



#### The Wizard of Oz

#### Page 6



Spirit of Christmas

#### STRATHMORE TIMES

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Legion crosswalk proposed

JOHN WATSON Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 10 in Strathmore presented as a delegation before Town of Strathmore council, Dec. 4, to petition for a crosswalk to be dedicated for the centennial of the Royal Canadian Legion in Canada.

"We are endeavoring to do everything we can to make ourselves and our duty and our role with the community as enhanced as possible," said Donovan Arnaud, president of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 10.

The crosswalks in question would be located at the intersection of Second Ave. and Third Street, suggested to be painted in the Legion's colours, being white and red. These would be the crosswalks on the south and west sides of the intersection adjacent to the Legion building.

Also included in the suggested design would be the words "Lest We Forget," as well as a stylized silhouette of a soldier.

"I like the idea of recognizing and paying tribute to the veterans in our community and having some sort of a remembrance for the people in our community," said Coun. Jason Montgomery.

Coun. Richard Wegener was also on board. "I do agree that we have to



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show honour to the veterans and what made this country what it is today. The thing I like about this is that we are under the understanding that the Legion assumes responsibility for both the initial costs and upkeep which is great," said Coun. Wegener. *Continued on Page 4* 



### Lions give back

Santa Claus was on hand for the Strathmore Lions Club popular Seniors Christmas Party on Dec. 8 at the Strathmore Civic Centre. Local seniors had a great meal and were offered a chance to let Santa know what they want for Christmas.

#### Joe Lepage Photo

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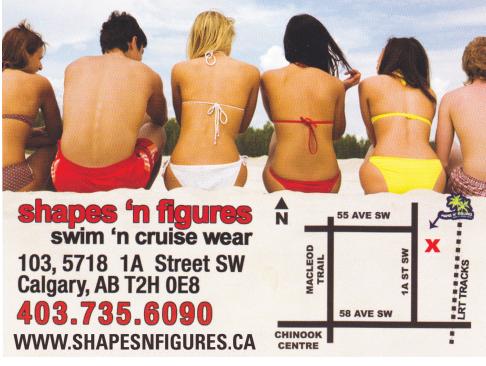
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## Wizard of Oz hits stage

MELISSA PICHE Times Contributor

There's no place like the stage for the Strathmore High School (SHS) drama students who are busy readying themselves for the opening night of The Wizard of Oz.

Drama teacher Deanne Bertsch said this production has been cast five ways this time.

"(The drama students are) so good that I just can't put them in chorus roles - I need to give them something a little more challenging," said Bertsch. "They're getting together on their own after school and having little cast rehearsals with each other so that makes me really proud of them."

Bertsch is always so welcoming of any younger student eager to be a part of her



productions. This time around she has joined forces with the École Brentwood's music director Loralee Laycock to incorporate the music students from Brentwood into this production.

"(Laycock) is part of my collaborative group at Golden Hills (School Division) and so I asked her if she would be willing to do some work with her kids," said Bertsch of the 20 students from Grades 2-6 who joined the cast as munchkins and jitterbugs. "The little ones love working with the big kids too."

Bertsch said there are between 70 and 80 students total in this production including the Brentwood students

This version of *The Wizard of Oz* is a youth version of the show.

"It's only an hour which is what I wanted because we are performing it for elementary kids during the week, but it does follow the movie line for sure," said Bertsch. "All the same characters, all the same songs and it's just a more manageable length."

Aurora Kruger (14) is a Grade 10 student at SHS. This is her first big drama production with the school. "It's going really well," said Kruger, who plays the Lion in one of the castings. "There's quite a few jokes, a lot of great actors and singers."

Ella Peterson is a Grade 11 student at SHS and she has been in many drama productions at the school.

"My main part is Dorothy and I'll have three shows with that," said Peterson, who is a munchkin, a jitterbug, and an Ozian when she's not Dorothy. "It's been really fun. I think this one is definitely more children and family-focus based. I think it's really fun to do one that's more for kids. It's kind of magical to create that story and that they'll be able to connect (with)."

Peterson said one of her favourite things about this production is when she isn't her main part, Dorothy, she loves reacting to every little thing.

"When were munchkins, we're scared of the wicked witch and I had a really fun time reacting to that as a munchkin," said Peterson. "Being able to connect and create a show like this has been really fun."

Tavish Foshaug (17) is a Grade 12 student. He is playing the main role of the Scarecrow and also the ensemble cast. Foshaug has performed in a number of productions for the drama program at SHS, most notably as Willard in Footloose.

