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Creating connections

TRIBUNE PHOTO BY JENNIFER MCFEE

Grade 5 students at École Stonewall Centennial are taking part in the GrandPals program alongside community volunteers. The intergenerational initiative aims to build meaningful connections between students and older adults. Back row: Cora, Lincoln, Owen, Gavin. Front row: Jane, volunteer Donna English, Hadley.

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GrandPals creates connections across generations

By Jennifer McFee

A multi-generational initiative is creating connections across the ages.

A group of Grade 5 students at Ecole Stonewall Centennial School is participating in the GrandPals program along with four older adult volunteers from the community.

One of those volunteers is Flo Bambenek, who outlined the impetus for the program.

"The GrandPals program is an exciting initiative that connects older adults in our community with students in our school," she said. "The aim is to create meaningful intergenerational relationships that benefit both the older adult and the student."

These relationships are nurtured through eight engaging sessions throughout the winter, starting with the first session that took place on Jan. 13.

"Each session focuses on different aspects of life, learning and shared experiences," Bambenek said.

"This intergenerational program is the first in our community, and we are hopeful to have the opportunity to organize more in the future."

Bambenek is also a member of the South Interlake 55 Plus program committee, which is always looking for new and innovative programs for its members. While researching program ideas, she stumbled across GrandPals.

"I was intrigued. I contacted the founder of the program Marc Mailhot and had several conversations at which time I learned that Manitoba had run this program in various communities in the past few years," she said. "Furthermore, Active Aging in Manitoba is the organization who

coordinates the program with the schools and the GrandPal volunteer participants."

Linda Brown, executive director of Active Aging in Manitoba, said the organization added the program as a way to help support older adults to make social connections in their community.

"Our experience in offering GrandPals in other communities has demonstrated the value of the connections that are formed from both the students and the older adults," Brown said. "Research around social connections confirms the physical and mental health benefits for older adults."

Once a week for eight weeks, Bambenek and the other three volunteers meet with the students of Aileen Wadge's Grade 5 class. They engage in discussions about topics including home, family, learning, work and travel.

A celebration will wrap up the initiative, complete with presentations from the students about what they learned over the two months of get-togethers.

"This is an opportunity for older adults to interact with young people. It will bridge a gap between the ages in a friendly and open environment, which will allow for meaningful engagement — both for the student and the GrandPal," Bambenek said.

"I expect a friendship will develop between the students and GrandPals. It may open up an opportunity to feel what it is like to be an older adult while the GrandPal will feel what it is like to be a student in this time. I expect the students will have lasting memories of this experience which



TRIBUNE PHOTOS BY JENNIFER MCFEE

Grade 5 students at École Stonewall Centennial are taking part in the GrandPals program alongside community volunteers. The intergenerational initiative is designed to create connections between students and older adults through eight engaging sessions. Left to right: Volunteer Bunny Williamson with students Oakley, Willow, Kinley, Harper and Riker.

will assist them with their own life."

She also points out that some GrandPals might be grandparents who don't get to see their own grandchildren very often due to distance. It might also be possible that some students don't have grandparents anymore if they have passed away.

"This program will give each group an opportunity to step into the respective roles, which will warm their hearts to no end," she said. "The program will enhance an appreciation for each other regardless of age."

Grade 5 teacher Aileen Wadge shared similar sentiments about the benefits of the program.

"An email came across my desk and I thought it would be a great experience for the students to interact with seniors," she said.

"We brainstormed some things that the students thought might be interested to know, like what was it like when they were in middle school?

What was their first vehicle? Did they have a lot of chores and responsibilities when they were young?"

During their first session, the class split up into four groups led by a GrandPal volunteer, who brought photos and mementos to share with the students. Both generations asked lots of questions to get to know each other.

The students also expressed enthusiasm during the first meet-up.

"I like to learn about how other people lived their lives," said one student. "It's interesting to know what's different between now and then."

"I like talking to new people and learning about what they did as a child," said another. "I like hearing about what they used to do and knowing more about them."

In addition to sparking new friendships across generations, the program

Continued on page 4

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STONEWALL

Collège Stonewall Collegiate musical theatre class shines at SI55 performance

By E. Antonio

It was an afternoon filled with singing, dancing and laughter during Collège Stonewall Collegiate's musical theatre performance for South Interlake 55 Plus on Jan. 13.

Sixteen students from Kendra Obach's musical theatre class put on what Diane Kazmerowich, SI55 program co-ordinator, described as a "showstopping" performance.

"The energy these kids brought was absolutely phenomenal," Kazmerowich said. "Mrs. Obach and her students put on a true musical for us, and we are so proud of them."

The students created and performed a 30-minute show featuring songs from multiple eras. They selected the music in October, then spent the following months learning their vocal parts, creating choreography and planning costumes leading up to their first performance.

Obach said students felt "hype," "excited" and "a little nervous" ahead

of the show but were ready to perform for a live audience.

"Seeing the enjoyment of the audience and their reactions, and the community-building with each other and the audience, was a highlight for me," she said.

She added that she and her students were excited to promote their upcoming school production of *Alice by Heart*, running March 18-20. The experience also "led to some hope for the future," as intergenerational connections were formed through the performance.

Students Juliana Windross and Dafne Kaemingk were among those who helped bring the show to life. The duo assisted with choreography and were featured soloists. Both said they loved performing at SI55, with Windross noting, "My favourite part of this event was seeing the joy and laughter from the audience, as well as from my peers."

For Kaemingk, a highlight was con-



TRIBUNE PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Students from Collège Stonewall Collegiate's musical theatre class performed at South Interlake 55 Plus on Jan. 13.

necting with the community through music.

"Music has a way of bringing people together and lets people know that they are not alone," she said.

Kazmerowich said the event was extremely well received by seniors, drawing an audience of about 60 guests and even welcoming some first-time attendees to the centre. She added that many audience members had grandchildren performing,

which made the moment "that much more special."

For her, one of the highlights was watching the audience interact with the cast through wide smiles and enthusiastic applause.

"The support the community brought was so great," she said. "Thank you to Collège Stonewall Collegiate for thinking about us — you truly made our community feel really special."



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Celebrating Indigenous leaders



TRIBUNE PHOTO CREDIT WINNIPEG JETS INSTAGRAM

The Winnipeg Jets hosted their annual WASAC Night on Saturday at Canada Life Centre, celebrating Indigenous culture through music, dance, food and community recognition. The evening honoured Indigenous leaders making a difference across Manitoba. For the ceremonial puck drop, four Indigenous role models were welcomed to centre ice: Elder Bill Shead, a Cree member of Peguis First Nation and former mayor of Selkirk; Elder Linda St. Cyr-Saric, a proud Red River Métis Elder; Connor Hanska, a nine-year-old rising star in the sport of golf; and Sagkeeng First Nation's Gena Boubard, Miss Indigenous Canada 2025. Winnipeg Jets captain Adam Lowry and Detroit Red Wings captain Dylan Larkin took the faceoff. The Red Wings won the game 5-1.

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> GRANDPALS, FROM PG. 2



Through the GrandPals program, volunteers and students engage in discussions about topics including home, family, learning, work and travel.

also ties into some learning objectives for the class.

"I think it will be good for the students to practise speaking and listening to other people, practise basic social skills like looking at the speaker, ask for clarification if needed and be a good listener," Wadge said.

"I am using this an authentic way for the students to learn a new type of writing. We are learning about biographies and how to make and ask interesting questions. As a final project,

my students will be making a biography picture book of the GrandPal. I am hoping that this will be as special and meaningful as my imagination thinks it will be."

If this session of GrandPals works out well, South Interlake 55 Plus will look at running it again in the future. More information will be available by contacting the organization at 204-467-2582 or by staying tuned for when GrandPal volunteers might be needed again.



IERHA CEO upbeat about health-care service improvements, future developments

By Patricia Barrett

Despite respiratory viruses ramping up before Christmas and landing some people in hospital in the Interlake, plus a couple of back-to-back snowstorms thrown in the mix, Marion Ellis, the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority's president and chief executive officer, remained upbeat about the progress the RHA has seen over the course of 2025 and optimistic about the future.

Like most health-care systems across Canada, Manitoba's system has experienced some lean years as a result of governments tinkering with funding, closing facilities and subsequent staffing losses, as well as an aging patient population requiring more care and the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused many health-care workers to burn out and seek better working conditions elsewhere or leave the profession altogether.

But efforts are underway to expand the province's health-care capacity through capital projects and human resources. Recovery takes time but Manitoba — and the Interlake-Eastern RHA — is on the upswing as far as physician numbers go. The corollary of that should be a decline in emergency room visits and lengthy wait times.

"We're excited about having good, proactive care [delivered] through primary care physicians," said Ellis, who spoke with the *Express* before the Christmas break. "Primary care capacity will help address wait times. When people don't have a primary care clinician, they come to the emerg for that care."

The retention of physicians is affected by factors such as burnout due to heavy workloads, poor working conditions and retirement, according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information. Among Canada's 10 provinces, Manitoba is fourth from the bottom with regard to the number of physicians per 100,000 residents. The province currently has 225 physicians, slightly better than Ontario (221), Saskatchewan (218) and P.E.I. (211). B.C. leads the pack with 271 physicians, followed by Nova Scotia (268).

Ellis said the Stonewall area is likely the "envy of Canada" with 10 physicians in various clinics plus one physician in Stony Mountain.

"For this geographical area, we have doctors. And these doctors very much want to focus on a proactive approach to health care, which is primary care. They know if people are screened early for certain chronic diseases or cancers, there can be earlier interventions, treatments and better outcomes for patients. Their commitment is to that," said Ellis. "Some primary care physi-



IERHA

Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority president and chief executive officer Marion Ellis has close to 30 years' experience in nursing leadership and other senior leadership experience including with the Northern RHA and the former Burntwood RHA.

cians [in the Stonewall area] are even looking for patients; there's no waitlist — they're looking for patients."

The uptick in doctors to Manitoba was noted by the physician advocacy organization Doctors Manitoba last fall, as well as by the provincial government in its November throne speech.

"When our government took office, Manitoba faced the worst doctor shortage in the country," states the throne speech. "That gap is now closing with 285 net new doctors added since October 2023, including six doctors from the United States and more in the recruitment process. Last year marked the largest increase of doctors ever."

As for physician availability in Ashern and Eriksdale, Ellis said that region is currently sharing its physicians. They work in clinic and also provide emergency room service to both hospital ERs.

Eriksdale's ER is open only about six days a month, typically on a Thursday, but Ashern's ER is typically open 24-7 all month, with some exceptions.

Six physicians are required to keep IERHA hospital ERs open 24-7. Fewer physicians than that can lead to burnout and retention issues. Doctors who work in their clinics all day and then are tasked to work emergency can feel they have no recovery time or quality of life. That often leads to their leaving for better working conditions.

Despite the physician challenges in that part of the health region, Ellis said a municipal leader expressed appreciation for the improvements underway in Ashern and Eriksdale.

The Ashern hospital had its medi-



The Interlake-Eastern RHA has 10 hospitals, 23 primary care clinics and 16 long-term care facilities that serve a population of close to 140,000.

cine inpatient unit expanded between January 2023 and May 2025 to add 12 more beds for a total of 26. The second phase of the project entails expanding Ashern's emergency room to add eight more treatment spaces (5,400 square feet). That's expected to be completed this year.

The current provincial government committed to building a new ER at the Eriksdale hospital. Construction is expected to start this winter.

"I think they're feeling really hopeful that they're being listened to," said Ellis.

When asked if there will be a workforce ready to go when Eriksdale's new ER is up and running, Ellis said the health authority is not yet at the staffing side of things as the capital project is just getting underway.

"We're not at that stage yet. We don't talk about staffing until way on in the capital project," she said. "This is a really good thing for Eriksdale. The design of the new emerg will improve visibility for nursing staff and patients. Sometimes design can inhibit efficiency, and we really feel the design is going to enable patient privacy and effi-

ciency for the workforce."

Although the health region is attracting more doctors, some Interlake hospital emergency rooms (apart from Selkirk's) continue to experience temporary closures.

