on display for the Virden Oil Capitals.

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League squad held its 2024 Comfort Inn and Suites Fall Camp on Aug. 30-Sept. 1. The event wrapped up Sunday with the annual Garry Cup intrasquad game. Team

Black beat Team Red, 5-2. The Cup is named for longtime dressing room attendant Garry Remple. The Oil Caps open the Manitoba Junior Hockey League season at home on Sept. 20 against Dauphin.

On Sept. 2, the squad opened its exhibition season with a 4-3 shootout loss in Yorkton. Scoring for the young team the Oil Caps put on the ice were Brooks Siemens, Parker Rolston and Campbell

Epp. Virden's own Brodie Cameron stopped all 10 shots he faced in relief of Oil Caps starting goalie Micky Gross, who made 11 saves on 14 shots.

The Oil Capitals were in Estevan on Sept. 4 after the Empire-Advance deadline. The Yorkton Terriers visits Virden on Saturday. The Oil Caps are in Portage on Sept. 10 and Dauphin on Sept. 14. They wrap up the exhibition season at home on Sept. 15 versus the Portage Terriers.

The Virden team has traded for 20-year-old goalie Nik Trakakis. The Quebec product split last season between the Navan Grads and the Smith Falls Bears of the Central Canada Hockey League.

In five games with Smith Falls, he had a 5-0 record and a 1.74 goals against average.

### Williamson Wins

Reston's Jamie Williamson helped the 16U Team Manitoba win the Western Canadian Prospects Series this weekend in St. Albert, Alta. The team was 4-1 in the tournament. It beat British Columbia, 2-1, in the finals.

### Senior Nationals

Team Manitoba had a 2-3 record at the 2024 Baseball Men's National Championship. It ran Aug. 22-25 in Tecumseh, Ont. The team included Virden Oiler Garrett Popplestone and Reston product Andrew Lochhead.



# SPORTS

## ICE BANDITS LOOKING FOR MORE SUCCESS AFTER STRONG SOPHOMORE SEASON



Brodie



Cooper



Jamie



Ryder

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

This coming hockey season the U17 AAA Canadian Ice Bandits are looking to build upon a successful season.

The Elkhorn-based team is currently preparing for its third campaign. It will be led by head coach Mike Robertson of Virden. He is assisted by Oak Lake's Riley Wallace and Jared Paulsen of Brandon. The Ice Bandits compete in the U17 division of the Winnipeg AAA Hockey League.

Last season the Ice Bandits, with then head coach Hannah Street leading the way, took important steps as players and as a team with area players contributing in important roles. The squad made the playoffs. It beat the Eastman Selects, 3-2, in the first round and fell to the Winnipeg Wild in the semifinals.

"I think it all kind of came together at the end of the season," Street said. "Around the end of January until the end of the playoffs, we were on a pretty hot streak. It was nice to see all of the boys' hard work and their dedication throughout the season paying off."

She said she believes development of players is an important part of the league. One of the players Street witnessed take major steps last season was Elkhorn's Cooper McColl. The centreman was named the team's Most Improved Player. He had five goals and 11 points in 36 regular season games. McColl scored twice in eight playoff contests.

"We really relied upon him at the beginning of the season for our D zone," Street said. "Near the end of the season, he really picked it up on the offensive side. He had some huge goals for us. He contributed a lot during our playoffs and our end of season push when we were hitting out stride."

Second-year player Brodie Cameron of Virden was standout in net and as a leader for the Ice Bandits. Street said he posted a shutout in his first game of

the season. She said, "Right then we knew we had one of the best goalies in the league."

"We really relied on him throughout the season to keep us in games and steal us some wins," Street said.

Cameron posted a .877 save percentage. He saw action in one game with the Virden Oil Capitals of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League. Cameron contributed to the Ice Bandits with his personality as well as his skills.

"He was very vocal. He was a leader in the dressing room. ... His intensity on the ice really carried into the dressing room," Street said.

Ryder Kyle of Elkhorn made an impact for the Ice Bandits on the wing. He has two goals and four points in 36 games.

"He was just relentless on the forecheck," Street said. "He was always getting under guys' skin. He played a big role in our (penalty kill). ... We saw a lot of improvement in his game over the season. He gained a lot of confidence."

Defenceman Jamie Williamson of Reston was third on the team in scoring. He had eight goals and 22 points in 35 games. Street described him as a big, physical defenceman who was really reliable and played in all situations. "A big contributor for our team for sure," she said.

Wawanesa's Shane Elder led the team with 22 goals and 41 points in 36 games. He was named the league's Forward of the Year. His father is Oak Lake product Brian Elder, who served as an assistant coach.

Virden's Bradley Kyle and Boyd Canart of Elkhorn also were assistant coaches. Kaileigh Kyle was the team's manager. Street praised each of them for the contributions they made last season.



# FLBSD prepares for new school term

By Dale Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Condensed from the regular meeting of the Fort La Bosse School Division Board of Trustees that was held in the Division Office boardroom on Tuesday, August 20, 7:30p.m.

