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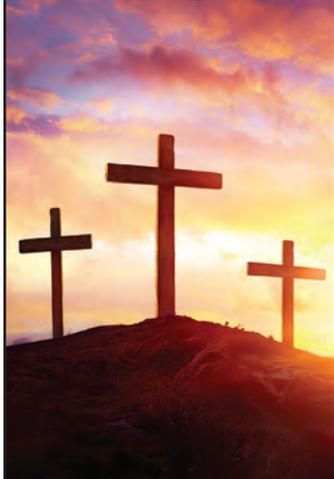
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**Soup & pie at
The Gardens**

Daizee Wiebe was all smiles at The Gardens on Tenth's annual soup and pie fundraiser last Thursday night. For more, see Pg. 12.

PHOTO BY EDWARD VINCENT ARCENAL/VOICE

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Songs for a Winter's Night



PHOTOS BY EDWARD VINCENT ARCENAL/VOICE

The Southern Manitoba Choral Society filled the Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church with music at its Songs for a Winter's Night concert Sunday afternoon. The group was conducted by Ben Kroeker and accompanied by pianist Loren Hiebert.

Winkler council passes \$26.8M financial plan

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Winkler city council last week approved a \$26.8 million financial plan with a 3.9 per cent increase in taxes for the year ahead.

The increase comes as no surprise, as it's part of the city's multi-year budget that saw it commit to a 4.20

per cent increase in 2025, 3.9 per cent this year, and four per cent in 2027, all tied to inflation and the city's annual commitment to significantly reduce its debenture terms while also putting money way for future needs.

"We're in year two of a three-year plan where we told the community that we're going to do CPI [Consum-

er Price Index, which rose 2.1 per cent this year] plus one per cent for our debenture plan and one per cent for our asset management plan," noted Mayor Henry Siemens.

"To walk that out, what it really means is we're going to continue to invest in bringing our debenture terms down. We're now at a point

that we're not going to take on any debt with a longer term than 10 years. That alone on the current debt that we have saves us about \$7.8 million in interest."

Winkler has three big capital projects currently on the books, totalling

Continued on page 4

Public Notice

Public Notice is hereby given that the Municipality of Rhineland intends to conduct the following **Pesticide Control Program in 2026.**

1. To control noxious weeds on road allowances, boulevards, public drains and golf course within the Municipality of Rhineland. The projected dates of application will be from **May 1, 2026, to October 31, 2026.**

Herbicides to be used may include the following: 2, 4-D, Banvel II, Dyvel DSP, Milestone VM, Par III, Round Up Weather Max, Tordon 22K, Vantage Plus Max II and Xtendimax.

2. To control insect pests, including grasshoppers, mosquitoes, etc. The proposed dates of application for this program will be from **May 1, 2026, to October 31, 2026.**

Insecticides to be used may include the following: Aquabac 200G, Decis 5EC, Malathion 85E, Malathion ULF, Pyrate 480EC, Sevin XLR Plus.

3. To control fungus at the golf course. The proposed dates of application for this program will be from **May 1, 2026, to October 31, 2026.**

Fungicides to be used may include the following: Banner Max, Daconil 2787, Trilogy 5C, Vectobac 200G

4. To control rodents. The proposed dates of application for this program will be from **May 1, 2026, to October 31, 2026.**

Chemicals to be used may include the following: Ramik Green, Ratak.

Any person wishing to make a representation in this matter may send written submissions **within 15 days of the publication** of this notice to the following:

**Manitoba Environment and Climate Change
Environmental Approvals Branch
Pesticides Program
1007 Century
Winnipeg, MB R3H 0W4**

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Michael Rempel, CAO
Municipality of Rhineland



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6,000 loaves shared by The Bread Basket in six years

By Siobhan Maas

A “divine download” that came six years ago to Morris resident Joan van der Linde during the early days of COVID-19 has grown into a community project, touching many with free loaves of bread baked in bread machines in her kitchen.

The passion project is funded fully by monetary, time, and ingredient donations from community members and local organizations. Van der Linde takes care of the rest, having baked 6,000 loaves at The Bread Basket since March 23, 2020.

She celebrated the milestone last month with two events: sharing her story and loaf 5,999 at Morris Bigway on March 22, and breaking loaf 6,000 on a Facebook livestream March 23, a culmination of six years of blessing her community.

“It was March 22, 2020 when I asked God how I could bring joy into this world. The next day I baked a loaf, had Troy Hoffman throw it up on social media, and I never, ever in a million years guessed that I would be here still carrying on.”

Van der Linde records milestones, numbers, people, and newspaper articles in two scrapbooks.

“It’s really cool to flip through the

papers and see how many people have grabbed hold of this project. It has become a community project,” she said. “At 2,000 loaves, I had six machines going. Now I have up to 15 machines going.”

Van der Linde has a rack of eight bread machines in her kitchen, with additional ones scattered throughout her house.

“One of the most amazing stories came about with this rack of machines,” she shared, “I had a dream two years ago: five men renovating my kitchen.”

Within weeks of that, she had men tackling the fire hazard of too many extension cords by putting in extra power. The number of men in her kitchen? Five.

“I could talk for hours about all the stories of how people have grabbed a hold of loaves of bread and have blessed their families and friends with these loaves,” van der Linde said. “As we look at loaf number 6,000, I’ve been praying and asking God what to do with that special loaf.”

Loaf 5,000 was used for communion last year. For loaf 6,000, van der Linde was guided by the book of 1st Corinthians and what Jesus did when he was with his disciples at the Last



FACEBOOK.COM/THEMORRISBREADBASKET

Joan van der Linde with the 6,000th loaf of bread she’s made for The Bread Basket project, which has distributed free bread to those in need in the area since 2020.

Supper.

“He took the loaf of bread and he broke it and he gave thanks, saying, ‘This is my body.’ Jesus is the Bread of Life. I find it so unique that we are celebrating Easter and the death of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection

for loaf 6,000.

“So many people have taken loaves and blessed others and I’m deeply grateful that I get to be part of administering such a unique project.”

Continued on page 4

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> **WINKLER BUDGET, FROM PG. 2**

\$24.27M in debt. It's slated to pay off the water treatment plant expansion (\$4 million) by 2030, the new wastewater treatment facility (\$8.44M) by 2034, and the Meridian Exhibition Centre (\$13.29M) by 2038. The City will be putting \$2.26M towards the principal of that debt this year.

The one per cent of the tax increase going to the asset management plan ensures there's a steady fund of money put away to allow for necessary repairs and replacement of city assets (roads, buildings, the water and sewer systems, equipment, and parks) without hefty hikes to pay for them.

"We will continue to lobby very aggressive-

ly for Manitoba and Canada to be involved in where they need to be involved," Siemens said," but we don't want to be stuck in a place where we're not able to do something because some of the other orders of government aren't at the table at the right time.

"We want to make sure that we can provide for Winkler what Winkler needs when Winkler needs it."

The City will receive \$18.4M in municipal taxes and another \$8.1 from other revenue to cover the \$26.8M financial plan.

On the expenses side, they'll spend about \$5.1M on police, \$4.7M on community services, \$3.7 on fiscal services, \$3.6 on transportation, \$3.3M on corporate services, \$2.1M transferred

to reserves, \$1.1M on waste disposal, \$991,225 on the fire department, \$925,150 on economic development, and \$776,600 on planning and engineering.

The mill rate increases from 13.315 in 2025 to 13.830. What it means for the average taxpayer with a home valued at \$330,000 is an increase of about \$76 on their tax bill (3.58 per cent). For a commercial property valued at \$1 million, their tax bill will increase by about \$334 (3.87 per cent).

The financial plan also lays out Winkler's utilities budget for the year ahead. They'll be spending \$5 million on things like sewer relining, well replacements, a water main loop, a water pipe and generator at the George Ave. reservoir, and water tank repairs—key infrastructure upkeep that, when done year by year, ensures everything remains in good shape longer, Siemens noted.

"That way we never get to a place that we have to do one massive amount [of repairs]," he said.

There is also money earmarked for the City to purchase land for future industrial park expansion (nearly \$5M), a new specialized fire truck (about \$891,000), and transportation/drainage improvements (\$2M).

It's a lean budget by design, Siemens said.

"We had to make some very difficult decisions in terms of what we wanted to do and what we thought would make Winkler a better community versus what we can afford right now," he said. "We've just come out of the three biggest capital projects in Winkler's history, all done simultaneously. So we're very careful now to make sure that what we're doing is the meat and potatoes—we don't have the opportunity for dessert in our budget right now. We have to tackle what needs to happen and we have to look after what we have."

While no one likes seeing their tax bill increase, Siemens hopes Winklerites will appreciate council's measured approach.

"We are keenly aware of the fact that there is pain involved with an increase and we try to mitigate it as much as possible to not jeopardize our future, and that's where we really are: we're planning to make life as affordable as possible today while protecting the future of Winkler as well."

> **SPEED LIMIT REVIEW REQUESTED**

In other council matters, the City of Winkler is renewing its request that Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure take a closer look at the speed limit and road usage of Hwy. 14 between 15th St. and Road 23W (Dicken's Road) west of town.

The request was originally made in late 2023, but got stalled at the provincial level somewhere between now and then, city manager Jody Penner explained. MIT's new director has asked Winkler council to make a formal application once again so the process can move onto next steps.

Council hopes the results of the study it will give the province food for thought as to whether the speed limit on that stretch of road—currently 100 km/hr and 80 km/hr towards the intersection—needs to be lowered given the increased vehicle and pedestrian foot traffic in the area.

> **THE BREAD BASKET, FROM PG. 3**

The milestones won't come as fast in the future, as van der Linde hopes to work toward baking only 500 loaves of bread per year moving forward.

"People often ask how long I will carry on this project. It's not a story that I could have written. So as long as ingredients are coming in and people want to take them to bless others, so it will keep going."

The Bread Basket bread is shared within the Morris community at local organizations including the Red River Food Bank, but also reaches other hands in southern Manitoba through the ripple effect of locals sharing with loved ones.

Find the project online at The BREAD Basket on Facebook.



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Seymour Farms named PVWD Conservation Award winner

By Lorne Stelmach

A Manitou-area farm has been recognized by the Pembina Valley Watershed District for its commitment to conservation, sustainability and responsible water stewardship.