"It was one of the greatest experiences I've ever had," he said. "It has been really fun figuring out the character (Scarecrow) and figuring out the movements and the voice. The (audience) is in for an amazing experience seeing the original Wizard of Oz story told from the perspective of these teenagers and kids."

The Wizard of Oz runs Dec. 14-15 at

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2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Dec. 16-18 at 7 p.m. Tickets can be reserved in advance by calling 403-821-3203 or purchased at the door. Tickets are \$10 each.



## WAHS receives major donation

#### JOHN WATSON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Wheatland and Area Hospice Society (WAHS) has received a donation of \$2 million towards their capital building fund from two members of the local community.

"We were notified unexpectedly ... Bonnie and Ken Seitz would like to donate a significant amount to the Hospice Society, and we very much appreciate that they have donated \$2 million to the capital building fund," said Joni McNeely, chair of the WAHS. "As well, we are hoping an endowment fund will be started which friends and neighbors will also contribute towards the operation of the hospice."

McNeely explained with this donation, the capital build funding for the hospice facility is now completed. The WAHS has now amassed over \$6 million, which fulfills their estimated contribution to the build to be constructed adjacent to Kinsmen Park in Strathmore.

The next steps for the WAHS will be to decide how to set up an endowment fund, as well as to wait for the Alberta Affordable Housing Partnership Program (AHPP) to be decided whether the WAHS is successful in their application.

Following the closure of the AHPP application window in January, the WAHS will have a much better understanding of when shovels may be able to hit the ground and construction of the facility may begin.

"We are waiting for the next AHPP grant announcements to see if the application from the Wheatland Housing Management Board for the new lodge is successful. Our application is in, it has been since last spring, and it is at a Class B level application, which is more than is required at the moment," said Keith Clayton, who sits on the board for the WAHS. "We are working on all the background to get a development permit done at the present time with the Wheatland Housing Management Board, and so we will update the application even though it is in ... to its current level and wait for an announcement after the end of January."

Clayton explained announcements from the

Seitz present Joni McNeely with their donation to the Wheatland and Area Hospice Society, completing the organization's fundraising goal for a new senior's lodge in Strathmore. **Photo Courtesy of** 

Bonnie and Ken

Joni McNeely province are likely to be released in February or March regarding successful grant applications for

the AHPP. Key differences this time around, following an unsuccessful application for AHPP funding during the last funding period, are the WAHS and Wheatland Housing Management Board have provided more information regarding the project, and it is now able to be considered "shovel ready" once funding is made available.

Subsequent engineering work for the new lodge is set to be completed following grant approval and is estimated to take approximately two mont-

"This takes a lot of pressure off of us as the Hospice Society with our fundraising, and we are looking to the next stage of fundraising because there are always ongoing costs," said McNeely. "We still are planning on our Hype for Hospice that we have in May, and we will continue with Farming for Hospice. We are also so pleased that so many donors have come forward or done third party fundraising events. All of those will continue because it is a way for the community to reach in and help out."

McNeely added the WAHS is currently debating avenues to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of the organization.

Similar fundraising efforts will continue following the development of the facility in order to address ongoing upkeep, staffing and maintenance costs.

The current estimate for construction of the facility to begin approximates sometime in the spring of 2025.

## Local barbershop donates time for seniors' haircuts

#### **IOHN WATSON**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Sir Lance Barbershop volunteered their time at the Sagewood AgeCare facility, Dec. 11, to give free haircuts to local seniors as a way to give back to the community just before Christmas.

"Last year, we did the same thing. We just went and donated our time to do something for the community and I thought ... there are a lot of seniors; they need some help over the holidays and they need services done," said Tarek Harb, owner and operator of Sir Lance Barber Shop. "There are some people in need and we would be happy to do it. I had a chat with my staff and they were all good and willing to help out and we made it happen last year. Now this year, we want to do it again and the staff is all cheery to do it."

Harb added he aims to make the event an annual occasion going forward around Christmas in ormake them happy and we can give them a little gift ... we thought it was a nice way to give back," said Harb. "What better way to give back to the seniors, most of whom have supported us over the years ... last year, I believe my team and I served around 56 people."

Half the team was stationed at the lodge for the morning, with the other half back at the shop for regular operations. The idea was at the halfway mark through the day, the teams would switch places and continue the service.

The idea was to cater to whatever each of the clients wanted and get them looking sharp for the holidays and trying their best for those who have difficulties communicating their exact wishes.