Present: Chairperson Craig Russell, Vice-Chairperson Becky Flannery, Nicole Chaske, Teresa Vandenberghe, Bonnie James, Kayla Moore, Superintendent of Schools Barry Pitz, Secretary-Treasurer Kent Reid, Supervisor of Operations Mark Johnston

The agenda was approved, minutes from the previous meeting, June 24, were approved. There was no business arising out of the minutes.

A delegation was present to appeal a school of choice denial for their children.

### Administrative reports

The Superintendent of Schools shared a staffing update for the 2024-2025 school year with the Board which included a letter of resignation from Jennifer Lesnar, a long-serving administrative assistant and school librarian at Kola School.

With the new ban on cell phone use by the Minister of Education, the Board of Trustees reviewed and amended our policy to align with the directives in his letter to the Division.

An update on our divisional professional development start-up day was provided. All staff will receive Treaty Education training.

The Secretary-Treasurer presented a resolution to approve the amended tuition agreement with Canupawapka Dakota Nation.

Resolutions were presented to pay our Manitoba School Insurance premiums, our MUST Fund fee assessment and our Sylogist ERP software licensing and hosting fees for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. We have begun the process reviewing options for a new

ERP provider as this is the last year committed to our current provider.

An overview discussion of the recent settlement of the provincial collective agreement for teachers with more details to come after signing.

In the transportation department, the Supervisor of Operations reported that we still have 1 bus route vacant and needing a full-time driver heading into the school year. Our fuel tender will be advertised next week. Prior to summer, we lost a 10-year-old school bus to an electrical fire. All buses are ready to go for the first day of school. We have two new school buses ordered, and expect delivery towards the end of this calendar year.

From the maintenance department, Elkhorn School has been hooked up to the municipal waterline thanks to a partnership with the RM of Wallace-Woodworth.

The Supervisor of Operations provided an update on some of the major projects completed over the summer by the maintenance team. Motions were presented for the purchase of a new floor cleaner and for the LED lighting upgrade project at Oak Lake Community School.

### New /unfinished business

The Board of Trustees reviewed a memorandum from the Manitoba School Boards Association updating the status of several bills considered by government in the Spring Legislature sitting.

A confidential communication was discussed in-camera by the Board of Trustees.

### Resolutions

187/24 Moved by N. Chaske – B. Flannery – to approve the signing of the amended tuition agreement with Canupawapka Dakota Nation as detailed and reviewed in the Secretary-Treasurer’s report dated August 20, 2024, and subject to approval by Canupawapka Dakota Nation Chief and Council. Carried (Unanimous)

188/24 Moved by B. Flannery – N. Chaske – to approve the payment of invoice 3481176 to HUB International in the amount of \$111,543.91 plus applicable taxes for the 2024-2025 MSI premiums. Carried (Unanimous)

189/24 Moved by N. Chaske – B. Flannery – to approve the payment of our MUST Fund fee assessment for the 2024-2025 fiscal year in the amount of \$9,846.46. Carried (Unanimous)

190/24 Moved by K. Moore – T. Vandenberghe – to approve the payment of invoice SI-34089 from Sylogist Ltd. in the amount of \$47,091.83 plus applicable taxes for the 2024-2025 annual maintenance and hosting support fees. Carried (Unanimous)

191/24 Moved by K. Moore – T. Vandenberghe – to approve the amended Policy JICJ as reviewed and detailed in the Secretary-Treasurer’s report dated August 20, 2024. Carried (Unanimous)

192/24 Moved by N. Caske – B. Flannery – to approve the payment to Swish Maintenance Limited, invoice #F318024 in the amount of \$8,088.10 taxes included for 1 new 17” walk behind floor scrubber. Carried (Unanimous)

193/24 Moved by B. Flannery – N. Chaske – to approve the payment to LRB Electric, invoice #E12762 in the amount of \$13,659.08 taxes included for LED light upgrades at Oak Lake Community School. Carried (Unanimous)


194/24 Moved by K. Moore – B. James – THAT we rise as a Board and sit as a Committee-of-the-Whole to consider a matter as outlined in the agenda. Carried (Unanimous)

195/24 Moved by K. Moore – B. James – THAT we rise as a Committee-of-the-Whole and sit as a Board to continue with the business on the agenda. Carried (Unanimous)

The meeting adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

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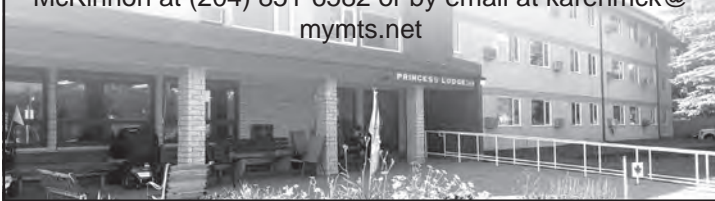
Virde Centennial Housing (VCH) is now accepting resumes for the part-time position of Business Manager for Princess Lodge.

Princess Lodge is a 40-unit senior facility located at 247 Princess Street West in Virde, Manitoba.

Resumes are to be forwarded to VCH Chairperson Karen McKinnon by email at karenmck@mymts.net prior to Friday, September 13th at noon.