At its annual meeting in La Riviere March 20, the district presented the 2026 Conservation Award to Dale Seymour and sons Chris and Brett of Seymour Farms for their outstanding work as stewards of their land.

Seymour Farms philosophy of “healthy land provides healthy food” is an encouragement to all who work toward building and maintaining a healthy watershed.

“We’re honoured to receive the recognition,” said Chris Seymour. “We’ve been doing a lot of interesting things on the farm, and it’s been working out well for us, and it also fits in well with what the conservation principles would be as well.”

Angela and Dale Seymour took over the farming operation originally established by their parents in the 1960s. What began as a traditional family farm has grown into a diversified, forward-thinking agricultural operation rooted in long-term land stewardship.

Over the years, the farm has expanded significantly in both acreage and scope, incorporating cattle, chickens, and hog production alongside crop operations.

When their sons joined the business, they brought renewed energy and a

strong focus on sustainable management practices that continue to shape the farm’s direction today.

At the heart of Seymour Farms’ philosophy is the simple but powerful belief that healthy land provides healthy food for their own families and for the consumers they serve. Every management decision is made with long-term soil health, environmental protection, and water conservation in mind.

To protect soil structure and reduce erosion, Seymour Farms eliminated conventional tillage practices, transitioning to a no-till system. This approach minimizes soil disturbance, improves water infiltration and reduces surface runoff, helping to protect nearby waterways within the watershed.

The farm has also adopted intercropping and cover cropping systems to improve soil resilience. These practices enhance biodiversity both above and below ground, improve nutrient cycling, reduce erosion risk and increase organic matter. Cover crops help retain moisture, prevent nutrient loss and provide continuous ground cover—all of which support improved water stewardship across the landscape.

Strategic cattle management has been another key conservation tool. Managed grazing practices allow livestock to play a regenerative role in soil health, stimulating root growth, increasing organic matter and improving soil structure. Prop-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Dale, Brett, and Chris Seymour receive this year’s Conservation Award from Pembina Valley Watershed District manager Samantha Leech.

er rotation and pasture management reduce compaction and runoff while strengthening the land’s natural ability to retain water.

Tree planting initiatives have further enhanced environmental benefits on the farm. The addition of shelterbelts and tree corridors helps reduce wind erosion, capture carbon, improve wildlife habitat and stabilize soils, contributing to long-term watershed protection.

Through improved soil testing and precision nutrient management, Seymour Farms has also achieved a significant reduction in fertilizer use. By applying nutrients more efficiently and relying on natural soil-building processes, the farm reduces the risk of nutrient runoff into surrounding waterways while maintaining strong productivity.

Together, these conservation efforts

reflect a multi-generational commitment to farming in a way that protects the land and water for the future.

Chris Seymour observed that their goal has perhaps not been specifically with conservation in mind, but it has been the right thing to do for the success of their operation.

“The principles with our mixed farm and the principles that work well for profitability are the same thing as what is good for the eco-system,” he said. “We’re trying to work in partnership with nature rather than fighting with Mother Nature.”

It can all be done not at the cost of profitability, he emphasized.

“Sustainability doesn’t happen without profitability,” said Seymour. “What a lot of farmers fail to realize is if you work with nature, it’s a lot more efficient than trying to work against nature.”

Winkler Festival of the Arts brings back speech arts

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Festival of the Arts takes over the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church (600 Southview Dr.) the next two weeks for four sessions of performances.

They’ll kick things off April 9 with the return of speech arts, a category that hasn’t been at the festival since the late ‘90s.

“We have six entries. It’s a start,” says festival president Dorothy Plett, who noted a speech arts workshop held earlier this year was well attended, so they feel the interest is out there.

The categories this year include solo spoken poetry classical, Canadian, and 20th/21st century in various age groups and one solo Gr. 4-6 prose reading.

Other Manitoba festivals have kept speech arts on their rosters, and the Winkler committee felt the time was right to try to bring it back locally.

“We see these things happening at the provincials—you can get recommended from your local festivals to provincials for speech arts—and one of our committee members actually went and watched some or it and she was just enthralled,” Plett shares. “We thought, ‘This is something we just miss having.’”

“And then there was a liaison from the homeschool world of southern Manitoba who reached out to me and asked if there was a chance of having something like this in Winkler, and that was just the push we needed.”

Starting small with this category suits the festival fine this year, though they do hope more participants will

take part in the future.

It’s an invaluable skill for kids to hone, Plett observes.

“It’s about how to present, how to be in front of people, how to read things with expression and be able to not be absolutely tongue-tied and nervous just because you are now asked to read something in front of somebody.”

Loretta Thorliefson will be the adjudicator for speech arts along with the choral and vocal sessions. Thorliefson has taught English and choral music extensively at the junior high and high school levels and has mentored many individual students and speech choirs in festivals.

The festival will also include performances from three choirs (with sessions taking place at the church and Northlands Parkway Collegiate) on

April 9, the vocal sessions representing a range of genres and ages April 9-10, and then piano April 13-17. A full program is available online at winklerfestivalofthearts.com.

Piano is by far the most popular category, with over 300 entries.

“Piano is sort of what has caught on, because there’s a lot of kids who take piano lessons in this area,” Plett says, “and this is a great opportunity for extra education exposure.”

That’s the festival’s mission for all its sessions, she notes: to give performers a chance to showcase their skills while also learning a little something from the adjudicators that might help them grow in their craft.

Adjudicating the piano sessions is accomplished Winnipeg pianist and piano teacher Everett Hopfner.

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The **Voice**

getheard
EDITORIAL > VIEWPOINTS > LETTERS



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OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



Make up your mind

Ugh. Winter has been hanging on like Jack hanging on to that door at the end of Titanic ... just let go man.

Just when you think it's about ready to get up and wander off, we get a few more days of snow and cold weather.

In fact, as I am writing this, we recently exited a beautiful weekend of plus degrees only to wake up to more snow. And it's not simply a quick fall and retreat. These snows have been all-day affairs, like the winter equivalent of a full day of light rain.

If I were more of a Farmer's Almanac kind of person, I would say winter is hanging on because we've got a hellishly hot summer coming along and it's trying to prepare us.

You would think after more than 21 years in Manitoba I would have come to understand the ridiculous nature of this province's weather. The old joke "if you don't like the weather in Manitoba, wait five minutes" comes to mind.

The regular reader knows I'm not overly fond of winter unless I can participate in near life-ending activities to pass the days, like that time I managed to break 70 km per hour skiing at Holiday Mountain.

No, I am solidly a spring/summer kind of guy. My fondest memories from childhood have to do with baking in the sun, tempting skin cancer in shorts and T-shirt wandering the

streets of Guelph on my bike. We would bike up to the lake or simply swim under bridges in the downtown area blissfully unaware of things like urban pollution.

If we were feeling especially energetic we would bike all the way to Elora and cliff jump at the quarry ... you know the one: it's fenced off today to prevent people from dying, but they opened it briefly for a memorable scene in the movie *It*, which was filmed there.

Occasionally winter would find me on a sled but only to plow into a

friend at the bottom of the hill from behind or aim at a tree to see if I could rocket up its side. It really is astounding that I'm still alive.

I like the growth and green of spring and summer. I appreciate the many metaphors related to light, health, and life that these seasons offer. I can do without the bleak imagery of winter and fall.

Although, to be fair, if you are required to experience winter at all a good, life-threateningly cold Manitoba winter with its piercing blue skies

Continued on page 8



By Peter Cantelon

Letters

KUDOS FOR COLUMN

I applaud the editorial written by Peter Cantelon in the *Winkler Morden Voice* of March 26, 2026 [Pg. 6, *The most valuable crop*].

The topic is the crop of HATE that is being farmed among us. Mr. Cantelon identifies the local Jewish community as frequently being targeted. He also notes people profiting from the sale of items from hate groups—

notably Nazi artifacts.

At its root I have often wondered why people hate? Most often people hate what they do not understand or have experience with. The fear of the unknown and that which is different. Hence Peter suggests connecting with some Jewish organizations and invite them to speak to your church or community group. Great idea!

Ken Reddig, Pinawa

Letter policy

The *Voice* welcomes letters from readers on local matters.

Please keep your letters short (excessively long letters are less likely to be published), on-topic, and respectful.

The *Voice* reserves the right to edit, condense, or reject any submission.

Please include your full name, address, and phone number for verification purposes. Your name and city will be published with your letter. We do not print anonymous letters.

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Provincial budget prioritizes jobs, lower costs, better health care: Sala

By Lorne Stelmach

The Manitoba government emphasized such things as good jobs, lower costs, and better health care for Manitobans as it unveiled its 2026 budget last week.

Finance Minister Adrien Sala also particularly touted his belief that the budget positions rural and northern Manitoba for long term growth, safer communities, and better health care.

He suggested the government is making responsible investments that align with Manitobans' priorities while making progress on the path to balance the budget within four years.

"Budget 2026 reflects the priorities we heard from Manitobans every day, strengthening health care, lowering costs and creating good jobs," said Sala. "We're delivering real progress with relief at the grocery store, more front-line staff in our health care system and new opportunities for workers. This budget is about building a healthier, more affordable Manitoba for families."

Sala billed it as a budget that leaves no Manitoban behind.

"For the third year in a row, our government is making historic investments outside of Winnipeg. This budget includes policies and projects for every region every region of the province, every town, every city and ever regional municipality.

"Each section of the budget contains policies and projects that will have a positive effect on rural, northern and remote families, whether it's for health care, public safety, infrastructure, affordability or agriculture, there's something positive for your community in this budget."

Some key highlights included investing more in health care for the third consecutive year, adding 4,054 net new health care staff to the front lines, and focusing on new initiatives

to reduce the number of emergency rooms wait times.

Sala also suggested Manitoba is leading the country in tackling rising grocery prices through new legislation that would ban predatory pricing and restrict property controls. He said this budget goes further by removing the provincial sales tax from all food sold in grocery stores starting July 1. Additional measures to lower costs for Manitobans include an increase to \$1,700 to the homeowners affordability tax credit, increased rent relief, and free transit for children and youth.

The budget also builds on economic growth with a commitment to train 40 per cent more apprentices in the skilled trades and a new \$10-million Churchill Catalyst Fund to attract more private-sector interest in an energy corridor that will create good jobs.