IERHA's ER schedule for Dec. 16-31 showed Ashern's ER open 24-7 on 15 days of the 16-day schedule. Eriksdale's ER was open 24-7 on two out of 16 days. Gimli's ER was open 24-7 on 10 out of 16 days and open five days with 12 hours or fewer. Stonewall's ER was closed 14 out of 16 days with two days offering 12-hour service. The ERs at the Teulon and Arborg hospitals are permanently closed.

The schedule for Jan. 16-31 shows improvement in ER availability in Stonewall, with seven days of temporary closure and the remainder of the schedule showing a mix of days with 24-7 and 12-hour availability.

Stonewall's ER had shifted to more temporary closures after the death of Dr. Zahiri in October.

Ellis said his death was tragic and staff were devastated.

"It was an unexpected shocking

Continued on page 6

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[event]. The staff were very upset," she said. "We really relied on him strongly. He's still missed and his commitment is honoured by the region."

The situation should improve with a doctor due to arrive at the Stonewall Medical Clinic and who'll be starting his first ER day on Jan. 3, she said.

"Half of the work will be in clinic and half will be emerg," said Ellis. "We also have an international medical graduate who'll be graduating [from the Canadian curricula] and ready to come to work with us in February."

The availability of the doctors the region does have is expected to improve with the abolishment of sick notes. Doctors can see fewer patients if their time is taken up writing sick notes for patients whose employers require documentation.

Ellis said the provincial government introduced legislation [last year] to end sick notes for short-term absences, and that should add the equivalent of 50 more doctors or 300,000 more patient appointments per year.

To meet the future needs of an aging population, the Interlake-Eastern RHA needs additional personal care home beds.

The population in the IERHA is older than the Manitoba average with 42 per cent aged 50 or older, according to the IERHA's annual report.

Ellis said the provincial government has committed to one PCH a year during its current term. It's building new PCHs in Winnipeg and in Lac du Bonnet and Arborg in the Interlake-Eastern region.

Stonewall has been engaged in lobbying the provincial government for a new seniors complex in their community since residents sometimes have to seek placements in facilities outside the area, separating them from their

Thursday, January 29, 2026

families.

Ellis said Stonewall is to be "commended" for its efforts to move its bid forward and for its proactive engagement with other communities along highways 6 and 7.

"They are working with their partner municipalities, proactively planning. They're engaged and listening. They have a vision they're committed to, and I think it's so admirable. I've had a meeting with Wally [Melnyk], their CAO, and Mayor Sandra Smith, and they're committed to ... supporting an aging population. That's to be commended," said Ellis. "We have great municipal leaders and First Nation chiefs in our region, and I feel very blessed to be here. We are working as true partners."

On the nursing front, Ellis said rural training programs such those offered in Arborg — which had "led the way" — in conjunction with Fieldstone Ventures and Assiniboine Community College have been a success in terms of recruiting nurses to the region.

Nurses who graduated from a licensed practical nursing program in Arborg are working in communities including Gimli, Eriksdale and Ashern and in health-care areas such as acute, long-term and home care.

"The LPNs that graduated from the Arborg program have been incredible team players and we appreciate them so much," said Ellis. "Because of the model in Arborg, and how the community stood that up, we were able to work with Fieldstone Ventures and Assiniboine Community College. Now we've stood up a program in Beausejour with that model, and about 20 nurses will be graduating in the summer. Then come January of '27, we're doing another LPN program there to get more nurses for that area and also to support additional beds in the new

Lac du Bonnet Personal Care Home."

To help offset the paramedic deficit in the rural health regions, the provincial government announced last year it had increased paramedic training seats.

In addition, the government said it would help recruit emergency medical responders (EMRs) for rural areas through financial aid (a \$5,000 bursary for students) and community training. Arborg will be the site of EMR training this year. By fall, about 50 to 60 EMRs are expected to graduate.

EMRs will be able to help stabilize patients while waiting for an ambulance, said Ellis. Training rural people as EMRs will not only benefit rural communities but may also entice EMRs to further their training and become a paramedic.

"If people know how to help someone who's choking or in distress, that's very helpful. We can use EMRs to help support the health-care system in our local areas," said Ellis. "If someone does this course and sees the value of it, that's a stepping-stone for going to the next level. It's a way of opening up opportunities and bringing local people into the health-care system."

Ellis emphasized that EMRs are "not replacing" paramedics or taking away jobs from paramedics as their scope of practice is different. EMRs will simply be providing immediate onsite support.

"They only do what they're qualified to do," said Ellis. "It's not like they'd be going outside the scope they'll be given."

In addition to more primary care physicians setting up shop in the health region and major capital investments in Ashern, Eriksdale, Arborg and Lac du Bonnet, Ellis said the provincial government is investing in other areas that will benefit IERHA, and the region is "collectively grateful" for those ser-

vices.

Those services include expanding the number of transitional care beds for people who can be discharged from the hospital but who need to wait for other health-care services, and expanding allied health services to ensure patients get rehabilitation and mobility services seven days a week, up from five days.

"We've also been really pleased with our Indigenous investments. We're working with our First Nations and supporting the patients who come to our sites," said Ellis. "We're strengthening those relationships and building trust that aligns with reconciliation. We're very committed to that."

The cost of public health care is always rising regardless of jurisdiction, but Interlake-Eastern hasn't scrimped or cut services. Ellis said the RHA ended its 2024-25 fiscal year with an operations deficit (salaries, equipment, etc.) of \$836,048 and a capital deficit (depreciation of capital) of over \$1.6 million.

"Wouldn't I love it if we had a surplus," said Ellis when told about a misperception that the IERHA was sitting on a wad of cash at the end of its last fiscal year while ERs on both sides of the region continued to temporarily close. "This is a time when physicians are exercising their choices [declining to work in ERs]. If they work in clinic all day and then they're called out night after night to work in the ER — I don't know if I could do that. For some of these doctors, a quality of life is important. I know what it was like for me: I loved being on call when I was younger. But that's hard to sustain year in, year out."

Ellis said she'll be able to share additional positive developments with regard to gains in staffing, family-centred services and other key health areas later this spring.

Greenvale, Enns Brothers to merge John Deere operations

By Lorne Stelmach

Greenvale Equipment and Enns Brothers have announced plans to combine forces.

The two John Deere dealerships will merge to create what they say will be an even stronger dealership network serving the province.

Company representatives say the merger brings together two trusted organizations with deep agricultural roots, shared values and a long history of supporting farmers across Manitoba. They suggest the new partnership will create a stronger, more resilient company focused on enhancing customer service, strengthening employee opportunities and investing in the future of agriculture.

"This represents an exciting step forward for both our customers and

our employees," said Curwin Friesen, president of Greenvale Equipment. "By combining resources, expertise and technology, we'll be able to serve farmers with an even broader range of solutions and faster access to the parts and service they depend on."

"Our companies share the same commitment to customers, employees and communities," added Ray Bouchard, CEO of Enns Brothers. "Together, we'll have the scale and financial strength to continue investing in innovation and meeting the evolving needs of our industry for years to come."

Greenvale Equipment began in 1989 when Ernie and Glen Kehler purchased the John Deere dealership in Morden. Today, the company operates locations in Altona, Killarney, Morden

and Treherne.

Enns Brothers traces its roots to 1953, when Jake and Harry Enns entered the farm equipment business as an Allis-Chalmers and New Holland dealer in Sanford. Three years later, they became a John Deere dealer, eventually relocating the business to the corner of Highway 3 and the Perimeter at Oak Bluff. Enns Brothers currently operates nine locations across Manitoba.

"There's always been synergy between Greenvale and Enns. We're neighbours in the province ... we've had a strong relationship," said Friesen. "It made sense for us to talk about joining forces to better serve the province."

Friesen stressed the importance of balancing growth with maintaining lo-

cal connections.

"In the John Deere world, size and scale matter. The challenge in the agriculture world for dealers like us is having the right piece of equipment on the yard. The greater we can work together with Enns, the better we can meet those needs," he said.

"Scale allows us to meet the needs of growers when it comes to equipment. We also face that same challenge on the parts side. Now we'll be tapping into 13 branches, all with inventory. That scale allows us to provide more offerings faster to customers, and that's also true when it comes to service technicians."

The merger is expected to be completed by April.

Lakeside MLA shares thoughts for the new year

By Jennifer McFee

When Lakeside MLA Trevor King looks back on the past year in the riding, he sees a mix of progress, frustration and pride in the people who make up our communities.

"It's been a year that reminded me why local representation matters because what happens at the provincial level translates into daily life for families, seniors, farmers and volunteers here at home," he said.

"On the positive side, there were some long-awaited infrastructure improvements that finally moved from planning to reality."

These improvements include paving work on Provincial Road 236 between Highway 6 and Stonewall. Gravel work took place on Provincial Road 323 as well as on a few other provincial roads in the Lakeside constituency.

"Improvements on PTH 26 and sections of the northwest Perimeter might not sound glamorous but they matter. They make roads safer, reduce wear on vehicles and equipment, and support the businesses and producers who depend on reliable transportation. We also saw progress on the St. François Xavier water expansion proj-

ect, which is exactly the kind of foundational infrastructure communities need in order to grow responsibly," King said.

"My position has always been that if a project is promised, government has a responsibility to see it through. I will continue to advocate for improvements on our PR roads, along with the pavement and upgrades to PR 227. Bridge replacement is happening now west of Warren with challenges of detours for commuters east and west throughout the constituency. The hope is for short-term pain and a long-term gain over time."

Across local communities, King spent a lot of time with students, families and volunteers in 2025.

"Attending graduations across the constituency and supporting scholarships is one of the most rewarding parts of this job. It's a reminder that, despite all the political noise, there are young people here who are stepping up, contributing to their communities and planning their futures right here in Manitoba," he said.

"I also had the opportunity to recognize community builders through private member's statements in the legislature — people who often work

quietly behind the scenes but whose contributions keep our towns strong. Those recognitions matter because they tell people that their effort is seen and valued."

For King, another highlight was the opportunity to present King Charles III Coronation Medals to residents who represent the best of Lakeside.

"Recognizing people like Glenn Tully and Paige Procter was about more than an award — it was about acknowledging decades of service, leadership and generosity," he said.

"Whether it's national leadership in the cooperative movement or grassroots fundraising that has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for cancer care, these are the kinds of stories that remind you how much impact one person can have. Lakeside is full of people like that, and it's an honour to recognize them."

At the same time, King acknowledges that many families feel under pressure these days.

"Affordability continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing Lakeside. Rising grocery bills, fuel costs and housing pressures are having a very real impact on people's lives. Safety and access to services are also ongoing concerns, particularly as communities grow," he said.

"These issues affect how people plan their lives, their work and their futures, and we need to see real action on solving them. Many of these challenges have deep-seated systemic causes, and right now the solutions being thrown around by the government will do little to actually address these problems."

In another example, King noted that the daycare at Warren School has been announced and re-announced for years.

"Families still don't have a building. I've been working to make sure this project actually gets built because child care isn't optional for working families. Promises don't help parents if nothing ever materializes on the ground," he said.

"We have to remember that the Warren School daycare was announced in spring of 2023 and has been delayed ever since by the government. It's really not fair to delay a project for perceived political points later when it's re-announced."

Senior care is another area that King believes needs improvement.

"The personal care home in Stonewall was planned and budgeted under the previous government, yet instead of moving forward in a timely way, the current government has chosen to slowly roll out personal care homes that were already planned," he



Lakeside MLA Trevor King

said. "Building them piecemeal creates uncertainty and delay, and that's not fair to seniors or their families. Seniors deserve dignity, stability and timely access to care."

In addition, King said he felt disappointed by the provincial government's throne speech.

"There were a lot of recycled promises but very little detail on how those promises would actually be delivered, other than continuing to increase debt and deficits. Right now, about 21 cents of every dollar the government takes in goes just to servicing the debt," he said.

"That's tax money that could be going toward health care, education, infrastructure or public safety, but instead it's being used to pay for poor fiscal management. Servicing the debt has now become the third-largest government expense, larger than education, infrastructure or justice, and that should concern people."