References may be requested for those interviewed, and please note that only those candidates to be interviewed will be contacted by the Board.

Should you require further information or wish to request a job description, please contact Chairperson Karen McKinnon at (204) 851-6582 or by email at karenmck@mymts.net



## Anniversary

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# Kenton plans playground

## RMWW meeting brief, Aug. 27

By Dale Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Nicole Wilson and Patrick Routledge representing the Kenton Community Action committee, and Vaughn Wilson the president of the Kenton Legion attended the meeting to inform council of plans to create a new town playground. Routledge explained that phase one of the project involved consulting with Legion members and people in the community to determine the scope and location for the facility. This phase is complete, and the playground will be moved from its current location on Cornwall Street to the large open area near the Legion Hall. This would be convenient for those attending public events at the bandstand there.

Phase two, fundraising for the project, is under way with grant applications and community donations. Estimates for the required equipment and installation indicate a price tag of around \$100,000, with currently around \$12,000 raised.

Phase three would be

the new construction and the demolition of the existing playground.

The current playground was established in 1961 and Routledge said, "The playground needs a lot of updates. None of it is up to code."

The delegation requested council's permission to relocate and asked for a letter of support for the project. Council agreed to provide the letter of support and informed the delegation that grant applications to the municipality should be submitted as soon as possible.

In closing, Nicole Wilson stated, "Having something for ages 2 to 12, it's a need in Kenton for sure."

### SEASONAL ROAD REPAIRS

Coun. Val Caldwell was contacted by a ratepayer asking about plans to deal with the wet conditions on road 71W and to provide access to farmland in the area during harvest. The road allowance is a seasonal road that became impassible after the wet weather this spring. At that time council agreed to look at possibilities

that would allow access to the agricultural land but have yet to come up with a solution. Now, with harvest progressing and with recent heavy rains, the road has again become impassible. Caldwell said, "They need to access it for harvest, and we haven't done anything. The only solution I can think of this late in the game is just as much rock as we can get dumped in there so they can drive over it."

Reeve Clayton Canart noted that throughout the municipality these seasonal roads cause similar problems and some have been repaired at the landowner's cost.

Caldwell replied, "We have to find a way to work with them to find a way to get them in there so they can access their property."

Coun. Barb Stambuski made a motion to provide up to 500 yards of stone or \$10,000, whichever comes first. Coun. Caldwell seconded the motion and council passed it.

### BRANDON CITY PLAN

Couns. Caldwell, Stambuski and MacDon-

ald attended the city of Brandon council meeting and public hearing regarding Brandon's city plan, saying, "They had several delegations there that evening to speak to the plan. There were a few individuals who were, thought it was a good plan, and there were a large number of individuals who didn't think it was a good plan and spoke very much against it." The city plans for growing population and demographic changes over the next 30 years. The plan proposes to improve public transit in Brandon to increase options to get around the city and have better access to amenities and services. Those criticizing the plan felt that it would isolate local neighbourhoods and interfere with residents' freedom of movement.

### TRANS-CANADA WEST PLANNING

Martha Penner and XTRA Enterprises applied for a conditional use order to subdivide the existing trucking operation from the farm property and to vary the minimum site size requirement in a rural general zone from

80 acres to 47.84 acres. Council passed both the conditional use order and the variation order.

Brent and Cindy Soder purchased property to construct a house and shop on-site. Zoning requirements for an accessory building allow a maximum footprint of 1,500 sq. ft. in that zone, so the Soders applied for a variation order to increase the accessory building size from 1,500 to 1,824 square feet. They also applied to vary the requirement to have a dwelling in use on site prior to an accessory. They would like to construct the shop first to house materials and tools for the construction of their dwelling. Council passed the variation order with the condition that the applicant get a building permit for both the accessory and dwelling prior to any construction.

### OTHER BUSINESS

The new Ward 2 shop is nearing completion with electrical and plumbing work proceeding and the floor being prepared for sealing. Council authorized payment to LRB Electric of \$8,396.64 for the elec-

trical work completed on the shop.

Dodds Bridge has been damaged and road 135W has been closed between road 61N and 62N. The decking of the bridge is unsafe, and council discussed possible temporary repairs with steel girders.

Interest earned from their term deposit to July 17, 2024 of \$1,193.50 was transferred to the operating account of Breadalbane Cemetery Perpetual Care.

Council approved progress payment number eleven of \$263,794.12, for the work completed up until August 6, 2024 on the Elkhorn RTM childcare facility.

Reeve Canart reported that the year to date building permits showed \$10,792,013 in new buildings with permit fees of \$56,530.

Coun. Mark Humphries reported on the library repairs that are progressing slowly, saying "We're chasing the library renovation still, which is getting frighteningly close to fall. We're waiting now for the plans to be submitted."



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### School Zone Reminder



Reduced speed limits in school zones are **in effect** as of September 1.

Please remember to travel safely in and around school zones.

