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The Weekly
MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2024

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VOL. 35, NO. 16

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At participating McDonald's restaurants in Canada. © 2024 McDonald's

EDSON

Day Care Society's first Princess Superhero Party...
see page 4

VOLUNTEERS

FCSS hosts Volunteer Fair at Griffith Park Centre...
see page 3

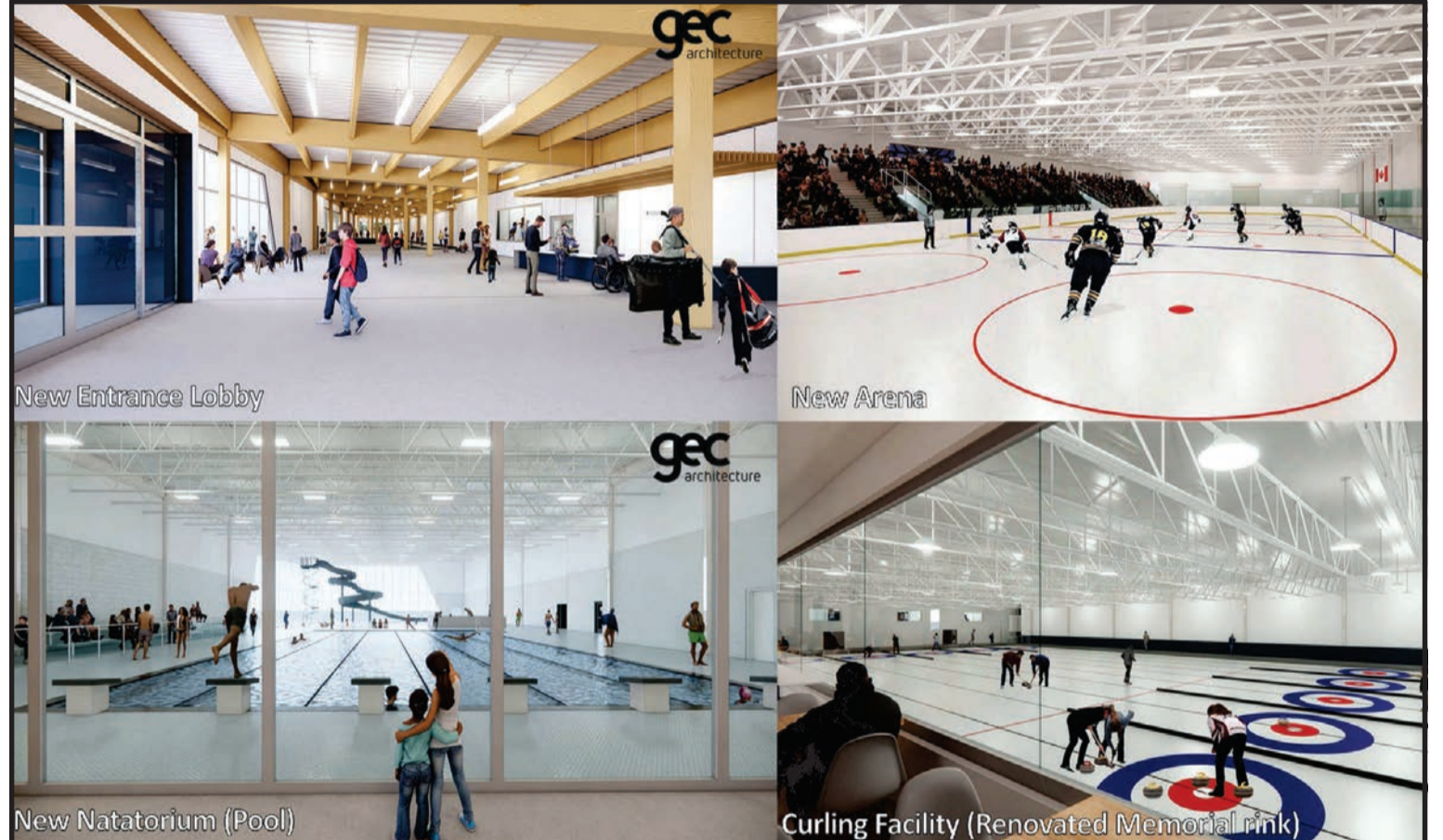
COMMENT

Prioritize mental health...
see page 6

Councils approve final design for YCE Multiplex

by Dana McArthur Council and the Yellowhead Project. The facility will include a new pool, new arena, new gymnasium, renovations to Centennial Arena, repurposing Memorial Arena to a curling facility, and inclusion of an elevated walking track in the gymnasium at an estimated cost

continued page 2



Local Councils approved the design for the Yellowhead County Edson (YCE) Multiplex Facility Project. It will include a new pool, new arena, new gymnasium, renovations to Centennial Arena, a curling facility, and an elevated walking track in the gymnasium. Council members from both municipalities thanked the Steering Committee and Administrations for their hard work making this happen, and their excitement to see 'shovels in the ground' soon. - (Concept Drawings).

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Councils approve design for YCE Multiplex

continued from front

of \$80.24 million.

The scope budget includes: Fees, management + OH \$8.46M; construction \$70.18M; off-site service Upgrades \$0.54M; and FFE allowance \$1.06M.

Funding for this project includes an Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) grant for \$20,000,000. The YCE Multiplex is a regional partnership with the project being cost-shared 50-50 between the Town of Edson and Yellowhead County. Each partner will contribute \$30,120,000, representing an increase of \$5,120,000 from our currently approved financial contribution of \$25,000,000.

Each Council directed the Steering Committee and their respective Administrations to proceed with phased tendering of the project.

Over the past several months, intensive planning has been done towards developing the design of the YCE Multiplex. Construction set to begin on the new recreation facility in Summer 2024.

This joint initiative between the Town of Edson and Yellowhead County is one step closer to becoming a regional staple, with schematic designs for the YCE Multiplex officially approved. With the innovative design given the thumbs-up, a four-phase construction plan is in the books and work is ready to begin this summer.

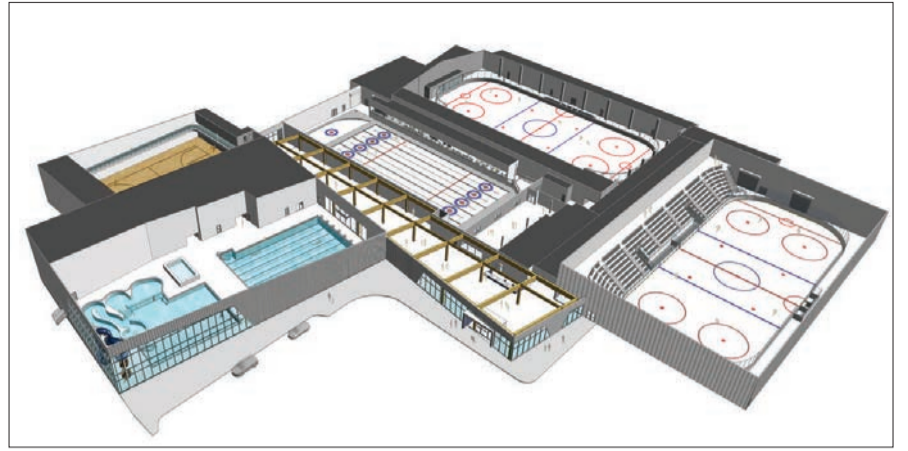
The initial phase of construction focuses on the continued use of the

existing Edson and District Leisure Centre – a unique step advocated by both municipalities.