Recently, Opposition leader Obby Khan appointed King as the new caucus chair for the PC caucus.

"This role means that I now chair all of our caucus meetings and serve as the bridge between our caucus's elected members and staff, ensuring that the team functions smoothly, priorities are aligned and staff have the guidance and support they need to serve the caucus effectively," he said.

Looking ahead, King plans to keep focused on accountability and follow-through.

"I want to see promised projects built, not delayed. I want families to see real progress on affordability, not just rhetoric. And I want to keep recognizing the people in Lakeside who give their time, energy and leadership to their communities," he said.

"There is a lot of potential here and a lot to be proud of, but maximizing that potential depends on government being disciplined, realistic and willing to deliver — not just talk."

Deep freeze hits



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY LANA MEIER

With northwest wind gusts reaching 50 km/h, snow drifts quickly piled up on Road 323 in the RM of Rockwood over the past week. Daytime highs struggled to reach -15 C, but the wind made it feel closer to -30. Temperatures plunged further over the weekend, dropping to -44 with the wind chill early Sunday morning. The extreme cold prompted Environment Canada to issue an orange-level extreme cold warning, urging residents to take precautions against dangerous conditions. Help the Tribune record the weather of the week and send in a photo of friends or family enjoying the outdoors. Email: news@stonewallteulontribune.ca

Stonewall Teulon Tribune



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NEWS > VIEWS > STONEWALL > TEULON > WARREN > SURROUNDING AREAS

What 2026 holds for Canadian agriculture

By Cam Dahl, Manitoba Pork

How did Canadian agriculture fare in 2025? What trends will continue from 2025 into 2026, and what does that mean for export-dependent farmers?

A year ago, I predicted that 2025 would be filled with global uncertainty that disrupted markets. I was hoping that this forecast would be proven wrong, but unfortunately it was not. Our neighbour to the south is focused on "America First." U.S. policies are moving away from supporting free and open trade. Canadian agriculture faced a short period of tariffs but ultimately was protected by the Canada-U.S.-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). However, we don't know if this will continue until the end of 2026, as CUSMA is up for review.

This is the most important policy file for the 90 per cent of farmers in Canada who depend on international markets. The agreement will either be extended to 2032, put into a cycle of annual reviews or terminated. The outcome of the review will determine the fiscal sustainability of many farms across Canada, including in Manitoba.

Tariffs are a threat, but they are not the only protectionist measures faced by farmers and food processors. The revival of country-of-origin labelling in the U.S. and individual state legislation that is fragmenting the North American market — such as Proposition 12 in California — are just two other examples of protectionist policies threatening Canadian agriculture

and food exports. And the U.S. is not alone. China has targeted agricultural commodities in retaliation for Canadian tariffs on electric vehicles. The European Union continues to block Canadian agricultural and food exports using non-tariff trade barriers.

Uncertainty in world trade is costly for both Manitoba farmers and processors. Unfortunately, this uncertainty will remain throughout 2026 and will likely intensify during the review of CUSMA. Securing the North American market, offsetting the cost of trade uncertainty and trade diversification need to be at the top of the policy list for all governments in 2026.

Food and agriculture need to be top of mind at every Canadian negotiating table in 2026. Canadian governments and negotiators need to be continuously reminded that food

and beverage processing is the largest manufacturing sector in Canada, with sales worth about \$175 billion. The sector accounts for more than 20 per cent of total manufacturing sales. Meat products comprise the largest proportion of the food manufacturing sector in both Manitoba and Canada. If agriculture and food are left behind in trade discussions, livelihoods in every region of Manitoba will be significantly impacted.

Manitoba hog farmers continue to be world leaders in disease prevention and management. The entire sector has recognized the need to work together to effectively protect the health of the animals under our care. Sometimes this means that parts of the value chain take actions that are not in their short-term fiscal interest but

deliver long-term benefits to the entire sector. This level of collaboration is not often found in other countries or regions. Manitoba's pork sector should be congratulated for this accomplishment.

Working with the entire value chain to prevent and mitigate disease impacts is a key priority for Manitoba hog farmers in 2026. This includes preventing diseases such as Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome and Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus where possible and limiting their spread when it is not. We are also working with processors, veterinarians, transport companies and Manitoba's Office of the Chief Veterinarian to keep foreign animal diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease and African swine fever out of Manitoba. Again, collaboration is the key factor in developing effective disease-prevention and response plans.

On the economic front, 2025 was a profitable year across the hog sector. Profitability was driven by strong pork demand around the world, relatively affordable pork prices for consumers — especially when compared with beef — disease pressures in other pork-producing regions and reasonable feed costs. I expect profitable conditions to continue into 2026, at least for the first half of the year. Profitability in the second half of 2026 will depend largely on the world trade situation.

Given current profitability, 2026 should be a year of renewal and growth for Manitoba's hog sector. However, investing in the future is difficult when markets and trade patterns remain uncertain. Financing barns with a 25-year lifespan becomes more costly and challenging amid growing uncertainty. Manitoba's Eco-

Continued on page 9



Cam Dahl, Manitoba Pork

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MP James Bezan reflects on 2025, looks ahead to 2026

By Jennifer McFee

As a long-standing member of Parliament, James Bezan continues to be grateful for the opportunity to serve the community.

In 2025, Bezan was sworn in for the eighth time as the member of Parliament for Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman.

"This is a role I never take for granted, and I am proud to have the continued trust of our constituents to serve them in Ottawa," he said.

"Additionally, I was asked by Conservative Leader Pierre Poilievre to continue to serve as our shadow minister for National Defence. More recently, in September, I tabled my new Private Member's Bill C-219, The Sergei Magnitsky International Anti-Corruption and Human Rights Act."

Looking back at 2025, Bezan said American and Chinese tariffs have hit

hard locally for the steel mill, manufacturing industry and farmers.

"Conservatives stand ready to work with the government to remove these tariffs and restore markets for our farmers and businesses," he said.

Looking ahead in 2026, Bezan is focused on ensuring that rural communities and constituents aren't forgotten at the federal level.

"I will always fight for Manitobans and do everything possible to ensure we can continue to afford our rural way of life," he said.

"Additionally, in Ottawa, I will continue to work with other members of the National Defence committee on Bill C-11, Military Justice System Modernization Act. And, finally, my private member's bill is expected to be back up for debate in March and voted on at second reading."

In the early days of the new year, he

also shared some goals for the local area.

"I will continue my support of our local communities here in Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman, especially those seeking federal funding for infrastructure projects. We must ensure the federal government is investing across Canada and especially into rural communities," he said.

"As well, my team is always here to help the good people of Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman in dealing with the federal government."

After a short break for the holidays, Bezan's office in Selkirk reopened on Jan. 5 to serve the local community five days a week, all year long.

"I wish peace, prosperity and good health to all as we head into 2026," he said. "All the best in the new year."



Tribune Photo Submitted

Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman MP James Bezan attended Sgt. Tommy Prince Day in Petersfield.

Armstrong council prepares for bright year in 2026

By Jennifer McFee

Armstrong council had plenty of accomplishments to celebrate in the past year, as well as lots to look forward to in 2026.

The current council now has more than a full year under their belts after being elected in a byelection in July 2024.

"We've rebuilt our staff in the last year and a half since this new council has come on. Getting our staffing

in place has been a major accomplishment and I'm pretty happy with that," he said.

"The first year that we were on council was about getting things up and operating again. Then this last year allowed us to sit back and talk about where we need to move forward and what we need to do."

Reeve Garry Wasylowski shared some of the accomplishments and projects going on in the municipality.

To start, they resolved a Disaster Financial Assistance claim dating back to 2022 for previous flooding.

"After this council got elected, we asked for an extension and we got it done this year," he said. "It's one major project off the list."

The municipality also completed a study related to its landfill and transfer stations.

"We had some concerns about running out of room and having to be prepared to rebuild a new cell. It turns out we're going to have capacity for a few more years, so we're going to look at the operations and streamline it," he said.

"We think that the landfill is going to last longer than we thought it would. That was another major thing that we did this year."

The RM also completed a major land sale in the northwest corner of the Chatfield area.

"There was a lot of vacant land that didn't have anybody leasing it at this point in time," he said, "so we decided to put it up for sale and it worked out well."

Looking ahead, discussions are underway about building a firehall in Fraserwood.

"We are out of room for all our equipment in Fraserwood and Inwood, and we're looking at a way to make this work. We're probably looking at acquiring some land," Wasylowski said.

"We talked to the Evergreen School Division, which has a piece of property in Fraserwood where the school used to be. We are hoping that we could acquire that because that would be a perfect place to build a firehall in Fraserwood."

Council is also working on the 2026 budget, with a public meeting coming up on April 9.

"We just started sitting down as a council and talking about what our goals are for the budget. We've got to be prepared for our budget so that we've got money when it's time to get projects done," he said.

"It is election year and we are going to look at our ward boundaries and maybe be shuffling some things around."

> PORK, FROM PG. 8

conomic Development Plan recognizes the impact of international uncertainty on the province's investment climate and the need to reduce reliance on trade with the U.S.A. priority for 2026 will be developing ways to partner with government and industry to offset some of these financial risks and costs in order to facilitate industry renewal.

In some ways, 2026 will likely look a lot like 2025. We will contin-

ue to see significant trade and market uncertainty, with the potential for that uncertainty to increase as the CUSMA review approaches. Positive profitability should continue, based on strong demand, disease pressure in other jurisdictions and manageable feed costs. The question at the end of 2026 will be whether the potential negatives from the political environment outweighed the natural positives of the market.

> Got something you want to get off your chest? How about an act of kindness to share?

Send your letters to the editor or acts of kindness to news@stonewallteulontribune.ca. Please include your name, address, and phone number for confirmation purposes.

Stonewall council works with Crime Stoppers on vandalism

By Jennifer McFee

Do you have any information about who vandalized the town's welcome signs?

The Town of Stonewall is working with Crime Stoppers to ask the community for tips regarding vandalism to Town of Stonewall signs on Provincial Road 236 and Provincial Trunk Highway 6 that took place overnight between Jan. 2 and 3.

"There seems to be a fascination with destruction," said Mayor Sandra Smith.

The town is currently working on a submission to Crime Stoppers. The organization accepts anonymous tips online at www.manitobacrimestoppers.com or through its online toll-free tip line at 1-800-222-8477, which is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Tips submitted through the website are encrypted, and the phone line doesn't have call display and is not traceable.

Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards of up to \$2,000 if the tip leads to an arrest, charges or the recovery of stolen property or illegal drugs. All costs and reward money come from fund-raising and donations since Crime Stoppers doesn't receive government funding.

Tipsters never have to give personal information, never have to identify themselves, never have to appear in court and will not be required to give a statement to police. Crime Stoppers provides all information to local police authorities. For emergencies, be sure to call 911.

IN OTHER COUNCIL NEWS:

- The Town of Stonewall is submitting a subdivision application to the South Interlake Planning District for the age-in-place campus, which will include seniors housing, a personal care home and shared amenities. Council also approved an offer to purchase a two-acre lot on the western edge of the age-in-place campus site to build a 30-room hotel.

Mayor Sandra Smith expressed excitement for the project.

"This is a positive project for the

town. Economically, it's something that we've been working towards and I think this will provide a great benefit not only to our residents. We're big on recreation here but we know that when we have tournaments, we see people come in and then their dollars leave because there's not enough accommodations," she said.

"I think this will spur that development, that activity for our residents and definitely for our businesses when people are staying here. Rather than leaving to go to Winnipeg or Headingley for dinner or because their hotel is there, they're going to stay here."

Coun. Peter Bullivant shared similar thoughts.

"Families coming in to see families will have somewhere to stay," he said. "We already know that we're a very popular town when it comes to sporting tournaments and things like that, so this is going to complement that as well."

- Council gave second and third readings to amend a bylaw to authorize the borrowing and spending of funds for a roadwork project to upgrade about 560 metres of Lime-stone Bay to asphalt from gravel.

- Council gave second and third readings to a bylaw to establish a rate for all residential and institutional properties within town limits for waste and recyclable curbside collection, removal and disposal service for 2026 and 2027.