Sala further suggested the budget reflects the values of everyday Manitobans who want to see everyone succeed with progressive policies that give families with the lowest incomes the most help. This includes the change to the homeowners affordability tax credit to help Manitobans with the most give back to those with the least, new investments in free child care for low-income families, and a \$2.5-million investment in adult literacy programs to help more Manitobans graduate and find a good job.

In reference to economic development, Sala touted a number of key investments in various infrastructure projects that will serve as catalysts for further growth.

"All across Manitoba, we're building, and we know that those investments in capital are going to not only help to ensure that Manitobans have the resources and infrastructure that we need to support our local economies, but it's also going to help put people to work."

In a press conference, Sala fielded a question about producers facing lower crop prices and higher input costs, and what the government was going to do to help farmers maintain their profitability beyond the usual supports and loan programs.

"I think we're doing the important work of making sure they have adequate access to those programs that we know will help our producers across the province," he said. "We know that producers are the backbone of the provincial economy, and we know that trade disruptions are creating increased risk and uncertainty, and I think it's critical our government is stepping up with more support to help producers.

"Our government is investing in the strength of rural and northern Manitoba," Sala emphasized. "These communities deserve reliable infrastructure, good jobs and health care they can count on. Budget 2026 delivers real support to help families build a stronger future, close to home."

The budget raises municipal funding by close to \$6 million, bringing total base support to \$198 million by 2026-27, along with new commitments for water infrastructure, Northern Affairs communities, and the Manitoba Growth, Renewal and Opportunities for Municipalities (Manitoba GRO) program.

Sala also emphasized that they are aiming to improve rural and northern health care as a priority with several initiatives to continue the provincial commitment to improving the quality of health care in those areas.

While physician recruitment and retention are at an all-time high, according to Sala, the budget adds an additional \$6.3 million to recruit more doctors to Manitoba, and it also provides funding for new training pathways for nurses, paramedics and internationally trained physicians.

Major capital projects include the construction or expansion of a number of hospitals, including Boundary Trails Health Centre in Morden-Winkler.

And for agricultural producers, Sala noted the budget will freeze crown land leases for the third year in a row, and producers will also benefit from the continuation of both the 50 per cent school tax rebate for farm properties and the farmland school tax rebate.

Additional funding includes:

- \$45.6 million for AgriStability to help Manitoba producers manage the risks of changing weather and markets.

- \$71.8 million for AgriInsurance to lower premiums and protect producers against crop production shortfalls caused by natural perils.

- \$18.5 million for AgriInvest to help producers manage minor income fluctuations.

- \$7.8 million for the wildlife damage compensation program to expand eligibility for claims on agricultural losses from predatory wildlife.

And to encourage young Manitobans to enter the agriculture sector, the government increases the cap on the young farmers rebate and the lifetime maximum rebate rises.

Sala also touted what he called record investment in rural and northern infrastructure ranging from twinning of the Trans-Canada Highway to Ontario to rebuilding highway 2 in southwest Manitoba.

A federal-provincial investment in 2025 of \$76.9 million in water and wastewater capacity across rural Manitoba will include 22 million for the Pembina Valley Water Co-op capital plan and \$4.4 million for the Morden-Winkler sewer line as well as other wastewater capacity projects totalling \$28.5 million.

Provincial financial plan gets mixed reviews

By Lorne Stelmach

There were mixed reviews for the Manitoba NDP government's new provincial budget released last week.

Midland MLA and Conservative finance critic Lauren Stone said she's disappointed the budget lacks any serious plan to make life more affordable.

"Wab Kinew and his NDP are once again letting down Manitoba families," she said. "They promised Manitobans that they would make life

more affordable, but this budget fails to deliver real, tangible relief for families struggling with rising costs."

Meanwhile, skyrocketing education property tax increases are what Manitobans continue to get from the NDP, Stone suggested. According to Statistics Canada, homeowners in Winnipeg experienced a near 20 per cent increase in property taxes between 2025 and 2026.

"When education property taxes in Winnipeg and across Manitoba are going up by hundreds and thousands

of dollars, increasing the tax credit by only \$100 and not until next year is a drop in the bucket," said Stone. "Manitoba families need affordability relief now, not next year."

"Manitoba families deserve affordability," said Obby Khan, leader of the Opposition. "They deserve stability. They deserve a government that understands what they're going through and is ready to act. I see moms and their kids in the grocery store, picking up fruits, vegetables, meat or coffee and putting it back on the shelf be-

cause it is just too expensive.

"We're focused on putting more of your hard earned money back in your pocket. Because Manitoba families deserve affordability now."

The Conservatives are proposing zero provincial income tax on the first \$30,000 earned, which they estimate would save an individual about \$1,500 per year and the average family up to \$3,070 annually.

Water co-op reports on a year of growth

By Lorne Stelmach

Key projects, priorities, and challenges posed by providing a vital source of water for the greater region were highlighted recently as the Pembina Valley Water Co-op (PVWC) held its annual meeting.

Co-chairs of the PVWC board Don Wiebe of the RM of Rhineland and Peter Froese of the RM of Stanley suggested that 2025 was a very productive and eventful year.

A highlight was the provincial announcement of a \$22 million capital support grant.

"This grant will be used toward our capital plan to increase our capacity and to produce more potable water across the entire region," they wrote in their report.

Meanwhile, detailed design for the new Letellier membrane plant has begun with a projected completion date for 2028, and they are also optimistic that the new river intake at Letellier will be completed this spring.

And as far as the financial side of things goes, the volume of water sales and approximated budget projections were on target, while the operating costs were under budget.

"This, along with the municipal contributions, strengthens our financial position," Froese and Wiebe said.

CEO Dale Toews touched on a number of key areas for the PVWC, begin-



ning with the state of the water supply for the region.

"At this time, we don't have spring supply concerns for both the Stephenfield Lake or the Red River. What the summer and fall will look like right now is unclear," he said. "From a water supply stand point, we don't need the high river flows but rather we need the steady river flows throughout the year.

"It is important for us to get the steady rains through summer to fill the dugouts, ponds and private wells so folks can continue using their own raw water sources for livestock and outdoor usage," he added. "When the raw water dugouts and other sources aren't available, we see folks start pulling from our system and that can put a tremendous strain on it."

Toews also touched on some key considerations around seasonal water demands.

"Spring demand is something we will be working on again this year as the agricultural spraying, livestock, gardening and summer pool filling can create challenges for us," he said

"There are those couple of weeks in spring, typically mid-May through to the end of June, that we see a very sharp and very significant demand in water which puts an enormous strain on our entire network.

"The municipalities have been very helpful in helping us get the message out to the public, which is to spread out your high water usage from mid-May to the end of June. Fill your pools early in the year, wash your house earlier in the season, and spread out your landscape watering," Toews said. "The more we can spread that high demand out, it takes the strain off the system."

Toews went on to touch on their key capital projects.

"Construction of the new intake at Letellier has moved slower than we anticipated," he said, adding they are now anticipating this work to be completed midway through 2026. "This is an important project for us as it places the intake in a location in the river that should improve our ability to access water in low flows.

"The new membrane treatment

plant in Letellier is moving along nicely," he shared. "Significant design work has already been completed, and we are working on getting formal contracts issued ... so we are looking at a 2028 completion date for that project.

"This will increase our treatment capacity significantly and really help take the edge off during peak usage seasons."

Toews also credited the staff and people who are involved in making the PVWC work and continue to provide safe and secure sources of water.

"It is no secret that our raw water sources—the Red River and Stephenfield Lake—are challenging. The water chemistry in both sources are continually changing, and so our team at PVWC is continually adjusting how they perform their work," he said. "We are fortunate to have the talented and committed people we have here at PVWC working tirelessly to ensure we have safe clean water."

The PVWC is owned by 14 municipalities and is supplying water to over 65,000 people across southern Manitoba. It works with over 400 kilometres of water pipelines over a 9,000 square kilometre service area with 888 million gallons of water distributed and \$10 million worth of water sold across the region.

Menonite historical soc. hosting events in our area this spring

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Manitoba Menonite Historical Society has a trio of events coming up in the area this spring.

Up first is its annual meeting on Saturday, April 25 at 1 p.m. at the Winkler Arts and Culture Centre (547 Park St.).

It's a chance to hear from some of their partnering organizations, shares society treasurer Sean Goerzen.

"We're kind of the parent organization over many of the other local heritage groups, like the Menonite Heritage Museum, the Menonite Archives in Winnipeg ... they all report to us there at the AGM."

The meeting will also share reports about the agency's own work fostering awareness about Menonite history and culture.

"We're also always looking for new people to join us," notes Goerzen. "So if people are interested in becoming a member, this is the place to do it."

The meeting will be followed at 3 p.m. by a free showing of *The Russlander Migration: From Revolution to Reflection*.

The documentary shares interviews done with Menonites who migrated to Canada from Russia during the 1920s.

"They recorded their experiences in pre-revolu-

tionary Soviet Union and then living through the [1917] revolution and subsequent migration to Canada, settling here and going through the Great Depression and having to make a new life," Goerzen says, noting there are also interviews done with the children of these immigrants reflecting on how their parents' experiences of war, famine, and displacement shaped later generations.

"And then the other part of the film is commemorating the train tour that was done as a centennial recognition of the Russlander migration," he adds, speaking of the 2023-2024 cross-country train that re-enacted the immigrants' journey from Quebec to British Columbia.

Following up on the documentary showing, the society on May 23 is hosting a bus tour of the West Reserve, where thousands of Russian Menonites settled in the late 1800s.

Conrad Stoesz, a historian with the Menonite Heritage Archives, will be providing educational context behind stops at sites in Dufferin, Edenburg, Neuanlage, Neuhorst, Reinland, Hochfeld, Osterwick, Waldheim, and Mountain City.

"They're going to be visiting some significant sites," Goerzen says. "And it's not just we get off and you look—they will all include a very interactive, engaging talk from Conrad.

"I think there's things that people see every day in their life, commuting around the area, that maybe don't seem like very significant historical things but, in reality, there are all sorts of stories attached to these locations," he says. "So this is a chance for people to connect with that and learn more about their own history."

The tour will set out from Winkler that Saturday morning. Registration is \$50 per person, which includes lunch. You can sign-up online at mmhs.org.

> CANTELON, FROM PG. 6

is the way to go for sure. The kind of cold that threatens to freeze your lungs solid with every breath.

