

Plain & Valley

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This is the site of a proposed assisted living/long term care facility in Moosomin. A meeting is coming up January 19 to gauge investor interest

New facility proposed for Moosomin:

Meeting for assisted living/long-term care facility

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

Meetings are coming up Tuesday, January 19 for a 42-unit assisted living facility proposed for Moosomin, to determine investor interest.

The building would have 14 long-term care beds on the main floor, and 28 assisted living units on the second and third floors.

The facility would be next to Pipestone Villas on Wright Road. The plan is to offer the meals, wellness checks, and house-keeping not only in the new facility but also to Pipestone Villa residents if they want them, so that the services would be available to 100 units in total.

The facility would create 15 full-time equivalent positions—there will be more than 15 people employed as some positions will be part-time.

The proposal has been put together by Manitoba-based Bridge Road Developments—which developed the original Pipestone Villas in Moosomin and properties in many other communities.

The project proponents plan to meet with Pipestone Villas shareholders on Monday, January 18, and invite members of the public who would potentially be interested in investing in the project to meetings on Tuesday, January 19.

"We see real potential for this," Travis Penner of Bridge Road said.

"We're here as a developer, general contractor and investor. We certainly intend on investing in the project as well."

"The goal of the project is to keep as many people who require a higher level of care in Moosomin as possible," said Heather Hauptstein of Care by Design, which is involved in the project.

"With this new project, we want to include the residents in Phase 1 and 2 as much as possible, and have a sense of

community."

Larry Scammell of Kohr Capital said the proposal is to handle investments in the facility through a mutual fund trust, which would allow investors to purchase shares within RRSPs, TFSA, RRIFs, and LIRAs.

The project will need \$3 million of investor funds to proceed.

Scammell said ideally he would like to see all the funds raised locally. "In a perfect world we would get 100 per cent of the investment locally, but if that can't be done we can backfill it with investment from outside the community," he said. "Community investment, community ownership is very important, and we would tip our hat to what has been accomplished by Bridge Road in this community and others."

Penner said the project could move ahead quickly once funds are in place. "It would be five to six months from starting the plans to getting shovels in the ground, and a 12-14 month window from when shovels get into the ground to project completion," he said.

The investor meetings January 19 are set for 10 am and 12:30 pm, and additional meetings will be scheduled if needed.

People must pre-register to attend the meetings. Anyone interested in attending can contact Moosomin Economic Development Officer Greg Gillespie at 306-532-3157 or email moosominedo@sasktel.net

Q&A on the project

Kevin Weedmark spoke with Travis Penner, vice-president of Bridge Road Developments, about the plan for an Assisted Living/Long-Term Care facility in Moosomin. Investor meetings are coming up January 19. The complete interview follows:

Can you walk us through and tell us how this proposal came together and why this is being proposed for Moosomin?

It really dates back a few years. It stemmed from the Pipestone Villas Group. They've been instrumental in providing the independent living facility for seniors in Moosomin and surrounding area.

The Pipestone Villas proposal back in 2010 initially proposed that we would do three phases, and mapped them out. As we built phase one and phase two of Pipestone Villas we've evaluated do we build another phase just like Pipestone Villas or have we met the majority of the demand for seniors independent living right now?

There have been discussions with the Pipestone group and the consensus is, there may not be enough sustained demand for 72 suites of independent living, which is what you would have with three phases, but there's an increasing demand in a newer building with services—with food service and providing care.

The conception of a third phase that included services happened two or three years ago.

It's been a slow progression of evaluating the market and determining that, yes, this is what we want to do. Then it was a matter of, who is going to provide the care. Ultimately, any building like this is only successful with a good operator. You want your residents taken care of and left in good hands. So, both from a tenant perspective, as well as an investor perspective, that operator is key.

The last 12 to 18 months has essentially been an evaluation of operators. There was a presentation done 15 months ago, 16 months ago, with Orange Tree, and that further demonstrated demand that the response to those meetings was greater than anticipated by all parties. That really enforced that yes,

this is the right direction to go. After further discussion, it just didn't work out with Orange Tree and we engaged in new discussions with Heather and Jim Hauptstein from Care by Design and they have a long history of running successful businesses, care home businesses both large and small. And there's a great comfort level dealing with them.

And the idea is they will come up with the plan for the care side and do the training of staff initially? Then the new company will actually operate it?

Absolutely. Heather and Jim will be involved extensively in the design, they'll be involved extensively in the training and hiring, and setup of procedures and policies and in the initial startup of the building. They'll be on-site for the first three to six months until the building is running smooth and providing the training for the permanent manager that's going to run the facility. And then on an on-going basis, they'll be involved in a consulting role. They will be a resource to our on-site manager. If there are problems, Jim and Heather will become involved remotely by phone and email but then also in person if required as well.

What sort of services will be provided—I believe it's assisted living in 28 suites on the top floors and 14 beds of long-term care on the main floor?

That's exactly it, long-term care on the first floor and assisted living on the second and third floors, with the ability to provide different levels of care on those two assisted living floors.

Long-term care would be your level three/four tenants with health care requirements. Floors two and three, that we're terming as assisted living, would be your level one/two.

Continued on page 5 ❦

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APAS says carbon tax could devastate ag

BY ROB PAUL
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

In December 2020, the federal government announced that the carbon tax will increase to \$170 per tonne by 2030. The Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) has released updated estimates of the impact this increase will have on farmers.

"Our updated numbers show that the cost of producing wheat could go up to over \$12.50 per acre in 2030 due to the carbon tax," said APAS President Todd Lewis. "This cost increase is carried entirely by farmers and can't be passed along to our customers. We're looking at a reduction of net farm income by hundreds of millions of dollars in Saskatchewan alone, and the modest rebates provided by the federal government won't make up for these losses. It's unsustainable for our members."

The APAS estimates were calculated using key indirect costs that are not exempt from carbon taxation, such as rail and road transportation, electricity, and grain drying. These costs would be even higher in years like 2019, when most of the grain and oilseed crop required grain drying due to a wet harvest.

APAS plans to develop cost estimates for other crop and livestock commodities over the coming months as part of a concerted effort to obtain further exemptions and other forms of financial relief from the added costs.

"The carbon tax is designed to provide incentives to reduce energy consumption, but these dramatic cost increases will decrease our ability to adopt the new technologies that help us do just that," Lewis said. "In some cases, producers will pay for efficiency gains like high-capacity grain hopper cars through their freight rates, and yet those cost savings will go to the railroads."

In addition to the economic impacts, Lewis also expressed concern about the potential environmental consequences of the carbon tax.

"When you add costs to a producer's bottom line it creates incentives for them to convert grasslands and other natural carbon sinks into cropland just to remain viable," he said. "That works directly against the goals of the policy. Agricultural producers have waited decades to see some recognition of our environmental stewardship, and we have seen a lot of lip service, but not much concrete action."

Lewis says that APAS has been working very hard on engaging federal decision makers on the issue of carbon taxation, and that this advocacy would continue until the problem is addressed.

"Our members expect us to stay on this issue until our concerns are heard. We put a list together of increased costs and it's far from an exhausted list," he said. "It really shows the increased cost of natural gas and propane use, as well as

Fertilizer

Major Canadian fertilizer plants are subject to the output-based pricing system (OBPS) and are assessed to be in a "high competitive risk category" that allows them to emit 90% of their sector's average emissions intensity with no additional cost. More information is forthcoming.

Grain Drying

At \$20 tonne carbon tax, grain drying cost an additional \$0.52/acre in 2019, increasing to \$1.04/acre in 2021 at \$40 tonne and \$4.44/acre at \$170 tax rate.

Heating and Electricity

Electricity costs increased by \$0.06/acre in 2019 and will increase \$0.12/acre in 2021 and \$0.50/acre in 2030.

Heating costs increased \$0.15/acre in 2019 and will increase by \$0.30/acre in 2021 and \$1.30 acre by 2030.

Rail Freight

Using an average length of haul of 1,150 miles to export position and assuming a 65.2 bu/acre wheat crop, the carbon tax resulted in additional freight costs of \$0.85 an acre in 2019, increasing to \$1.15 for 2021 and \$4.90/acre by 2030.

Trucking

Hauling spring wheat from farm to elevator, travelling on average 63km one way (one way loaded, one way empty) increased trucking costs by \$0.16/acre in 2019, \$0.32/acre in 2021 and \$1.38/acre in 2030.

the major increase in costs on the fuel that is used to move our product out to export position. For grain farmers, we are a landlocked province and we burn a lot of fuel to get our crop to export position and I think that's a real hidden cost that's going to hit farmers. When you start adding everything up together and totalling some of these numbers, it ends up over \$12 per acre for an average wheat crop with an average haul and with drying involved as well. It's significant and when we start getting the cost per acre and multiplying it out for the total number of acres on a farm in Saskatchewan, the costs are pretty significant."

The extreme costs of the carbon tax will fall onto the backbone of Canada, the Ag industry, says Lewis and without exemptions it will put producers into a tough hole.

"It's going to be in the range of hundreds of millions of dollars annually that will be taken out of the farm economy," he said. "It won't be returned because we won't be able to have these costs passed along the rebate system that is set up now—it's more individual use of fuel, not for business use and farming. We are exempt for our diesel fuel, that's an exemption that's greatly needed, but we also need to see exemptions for other fuels that are burnt in agriculture practices as well as transportation of grain to borders because that's also a big part of our business. Those are examples of things we need to see some exemptions made and maintained for a lot of these costs because we don't have any way of passing those costs along. We compete with countries that don't have these costs and we don't want these costs that really will impact the sustainability of agriculture in Western Canada if we don't see some changes." Transportation costs are one of the biggest worries with the carbon tax says Lewis, because the key role it plays for agriculture in the prairie provinces.

"We've done research on these costs and they're sig-

nificant, specifically with transportation costs in Western Canada," he said. "Everything that comes onto the farm and leaves the farm is typically by rail or by truck and fuel is burned, it's expensive and all those extra costs will get passed down to producers, we pay the bill."

"It's something that's worrisome with increased costs, especially in year's when farming is down, this will really impact people's profit margin and viability of their operations. It's a high enough cost that some year's this will be the difference between profit and loss. If farmers don't have the money in their pockets and it's going to the carbon tax, they'll have less money to invest in new technology to actively lower their carbon footprint so it's kind of counterintuitive to what they're actually trying to achieve."

APAS will continue to make it clear to decision makers at the federal level that the carbon tax is unjust, says Lewis, especially in an industry that has worked hard to evolve and advance its practices in an effort to become cleaner.

"We've had a lobby effort and we're going to double our efforts, certainly with Minister Wilkinson at the federal level and we're hoping to have talks with him" he said. "We want to see the concept of better exemptions put in place."

"Within agriculture, greenhouse operators have 80 per cent exemption on their natural gas and propane use. What's the difference between a greenhouse operator and someone using those products to dry their grain? We've got a good story to tell here in Western Canada, we've got a sustainable industry that literally sequesters millions of tonnes of carbon every year between our cropping practices and our really good range land management that our ranchers do."

"I think we've got a good story to tell and we just need some recognition for it. At worst we're probably carbon neutral and I think when you really look at the numbers we're actually a carbon sink here in Western Canada with the way our agricultural practices work."

Steven Bonk, MLA
for Moosomin Constituency

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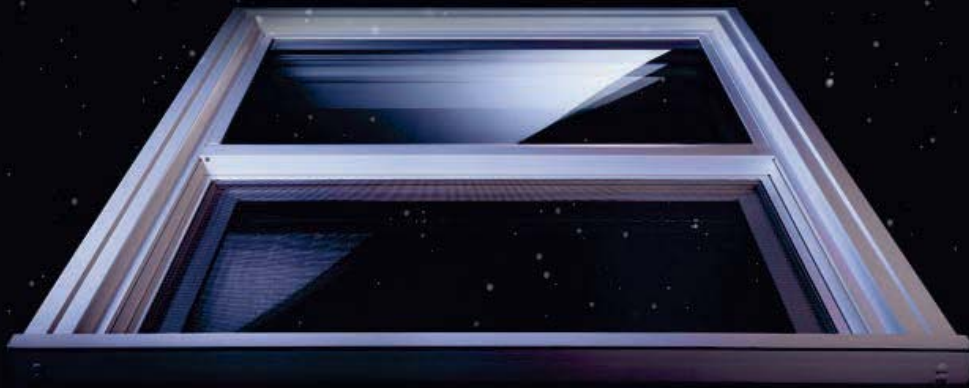


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Meeting for assisted living/nursing home facility

Continued from front

The level one/two would essentially require the meal programs, some light housekeeping and maybe some light medical care with a little bit of help with medications possibly, but not necessarily.

With the staff that we'll have on hand, that are trained to provide care for the long-term care residents, we will have the ability to provide some additional services. And again, whether that's medical requirements or getting dressed or any of those sorts of things, we will be able to provide services on those top two floors as well.

And some of those may be available to people in Pipestone Villas as well?

Absolutely. How that rolls out hasn't yet been defined. We have to determine the demand from the existing Pipestone tenants but that's absolutely the desire, to provide service for those 48 suites as well as the 42 new units.

Is this a first for Bridge Road or have you been involved with assisted living or long-term care in other facilities?

We have been involved in a few care homes, they would be smaller in size than what is proposed for Moosomin. We've been involved in a dementia wing and in three other care homes, but the largest of those would have been 20 suites. So this certainly would be larger than the ones we've done in the past, but we've been involved in four projects that would involve a level of care from a construction and development perspective.

How different is it going into a project like this compared to the traditional independent living projects that you folks have been involved in?

From our perspective, the marketing end becomes a little different. You're marketing to a different demographic. From a construction perspective, construction is construction. Certainly there are different code requirements for our architects and engineers, but the real key difference is what you're looking for in an operator. For our independent living buildings, such as Pipestone, you're looking for a property manager, but that property manager isn't

necessarily dealing with any health care needs, or services such as food services and housekeeping. They certainly are dealing with maintenance and rent collection, and there are certain skill sets required there. It's a very different operation, it becomes more of an active business than it does a passive business when you're involved in the building with care. The biggest difference is finding that right operator to make sure the active business keeps moving.