- The town is hiring Taxervice Inc. to manage tax arrears recovery on the town's behalf for a three-year period.

- The town has identified 4th Street West as a priority for redevelopment and upgrades this year. Council approved a proposal for engineering services from WSP. Work will include a full redevelopment, including curbs, gutters, lighting and sidewalks.

- Council gave second and third reading to bylaw to borrow up to \$9.5 million for a strategic investment to support long-term community planning, infrastructure development, and economic growth in



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY JO-ANNE PROCTER

Missing letters are visible on a Town of Stonewall welcome sign after vandalism reported overnight between Jan. 2 and 3. The town is working with Crime Stoppers to ask the community for tips.

Stonewall. Coun. Walter Badger was absent from the vote.

"Debentures will be issued as work is done on site and costs are incurred with the hope that less than the full amount authorized needs to be borrowed," said CAO Wally Melnyk.

The funds will go towards capital projects including the servicing of 21 acres for the future personal care home and age-in-place campus, including sewer, water, roads and land drainage. Funds will also go towards shared sewer infrastructure needed by the age-in-place campus and future commercial development, supported by private sector investment in addition to the town's contribution.

In addition, the town will buy up 31.5 acres of land next to the age-in-place campus for future land-use planning. The borrowed funds will be repaid over a 20-year period through a special mill rate that will be sufficient to cover the principal and interest.

- Scatliff + Miller + Murray will complete a complete a climate adaptation plan. The town received funding to complete this work as part of its emergency preparedness plan.

- The town appointed Mike Dola as the municipal noxious weeds inspector.

- The RM of St. Laurent has joined the South Interlake Regional Library, along with Stonewall, Rock-

wood, Rosser and Teulon. All five municipalities will share the legal costs for drafting a new regional library agreement.

- Council accepted a \$33,209.96 quote from Horizon Storage Sheds for a new lifeguard shack at Kinsmen Lake.

- Council accepted a quote from SJPT Services for cleaning services at town facilities.

- Council accepted an amended version of the Commercial Revitalization Incentive Support Program (CRISP). In the amended version, the grant criteria expands eligibility from the commercial general zone to include anywhere within town boundaries for the \$5,000 BOOST grant and the \$25,000 NEST grant.

- Stonewall residents should know their snow zone, which is used for clearing streets on a rotational basis. Learn more at stonewall.ca/p/snow-clearing-policy.

- The Town of Stonewall is now receiving applications for its annual grant program. Information is available on the town's website at stonewall.ca.

- The Town of Stonewall will be hosting a Louis Riel Day celebration on Monday, Feb. 16 at the Heritage Arts Centre starting at 11 a.m.

Activities include arts and craft, bannock over an open fire, skating on the pond, and cross-country skies and snowshoes can be borrowed from the Heritage Arts Centre for free. At 2 p.m., there will be live music by Morgan Grace.

The cost is \$15 for a family of four or \$7 per adult and \$5 per student. Kids aged two and under are free. Hamburgers, hot dogs, drinks, chips and candy will be available for purchase at the event.

To learn more, visit the town's website or call the Heritage Arts Centre at

Continued on page 11

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Dinner tickets on sale for January 31

\$15 Dinner will be pork tenderloin

All are welcome - please support your local legion!

Conservation projects protect nearly 1,000 hectares in Interlake

By Lana Meier

Nearly 1,000 hectares of ecologically significant land in Manitoba's Interlake region are now permanently protected, demonstrating how conservation and working landscapes can coexist to benefit both nature and local communities.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) announced the conservation of more than 935 hectares through two projects — the Highland Meadowwoods property and an expansion of the Swan Lake Wetland-Parkland Complex near Lundar. Together, the projects safeguard prairie grasslands, wetlands and forested areas northwest of Winnipeg while continuing to support traditional land uses such as cattle grazing, haying and hunting.

NCC says the projects highlight the growing recognition that working landscapes — often associated with agriculture and ranching — play a critical role in maintaining healthy ecosystems.

"Working landscapes are sometimes viewed as separate from conservation," said Kevin Teneycke, regional vice-president for NCC's Manitoba Region. "But these lands are essential habitat for wildlife and plants, and they also support the people who live and work on them."

The Swan Lake Wetland-Parkland Complex lands were managed as a livestock operation by the Cruise family for nearly 30 years, maintaining ecological integrity while supporting local livelihoods. The Highland Meadowwoods property, formerly stewarded by the Laubstedt family, also supported seasonal cattle grazing and forage production.

Former landowner Jack Cruise said preserving the land for future generations was a driving factor in the decision to conserve the property.

"As I get older, I realize more and more how important it is to preserve some land so future generations can

see it in its natural state," Cruise said. "This land should never be bulldozed or disced, but rotational livestock grazing should allow for preservation and wildlife habitat."

Both properties contain tall grass prairie — one of the most endangered ecosystems in the world. NCC estimates that up to 90 per cent of Manitoba's original prairie grasslands have already been lost to land conversion.

Prairie grasslands play a vital role in supporting biodiversity and absorbing carbon, helping landscapes remain resilient in the face of climate change. Wetlands on the conserved lands further enhance resilience by recharging and purifying groundwater, slowing runoff and holding water longer, reducing the impacts of flooding and drought.

Forested areas within the projects provide nesting, feeding and breeding habitat for numerous species of birds, amphibians and mammals. The properties are home to several waterfowl species and species at risk, including eastern whip-poor-will, least bittern and red-headed woodpecker.

The conservation work was made possible through support from the Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program, part of Canada's Nature Fund, along with

**"AS I GET OLDER,
I REALIZE MORE
AND MORE HOW
IMPORTANT IT
IS TO PRESERVE
SOME LAND."**



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

A red-headed woodpecker and an eastern whip-poor-will, both species at risk in Manitoba, are among the birds that depend on prairie, wetland and forested habitats protected through recent land conservation projects in the Interlake region.

contributions from Jim and Leney Richardson, the Richardson Foundation, and the estates of Debbie Zibresky, A. Richard Omatsu and Joy E. Goodwin.

Federal Environment, Climate Change and Nature Minister Julie Dabrusin said the projects reflect Canada's broader commitment to protecting nature while recognizing the importance of working lands.

"This announcement in Manitoba's Interlake region highlights Canada's commitment to protecting nature and mitigating climate change while recognizing the value of working landscapes," Dabrusin said in a statement.

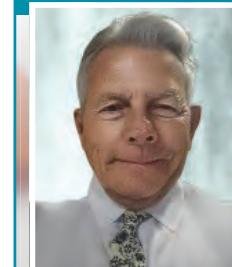
Secretary of State (Nature) Nathalie Provost added that protecting prairie grasslands, wetlands and forests is essential to sustaining wildlife and maintaining the

long-term health of the land.

According to NCC, the conserved lands lie at the transition between prairie and boreal ecozones, supporting a mix of deciduous and mixed-wood forests. Canada's boreal forest covers roughly 60 per cent of the country's land mass and holds the largest portion of the world's land-based carbon.

Since 1962, NCC has worked with communities, Indigenous Nations, governments and businesses to protect lands and waters across the country. The organization says projects like those in the Interlake demonstrate how conservation can strengthen local economies, protect biodiversity and build more resilient communities for generations to come.

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Argyle museum acquires 15 RCMP divisional ensigns

By Jennifer McFee

RCMP Day is coming up on Feb. 1, which is particularly poignant for a local museum since it's the only one in Canada with the complete collection of all 15 divisional flags.

In Manitoba, RCMP Day is celebrated each year on Feb. 1. It was established through provincial legislation to recognize the history and dedication of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which formed in 1920 and continues its service to public safety in the province.

The RCMP has 15 divisions — one for each province and territory plus a national division in Ottawa and a depot division for training in Regina. In the late 1980s, each division received its own distinct flag, or ensign, presented by former governor general Ramon Hnatyshyn to then RCMP commissioner Norman Inkster.

All the ensigns have the RCMP badge in the canton, or top left corner of the flag. In addition, they each have a different regional badge on the fly end, or right side of the flag, to indicate the division. Since these ensigns represent the RCMP's official authority in Canada, they can be seen flying at divisional headquarters, including at D Division on Portage Avenue in Winnipeg.

Shayne Campbell, president and CEO of Settlers, Rails & Trails museum in Argyle, spent more than a decade working with the RCMP to acquire the full donations of ensigns.

"Since 1997, Settlers, Rails & Trails has been collecting flags from across Canada to include historic, corporate, regional, sport and special events. Currently holding over 1,800 flags,

Al-Anon and AA Meetings Information

Balmoral Al-Anon Family Group
Balmoral Community Hall basement
6003 E MB-236, Balmoral, MB
Contact: (204) 470-8972
Meets every Wednesday 7-8 PM
Everyone welcome

Selkirk Red River Al-Anon Family Group
Christ Church Anglican
227 McLean St., Selkirk, MB
Contact: (204) 482-6287
Meets every Monday 7-8 PM

Teulon AA
Christian Education Building
3rd Ave. SE, Teulon, MB
Contact: (204) 461-0155
Meets every Tuesday 8-9 PM

Stonewall AA
Parochial Hall
291 1st St. W., Stonewall, MB
Contact Denis: (204) 981-7747
Donna (204) 461-0892
Meets every Sunday 7:30-8:30 PM



our small museum is proud to have the second largest museum flag collection in the country," he said, noting that it's second only to the federally operated National Museum of History in Gatineau, Que.

"In an effort to include important flags from unique Canadian organizations, our museum began conversations with RCMP officials 15 years ago. It is very important that our museum now includes these RCMP divisional ensigns in our famous Canadian flag collection. We are the only civilian museum in Canada to have been officially gifted these flags. Due to their representation of official RCMP authority in Canada, they have never been used outside of the RCMP organization."

Since the museum collects flags that represent all aspects of Canadian identity, Campbell said they've wanted to add these ensigns to their permanent collection for a long time.

"The main goals of our museum's flag collection is to collect, display and educate visitors about our country's use of flags as pop culture items," he said. "We are excited to be home to this very unique and specialized national collection."

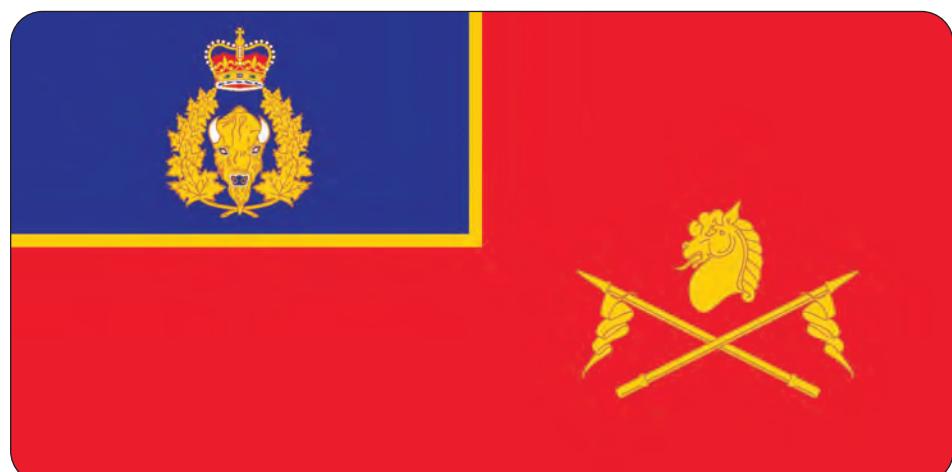
When flags enter the Settlers, Rails & Trails collection, they are inspected and then digitally catalogued, labelled and photographed before going into special storage containers.

"Textiles require temperature and humidity controls, as well as protection from mould, insects and even tight folding or crushing over time. When on display, the flags are usually suspended from our specially designed T-bar system, which supports



TRIBUNE PHOTOS SUBMITTED

RCMP divisional flags arrived at the Settlers, Rails & Trails Museum in Argyle, ready to be entered into their database.



RCMP musical ride, with the equitation badge on "fly end."

and displays items flat so they can be seen and enjoyed," Campbell said.