I know I'm complaining. Soon enough spring will truly have sprung, we will be gardening, hiking, biking, relaxing on the porch and going to the beach. While it will never be nearly long enough it is usually just enough to get us through the coming darker seasons.

In the meantime, I suppose I will go stand in front of the window and pretend I live inside a snow globe for a little while longer.

Current, former Aces come together to raise \$3,300

By Lorne Stelmach

Past and present members of the W.C. Miller Collegiate high school hockey teams in Altona came together on the ice recently in support of a good cause.

The high school's Youth in Philanthropy group hosted an Aces alumni hockey fundraiser March 20 where the current Aces hockey team challenged the alumni from the 2017-2018 Aces Zone 4 hockey league championship team in an effort to raise funds for the YIP grant program.

Over \$3,300 was raised that will be given back to the community through grants in the coming months. And because YIP is in a partnership with the Altona Community Foundation, a fund matching agreement will nearly double the impact of the money in the community.

The Aces alumni hockey fundraiser was an excellent example of how young people can partner with community members and area businesses to help support local organizations to directly assist families in the region through community grants, say organizers.

"Everybody really came together," said Derek Wahl, vice principal of W.C. Miller Collegiate.

He noted one of the student council members came forward with the idea as a result of hearing about some informal games happening involving alumni, so there was the thought that it could be made into a fundraiser.

This one particular alumni group had been quite close, so it just seemed like a good fit, and Wahl suggested there was a sense that there was a common interest in wanting to come together as a community to support the community.

"We were able to make a bunch of things come together ... student council was willing to do all the work," he said, noting the students organized a 50/50 draw, raffle prizes, and a bake sale. Prizes were donated by a host of community businesses, such as Rhineland Car and Centennial Farm Supply, and the Altona Minor Hockey program partnered with school staff and students in running a canteen to help increase the profits earned.

"We had kind of an end of the year at the hockey rink, so Altona Minor Hockey sort of split the canteen pro-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Past and present Altona Aces hit the ice for a charity game last month to raise funds in support of W.C. Miller Collegiate's Youth in Philanthropy program.

ceeds with us, and we worked with the town on it," said Wahl. "Everything just came together really well with the work of a number of different people involved, and it was also all the community members who came out because they heard about it.

"Kids were working together to raise money to give away ... that was something that was really inspiring ... there were a lot of things that came together."

For the school staff, it felt especially good "being able to help the kids to do as opposed to us doing the work ourselves. It was really nice to give them the opportunity to do that work."

Wahl sees potential for this to be an annual event.

"I think everyone feels there was enough fun and enough connections made that it's something the students could build off of for the future."

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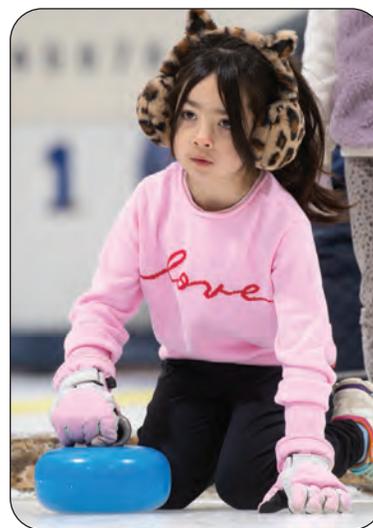
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Fundraiser for Pembina Counselling Centre



Jam Can 2026

Over 100 youth came out to the Morden Curling Club Saturday morning for the annual Jam Can bonspiel to kick off spring break. The event was started by Morden Elks in 1967. Back then, the kids played with frozen cans of jam instead of curling stones, hence the name. Generations of young curlers—some trying the sport for the first time—have had the opportunity to take to the ice in the decades since. From left: Lux Sawatzky watches an incoming rock carefully, Trey Moffatt and Amara Dhala throwing stones.

PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

> FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS, FROM PG. 5

The festival wraps things up with the awards night on Friday, April 17 starting at 6 p.m., where the top entrants will take the stage once again to perform.

"It's always a great concert," Plett says.

The community is welcome to at-

tend any festival session or the awards night.

Admission is free, though donations to keep the festival going are most welcome.

As always, the organization is on the lookout for people willing to get involved as volunteers, which are truly

the lifeblood of the event.

"We always need more help," Plett says. "If we're going to continue to offer this many festival options, then we do need more committee members."

There are a range of roles available, including those dealing with admin-

istration or organizing volunteers.

"So that doesn't even have to be a musically oriented person," Plett notes.

Connect with the festival through their website if you'd like to get involved.

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Altona Chamber names 2026 award winners

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Altona and District Chamber of Commerce has announced the winners of its 2026 awards.

They received numerous worthy nominees this year, shared Stephanie Peters, economic development officer.

“We’ve got so many deserving businesses and not-for-profit organizations that it’s really great to see all those nominations come in,” she said. “I just wish everybody could receive an award.”

The annual awards are a chance for the community to come together to celebrate the work local businesses, entrepreneurs, and non-profits are doing to make Altona a better place to live and work, Peters noted.

This year’s winners have “been in the community for many years and have been contributing in so many ways,” she said, “whether it’s financially or volunteering time on different efforts.”

Red River Mutual is this year’s Business Excellence Award winner for companies with 11 or more employees.

The company is celebrating 150 years of service, with deep roots in Altona. From its beginnings as a mutual aid collective in 1875 to becoming one of Western Canada’s leading insurance providers, Red River Mutual today serves over 86,000 policyholders and employs 190 people.

“With a strong local presence and a deep commitment to community, the company has contributed over \$600,000 to local initiatives in the past three years and continues to demonstrate leadership through innovation, employee engagement, and community investment,” the selection committee said.

The Business Excellence Award for companies with 10 or fewer employees is going to Altona Dental Centre, which has served its patients in the community for over 50 years.

“Through significant growth and modernization, the clinic has doubled its patient base since 2018 while bringing advanced dental care services to Altona that were previously only available outside the community,” the committee noted. “With a strong focus on hiring and developing local talent, supporting education,

and delivering patient-centered care, Altona Dental Centre continues to enhance both the health and quality of life for residents.”

This 2026 Entrepreneur of the Year is Jenna-Lee Luptak, owner of Beautiful Bend Therapy.

“With more than 15 years of experience as a pediatric occupational therapist, Jenna-Lee has built a practice grounded in compassion, connection, and play-based therapy,” the selection committee noted. “Through strong community partnerships and a growing demand for services, Beautiful Bend Therapy is helping address a critical gap in pediatric care while empowering families and strengthening the community.”

Finally, the Non-Profit of the Year Award will be awarded to the Altona & Area Family Resource Centre (AAFRC), an organization that has supported local families for over 25 years.

“Founded as a grassroots, community-driven initiative, AAFRC continues to provide accessible, inclusive programming focused on early childhood development. Through its welcoming environment, strong partnerships, and commitment to removing barriers for families, AA-

FRC plays a vital role in building a healthier, more connected, and resilient community.”

These recipients will be honoured at the chamber’s awards gala on April 23 at the Rhineland Pioneer Centre.

The evening will also feature multicultural entertainment provided by Folklorama, including Japanese Taiko drumming, Irish dance, Filipino performances, and a Ukrainian dance ensemble.

To book a ticket, head to www.altonachamber.com or call 204-324-9549 by April 9.

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PHOTOS BY EDWARD VINCENT ARCENAL/VOICE

The Gardens on Tenth in Altona hosted its annual soup and pie fundraiser March 26. Above: It was a full house for the by-donation evening, which raised funds for The Apartments' dining room roof. Right: Leona Braun, Martha Braun, and Diana Heppner enjoy the night.

Supper raises the roof



Altona council keeps mill rate steady in 2026 budget

By Holly Thorne-Wiebe

Altona town council has approved its 2026 financial plan, holding the municipal mill rate steady while introducing a modest tax increase to address rising costs.

The \$12.6 million budget includes a 0.56 per cent increase to the municipal tax levy, bringing the total to just over \$6.16 million. Officials say the plan reflects current economic pressures while aiming to limit the impact on residents.

"These are tough economic times

with tariffs, high inflation, and interest rates," Councillor Perry Batchelor said during the public hearing last week. "This 0.5 per cent increased budget is designed to lighten those burdens."

A surplus from 2025 helped offset costs, allowing the town to maintain service levels and move ahead with major projects without increasing the mill rate, which remains at 18.20.

"Thanks to a surplus in 2025, administration and council are able to complete major projects in 2026 and continue at the same service level, all

the while keeping the mill rate unchanged," Batchelor said.

Property taxes account for 48.9 per cent of municipal revenue, with additional funding coming from reserve transfers and grants, all totalling \$12.6 million for a balanced budget.

Operating costs, including salaries, utilities,

and fuel, continue to rise.

"The Town bills go up with inflation, tariffs, and other market changes," Batchelor noted.

The 2026 capital budget totals approximately \$4.14 million. Key projects include renovations to the former library space at Golden West Plaza for Regional Connections, upgrades to the community pool, ongoing sewer relining, and raising and flood-proofing 9th Street Northwest.

"That is just over a million-dollar project, which we received just over \$600,000 from the provincial government," said Mayor Harv Schroeder of the 9th Street work.

Officials noted that prioritizing a major project limits what else can be completed in the same year.

"As soon as you pick a large project like that, you're kind of committed," said Dan Gagne, chief administrative officer.

The Town of Altona will not take on new debt in 2026, with long-term existing debt not beginning to come off the books until 2032.

"There's no new borrowing for 2026, so that's good news," Batchelor said.

For homeowners, the municipal portion of property taxes remains largely unchanged. On a \$250,000 home, the increase is limited to about \$5 due to

a new waste collection contract.

However, overall tax bills will rise due to school division taxes, which are outside municipal control. Border Land School Division taxes are expected to increase by about \$113.51 on a typical home, bringing the total increase to roughly \$118.

Commercial properties of similar value are expected to see an increase of about \$216.74, also driven largely by school taxes.

Council pointed to continued residential and commercial growth as a factor helping stabilize the tax base.

"We're having buildings, houses, and apartments continue to grow, especially in the northwest corner," Schroeder said.

The town continues to offer development incentives, including a three-year municipal tax exemption in the industrial park and a two-year exemption for new multi-unit housing built on existing serviced streets.

"There's definitely people kicking the tires for lots in the industrial park," Schroeder observed.

While officials say the 2026 budget was manageable despite economic pressures, they cautioned that future tax decisions will depend on conditions and priorities in the years ahead.