During the County Council meeting, Crystal McNemie, General Manager of Community Services and a member of the Steering Committee, stated, "The intent behind the entire construction project is that services will be maintained. So the pool will remain operational until the new pool is online. Nothing will be shut down with the arenas until the new arena is online. Will there be impacts to use? There will be, we'll have temporary access points and so forth. But the intent throughout this entire project is to maintain operations."

Public parking and building access will be planned and managed during construction, working around existing amenities and various project activities. This will ensure residents' have access to recreational opportunities throughout the entire project, it stated in a joint release.

"Edson Town Council is excited to get to this stage of the project. We are no longer talking about it; we're actually doing it. This investment will make our region more desirable for those looking to move here, and will enhance the wellness of existing residents with expanded recreation opportunities. We thank Yellowhead County for being at the table as an equal partner in this regional facility," stated Mayor Kevin Zahara, Town of



Concept drawing of the YCE Multiplex.

Edson.

Phase 2 of the project will include the construction of a new ice arena and an aquatics area, including lane and leisure swimming, scheduled for completion in Spring 2026.

Phase 3 will incorporate the construction of a new lobby and a gymnasium that includes an elevated walking track and Phase 4 will see renovations to the current Centennial Arena and the conversion of the Memorial Arena to a new curling facility. The project is expected to be completed by Summer 2027.

"The new YCE Multiplex will be a fantastic space for year-round indoor

recreation for residents of all ages, from young families to seniors and every age in between. The upgrades and new amenities will be well-used, and it will be a facility that we can take pride in. We're happy we can give new life to this well-utilized centre in our community and the results show the benefit of being able to work in partnership with the Town of Edson towards this common goal. It will be a welcome addition for our residents and a draw to anyone moving to our region, now and for years to come," stated Mayor Wade Williams, Yellowhead County.

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Saturday

April 27

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Edson FCSS hosts Volunteer Fair Griffiths Park Centre



There were 15 different organizations registered for this year's Volunteer Fair (including the Edson Food Bank pictured above). The event was held at the Griffiths Park Centre on April 14. photos Niki Luymes

by Niki Luymes

Organizations from Edson and area gathered together for the Volunteer Fair on April 14.

Local not-for-profits, and clubs set up inside the Griffiths Park Centre from 1pm to 3pm to answer questions and recruit potential volunteers. This is an annual event helping connect residents with the community.

15 groups registered for this year's fair. This

included community staples such as the Girl Guides, Edson Community Watch, the Edson Youth Council, and Edson Food Bank. Other groups such as the Culture and Arts Network of Edson (CANOE), the Edson Community Care Foundation, and Yellowhead Woman Shelter also came out to the event.

Representative did their best to answer questions and many gave out pamphlets, cards, and free swag such as pens, magnets, and

more. Edson Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) hosted the event.

"We wanted to invite community agencies that are hoping to get and recruit more volunteers, to come and set up a table. They could showcase all their information and what a volunteer may look like at their organization," said Sarah McDonald, Supervisor for Edson FCSS. "And also invite the community out and learn about all the opportunities that are in our community. A lot of people don't know where to start. They might not know about all these great organization that we have."

The event had a slow but steady amount of people come though. "Getting people out to volunteer isn't always easy, but it's something that is needed in our community. Without volunteers we are nothing," added McDonald. If you are curious about volunteering, but missed the fair, you can find more info about community organizations on the town website, edson.ca/volunteer.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Wildwood Legion is looking for a Bar Steward to work in the Tavern. Please drop a resume off at the Legion Thursday - Saturday from 1:30pm - 5:00pm or email to rclbr149@gmail.com

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Day Care Society of Edson's first Princess Superhero Party

by Niki Luymes

It was a great day for some family fun at the Day Care Society of Edson's first annual Princess Superhero Party.

The event took place on Saturday, April 13 from 1pm to 4pm at the Galloway Museum. Tickets were required for this fundraiser event, but could be purchased at the door if required. Each ticket was \$20 per child, with parents getting in for free.

Doors to the event opened at 1pm. There were activities for kids to enjoy while they waited for the Princesses and Superheroes to arrive. In one area, attendees could decorate their own sword or wand. Snacks and refreshments like cookies, fruit, and juice were available. There were also small prizes for best kids costume.

By 1:30pm the characters made their big entrance. Local performer 'Once Upon a Princess' and Edmonton based group Cause-Players donated their time to the event. There were seven performers including Ariel, Elsa, Belle, Captain America, Spiderman, Spider-Woman, and Spider-Punk. As soon as they entered the room the kids went crazy with excitement. Lots of smiles, hugs, and photos ops ensued. Photos booths were placed around the room for people to use.

"We wanted to come up with something different, something that's geared for kids. I mean that's the field we're in. So what better event than this?" said Mary-Anne Bittner Manager with the Society. "It has gone better than expected. Ticket sales were slow, but we did end up selling about 50 tickets. This is awesome, this is what we wanted, for the kids to have a good time."

The event served as a fundraiser for the Day Care Society of Edson. The Society supervises not only the Edson Early Learning Childcare Centre, but also the Hinton Children's Learning Centre, and Whitecourt Early Learning Childcare Centre. They also recently upgraded their Edson location to better meet the needs of this community. "This is the first time that we've gotten together as a group and done a big function like this. We are hoping to make this an annual event. We want to start showcasing who we are," added Bittner

The money raised at this event will go directly into providing daycare services for the community. The Town of Edson and the Edson Kinnettes donated funds to help make this event possible. All of the society employees who came out donated their time to make the event happen. If you want to learn more, the Edson Early Learning Childcare Centre is having an open house on May 15 from 6 to 8.



The Day Care Society of Edson's Princess Superhero Party featured snacks, crafts and appearances by some favourite superheroes and Disney princesses. photos Niki Luymes



Woodlands/Carrot Creek
Cemetery

AGM

May 1, 2024

7:30pm

at the
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TOWN OF EDSON

Public Information & Notices 2024

**Town of Edson
Office Hours:
Monday to Friday
8am to 4pm
(Closed Stat Holidays)**

FIND US AT THE TRADESHOW THIS WEEKEND!
 April 26 from 12pm to 8pm
 April 27 from 10am to 4pm
 @ the Edson and District Leisure Centre

Edson Sani-Dump
 open April 26th

Edson's Sani-Dump will open for the season on April 26th, weather permitting. The main sani-dump station is located on 1st Avenue between 56th and 57th street, west of the RCMP building.

Town of Edson FCSS - Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

FREE TAX CLINIC

March 4th - April 30th
 Located at the Griffiths Park Centre (5414 6 Ave)

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday..... 9AM to 3PM
 Wednesday 11AM to 7PM
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To book an appointment, please email edsoncvtp@gmail.com or call 780-725-0582

Drop-in & drop-off taxes are welcome, but appointments will have priority.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Simple tax returns only (no business income, no capital gains, no depreciation and no death returns)
- Edson and area residents welcome
- Low income, seniors, students

Income Thresholds are as follows:
 1 person income \$35,000 or less
 2 person income \$45,000 or less
 3 person income is \$47,500 or less
 4 person income is \$50,000 or less
 5 person income is \$52,500 or less and increases by \$2,500 per individual per family thereafter

Hydrant Flushing

Hydrant flushing is underway starting in Glenwood and moving east.

If residents in area experience unclear water, please run cold water until the water clears.

If the water doesn't clear, please call Public Works at (780) 723-6461, Mon-Fri 7:30 am-4:00 pm.

After hours please call (780)723-6300 and ask to speak to a utility operator.