"We might have the same or a little bit more. Last year we ran from 9:30 (a.m.) until about like 3 (p.m.) I believe we were done at the end. I was anticipating something similar," said Harb. "We ask some people; some people go for it and some

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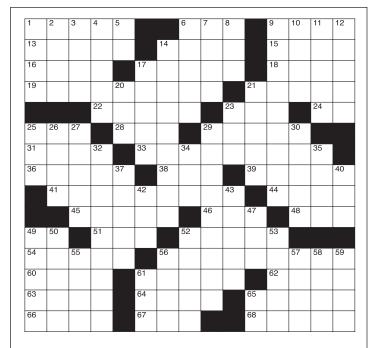
REGISTRAR OF MOTOR VEHICLE SERVICES DECLARATION SERVICE ALBERTA AND RED TAPE REDUCTION

Due to the Canada Post mail strike, expiry dates for the interim driver's licence issued from November 1, 2024 to January 14, 2025 are extended to expire on February 15, 2025. Albertans with interim driver's licences can continue to operate a motor vehicle while awaiting the final driver's licence card once mail service is reinstated. Motor Vehicle Services continue to be delivered through Alberta's Registry Agents and online.

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#### **CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Thou do it
- 6. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
- 9. Brainstem part
- 13. Town in New York state
- 14. Little (Spanish) 15. Continent
- 16. Retch
- 17. Short-billed rails
- 18. Small period of time (abbr.)
- 19. Confused
- 21. A team needs one
- 22. Woman in ancient times 23. Republican Party
- 24. Spanish be
- 25. "The Godfather" character
- Johnny
- 28. Not around
- 29. City in Zambia
- 31. A type of beginning

**CLUES DOWN** 

3. Overly studious person

5. The Volunteer State

4. They protect your valuables

2. Wings

- 33. Numb 36. Gurus
- 67. Tax collector
  - 68. Cassia tree
  - 30. Mountain range

38. Small, gray-headed crow

44. One point east of southeast

48. Midway between south and

39. Vehicle type

45. Indian soldier

southeast

52. Ship's deck

56. Improvised

63. Discharge

65. Once more

54. A way to bake

60. Butterfly genus

62. Designated space

64. Two of something

66. Part of your face

61. Baseball fields have them

49. It cools your home

51. Corn comes on it

41. Disorders

46. Tree type

- - 37. Persian male given name
- 6. Non-hydraulic cement 7. Horse mackerel
- 8. Jackson and Diddley are two
- 9. Splendid displays
- 10. Mountain in NE Greece

- 12. German surname 14. Having more than one husband at a time 17. Romanian city 20. Energy 21. Makes less hot 23. Gas diffusion electrode 25. Former CIA 26. Set an example for others

47. Knockouts 11. A daughter or your brother or sister 49. Posh Colorado destination

50. Form of therapy

- 1. One-time Aaron Rodgers target 29. One from the Big Apple
  - 32. Violate the sanctity of something
    - 34. Supervises flying
  - 35. Talks
  - 40. Born of
  - 42. Forcibly take one's possessions 43. Discounts

der to keep creating an opportunity to give back to the local community.

He explained he sees it as an opportunity to accommodate those who may not be able to get out for a haircut conveniently otherwise, as well as to visit folks who may be lonely.

"Sometimes you do not realize people's lifestyle or the things they are going through so if we can

#### STRATHMORE

Mario Prusina Publisher

John Watson Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Kristina Bezic Financial Manager Rose Hamrlik Advertising

Jody Schneider Production

with the flow."

Contributors: Laureen F. Guenther, Joe Lepage, Melissa Piche, Fernando David Moreno-Prado

Canada

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people do not, but I think this year they will be a little bit more involved. We will see, we are going Harb added he is uncertain what the event will

look like going forward and it will depend what ideas get thrown around.

- 27. Support of a particular person
- 52. British rock band 53. Type of virus (abbr.) 55. The U. of Miami mascot is one 56. Volcanic crater 57. Middle Eastern nation 58. Sinn \_\_\_, Irish organization 59. Ethiopian lake 61. Bits per inch (abbr.) 65. Equally