"Flags are only on display for short periods of time and are never exposed to high UV light, wind or excessive handling. We never fly these special flags outdoors, and the display of these items by our museum is never an attempt to become representatives of those organizations."

Now that the RCMP ensigns have been received, they will begin to plan for a future exhibition for 2027.

Meanwhile, their Canadian flag collection continues to grow.

"We are always looking for Canadian historic, corporate, regional, sport and special

event flags which we do not already hold in our permanent collection," Campbell said.

"We are pleased to note that flags have been gifted to our small museum from all across Canada and from Canadian embassies across the world. Our small community museum has a huge reach and continues to educate visitors from far and wide."

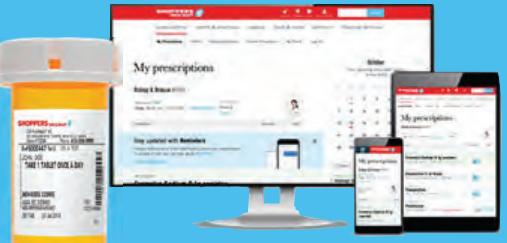
For those looking to check out the current displays, the museum's Treasures from the Vault Exhibition continues in the lower level of the Argyle Community Centre. It's open the first Saturday of the month from 1 to 4 p.m., and admission is free.

Learn more about the volunteer-run museum at settlersrailsandtrails.com.

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Team Lott seeking redemption in Bunge Championship's return to Selkirk

By Kieran Reimer

Team Tanner Lott hopes to get over the hump next weekend at the 2026 Bunge Championship.

Formerly known as the Viterra Championship, the Manitoba men's provincial curling championship will bring together the province's top 24 teams at the Selkirk Recreation Complex from Feb. 3 to 8, with a berth at the 2026 Montana's Brier on the line.

Team Lott, based out of Fort Rouge in Winnipeg, is among the teams most familiar with the event and the pressure that comes with it.

Skipped by East Selkirk's Tanner

Lott, the rink also includes third Riley Smith, second Adam Flatt, lead Sean Flatt and fifth Justin Twiss. Each has competed at provincials in the past.

Next weekend, however, will mark the first time all five are vying for a provincial title together as members of the same team. Lott has come close before, including a finals appearance in 2022 that ended in an 8-3 loss to Team McEwan.

That year was also the last time the championship was held in Selkirk,

Continued on next page

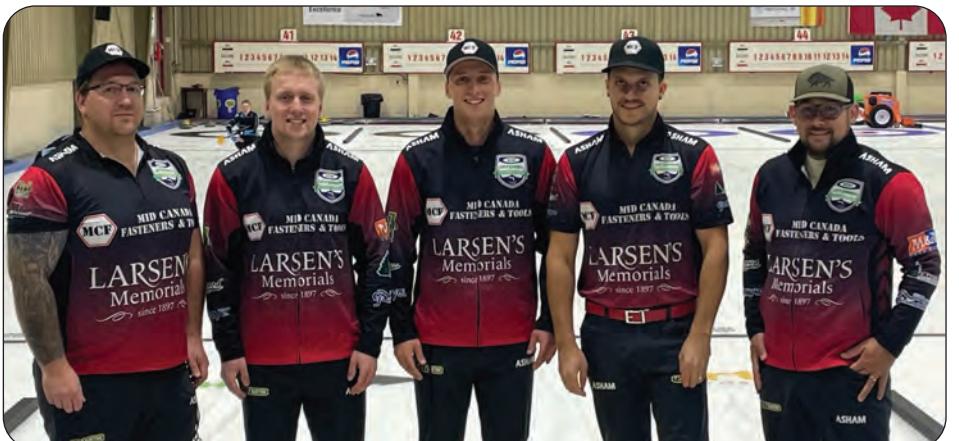


PHOTO SUBMITTED

Team Tanner Lott will compete alongside 23 other rinks at the 2026 Bunge Championship from Feb. 3 to 8 at the Selkirk Recreation Complex, where the winner will earn a berth at the 2026 Montana's Brier. The Fort Rouge-based rink qualified through a strong season on the Manitoba Curling Tour, highlighted by a first-place finish at the MCT Shootout in Virden last November. Pictured, from left, are Justin Twiss, Sean Flatt, Adam Flatt, Riley Smith and Tanner Lott.

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Continued from previous page

adding to the excitement of the tournament's return. Lott said the team has been preparing steadily in recent weeks and feels ready to take on Manitoba's top competition.

"We've put in a lot of work this year — a lot of practice, and we've played a lot of events," Lott said Jan. 23. "For a new team, we've really brought it together coming into this event. We have fairly high expectations for ourselves."

The field includes several high-profile teams, such as Reid Carruthers' Granite Curling Club rink, Team Braden Calvert of Heather and Jordan McDonald's squad.

Team Lott enters the championship with momentum after a first-place finish at the Manitoba Curling Tour Shootout in Virden in November, a result that secured their spot at the Bunge Championship.

It was one of several events where the team collected Manitoba Curling Tour points this season, but it proved to be the most timely. Different re-

sults would have forced the rink to compete in regional qualifiers.

Team Lott posted only one loss at the Shootout and capped the weekend with a dominant finals victory that included a five-ender in the third end.

"It was a super important event for us," Lott said. "We had the goal of at least making the final and giving ourselves a good shot at qualifying for provincials, so we didn't have to go through the regionals. It worked out really well."

The team stayed busy following that win, travelling south to Duluth, Minn., last weekend to compete in the 2026 Duluth Centennial Cash Spiel.

They now head into Bunge week with confidence, setting their sights on a first trip to the Brier, scheduled for Feb. 27 to March 8 in St. John's, N.L.

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The importance of Probiotics and Prebiotics for dogs

Few other supplements can have such a large impact on the immune system and health as probiotics for dogs. Gut bacteria play a large role in health and disease. So if you want a healthy dog, it's important to support his microbiome by using the best probiotics for dogs at the right times.

Beneficial bacteria have a few key jobs in your dog's body:

- Promote overall dog gut health
- Digest your dog's food
- Produce key vitamins (including vitamin K and B vitamins)
- Produce serotonin and influence mood
- Reduce the gut pH
- Crowd out harmful bacteria
- Produce enzymes
- Produce fatty acids that discourage the growth of harmful bacteria
- Support the immune system

Since 80% of your dog's immune system is in his gut, bacteria are critical to your dog's health. Specifically, a diverse and well-populated bacteria population is critical to your dog's health.

The beneficial bacteria in probiotics are living entities that need to eat. That's where prebiotics come in. Without prebiotics, probiotics will be less active, less effective and can eventually die off. But if the probiotics are well-fed, they'll grow and encourage new colonies of friendly bacteria to populate your dog's gut ... and soon they'll start to crowd out the harmful bacteria.

What is a good probiotic for dogs?

A good probiotic for dogs should contain a variety of strains to support the gut microbiome effectively. Products like Lactobacillus, Bifidobacterium, and Saccharomyces boulardii are highly researched and beneficial. Always ensure to include prebiotics to nourish these beneficial bacteria.

The little bacteria and organisms that live in your dog are so important to his health that they outnumber his own cells 95 to 1! Most dogs can benefit from probiotics. But there are a wide variety of health issues that can be helped by probiotics:

- Leaky gut • Yeast overgrowth
- Urinary tract infections • Diarrhea
- Colitis and bowel diseases • Pancreatitis
- Obesity • Allergy symptoms
- Mood disorders

How do I know if my dog needs a probiotic?

Your dog might need a probiotic if they are experiencing digestive discomfort, irregular stool, allergies, or after antibiotic treatment. Probiotics are also beneficial for overall health, supporting the immune system and maintaining a balanced gut microbiome.

What food has probiotics for dogs?

Foods that naturally contain probiotics for dogs include fermented vegetables (ie: homemade sauerkraut), kefir, or tripe. These can provide live microorganisms beneficial to your dog's gut health. Always introduce these foods gradually to ensure they suit your dog's digestive system.

What food has prebiotics for dogs?

You can feed your dog foods like garlic, bananas, apples, cooked mushrooms, Jerusalem artichoke, chicory root, cabbage or asparagus to make sure you get the benefits of pre and probiotics for dog digestive health.

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SCC takes the stage at Valentine's Day themed coffee house on Feb. 10

By E. Antonio

Selkirk Community Choir (SCC) takes pride in providing enriching musical opportunities to singers throughout the Interlake region. To ring — or sing — in the new year, the choir continued its decade-long tradition by offering a six-week Try-A-Choir mini-session, giving participants the chance to experience being part of the SCC family without a long-term commitment.

"The mini-session not only breaks up the year and gives us a fun project for the dark days of winter, but it also allows a short-term trial for people who want to come for just a while," said choir director Kendra Obach. "Choir is awesome! That said, singing can feel vulnerable, and I think it's important for people to know that it's safe to come out and try something new — even if you don't



TRIBUNE PHOTO SUBMITTED

Selkirk Community Choir will host a Valentine's Day themed Coffee House on Feb. 10 at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Singers will perform a variety of songs they've practised during the "Try-A-Choir" mini session that began in January. Pictured are Selkirk Community Choir members at their holiday performance.

consider yourself a 'singer.'"

Choir members met on Tuesday evenings at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. For a small registration fee, participants found their place in the choir, learned essential choir basics and rehearsed several songs in preparation for a Valentine's Day-themed Coffee House performance on Tuesday, Feb. 10.

"Try-A-Choir is a very accessible, low-cost, warm indoor activity to enjoy during the dark winter months," said Kendra Bannish, SCC's public relations representative. "Singing and community are amazing for mental health — something many of us

struggle with during the winter."

No previous experience was required to enroll, and SCC's approximately 50 current members were happy to welcome new singers. Bannish described participating in a community choir as a bucket-filling experience.

"You can expect to work hard, learn a lot and have fun," she said. "You can also expect to build community with like-minded people."

Obach echoed Bannish's sentiments, explaining that for her, a successful choir is one filled with joy.

"Singing should be fun, build community and show musical progress," she said.

The public is invited to attend SCC's Try-A-Choir Valentine's Day-themed Coffee House on Feb. 10 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 106 Sawchuk Dr. Beginning at 7 p.m., the choir will perform songs learned during the sessions, along with solos, duets and small-group arrangements. Tickets are \$5 at the door, with proceeds supporting general choir operations.

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Interlake explorers launch docuseries in search of Canada's Viking roots

By E. Antonio

A new docuseries is taking viewers deep into the Interlake and beyond, following one family's quest to uncover answers about Viking ancestry in Canada — and the journey may change how Canadians see their own history.

Quest for the Lost Vikings, now streaming on Super Channel Quest, explores Icelandic history in Canada through the lens of people, geography and wildlife, revealing stories rarely told.

"It's a point of Canadian history no one has really looked at before," said David Collette, lead explorer with Fara Heim.

Fara Heim — Icelandic for "going home" — is a team of four explorers who began their ambitious journey 18 months ago after receiving approval to produce the series. Following 15 months of filming, the eight-episode docuseries is now airing weekly.

Collette and Johann Straumfjord Sigurdson serve as the senior leads of Fara Heim. Both grew up in the Interlake and have spent decades researching Icelandic heritage in Canada. They are joined by junior explorers Mackenzie Collette and Johann Straumfjord Sigurdson Jr., as the team



Quest for the Lost Vikings is a new docuseries featuring parts of the Interlake as the Fara Heim explorers attempt to uncover stories of Norse heritage.

sets out to uncover pieces of Viking history dating back more than 1,000 years.

For Collette and Sigurdson, the project grew out of years of unanswered questions.

"We know Norse arrived in Canadian territory around 1000 C.E., but there isn't much publicly available information," Collette said. "We wanted to find our own answers."

Their curiosity led them to think differently about familiar waterways.

"In northern Manitoba, through Hudson Bay, you can sail anywhere in the world," Collette said. "We started asking, what if people came the other way? If Vikings sailed from Iceland, what signs would point to life in



TRIBUNE PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Johann Sigurdson (left) and David Collette plotting their route.

North America?"