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NOTICE OF DEVELOPMENT

Recent Development Permits approved by the Development Authority, under the Town of Edson Land Use Bylaw 2070 as amended, can be found at <https://www.edson.ca/business/planning/development-permit-applications>. Additional information can be requested from the Planning Department at 780-723-4402 or planning@edson.ca.

Any person who is deemed to be affected by the issuance of any one of these permits may appeal to the Subdivision and Development Authority **by 4:00 p.m., on the 21st day after the date of issue as published on the Town's website.** On Permitted Uses, grounds for appeal must relate only to interpretation, variance, or relaxation of Land Use Bylaw 2070. On Discretionary Uses, all aspects of the proposed development may be challenged upon appeal. Written notice of appeal, accompanied by the appeal fee as established by Town Council, must be filed through the Office of the Secretary of the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board at Box 6300, Edson, AB T7E 1T7. **Direct Control District Approvals cannot be appealed.**



Guest OpEd/Comment

Prioritize Mental Health..

Our Moral Imperative: Prioritizing Mental Health in Today's Public Coverage and Tomorrow's National Universal Pharmacare.

by Dr. Diane McIntosh and Dr. Pierre Blier

A significant disparity around the accessibility of medicines for mental illness exists today, in Canada, a country celebrated for its fair and universal healthcare system. This inequity not only underscores a critical gap in our current healthcare model, but it also highlights the need for an improved mental health approach in all pan-Canadian initiatives, including future national universal pharmacare.

As past and present co-authors of Canadian Treatment Guidelines for Mood and Anxiety Disorders and steering committee members of Mood Disorders Society of Canada's "System Broken: How Public Drug Coverage is Failing Canadians with Mental Illness" report (www.accessmedication.mdsc.ca), we are deeply troubled by inequitable access to mental illness medications. This report examined Canada's public reimbursement review process for medications to treat mental illnesses that have been approved by Health Canada between 2012 and 2022 revealing substantial delays, a significantly higher rate of negative reimbursement recommendations for medications that treat mental illness compared to other illnesses, and an inequality of publicly funded medications across Canada's most populated provinces.

One in five Canadians experiencing a mental illness each year. From debilitating anxiety disorders to life-threatening depression, the burden of mental illness weighs heavily on individuals, with a tsunami of effects on families, workplaces, and the healthcare system. When the needs of people living with mental illness are overlooked or minimized, it perpetuates a cycle of suffering and economic loss, as untreated mental illnesses lead to increased healthcare costs and decreased productivity.

Despite the prevalence and the severe impact mental illness can have on individuals' lives, access to necessary medications remains a substantial challenge for many.

This obstacle is largely due to the variations in drug coverage across provincial health authorities and between those with and without private coverage, creating a patchwork of access that leaves many Canadians without the

essential treatments they need. The inconsistency in drug coverage exacerbates the challenges faced by those living with mental illness, contributing to prolonged suffering and, in many cases, preventing recovery.

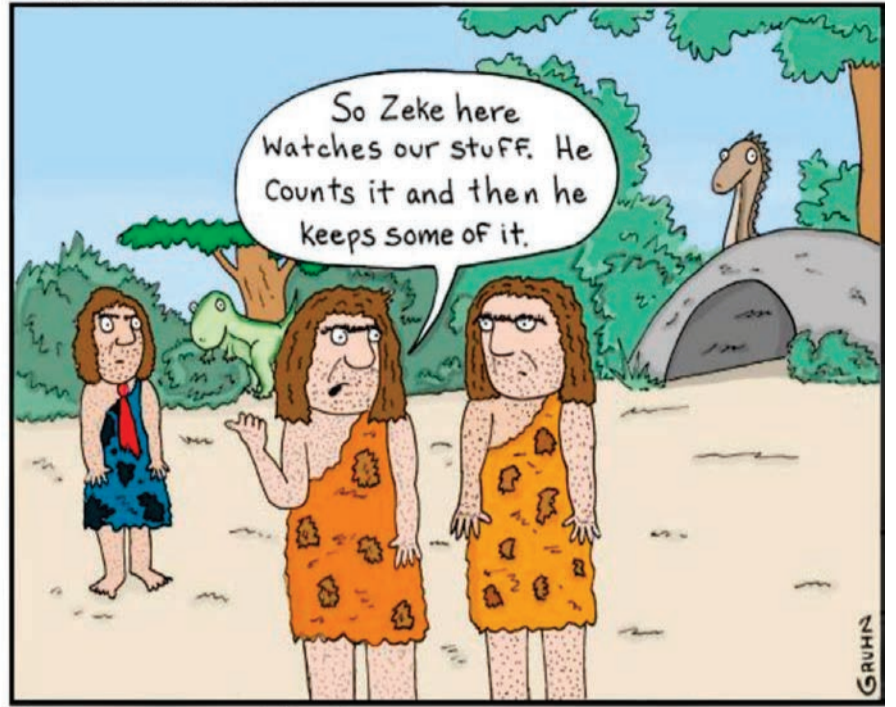
In February, The Honourable Mark Holland, Minister of Health said, "Each and every Canadian should have access to the prescription drugs they need." The first phase of the proposed National Universal Pharmacare legislation includes universal access to contraception and diabetes medications. Will the 1 in 5 Canadians currently living with mental illness continue to be marginalized and deprioritized in future phases? Mental health care and access to medications must be prioritized to address Canada's current mental healthcare crisis.

Psychiatrists are committed to patient well-being, and we see firsthand the benefits of improving access to medications that treat mental illness. Enabling access acknowledges mental health as integral to overall health, breaking down the stigma that has long prevented individuals from seeking and receiving help, thus, fostering a healthier population and, by extension, a more robust society. From an economic perspective, investing in mental health care, including medication coverage, yields high returns by reducing hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and the need for more intensive, costly interventions down the line.

In conclusion, as Canada moves towards implementing a national universal pharmacare strategy, it is vital that the needs of individuals with mental illness are placed at the forefront of policy discussions. It is time for Canadian policymakers to prioritize the mental health of their citizens, acknowledging the profound impact that such a commitment can have on the lives of millions. The path towards a more inclusive, equitable healthcare system is clear; it is our collective responsibility to take this route.

Authors: Dr. Diane McIntosh, Community Psychiatrist, and Clinical Assistant Professor at The University of British Columbia and Dr. Pierre Blier,

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Publisher/Editor Dana McArthur
Published by: 422247 Alberta Ltd.

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Edson RCMP Occurrences

For the week of: April 8 to April 14, 2024

Traffic violations calls topped the list of Edson RCMP occurrences at 17 calls . Other investigations included: Assistance 14; Abandoned Vehicles 0; Alarms/False Alarms 4; Animal Calls 2; Assault 4; Cause Disturbance 9; Fail to Comply with Conditions 2; False/Abandoned 911 Call 1; Family Orders and Agreements 0; Fraud 2, Harassment/Criminal Harassment 1; Lost or found property 5, Impaired Operation of Motor Vehicle 2; Information File 0; Mental Health Act 4; Mischief or Damage 6; Municipal Bylaws 1; Obstruct/Resist Peace Officer 0; Possess Stolen Property 0; Recovered Stolen Property 0; Sudden Death 0; Suspicious persons 8; Traffic Complaints 6 ; Theft Complaints 15, Trespassing 8; Unlawfully in Dwelling 0; and Wellbeing Checks 5.

KID'S CORNER



Meet 6 year old Aleera who is in grade 1 at Mary Bergeron Elementary School.