There are investor information meetings coming up on January 19. For this project to go ahead, how important is it to get a good turnout there and to see some interest there?

It's vital. This is a project that's been in the works for a couple of years. Before this project can really start to gain traction and move forward, we need investors.

We have an operator that we are very confident in. We are confident in the market and the demand that will be there. Now it's a matter of, what sort of support is there from the community to invest in this project and get this project off the ground?

If we were to look at beginning construction this year, we need to have our investor funds in place sometime in early spring. Getting that significant turnout now is vital in getting momentum and raising those investor funds.

What's the total budget for this project and how much are you hoping to raise from local investors?

The total budget is approximately \$7.5 million and we're looking to raise approximately \$3 million.

The rest will be financed by a financial institution. The ideal scenario would be the vast majority of that \$3 million would be raised locally in the community, but certainly if there isn't enough support there we will look to branch outside of the community to put the required investment funds in place.

Is this something people need to have pretty deep pockets to invest in or is this something that's going to be available to your typical retail investor?

There are a couple of different vehicles, and we're going to get into a lot more de-

tail with those vehicles in the presentation, but there's the opportunity to invest directly into the project which will require a larger investment, and the opportunity to invest through a mutual fund trust which opens the door to people to invest with registered funds such as RRSPs and TFSA's. An investor can roll in existing RRSP or TFSA funds they have now. As far as the levels of investment and what those vehicles look like, we are going to get into a lot more detail in the presentation.

If you do get a good buy in from investors, what kind of timeline are you looking at for this project?

We have the conceptual design. If we can get our investor funds in place by early spring, we would then begin work with the consultants, architects and the engineers and we would envision a 12 to 16 week process of design followed by another four to six week process of permitting and tendering and then construction would begin. You're looking at roughly five to six months from when we give the consultants the green light to when construction can begin. It would be a late summer, early fall construction start, provided investor funds are in place in early spring.

How confident are you that you are going to get that investor support in this project and go ahead?

We feel confident. The meetings we held 16 months ago certainly demonstrated interest from a tenant perspective but it also demonstrated interest from the local business community. We're confident that this project will move forward. The community has been extremely supportive as we look at the last two phases of Pipestone Villas and we're confident that the community sees this need and has a desire to have this type of facility in the community and that they'll support it.

Do you think there is an unmet need out there in a lot of rural communities for this type of facility?

Absolutely. The Bridge Road model of independent living was born out of recognizing the need for a building like that, for those that want to move off the farm or move out of their house and have the freedom to go south in the winter or travel and do whatever and live a maintenance free lifestyle.

As we've went across the communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan we recognized there was this need. People were moving to the larger centers because there was nothing in town, or what was in town was perhaps quite an aged inventory and not meeting the desires for size and amenities that this generation was looking for. Over the years, as we've continued to build those, we recognized not only is there a need for that but there is a need for something with care provided, and something with services. Again, there are a lot of rural communities where there is some fairly old and dated inventory.

Beyond that, there is just an increasing level of desire for something newer, nicer, perhaps bigger than what was available. Again, we were recognizing that in a lot of communities. Even if there was inventory, there was a shortage and people were still being forced to move to larger centers, or Regina, or Saskatoon, or Moose Jaw or PA, wherever the largest centers were.

We have a vision of trying to serve the rural communities, both in independent living but also with care, allowing people to age in place, rather than being removed from the community that they've grown up in and the only community they've known for most of their lives.

Anyone interested in attending the investor information meetings can contact Moosomin Economic Development Officer Greg Gillespie at 306-532-3157 or email moosominedo@sasktel.net

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Economic impact of recreation facilities in Moosomin

BY ROB PAUL

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The recreation facilities in Moosomin have long been recognized as some of the best in the province. With plans to continue to expand the facilities and programming through a rec community plan that utilizes suggestions from the community to outline the next 10 years, Rec Director Mike Schwean wanted to show just how important recreation is to the town.

To give residents of Moosomin an idea of how much money flows through the town via recreation, Schwean and the rec department had an economic impact study done.

"The economic impact study is the first one done in rural Saskatchewan that I'm aware of," said Schwean. "We thought it was important to tell people that if we're looking at a certain facility, it could have a million dollar return for the community."

"Moosomin being a little bigger of a centre, I think we're pretty fortunate to have other communities coming to us to use our facilities. There was that part of it, and then for our recreation, economic development, and chamber of commerce it was important to have this in place so when we have events—perhaps to raise money—there's an understanding of the value these types of things will bring back."

Wanting to get an exact idea of how much each facility in Moosomin brings in, the impact study analyzed the number of participants using every major facility in town and how much money in total they brought in before going through a multiplier that estimates how much money in total comes through the town in one year from each facility.

"For the economic impact study, we went through each facility in town and we outsourced each event," he said. "We figured out roughly how many people were at each event at each facility and we used a study from Indiana on how to come up with an economic impact financial number."

"We went through that in detail with each one of the different facilities in town so we included all of our own as well as the curling rink, theatre, regional park, pretty much all the facilities in town."

"We came up with the number of patrons we would have in a normal year and from there we used that Indiana study to come up with a number, which ended up being around \$15 million in new money to the town. Then economic people use a seven times multiplier, which means that money will flow through the town seven times before it's extinguished. So that translates into a little over \$100,000,000 flowing through the town."

Moosomin recreation economic impacts summary event-sport/tourism 2019-2020:

- Moosomin Convention Centre: 19,360 patrons- \$3,059,050 spent- \$21,413,350 injected into the com-



Moosomin Rec Director Mike Schwean and the rec department had an economic impact study done to show how much money flows through the town via recreation.

- Total: 270,918 patrons- \$14,403,200 spent- \$100,822,400 injected into the community.
- Mike Schwean Arena: 48,083 patrons- \$2,428,816 spent- \$17,001,712 injected into the community.
- Moosomin Borderland Coop Aquaplex: 15,497 patrons- \$524,410 spent- \$3,670,870 injected into the community.
- Moosomin Lloyd Bradley Park: 52,016 patrons- \$1,952,364 spent- \$13,666,548 injected into the community.
- Moosomin Nutrien Sportsplex: 50,3453 patrons- \$1,324,394 spent- \$9,270,758 injected into the community.
- Moosomin Curling Club: 3,078 patrons- \$192,008 spent- \$1,344,056 injected into the community.
- Moosomin Parks and Recreation grants N/A- \$101,400 spent- \$709,800 injected into the community.
- Moosomin Regional Park: 66,076 patrons- \$3,078,390 spent- \$21,548,730 injected into the community.
- Moosomin & District Arts Council events: 929 patrons- \$169,078 spent- \$1,183,546 injected into the community.
- Moosomin Pipestone Hills Golf Club: 15,525 patrons- \$1,573,290 spent- \$11,013,030 injected into the community.

Knowing how important the rec facilities are for bringing new money into Moosomin, Schwean wasn't shocked to see that the number is over \$100,000,000. He says Moosomin is the perfect centre to host large events because the hotels, restaurants, and businesses work to supplement the facilities.

"We're pretty happy with what we learned," he said. "To me this type of number had been in my head forever, I knew it was going to be a big number and I think some people around town would know it's big too. We have restaurants in town that will call us in August or September and ask when our tournaments are because they understand how many people that brings in. I certainly was confident the number would be high into the millions, I'm quite happy seeing over \$14 million. I knew it would be a lot, and it is a lot."

"Most people wouldn't necessarily know how much money this generates. Moosomin is situated perfectly with everything needed for a hosting community. People want to come here because they like the hotels, restaurants, businesses, and facilities. They like everything about Moosomin."

"Years ago when we'd host hockey tournaments it would be hard to get teams from two hours away because they didn't like what they saw and didn't want to come for two days. Now, we'll have a two-day tournament and we'll have teams from Regina come for four days because they enjoy everything we have. With Sask Softball, Sask Baseball, Sask Hockey, they look to us to host events because they realize the amenities we have here. On the backside of Covid, we're well positioned to take huge advantage and have some pretty amazing events here over the next couple years and we're excited about that. Our facilities can help do a lot to get us back on track after Covid. It's a team thing, we need the hotels, restaurants, and business sector, it's win-win. They're a value to us because they make Moosomin a desirable location to host events and we're a value to them because of the money it brings into town, it's all cyclical. We're excited to help them because they've always been such great supporters of us."

With the community rec plan laying out the next decade of recreation for Moosomin, Schwean is hopeful residents will see the economic impact study and understand why these advancements to rec must continue.

"With these studies hopefully everyone will understand the money that's involved and continue to support us," he said. "We have new initiatives as well with facilities and things down the road, which is part of the reason for the community rec plan. We have a lot of exciting things coming that we can't publicize yet, but this all goes hand in hand."

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Sealed, written tenders to lease the property situate in the R.M. OF PIPESTONE and described below will be received by:

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Attention: Warren G. Barber, Q.C.

LAND TOTAL ACRES
as shown on Municipal Assessment:

Parcel 1: SE ¼ 36-8-26 WPM	160.00
Parcel 2: E ½ 26-8-26 WPM	307.42
Parcel 3: SW ¼ 26-8-26 WPM	160.00
Parcel 4: SE ¼ 27-8-26 WPM	160.00
Parcel 5: E ½ 22-8-26 WPM	239.76

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

1. Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on the above or any other particulars or representations made by or on behalf of the Sellers.
2. Tenders must be received on or before 2:00 p.m. on Monday, March 1, 2021.
3. Tenders may be submitted to lease one or more parcels.
4. The party whose tender is accepted will be required to enter into a written Lease Agreement to be prepared by the solicitors for Graycan Inc., a copy of which is available by contacting Warren G. Barber, Q.C. at wbarber@mhlaw.ca. Interested parties are encouraged to obtain a copy of the Lease prior to submitting a tender.
5. Entry onto the land will not be authorized until the Lease Agreement is executed.
6. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

For further information or an appointment to view, contact:
Giovanni Colangelo at (204) 851-2101.

MH Meighen Haddad LLP
LAW FIRM

FOR SALE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders for the property situate in the R.M. OF PIPESTONE and described below will be received by:

Meighen Haddad LLP • 110 11th Street • Brandon, MB • R7A 4J4
Attention: Warren G. Barber, Q.C.

PROPERTY:

E ½ 32-8-26 WPM

This property is immediately adjacent to Hwy #83 and comprises 315.75 acres based on Municipal Assessment records.

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

1. Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on the above or any other particulars or representations made by or on behalf of the Sellers.
2. Tenders must be received on or before 2:00 p.m. on Monday, March 1, 2021.
3. Each tender must be accompanied by a \$5,000.00 deposit cheque payable to Meighen, Haddad LLP. Deposits accompanying unacceptable bids will be refunded.
4. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE

1. The bidder whose tender is accepted will be required to complete an agreement covering terms and conditions of sale.
2. In addition to the deposit, the balance of the accepted tender must be paid on March 15, 2021 (the closing date) or evidence provided that the purchase funds will be available under conditions acceptable to the Seller. If the balance of the accepted tender is not paid within the set time limit the deposit paid may be forfeited as liquidated damages and not as a penalty.
3. Possession is not authorized until acceptable arrangements for full payment are made following acceptance of tender.
4. All mines and minerals will be reserved from any transfer.
5. Successful bidders will be responsible for real property taxes commencing January 1st, 2021.

For further information or an appointment to view,
contact: Giovanni Colangelo at (204) 851-2101.

MH Meighen Haddad LLP
LAW FIRM

Next issue of Plain & Valley: February 12

Deadline: February 3

Call 306-435-2445 www.plainandvalley.com

Will there be refunds for travel halted by pandemic?

BY ROB PAUL

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
Some people who booked travel over the holiday season that had to be cancelled because of Covid-19 travel restrictions have had a hard time getting refunds for travel that was cancelled because their plans had to be cancelled because of the restrictions.

In the fall, Moosomin's Chad Stewart and his family planned and booked a holiday trip to Fernie, British Columbia to take advantage of the skiing weather out west. They rented a cabin for six and at the time there were no restrictions in place stopping them from going on the trip.

Things started to change in early December as provinces began to heighten restrictions to help stop the spread of the virus and Stewart wasn't certain if they could still go through with the trip—a situation many could find themselves in this holiday season.

"B.C. updated their travel restrictions and basically said you can't gather or travel," said Stewart. "So we went about talking to our rental and travel agent and everything to see about cancellation or change of dates, we wanted to see what our options were. We were basically told since the borders aren't closed we can still come and enjoy the rental."

Having been told by the renters it was fine, but seeing that according to the new restrictions it wasn't, Stewart and his family decided to check with the Government of B.C. to see if they were still permitted to go on their holiday trip.

"My sister—who is in Kamloops, B.C.—contacted the government at 1-888-Covid19 who then transferred them to the Fernie bylaw enforcement officer who deals with Covid rules. They laid out the situation and the bylaw enforcement officer said no, it's not appropriate and you guys can't travel here and do all this stuff. We're one family—my parents and their two adult children and their spouses—so six of us from one family, but three different households, planned to rent this six person cabin.

"We believed at the time of booking that if we were prevented from going then we would receive a refund because Covid-19



Covid-19 restrictions prevented many people from taking advantage of ski resorts in B.C. this holiday season and it may be difficult to receive refunds for those who booked their vacation in advance.

was going on, but we booked while there were no travel restrictions in place. We could have packed up our vehicles the day we booked and gone to B.C. because there was nothing preventing us from doing so then. At that point, for the most part, the government was saying if everyone social distances then we'll be okay.

"Now, my family and I believe the B.C. government has prevented us from going because they said there shouldn't be any leisure travel—this is a vacation—and there should be no gathering of five or more—we're three households of two people each so we're six. So if we were to go we would be breaking multiple rules. When we explain that while trying to get refunded we're told that because the federal government hasn't closed the borders that we still could come. We're experiencing people crossing the borders now, since Manitoba went into lockdown we've seen an influx of Manitobans coming to Saskatchewan to Christmas shop—that technically shouldn't be happening—but it's not like there's a gate at the border."