That question inspired their expeditions along routes Vikings may have travelled, including Hudson Bay waterways that connect as far south as Minnesota. While the crew has not yet completed a sail from Iceland, they hope one day to journey from Iceland to Greenland and into Hudson Bay — an expedition that could take weeks or even months, depending on where they stop to explore.

Quest for the Lost Vikings takes view-

ers from Nunavut to the Kensington Runestone in Minnesota — a journey Collette describes as "a trip across Canada you can do sitting in your own chair."

"We're going places most people will never see," he said.

While many filming locations will feel familiar to Manitobans, the series also explores remote communities accessible only by boat. Along the

Continued on page 18

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Funding for this project [in part] has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Agricultural Climate Solutions - On-Farm Climate Action Fund

> VIKINGS, FROM PG. 18

way, the team uncovers unexpected stories, often through conversations with local residents and oral histories passed down through generations.

"We're trying to peel back the layers of stories that haven't been told," Sigurdson said.

"Our direct ancestors were here 1,000 years ago," he added. "They were explorers and businesspeople who built relationships with Indigenous communities. Now we're trying to understand what they saw, what they experienced, and why they came."

All members of Fara Heim belong to both the Explorers Club and the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, bringing professional expertise to their passion for history. Sigurdson previously worked as an environmental impact biologist designing specialized Arctic products, while Collette holds a mechanical engineering degree and served in the Royal



Left photo: Jo Sigurdson and Johann Sigurdson on the ice with the SHERP amphibious vehicle; right photo: Fara Heim film and production crew.

Canadian Air Force.

Viewers can also expect revelations surrounding the Kensington Runestone, the discovery of the oldest English silver penny in North America dating back to 1320, and firsthand accounts shared through oral storytelling.

"It's more than just old guys on a



trip," Collette said. "It's a journey across Canada to understand how people first began settling here."

The team credits famed Arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson — who grew up in Arnes in the late 1800s — as a major inspiration. Stefansson lived among the Inuit and helped advance archaeological and anthropological research in the North.

Exploring by water was essential to the crew, allowing them to experience the land the way Vikings once did. By travelling aboard whaling ships through historic routes like the Nelson River, York Factory and the Red River, they uncovered stories embedded in the landscape itself.

In one episode, the crew reflects on a trip to Port Nelson 15 years ago, sharing photos from a night spent camping on an island — unknowingly near a polar bear.

"That's the kind of adventure we bring viewers along for," Collette said. "Land, people, wildlife — it's all incredible."

While the team is still searching for answers, the first season reveals a wealth of information. If renewed, Fara Heim hopes to produce two or three additional seasons, expanding their search across other regions of North America.

"There's only so much one season can share," Collette said. "We want to keep this journey educational, entertaining and accessible."

The first half of *Quest for the Lost Vikings* is now streaming on Super Channel Quest, with new episodes airing Sundays at 8 p.m.

For more information, visit www.faraheim.com or www.questforthe-lostvikings.com.

Merks go undefeated



TRIBUNE PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Warren Junior Merks U15 team captured the Gimli Vikings tournament banner after going undefeated over three action-packed days from Jan. 16 to 18. In the final, the Merks edged the Stony Mountain Flames 4-3. They also claimed a narrow 3-2 victory over the host Gimli Vikings. Earlier in the tournament, the Merks defeated the Thompson Minor Kings 7-2, The Pas Huskies 11-0, the Flames 7-3 and Seals White 4-3. Pictured left to right, back row: Duncan Grassinger (assistant coach), Stu Coolidge (assistant coach), Riley Coolidge, Easton Macmillan, Matthew Estensen and Burke Johnson. Middle row: Ayden Sawatsky, Cabrel Hogg, Rylan Robert, Connor Delaroque, Armand Buors, Charlie Beachell, Cree Redhead, Aaron Hogg (head coach) and Craig Anderson (assistant coach). Front row: Blake Park, Eli Grassinger, Theodore Anderson and Cameron Koss. Missing from the photo are Davis Lambert, Lincoln Hallow and Ethan Voth.

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9:15 Grasshoppers, Weevils and More: A Review of Insect Pests of Forage Crops
John Gavloski, Entomologist Manitoba Agriculture

10:00 COFFEE & TRADESHOW

10:30 From Virtual Grazing to On-Pasture Weighing
Mary-Jane Orr, General Manager Manitoba Beef and Forage Initiatives

11:15 Impacts of Sire Nutrition on Future Generations
Carl Dahlén, Reproductive Physiologist North Dakota State University

12:00 LUNCH & TRADESHOW

1:00 The Business of Raising Beef
John Maltman, Nutritionist Highline Manufacturing

1:45 Livestock Inspection in Manitoba
Carson Callum, General Manager Manitoba Beef Producers

2:30 COFFEE & TRADESHOW

3:00 Economics of Buying Versus Raising Replacement Heifers
Ben Hamm, Farm Management Specialist Manitoba Agriculture

3:45 INDUSTRY DRAWS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026

Cost \$20 includes Hot Lunch, Displays, Grand Prize & Industry Draws

8:30 REGISTRATION & VISIT TRADESHOW

9:15 Soybeans!! A Recap of 2025 and My Best Guess At 2026
Terry J. Buss, Production Agronomist-East Manitoba Pulse & Soybean Growers

10:00 COFFEE & TRADESHOW

10:30 Cover cropping on the Canadian Prairies: Lessons from 2020, Questions for 2026
Callum Morrison, Crop Production Extension Specialist, Manitoba Agriculture

11:15 From Armyworms to Wandering Weevils: A review of Insects on Crops in Eastern Manitoba in 2025
John Gavloski, Provincial Entomologist Manitoba Agriculture

12:00 LUNCH & TRADESHOW

1:00 Decisions That Pay: Practical Approaches to Soil Fertility Management
Marla Riechmann, Provincial Soil Fertility Specialist, Manitoba Agriculture

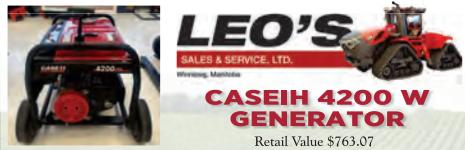
1:45 The Prairie Fusarium Head Blight Risk Mapping Tool
Dr. Paul Bullock, Senior Scholar-Agronomist, University of Manitoba

2:30 COFFEE & TRADESHOW

3:00 Handling Tariff Uncertainty In Your Crop Marketing Plans
Bruce Burnet, Director of Markets and Weather Analysis, Glacier Farm Media

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Dip your line during inaugural Hailey's Way Ice Fishing Derby and support Interlake youth

By Patricia Barrett

The upcoming Hailey's Way Ice Fishing Derby in Gimli in honour of Hailey Dugay, a young woman who loved to fish, is gearing up to give participants a fun-filled day of ice fishing on Lake Winnipeg and a chance to vie for the top prize of \$10,000.

People registering for the March derby will also be supporting programming and recreational activities for Interlake youth offered through Hailey's Way Inc., the non-profit organization that's organizing the derby.

Hailey's mom, Dana DesRoches, founded the organization in honour of her 20-year-old daughter, who tragically died in 2018 near Fraserwood after a man opened fire at a vehicle in which she was a passenger.

DesRoches wants to provide youth in small Interlake communities opportunities to take part in safe, supervised programs that focus on building life skills and engagement in recreational activities.

She said she thought a fishing derby would be ideal to raise funds for programs while bringing friends and family together for an enjoyable day on Lake Winnipeg.

"Ice fishing is something I've done with my children right from the time we moved here to Gimli. It was something that Hailey really enjoyed doing. That was a big part of why we decided to hold a derby," said DesRoches. "And we wanted to bring an ice-fishing fundraiser back to Gimli; there hasn't been a fishing derby here in about two years or so. We decided we'd take that on. It's also a great way to bring people together, bring community organizations together and help raise money for youth programs here in the Interlake."

The board of Hailey's Way is organizing the event, along with business supporters such as Ian Prise from Prise Fishing and Adam Stringer from Stringer Rentals. They'll be organizing the layout of the site, drilling the holes, arranging parking and so forth said DesRoches.

Last winter, Hailey's Way partnered with the RM of Gimli, the Gimli Recreation Centre and local anglers to offer a free half-day how-to-fish program to Interlake kids aged 8 to 17.

"We brought out a bunch of kids and taught them about ice fishing, everything from setting up a tent, drilling the holes and using a hook to how to fillet your own fish and clean up their site," said Des-



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Roches.

Last year, the organization was able to provide programs and funding for almost 100 kids in the region, she added.

There will lots of prizes for children and adults at the derby.

"There will be probably be close to 70 prizes, which could be range from an ice auger to an ice-fishing kit," said DesRoches. "There will be random draws for people buying their hole and showing up to participate. Other prizes will be based on the fish caught."

The grand prize is \$10,000 with second- and third-place prizes of \$3,000 and \$1,500 respectively. There are two early bird ticket-purchasing prizes, one for adults (a Mr. Heater portable propane heater) and one for children (ice-fishing rod and tackle box).

Early-bird ticket sales end on Feb. 15 and the draws will take place online on Feb. 28 via the Hailey's Way Ice Fishing Derby Facebook page.

DesRoches said the derby has attracted plenty of top-notch sponsorship support from several businesses, individuals and the Rural Municipality of Gimli.

"We've had lots of community involvement, lots



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DANA DESROCHES

Hailey Dugay was only 20 years old when she was fatally shot in 2018. Hailey loved to fish and the 1st annual fishing derby organized by Hailey's Way Inc. in her name will raise proceeds for programs that will be available to youth from across the Interlake.

of in-kind services and lots of volunteers who are stepping up to help set up tents, judge at the hole to measure fish, and cleanup," she said.

In the spirit of community solidarity, the fishing derby will be held during the Gimli Ice Festival, said DesRoches, and the two organizations are "helping one another out."

Peter Holfeuer, co-chair of the Gimli Ice Festival with his wife Susan, said collaboration is what it's all about.

"Since its conception in 2012, the Gimli Ice Festival continues to be a collaboration of many organizations who come together once a year to support or facilitate an event," said Holfeuer. "Some events are organized independently of the festival; however, with the festival's approval, an organization may choose to run their event during the same weekend as the festival in order to draw from and help create a better overall experience for the 3,000-5,000 indi-

Continued on page 21

Avros Black shut out Interlake Lightning U15F

By Lana Meier

The Interlake Lightning U15 female AAA team was held scoreless in a 4-0 loss to Avros Black on Saturday afternoon at Warren in Winnipeg AAA Hockey action.

Avros Black opened the scoring midway through the first period when Sophie Saurette scored unassisted at 7:52, giving the visitors a 1-0 lead after 20 minutes.

The Avros extended their advantage in the second period with a pair of goals. Brooke Adams made it 2-0 at 10:45 on a setup from Adley Harrison, before Harrison added her own

marker at 5:08, assisted by Jacklynn Wuirch-Coombs.

Maya Lischka rounded out the scoring early in the third period, finishing a play from Sloane Gunn at 3:41.

Avros Black outshot the Lightning 34-21, including a 14-11 edge in the final frame. The first period was penalty-free, while each team took minor penalties in the latter two periods.

The loss drops the Lightning to 2-18-0-1 on the season, sitting seventh in the U15 Female standings with five points. Avros Black improved to 15-6-0-1 and remain second overall, trailing only Avros White.



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY JO-ANNE PROCTER

Interlake Lightning's Kaylah James and Cooper Darragh battle for the puck during Winnipeg AAA Hockey play.

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Mercs top Hawks 7-5 in high-scoring SEMHL tilt

By Annaliese Meier

The Warren Mercs scored four unanswered goals across the third period and late stages of the second to earn a 7-5 win over the Notre Dame Hawks on Friday night in South Eastern Manitoba Hockey League action.

The teams traded momentum early, with Warren opening the scoring just over three minutes in on a goal by Dasek Sobkow before Notre Dame responded with three straight markers to take a 3-1 lead midway through the

first period. Brett Brooks cut the deficit late in the frame, sending the game to the intermission tied 3-3.