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TREE PRUNING ADVICE

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• Limit of 1 garden soil sampling per household.
• Testing is on a First come, first serve basis and is subject to availability of testing supplies. *Priority is given to gardens that are exhibiting growth concerns.

TREE & PLANT DISEASE ID

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Contact Yellowhead County Agricultural Services Department at 1-800-814-3935 or 780-325-3782 for inquiries or to set up an appointment with our Horticultural Technician.

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN & LAND USE BYLAW DRAFTS

We invite your input for an update to the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and the Land Use Bylaw (LUB).

The Municipal Development Plan communicates the long-term desired land use for the County and serves as a framework of how it is expected to change over time and shape its future.

The Land Use Bylaw regulates the use and development of land and buildings within Yellowhead County to achieve an orderly and efficient pattern of development.

Public Information Sessions

Open Houses start April 15 across Yellowhead County. Join us at these "drop-in" events for landowners, business owners, and residents to discuss the proposed changes to the MDP and LUB. The sessions aim to answer questions and provide background on the proposed changes.

Marlboro

April 15, 2024, 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Marlboro Community Hall, 1005 21 Ave.

Peers

April 24, 2024, 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Peers Multiplex, 5113 51 Street

Wildwood

April 16, 2024, 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Wildwood Community Hall, 4904 51 Ave.

Cadomin

April 25, 2024, 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Cadomin Firehall, 5215 50 Street

Edson

April 17, 2024, 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
County Administration Building, 2716 1 Ave.

Hinton

April 26, 2024, 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Hinton Municipal Library, 803 Switzer Drive

Evansburg

April 19, 2024, 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Tippie Park Museum, 4805 48 Street

Robb

April 29, 2024, 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Robb Community Hall, 5101 52 Ave.

Brute

April 23, 2024, 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Brute Community Hall, 5010 Mountain Road

Online Open House

April 30, 2024, 11:00 am and 6:00 pm
www.yhcounty.ca/join

Public Hearing to be held on:
June 25, 2024, 9:30 am

Council Chambers, County Administration Building, 2716 1 Ave, Edson



www.yhcounty.ca

Surveys are available online or at the Yellowhead County offices in Wildwood and Edson.

For the draft document and the online survey, visit: yhcounty.ca/MDPLUB2024

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8:00 AM - 4:30 PM



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LOCATION: EDSON OFFICE
COMPETITION NO. 24-017

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To apply please submit resumes online, on our web page <https://yhcounty.ca/jobs/>

A detailed position description can be found in the job posting online.

The competition will remain open until filled.

We thank all interested applicants in advance, however only those applicants to be interviewed will be contacted.

Human Resources
Yellowhead County
Email: jobs@yhcounty.ca

The personal information obtained as a result of this advertisement will be utilized for these employment opportunities only, and is subject to compliance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.



Approved Development Permits have been issued authorizing the following:

Permit No.	Location	Proposal	Date	Appeal Deadline
D24-040	SW-31-53-17-W5 North of Edson	Single Detached Dwelling	Apr 5/24	Permitted Use
D24-043	NE-10-53-17-W5 South of Edson	Accessory Building (Shop) with Lean To's	Apr 5/24	Permitted Use
D24-044	Plan 1323215 Blk 2, Lot 2 SE-12-54-13-W5 North of Niton Junction	Accessory Building (Shed) Change of Use to Storage - Discretionary	Apr 5/24	Apr 26/24
D24-046	Plan 9021782 Lot 1 SW-9-53-12-W5 South of Niton Junction	Manufactured Home with Addition- Variance for Age	Apr 10/24	May 1/24
D24-048	SE-4-55-12-W5 North of Niton Junction	Accessory Building (Shop)	Apr 10/24	Permitted Use
D24-049	Plan 9222242 Blk 2, Lot 24A NW-10-55-15-W5 Bear Lake	Bed & Breakfast	Apr 10/24	Permitted Use
D24-050	SE-21-52-18-W5 South of Edson	Accessory Building (Garage)	Apr 11/24	Permitted Use

Yellowhead County Development Permits are also posted online at www.yhcounty.ca. The public is considered officially notified of approved development permits once posted online, in accordance with the Public Notification Bylaw. The Yellowhead County Land Use Bylaw NO 09.21 provides that any person claiming to be affected by a decision of the Development Authority may appeal to the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board or Alberta's Land and Property Rights Tribunal dependent on jurisdiction of the appeal authority. Appeals under the jurisdiction of Yellowhead County's Subdivision and Development Appeal Board require a written notice of appeal and a payment of \$300.00 payable to Yellowhead County within 21 day of the publishing of the Notice of Decision. Requirements for appealing the development to the Alberta's Land and Property Rights Tribunal can be found here: <https://www.alberta.ca/subdivision-appeals.aspx> or by calling 780-427-2444.



Did you know that wild boar at large are one of the most damaging invasive species in North America?

FOR EVERY VERIFIED* WILD BOAR SIGHTING, YOUR NAME WILL BE ENTERED TO WIN A CABELA'S GIFT CARD!

The MD of Greenview, Saddle Hills County, Woodlands County and Yellowhead County want you to Squeal on Pigs! For every verified* sighting, your name will be entered to win a Cabela's gift card! You can report sightings through the EDDMaps App or by emailing wildboar@gov.ab.ca.

*To be eligible for the draw, reported sightings need to be geotagged for confirmation. To learn more about the reporting process, please visit www.mdgreenview.ab.ca/squeal-on-pigs/



For more information, please contact Greenview Agricultural Services at 780.524.7621.

DO YOU NEED TO PURCHASE SPRING DUST CONTROL?



Application Deadline May 15

To apply for Spring Dust Control (Calcium Chloride), submit payment and application before the deadline.

The application form is available online at www.yhcounty.ca or at the Wildwood or Edson office.

1. Applications for Dust Control can be made at our Wildwood and Edson offices.

2. Each ratepayer is entitled to an application of Calcium Chloride, 200 metres in length, for a fee of \$242.00.

(This fee represents approximately 33% of the total cost for the dust control application. Full application costs will apply for any requests over 200 metres.)*

3. The fee must accompany the application.

4. Spring Applications must be received by May 15, 2024.

If you have any questions, please contact our office at (780) 723-4800 or 1-800-665-6030.

*Dust Control Policy #3200.02



Get ready for the 43rd Annual Medicine Lodge Rodeo

by Deanna Mitchener

It's Rodeo time once again! The Medicine Lodge Rodeo will be hosting their 43rd Annual event over the Mother's Day Weekend from May 10 to May 12th.

The Medicine Lodge Rodeo is located 40 km west of Edson AB, 1 km south of Hwy 16 on Anderson Road (Rge Rd 213).

Susan Longmore said, "The campground security continues to show an increase in camping units. Weekend camping is \$10.00 per unit per day, which includes free firewood. We are asking campers to wait until the Monday prior to the rodeo event to setup camp."

"In 2023 the Medicine Lodge Rodeo was faced with some natural disasters that involved evacuations and flooding in nearby areas. One positive from this was that we saw new spectators from our surrounding municipalities that had never attended our annual rodeo

event. There were many advising they would attend again in 2024. We look forward to welcoming new and consistent sponsors, spectators, contestants, and volunteers to our 43rd Medicine Lodge Rodeo on May 10 to 12th," said Longmore.

"New this year, we will be holding a Kids Dance on Friday, May 10, starting at 8:00 p.m. for all our singing and dancing young cowgirls and cowboys. The admission will be free for young ones 12 & under, and have an adult with them. This is a non-alcohol event special for our younger generation to enjoy," said Longmore.