**Upcoming Council Meeting:**  
September 17

Please Note:  
Town of Virden Council meetings begin at 7:00 PM

### Winter Ice Available for Booking




2024/2025 Winter Season Ice is available to book at Tundra Oil and Gas Place.

Time slots will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

For available times, check the Facility Calendar at <https://app.univerusrec.com/virdenpub/calendars/facilities/index.asp>, or email [bookings@virden.ca](mailto:bookings@virden.ca).

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### Check your mailbox!

**2024 Property Tax Notices have been sent out.**

If you haven't received yours, please contact the Town Office at 204-748-2440.

2024 Property Taxes are due by October 31, 2024.



# Riding for community wellbeing

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Sioux Valley Dakota Nation leadership and community members

undertook a challenging journey of about 21 miles around the perimeter of their reservation on Aug. 30.

The trip began on Friday morning where a handful of riders gathered at the buffalo compound and headed north on the west perimeter of the reserve. In high traffic areas where safety was an issue the horses were trailered and quads took over the journey. Along the edge of the Assiniboine River, trained drone operators flew over the reserve's watery boundary. What began on horseback ended that way as that afternoon, riders came up from the south west corner of SVDN reserve to return to the buffalo compound.

Chief Vince Tacan said that a lot of 'things' had happened in Sioux Valley. He described this act as "putting up a spiritual fence to keep out negativity and prevent terrible things from happening. Weather events, that kind of stuff." It included a 'smudge' ceremony which is regarded as a purifying or cleansing agent for mind, body and spirit. Prayers are part of the ceremony.

Tacan said, "Years ago we were told this was something we ought to do. So, this year we decided, 'let's just do it.'"

The riders encountered some rough terrain. It was "a bit of an undertaking," Tacan said. "There's always a little bit of hardship. We were expecting some difficulty. But it wasn't too bad. We started at 9 a.m. and ended at 3 p.m. and that was what we were expecting. The weather was cooperating. It was a beautiful day. We had a lot of fun.

"This is also something that we had to do culturally, but also something that brings folks together."

Included on the journey were Vince and Annmarie Tacan, their son Keith Tacan (traffic duty for the ride), Eric Langan, Cindy Noel, Cheyenne Myran, Councillor Tony Tacan, Travis Mazawasicuna, Gabriel Sutherland and Morgan Redman. A senior woman, Daniza DePaola carried the smudge.

Following the ride, people gathered in Veteran's Hall where community members were recognized for recent achievements and contributions.

SVDN has a First Nations Safety Officers program. These officers live within the community and are the first on the scene when there is trouble. The recent RCMP Staff Sergeant in Virden, Helen Goodman, strengthened the cooperation between the RCMP and FNSO forces.

Helena Mazawasicuna is Justice Coordinator /FNSO Program Coordinator presented certificates of completion for search and rescue training. She said, "We took it upon ourselves to take intensive search and rescue training with Manitoba... we are now certified. I want to give the certificates to the ones who went through these grueling four days. They've earned it."

Another important event celebrated on Friday was the Sioux Valley endurance horse race from Canupawakpa Dakota First Nation community north of Pipestone, to Sioux Valley.

The race, an initiative of a former council member, Gabriel Sutherland, came together quickly this year. Chief Tacan said, "He raised the prize money, and we (SVDN) put up the buckles and jackets."

The race through back roads past Oak Lake Beach was about 32 miles or just over 51 kms. It included a stop where the horses were rested, fed and watered. Five riders completed the course, reaching Sioux Valley before dark.

Award buckles crafted in Montana had recently arrived and were presented to the riders.

The winner was a 15-year-old boy who had practiced for it. Tacan said, "From what I'd been told, he was riding his horse every day and getting it in condition." Draedyn Pelletier, won significant prize money, a buckle and a jacket." In his absence on Friday, his uncle accepted the first place buckle and jacket on his behalf.

Next year's race is in the planning stages. Tacan says it's a good event to involve the youth and adds, "It's in line with our culture as horse people."

The day's events ended with soup served with Bannock.



PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

They've ridden the circumference of the reserve, now the riders pick up the pace as they approach the buffalo compound where they started and now finish. They're followed by an entourage - people engaged in the endeavour - and spare horses in trailers.



Certificates for the Search and Rescue course are presented to SVDN members by the Safety Officer coordinator Helena Mazawasicuna: (l-r) Helena, Christopher Tacan (an EMR qualified Safety Officer), Adam Subject (SVDN staff), Travis Mazawasicuna (Safety Officer), and Sylvia Tacan (Safety Officer).



This special silver buckle goes to Draedyn Pelletier for his first-place finish in the endurance horse race - the first of its kind for SVDN. The other riders received smaller buckles and all riders received jackets with the emblem: "Dakota Nation Unity Riders Horse People Of The Plains."



# Linda Peters tells of Rwandan learning tour

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Addressing the community and volunteers gathered at the Cross Borders Growing Project picnic, Gordon Janzen, regional Canadian Foodgrains Bank representative for Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario says “the work is saving lives.”

“Our work is to address global hunger and we talk about working together as a Christian response to global hunger,” he says. “There’s definitely hunger in Canada. And we need to respond to that. But hunger in the international context is on a different scale.”