Warren pulled ahead early in the second on goals by Jesse Korytko and Gianluca Esteves, but the Hawks answered back with goals from Eli and Zander Carels to knot the game 5-5 heading into the third.

Esteves restored the Mercs' lead just over a minute into the final period, and Brooks followed with the even-



TRIBUNE PHOTO SUBMITTED

Rene Hamonic wasn't sure who he would be cheering for when his two sons laced up their skates to battle it out on opposing teams for the first time in a South Eastern Manitoba Hockey League game in Warren on Jan. 23. Connor Hamonic, a 29-year-old defenceman, has been playing for the Notre Dame Hawks since 2021 and before that played for the University of Wisconsin and the Winkler Flyers in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League. His brother Justin Hamonic, 31, also a defenceman, recently joined the Warren Mercs after playing across Europe for the past eight years and various North American leagues prior to that. Justin's team emerged victorious with a score of 7-5. He picked up an assist at the end of the third period as teammate Drake Lindsay scored an empty net goal. Pictured left to right: Connor Hamonic, Rene Hamonic and Justin Hamonic.

WARREN MERCS HOCKEY — SEMHL ACTION



Thu, Jan. 29 • 8:00 p.m.

Morden (Away game)

Wed, Feb. 4 • 8:00 p.m.

Ille des Chenes (Away game)

Come cheer on your hometown Mercs!



Warren Mercs' Gianluca Esteves scored twice for his team in their 7-5 victory over the Notre Dame Hawks in Warren on Jan. 23.

tual game-winner 32 seconds later. Drake Lindsay sealed the victory with a power-play goal in the final minute.

Brooks and Esteves each finished with two goals, while Brenden Luschinski recorded three assists for Warren. Travis Bosch earned the win in goal, stopping 41 shots.

Christopher Lesage took the loss for Notre Dame despite making 48 saves.

Warren went 1-for-5 on the power play, while Notre Dame converted once on three opportunities. The Mercs are back in action Thursday, Jan. 29, when they visit Morden for an 8 p.m. start.

> FISHING, FROM PG. 20

viduals that attend the festival each year."

Hailey's Way had asked GIF if it could run a major ice fishing derby on March 7, and Holfeuer said GIF's executive committee "fully supported this complementary event" with its aim to support youth, and that GIF will help out in any way it can.

Gimli council is providing in-kind support to the fishing derby, said RM and council spokesperson Christine Payne.

"Council approved an in-kind sponsorship by directing that the

event's ice-clearing requirements be included within the existing Harbour Ice maintenance contract," she said. "As a result, Stringer Rentals & Power Products will clear the designated derby area as part of their contracted duties, at no cost to the organizers."

The Hailey's Way Ice Fishing Derby will be held on Lake Winnipeg on March 7, just south of Gimli Harbour. Tickets are available via the Hailey's Way Inc. Facebook page or by scanning the QR code on the derby's poster.

STONEWALL JETS HOCKEY — MMJHL ACTION



Come cheer on your hometown Jets!

Friday, Jan. 30 at 8 p.m.

Stonewall Jets at Charleswood Hawks

Sunday, Feb. 1 at 6:30 p.m.

Stonewall Jets at Ft. Garry/Ft. Rouge Twins

Fast-paced junior hockey • Family fun for all ages

Jets rebound with back-to-back wins after setback in St. Vital

By **Lana Meier**

The Stonewall Jets answered a tough road loss with a pair of strong performances over the weekend, earning a 4-3 overtime win over the Pembina Valley Twisters on Friday before knocking off league-leading Transcona 5-1 on Sunday.

Stonewall's three-game stretch opened Thursday night in St. Vital, where the Jets outshot the Jr. Victorias 46-36 but fell 7-2 at St. Vital Centennial Arena.

Karson King opened the scoring just 1:37 into the game, converting a feed from Gavin Holod and Rylan Slatcher to give Stonewall an early lead. St. Vital answered later in the first and then took control in the second period, scoring four times to open up a 5-1 advantage.

Adam Newcombe scored late in the second period to cut into the deficit, but St. Vital added two more goals in the third to seal the win. Mason Tabak stopped 44 shots for the Jr. Victorias, while Stonewall went 0-for-5 on the power play.

The Jets bounced back Friday night at Stonewall Veterans Memorial, edging Pembina Valley 4-3 in overtime.

Cohen Cheung opened the scoring early, and Gavin Holod added a pow-

er-play goal in the second period before Evan McMurtry restored Stonewall's lead late in the frame. Pembina Valley tied the game with a third-period power-play marker, forcing overtime.

Holod ended it just 1:07 into the extra frame, scoring his second of the night after taking a pass from Peyton Bateman. Ron Cailo made 23 saves to earn the win.

Stonewall capped the weekend with an impressive road victory Sunday afternoon, handing the Transcona Railer Express just their fourth loss of the season in a 5-1 decision at Ed Golding Arena.

Austin Lourenco opened the scoring on the power play late in the first period, and Peyton Bateman doubled the lead midway through the second. The Jets put the game away early in the third with goals from Rylan Slatcher, King on the power play, and Seth Clements shorthanded.

KC Couckuyt was sharp in goal, stopping 38 of 39 shots, as Stonewall went 2-for-7 on the power play and 6-for-6 on the penalty kill.

With the two wins, the Jets improved to 19-12-1 and moved into a tie for third place in the MMJHL standings



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY LANA MEIER

Stonewall Jets forward Gavin Holod scored twice, including the overtime winner, as the Jets edged the Pembina Valley Twisters 4-3 on Jan. 23 at Stonewall Veterans Memorial Arena.

with 39 points.

Stonewall returns to action Friday, Jan. 30, when it visits the Charleswood

Hawks for a 7:30 p.m. start, followed by a road game Sunday against the Ft. Garry/Ft. Rouge Twins.

Wildcats roll in Price Division, women edged in tight road loss

By **Annaliese Meier**

The Warren Wildcats continued their dominant Winnipeg High School Hockey League Price Division season last week, shutting out Pinawa 6-0 at home on Jan. 20 to improve to 16-1 and remain second in the standings.

Warren opened the scoring midway through the first period with a power-play goal from Kaelen Ivany at 9:29, before Ashton Baldwin added another less than four minutes later to give the Wildcats a two-goal cushion after one.

The hosts carried the momentum into the second period, where Braeden Ivany extended the lead with an early marker. Warren's offence kept rolling in the third as Jonathan Gilmore scored twice in quick succession, followed by Rhet King's goal at 5:33 to cap the scoring.

The Wildcats spread the offence throughout the lineup, with assists coming from six different players

in the shutout victory. With the win, Warren remained firmly in the hunt near the top of the Price Division standings. The team does not have any games scheduled this week.

In Manitoba Women's High School Hockey League West Division action, the Warren Wildcats came up just short in a tightly contested road

game, falling 2-1 to the Churchill Bulldogs on Jan. 20.

After a scoreless first period, Warren opened the scoring midway through the second when Brook Waldbauer found the back of the net, assisted by Mackenzie Boonstra. The Wildcats carried the 1-0 lead into the third before Churchill mounted a comeback.

The Bulldogs tied the game at 14:40 on a goal from Annalise Lamoureux before pulling ahead just over five minutes later on a power-play marker by Lyla Vogelsang to secure the win.

With the loss, Warren sits eighth in the West Division with a 6-11 record. The Wildcats do not have any games scheduled this week.

Rams roll to season-best effort on road

By **Annaliese Meier**

The Stonewall Rams delivered their most complete performance of the season last week, cruising to an 8-1 road victory over CSLR on Jan. 20 to improve to 6-11 and remain ninth in the Winnipeg Free Press Division.

Stonewall took control early, scoring four times in the opening period. Brody Slatcher opened the scoring midway through the frame and add-

ed another shortly after, while Mason Bernier struck twice — including a shorthanded marker in the final minute — to give the Rams a commanding 4-0 lead after 20 minutes.

The offence continued in the second period as Matthew Hawryluk scored twice, including a power-play goal, and Alec Harrisko added another to extend the lead to 7-0.

Slatcher completed his hat trick early in the third period before CSLR broke the shutout later in the frame. Stonewall finished the night with goals from Slatcher (three), Bernier (two) and Hawryluk (two), rounding out a balanced offensive effort.

The Rams return to the road Monday, Jan. 26, when they visit the Kelvin Clippers for a 1 p.m. start.

2015-16 MMJHL champion Jets to be honoured at Veterans Cup

Opening ceremonies begin at 1 p.m. Saturday at VMSC

By Kieran Reimer

A championship team that helped define a generation of Stonewall hockey will return home this weekend as the community gathers for the 43rd Veterans Cup.

Veterans Cup weekend runs Jan. 30 to Feb. 1, featuring three U13 tournaments and a special tribute to the 2015-16 Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League champion Stonewall Jets, who will be honoured as guests of honour during Saturday's dedication ceremony.

Teams from across Manitoba, the Interlake and Ontario will make up a 24-team field, competing at Veterans Memorial Sports Complex and Access Credit Union Arena.

The tournament will also welcome back members of the 2015-16 Jack McKenzie Trophy-winning Stonewall Jets, marking 10 years since their championship season — a run remembered as much for its resilience as its result.

Former Jets captain Brett Meilleur said one moment late in the season still stands out.

"We had an incredible group of guys who all knew how to be a good friend," Meilleur said. "But sometimes that came at a cost. We could get distracted talking about life outside the dressing room."

As the playoffs approached, Meilleur said he challenged the team to narrow its focus.

"I made it known that if we were going to go on a run, we had to leave life outside the rink," he said.

That message was put to the test in the opening round against the St. Vital Jr. Victorias. The Jets trailed the series 3-1 and were down 3-1 in Game 5.

"With elimination on the doorstep, we came into the dressing room for the second intermission and something was different," Meilleur said. "I looked around and not one word was spoken. The guys were locked in. Life was simply all about that moment."

Stonewall went on to win that game, take Game 7 in double overtime, and then win 11 straight games to claim the franchise's first MMJHL championship.

"Those 15 minutes of silence told me everything I needed to know about our group," Meilleur said.

Tournament organizer Laura Bilingham said that perseverance is exactly what the Veterans Cup hopes to highlight for today's young players.

"The big thing for the kids to take home is it took a lot of teamwork and perseverance to get through that season, and we hope some of those values are what these kids are working toward today," she said.

For Meilleur, lifting the trophy in Stonewall made the journey even more meaningful.

"To do it for the town of Stonewall and showcase what I knew our group had all along was a payoff you find only in rare occasions in life," he said. "To live it out loud and share it with our teammates, families and close friends was surreal. I'm proud of the joy it brought the town."

He said the team's story still carries an important lesson.

"No one in the league thought the Stonewall Jets would win that year, but we believed we could, and the difference is history," Meilleur said. "If I



TRIBUNE FILE PHOTOS

The Stonewall Jets captured their first Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League championship with a 4-2 win over the Pembina Valley Twisters in Game 4 on April 20, 2016, at home in front of 1,200 fans. The team will be honoured as Veterans Cup guests of honour during the opening ceremonies Saturday at 1 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Sports Complex.

could send a message to the youngsters, it would be to believe in your heart of hearts that you can win. In life and in hockey, if you tell yourself you can't, you've already lost."

The 2015-16 Jets will be honoured during the tournament's dedication ceremony Saturday, Jan. 31 at 1 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Sports Complex.

The ceremony will also feature the Centennial School Grade 7/8 choir singing *O Canada*, Dusty Moore as master of ceremonies and special guests including Stonewall Mayor Sandra Smith, Rockwood Reeve Wes Taplin and Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 52 president Ken Power and the Colour Party.

"I have a great committee that I'm working with this year," Bilingham said. "It's a big team effort, and I think it's brought a lot of the community together."

The tournament will make a donation to the Military Family Resource Centre, with a silent auction and 50/50 draw running throughout the weekend.

Play begins at 8 a.m. Friday, Jan. 30, with the preliminary round, continuing into Saturday evening. Playoff action begins Sunday morning, Feb. 1, wrapping up with medal games later that day.

Stonewall will have teams represented in all three divisions.