Knowing that they weren't supposed to cross provincial borders for the holiday season and having more than the recommended number of people in close contact, Stewart was hopeful he and his family would be able to get a refund because the situation was out of their control.

"We had insurance through our Visa that we used to purchase the trip," he said. "We thought when we purchased that if the regulations were preventing us from going that the credit card insurance would cover it. They didn't, they stated the same thing, that the federal government would have to close provincial borders for us to receive a refund."

"We then tried to change the dates to exactly the same dates, but a year from now," he said. "So December 2021 to January 2022 and also asked about dates in March. The renter told us that they can not accommodate for a 12-month change and the dates in they provided to us in March don't work."

Struggling to make it clear to the renters that according to the government restric-

tions they were not permitted to go on the trip, Stewart provided the renters with the exact public health orders from the Government of B.C. hoping they would realize this was out of the Stewart families control and they were just trying to do the right thing.

"Once we explained that we were in violation of the B.C. governments orders, the renters replied back, 'to clarify, we're not a business. We're a private couple that rent our vacation property when it's not otherwise in use . . . We personally facilitated the cancellation or refund of quite a number of reservations, however the platform has taken this position since about June which has been publicly posted on the site.'"

The Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions in place are out of the Stewart family's control and they have found themselves in a tough situation where they want to follow the rules, but are being punished for it by receiving no refund.

"Now we feel like we're in a situation where we don't get a refund and we can't go. The people who have something to gain from us going say we still can. In my eyes, the B.C. government has prevented us from going. From what the insurance agents and through the booking site, from what they've stated to us is, until the federal government closes the provincial border they are not going to give us cancellation refunds."

"The crux of the problem is that we believe the B.C. government doesn't want us to go, while the provider of the rental is saying we can come. Everyone who has an interest in us spending money says we can go."

"The renter has no obligation to offer us alternative dates in March and doesn't have to hold those dates for us as far as VRBO is concerned."

"We could take those dates in March—even though they don't work for us—and come February they could rent those dates in March to someone else and we have don't have a leg to stand on at that point and we could be out of luck on everything."

"We just want to follow the rules and we feel like there's no options for us right now."

FOR SALE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders to purchase the property situate in the MUNICIPALITY OF DELORAINIE-WINCHESTER and described below will be received by:

Meighen Haddad LLP • P.O. Box 485 • Deloraine, Manitoba • R0M 0M0
Attention: Warren G. Barber, Q.C.

PROPERTY:

- SW ¼ 34-2-22 WPM
- The property is fenced and cross fenced
- New dugout
- Yardsite with hydro and a well
- Approximately 110 acres of tame hay ground
- Balance is native pasture – mostly open and arable.

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

1. Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on the above or any other particulars or representations made by or on behalf of the Sellers.
2. Tenders must be received on or before 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 21, 2021.
3. Each tender must be accompanied by a \$2,500.00 deposit cheque payable to Meighen, Haddad LLP. Deposits accompanying unacceptable bids will be refunded.
4. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE

1. The bidder whose tender is accepted will be required to complete an agreement covering terms and conditions of sale.
2. In addition to the deposit, the balance of the accepted tender must be paid within 30 days of notification of acceptance of tender (the closing date) or evidence provided that the purchaser funds will be available under conditions acceptable to the Sellers. If the balance of the accepted tender is not paid within the set time limit the deposit paid may be forfeited as liquidated damages and not as a penalty.
3. Possession is not authorized until acceptable arrangements for full payment are made following acceptance of tender.
4. All mines and minerals will be reserved from any transfer.
5. Successful bidders will be responsible for real property taxes commencing January 1st, 2021.

For further information or an appointment to view, contact:
Phil Adams at (204) 747-3089 (home) or (204) 522-6329 (cell).

MH Meighen Haddad
LAW FIRM

1:6

FOR SALE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders to purchase the property situate in the MUNICIPALITY OF GRASSLAND and described below will be received by:

Meighen Haddad LLP • P.O. Box 485 • Deloraine, Manitoba • R0M 0M0
Attention: Warren G. Barber, Q.C.

PROPERTY:

W ¼ 8-6-23 WPM

EXC THAT PORTION OF THE SW ¼ LYING SOUTH OF THE RAILWAY RIGHT-OF-WAY

Based on Provincial Assessment records, the property for sale comprises 204.06 acres more or less

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

1. Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on any representations made by or on behalf of the Vendor.
2. Tenders must be received on or before 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 21, 2021.
3. Tenders must be accompanied by a \$2,500.00 deposit cheque payable to Meighen Haddad LLP. Deposits accompanying unacceptable bids will be refunded.
4. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE

1. The bidder whose tender is accepted will be required to complete an agreement covering terms and conditions of sale.
2. In addition to the deposit, the balance of the accepted tender must be paid within 30 days of notification of acceptance of tender (the closing date) or evidence provided that the purchase funds will be available under conditions acceptable to the Sellers. If the balance of the accepted tender is not paid within the set time limit the deposit paid may be forfeited as liquidated damages and not as a penalty.
3. Possession is not authorized until acceptable arrangements for full payment are made following acceptance of tender.
4. All mines and minerals will be reserved from any transfer.
5. Successful bidders will be responsible for real property taxes commencing January 1, 2021.

For further information or an appointment to view, contact
Wayne McPherson at 204-858-2332 or 204-741-0685.

MH Meighen Haddad
LAW FIRM

1:6

The Saskatchewan Agriculture Student Scholarship Program is now accepting applications

BY ROB PAUL

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Applications are now being accepted for the 2021 Saskatchewan Agriculture Student Scholarship Program. The program is focussed on giving graduating high school students in Saskatchewan interested in the Ag industry an avenue to continue studying agriculture in post-secondary and help contribute to the sector.

The Saskatchewan Agriculture Student Scholarship Program invites grade 12 students and recent high school graduates who are planning to take agriculture-related post-secondary education beginning in the fall of 2021 to apply. The deadline for applications is March 1, 2021.

This year's theme is 'transparency.' Applicants for the scholarship are encouraged to explore what transparency is and how it is connected to the public's perception of modern agriculture.

Submissions to the program should answer one of the guiding questions about the theme of transparency. The guiding questions are, what does transparency in modern agriculture look like? And, what can the agriculture industry do to improve its transparency?

To apply, students are asked to submit a creative three-minute video or 1,000-word essay discussing transparency in agriculture. The submissions will be judged and one scholarship of \$4,000 and three runner-up scholarships of \$2,000 will be awarded.

Along with the video or written submission, students must provide a letter of conditional acceptance to a post-secondary institution and provide a letter of recommendation from either a teacher/professor, agriculture industry leader, or community leader.

Videos and written submissions will be judged by a review committee based on alignment with the theme provided, development of ideas, structure and clarity, creativity and quality, and professional-

ism. Leadership qualities and school/community involvement in letters of recommendation will also be taken into consideration. The Ministry of Agriculture reserves the right to publish or promote all submissions as deemed appropriate.

For more information on the Saskatchewan Agriculture Student Scholarship Program, visit www.saskatchewan.ca/agriculture. The award is funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year, \$388 million investment in strategic initiatives by the federal and provincial governments.

The scholarship encourages constructive conversations about where food comes from and how everyone along the value-chain, from the field to table, shares a role in communicating about food production.

"The Agriculture Student Scholarship Program is an opportunity for our province's youth to help tell industry's story," Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "By encouraging the best and brightest young minds to pursue a career in agriculture, we are helping to ensure the future success of this important sector."

The basis of the scholarship program is for the Ag industry to hear new ideas while also providing a stepping stone for the younger generation in the province interested in agriculture.

"Young people are key to the continued growth and prosperity of Canada's agricultural sector," said Federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau. "This scholarship program will give young leaders the help they need to pursue their studies and embark on a rewarding career in the sector."

The 2020 winner of the scholarship program, Mackenzie Van Damme, submitted an essay that highlighted the impact of agriculture on Saskatchewan, specifically her own community, Imperial. Her essay also touched on genetically modified organ-



Saskatchewan Agriculture Minister David Marit.

isms, new technology in the agriculture sector and how innovation has modernized farms and increased sustainability across the industry.

"The scholarship has offered me so much," said Van Damme. "By helping to fund my education, I'm able to learn all about agriculture, meet new people and spark an even greater passion for the field."

Van Damme is furthering her education at the University of Saskatchewan. She plans to obtain a Bachelor's of Science in Agriculture with a focus on agronomy.

The Ministry of Agriculture believes the scholarship program is one of the most important parts of what they do because these students are the future of the Ag industry and this gives them a path to sharing their ideas while helping with their education.

"We've been doing the scholarship for a number of years now," said Marit. "It's just something to help grade 12 students that are looking at post-secondary education in the agriculture realm. We've been offering it for quite a while and what we do is

theme it every year. This year the theme is transparency with not just transparency in the agriculture, but a focus on public trust and where that can lead.

"Applicants can either do an essay or a video and then we have a panel of industry people and government/ministry folks as well who look at them and judge them. Then the first place winner gets a \$4,000 bursary and then the other finalists get a \$2,000 bursary so it's something we've done to help the younger generation interested in the Ag industry. I think it really adds to students who are engaged in the Ag industry or want to be engaged in the Ag industry with an opportunity for funding towards their post-secondary education."

"We also get some pretty good ideas from it and get an understanding of what kids are thinking. It's something we're really quite proud of and it's in partnership with the federal government through the CAP funding."

Marit says that it's not just about giving these students a helping hand, but truly hearing from them with fresh ideas and learning about where the younger generation sees the Ag industry going in the future.

"It's really quite good," he said. "It gives them an opportunity to showcase what piques their interest in the Ag industry and where their focus is. Obviously, for a person who has been farming all their life, like myself, it's really kind of neat to see these young kids with some of the ideas they have and where they think agriculture is going."

"It builds on everything that's happening around the Ag sector here in the province when you look at value-added, new technology, and everything. It's quite a circle right now and it's pretty dynamic and interesting to be around right now. It's always good to know what the younger generation is thinking."

Agriculture Programs and Services

Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture regional specialists are located at offices around the province.

Specialists offer advice and support on:

- All livestock, crops, agri-environmental and range management practices; and
- A wide range of programs that fit your agricultural operation's needs.

Contact the Agriculture Knowledge Centre (AKC) and a resource agent can connect you with the nearest specialist.



Thank you to the agriculture industry for your resilience throughout 2020.

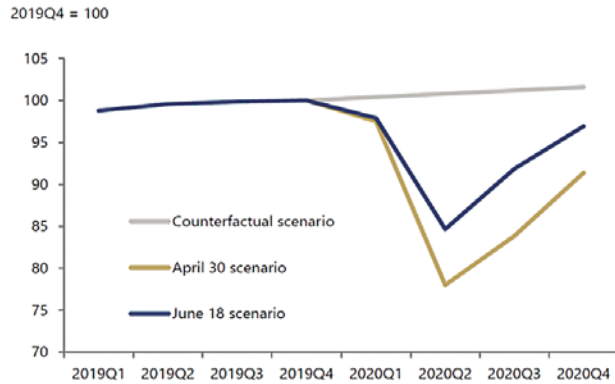
Saskatchewan produced the second-largest crop on record and the province remains a leading agri-food exporter in Canada.

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Email address: aginfo@agr.gov.sk.ca
Website: saskatchewan.ca/agriculture
Farm Stress Line: 1-800-667-4442

Saskatchewan 

A wrap of the decade that was 2020 (July to December)

Level of real GDP under PBO economic scenarios



A glimmer of hope for a V-type economic rebound

BY MARTHA ROBERTS
FARM CREDIT CANADA

The first half of 2020 was nothing but a once-a-century seismic shock. By July, across all Canadian ag, food and agribusiness sectors, we knew “the new normal” was simply code for much that was abnormal. Nonetheless, news of COVID-19 faded somewhat as crop progress and meat processing dominated headlines in July and August. News of successful vaccine development spurred hope everywhere. September and October also held much promise, despite mounting evidence of COVID-19’s return. November was filled with uncertainty following the U.S. election, while December’s rising commodity prices pointed to a much-needed recovery.

July

The Parliamentary Budget Officer’s (PBO) update of its COVID-19 economic scenarios suggested the 2020 recession would be deep (Figure 1). However, by July, Canada’s economy was on a better track than many had assumed it would be a couple of months prior. However, two fiscal indicators stood out. The budget deficit for 2020-21 was projected at 11.8% of GDP, well above the 1984-85 record peak of 8.0%. And the federal debt-to-GDP ratio was projected at 44.4% at the end of the 2020-21 fiscal year, the highest in almost 20 years. It would take several more months to realize these mid-year estimates were too optimistic. The Bank of Canada

held its benchmark interest rate steady at 0.25, indicating inflation would likely be below the 2% target for the next two years.

On the bright side, CUSMA went into force July 1, helping ease any worries about the health of North American supply chains. The powerful agreement outlined challenges facing supply-managed sectors. Simultaneously, it enhanced trade stability (among other benefits) with a partner accounting for over 55% of Canadian agriculture and agri-food exports and nearly 50% of imports in 2019.

August

If the early summer months of June and July showed a break in the relentless stream of worrying news, August brought even better news. Major weather events in the U.S. reduced expectations of the 20-21 marketing year’s crop size for both corn and soybeans. Better prices and an excellent harvest would do wonders for growth in Canadian producers’ crop receipts for 2020. Data for the second quarter had already shown an increase in those receipts.

The beef packing plants that had closed in spring and early summer were once again running at full capacity, their return prompting McDonalds to resume purchases of Canadian beef. And while the weakened CAD had helped boost exports to China and the U.S. in the early days of the pandemic, the loonie’s growing strength relative to a declining USD (Figure 2) throughout the

summer boded well for importers of food, equipment, and inputs. Such strength didn’t show up everywhere. The CAD continued to decline against the Euro, with Canada enjoying a competitive edge against European exporters to China.

September

More good news arrived in September. Hog prices surged after the discovery of African Swine Flu in Germany. Elsewhere, expected Canadian production was estimated to be higher for most crops than previous es-

timates—and in the case of wheat, the 2020 harvest was forecast to be the second-largest on record.