Janzen related statistics on the state of food insecurity in the world. “They’ve said that the absolute number of hungry people has actually gone down in some areas. But in other areas it’s gotten worse. The overall number is now 757 million people who experience chronic hunger... that is 19 times the overall population of Canada that experiences hunger on a daily basis.”

CFGB has gathered resources to help out in Gaza, but the ongoing war has hindered delivery there.

Some 15 million people have been displaced in Sudan. “Our response is more in the South Sudan which has received a lot of refugees but also in DR (Democratic Republic) Congo and places like Lebanon and Syria where there’s still refugees.”

CFGB also partners with the Mennonite Central Committee and together they provide pro-active solutions that include regenerative agriculture training.

Janzen said, “I was on a learning tour to Nepal in February and saw women’s groups receiving training that were so appreciative of the training.” The importance of this is that women make up about 70 per cent of the farmers in some areas of Africa.

He then invited Linda and LaVerne Peters to share about a learning tour they were on to Rwanda in March.

“It’s very exciting to be here today. We’ve seen this every year,” Linda said of the Growing Project harvest.

The couple now live in Lethbridge, Alta., but every fall they head back to Manitoba for about six weeks to help their daughter Aleda and son-in-law Tyson Martens take off the crop.

She was happy to speak of what she and LaVerne had witnessed firsthand in Africa.

“Now, having been in Rwanda, we see how the monies that are earned here on this day are used there in Rwanda to teach conservation agriculture and help feed the poorest of the poor in Rwanda.”

She said that the yields on the fields, some just the size of the yard site at the Kola wheat field, “are more than doubled as they have learned and then they teach others. The last notification we saw, they have taught 10,000 farmers and from those 10,000 farmers each of them have to teach another five more. So, the

multiplication of this money is really huge.”

Janzen spoke after, inviting others to consider travelling across the world to see the needs of others for themselves. “We’d love to have someone else from the Virden/Kola community go on another learning tour. Applications are open right now for a learning tour in March, going to Mozambique and Zimbabwe.”



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

At the Cross Borders Growing Project picnic, Gordon Janzen for Canadian Food Grains Bank introduced Linda Peters, who related what she and her husband LaVerne witnessed in Rwanda.

## Crop dusting to assist in ending this harvest season



PHOTO BY JESSICA COULTER

End of season crop dusting is well under way. A final spray of pre-harvest crop desiccation refers to the application of an agent to a crop just before harvest to kill the leaves and/or plants so that the crop dries out from environmental conditions, or “dry-down”, more quickly and evenly. This will maximize the yield from the field.



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# Celebrating National Trucking Week



PHOTO BY DIANE WARNER

Canada moves by truck- that's why National Trucking Week is held each year to recognize those who work in the trucking industry. Whether it's fuel, groceries, equipment, or another of the many products found in day to day life and the nation's many professions, there's likely a trucker out there who got it to its destination!

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# National Trucking Week - Sept. 1 to 7, 2024

## Highlights of the semi-truck transportation industry



PHOTO BY DIANE WARNER

Long haul or short haul, drivers across Canada are likely to see a semi- or several- on their daily travels.

**By Casper Wehrhahn**  
NEEPAWA BANNER & PRESS

Semi-trucks are a very common sight on the roadways. However, some may not know how much of an impact the trucking industry has on their day to day lives, or the industry's impact on the province as a whole.

The following details are facts culminated from the Manitoba Trucking Association, which help to paint the picture. Some are from a Manitoba-based perspective, while others provide a look at the industry on a national level.

For starters, five of Canada's top 50 carriers are based in Manitoba. There are also approximately 475 for-hire trucking companies headquartered in Manitoba!

It has been stated before that much of the province moves by truck. But how much? According to the Manitoba Trucking Association, a whopping 95 per cent of goods within Manitoba depends on trucks!

On an economical level, for-hire trucking directly and indirectly contributes more than \$2 billion to Manitoba's GDP (gross domestic product). The for-hire trucking carriers themselves have a total gross expenditure impact on Canada as a whole of more than \$3.07 billion.

With a massive demand for trucking services, the trucking industry directly and indirectly employs approximately 4.6 per cent of the Manitoba labour force.

In conjunction with

this, did you know that the Manitoba trucking industry operates more than 15,000 power units and 20,000 trailers? Or that Manitoba makes up three per cent of the Canadian population while the Manitoba trucking industry equals out to 5.1 per cent of the Canadian industry?

On a national scale, over 268,000 Canadians are truck drivers, which makes it one of the top occupations in the country!

According to figures collected by the Manitoba Trucking Association, for every 10 jobs created in the trucking industry, seven jobs are created elsewhere. For example, suppliers, service industries and road departments.

A typical tractor-trailer

also raises about \$45,000 a year in federal/provincial taxes and fees.

When it comes to travel, approximately 400,000 commercial trucks cross the Manitoba-U.S.A. border each year. Additionally, \$8.87 billion of Manitoba's exports are to the U.S.A., while \$12.46 billion of the province's imports come from the U.S.A.