U13 A1 Stonewall Jr. Jets schedule:

Friday, Jan. 30 vs. Transcona Regents, 8:30 a.m., VMSC

Friday, Jan. 30 vs. Winkler Flyers, 5:30 p.m., VMSC
Saturday, Jan. 31 vs. Rat River Saints, 2:30 p.m., Ice Palace

U13 A2 Stonewall Blues schedule:

Friday, Jan. 30 vs. Neepawa Titans, 2:45 p.m., Access Credit Union Arena

Friday, Jan. 30 vs. Selkirk Fishermen, 7 p.m., VMSC
Saturday, Jan. 31 vs. Killarney Stars, 2 p.m., VMSC

U13 A3 Stonewall Blues schedule:

Friday, Jan. 30 vs. Springfield Icehawks Yellow, 10 a.m., VMSC

Friday, Jan. 30 vs. Brandon Stingers, 4 p.m., VMSC
Saturday, Jan. 31 vs. Rat River Saints, 5 p.m., VMSC



Warren 67's drop two, Niverville game postponed

By Lana Meier

The Warren 67's endured a challenging stretch of Hanover Tache Junior Hockey League play last week, dropping both games against East St. Paul, Grunthal and Niverville.

Warren opened the week with a 7-4 loss to the East St. Paul Gators on Wednesday night. Quinn McKnight got the 67's on the board late in the first period, while Dylan Riddell added another early in the second. Carson Turner and Kane Woodward scored third-period goals to keep Warren within reach, but East St. Paul pulled away with an empty-net goal in the final minute. Scott Mailloux made 53 saves in the loss.

Saturday night in Grunthal, the 67's stayed competitive through two periods before falling 7-2 to the Red Wings. Shepard Trosky scored both of Warren's goals, striking once in the first period and again early in the second to briefly keep the game tied. Grunthal responded with five unanswered goals over the final 25 minutes to take control. Dallas Shaver stopped 34 shots for Warren.

The week was to close Sunday night at Access Credit Union Arena, but Warren was forced to forfeit its game against the Niverville Night-hawks due to a shortage of available players.

Warren sits 11th in the HTJHL standings at 2-22-3 for seven points through 27 games.

The 67's return to action Friday, Jan. 30, when they travel to Sanford Recreation Centre to face the league-leading Macdonald Swarm.



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY LANA MEIER

Warren 67's defenceman Wade Byle keeps an eye on an East St. Paul Gators forward as goaltender Scott Mailloux tracks the puck during HTJHL action on Wednesday, Jan. 21 in Warren.

Happy New Year and Denture insurance renewal date

BY ELISHA VANDOR

For us at Vandor Denture Centre, the most wonderful time of the year (besides Christmas) starts on New Years Day, January 1, 2026. It's a time when we start submitting and receiving new pre-approvals for denture coverage. It's a joyous occasion for you, with dental insurance too, because your full yearly maximum is available once again and you're able to call us and schedule your denture appointment knowing you're saving the most money with your full benefits in tow. The real question is how much coverage does your specific plan cover towards new partial dentures, full dentures, relining, dental implant procedures...etc? Well, you can leave all the heavy insurance lifting to us, after all, we find enjoyment in discovering how much your plan covers and want to be the first to share your benefit results with you, but don't worry, you'll also receive your results by mail or online too.

Some insurance companies provide us an instant response when submitting electronically, while others take some processing time before a pre-approval response is provided. All insurance plans are different, so a predetermination of benefits is necessary for an accurate price quote.

If you have coverage through the government program (Canadian Dental Care Plan) with Sun

Life, we are happy to continue accepting your denture insurance benefits, and yes, they do provide great coverage for dentures! In our experience, the Canadian Dental Care Plan comes close to the best denture insurance coverage we have seen by any insurance plan. We were one of the first providers to accept the government insurance plan when it started back in May of 2024 and have worked alongside the head case managers at Sun Life and their subordinates to provide a seamless pre-approval and coverage process. If you have received your CDCP card and are ready to use your benefits, then don't hesitate to call. *As a friendly reminder, your CDCP benefits will become inactive on July 1, 2026 if you do not re-apply on or before June 1, 2026. Set the date for June 1, 2026 in your calendar to reapply so you can avoid any lapse in your coverage.*

Dentures can be replaced every 5+ years through your private insurance. So, if you received your denture(s) in 2021, then you'll be eligible for new. By simply sending in a pre-approval, the information provides your coverage specifics towards the designated treatment and is accurate for 3-6 months if no other dental insurance has been used for another treatment, like extractions. Each insurance plan is different, so it's important to call us and ask for free consultation appointment to find out the exact treatment and predetermine your coverage so you can have your best dentures yet in 2026.



Office managers Manon (left) and Elisha (right) together provide over 20 years of dental insurance experience.

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THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF ROCKWOOD

INVITATION TO QUOTE 2026 HOURLY EQUIPMENT RATES

The Rural Municipality of Rockwood is inviting quotes for hourly rental rates of various equipment, for the purpose of establishing pay rates for the 2026 construction and maintenance season. Quotation packages including submission documents are available at the Municipal Office, or from the RM's website, www.rockwood.ca

Deadline for Quotation Packages is 4:00 p.m.
(CST) Friday, February 20, 2026

Quotations may be submitted to:

Ian Tesarski, Director of Operations
Rural Municipality of Rockwood
Box 902, Stonewall, MB ROC 2Z0
Phone: 204-467-2272
Email: ian.tesarski@rockwood.ca

FARMLAND FOR SALE

FARMLAND FOR SALE BY TENDER IN THE RM OF ROCKWOOD - Approx. 650 acres of productive Farmland for Sale in the RM of Rockwood, Section 31-15-3 EPM, Deadline for Submission of Tenders is February 6, 2026. For further Information and a Tender Package contact Dillon Acheson at 204 925-5360, dachezon@darcydeacon.com

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APARTMENT FOR RENT

2 bdrm. apartment for rent, approximately 1,000 square feet. 278 Main Street, Stonewall, Manitoba above Grantham Law Offices. Available December 1, 2025. Rent is \$1,600 per month, hydro, water, internet and cable are extra. Stove, fridge, dishwasher, washer, dryer and security system in a secured building are included. No Smoking. No pets. Minimum 1 year lease. For more information please call Lynne at 204-467-5527 or email lynnet@granthamlaw.ca

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NOTICES

URGENT PRESS RELEASES - Have a newsworthy item to announce? An exciting change in operations? Though we cannot guarantee publication, MCNA will get the information into the right hands for ONLY \$35 + GST/HST. Call MCNA 204-947-1691 for more information. See www.mcna.com under the "Types of Advertising" tab for more details.

ADVERTISE IN THE TRIBUNE

THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOODLANDS PUBLIC NOTICE GRANT APPLICATION PROGRAM



The R.M. of Woodlands has opened up their annual grant application program. Please see our website at rmwoodlands.ca for more information. Completed applications must be submitted to the Municipal Office at P.O. Box 10, 57 Railway Avenue, Woodlands, R0C 3H0, or by fax to 204-383-5169, or by email to admin@rmwoodlands.ca The deadline for submissions is February 15, 2026.

RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF ARMSTRONG

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

TRANSFER STATION & WASTE DISPOSAL GROUNDS OPERATORS

The Rural Municipality of Armstrong invites applications for the position of part-time and casual operators for the waste sites within the RM of Armstrong.

Under the supervision of the Public Works Coordinator, the Disposal Grounds Operator operates the site in compliance with the Waste Disposal Ground Operating Permit, Municipal By-laws and policies, and applicable federal and provincial regulations.

The operator will be required to take the Manitoba Landfill Operator Certification Program and be responsible for various recycling programs. The operator must be physically able to lift 50 lbs and have a valid drivers license.

Posting will remain open until a suitable candidate is found. We appreciate your interest in the position, however, only those applicants chosen for an interview will be contacted. This position commences as soon as possible.

Interested candidates should submit a resume with three references to:

RM of Armstrong Office
1094 Highway 17 Inwood
P.O. Box 69, Inwood, MB ROC 1PO
Fax: 204-278-3437
Email: clerk@rmofarmstrong.com

The Tribune Classified booking deadline is Monday at 4 p.m. prior to Thursday's publication

Please Call 204-467-5836



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SOUTH INTERLAKE PLANNING DISTRICT UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE PLANNING ACT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On the date and at the time and location shown below, a PUBLIC HEARING will be held to receive representations from any person(s) who wish to make them in respect to the following matter:

THE SOUTH INTERLAKE PLANNING DISTRICT BY-LAW NO. 3/25
Being an AMENDMENT to the SOUTH INTERLAKE PLANNING DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PLAN BY-LAW NO. 3/10, as amended.

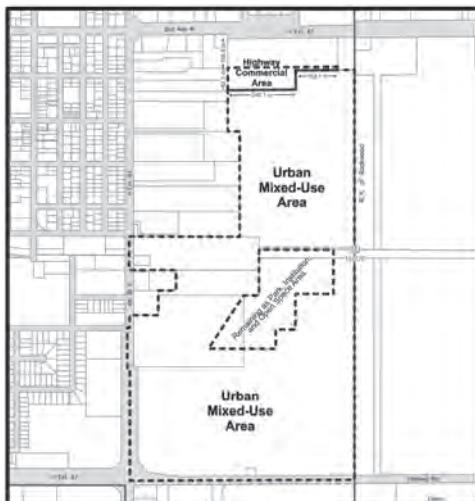
HEARING R.M. of Rockwood Municipal Building
LOCATION: 285 Main Street, Stonewall, MB

DATE & TIME: Friday, February 20, 2026, at 10:30AM

INTENT:

1. To establish a new land use designation: "Urban Mixed-Use Area";
2. To add new objectives under Part 4: Urban Centres, Section 4.2 Objectives, for the new Urban Mixed-Use Area designation;
3. To add new policies under Part 4: Urban Centres for the new Urban Mixed-Use Area designation;
4. To re-designate lands as follows:
 - a. Pt. of the NW 1/4 of Section 30-13-2 EPM from "Industrial Area" to "Highway Commercial Area" and "Urban Mixed-Use Area";
 - b. SP Lot 4 Plan 18778 WLTO in NW 1/4 30-13-2 EPM from "Industrial Area" to "Urban Mixed-Use Area";
 - c. Parcel A, B and D Plan 72610 WLTO in the W 1/2 30-13-2 EPM from "Residential Area" to "Urban Mixed-Use Area";
 - d. Pt. Parcel C Plan 72610 WLTO in the W 1/2 30-13-2 EPM from "Residential Area" to "Urban Mixed-Use Area";
 - e. Lot 1 Plan 26683 WLTO in the SW 1/4 of 30-13-2 EPM from "Residential Area" to "Urban Mixed-Use Area";
 - f. Pt. of the SW 1/4 of Section 30-13-2 EPM from "Residential Area" and "Commercial Area" to "Urban Mixed-Use Area".

AREA AFFECTED:



CONTACT INFORMATION: Eric Shaw, General Manager, South Interlake Planning District, 5-15 Davis Way, R.M. of Rosser, MB, R4B 0A3, Phone: 204-467-5587

A copy of the above proposal and supporting material may be inspected at the location noted above during normal office hours, Monday to Friday. Copies may be made and extracts taken therefrom, upon request.

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PRSD's electronic registration form or contact schools directly using the information below:

www.g.prsdmb.ca/studentsparents/student-registration

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(204) 745-2623
vgiesbrecht@g.prsdmb.ca

École St. Eustache
(204) 353-2869
steuoff@g.prsdmb.ca

Elm Creek School
(204) 436-2354
ecadmin@g.prsdmb.ca

Miami School
(204) 435-2441
miamischool@g.prsdmb.ca

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(204) 343-2023
mbenner@g.prsdmb.ca
mrempel@g.prsdmb.ca

St. François Xavier School
(204) 864-2868
sfx@g.prsdmb.ca

St. Laurent School
(204) 646-2209
loricombot@g.prsdmb.ca

Your child's birth certificate or Manitoba Health Card **MUST** be presented at the time of registration.

Please contact the school by phone or email to make attendance arrangements and with any questions.



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