Pickup *Your* Community

Weekly News at



IN MORRIS MB

ACAN hosting annual Fruit Jam April 11

By Lorne Stelmach

A grassroots Altona organization is looking forward to another year of building community with a focus on sustainability and connection.

The Altona Community Action Network (ACAN) is a volunteer group that aims to promote that focus through both education and action in a number of ways.

"We've got a lot of projects on the go," said chairperson Joanne Wiebe. "Our most recent project and probably the most well known is the Altona community garden. There's quite a beautiful pavilion facility ... as well as 200 garden plots with a tool shed."

The plots located across from the Millennium Exhibition Centre sell for only \$25, and there are not only tools provided but some volunteers who will reach out to help people learning the ropes.

"The previous garden manager really worked tirelessly to get this community garden up and running, so now we are looking to maintain it to his standards," said Wiebe. "It's kind of a gem in our community."

Not only have they expanded the garden to over 200 garden plots, making space for even more community members to grow their own fresh food, but they have also continued the development of a community orchard just north of the garden.

"In the orchard, we're planning to install gravel paths to improve accessibility and make it easier for everyone to enjoy the space," Wiebe said.

They are currently fundraising to hire a dedicated employee to help maintain both the community garden and orchard.

"As these spaces grow, so does the need for consistent care ... and we're excited about the possibility of having extra hands to help them thrive.

"We're also looking forward to host-

ing more gatherings and workshops at the garden pavilion this season. Our work also continues with Butterfly Way to support pollinator habitats throughout our community."

On top of those things, they also try to do educational events as well as utilize their website and social media to promote community events.

A big part of their goals as well is trying to support environmental initiatives in the community, Wiebe noted.

"We have a partnership with the Town of Altona," she said. "There's a sub-committee to work on some issues such as active transportation and promote things along that line.

"We're continuing to collaborate with the Town of Altona through the Active Transportation Committee to promote safe, accessible and sustainable ways to move around town."

Next up for the group this spring is the April 11 Fruit Jam at The Community Exchange at 7 p.m. It will feature a live performance by The Pylons along with a local artisan raffle with an amazing variety of products and a silent auction for a stunning quilt.

"We just wanted to bring people together for a fun event in the community ... learn a little bit about our organization and also raise a little bit of funds," Wiebe said, noting the event is in its third year and has raised between \$4,000 and \$5,000.

"We're also



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The Altona Community Action Network is hosting a free concert April 11 to raise funds for its programming and the community gardens.

planning to host an Active Transportation Day in June, complete with a coffee giveaway to celebrate walking, biking and rolling around town," she shared, adding there will also be additional gatherings and workshops at the garden pavilion in the months ahead.

Wiebe said they are hopeful about the progress being made and the positive impact this work can have on the health and vibrancy of the community, and she feels

the community has really embraced what they are trying to do, especially with the community garden.

"It's really a diverse group. There are a lot of newcomers accessing those plots, so again that was kind of the mandate, to make it as accessible as possible," she said. "It tells us that people value this as sort of a meeting point or kind of an access point where people can connect with each other."

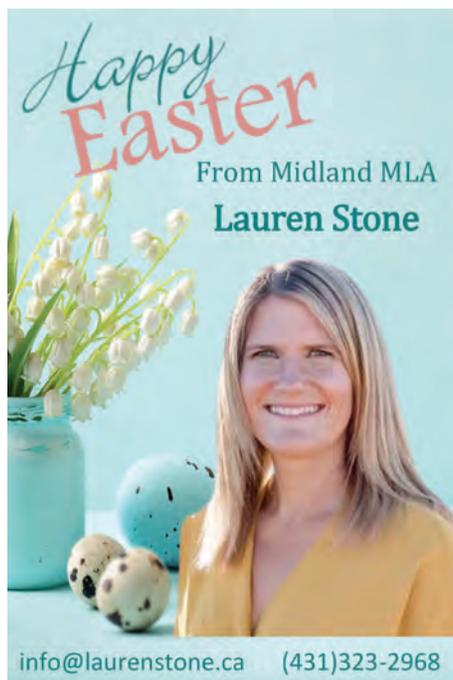
"WE'VE GOT A LOT OF PROJECTS ON THE GO."

Wishing you a Blessed Easter

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

ROMANS 5:8

Josh Guenter
 MLA for Borderland
 info@joshguenter.ca
 204.324.8957



HAPPY
 Easter



sports & recreation

Winkler Royals win SEMHL title with 4-3 OT win

By Annaliese Meier

The Winkler Royals are champions. Winkler capped off a hard-fought South Eastern Manitoba Hockey League final with a 4-3 overtime win over the Ile des Chenes Northstars in Game 6 on March 27, securing the best-of-seven series four games to two.

After trading wins through the first four games, the Royals took control late in the series, highlighted by a dominant Game 5 performance on March 25, when they defeated Ile des Chenes 6-2 on home ice to grab a 3-2 series lead.

Game 5 proved to be a turning point, as Winkler's powerplay took over. The Royals struck three times on six opportunities, with Cody Fowlie scoring twice and adding two assists, while TJ Matuszewski delivered a four-point night with a goal and three helpers.

Winkler opened the scoring early in the second period when Fowlie converted on the man advantage, and they never looked back. Brett Bergman netted the game-winner mid-

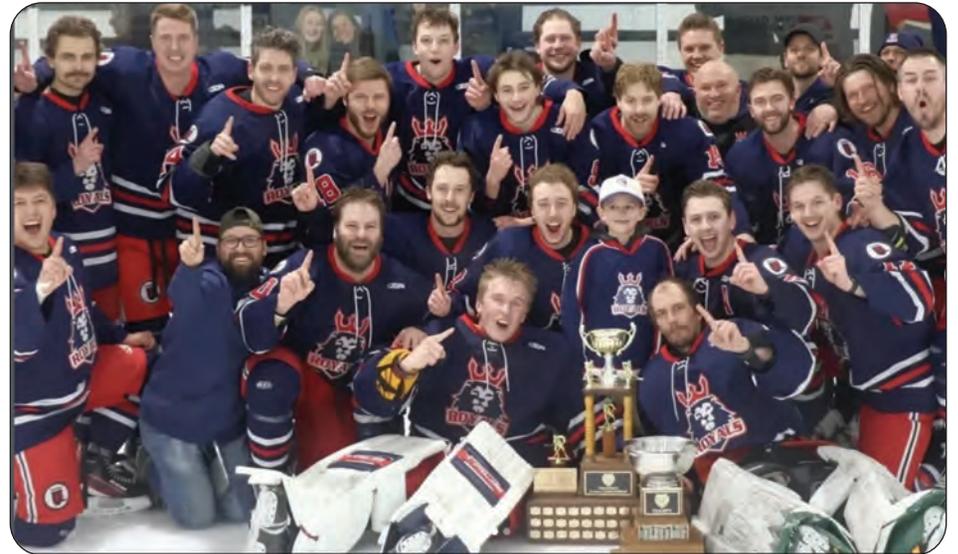
way through the frame, while Aaron Lewadniuk and Matuszewski added insurance goals to put the game out of reach.

In goal, Matthew Thiessen was steady once again, turning aside 33 shots to backstop the victory. Thiessen was a difference-maker throughout the playoffs, finishing with a 10-2-1 record, a 1.98 goals-against average and a .945 save percentage, along with four shutouts.

The Northstars had opened the scoring in Game 5 through Noah Keating, and later added a goal from Matthew Osadick, but struggled to keep pace as Winkler's special teams and depth took over.

That momentum carried into Game 6, where Winkler sealed the championship in overtime after a tightly contested battle.

The Royals' playoff run was powered by a deep and consistent offensive attack. Matuszewski led all postseason scorers with 21 points (11 goals, 10 assists), including six powerplay markers and three game-winning goals. Justin Augert followed closely with 20 points (10 goals, 10 as-



INSTAGRAM.COM/WINKLER_ROYALS

The Winkler Royals are the South Eastern Hockey League champions after taking their series against Ile des Chenes four games to two Friday night.

sists), while Lewadniuk also reached the 20-point mark with 14 assists and six goals.

Fowlie added 14 points in 13 games, while Braden Hildebrand chipped in five goals, including three game-winners, underscoring Winkler's ability to get contributions throughout the lineup.

Across the series, the Royals showed

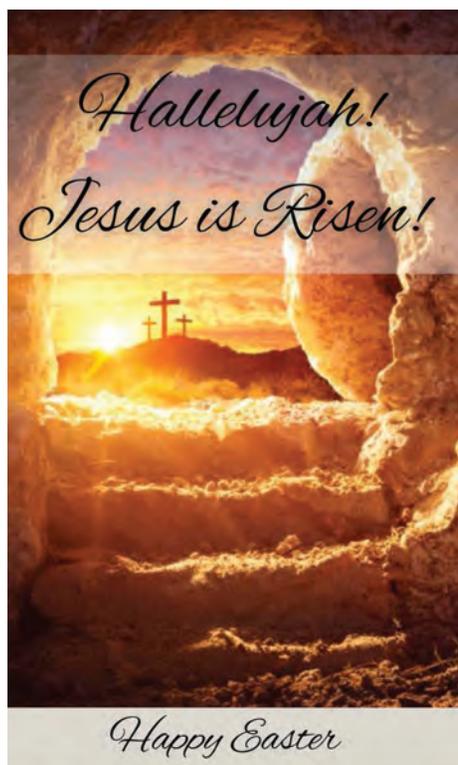
resilience after dropping Games 2 and 3, responding with three wins in the final four contests to close out the Northstars.

With a balanced attack, elite goaltending and a lethal powerplay, Winkler proved to be the class of the league when it mattered most, capturing the SEMHL championship in six games.