Production growth pushed expected revenues up for canola, dry peas, lentils, durum and spring wheat. Corn and soybean futures continued to trend up, as did estimates of their Canadian prices. U.S. export commitments to China in 2020-21, if adhered to, would be four times the actual volume of exports between the two superpowers in 2019-20.

Continued on page 20

FOR SALE BY TENDER

Sealed, written tenders to purchase the property in the Municipalities of BRENDA-WASKADA and GRASSLAND and described below will be received by:
Meighen Haddad LLP • P.O. Box 485 • Deloraine, MB • ROM OMO
Attention: Warren G. Barber, Q.C.

Municipality of Brenda-Waskada

PARCEL ONE: SW ¼ 16-2-24 WPM 160.00 acres	PARCEL SIX: NE ¼ 4-2-25 WPM 157.23 acres 7 well sites
PARCEL TWO: NW ¼ 3-2-25 WPM 157.28 acres 6 well sites	PARCEL SEVEN: SE ¼ 9-2-25 WPM 156.66 acres 5 well sites
PARCEL THREE: SE ¼ 4-2-25 WPM 154.09 acres 5 well sites	PARCEL EIGHT: SW ¼ 9-2-25 WPM 156.83 acres 10 well sites
PARCEL FOUR: SW ¼ 4-2-25 WPM 140.41 acres 6 well sites	PARCEL NINE: NE ¼ 9-2-25 WPM 160.00 acres 6 well sites
PARCEL FIVE: NW ¼ 4-2-25 WPM 157.35 acres 9 well sites	

Municipality of Grassland

PARCEL ONE: NW ¼ 9-6-23 WPM This parcel includes: • 159.08 acres • 4 x 42,000 bu flat bottom bins • 2 x 25,000 bu hopper bottom bins • 4 x 6,500 bu hopper bottom bins ABOVE BINS ALL WITH AERATION • 1 x 6,500 bu flat bottom bin • 1 x 5,000 bu flat bottom bin • 1 x 4,350 bu flat bottom bin • 54' x 200' shop with heated cement floor, new lighting system (installed May/20), three phase 600 volt power, municipal water, natural gas service to the yard site	PARCEL TWO: NE ¼ 9-6-23 WPM 143.21 acres
	PARCEL THREE: SW ¼ 9-6-23 WPM 160.00 acres
	PARCEL FOUR: SE ¼ 9-6-23 WPM 156.93 acres
	PARCEL FIVE: SW ¼ 20-5-23 WPM 157.70 acres
	PARCEL SIX: NW ¼ 20-5-23 WPM 160.00 acres
	PARCEL SEVEN: NW ¼ 30-5-23 WPM 158.17 acres
	PARCEL EIGHT: SW ¼ 30-5-23 WPM 158.51 acres

CONDITIONS OF TENDER

- Interested parties must rely on their own inspection and knowledge of the property and not on any representations made by or on behalf of the Seller.
- Tenders must be received on or before noon on February 16, 2021.
- Each tender must be accompanied by a \$5,000.00 deposit cheque payable to Meighen Haddad LLP. Deposits accompanying unacceptable bids will be refunded.
- Tenders may be submitted on one or more parcels.
- Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.
- Acres shown are taken from the most recent Provincial Tax Assessment records and are believed but not guaranteed to be accurate.
- Properties in the Municipality of Brenda-Waskada will be sold subject to all existing encumbrances registered with respect to surface leases, easements and rights-of-way relating to oil production and transportation.
- All properties will be sold subject to existing caveats and instruments protecting easements or rights of way for public utilities or services.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE

- The bidder whose tender is accepted will be required to complete an agreement covering terms and conditions of sale.
- In addition to the deposit, the balance of the accepted tender must be paid within 30 days of notification of acceptance of tender (the closing date) or evidence provided that the purchaser funds will be available under conditions acceptable to the Seller. If the balance of the accepted tender is not paid within the set time limit the deposit paid may be forfeited as liquidated damages and not as a penalty.
- Possession is not authorized until acceptable arrangements for full payment are made following acceptance of tender.
- All mines and minerals will be reserved from any transfer.
- Successful bidders will be responsible for real property taxes commencing January 1st, 2021.

For further information, particulars of Surface Lease revenues, or an appointment to view, contact: Murray Temple at (204) 522.6597.



1-2c

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The seventh annual Dakota Holloway Memorial Hockey Tournament couldn't take place in Wapella this year due to Covid-19 restrictions, but the organizers still wanted to award a scholarship in Dakota's name. Allan Holloway awarded the \$500 scholarship to Ashley Holloway, Dakota's cousin, on December 28 at the Wapella rink.

Dakota Holloway scholarship awarded

BY ROB PAUL
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Every year at the Wapella rink there's a hockey tournament held in honour of Dakota Holloway. Holloway died at the age of 20, but his memory lives on through the tournament.



Dakota Holloway

This year was supposed to be the seventh annual Dakota Holloway Memorial Hockey Tournament, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the tournament wasn't able to happen.

Usually it's a two-day tournament consisting of eight teams playing three-on-three hockey with a pancake breakfast on the Saturday morning and a roast beef dinner on the Saturday night, as well as a silent auction and shoot-out calcutta.

The tournament raises funds for a \$500 scholarship in Holloway's name and the rest of the proceeds go towards the Wapella rink.

The scholarship goes annually to a Wapella resident attending post-secondary school.

Previous years' tournaments have raised at least \$6,500 and as much as \$9,300—spots in the tournament fill up quickly every year due to its popularity in the community. The previous six years of

the tournament have combined to raise over \$40,000. A plaque within the rink honouring Holloway reads, "funds donated from the tournament have been dedicated to improvements to the rink, where Dakota spent countless hours playing hockey with his friends and family. Missed dearly and never forgotten..."

Holloway was known for his passion for hockey, and his family says he spent all his free time at the rink, that's why it's the focus of keeping his memory alive.

"The fundraiser is an important part of remembering Dakota's passion for hockey and keeping the community connected," said Allan Holloway.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic leading to the cancellation of the hockey tournament, the organizers still wanted to award the scholarship in Dakota's name this year.

"Obviously we weren't able to do the tournament because of Covid restrictions, but it was important for us to still give a scholarship out," said Holloway.

On December 28, Allan Holloway awarded the \$500 scholarship to Ashley Holloway, Dakota's cousin.

"It's nice to be able to award the scholarship to a member of the family this year," said Holloway. "We're hoping to increase the scholarship to \$1,000 in the coming years."

Holloway's sister, Afton Crumly, is one of the organizers and she was pleased they were still able to go forward with the scholarship even if there's no tournament this year.

"We usually have a little bit of money we keep for startup costs each year so we still had some of that left over," said Crumly.

"So we were unsure if we'd be sitting on it next year or be able to have another tournament so we just decided that since we'd still have money to start up next year then we might as well still hand

out the scholarship and have enough money for next year as well if we're still unable to hold a tournament. We still wanted to keep it known and talked about."

Getting to see the scholarship go to a member of the family is something Crumly thinks Dakota would be happy to see.

"It's very cool that it's going to a family member," said Crumly. "Ashley's older brother Riley was really good friends with one of our brothers so our families have always been really close. We just let the school randomly pick a scholarship winner each year so it was a really big surprise to everybody when they picked Ashley. It kind of touched everybody's hearts a little bit because Dakota knew her very well and I think he would be quite happy that she was the one who got it this year."

The Covid-19 restrictions stopped the tournament from happening this year, but the organizers are hopeful it will return as soon as possible.

"Brandon Munro is the one who came up with the idea and he's totally like, 'we can't do this year, but we'll be ready to go for next year.' You always worry with these things that it might die off and

people won't remember," we wanted to make sure said Crumly. "That's why we did the scholarship."



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Strong future seen for potash in area

World-Spectator and Plain & Valley editor Kevin Weedmark recently interviewed Larry Long, Senior VP of Potash Operations with of Nutrien, about the future of the potash industry in the area:

What does Nutrien see as the long-term role of Nutrien Rocanville within the company?

Rocanville is a very important part of the potash business unit. Obviously it's our largest operation, one of the largest potash mines in the world. Our major customer out of Rocanville is not exclusively the U.S., but a lot of the product goes down into the U.S. They purchase close to 50 per cent of our production.

How has that changed over the years? Has it become a larger percentage?

Yes it has. When I was a GM in Rocanville, it was towards the end of the expansion. They were still one of our bigger sites, but not to the level they are now. But during the expansion we increased the capacity. It has probably close to almost doubled. It's around 5.2 million tonnes. So it was quite a significant increase in production.

And why was that done? What's the difference with Rocanville and some of the other sites that they made that massive investment at Rocanville specifically?

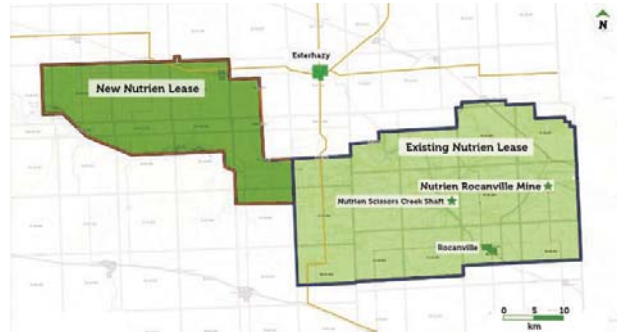
We'll we did invest at all of our sites. It's just that the ore body, the part of the Potash basin in the Esterhazy/Rocanville area doesn't have clay seams in it. Our operations are very productive there, and I don't think it's any different in Esterhazy, because the clay seams and the geology is more favorable in that region of the potash basin in Saskatchewan. It's more mining friendly underground.

The project which added the shaft at Scissors Creek added a lot to Rocanville's capacity. Are there any other major projects or upgrades planned for the next few years?

Yes, not immediately, but we're always looking and doing long-term planning. And Rocanville is still a significant part of that. We're always looking at our future mining plan. In regards to the lease that we signed with North Atlantic Potash, that was a Crown lease, we purchased it for them. So that will extend Rocanville to the west.

So how did that come about? Was that a long-term negotiation?

It's a Crown lease but North Atlantic Potash had staked that lease, so it was theirs. Internally the business decided that they weren't going to develop it. We negotiated



In May, Nutrien acquired a new lease of more than 243 square kilometers for the very long term expansion of Nutrien Rocanville.

to purchase it from them and the Crown approved it. That took a while to do. That adds decades of production to Rocanville.

How long-term is Nutrien looking with that purchase? Is that something that will be developed a decade or two or three into the future?

Yes, I would say a decade to two decades roughly. In our normal course of operations we have what we call our production panels, but then we also have our development. And development is always where we cut our main travelways and our underground belt access, and those are parallel tunnels that we're cutting.

And then from that what we do is, we start roughly perpendicular to those main entries into the new area. Then we cut perpendicular travelways, and then off those we start cutting our production panels.

We kind of categorize it as developmental cutting and production cutting. But there's the primary development, where you're putting your main access in your main beltlines into a new area. Then you kind of turn off that—it's not always 90 degrees but Rocanville for the most part is 90 degrees—and then you develop your belt lines and travelways into the new areas. Then you start cutting panels off that which are perpendicular to that secondary main travelway.

It takes a few years to do that. Most of our mining right now is mainly in that area between Scissors Creek and the original mine site of Rocanville, and we're cutting to the west towards Scissors Creek. Eventually after that we'll start developing out further west to take advantage of that new lease that we have purchased.

So what will the long-term plan be? Would there be at some point another shaft developed within the current lease area? Or would the next shaft to be developed be up in that new lease area west of Esterhazy?

We haven't decided that, but that will be one of the options. We haven't decided at this point yet on what to do. We still have to do all that planning and look at the economics. Distance does become an issue from the mill at a point, and even the service shaft where you lower employees into the underground and materials and stuff like that—distance from that will become an issue. That's at least a decade before we make a decision on what to do there. We've got a lot of production ahead of us as we're cutting west towards Scissors Creek from Rocanville.

How many years worth of potash production would there be in the current lease area?

There's 30 years-plus of production in the current lease area. We're pushing the west but we're also going to the south and we still have some production to the north of the lease. So that would be 30 years-plus. By that time we'll have developed into the new area and that production will just roll into the new lease that we've purchased.

I know new mines are being developed in some countries that maybe have lower costs than Canada. What does Nutrien see as the long-term outlook for potash production in Saskatchewan?

Obviously the bulk of the production is between us and Mosaic and K&S—the heavier solution mine and I know there are a few smaller projects that are looking at

directional drilling-type solution mining.

The ore body in Saskatchewan is vast, so there is decades and decades and decades of production ahead of us underground, and then the ore bodies, after they can't be mined underground anymore, they'll probably switch to solution mining.

My children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren will probably have opportunities to be involved in the potash industry in Saskatchewan.

This is a world-class ore body. In my career I worked all over Canada, and I've worked in both hard rock and soft rock. This ore body is the biggest potash deposit in the world. You have the advantage that you're in the middle of the continent, so you don't have all those tectonic issues with faulting. So the ore body is very conducive to high productivity mining like we do and Mosaic does as well.

Saskatchewan will probably benefit from 100-plus years of potash mining ahead of it. At some point it will probably stop being underground mining and be more solution mining, but that's in the far distant future. That's kind of when you'll be cleaning up some of the more challenging areas to mine.

The ore body in general—like at Rocanville as an example, and it's a general trend within the entire ore body—as it goes south it gets deeper. So that's more or less why K&S Bethune and Mosaic Belle Plaine are solution mines because the ore body is getting deeper and it's more challenging to use mechanized mining.

What are the advantages of Saskatchewan for the mining industry? And what are the challenges the industry faces in terms of investing here as opposed to other jurisdictions?

We have a great workforce. We have skilled people, such as the trades, we have universities that are putting out engineers and geologists and chemists and chemical engineers, accountants, and all those skill-sets—everyone that we need to run our business. So the universities are important, the trade schools are important, to have all those trades available to us.

From the standpoint of the supply chain, I've worked at remote mine sites, in Bafin Island and at the Ekati diamond mine outside of Yellowknife, and the fact that here in Saskatchewan we can call up a fabricator or a service provider or supplier in Saskatoon and they can hotshot a truck out to one of our minesites or fabricate something for us within a couple of weeks, that is a huge advantage in Saskatchewan.