"On Saturday, May 11, there will be an 'Adults Only' Dance (18 & older) with bar. Admission is \$10.00. Both dances feature live entertainment by Ron Pederson the 'Mullet Man'. Melissa's Bouncy House Fun will be setup by the playground area all weekend. There will be two bouncy castles setup on Friday with three Bouncy Castles on

Saturday and Sunday. A familiar mascot will be walking around greeting the young and old for a few hours on Saturday and Sunday," Longmore said.

"Other features include a pancake breakfast on Saturday and Sunday, mini-chuckwagon races on Friday and Saturday, lawnmower races on Saturday and Sunday, Cowboy Church on Sunday, mutton bustin' (6 & under), a new playground item, and our home-grown rodeo clown, Squirrely Early Anderson, will be doing things that he loves to do all weekend," added Longmore.

"On Friday, May 10, the All Girls Rodeo event will kick off the weekend at 4:00 pm. The Friday wheelbarrow races were highly entertaining in 2023 and will be happening again in 2024. The Wildrose Rodeo Association (WRA)

events start at 1:00 p.m. on both Saturday and Sunday. Many of the 'Added Purses' in the events have been increased. We are hoping for many spurs and dreams to be present on these days."

"There will be three concessions and more food menus to check out for all our hungry weekend residents. During intermissions, Ernie Smith will be entertaining all those standing in line at our concession. Ernie is a familiar long-time entertainer that has been with us from the beginning," Longmore said. "Come join us at a place where 'Rodeo Roots, Spurs and Dreams' come together. And being the 'Biggest'".

This event on Mother's Day Weekend will be sure to brighten moms' day with a trip to the Medicine Lodge Rodeo. There is lots of fun and prizes to be won.

Rotary grant request for Willmore Park added to Town's budget deliberations

At the April 16 Town Council meeting, Administration provided an update on the current Willmore Park Contract with the Rotary Club, as well as an update on insurance claims and efforts to re-open the overflow campground following the fire. Council has also approved the inclusion of a one-time grant of \$20,000 to the Rotary Club of Edson in the 2024 Operating Budget deliberations to be held on April 23, 2024.

Meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2024, at 7:00 pm, in Council Chambers. A Committee of the

Whole Meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2024, at 7:00 pm, in Council Chambers.

- **2023 Audited Year-end Financial Statement Extension.** Council has approved a request to apply for an extension to June 30, 2024, to submit the Financial Statement and Financial Information Return to Municipal Affairs. Several factors have led to the delay in submission, including the 2023 wildfires and flooding, and the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) position being vacant for an extended period.

- **Meeting Schedule.** A Committee of the Whole Meeting has been scheduled for April 30, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. to further discuss the Draft Land Use Bylaw.

- **Next meetings** – A 2024 Operating Budget

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NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

APRIL 28, 2024

Honouring those who lost their lives or were injured on the job, as we reflect on their sacrifices.

GERALD SOROKA MP
 YELLOWHEAD

GERALD.SOROKA@PARL.GC.CA
 GERALDSOROKAMP.CA
 780-723-6068

65th Anniversary

The Children of John and Grace Vanderveen would like to Celebrate their 65th Anniversary with a come-and-go tea.

Location is at the Pioneer Cabin

Sunday May 5 from 2-5pm

TRI
Gas CO-OP Ltd.

Is now accepting applications for 2024 Natural Gas Installations

RURAL
\$8,500.00+ GST

URBAN
\$3,500.00 + GST

(Construction must be completed in the Current Season)
INFILL FINANCING AVAILABLE

3349 – 34 Avenue
Whitecourt, Alberta, T7S 1X3

Phone: 780-779-9990
Toll Free: 1-800-727-5259
Monday - Friday 8:00 – 4:30

No applications accepted after September 1, 2024



43rd

Medicine Lodge Rodeo

Fri May 10, 2024 (All Girls Events) 4:00 PM

Sat/Sun May 11 & May 12, 2024 (WRA/Local Events) 1:00 PM

Location 40 km west of Edson AB, 1 km south of Hwy 16 on Anderson Road (Rge Rd 213)

General Admission \$10.00 Seniors \$5.00 12 & Under FREE

WEEKEND CAMPING: \$10.00/Unit/Day

BAREBACK "POT OF GOLD"
LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP, CANADIAN
PRO RODEO HALL OF FAME

FRI, MAY 10th 8:00 PM – KIDS DANCE
RON PEDERSON - 'MULLET MAN'

SAT, MAY 11th 8:00 PM- 'ADULTS ONLY' DANCE
RON PEDERSON - 'MULLET MAN'

SAT & SUN – PANCAKE BREAKFAST

FRI & SAT – MINI-CHUCKWAGON RACES

SAT & SUN – LAWNMOWER RACES

FRI, SAT, SUN - MELISSA'S BOUNCY HOUSE FUN

SUN, MAY 12th - COWBOY CHURCH

SQUIRRELLY EARLY ANDERSON – ALL WEEKEND



EDSON FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

SENIOR GIRLS EVENTS	ENTRY	ADDED PURSE	WRA EVENTS	ENTRY	WRA FEE	ADDED PURSE
SR BARREL RACING	\$25.00	\$200.00	SADDLE BRONC	\$75.00	\$15.00	\$2,000.00
SR POLE BENDING	\$25.00	\$200.00	BAREBACK	\$75.00	\$15.00	\$4,000.00
SR POTATO RACE	\$25.00	\$200.00	BULL RIDING	\$75.00	\$25.00	\$2,000.00
STEER UNDECORATING	\$25.00	\$200.00	TIE-DOWN ROPING	\$75.00	\$15.00	\$1,000.00
COW RIDING	\$25.00	\$200.00	STEER WRESTLING	\$75.00	\$15.00	\$1,000.00
			LADIES BARREL RACING	\$75.00	\$15.00	\$1,000.00
			TEAM ROPING (single entry)	\$75.00	\$15.00	\$2,000.00
			JR BARREL RACING	\$50.00	\$10.00	\$800.00
			JR BULL RIDING	\$50.00	\$20.00	\$800.00
			JR STEER RIDING	\$50.00	\$20.00	\$800.00
			NOVICE HORSE RIDING	\$50.00	\$10.00	\$800.00
			JR BREAKAWAY ROPING	\$50.00	\$10.00	\$300.00
JUNIOR GIRLS EVENTS	ENTRY	ADDED PURSE	ADDED LOCAL EVENTS	ENTRY	ADDED PURSE	
JR BARREL RACING	\$15.00	\$100.00	MUTTON BUSTIN' (6 yrs & under)	\$1.00	TROPHY & \$10.00	
JR POLE BENDING	\$15.00	\$100.00	COWGIRL COW RIDING (SAT)	\$20.00	\$300.00	
JR POTATO RACE	\$15.00	\$100.00	RIDING LAWN MOWER RACES	\$50.00	\$250.00/ each	
			(**Stock/Modified/Outlaw races**)			
OPEN GIRLS EVENTS	ENTRY	ADDED PURSE				
RESCUE RACE (2 PER TEAM)	\$15.00/each	\$200.00				
ADDED EVENT	ENTRY	ADDED PURSE				
MUTTON BUSTIN' (6 yrs & under)	\$1.00	TROPHY & \$10.00				
WHEELBARROW RACE (2 PER TEAM)	\$10.00/each	\$100.00				

WILDROSE RODEO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS TO ENTER ONLY THRU W.R.A. ENTRY OFFICE: (780) 786-9177
ENTRY DATES: May 1, 2024 – 9:00 A.M. – MAY 2, 2024 - 3:00 P.M.