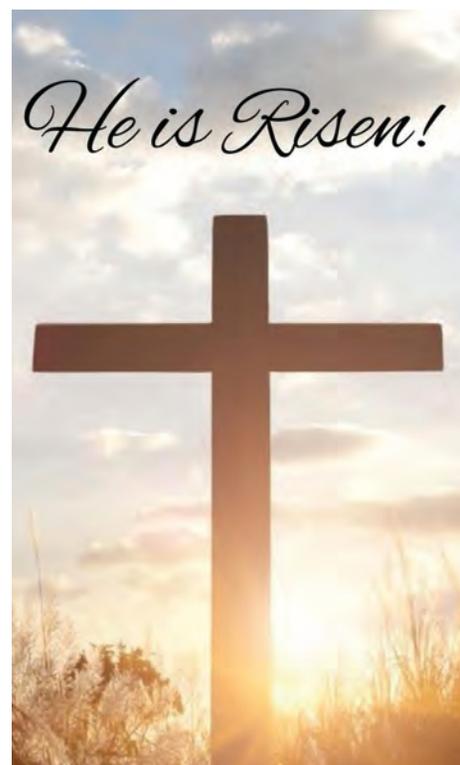


PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Ile des Chenes' Justin Engel tries to stop Winkler's Brett Bergman from getting to the puck in front of goaltender Matthew Radomsky in game five of the series last week. Winkler won it 6-2 and then took game six 4-3 two nights later on the road to win the trophy.



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End of the line for Winkler Flyers

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Niverville Nighthawks put an end to the Winkler Flyers' hopes of reclaiming the Manitoba Junior Hockey League title by sweeping their best-of-seven playoff series in four games straight.

Following up on an 8-2 rout in game one and a narrow 2-1 win in game two, the Nighthawks eked out victory in game three 3-2 at home March 25 and then blanked the Flyers in their own rink 4-0 March 27 to advance to the next round.

Joshua Ingram had Winkler in the lead less than a minute into Wednesday night's game, but the Nighthawks fired in two in the second and one more late in the third. A goal in the 18th minute from Niklas Gudmundson just wasn't enough to close the gap.

Liam Ernst made 24 saves that night off the 27 he faced. His teammates sent 26 the other way.

Two nights later, Winkler fans filled the Centennial Arena hoping their



PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Winkler's Liam Ernst makes a save off the close-in scoring attempt by Niverville's Adam Vigfusson in the second period of what proved to be the Flyers' final game of the season last week. Right: Niklas Gudmundson leads the charge up the ice. He was the Flyers' scoring leader in the playoff series against the Nighthawks.

team could pull off a win to stay in the running, but the Flyers struggled to find a chink in the Nighthawks' armour, despite outshooting their opponents 38-27.

The visitors scored twice in the opening frame and then added more unanswered goals in each of the remaining periods to win it all.

Niverville will now face the Waywayseecappo Wolverines while the Steinbach Pistons take on the Virden Oil Capitals in the league's second round of playoffs.

For the Flyers, it's the end of a season that saw them rank a solid fourth in the MGEU East Division standings with a record of 34-20-2-2 and 72 points, trailing the Nighthawks in first (103 points and just seven losses to their names), the Pistons in second (96 points), and the Portage Terriers in third (79 points).



Sawatzky honoured

Altona's own Kate Sawatzky is one of the recipients of the Manitoba Pork Fuel Her Future Award, the Manitoba High School Athletic Association announced last week. The award is given to recognize exceptional performances by female student athletes. Sawatzky, who has played for the W.C. Miller Collegiate Aces for the past four years, was lauded as a leader for her team. She's averaged 23.2 points a game on 60 per cent shooting, 14 rebounds, and four blocks. According to her coach, basketball is won as a team, and Kate is the motor that runs the ship.

MHSAA PHOTO

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Junior curling champs



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

The Winkler Curling Club's junior curling program wrapped up its season recently. Thirty-two curlers in Gr. 5-8 took to the ice in the Monday skills development program and another 30 Gr. 5-9 kids took part in the Thursday night league play, which has been up and running since November. League champs include (at left, from left) lead Camryn Krahn, second Katelyn Peters, skip Bramwell Friesen, and (missing) third Lucas Rothenburger. Consolation champs were (above, from left) skip Damian Krahn, third Elizabeth Schmidt, second Isabelle Peters, and lead Janie Hiebert.

Beyond the T-Shirt: Morden and Winkler Schools Echo a Message of Inclusion for International Day of Pink



On April 8, 2026, a familiar and vibrant hue will wash over the Pembina Valley as students, educators, and community members from Morden to Winkler don pink to mark the International Day of Pink. While the "sea of pink" has become a staple of the spring season, this year's observance carries a specific, resonant call to action: "ECHO."

The 2026 theme, ECHO, shifts the focus from simply wearing a colour to actively listening to the voices of 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. In the heart of the Pembina Valley, where community ties run deep, this day serves as a powerful reminder that the province's Safe and Inclusive Schools Act provides a vital framework for dignity, respect, and protection for every student.

The movement's roots trace back to 2007 in Nova Scotia, when two high school students organized a "sea of pink" to support a peer harassed for his clothing choice. Since then, the initiative has become a cornerstone of the Safe and Caring Schools strategy across Manitoba. In Morden and Winkler, this message of solidarity has evolved into a year-round commitment to ensuring no student feels isolated or unsafe.

Local residents are noticing a shift in the community atmosphere. "It's different now; there's more attention and a real sense of awareness," notes a longtime resident, reflecting on decades of

moving past childhood bullying. "I would hope that bystander kids in the valley now feel empowered to step in and say, 'Hey, hold on, that's not right.'"

Across the region, schools are taking the message to

heart. From the hallways of Morden Collegiate to the classrooms of the Garden Valley School Division in Winkler, students are leading the charge. Activities planned for April 8 include peer-led assemblies and "pink shirt cutouts," where students record specific acts of kindness to create massive community murals.

Local law enforcement and businesses are also expected to participate, wearing pink pins or ribbons as a visible sign that the Pembina Valley is a place where everyone deserves to feel safe. This

year's "ECHO" theme also commemorates the 25th anniversary of pivotal legal victories for 2SLGBTQ+ rights in Canada, highlighting that today's local inclusion was built on a national foundation of courage.

As Pembina Valley residents prepare their pink attire, the goal is for the message of kindness to echo long after the shirts are put away.



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By Voice staff

Their seasons now behind them, both the male and female U18 AAA Pembina Valley Hawks teams handed out their awards in recent weeks.

On the women's team, Delaney Darby went home with the Most Sportsmanlike Award, Ariel Rondeau

clinched the Coaches Award, Leah Klassen is this year's Unsung Hero, Top Scorer went to Casey O'Brien for her 27 points (20 goals, seven assists), Rookie of the Year is Claire Boyd, Most Improved Player is Rylee Harms, and sharing the Most Valuable Player nod is Madison Froese and Casey O'Brien. On the men's team, Carson Hie-



Hawks hand out awards

bert's 82 points (36 goals, 46 assists) earned him the Eric Fehr Top Goal Scorer Award and the Terry Yake Top Scorer Award, Ocean Fehr won the Coaches Award, Logan Delichte was named Most Improved Player, Casey Magarrell and Parker Henderson are this year's Unsung Heroes, Rookie of the Year is Caden McMahon, Top

Defencemen is Paxton White, MVP is Carson Hiebert, Playoff MVP nods went to Tyson Pethybridge, Ocean Fehr, and Carson Hiebert, and the Best Defensive Forward Awards is shared by Tyson Pethybridge and Ragnar Gillis.

SEMHL celebrates 75 years with updated list of all-time leaders

By Annaliese Meier

The SEMHL is celebrating its 75-year history with an updated list of all-time statistical leaders, recognizing some of the most accomplished players to ever compete in the league.

Leading the way among career regular season goal scorers is Rob Hamm (Carman/Morden), who finished his SEMHL career with 376 goals. Hamm also sits atop the league's all-time points list with 764, further cementing his place as one of the most dominant offensive players in league history.

Close behind in the goal-scoring race is Shane Moffatt (Portage/Notre Dame) with 349, followed by Greg Waldvogel (Portage) with 311. Other notable names in the top 10 include Mike Mutcheson (Morden) with 291, Dale Rempel (Carman/Morden/Morris) with 286, and Mike Kehler (Altona) with 279, all of whom were consistent offensive threats throughout their careers.

Also among the top goal scorers are Marlin Vanrobaeys (Morden/Winkler) with 274, Brian Miller (Carman/Elm Creek/Starbuck) with 259, Pat Owen (Carman) with 241 and Darren Seymour (Morden/Swan Lake) with 223.

While Hamm leads in goals and points, Marlin Vanrobaeys (Morden/Winkler) holds the distinction as the league's all-time assist leader with 466. Vanrobaeys also ranks second in career points with 740, highlighting his playmaking ability and longevity.

Rob Hamm (Carman/Morden) sits

second in assists with 388, followed by Ryan Dyck (Altona/Carman/Morden) with 357, Troy Ehnes (Morden/Winkler) with 338 and Mike Kehler (Altona) with 333. Rounding out the top 10 are Shane Moffatt (Portage/Notre Dame), Paul Harland (Portage/Notre Dame), Greg Waldvogel (Portage), Dale Rempel (Carman/Morden/Morris) and Jeremy Matuszewski (Morden/Altona/Winkler), all of whom surpassed the 290-assist mark.

The SEMHL's all-time points leaderboard mirrors many of the same names, with Hamm (Carman/Morden) leading the way at 764, followed by Vanrobaeys (Morden/Winkler) at 740 and Moffatt (Portage/Notre Dame) at 674. Waldvogel (Portage) and Kehler (Altona) round out the top five, while Dale Rempel (Morris/Morden/Carman), Ryan Dyck (Morden/Carman/Altona), Mike Mutcheson (Morden), Troy Ehnes (Morden/Winkler) and Paul Harland (Portage/Notre Dame) complete the top 10.

Physical play has long been a hallmark of senior hockey, and that is reflected in the penalty minutes category. Darrin Husak (Warren) tops the list with 1,225 career penalty minutes and remains active. He is followed by Mark Heinrichs (Altona) with 848 and Ryan Dyck (Altona/Carman/Morden) with 677. Brent Toews (Altona), Jeremy Matuszewski (Morden/Altona/Winkler), Craig Johnston (Carman/Morden), Phil Letkeman (Altona/Winkler), Marcel Pruden (Oakville/Portage/Swan Lake), Greg

Clayton (Morden) and Mitch Wicklund (Warren) round out the top 10, with Husak and Letkeman still active.