Continued on page 21

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There are school children in Saskatchewan who simply do not have a winter coat. The Knights of Columbus Coats for Kids Program aims to fix this problem.

Many children throughout Saskatchewan go without a coat each winter. Low-income families use their scarce resources to meet the most basic needs and cannot always afford this vital winter necessity.

Ten years ago, the Knights of Columbus recognized the needs of children living in poverty and that's why the Knights of Columbus developed the Coats for Kids Program, which allows local councils the opportunity to put their faith into action and purchase new winter coats for children in need in their communities.

As the weather started to get cold, the Esterhazy Knights of Columbus Council heated up their commitment to their community with free winter coat distributions for deserving children.

Left: Members of the Esterhazy Knights of Columbus Council #5249 Lorne Schentag, left, and Don Halyk, right, donate children's coats to the Esterhazy preschool. In center is Parent Education Program Co-ordinator Jasmine Kerr accepting the donation.

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Kipling outdoor rink is a silver lining



Above: A drone shot taken by Mathew Bonville of the Kipling outdoor rink at night. This is the second year of the rink, but the first year that Alan Batters added goal creases, red and blue lines and face off circles. The rink stand on the spot of the old Kipling hospital.

Above: Alan Batters, President and CEO of Gee Bee Construction, sitting on the zamboni that also carries the memorial photo of his son who sadly died of brain cancer at age 11.

By VICTOR VAN DER MERWE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Looking at the drone picture of the outdoor rink in Kipling, it is clear that Alan Batters put a lot of care into the construction of it. The large oval is even sporting regulation rink markings with the goal creases, red and blue lines and the face off circles of the highest quality.

Practice makes perfect because this is the second winter Batters has gifted the town with an outdoor rink for all to enjoy. The first time he did it was for last year's Winter Carnival.

"They were looking for an outdoor rink and they approached me because I had this property across from my house. We did the rink last year and the feedback was

great. A lot of families were out there on Christmas eve, so we thought we would do it again this year," said Batters.

Last year there was no pandemic and people had more options for outdoor and indoor activities. This year is a bit different, so Batters stepped up and made this year's rink even more of an attraction for the residents of Kipling.

"This year we are doing a bit bigger and bit better. We actually put the lines in and goal creases and we added more lights and more fire pits and benches just to accommodate more people and to do it safely with all the Covid-19 restrictions and just get people out side," said Batters.

The location of the rink is where the former Kipling hospital used to be.

"There is a little bit of sentimental value to that land. That land used to be the Kipling hospital. My son died of brain cancer on Christmas day in 2013. He was only 11. He was born in that hospital and sadly passed away in that hospital. So, when they tore it down, I said that I would like to buy (the land) if it ever comes up for sale. I purchased it. It is a nice park area, it is right in the middle

of town, it has trees. So there is nothing better than putting a rink there for kids to enjoy it. It is a little silver lining," said Batters.

The outdoor rink will also alleviate some of the pressure of the town's indoor rink to accommodate people during a pandemic.

"Kipling has a rink, but especially this year with Covid-19, there are limited hours," said Batters.

Now that the rink is built, all that is needed is for the weather to co-operate.

"You can have lots of kids that would not normally go to the rink that are out skating. It is very informal. You can't have any organized events, you can't say you are having a hockey game. It is just an open thing for the public the lights are on 24/7. Last new year's eve we had people out there past midnight."

Any good rink needs a proper zamboni to keep the ice smooth and safe for those who want to skate on it. Again, Batters stepped up and got one for the rink.

"I bought a zamboni. It has my son's memorial photo on it, so whenever the zamboni is on the ice, he is on the ice," said Batters.

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Left: Ashley Johnston with the World-Spectator, left, presenting the grand prize to Kim Setrum, right.



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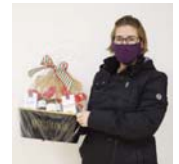
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Peter Nabholz Circle Skate Way a new addition in Moosomin for the winter

On December 14, Moosomin Fire Chief Rob Hanson began flooding for the Peter Nabholz Circle Skate Way in Moosomin. The skate way is 500 yards around Bradley Park and is open for public skating this winter.



An aerial view of the skate way above.



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Rocanville cross-country trails are open this winter

BY ROB PAUL

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Winter has arrived and with it comes snow and although this holiday season won't be full of festivities like in a normal year, there are still activities for people to take advantage of with their families.

The Rocanville Cross-Country Ski Club has been around for decades and it's gearing up for another ski season by prepping the trails, it's a popular spot for those who loves the outdoors and has been called a hidden gem.

"We started out as a group clearing trails," said McFarlane. "It actually started in 1991 as a group clearing trails and over time, I guess I was prominent in setting up a non-profit corporation, so there's Rocanville Cross-Country Ski Club Inc.

"We have memberships, we're registered through Sask Ski and our insurance coverage is all covered through them, so we pay \$15 a member towards Sask Ski and that provides us liability insurance.

"We're also eligible for grants through Sask Ski based on memberships. Probably the most members we've ever had was about three or four years ago when snow conditions were really good and we got up to about 120 members.

"We have a sign-in book on a volunteer basis and normally it's \$5 to go on the trail and it's another \$5 if you want to rent equipment—we've got a lot of our equipment from Fresh Air Experience. But three or four years ago there was about 1,200 people that had signed in the book.

"There's a little box at the front of the club house where you pay and sign-in so we can keep track of how many people are using the trails. There's lots of routes through the trails and if you do the entire thing it's about nine kilometres.

"It's mostly people from the local area, lots of people from Moosomin and Rocanville. It's primarily people from our region that come out. Even last year with poorer weather conditions, we had 70 memberships and a little over 500 people that signed into our book."

With the Covid-19 pandemic impacting everything these days, McFarlane says the ski club has taken the proper precautions to ensure the safety of everybody who wants to use their trails this winter.

"Originally we said no more than four people in the club house at a time because that's where all the rental equipment is," he said. "As a result of recent announcements, we've said only one family at a time to keep it to one bubble at a time.

"With rental skis and equipment people used to bring them back into the club house to put them back, but now we're just going to have a ski return outside the club house and they will stay there overnight. For boot return, we have another box that will be inside and Dennis Hack—who lives across the road—is going to come spray the boots every morning and put them back in their place.



The Rocanville cross-country ski trails are located just south of Rocanville and a mile west of Highway 4.

If we got a good snow and it was really busy then I think we'd have to do it more often so we'd come twice a day to spray."

Without many recreation options right now, McFarlane thinks the Rocanville cross-country ski trails are perfect for those looking for a Covid-19 safe way of getting out-

side and exercising.

"The activity itself should be really conducive to our Covid environment right now," he said. "You get to be out in the fresh air and you're doing your own thing. Cross-country skiing is a little bit like riding a bike, the person you're with is either going too fast or too slow."

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In Esterhazy:

Outdoor skating rink and skating path open

BY ROB PAUL
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

At their meeting in December, Esterhazy Town Council applauded the work that has been done to set up an outdoor rink and skating path in the community. Both the rink and skate path are now open for public use.

"Councillor (Vern) Petracek came into the town office with the idea," said Acting Administrator Mike Thorley. "His idea was to look at expanding our outdoor recreation with the regulations going on for indoors. He said we should look into opening up an additional spot outdoors and we said right away it was a great plan."

"Then it expanded even further to actually have a skating path run through our regional park parking lot and campground area. We have lights in the regional park too, so we're excited about that. It should be a really interesting spot for people to go for a skate to enjoy them-



The Town of Esterhazy has opened a skating path (left) and outdoor rink (right) for public use this holiday season to provide residents with recreation options due to increased indoor restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

selves. We're also going to have wood out there because the campground

area has established fire pits, so hopefully we can have some fires out there



through the winter time." The council is excited that residents will be able

to take advantage of the outdoor fun in Esterhazy this winter. Although the

circumstances around how the outdoor rink and skating path came to be were due to pandemic restrictions, the council thinks it could develop into something that continues past this year.

"It's a huge positive," said Thorley. "There's so many other communities embracing expanding outside recreation because you can do a little bit more with the regulations. It will also allow us to close our rink down over the holidays and know that people have another outlet."

"We have great cross country ski trails that the club will organize, we have the sliding hill that comes through our valley, and we have the walking trail through the valley. We need to encourage people to do things and this is an encouragement to come out and skate or wander around through the area too. I think what it will be is a growth for many communities, this was a negative that has turned into a positive."

Manitoba beginning to roll out vaccination plan

BY ROB PAUL
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

To protect vulnerable Manitobans who are at greatest risk from Covid-19, Manitoba will launch a 28-day campaign

to immunize all eligible personal care home (PCH) residents in 135 sites across the province with the first dose of the vaccine, Premier Brian Pallister announced the week of Jan. 4. "This is the next cru-

cial phase in our plan to protect Manitobans from Covid-19," said Pallister. "We have built a plan to immunize some of our most vulnerable people as quickly as possible, now that we can bring the vac-

cine to them safely. By early March, every eligible resident will have received both doses and the fullest protection we can provide against this virus."

The PCH immunization campaign began on Monday, Jan. 11. Over the week, focused immunization teams (FITs) will visit seven locations in every regional health authority across the province.

They will immunize an estimated 1,157 people at Boyne Lodge, Carman, Southern Health-Santé Sud, Charleswood Care Centre, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Hillcrest Place, Brandon, Prairie Mountain Health,

Oakview Place, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, St. Paul's Residence, The Pas, Northern Health Region, Tudor House, Selkirk, Interlake Eastern Regional Health Authority, Tuxedo Villa, and Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

As announced in December, the prioritization of PCHs uses an evidence-based approach to measure the vulnerability of the site, based on the number of residents as well as the percentage of shared beds. Within each regional health authority, the local FIT will prioritize facilities for immunization based on these criteria. The FITs will follow all protocols for per-

sonal protective equipment while on-site.

The province has developed a week-by-week plan to immunize an estimated 9,834 people living in PCHs across the province. They will receive their first dose of vaccine within 28 days of the campaign launch, as long as the vaccine continues to be delivered to Manitoba by the federal government as expected. The schedule will then be immediately repeated to provide the second dose to all PCH residents. Immunizations are expected to use the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.

Next week, the immunization schedule for all remaining PCHs will be released. It will reflect any lessons learned from the first week of immunizations and significantly expand the number of immunizations scheduled on a weekly basis.

All eligible residents and personal care homes will be included in the campaign if they consent to be immunized. The vaccine will be offered at all sites, regardless of whether the PCH has had an outbreak, is having an outbreak or has never had an outbreak of Covid-19. Individuals in personal care homes will be offered the vaccine even if they have previously tested positive for Covid-19, as long as they do not have any other medical conditions that would exclude them from immunization.

Continued on Page 20



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2020 was a year of challenges for the Ag industry

BY ROB PAUL
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

There are plenty of uncontrollable factors those in the Ag industry must deal with every year, from weather to unpredictable market trends. This year brought more than anybody could have expected with the Covid-19 pandemic hitting Canada in March.

APAS VP Ian Boxall says the pandemic's impact on the Saskatchewan Ag industry was yet another roadblock in a year full of them.

"I think 2020 has had lots of challenges for the Ag industry," said Boxall. "I think as we start every year—let's go back to January 2020—we saw some market disruption early on in the new year with some trade issues that Canada was having. We also saw some transportation issues, like we always see in the winter in this country."

"As things progressed into the spring and Covid came in, I think there was quite a bit of uncertainty on the onset of Covid around access to inputs to get the crop in the ground. As it warmed up and farmers got out into the field, I think many had a very tough start to the year this year."

"There was a lot of crop left out after the wet fall of 2019 so it was pretty tough to start in the spring—with that crop being left out there, there was also a lot of money left out in the fields still. I think we saw some producers have some cashflow issues because of that."

"When you have all that money tied up and sitting out in the field and you haven't been able to harvest it, that leads to producers in the province having some cashflow



APAS VP Ian Boxall.

issues—which is expected when you have that much crop left out. I think the growing season went very well, people got the crop in and there were some dry areas, but I think most of the province ended up with some pretty average crop."

Although grain producers didn't go unscathed, Boxall thinks the effect Covid-19 has had on the livestock sector has been major and will likely have a lasting impact as Canada comes through the pandemic.

"It definitely had a huge impact on the livestock sector," he said. "We saw huge issues within the supply chain for livestock with slaughtering plants and processing plants for beef and pigs. They were really hit hard with Covid, it didn't so much hit the grain side, but I know the livestock sector was really hurt here."

"They were hit really hard and I think they still might be feeling some of that, even now. It has affected their bottom line, that's for sure. I think probably horticulture and livestock are the two sectors probably hit hardest in Saskatchewan and Canada because of Covid."

Something Boxall is hopeful for as 2021 is set to begin is increased help for the Ag industry through more flexible support programs. With the impact Covid-19 has had on the sector and agriculture being the backbone of Canada, he thinks both the provincial and federal government need to make aiding producers a priority.

"I think the grain sector had a pretty good year," he said. "We didn't see huge yields, but I think we saw some pretty average yields across the province. Let's hope that this vaccine gets rolled out and we don't have any supply chain issues in the livestock sector in 2021."

"As a producer and someone involved in Ag policy, I'm curious to see what the province is going to say on the whole BRM and AgriStability shortly, I thought it would be announced by now, but maybe it won't be until the New Year."

"I'm interested to see what happens with that and what the federal government has proposed with it being retroactive to 2020, I hope there's some support there for the livestock producers that have been hit so hard."

As the Covid-19 vaccine begins to be accessible to the general public, Boxall sees agriculture as the key sector that will help get Canada back on track after the pandemic.

"The federal government has put some new money on the table in AgriStability," he said. "We're waiting to see if the provinces will sign on to that, that will help some producers. Is AgriStability the appropriate BRM program? I think lots of people would argue not."

"I think it could be rejiggered for the 2023 framework, that would be a more implementable and adaptable program. It would adapt a little more to some of the circumstances we've seen over the last framework. We saw some major trade issues and some erosion in some markets where it's still been trigger payments."