LOCAL ENTRIES FOR WRA / FRIDAY ALL GIRLS RODEO EVENT / PLUS LOCAL EVENTS
ENTRY DATES: APRIL 27 & APRIL 28, 2024 PHONE: (780) 723-0384 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM BOTH DAYS

(Mutton Bustin' / Cowgirl Cow Riding / Lawnmower Races / Wheelbarrow Races Open Until Full
With Limited Entries being taken)

FOR MORE INFORMATION PHONE: Earl Anderson (780) 723-0906 or Susan Longmore (780) 723-6848



Views & News

by Deanna Mitchener

Walking the Beach

by Deanna Mitchener

This reporter finds it so cool meeting all the different people along my own journey in life. While walking the beach in Mexico I met a man by the name Simon Drvaric. He was originally born in Hamilton Ontario, Canada.

Simon was on his first photo assignment traveling down the North Baja of Mexico. He was pretty excited about his first gig for tourism.

Drvaric said, "It's kind of tough as you have a lot of spots condensed into a certain amount of time. You have to schedule the trip to be out there catching all the sunrises and sunsets. But this particular project is for tourism in the state for Baja, California North. We have 15 days, and today we are right in the middle of those days. The last seven days have been a lot of driving, a lot of early mornings and late nights, so today we are just taking it easy before the trip back."

When asked how long he has been doing this sort of work, Simon replied, "I have been taking photographs since I was 17 years old. I'm 27 now, so about 10 years. Professionally its been about five years. I am self taught, I never went to college for it. It started off just like this, waking up early catching the next light and trying to shoot the landscape. My dad is a graphic designer. He always had a camera laying around the house and he showed me how to shoot manually and here I am now. I slowly met people and built up my portfolio. Not your typical kind of route, but it worked out for me and I'm loving it. I think I got very lucky."

We spent some time just talking. It's pretty amazing to be traveling and doing what you love, while having all your expenses paid. Makes me look back on when I first got started for the Weekly Anchor.

I was just looking to

complex girl. I was looking for something that I could juggle if I needed to cancel, due to the young girl I was caring for. That's when I saw an ad in the Weekly Anchor for someone to take photos, and time was very flexible.

To this day I cannot thank Dana enough for

allowing me this opportunity. I do love the flexibility and the many wonderful people I have met along the way.

Editor's note: We have had many wonderful writers come and go here and we thank them all. But one

of the best decisions I have made was to have Deanna Mitchener as a writer/reporter for the

Weekly Anchor. Her nose for news, kindness, and love of a community comes through in each of her stories. -DM



West Fraser is a leading diversified forest products company, listed on the TSX, NYSE and rated as one of Canada's Top 100 Employers for ten years, we are a growing company looking for talented people to be part of our team. Our Edson Forest Products division has an opportunity for an:

MILLWRIGHT

We offer the following:

- Competitive Salary
- Excellent benefits and a defined-benefit pension plan
- Employee Share Purchase Plan
- 7 ON 7 OFF Shift Schedule
- Relocation package
- Job Stability
- Career growth

West Fraser Timber has over 60 locations across Canada, the United States and Europe. We believe strongly in promoting from within and pride ourselves on providing a challenging environment with continuous development. The successful candidate should be interested in future growth opportunities within the company.

If this position sounds like the start of a career for you, Submit your resume at www.westfraser.com/jobs. For more information on West Fraser and other career opportunities, visit our website at www.westfraser.com.

West Fraser believes inclusive, diverse teams build a more vibrant workforce, safer operations, and a stronger company overall. We strive to create workplaces and leadership teams that are reflective of the diverse communities we are a part of. We will not discriminate against any applicant for employment on the basis of race, gender, national origin or any other protected legal characteristic.

We thank all candidates for their interest; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted. Candidates must possess a journey person trade certificate.



Weyerhaeuser Company Limited

Pembina Timberlands

Public Input Opportunity for Weyerhaeuser's Proposal to Use Herbicides 2024

What: Pre and Post harvest application of Triclopyr herbicide (for up to 200 ha), and Post harvest application of Imazapyr (for up to 90 ha) within conifer plantations to control grass and other competing vegetation.

Where: Various locations within the following Townships:

Pembina Forest Management Area

Twp. 43 Ranges 12, 13, & 14	W5M
Twp. 44 Ranges 13, 14	W5M
Twp. 46 Range 13	W5M
Twp. 46 Range 13	W5M
Twp. 47 Range 11	W5M
Twp. 49 Range 16	W5M
Twp. 50 Range 16	W5M
Twp. 51 Range 10	W5M
Twp. 51 Range 19	W5M

When: July and August, 2024

How: Application of triclopyr will be using aerial and ground application Application of Imazapyr will be by ground application.

Open Houses will be held on:

- April 29th, 2024 from 5-8 pm at the Canalta Hotel, Rocky Mountain House.
- April 30th, 2024 from 5-8 pm at the Best Western, Drayton Valley.
- May 1st, 2024 from 5-8 pm at the Repsol Place Recreation Center, Edson.

Should you have any questions or wish to provide input to the above mentioned project, please attend the information session or contact:

Edson Office
2509 Aspen Drive
Edson, Alberta
T7E 1S8
 Kandis Dickhaut
 Phone: 780-712-6879
 E-mail: kandis.dickhaut@weyerhaeuser.com

Drayton Valley Office
Hwy 22 & 34th street
Drayton Valley, Alberta
T7A 1S8
 Dave Swindlehurst
 Phone: 780-542-8074
 Email: dave.swindlehurst@weyerhaeuser.com

Fran Lehto
 Phone: 780-621-5591
 Email: fran.lehto@weyerhaeuser.com

Open House

Engage with Forest Industry staff, to review our 2024/25 Annual Operating Plans.

Staff will be present to discuss:

- **Harvesting Plans;** Road development, operations, log haul.
- **Silviculture Plans;** Stand tending, Herbicide vs. Sheep.
- **General Planning,** current and long term.

Wed. May 1, 2024 5pm – 8pm

Repsol Place, Main Lobby, 1021 – 49st., Edson

FREE



Seedling!



Weyerhaeuser



Alberta Newsprint Company



West Fraser

For information call 780-542-8014

Letter to the Editor:

Edson Rotary Fire Truck to the Rescue!



We have been vacationing in Mazatlan Mexico for about a month. This morning we discovered a gas leak in our condominium and we phoned the local fire department.
 We were amused on their arrival to learn that their pumper truck had been donated to the local fire department by the Edson Rotary Club.
 It is indeed a small world!
 Cheers,
 Al Lewis, Nelson B.C.

Edson & District Public Library fundraising



The Edson & District Public Library would like to express our heartfelt thank you to the Order of the Eastern Star, Elizabeth Trapp Chapter for their generous donation of \$3,000 in support of the library's furniture and shelving fundraising drive. Pictured from left to right: Bryan Drysdale (Order of the Eastern Star), Connie Hargreaves (Library Director), and Sheila Stuart (Order of the Eastern Star). submitted



With the weather being exceptionally nice outside recently. Mr. Hyatt's Grade 4 class at Mary Bergeron School took their math class outside to enjoy the beautiful weather. photo submitted by Deanna Mitchener



If campfires aren't properly extinguished, they can burn deep into the ground and cause a wildfire when conditions are right. This campfire was likely started over a thin layer of snow and left abandoned (not fully extinguished). Once the layer of snow melted, it exposed the dead dry vegetation that the fire could burn into. This could have easily become a wildfire if wind had been present. -AB Wildfire

GNS

Slippery Tricks for Leprechaun Traps!