A total of 80 per cent of Manitoba's merchandise trade with the U.S.A. is shipped by truck. On a national scale, Canada and the U.S.A. trade \$662 billion in goods and services every year, with more than 75 per cent of the goods and services moving by truck.

To learn more about the Manitoba Trucking Association, visit [trucking.mb.ca](http://trucking.mb.ca).

National Trucking Week has a long history in Canada. This annual event has been taking place since approximately the 1990s and was launched by the Canadian Trucking Association in conjunction with provincial associations.

This week long celebration begins on the first Sunday of September until the Saturday of the following weekend with the purpose of recognizing the contributions made by the approximately 400,000 individuals who keep Canada's freight moving.

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Keep reading to learn more about the industry!



# National Trucking Week - Sept. 1 to 7, 2024

## Acknowledgements and well wishes for National Trucking Week

**Jodie Byram**  
 Member of Legislative Assembly  
 Electoral District of Agassiz



In recognition of National Truckers Week, I wish to personally thank each one of you for the incredible dedication and hard work you demonstrate every day. Your tireless efforts ensure that our shelves are stocked, our goods are delivered, and our economy keeps moving forward. I deeply appreciate the long hours, challenging conditions, and sacrifices you each make to keep Manitoba running smoothly. You are the backbone of our province, and your commitment does not go unnoticed. Thank you for all that you do.



PHOTO BY DIANE WARNER

The trailer seen here is just one example from the many unique trailers Truckers use on their jobs. Trailers differ depending what best suits the materials or items being hauled.

**Greg Nesbitt**  
 Member of Legislative Assembly  
 Electoral District of  
 Riding Mountain



The robust trucking industry in Manitoba is one of our province's most important economic assets, and this sector is poised to become stronger.

With advantages including its position at the geographic centre of North America and Winnipeg's CentrePort Canada that stands as the continent's largest inland port, truck transportation in Manitoba has the greatest share of total employment compared to all provinces in the country.

In 2021, approximately 41,200 people worked in transportation and warehousing in Manitoba, an increase of 2,000 from a year earlier and amounting to six per cent of the province's total employment. Within this logistics sector, truck transportation is the largest employer with 18,400 people, amounting to 45 per cent of all workers in the industry as of that year.

As well, according to Trucknews.com, four of Canada's top 100 for-hire trucking firms are in Manitoba, including the third-largest company, Bison Transport.

The sector's strength is seen on another economic level, too. The contribution of transportation and distribution to Manitoba's GDP is \$6.8 billion or approximately 10 per cent, the highest proportion in the nation.

The trucking industry in Manitoba has further advantages. In addition to CentrePort Canada's status as the only inland trimodal port in Canada providing foreign trade zone benefits, Manitoba has rail access to all four gateways in North America and one of the country's busiest air cargo facilities. The Emerson-Pembina border crossing is the fourth-largest Canada-U.S. border crossing measured by the dollar value of trade in both directions, and the largest in Western Canada. Winnipeg is one of two cities in Western Canada with access to three Class 1 railway companies.

Though Manitoba is a globally recognized trade and transportation hub, the trucking sector in our province is facing challenges through labour shortages and infrastructure concerns. It's up to the provincial government to work with the industry to harness Manitoba's advantages with investments that improve our highway system, enhance trade corridors, strengthen supply chains and attract drivers and other workers through training opportunities. This action is needed to support the sector and maintain its momentum in the interests of our economy and to deliver prosperity to Manitobans.

**Grant Jackson**  
 Member of Legislative Assembly  
 Electoral District of  
 Spruce Woods



Manitoba's reputation as an international hub for transportation and trade hinges in large part on the strength of its trucking industry. And the current power of trucking here as an economic driver is seen in Manitoba's share of truck transportation employment, which is higher than that of all other provinces.

Four of Canada's top 100 for-hire trucking companies are based in Manitoba and CentrePort Canada in Winnipeg is North America's largest inland port. Our province's location at the heart of North America, as well as the Port of Churchill, provide competitive advantages in attracting investments from around the world. But to capitalize on these advantages, maintain this global recognition and keep its trucking sector humming, Manitoba must commit to improving its transportation infrastructure. The roads that most Manitobans want smooth and safe for comfort and convenience are the same ones that carry the key elements of our economy, and every related infrastructure investment creates more opportunities for people across the province.

Strategic infrastructure was a priority for the previous Manitoba government, whose long-range plan included an annual investment of at least \$500 million to improve provincial highways. This was a commitment to stable and predictable investment that would assist industry partners by developing national trade corridors and prioritize the efficiency and safety of Manitoba's critical trade routes, including with an upgrade of Winnipeg's Perimeter Highway to freeway status based on the U.S. Interstate model.

At stake is Manitoba's continued capacity for international trade amidst economic uncertainties stemming from rising inflation and supply chain disruptions. The provincial government owes it to Manitobans to talk to the trucking sector about its needs and concerns, and to combine our advantages with investments that secure Manitoba's status as a global trade destination. The trucking industry deserves our thanks and support for keeping our economy moving and the products we need on our shelves.