"With some of that, I'm hoping that maybe some new programs are written for the 2023 framework that would work better. But in saying that, I think agriculture in this province and this country will be a driving factor to get the economy back on track once we do have Covid in check."

"There's always positives and I think that's one producers should be proud of and I think governments, both provincially and federally, will be looking at agriculture to drive us out of this downturn we're seeing."

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A wrap of the decade that was 2020 (July to December)

Continued from page 9

Some news was mixed or pointed to uncertain outcomes. For instance, although global economic output recovered swiftly after the first shock caused by the pandemic, it had lost momentum shortly after.

The 2019 FCC Farmland Values Report published in April had shown a decline in farmland's affordability—2019's growth in farm income hadn't kept pace with the growth in land values. While the first six months of 2020 didn't reveal much impact from COVID-19 on land values, the second half may. The low and falling commodity prices we saw during the early months of the pandemic may have weakened farmland demand between January and June. But higher prices and crop revenues in the second half, along with the low interest rates COVID-19 has produced, should increase demand for the rest of the year.

October

Sure enough, the good news of the summer waned in October when, as expected, COVID-19 cases gained momentum. While the ag and food supply chains had proven remarkably resilient in the first nine months, we started to again watch some of the most critical trends and factors to understand their re-emerging impacts on those chains:

Changes to both production and consumption of animal proteins

Measures implemented in packing plants to control the spread of COVID

The macroeconomy, including GDP and unemployment

Analysis conducted this month showed the year's growth in Canadian ag and food exports between January and September had done little to alleviate concerns about the effectiveness of CETA, Canada's trade agreement with the EU. Those concerns still exist. Instead, our exports' gains had been largely attributed to challenging EU weather, biodiesel demand and a weaker CAD compared to the Euro—not the trade agreement.

But there was still good news. Western Canadian grain harvest was exceptionally



Above: % change in CAD exchange rates since January 1 shows growing strength against USD; declines against the Euro.

quick this year, leading to strong producer deliveries to meet robust demand. Simultaneously, the USDA's quarterly grain stocks report lowered stock estimates for corn, soybeans and wheat, pushing futures prices up again. U.S. hog prices were strong in October, with optimism growing around U.S. exports to China.

And the business sentiment that was strong in January, but that had fallen dramatically since showed improvement (Figure 3). In October, it was still negative but climbing.

November

The month ushered in a hugely anticipated U.S. presidential election that read a lot like a high schooler's play about treason, corruption, and U.S. pluck. Now in the middle of December, we're still not sure how its results will play out for Canadian agriculture, food manufacturers and agri-business in the years ahead. Trade

relations, especially with China, are arguably the #1 issue to watch with a new U.S. administration.

November's other major trade news was also significant for Canadian exporters. First, fifteen Asia-Pacific economies signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. The deal ensures greater competition from Australia for Canada's beef and grains exports once it comes into effect. On the upside, Canada and the United Kingdom reached an interim post-Brexit trade agreement. Extending the terms of CETA, 98% of Canadian products exported to the UK will remain tariff free.

Finally, the ag sector was spared some of the worst business outcomes of COVID-19 during the fall months. For one thing, Canada's backlog of fed cattle was down by roughly 50,000 head between June and October, boosted by an even faster decline in the U.S. And new StatsCan / AAFC pric-

ing forecasted revenues for some of the largest grains and oilseeds crops in 2020 to increase year over year by almost two billion dollars – a rather astonishing 7.5% gain.

December

Local and global supply chains were both robust and fragile this year. For example, the strength in demand from China and production concerns in Europe, the Black Sea region and South America led to higher grain, oilseed and pulse prices. Canola futures neared \$600 per tonne in mid-December, a sharp contrast from the 2020 low of \$446 recorded in February. U.S. soybean futures flirted with US\$12 per bushel at the beginning of the month, quite different than the US\$8.22 recorded in mid-March. U.S. corn futures at the beginning of the month were 30% higher than in April. Cattle prices remain below their 5-year average, but hog prices have rebounded from the summer lows.

Most of these economic signals point to a recovery. But although we're ending an incredibly difficult year, we're not through the challenges that shaped so much of it. Three forces – the geopolitical tensions, negative weather events induced by climate change and the deadly global virus – that exposed risks for agri-food supply chains in 2020 will return in 2021. We'll dig into these three in our first two posts in January.

So, as vaccine approvals climb globally amid strengthening hope for eased lockdowns, we'd like to take a moment to acknowledge Canadian ag, food and agri-business. We've survived, and some have thrived in, a year of devastating losses, unmitigated uncertainty, and a persistently murky vision of the horizon ahead. That success is due to nothing other than the strength and resilience of the industries we at Farm Credit Canada serve. To all, a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Martha is a Research Specialist with a focus on economic performance and success factors for agricultural producers and agri-businesses.

Manitoba beginning to roll out vaccination plan

Continued from Page 18

The province has been working with the long-term care sector to prepare for the campaign since the middle of December. When required, this includes seeking consent from alternate decision

makers for immunization. Individuals working at these facilities will continue to be immunized at the RBC Convention Centre super site with the Pfizer vaccine, to preserve the more limited supply of Moderna.

With the limited supply of the Covid-19 vaccine, Manitoba has set criteria for those eligible to be immunized at this time. Only individuals who meet the criteria of the eligibility list are able to call and make an appointment for immunization.

Eligibility criteria currently include health-care workers whose work involves direct contact with patients and who meet at least one of the following criteria: Work in critical care units (intensive care units only, no age restrictions), work in long-term care facilities (born on or before December 31, 1975), work in acute care facilities (born on or before Decem-

ber 31, 1975), assigned to a Covid-19 immunization clinic or designated Covid-19 testing site (no age restrictions), work in a laboratory handling Covid-19 specimens (no age restrictions) and may include some individuals who do not have direct contact with patients, based on their role, work on a designated Covid-19 hospital ward (no age restrictions), and work in provincial or federal correctional facilities (no age restrictions).

The Manitoba government will use daily Covid-19 vaccine bulletins to inform health-care workers and other Manitobans when they become eligible to be immunized, based

on vaccine supply.

Manitoba is taking a measured approach to provide vaccinations quickly and safely to designated priority populations, based on medical advice from provincial public health officials and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization. The key limiting factor now is vaccine supply acquired by the federal government, as supplies are expected to be limited until April 2021 across Canada.

During the month of January, Manitoba expects to be provided enough vaccine to provide approximately 10,000 immunizations per week. To

support more residents of Manitoba who will need to book an immunization appointment in the coming months, a new online system will be launched in early 2021.

To date, Manitoba has received a total of 22,230 doses of the Pfizer vaccine, as of Thursday morning 6,026 residents of Manitoba had received a first dose immunization—302 people have received their second dose. Manitoba expects approximately two per cent of its population to be vaccinated by the end of January and four per cent by the end of February.



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The Wapella Memorial Arena is a natural ice arena. Money from the Community Rink Affordability Grant will be used for general operating costs such as salaries, utilities and facility maintenance.

Sask Community Rink Affordability Grant program returns

By VICTOR VAN DER MERWE
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Saskatchewan's provincial government has brought back the Community Rink Affordability Grant program (CRAG). The announcement by the Government of Saskatchewan fulfills a platform promise by the Saskatchewan Party during the 2020 provincial election to communities around the province, to provide funding for community-owned indoor skating and curling rinks.

"In reinstating the Community Rink Affordability Grant, we are helping communities keep ice rinks accessible and affordable across Saskatchewan. We are ensuring that when rinks and the activities held at them are safely reopened, they can continue to support the health and wellness of communities and contribute to local residents' quality of life," said Parks, Culture and Sport Minister Laura Ross.

The program will provide \$2,500 per year per indoor ice surface. This aims to help cover the costs of operating rinks in villages, towns and cities. First Nations, schools, and nonprofits are all eligible and encouraged to register for the grant. Like before, the grant may be used to offset the cost of rink operations and minor capital upgrades, but this year the grant can

also be used to outfit the facility with Covid-19 related expenditures. It is expected that more than 600 ice surfaces in nearly 400 communities will be eligible to receive this support.

"We are grateful to the Government of Saskatchewan for recognizing the escalating costs communities are facing in order to operate and maintain their rinks. These facilities are integral to the vitality and wellbeing of our communities, with this funding coming at a time when that has never been more necessary," said Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association President TJ Biemans.

Redvers

Alicia Stewart who serves as Recreation Director for the town of Redvers feels this grant will absolutely help in these times.

"All small rinks appreciate that. To hear that they are bringing it back is nice. It is not a huge amount of money, but every little bit helps towards everything we have to do," said Stewart.

In its previous incarnation the application process was simple.

"It was a quick application process where you told them how many ice surfaces you have and basically that was it," said Stewart.

Redvers has two indoor ice surfaces that could qual-

ify them for \$5,000.

"When they had it before, we would usually put a lot of it towards putting the ice in. This year I am not sure, I will have to see what is eligible, but it will get used for something," said Stewart.

In a year that saw regular revenue streams for the ice surfaces impacted by Covid-19 regulations, the money will come in handy. The grant can also be used alleviate cost like power bills.

"We were allowed to use it for our power bills. That is the biggest expense, because if you turn the plant on, the bills skyrocket, so that is what we will be using it for," said Stewart.

Getting the ice surfaces ready sometimes reaches up to \$7,000, the \$5,000.

"With the paint and everything you need it is around \$7,000. So, it won't cover it, but every little bit helps. It has always been great in the past and this year it will help a little more," said Stewart.

Moosomin

In Moosomin, Rec director Mike Schwan remembers when the program was introduced in the past.

"They used to do that about five or six years ago, and they ran it for two, maybe three years. A grant like this is always appreciated," said Schwan.

The winter power bill can be enormous, so a grant like

this will have its use.

"It certainly helps our cost. At our communiplex our power and energy costs are usually high so this type of thing certainly helps out especially in a Covid-19 year," said Schwan.

Moosomin having both a skating rink and curling rink, will be eligible for \$5,000.

"That will probably be used to offset the power bill. Our power bill can easily reach up to \$10,000 a month. It depends on the month, but it is expensive," said Schwan.

Rocanville

The town of Rocanville, only has the one indoor ice surface, that might qualify for the grant.

"We only have the one indoor surface. The curling rink could potentially benefit from this. It is not operating right now, but this may help the curling rink," said Rec Director Andrea Logan.

The town still needs to apply for the grant, but there are a few ideas of where to use the money.

"Right now I think it will probably just be used to operations, because this has been a weird year where we have not had many rentals coming in as we normally would," said Logan.

There is a chance that this grant might help get the curling rink open, but the decision needs to be made

by the rink board.

"If it is decided that this will help the curling to be opened, then that is what it will be used for," said Logan.

As of now, the money will likely go towards operations.

Wapella

Wapella just has one rink in town, and it is a little different from the other community rinks in the area.

"We just have the one. We don't have a curling rink, just the rink," said Tammy Skiba, administrator for the town of Wapella.

This makes the town of Wapella eligible for \$2,500 from the grant to help with operation costs.

"Right now it will probably go to help general operations. It is hard to say, with Covid-19," said Skiba.

Wapella's rink is a natural ice rink.

"We have natural ice. Basically it is a dirt floor rink and then what we do in the fall is we start to level it off and then flood it with a hose," said Skiba.

The building or shell that the rink sits in is not insulated so it stays cold as long as the weather co-operates.

"We still have power out there in terms of lights so, we do have extra bills and a care taker and other general expenses once winter comes," said Skiba.

Esterhazy

In the town of Esterhazy, Brenda Redman who serves as the town's rec director is also excited to apply for this grant.

"Esterhazy will be applying for this grant to help cover the operational expenses of both the Dana Antal Arena and The Esterhazy Curling Ring," said Redman.

With two indoor ice areas, the town will be eligible for \$5,000 from the grant. This will help during a time when indoor rink activities have been severely restricted.

"It will definitely go towards the rink, but I will have to see what we want to do with it," said Redman.

Wawota

Joel Carpenter who is president of the rink board in Wawota feels this grant will help with the power bill.

"We paid our power bill for last month and it was \$4,000. So, this is much appreciated. Every little bit helps this year for sure. There are a lot of expenses when it comes to the rink," said Carpenter.

Wawota is eligible for \$5,000 since they also have a curling rink in town.

Applications will be accepted until March 12, 2021.

Strong future seen for potash in area

Continued from page 11

It's one of the strongest supply chains I've worked with in my career in Canada. All my mining career has been in Canada, and I've worked in a few different places. The supply chain is a massive advantage for us.

Having the universities in Regina and in Saskatoon are a huge advantage to have access to those graduates in all the different skillsets—that's a huge advantage.

The people who run our operations, and the suppliers and service providers who keep us going—those are the big advantages I see in Saskatchewan—those two aspects.

Are there other ones? Yes, but I'd say from the standpoint of disadvantage, it would be great if we were closer to the ocean—either ocean—because we have to rail it across the country to get to a port to ship it to our overseas customers—South America, Asia. It would be nice if we were closer to the water, but we're not. We're really reliant on CN and CP to deliver our product to the ports.

We're always monitoring both federally and provincially the regulations and taxation issues. To

be honest with you, it can become challenging for us potentially. But we're always talking to the government and we're always interacting with those key stakeholders to remind them that we have to remain competitive because we're competing against the Russians and the Belarussians and some smaller organizations around the world. But our biggest competition really are the Russians and the Belarussians.

How is Saskatchewan positioned to compete right now?

We're in pretty good shape. They have some advantages from their cost structure. The ruble in Russia has devalued quite a bit, so that's an advantage for them. They're not under the same regulatory regime structure that we are in Western Europe and North America, whether it's environmental regulations or taxation. But we manage our way through those things. We have a good relationship with the government here in Saskatchewan and we maintain an open dialogue with them.

We're a company that exists partially to make profits and sure we'd love to have lower taxes, but at the

same time we're part of the community so we understand we have to bear our portion of taxation.

I think what helps us to compete against the Russians and Belarus is really our skillset with the people we have here in Saskatchewan and innovation and a drive to be the best, most efficient mining operations in the world.