Board Priority:
Student Learning

gypsd.ca communications@gypsd.ca

GNS: Good News Story

Elementary schools across the Division were busy the week before Saint Patrick's Day trying their skills in building leprechaun traps; a children's craft project used to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day. The "traps" are set up the night before St. Patrick's Day, and children awaken to discover signs that leprechauns have visited the trap.

At Ecole Jasper Elementary, Mme. Beauchamp's kindergarteners worked together in teams on a STEM challenge to plan, build, and present leprechaun traps to keep their classroom safe from mischief. Throughout the morning, students were actively engaged in this hands-on activity, fostering collaboration and creativity in a fun and educational way.

Mrs. Walker's class at Fulham School made some fantastic hats last week and Miss Marshall's class created some traps to try to catch a leprechaun, using boxes, lots of tape, and a "gold" coin to lure him in. The next morning when the students returned to their classroom, they saw that all of their traps had been sprung and the naughty leprechaun left a trail of shamrocks and a joke on each desk!

Ms. Adelman's Grade 1 students at Mary Bergeron Elementary in Edson arrived to find that their classroom had been destroyed over the weekend. They were disappointed to find their leprechaun traps empty, that tricky little leprechaun! Better luck next year, Grade 1!

One Vision One Team One Goal

The Weekly ANCHOR Comics & Fun

A Family Literacy Opportunity
provided by The Weekly Anchor

SWAMP by Gary Clark



www.swamp.com.au



WOMBANIA™

by PETER MARINACCI



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www.wombania.com

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Q: What do you call a cow with no legs?

A: Ground beef!

C	F	B	K	M	A	N	A	L	Y	S	T	M	G	J
H	Z	U	Q	P	E	C	F	Y	O	X	W	X	B	N
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WORD SEARCH

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To place an ad: 780-723-5787 Classifieds go online at www.weeklyanchor.com

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EMAIL: ANCHORWK@TELUSPLANET.NET

SEED/FEED GRAINS
Seed Oats 98 % germination, Fusarium tested, No wild oats, Can deliver, On farm scale
 jamesbeniuk@gmail.com Woodland Lumber, Evansburg 780-621-2229
FOR RENT
Commercial Property for Lease - 3000 sq.ft., offices, mezzanine, in-floor heating, Sumo, 12' x 12' insulated overhead door, fenced backyard. Contact Marion 780-712-1497
Office space for rent, various sizes, central location, ample parking call 780-712-9890
FOR RENT: 2 bdrm, suitable for 1

person only. No children, pets or smoking. Call 780-728-5917 leave message
Commercial shop on 2nd Avenue. 1800 sq ft total. 1200 sq ft of 1800 includes storefront and bay with 14 ft door and 600 sq ft of office space. Call Wayne at 780-712-0660. TFN
Pine Manor Apt: 4102-6Ave, Edson 2 bdrm \$1075/ mth rent, \$1075 damage deposit. 1 bdrm \$950/ mth, \$950 damage deposit. Includes heat and water. 780-723-2177 or 780-728-3932
Super Location in town near the highway. Quiet area for resting after work and for pets. 2 bedroom 2 bathroom. Double garage carport.

Utilities included \$1500/mth. text Orest 778-875-4853
Half house quiet area. 1 bedroom + den 2 bathroom. Private entrance. The backyard is fully fenced perfect for pets. Huge deck the unit comes with private laundry RV parking and lots of storage space. utilities included. \$1400/mth text Orest 778-875-4853
Completely renovated trailer in Sunset Trailer Park. New windows, floor, paint closet and more. one year lease \$1400/mth short term \$1500/mth text Orest 778-875-4853

CLASSIFIED DEADLINE:
 Tuesday, Noon

HELP WANTED
 EYAEYO Cleaning Services Ltd: Looking for 2 Cleaning Supervisor with NOC62024. Wages \$24.10 hourly. Resumes: eyaeyo.cs@yahoo.com
 GET YOUR MESSAGE SEEN ACROSS EDSON AND YELLOWHEAD COUNTY. In print and online! The Weekly Anchor Classifieds reach over 10,000 local readers weekly. email: anchorwk@telusplanet.net

CHURCH DIRECTORY

EDSON

BETHEL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
 6350 - 13th Ave., Edson. Phone 723-3007
 Pastors John & Roberta Greiner: Heather & Daniel Greiner
 Sunday service: 10:30 am Morning worship
EDSON ALLIANCE CHURCH
 5525-2nd Ave., Edson
 Ph: 723-5776 Pastor Bryan Walter
 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:45 a.m. Worship Service
 Wednesday: 7 p.m. Prayer Meeting.
EDSON BAPTIST CHURCH
 4719 - 9th Ave., Ph: 723-3982
 Pastor Mesh Hit
 Sunday Services: 10:00 a.m.
EDSON MENNONITE CHURCH
 6212 - 13 Ave, Edson
 Office hrs: Tues 9am-1pm
 Office phone: 780-723-4992
 Pastor Tyson Moerike (Call or text 403-966-4705)
 Sunday worship - 9:45
EDSON-PEERS CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
 4633-7th Ave., Edson
 Ph: 723-5242
 Pastor: Ryan Hoogerbrugge
 Worship: 10:30 a.m. Edson - Nursery provided Sunday School
EDSON SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
 1133-55 St. Edson - Ph: 723-5490.
 Saturday Morning Service at 11:00 a.m. Sabbath School at 10:00 a.m.
EDSON UNITED CHURCH
 Edson United Church
 1214 Edson Drive Edson AB
 Phone: 723-3418
FAMILY OF FAITH CHURCH
 463 72 St., Edson (formerly Glenwood Hall), Telephone: 780-517-7558
 Sunday: 10:00 am - Coffee and Donuts; 10:30 am - Morning Service
 Pastors: Pastors John and Ingrid Huizing vfm@shaw.ca
HOLY TRINITY
 (An Anglican/Lutheran Faith Community)
 Rev. Johnny Pooten 780-723-4366
 Worship Service 10am Sundays.
 All Services will be held at 623-50 St., Edson. (St. Catherine's). Please phone for other information.
THE NEW JOSHUA GENERATION FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL
 4911 B 3rd Avenue, Edson, AB
 Sunday Worship at 2:00 p.m.; Fellowship after service.
 Rev. Noemi Sogocio, Senior Pastor, 780-600-0050; noemi_sogocio2006@yahoo.ca
SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH
 4803 - 6th Avenue, Edson
 Telephone: 723-3661.
 Pastor Father Thomas Basani (SAC)
 Mass: Saturday: 5:00 p.m. Sunday: 10:00 a.m.
 Call office for weekday Mass times.
HARVEST OUTREACH MINISTRY EDSON
 (HomeChurch) in Dunamis Centre 5202 -2nd Ave (East Entrance)
 Service: Sunday 10am
 Ph. 780-725-2222

CARROT CREEK, NITON JUNCTION & PEERS
CARROT CREEK CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
 Pastor George Stone
 Ph: 795-2132 Church in Peers, Ab Adult Sunday School: 9:30 a.m. Worship Service: 10:30 a.m. Non-denominational - Everybody Welcome!
COMMUNITY COWBOY CHURCH
 Niton Junction Hall Tuesdays, 7 p.m. 780-712-3502
GREEN GROVE UNITED CHURCH
 Niton Junction - Ph: 795-2568
 Sunday Services

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who died on December 28, 2023.
 If you have a claim against this estate, you must file your claim by:
 May 29, 2024,
 with:
Shari L. Boisvert;
Boisvert Law Group
 at:
 324-50th Street, P.O. Box 6568
 Edson, AB T7E 1T9

If you do not file by the date above, the estate property can lawfully be distributed without regard to any claim you may have.