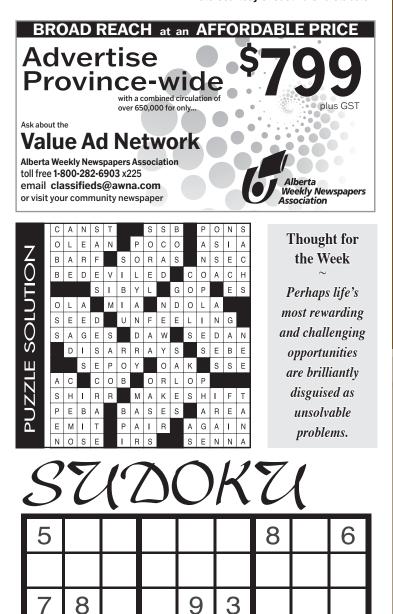






#### **Christmas celebration**

The Crowfoot 4-H Multi Club held their annual Christmas party at the Crowfoot Hall on Dec. 1. They celebrated this event by playing games, drinking hot chocolate, having a pizza party, doing Christmas crafts and having a gift exchange. Photo Courtesy of Justina Sherstabetoff





Pass the Salt

#### WE HAVE ENTERED

THE ADVENT SEASON "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders ... The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this." (Isaiah 9:6 a; 7; NIV)

We have entered the Advent Season, once again, with all its joys and hustle and bustle.

We have a lot to do and a lot to plan during this period of time. We decorate and clean; we bake, shop,

and plan on giving gifts to family and friends.

We plan for Christmas lunches and suppers, and we invite or visit with loved ones. We might also remember someone beloved, who is not with us any longer

In all these business of the season that we are involved in, I would like to draw your attention to the Good News, which is at the heart of Christmas: it is the Lord Almighty, who accomplished and prepared for us the reason why we can celebrate.

We give because we have been given. We do our preparations because God had prepared the greatest gift to us: the Holy Child, who is called Jesus. He came to heal us, to accompany us, to show us the way how we can love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind, and our neighbors as ourselves. At the first Christmas, which we remember every year, the Lord Almighty

came to us in a child, who is called "Immanuel," and his name means "God with us." He came to shoulder burdens

#### STRATHMORE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Meeting in the Lutheran Church 112 Lakeside Blvd. 1-888-506-1066 ext. 101 **Pastor: Donald Wright** Services held every Saturday Sabbath School: 10 AM Worship Service: 11 AM www.strathmoreadventist.ca donald816@hotmail.com **God's Closet** Collects children's clothing and

distributes Feb., May, Aug. and Nov.

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we couldn't carry alone and to break our separation from our Creator, which had led to so much heartbreak and blind tracks both in human history and our personal lives.

Remember, it is not merely us, who are in action during this very busy time of the year. God has been in work in this world and in our lives, which can give us strength to concentrate on the most important things despite our large to-do list. If we take some time to talk with the One, whose action had given us the reason to celebrate, we can set our priorities right. It will give us peace when we would freak out because of the never-ending chores and tasks. It will enable us to feel: we are not alone, even if we experienced loss, or family and friends are far away. And it can also awaken in us gratefulness towards the Giver, which will bring a joy that is not fading away on Boxing Day.

The words formulated by the New Creed of the United Church of Canada are not just for time of grief: "We are not alone ... In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone." Jesus came to be with us in our everyday lives, including celebrations and challenges. He is ready to stand by us in our joys and sorrows. His birth and sacrifice for us tells us we are beloved, no matter what. This is the real gift to all of us, prepared by the Lord Almighty! Thanks be to God.

Have a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Rev. Maria Szabone Berces Strathmore United Church

#### STRATHMORE FULL GOSPEL CHURCH

50 Maplewood Drive • 403-934-2225 Lead Pastor: Rev Murray Wright Associate Pastor: Kyle Lomenda Services Sundays 10:30 am www.strathmorefullgospel.com

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112 Lakeside Blvd. • 403-934-2374 **Pastor: Dawn Nelson** Sunday Worship Services – 10:30 am

Join us in Praising our Lord, Jesus Christ!

#### Winner announced

The Strathmore and District Health Services Auxiliary held a raffle on Dec. 2 at the Strathmore Station for various gifts. The quilt was made by Marty Koistra and top quilted by Arlene Hildahl and was won by Kim Larsen. The original picture was done by Dorothy Anderson and was won by Jen Allemany. The Christmas stocking was full of gifts and was won by Judy Forsyth. \$4,800 was raised to purchase portable ultrasound equipment for the Strathmore Hospital.

#### **Photo Courtesy of Linda Freeman**





#### Storm action

The Strathmore Storm U18 Tier 3 team hosted a pair of games over the weekend, including a loss to Red Deer on Dec. 6 at the Strathmore Family Centre. The Storm will now host Siksika on Dec. 13 at 7:15 p.m. Joe Lepage Photos

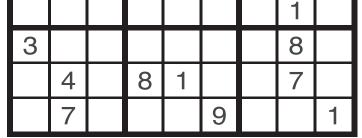
## Two crosswalks to see dedication to Royal Canadian Legion

#### Continued from Page 1

Wegener also asked for a clarification regarding the duration suggested for the crosswalks to be painted.