We deal with some of those other issues I talked about. Does it make it challenging? Is it maybe a disadvantage for us? I don't know if I'd would want to call it a disadvantage, but we have to work hard to make sure that we can compete. And we are competing. A lot of it is due to the efforts that our folks put in to help keep us competitive.

People sometimes underestimate the value of having universities in your area. For us as employers it's great to have access to those people from the universities. They drive a lot of the innovation that goes on within our business and that's critical.

We have to always be innovating, we have to always be looking at ways to drive our cost down.

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Asessippi Ski Resort open for the winter

BY ROB PAUL
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

There aren't many options for fun this winter with heightened Covid-19 protocols in place until at least mid-January. One option to take advantage of over the winter is the Asessippi Ski Area and Resort just north of Russell, Manitoba.

Asessippi will be open to the public after implementing health and safety protocol and spending the last few months making changes to ensure the safety of those looking to have a good time out in the snow. The resort has 26 runs, three lifts, and two terrain parks for skiing and snowboarding as well as a downhill snow tubing park.

With the hope of providing people with a getaway from the pandemic in a safe manner, Asessippi Assistant GM Shannon Johnston says the resort staff focussed on meeting all protocols and opening in time for the Christmas holidays.

"We opened the Saturday morning of December 19," said Johnston. "Obviously with public health orders in place with an emphasis on everyone's safety and security, we're following a lot of different protocols and guidelines. Basically everyone needs to know that face coverings are required in all lift-lines, loading and unloading chairs, and in the building when they're allowed in the building. We're going with, if you arrive together then you can ride together on the chair lifts. If we have single riders, we're not going to force them to ride with others, they can ride up on their own."

"Currently the building—the lodge itself—is only open for people to use the washrooms, to access the seasonal lockers or a day locker, to get their lift tickets, and to get rentals—as well as to pick up takeout. We do have our gift store open in its own area with its own entrance way with essential items. We've also moved online as much as we possibly can for this year, so we have online apps and stores to purchase the food to pick up and we're encouraging people to eat in their vehicles, for now."

"We'll also be doing online orders for tickets and rentals—we're going to pre-set everybody's rental



Manitoba's Asessippi Ski Area and Resort is open with Covid-19 protocols in place.

als so they're going to be designated a time slot or they can pick a time slot for arrival. That's just to minimize the numbers in rentals to make it as smooth and as quick in and out as possible. With tickets as well, we've built a bunch of self-serve kiosks—there will be some inside and some outside—and upon ordering online, they'll receive an e-mail confirmation that has a barcode and they can use that any of the kiosks to scan and it will print their day ticket.

"For season pass holders, we have a little bit of different protocol for them. We've been communicating with them just to make sure they're filling out the online waiver first and uploading a photo instead of having people do it on site. We're just asking that they scan their season pass daily when they're here, partly we're doing it for contact tracing—that's not something we have to do but we're trying to do our part—as well as to keep track of our numbers. We are requiring everyone right now to sign in—season pass holders are going to have to contact us before arrival to let us know that they're coming, as well as the online sales. We're going to monitor numbers, we just don't want to have too many people out here that we can't handle the crowds."



Asessippi Ski Resort in Manitoba opened to the public December 19 with new Covid-19 protocols in place.

It's been tireless work for Johnston and the resort staff preparing to open this winter. One of the biggest pieces of becoming as safe as possible was making the transition to relying on online sales for food and rentals rather than having unnecessary human interaction.

"We've put hours and hours into rebuilding all

of our policy, procedures, and protocols," she said. "Our staff are doing daily screenings, we've got increased sanitization and logs, we've bought a lot of equipment and we've moved as much as we possibly can online. Moving online has been good because we've always wanted to do it and this just forced us to move that timeline up

a little bit quicker.

"We've had to revamp entire departments and our staff has just been incredible. They're taking it and running with it and they're excited, we're all excited to be able to open. We're happy we can get people out to ski and snowboard because there's not a whole lot going on and we can offer sort of a break from the everyday and give people a little mental rest and allow them to enjoy some exercise—obviously at a big distance."

It's been months of work leading up to the opening, but Johnston says they've been lucky to have great guidance and a large area to help make a smooth transition. Of course, nothing has been predictable during the pandemic so the resort has multiple contingency plans in place if they need to make changes.

"I think 80 per cent of what I've been doing since I got back in August has been working on the guidelines, moving the protocols ahead, retraining, and coming up with ideas on how we're going to move forward based on the health orders and having many contingency plans based on how we're told we must operate," she said. "It's been a lot of hours, there's probably been about nine and 12 core staff that have been working really hard on that. We have the Can-

ada West Ski Areas Association that we work with and they've been incredible to work with, helping us build guidelines—they have national guidelines for ski areas in the west so we all have a template to work with."

"Our public health inspector has also been fantastic to work with, we've been asking her questions and seeing how certain things can work. We're really lucky here, we have a huge building—I think we have over 30,000 square feet—so there's a lot of room to maneuver and make changes. The biggest thing that took the most amount of time was moving everything to online and making it as easy and simple as possible for people, and it's ongoing. We're still rushing around trying to get stuff prepped and done."

A key part of the changes at Asessippi is ensuring resort goers are informed of all the protocols. To help with that, Johnston says they'll have more staff around and will be speaking with people as soon as they arrive to the resort to confirm they're aware of the new procedures and protocols in place.

"We're going to be having a lot more guest services people on site trained to greet people before they even get out of their cars in the parking lot to make sure they're aware of all the protocols and pre-purchased their passes and to answer any questions, to direct them, make sure they know about face coverings, and all that sort of stuff," she said. "I hope we're communicating the changes as best we can and we're trying to make sure that we're making it as safe as possible by following all the orders."

"We've put a continually changing document up on the website as a sort of 'know before you go' and we've recently posted videos on our social media regarding the overall information that they need to know and more will be coming out that will be more specific too—hey, so you bought a ticket online? Here's how that works."

"We've sent e-mails to every season pass holder to explain the new protocols to them and we've had lots of phone calls and given lots of updates to make sure everybody is as informed as possible before coming."

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Governments of Canada and Manitoba to help agri-processors and industry service providers

BY ROB PAUL

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The governments of Canada and Manitoba will be providing support to agri-processors and industry service providers to expand their market presence, federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau and Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development Minister Blaine Pedersen announced last week.

Through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership Market Development stream, the governments of Canada and Manitoba will be providing up to \$149,215 for 11 projects to improve their marketing activities that increase innovation and business capacity to expand or maintain existing market presence.

"Through this investment, we are supporting a range of agriculture and agri-food projects to grow farm and food-processing businesses," said Bibeau. "We continue to support farmers and food processors as they take advantage of new market opportunities here and around the world and respond to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic."

"Manitoba's small businesses have made many sacrifices to protect the health and safety of their employees and all Manitobans throughout the Covid-19 pandemic," said Pedersen. "This funding will help these businesses to be innovative and increase their market presence helping our economy recover."

Danny's Whole Hog, one of the funding recipients, began more than 25 years ago with the designing and building of its whole hog barbecues. Funding from the Market Development stream will help Danny's Whole Hog Inc. create frozen, ready-to-eat meats and meals that can be purchased through its website at www.dannyswholehog.ca.

"By working together with the province and our local community we were able to think outside the box to come up with new initiatives such as our frozen meals and direct delivery service," said Danny Kleinsasser, owner of Danny's Whole Hog Inc. "The Covid-19 pandemic has been hard on small businesses in Manitoba, so we appreciate the support."

Other approved recipients include:

- The Little Red Barn Inc.
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- 10210077 Saskatchewan Ltd.
- Buffalo Creek Mills (2017) Inc.
- HealthStraw Sales Corp.
- Little Brown Jug Brewing Company Ltd.
- Wolseyley Kombucha Inc.
- Hylife Foods.
- Hey, Ma!
- River Valley Specialty Farms, Inc.

Applications for the next intake will begin April 1, 2021 with the deadline being 11:59 p.m. CST on April 30, 2021—once an application has been made, the applicant will receive a decision notification letter. Government support cannot exceed 50 per cent of eligible expenses, to a maximum of \$20,000 per year—projects must be a minimum of \$3,000.

Agri-food and agri-product processors and abattoirs involved in value-added activities to produce or package agri-products for market are eligible to apply as well as industry service providers including auction marts, assembly yards, feed mills, food distributors, licensed commercial kitchens, and livestock transporters.

Application guides can be found for for agri-processors in the Ag Action Manitoba Program- Agri-Processors Guidebook (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/canadian-agricultural-partnership/pubs/guidebook/ag-action-mb-program-guide-for-agri-processors.pdf>) and for industry service providers in the Ag Action Manitoba Program- Industry Service Providers Guidebook (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/canadian-agricultural-partnership/pubs/guidebook/ag-action-mb-program-guide-for-risp.pdf>).

For projects over \$1 million, email the program administrator at agaction@gov.mb.ca to discuss the project prior

to applying to confirm eligibility and to determine if there are other services Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development can provide to facilitate the success of your project. Once the appropriate application form is completed, email the completed form and supporting documentation to agaction@gov.mb.ca.

All eligible projects must occur in Manitoba and include:

- Market research.
- Market access training.
- Trade show opportunities.
- Product development.
- Scale-up production.
- Labelling and packaging.
- Sensory and self life studies.

Projects will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Project description
- Project deliverables and outcomes.
- Alignment with Manitoba government objectives such as: the creation of new jobs or increased payroll value creation of new jobs or increased payroll value, incremental increases in processing value and volume, increased use of Manitoba agri-inputs, production that displaces goods imported from outside Canada increased exports outside Manitoba, increased value or volume of production of animal proteins, plant-based proteins or dairy, compliance with provincial and municipal wastewater regulations.
- Capital and financial capacity.
- Management capacity.
- Production capacity.
- Market plan.

Successful applicants may be required to enter into a contribution agreement with the Manitoba government before any funding is provided. The agreement lists the right and responsibilities of all parties with respect to government funding. Submitted invoices must be from applicants to be eligible for funding—reports and itemized receipts or other acceptable proof of payments will be required to make a claim.

The Canadian Agricultural Partnership is a five-year (2018-2023), \$3 billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen the agriculture and agri-food sector with:

- Simplified and streamlined programs and services

that are easier to access.

- Improvements to programs that help producers manage significant risks that threaten the viability of their farm and are beyond their capacity to manage.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments are also continuing to work towards bilateral agreements. This investment will be cost-shared on a 60:40 basis and delivered by provinces and territories to ensure programs are tailored to meet regional needs.

The five-year, \$3-billion Canadian Agricultural Partnership includes \$2 billion for cost-shared strategic initiatives delivered by the provinces and territories and \$1 billion for federal programs and services.

Other federally funded programs in key areas as part of the Canadian Agricultural Partnership include:

- Growing trade and expanding markets: AgriCompetitiveness and AgriMarketing Program.
- Innovative and sustainable growth in the sector: AgriInnovate Program and AgriScience Program.
- Supporting diversity and a dynamic evolving sector: AgriDiversity Program and AgriAssurance Program



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SPRING 2021 SALE SCHEDULE

- JANUARY 2021 -

18	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
20	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
25	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
27	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
29	Friday	Bred Cow Sale	11:30 a.m.

- FEBRUARY 2021 -

1	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
3	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
8	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
10	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
15	CLOSED	Louis Riel Day	
17	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale	9 a.m.
19	Friday	Bred Cow Sale	11:30 a.m.
22	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
24	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.

- MARCH 2021 -

1	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
3	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
4	Thursday	Sheep/Goat Sale	Noon
8	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
10	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale	9 a.m.
12	Friday	Bred Cow Sale	11:30 a.m.
14	Sunday	Rebels of the West Simmental Bull Sale	11:30 a.m.
15	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
17	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.
22	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
24	Wednesday	Regular Feeder Sale	9 a.m.
29	Monday	Butcher Sale	9 a.m.
31	Wednesday	Presort Feeder Sale	10 a.m.

Monday Butcher Sales
 Delivery accepted 12 noon until 8 p.m. Sunday.

Presort Sales
 Please consign your calves ahead of time.
 Delivery accepted until 5 p.m. the day before the sale

Bred Cow Sales
 Please consign your cows ahead of time.
 Delivery accepted until 2 p.m. the day before the sale.

Regular Cow Sales
 Delivery accepted Tuesday 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Sunday delivery between noon and 8 p.m. for Monday Butcher Sales.
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Broadview's Kurtis Fafard found his passion for photography through storms

BY ROB PAUL

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
People spend their whole lives taking pictures of things they find beauty in, whether it be family and friends, buildings, nature, or any of the millions of other things the world offers, but how many people really focus on strengthening their skills with photography.

Broadview's Kurtis Fafard has always loved being outside, especially when a storm is brewing, and wanting to capture the beauty in those storms led him to photography. From there, he honed his skills through classes and hours on the road snapping thousands of shots hoping for the perfect photo.

It's been over two years since Fafard first picked up a camera and dove into the world of photography and though he might not admit it, he's taken some beautiful pictures in the "Land of the Living Skies." Fafard spends as much of his free time as he can focussed on photography and even has a website (<https://www.706photos.com>) featuring some of his best work.

"Well, it was probably my interest in storms actually that got me started in my photography journey," said Fafard. "My memory is pretty poor so I figured if I was going to watch storms I might as well take pictures of them or else I'd never remember them!"

Fafard's interest in storms led him to photography and in December 2018 he began taking classes and that's when his journey really started coming together.

"I wouldn't necessarily call it a career at this point, but it's a seriously fun hobby—I put a pile of effort into it, but it doesn't pay the bills! I took a couple in-person courses from Greg Johnson, the tornado hunter, and then I actually signed up for all these online courses through cameraeasy.com," he said. "That was kind of the thing that really pushed me, it made everything a lot simpler and it was easy after that. I kind of had that 'aha' moment and everything just sort of clicked. Before that, I could get my way around a point and shoot camera pretty easily, but I really hadn't given much thought about a DSLR or any real professional grade camera until that point. That was when the bug bit me and it's kind of been a whirlwind ever since. Taking photos sort of felt like the natural thing to start doing if I was going to be watching storms anyway."