Durability and commitment are highlighted in the games played category, where Darryl McElroy (Morden/Winkler) leads all players with 380 career games. Scott Corbett

(Warren), an active player, follows with 355, while Hamm (Carman/Morden), Husak (Warren), Jeremy Matuszewski (Morden/Altona/Winkler), Wes Friesen (Altona), Bill Sisson (Elm Creek/Carman/Starbuck),

Continued on page 19



U11 champs

SUPPLIED PHOTO

This group of talented Pilot Mound athletes brought home the gold medal from the Co-ed U11 Rural A provincial championships that took place in St. Adolphe last month. Their road to victory included wins over the home team 10-1, Neepawa 9-2, Swan Valley 14-2, and St. Eustache 5-0 before downing Virden 3-1 in the final match. Back row, from left: Coach Nathan Ramage, Calan MacKinnon, Gavin Follis, Ali McCannell, Bram Chevalier, coach Brandy Chevalier, coach Jocelyn Keinanen. Middle row, from left: CJ Friesen, Kolton Wilson, Walker Bisson, Fynn Gelo, Camilla Keinanen, Charlie Collins. Front row: Booker Ramage.



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

The Morden Figure Skating Club held its annual spring show last Thursday at the Access Event Centre. Entitled *Skate The World*, the show featured individual, group, and synchronized performances including a special performance by the Pembina Pizazz team.



Manitoba players named to U16 Program of Excellence spring camp roster

By Annaliese Meier

A group of Manitoba's top young hockey players will take the next step in their development pathway as Hockey Manitoba has announced the roster for the 2026-27 Boys Under-16 Program of Excellence (POE) Spring Selection Camp.

The camp is scheduled for April 10-12 at the Scotiabank Hockey for All Centre in Winnipeg and marks the first stage in identifying athletes who will represent the province on the national stage.

Players selected to attend the camp come from communities across Manitoba, reflecting the depth of talent developing throughout the province.

The Spring Selection Camp will feature a series of scrimmages, a goaltender session and a Western Hockey League (WHL) presentation, giving

athletes both on-ice evaluation opportunities and exposure to the next levels of hockey.

Following the April camp, a reduced group of players will advance to the Top-40 Camp, set for May 21-24 at the Southeast Event Centre in Steinbach.

From there, the final roster for Team Manitoba will be selected ahead of the 2027 Canada Winter Games, which will take place Feb. 27 to March 14, 2027, in Quebec City.

Heading the program is Brad Purdie of Winnipeg, who returns for his second stint as head coach of the U16 squad and his fifth year with the Program of Excellence. He is joined by assistant coaches Dave Funk of Winnipeg and Garrett Szeremley of Morden, while Bernie Reichardt serves as director of operations.

The U16 Program of Excellence rep-

resents the first step in Hockey Canada's high-performance pathway. Athletes introduced at this level gain exposure to elite training standards and competition, with many advancing to represent Canada at the U17, U18 and World Junior levels.

Hockey Manitoba officials say the program is designed to provide elite athletes with the tools and opportunities needed to succeed at higher levels, including major junior, U SPORTS and NCAA hockey.

The full camp schedule includes multiple intra-squad scrimmages across the three-day event, beginning Friday afternoon and concluding Sunday, along with a mandatory WHL presentation for all participants and one parent.

Hockey Manitoba continues to partner with CCM Hockey and the West-

ern Hockey League in supporting the Program of Excellence and its athlete development pathway.

Selected players include Andrew Abbott (Winnipeg), Koen Braunberger (Winnipeg), Kingston Catcheway (Dauphin), Declan Champagne (Winnipeg), Aiden Christie (East St. Paul), Maddux Clark (Winnipeg), Jaxson Cullen (Killarney), Carter Cunningham (Winnipeg), Alex Delorme (La Salle), Alexander Dyrland (Winnipeg), Mohamad El Hossari Garcia (Winnipeg), Reed Everett (Winnipeg), Logan Fey (West St. Paul), Daniel Flett-Neapew (Brandon), Mason Froese (Winkler), Nixon Gaudet (Île-des-Chênes), Bentley Goulden (Virden), Joshua Harvey (Winnipeg), Owen Hirst (Lac du Bonnet), Carter

Continued on page 20

Charity game raises \$4K for HEART

The March 13 charity game between the Pembina Valley Twisters and the RCMP Horsemen was a rousing success, raising \$4,001 in support of the Hutterian Emergency Aquatic Response Team (HEART), a local organization specializing in underwater search and recovery. "Community and hockey—it's a win-win," the Twisters said in a social media post sharing the event's fundraising total.

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'Manitoba will need to keep an eye on its debt ratio'

From Pg. 7

"That's real relief, right now. It's not a rebate at tax time. It's higher paycheques every week, every two weeks, every month," said Khan. "It's shocking and surprising that Wab Kinew and his NDP have failed Manitobans on affordability, on growing the economy, on health care, and on crime. That's not leadership. That's failing to understand what Manitoba families are going through."

Manitoba Federation of Labour president Kevin Rebeck saw some positives in the budget.

"As the global economy continues to face strain, it is encouraging to see the provincial government focused on creating good, family-supporting construction jobs here at home by putting Manitobans to work first in building our province up," he said.

"This budget's commitments to build and renew critical infrastructure, like schools, hospitals and Manitoba Hydro projects, through the Manitoba Jobs Agreements is good news for Manitoba workers and higher wages and bad news for out of province license plates on job sites. And this budget's greater investment in our apprenticeship system will mean more Manitobans can build their future here at home."

Rebeck noted the budget also includes several other good supports for workers to join and succeed in the labour force.

"Higher wages for child care workers and more child care spaces will mean more parents, especially women, can participate in the labour force," he said. "More investments in personal care homes and long term care mean more workers, especially women, will not have to limit working hours or exit the labour force altogether to provide care for loved ones."

"And increased investment in adult learning centres will help to boost employment by ensuring more Manitobans can achieve their high school diploma."

The cost of living is high on every worker's mind these days, and Rebeck saw the budget as taking steps to "help make life more affordable for working families by providing free transit for kids and youth, free menstrual products in the workplace and free child care for low income fami-

lies.

"Finally, we all count on public services to be there for us when we need them, and we know that workers in Manitoba's public sector continue to struggle with understaffing and high vacancy rates after years of cuts and chaos under the former PC government," Rebeck continued. "The provincial government's important goals of ending mandatory overtime and ensuring safe patient ratios will only become a reality through a sustained commitment to recruitment and retention in health care."

"And understaffing is a major contributing factor to health care and the public service having the highest workplace injury rates in the province. This budget's additional funding for new workplace safety and health officers is welcome, but it only addresses enforcement. We would have liked to see commitments in this budget to bring these injury rates down through injury prevention programs as well."

"We know that these problems cannot be fixed overnight but we encourage the government to focus its efforts on staff recruitment and retention to strengthen our public services."

Cynthia Leach, an assistant chief economist at RBC, saw some reason for hope in the budget.

"Manitoba is the seventh province to table its 2026 budget, and the new numbers look not as challenged as several others," she suggested. "Despite the negative surprise in 2025/26, Manitoba claims the smallest 2026/27 deficit-to-GDP ratio and is one of few provinces charting a path to balance."

"Spending pressures and the uncertain economic environment could erode planned fiscal balances, and the province will need to continue to make fiscal room to support growth oriented spending. These are similar to the fiscal challenges faced by other provinces, but Manitoba will need to keep an eye on a debt ratio that is on the high end of the provincial average."

> SEMHL STATS, FROM PG. 17

Craig Johnston (Carman/Morden), Greg Heinrichs (Altona) and Dale Rempel (Morris/Carman/Morden) complete the list.

Longevity is further recognized in the years played category, with Wade Duncan (Warren) leading the way at 22 seasons. Husak (Warren) follows with 20 years and Corbett (Warren) with 19, both still active.

Also at 19 seasons is Darryl McElroy (Morden/Winkler). Pat Demke (Morden/Winkler/Carman) leads the 17-year group, alongside Brian Dyck (Winkler/Carman), Craig Johnston (Carman/Morden) and Bill Sisson (Carman/Elm Creek/Starbuck).

At 16 seasons are Rob Hamm (Carman/Morden), Jeremy Matuszewski (Altona/Morden/Winkler), Mark Thiessen (Morden/Winkler), Greg Heinrichs (Altona), John Mintenko (Altona) and Jean Prejet (Notre Dame).

The updated statistical lists serve as a tribute to the players who have shaped the SEMHL over the decades, showcasing not only elite skill but also the dedication and passion required to compete at a high level in Manitoba's senior hockey ranks.

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Carman student wins Loran Scholarship

By Holly Thorne-Wiebe

A Carman Collegiate student has been named a recipient of the prestigious Loran Scholarship, one of Canada's most competitive and sought-after awards for youth leadership, an honour he says comes as a complete surprise.

"I wasn't expecting it at all," Nathan Froebe said, recalling the moment he received the phone call. "I didn't really know what to say ... I was at a loss for words."

The Loran Awards recognize students across Canada for character, leadership, and service, not academic grades alone. Recipients are selected through a rigorous, multi-stage process that evaluates who applicants are as people and how they contribute to their communities.

"It's not necessarily just based on grades," Froebe explained. "It's based on character ... it kind of does a deep dive into who you really are as a person."

Froebe first learned about the opportunity in September, after being encouraged to apply by his school guidance counsellor.

"He said, 'This kind of aligns with who I believe you are,'" Froebe recalled.

From there, the process quickly intensified. After an initial written application, candidates were asked to complete timed video responses be-

fore advancing to regional semi-finals and, ultimately, national selections.

At each stage, Froebe doubted he would advance further.

"There's so many amazing people ... there's no way I'm making it to the next step," he said.

But he did, earning a spot at the national selection event in Mississauga, Ontario, where finalists from across the country gathered for interviews, activities, and networking.

"It completely blew my expectations," Froebe said. "I met so many people from all across Canada ... just so diverse, from all walks of life."

He described the experience as both inspiring and affirming.

"The thing that really surprised me was just how passionate every single person was," he said. "Everyone was extremely passionate about something."

The Loran Scholars Foundation places a strong emphasis on values, purpose, and long-term impact, encouraging students to reflect deeply on their goals.

"The whole application process makes you look in the mirror at yourself," Froebe said. "What are your core values? What do you stand for?"

For Froebe, that reflection is rooted in a willingness to take risks and stay grounded.

"I'm not afraid to take risks or be the odd one out," he said. "Life's short and you better make the most of it."

He also points to a guiding principle that helped shape his mindset: "Comparison is the thief of joy."

The scholarship includes significant financial support for post-secondary education, along with mentorship opportunities, summer experiences, and access to a national network of scholars.