What's happening, when and where in the community

Community Events

April 10-May 29: Family Time. Join us on Wednesdays for some indoor fun! Program runs from 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM Marlboro Community Hall (April 10,24& May 8,22). Peers Multiplex (April 17 & May 1,15&29). Registration is required. www.yhcounty.ca/registration
April 20: Women's Wellness Workshop. Time: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm Location: Best Western High Road Inn
April 19/24: Adult Card night 7:00pm at Niton Hall Everyone welcome
April 20 May 18 June 15: Grief Support Group 9:30am-11:30am at Griffiths park centre questions contact Sarah at 780-712-3500 or email sarahm@edson.ca
April 26-27: 2024 Edson and District Chamber of Commerce Trade Show. April 26, 2024 @ 12:00 pm – 8:00pm. April 27, 2024 @ 10:00am – 4:00 pm. Location: Edson and District Leisure Centre. Contact: Kathy Arndt 780-723-4918.
April 27: Angel Garden Childrens event and Musical coffee house & silent auction 4407 7 ave Edson Holy Trinity Anglican/Lutheran Church 1-2:30 pm crafts and children's games 2:30-4:30 Music and silent auction.
April 27: Niton Jam 1:00pm at Niton Hall everyone welcome
April 28: Spring Market at Marlboro Hall 11am- 3pm concession available.
April 28/29: Edson Trade Show. Friday April 28 Noon-8pm Saturday April 29 10am-4pm at The Edson District Leisure

Centre.
April 29-May26: Step it up Challenge. Teams of 3 to register in person at the Leisure Centre by April 22.
May 31 (begins): Trail Community Hall Garage Sale Fundraiser. 3 - Day Event. May 31st 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m; June 1st 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m; June 2nd 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Tables \$10 each day or \$20 for all Three Days. Call 780-728-5641
Every Thursday: Seniors Chair Yoga Free. 10-11am Leisure Centre Hospitality Room.
First Wednesday of Every Month: Senior's Recycling Day. Between 10 am and 1 pm, senior citizens are welcome to visit the depot for snacks and refreshments while their staff unloads your sorted recyclables free of charge.

We are proud to support community events



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Revamped health advisory system gives voice to rural Albertans – minister

by George Lee, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Revamped advisory councils blanketing the province will help ensure that the government understands and addresses rural health-care challenges while improving service, the health minister said Monday.

Rural Alberta will be heard through 13 new advisory councils – 12 regional and one Indigenous – that give traction to diverse concerns and ideas, said Adriana LaGrange.

Remote and rural communities deserve services equitable to those available in Calgary and Edmonton, LaGrange said in an interview for member publications of the Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association.

“Yes, there are geographic challenges. And if we don't address those challenges, then there will always be disparity,” said LaGrange, the member for Red Deer-North. “So I want to make sure that we are, in fact, hearing all the voices, with the aim of providing better health care.”

Officially announced Tuesday, the advisory system reflects what health-care workers and the public repeatedly tell the province. “They want to be involved in health care and they want their voices heard. That's been a consistent message.”

About 65 in-person engagement sessions have been held across Alberta so far, attracting about 3,000 attendees. LaGrange said she's attended about half of them. Telephone town halls attracted about 10,000 Albertans and 18,000 made their opinions known online.

The formation of new advisory councils builds upon an announcement in November that the province is restructuring Alberta Health Services from a single authority into four pillars: primary care, acute care, continuing care, and mental health and addiction.

The province describes the move as a refocusing to allow specialization for better health-care delivery. Opposition and other critics, however, have charged that the changes will create silos that break down communication and disrupt the flow of service.

But LaGrange said an integration council overseeing the pillars will work across ministries and keep siloing in check.

“We want to have a seamless patient journey. And that will be the type of information and the type of input that I want to hear directly from the

regional advisory councils and the Indigenous council.”

Regional councils will look at clinical, capital and workforce planning in their regions, said Tuesday's news release. They'll explore potential solutions to local challenges and identify opportunities to better support local decision-making.

Extra roles for the Indigenous advisory council are the design and delivery of culturally appropriate health care programs and services. It will also explore “opportunities to integrate and embed traditional Indigenous healing practices and teachings,” said the release.

Each region's advisory council will comprise at least 16 members. The Indigenous council, however, will have at least 22 members. Some appointees to the Indigenous council may be dually appointed to their geographically corresponding regional council.

Councils will be a mix of successful applicants and members appointed directly by the province as public members. The government appointments will allow the province to fill gaps in skillsets, occupations, community leadership and experience not represented by applicants, the minister said.

The membership number on the Indigenous council reflects expert advice on the diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities in Alberta, said LaGrange. She also noted that Indigenous peoples have unique health-care needs that the province needs to address, like a prevalence of diabetes and heart disease.

An overlap of responsibility with the federal government doesn't change that. “Whether you're on reserve or off reserve, you're Albertan, and we want to make sure that every Albertan has health care when they need it,” said LaGrange.

AHS has about 112,000 direct employees, not including contracted service providers and employees of its wholly owned subsidiaries, the AHS website says. It has 106 acute care hospitals and more than 8,600 acute care beds across Alberta, more than 29,000 continuing care beds or spaces, five stand-alone psychiatric facilities, about 3,200 addiction and mental health beds or spaces, and equity partnerships in 40 primary care networks.

Budget 2024 tabled on Feb. 29 set an operating budget of \$26.2 billion for the health ministry, up 4.4 per cent from the 2023-2024 forecast.

Tuesday's press release said the councils will

represent a wide range of lived and professional experiences. The government wants everyday Albertans receiving health care services to apply. It's also seeking applications from health-care workers, community leaders, municipal representatives and others.

LaGrange said better outcomes are the goal. “We are seeing improvements with some of the changes we've already made. But I want to see more improvement as we go.”

The province has estimated the cost of health care refocusing at \$85 million, which is disputed as too low by critics.

LaGrange said the expense of the new councils is worth it.

“The greatest strength of the health care system in Alberta is its workers. And they're excellent, caring, compassionate individuals who really want to use their skillset to the best of their ability and provide excellent patient care. So we want to make sure that's able to happen,” she said. “For a small investment, I believe this will provide huge value.”

Individuals interested in joining a regional advisory council can apply online at ApplyHealthRAC.alberta.ca. Those interested in joining the Indigenous advisory council can apply at ApplyHealthIAC.alberta.ca.

Those who apply before April 22 will be considered for appointment this spring. Applications received by Aug. 30 will be considered for appointment by the end of year.

Borders of regions will be similar to the ones that already exist. In the north regions will cover the northwest corner of the province, and the Peace, Lesser Slave Lake and Wood Buffalo areas.

The Greater Edmonton region will be surrounded by a Lakeland area region to the northeast, one to the north and west extending to the B.C. border, one east to the Saskatchewan border, and one below the city encompassing the rest of central Alberta.

And three more regions cover the south – one encompassing Calgary and area, one in the southwest corner of the province, and one in the southeast covering an Alberta section of the historic Palliser Triangle.

Editor's Note: George Lee is a reporter with the Fort Macleod Gazette.

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