His lifelong passion for storms started as a boy growing up watching them with his father, and from there it continued to bloom.

"The storms have always been an interest of mine," he said. "When I was young we moved to Broadview and anytime a storm would roll through—we actually had a carport on the side of the garage—my dad and I would go sit outside and we'd watch the lightning and the storms come through and if we were at the lake we'd get to watch it come down Crooked Lake towards the cabin. There's something calming or peaceful about them, I've just always loved them."

After taking the online classes it became second nature to Fafard as he continued to put his free time towards developing his new found infatuation with photography in hopes he'd continue to get better and better.

"It's really been an everyday thing," he said. "I try to get out there and shoot ev-



Broadview's Kurtis Fafard found time to dive into photography when the pandemic hit Canada in early 2020 (photos taken by Fafard).



ery day and it might not be a picture with my big camera, but I try to take pictures of something everyday to try and stay sharp. I put more time into it than I probably should! I probably put two to three hours into it a day—I spend most nights out in my garage on the computer either editing photos or looking at them, updating stuff, or ordering for someone. Any time I can get away from work in the after-hours to do this, I make time to do it."

Curiosity is key when it comes to photography, says Fafard, but more than anything it's about the drive to get better every day by putting the work in and always be willing to learn.

"Something that makes a great photographer is to be stubborn," he said. "Never give up on trying to get the shot that you've got pictured in your head. It never works out the way that you want it to the first time, but you just have to keep going out and trying to get that shot you've envisioned because you're going to learn a pile of stuff on the way. You've got to be



an eternal student, you always have to be learning and willing to listen to people as well as take criticism on the path to trying to improve every day—you have to be humble. My wife gives me grief quite a bit because I'm too critical of myself! I think that's a really important thing, to always try and improve. The other thing is just get out there and take pictures, if you have a 10 per cent success rate out of all the pictures you take then you're doing something right—I'm probably around three per cent of all the pictures I take that I actually use!"

When a storm comes around, most people head inside, but Fafard gets his camera and hits the road and he thinks his desire to chase storms was the next step for someone who loves storms the way he does.

"I absolutely love being out there with the storms rolling in and the lightning, and if you're lucky maybe a tornado! They're few and far between! I can't explain it, people always ask me why I'm running towards the storm, but it's just something

I've found fascinating my whole life—the power that nature has. Growing up on the prairies too, our lives are pretty much consumed by weather and so I think it's something that grew from that. There's nothing like being out there and getting the shot and being happy with that image once you've got it on the computer, it's incredible."

Storm chasing isn't as easy as checking the weather and heading out, Fafard explains, it's about staying plugged in, planning ahead, and hoping for some luck when hitting the road, it also helps that there's a community that has taught him a lot the last few months.

"I actually pay quite a bit of attention to the radars and the models coming through and I pretty much obsessively check them," he said. "You know a few days ahead of time so you can see what's coming and then that morning or evening you keep checking and start to game plan where you're going to go and try to guess where the weather's going to be—I'm usually about two hours off! But it's getting easier every day! The storm chase community that I had no idea existed has just been fantastic with helping me and teaching me all kinds of stuff. It's been really awesome. There are people I looked up to that I never thought in my wildest dreams I'd meet or call friends, it's been crazy. There's been so many cool people I've met through both the photography and storm chasing, there are so many fantastic people out there."

Taking the step to follow his dream wasn't something Fafard necessarily thought he'd have time to do, but when the Covid-19 pandemic hit Canada in early 2020 he finally had time to dive in and nurture his talent.

"Honestly I wouldn't be doing this if not for Covid," he said. "The the thing that really got me to do this was those online courses and because of Covid there wasn't a ton of stuff to do with my free time this year and so it was kind of a now or never thing. I wanted to do it, it's always something I've loved the idea of doing, but it's never been something I thought I'd actually put the time and the effort into with my kids, hockey, work, and everything else. It was always one of those things, a pipe dream. This year with Covid, I didn't really have any outstanding demands on my time or anything so I just decided to go for it. It's definitely going to be a lifelong thing now unfortunately! I think I've opened up a whole new money pit! It's been fantastic during this and it's just about the best outlet because you're by yourself in a vehicle in the middle of nowhere! It really helped pass the summer, my youngest boy came out with me a few times and he's getting into it and really liking it. I don't know how many hours we spent this summer chasing storms—from the Alberta border all the way up past Yorkton, everywhere and anywhere we could go."

Fafard's humility is obvious and he won't spend much time sitting back on what he's accomplished already, he's always looking ahead and ensuring his growth with photography and storm chasing continue.

"My main goal is to be the best I can be and try to be better than I was yesterday," he said. "It's all about just getting out there, I'm never going to get better if I'm sitting on my couch. I've had more bust days than I care to think about, but it's all about getting out there."

Freeze up report shows various moisture conditions across Sask

The Water Security Agency (WSA) released its 2020 Conditions at Freeze-Up report, showing a mixed picture for moisture conditions across the province entering winter. In combination with the winter snowpack, this forecast becomes the initial conditions for the spring snowmelt runoff.

Most agricultural areas of the province entered the winter drier than normal, particularly the area east of Gravelbourg and south of Yorkton where severe dry conditions exist. Exceptions are areas in the extreme southwest and northern portions of the grain belt where conditions at freeze-up were near normal.

While most larger water supply reservoirs in the south

have adequate supplies, surface water users who rely on smaller reservoirs or dugouts have been impacted by the dry conditions. This includes both diminished supplies and quality.

Over northern areas of the province, well above normal rainfall in late spring and throughout the summer has resulted in conditions at freeze-up that are wetter than normal. This is particularly true for the Churchill River Basin where flows at the end of October were at or near record levels for this time of year. Winter flows within northern areas are expected to remain above normal throughout the winter. Wet conditions in the north will increase the risk of above normal runoff in spring

2021.

Compared to the south where conditions at freeze-up were much drier, the infiltration capacity of the soils and storage capacity within wetland areas will be higher, reducing the risk of above normal runoff come spring. Over these southern areas, above normal snowfall would likely be needed to result in sufficient runoff to replenish surface water supplies in spring 2021.

Current long-range forecasts and climate indices suggest above normal precipitation and below normal temperature over the winter months.

WSA will release their initial Spring Runoff Outlook in early February.

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What to consider for next steps in growth or diversification

BY TREVOR BACQUE

There comes a time in farm operations when the conversation to expand or diversify the business comes up. The inevitable questions commonly include how, when and, most importantly, why?

But what does a farm CEO need to consider before answering these questions? Asking an advisor like Mark Verwey, BDO's partner and national agriculture leader in Portage la Prairie, Man., would be a good start. He's been advising farm clients for more than 25 years on everything from estate and succession planning to tax planning and wealth management.

Involve your financial institution

From Verwey's perspective, one of the first considerations is to have your financial house in order, since a growth or diversification phase is often a capital-intensive proposition.

"It's important to meet with your financial institution well in advance of any decision, to try and arrange pre-authorized financing," he says. "This will allow you to move quickly should an opportunity arise."

A lender will examine the strength of your operation before approving additional financing, so be prepared to talk about three ratios: debt-to-equity, debt-servicing and working capital.

Build a solid business plan

Similarly, diversifying may be a great decision, but don't go in blind. Verwey suggests farmers have a solid business plan to cover key areas such as production, labour, technical expertise and marketing opportunities.

"You must avoid going into a project that you love without having the technical expertise nor potential to make it profitable. That's what you call a hobby," he says. "Bottom line is that acting from the heart can be dangerous without the proper financial analysis."

Flexibility is key

Operations aside, the pandemic of 2020 was a fluid situation, and farmers had to consider many factors that could impact their business model.

"COVID-19 has exemplified how uncertain farming can be, the need to be financially aware of your operations and the need to be prepared for these uncertain times ahead," Verwey says. He adds that Canada's farmers always face challenges, including recent

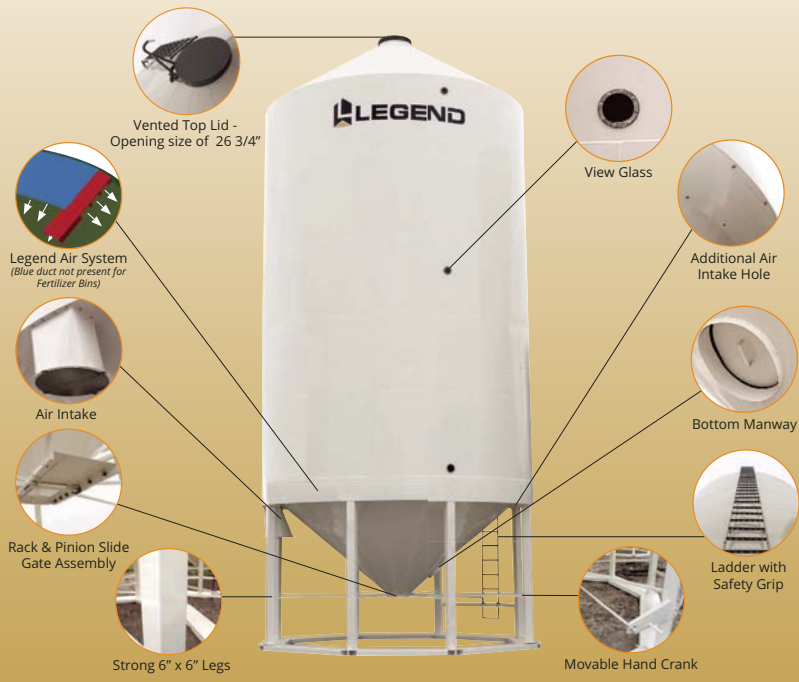


geopolitical issues with China, price fluctuation, weather and farm subsidies.

Feeling stuck at the starting line? Check out our March 2019 story about Beverly Greenhouses, one of Ontario's largest commercial cucumber operations run by brothers Jan and Dale VanderHout. One of many ways they diversify is through energy, generating baseload electricity for internal use and recycling heat to keep the greenhouses at optimum temperature. Diversification may be easier than you think.

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Renewed funding for the Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship Program

BY ROB PAUL
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan are announcing \$200,000 in renewed funding for the Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship Program (Next Gen), a Saskatchewan initiative delivered by Canadian Western Agribition (CWA). The funding will take the program into 2023, allowing for two additional cycles of mentorship matches.

The objective of the program is to develop young leaders and prepare them to take on active roles in industry leadership, governance and efforts to build public trust. The program does this by pairing each successful applicant with an established member of the agriculture industry.

It serves as part of the Ministry of Agriculture's effort to increase engagement between experienced professionals and the next generation of industry leaders. This renewed funding will allow 16 new mentees to enter the program over the next two years.

"Canada's young agricultural professionals and producers are key to the future success of our sector," said federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Marie-Claude Bibeau.

"Our government is working hard to ensure our youth have access to the necessary training and opportunities that will allow them to develop their skills to become leaders

in the agriculture industry. By ensuring they are equipped for the future, we can build a stronger, more prosperous agriculture industry in Saskatchewan and across the country."

"This year, eight applicants will be selected and paired with a mentor for an 18-month mentorship experience beginning in February 2021. Applicants should have clear developmental goals and exhibit strong leadership potential. More information about the program is available online at www.saskatchewan.ca/CAP.

"It's exciting to watch the Next Gen Agriculture Mentorship program grow as it has over the last two years," CWA President Chris Lees said. "To see what the mentees are getting out of the program and the connections they're making is something CWA is proud to be a part of."

Next Gen is funded through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, a five-year, \$388 million investment in strategic initiatives for Saskatchewan agriculture by the federal and provincial governments.

"The agriculture sector is an important driver of economic activity in our province," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "This program offers mentees new opportunities for knowledge sharing and network expansion while ensuring they have the resources they need to contribute to our thriving industry."



Ogema's Codie Nagy is an alum of the Ag Mentorship Program, he was recently elected to the SaskCanola Board.

The mentorship program gives young people involved in the Ag industry an opportunity to learn and develop their ability from a governance perspective as well as helps them create relationships with those already in the industry says Marit.

"We've been doing the mentorship program for a couple years now and it's in partnership with the Canadian Western Agribition," said Marit. "They kind of administer and house the program and so we just signed a two-

would go to conferences and sort of work things out and learn about the process that way. A great example of one is the SaskCanola council had elections for board members just last month and one of the young folks that was in the mentorship program—Codie Nagy from Ogema—actually got elected to the board.

"It helps them so they're not going onto these boards and commissions not knowing what it's like and what their role is," Marit said. "It really helps them to become a better board member and give them the experience that other professional people have had. The nice thing about it is that it's really a one-to-one so they learn from very smart people who have been involved in Ag policy and governance. It's important that we hear the young folks and their ideas around Ag and it trains these young people to really get engaged in the whole Ag policy and governance structure. This is something that I've never had and we're trying to develop that next generation."

Codie Nagy stumbled onto the mentorship program and it's been a huge help to him developing his professional career and he credits it to being elected to the SaskCanola board. He says it allowed him to get in-depth knowledge on Ag governance helped him network with the most experienced members of the industry.

"I just found it on the internet when I was googling mentorship programs in Saskatchewan when I came across it," said Nagy. "I was part of the first cohort, so that was around November of 2018. So I sent in an application on a whim hoping to hear something back and I got a phone call in February saying I'd been accepted."

"It was phenomenal. The amount of people you meet and get to interact with through a program like this is amazing. Before Covid caused the cancellation of the conferences, I was able to attend a fair amount of them and the amount of people I met through my mentor—Alanna Koch—was phenomenal. In my personal experience with the program, the networking capability is the biggest thing. The team does a great job rounding up the right mentors and pairing them up with the right mentees. So for me with Alanna, the biggest take-away was the amount of people she knows and the experience she has—she was able to unload some of that information onto me," he said.

"Getting elected to the SaskCanola Board was absolutely a byproduct of the mentorship program. It connected me with Alanna, whose husband is Gerry Hertz and he's a director for SaskCanola. Talking with him it kind of piqued my interest a little more and gave me the confidence to put my name out there."



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