"I didn't realize how invested they are in shaping your success and future," Froebe said.

Those experiences include opportunities in areas such as policy, entrepreneurship, and non-profit work, often with encouragement to travel internationally and broaden perspectives.

Looking ahead, Froebe plans to attend the University of Guelph and is considering studies in agribusiness or crop science, with a long-term interest in sustainable agriculture.

"I'd like to leave the soil in a better spot for my kids in the future," he said.

Beyond academics, his involvement in community initiatives, including local volunteer work, played a key role in his application.

"I didn't realize how many people in our community struggle to put food on the table or have a safe place to live," Froebe said. "If you have the opportunity to help someone, you should."

He credits his parents, grandparents, teachers, and coaches for shaping his path, along with a shift in perspective following a sports injury that broad-



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Carman Collegiate's Nathan Froebe has been named a recipient of the prestigious Loran Scholarship.

ened his outlook beyond hockey.

"It made me realize there's so much more to life than one thing," he said.

Now, as one of 36 2026 Loran Scholars, Froebe hopes others will consider applying, regardless of whether they believe they'll be successful.

"It's 100 percent worth it," he said. "Even just the application process ... it's life-changing."

For a student who entered the process with modest expectations, the experience has already reshaped what feels possible.

"Just being able to be in a room of incredible, amazing people ... it's just incredible."

> PROGRAM OF EXCELLENCE, FROM PG. 18

Hope (Winnipeg), Felix Huberdeau (Russell), Benjamin Kolton (Winnipeg), Rhett Legaarden (Grandview), Sawyer Lepp (Rivers), Camden Lesuk (East St. Paul), Owen Lovie (Holland), Tyler McCallum (Winnipeg), Declan McNicol (Winnipeg), Liam Meier (Stonewall), Jacob Mirlees (Oak Bluff), Kale Nicol (Brandon), Ryder Olford (Île-des-Chênes), Easton Pitz (Virden), Bo Sabourin (Winnipeg), Max Sauders (Winnipeg), Reed Sherry (St. Malo), Kellan Shtykalo (Dauphin), Cooper Soltys (Erickson), Taylor Sullivan (Brandon), Wyatt Sydenham (Hodgson), Greyson Urquhart (Winnipeg), Beck Van Kemenade (Rosser), Graycen Van Meijl (Brandon), Evan Vigier (Notre Dame), Brock Vodden (Manitou), Eli Waslyk (Winnipeg), Everhett Weiser (Winnipeg), Jett Wood (Brandon), Easton Anderson (Brandon), Jack Arseniuk (Winnipeg), Madden Atkinson (Swan River), Mason Auger (Virden), Bryson Calder (Carlowrie), Asher Carey (Selkirk), Owen Derkach (Winnipeg), Braedan Gilbertson (Lorette

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The Funnies

PLANET GARRY By: Harrison Doll ©



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bpl@gvsd.ca



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CARD OF THANKS



Kae Lambrecht

January 21, 1935 - February 22, 2026

Thank you friends, family and community. Your kindness and shared stories and memories of Mom has brought great comfort. Special thanks to Menzies Medical Centre, Dr. Brian Peters HSC, Buhler Eye Care Centre, staff at BTHC and Palliative Care Team. Many thanks to Tanya Rempel and Home Care Team and Buhler Active Living staff who gave Mom TLC for the last seven years. Gratitude to Wiebe's Funeral Home, Pastor Tom Baker and musicians who shared in her Celebration of Life.

COMING EVENT

CARMAN GUN SHOW

Date:
April 4, 2026
Time:
9AM to 3PM
Place:
Carman Hall

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BORDER LAND SCHOOL DIVISION
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Border Land School Division invites applicants for a

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PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF **winkler** PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE
DREAM. BUILD. LIVE. Planning & Permitting Department

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

UNDER THE PLANNING ACT

The City of Winkler, under the authority of The Planning Act, will hold a hearing at which time and place the council of the City of Winkler will receive representation from the applicants and any other persons who wish to make representations in respect of the Rezoning Application No. RZ2026-002 and By-law No. 2363-26, being an amendment to Winkler Zoning By-law 2271-21 of the City of Winkler.

The general intent of the above By-Law No. 2363-26, is to zone the land described below, Namely:

195 Eastview Dr, legally described as All of Plan (Deposit No. 1216-2025) MLTO excepting Lot 46, in the SW ¼ 2-3-4 WPM as shown outlined in a heavy solid line on the map attached hereto as Schedule "A", and forming part of this by-law, be rezoned

FROM: "M" INDUSTRIAL & "SI" SERVICE INDUSTRIAL
TO: "M" INDUSTRIAL, "SI" SERVICE INDUSTRIAL & "PI" PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

A copy of the above By-Law No. 2362-26 and supporting material may be inspected by any persons between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday to Thursday and 9:00 AM and 4:30 PM, Friday, in the City Office.

Date of Hearing: April 14, 2026
Time of Hearing: 6:30 p.m.
Location: Winkler Council Chambers, 185 Main Street, Winkler, Manitoba

DATED at Winkler, in Manitoba, this 12th day of March 2026.
Designated Officer, City of Winkler

185 Main Street, Winkler MB R6W1B4 204-325-9524
permits@cityofwinkler.ca WWW.WINKLER.CA

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITY OF **winkler** PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE
DREAM. BUILD. LIVE. Planning & Permitting Department

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

UNDER THE PLANNING ACT

The City of Winkler, under the authority of The Planning Act, will hold a hearing at which time and place the council of the City of Winkler will receive representation from the applicants and any other persons who wish to make representations in respect of the Rezoning Application No. RZ2025-011 and By-law No. 2361-25, being an amendment to Winkler Zoning By-law 2271-21 of the City of Winkler.

The general intent of the above By-Law No. 2361-25, is to zone the land described below, Namely:

legally described as Part of SW ¼ Section 8-3-4 WPM as shown outlined in a heavy solid line on the map attached hereto as Schedule "A", and forming part of this by-law, be rezoned

FROM: "DR" DEVELOPMENT RESERVE
TO: "R1" RESIDENTIAL LOWER DENSITY & "PI" PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

A copy of the above By-Law No. 2361-25 and supporting material may be inspected by any persons between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday to Thursday and 9:00 AM and 4:30 PM, Friday, in the City Office.

Date of Hearing: April 14, 2026
Time of Hearing: 6:30 p.m.
Location: Winkler Council Chambers, 185 Main Street, Winkler, Manitoba

DATED at Winkler, in Manitoba, this 12th day of March 2026.
Designated Officer, City of Winkler

185 Main Street, Winkler MB R6W1B4 204-325-9524
permits@cityofwinkler.ca WWW.WINKLER.CA

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Bombers Across the Border



1940 JOE WILSON'S TEAM FRANK + PRINCE

PHOTO CREDIT: JAKE REMPEL
ESTATE COLLECTION
1940: Emerson, Manitoba farmer Joe Wilson with his team of horses – Frank and Prince – at the Emerson/Pembina border.

PART ONE IN AN ONGOING SERIES

By Shaun Friesen

Robert Milne remembers his uncle referring to it as the “Airport Quarter,” 160 acres west of Emerson with its northern boundary scrunched up against the narrow track that is the Canada/US border. Cross the “road” and you are across the line. There is nothing about it today to suggest that it an essential piece in a mostly forgotten saga, a story of ingenuity, cooperation and deception.

In the summer of 1939 tension was high all across Europe. Adolf Hitler had annexed Austria, and Czechoslovakia. On September 1st Hitler invaded Poland, Britain declared war on September 3rd, and Canada followed on September 10th. Scarcely 20 years after the war to end all wars, and Canada was again at war. By June of 1940 Germany had controlled all of Europe. Only a battered and underequipped Great Britain remained. If Britain was to hold the line it needed to rearm, and quickly. Commonwealth countries stepped up, but without the industrial might of the United States the war would be lost

In the midst of all of this the United States declared itself a neutral country. The Neutrality Act of 1939 forbade the country from flying any arms to a country at war. Because Canada was at war the US could not fly badly needed aircraft across the border, for training purposes or for export to Britain. At that time all aircraft were flown to eastern ports, disassembled, crated, and shipped across the Atlantic where they were reassembled. President Roosevelt and Canadian officials came up with a creative solution. Bombers were to be flown to American airfields close to the Canadian border, and then “ferried across.” Three sites were chosen: Sweetgrass Montana, Houlton Maine, and Pembina North Dakota. Near Emerson Manitoba two temporary airstrip were constructed in fields on either side of the border. The rules were clear. No American planes could be flown across the border. The planes were flown from the factory in California to the Pembina International Air-

port by civilian pilots. At that point the plane was turned over to a Canadian Customs Agent who took possession of the title. The plane was then flown to a temporary airstrip just west of Pembina, a piece of land owned by George Kochendorfer. At this point it was transferred to Canadian civilians, who using a maximum of four horses, pulled the plane across the narrow strip separating the two countries. Once in Canada it was flown by Royal Canadian Airforce pilots to Winnipeg. From there it was transported to training bases across the prairies, or to the east coast for shipment overseas.

Beginning in January of 1940 twin engine Lockheed Hudson bombers were flown to Pembina. Although exact numbers are not available, we know that 18 Lockheed Hudson’s, 16 Douglas Digby’s, and 8 Boeing 247D airliners were shipped into Canada through the Pembina/Emerson port of entry. From January 15 to March 31 Joe Wilson, a Canadian farmer, received \$99.00 for towing 33 bombers across the border.

An interesting sidebar to this story is that in November of 1940 a secret mission involving Hudson bombers, perhaps pulled across the border at Emerson, was unfolding. Seven Hudson’s were flown to Gander Newfoundland, to see if bombers could make the transatlantic flight to Britain. It was a dangerous experiment, an eleven hour flight, with only a compass for navigation, no heat, and certain death by hypothermia should they crash. All seven Hudsons survived the flight. No longer would aircraft have to be disassembled, crated, and shipped across the German submarine infested Atlantic. It was estimated that by the end of the war 20,000 Canadian and American aircraft made the transatlantic flight from Gander to England.

Can you imagine the awe and excitement associated with “giant bombers” towed by horses, roaring to life, lumbering across a frozen field, to take flight into history. A grand story worthy of being told again and again. Hopefully it lives on in yet unshared diaries and pictures.

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