Listen, act and get the job done. For Manitoba's trucking industry and our economy, a lot is riding on it.

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# National Trucking Week - Sept. 1 to 7, 2024

## Manitoba trucking guide for entrepreneurs

By Joel Asselstine  
SUBMITTED

*Author's note: First off, I would like to acknowledge that I am by no means a trucker. The information below is a summarization of articles from Manitoba Trucking Association, Province of Manitoba—Gov.mb.ca and other like organizations.*

Starting a trucking business in Manitoba can be an enticing opportunity for the entrepreneur but they should be prepared for the unique challenges and initial costs associated with launching their own company in a region like Manitoba that features a diverse landscape and a variety of freight demands.

The speed bumps of starting a trucking business in Manitoba

Establishing a trucking operation in Manitoba requires planning and understanding

From my research here are six key things you

should plan for:

**1. Crafting a Solid Business Plan:** Business plan outlining service offerings, target markets, revenue projections, and expense management is crucial. In Manitoba's trucking sector, the competition is fierce but opportunities abound—especially with the rich agricultural and resource sectors

**2. Navigating Licensing and Permits:** Manitoba trucking entrepreneurs must acquire essential licenses and permits from provincial and federal authorities. Key requirements include an Operating Authority (MC Number), and compliance with the Manitoba Highway Traffic Act. The provincial government also has specific requirements for hazardous materials and specialized freight.

**3. Securing Adequate**

**Insurance:** Insurance is non-negotiable in the trucking business. Manitoban operators must invest in liability, cargo, and potentially workers' compensation insurance, with annual costs typically ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000 or more, depending on coverage types and the scale of operations.

**4. Attracting Customers:** Building a client base in a competitive landscape poses a significant challenge. Manitoba's trucking industry heavily relies on relationships with local industries, including agriculture, manufacturing, and mining. Effective networking through industry associations, such as the Manitoba Trucking Association, can provide vital leads and contracts.

**5. Understanding Financing Options:** Access to financing can be crucial in a province where capital investment is significant.

Manitoba entrepreneurs often rely on banks, credit unions, or government grants specifically targeting small businesses in the transportation sector.

**6. Keeping Up with Compliance:** Maintaining records and ensuring compliance with the Manitoba Transportation and Government Services is vital. Many new operators may consider hiring a compliance consultant or accountant familiar with provincial regulations and industry standards.

You've done your research, but how much does it cost to start a trucking business in Manitoba

Starting a trucking venture in Manitoba involves significant expenses that potential owners should carefully consider:

### Equipment Costs

New semi-trucks can range from \$150,000 to \$200,000 or more, de-

pending on specifications and features tailored for Manitoba's diverse climate.

Used trucks can provide a more budget-friendly option, costing between \$30,000 to \$100,000, depending on age, condition, and mileage.

### Insurance

A budget of \$10,000 to \$20,000 annually for necessary insurance coverage is advisable for Manitoban operators who want to ensure they are fully protected.

### Licensing and Permits

Initial fees for obtaining essential licenses and permits may total between \$5,000 and \$10,000, taking into account specific requirements.

### Ongoing Operating Costs

Factors like fuel prices, which can fluctuate, based on market conditions,

along with maintenance and tolls, can accumulate. It's practical to budget several thousand dollars for operational sustainability, particularly given Manitoba's long-haul routes.

### Legal Fees

Registering a business name and navigating legal registrations could cost between \$500 and \$1,500, depending on the chosen structure.

Starting a trucking business in Manitoba presents a mixture of rewarding opportunities and notable challenges. A well-thought-out business strategy that considers local market dynamics, regulatory requirements, and cost management can pave the way for success. With the right preparation, aspiring truck operators can thrive in Manitoba's dynamic transportation landscape and contribute to the vital supply chain that keeps the province moving forward.

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A thank you to all of those in the trucking industry for all that you do: National Trucking Week



# National Trucking Week - Sept. 1 to 7, 2024

## Trucking: The backbone of our economy



Canada's professional truck drivers are the unsung heroes of the national economy. By delivering the critical goods and products Canadians rely on, these truck operators support the backbone of our social infrastructure. While they deserve our appreciation all year-round, National Trucking Week is where the industry, the public and elected officials can express their gratitude to those who keep Canada moving.

National Trucking Week was started by the Canadian Trucking Alliance in the 1990s as a way to embrace the industry and spotlight the contributions of the hundreds of thousands of people in the industry who keep the country's freight moving, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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## What has 100% approval in our government for two years but isn't law?

By Joel Asselstine  
SUBMITTED

What has Summa Strategies, Lenova, Honda, Entertainment Software Canada, Associated Equipment Dealers, Medtech, John Deere and the CCGA (Canadian Canola Growers Association) have in common?

Lobbying the government on Bill C-244

Last Year, for Trucking Week, I did an article on the Proposed amendments of the Copy Right Act that will allow more freedom for consumers to repair their own equipment and vehicles.

Here is a very short recap

Bill C-244, introduced by the Canadian government, addresses consumer concerns regarding the right to repair various products, including electronics, appliances, and vehicles. The bill aims to empower consumers, particularly truck owners, by granting

them the ability to repair their vehicles independently or through local repair shops, rather than relying solely on authorized dealerships.

This initiative not only fosters greater flexibility and potentially lowers repair costs but also promotes sustainability by reducing the need for new products, encouraging durable product design, and supporting local repair businesses. Case studies from the farming industry and independent repair shops illustrate the positive impact of embracing the right to repair.

Since that article, Bill C-244 has been voted on twice both times with 100 per cent approval bringing the 100 per cent approval to three times, I would like to share the words from Ted Falk "Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise in the House today to speak to this legislation, Bill C-244. This is a good day. It is not a super common day in the

House that all parties come together and, for the most part, agree on the generality or principles of a bill, but I think this happens to be one of those days. That is where Canadians are, and we are here to serve Canadians and to be their voice in getting things done.

— October 3rd 2022.

BUT since then it has been stuck in limbo due to the active lobbyist. This turns instead of a simple amendment, (a) in respect of a technological protection measure within the meaning of paragraph (a) of the definition technological protection measure, to descramble a scrambled work or computer program, or decrypt an encrypted work or computer program or to otherwise avoid, bypass, remove, deactivate or impair the technological protection measure, unless it is done with the authority of the copyright owner

To multiple case studies

(which have already been done), Multiple reviews to the ethics of the bill (This has already been done)

The number one statement I see from the lobbyist is quality control. If we allow anybody to repair, modify, or remove components of the product it can be hazardous to the product or to owner. Hence why there was an amendment stating the following

41.121 (1) Paragraph 41.1(1)(a) does not apply to a person who circumvents

a technological protection measure for the sole purpose of maintaining or repairing a product, including any related diagnosing, if the work, performer's performance fixed in a sound recording or sound recording to which the technological protection measure controls access forms a part of the product.

For greater certainty

(2) For greater certainty, subsection (1) applies to a person who circumvents a technological protection measure in the circum-

stances referred to in that subsection for another person.

Non-application

(3) A person acting in the circumstances referred to in subsection (1) is not entitled to benefit from the exception under that subsection if the person does an act that constitutes an infringement of copyright.

It is with great hope that when parliament starts up again on September 16 that we will finally have the right to fix what we buy.



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## How to support the unsung heros of long haul trucking

By Joel Asselstine  
SUBMITTED

Across the nation, highways stretch for thousands of miles, with long-haul truckers traversing the vast landscape to deliver everything from food to fuel. While these unsung heroes keep the economy moving, a silent crisis is brewing—one that continues to affect their mental health and overall well-being.

Long-haul trucking has long been associated with high stress, isolation, and a demanding lifestyle. A recent study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has illuminated the mental health challenges faced by truck drivers, revealing alarming rates of anxiety, depression, and substance abuse among drivers.

### Isolation

The nature of the job often requires drivers to spend weeks away from home, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness. According to the American Trucking Associations, about 70 per cent of truckers report feeling a sense of separation from their families and communities. This disconnection can breed anxiety and depression.

Many drivers do not have a support system in place while on the road. The long hours, limited human contact, create a perfect storm for mental health issues.

### Substance use

The pressures have driven some long-haul truckers to

seek alcohol, prescription drugs, or illicit substances for solace. An estimated 25 per cent of truckers have reported using substances to manage their stress and fatigue. This can lead to a dangerous cycle, impairing judgment and increasing the risk of accidents on the road.

Many fear losing their jobs or being seen as weak if they admit they are struggling.

### Slowly improving support systems

As awareness of the mental health crisis among truckers grows, some companies and organizations are beginning to implement measures to support their drivers. Mental health hotlines, access to counselling services, and peer support programs are being introduced to provide a lifeline for those in need.

In a ground-breaking move, several major trucking companies have started to integrate mental health screenings into their wellness programs, recognizing the importance of mental health in promoting safety and productivity. These initiatives aim to create a culture where drivers feel safe discussing their mental health without fear of repercussions.

### The road ahead

Experts argue that while increased support is essential, systemic changes are necessary to tackle the root causes of mental health issues in the trucking industry. Factors such as unrealistic delivery schedules, inadequate rest facilities, and the lack of mental health resources at truck stops contribute to the challenges drivers face.

Advocates are calling for industry-wide reforms, including improved working conditions, better pay, and a focus on driver well-being as a priority. "We need to change the narrative around trucking," said Decker. "These drivers are not just cogs in the machine; they are human beings who deserve support and understanding."

As the nation continues to rely on long-haul truckers to deliver goods, it is crucial to address the mental health crisis within this workforce.

Only by prioritizing mental well-being can we ensure a healthier future for those who keep our economy moving forward.

### The first step is reaching out

If you or a loved one is struggling, whether or not they are driving a truck, call Manitoba's 2-1-1 and they will help you find local assistance.

You are not alone, as a nation that has created its identity for braving harsh weather together, taking

inhospitable lands and building thriving cities and businesses, the next frontier is not outward bound, but inward. Check in on your friends and family. Staying safe on the roads starts with you.

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