Arnaud clarified to council it is the intent of the Legion to have the crosswalks be painted and upkept in their colours indefinitely.

"I really appreciate all that you have brought to our community over 100 years - it is remarkable what you have done and in light of the fact that Strathmore is the only community in Canada where every able-bodied man signed up to fight in WWI, it is a remarkable thing that I have always found touching and humbling," said Coun. Denise Peterson. "I think that this is a wonderful addition to our community. I think that it will bring awareness especially to younger people, I think it will be a really good thing. I think that it could act also as a mechanism to boost membership within the Legion."



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403-273-0494 www.c3connect.ca Lead Pastor - Bill Olson Location Pastor - Shan Simpson Pastor - Eric Horstia Sunday at 10:10 a.m. C3 Prayer - Tuesday at 7 p.m. Immediately following her statement, she motioned for council to direct administration to bring information and proposal to council at the next, most appropriate meeting regarding the subject.

Council voted unanimously in favour to pass the motion following discussion. It was not specified exactly when the matter would be returned before council with a report.



#### Saturday, December 14 • 8 pm vs Cochrane

#### Friday, December 20 8 pm vs Mountainview



## YOUR WEEKLY HEALTH ADVICE Capsule Comments

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), often called the "winter blues", is caused by the shorter days of winter. Since the shortest day of the year is fast approaching, consider investing in a "SAD Light". These light boxes have a light intensity of 10,000 lux device, a safe type of light to help boost one's mood in the winter months. Just 30 minutes per day exposed to the light can help.

The cold weather of winter often dries out the skin. It's important to provide a good moisture barrier on the skin to prevent it from drying out. Central heating and low humidity contribute to skin problems. Cold temperatures can also cause skin blood vessels to constrict to conserve heat. Use a good skin moisturizer often to provide good protection for the skin.

Although TV ads for drugs are not allowed in Canada, many of these ads are on American stations received in Canada. The U.S. is one of only two developed countries in the world that permit direct-to-consumer drug advertising. The other is New Zealand. Millions of dollars are spent by drug companies advertising these products.

In 1965, one of the biggest advances in the treatment of blood pressure and heart problems occurred with the introduction of propranolol. This drug was the first in a new class of drugs called beta-blockers. They are used to lower blood pressure and cause the heart to beat more slowly. These drugs are still in common use today.





#### Holiday train

The CP Holiday Train rolled into Gleichen on Dec. 8. The performers this year were Juno nominee Shawnee Kish and Tyler Shaw performing holiday hits to a fervent crowd of onlookers. The CP Holidav Train delivers a message supporting local charities to help end hunger by donating \$3,000 to The Wheatland County Food Bank and \$3,000 to The Siksika Support Centre. **Melissa Piche Photos** 

#### Charming voice

The Hope Bridges Community Concert series was pleased to feature Megna Konschuh and Denis Dufresne who form the powerhouse duo The Charm. The pair delighted audience members including students from Wheatland Elementary and members of the Hope Bridges Society at a free concert on Dec. 3 at the Hope Community Covenant Church.

**Melissa Piche Photo** 



## Standard Lions Club hosts annual stag auction

#### **JOHN WATSON**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Standard Lions Club hosted their annual stag auction, Dec. 6, at the Standard Community Hall, raising money to put back into the local community.

We started this in the early 60s, and a lot of communities do these stag auctions, and it is for community betterment. This is one of the Standard Lions Club's biggest fundraisers of the year," said Michael Rasmussen, chairman of the Standard Lions Club. "The money that comes out of this goes to our arena, our curling rink, our library, the tennis courts, outdoor arena, everything in town. That is what we support."

Rasmussen said even if the Standard Lions Club does not have a major project ongoing, if there is aid they can provide to their local community, they will do so.

Last year, the stag auction raised an estimated \$67,000 which, through an assortment of projects, made its way back to the local community.

"There is always upkeep with the community hall and the hall board always needs some money if we are buying new tables or chairs – those are expensive. The outdoor arena, we always help with the compressors," said Rasmussen. "(Organizations) will send us a letter and they have to come to a Lions meeting and talk to us and they have to show us their books to make sure they do not have the money to do something, then we will fess up and do it."

He said many communities would not be able to maintain amenities such as rodeo grounds, tennis courts, and outdoor arenas without the support of local Lions clubs.

The items up for auction were donated through a variety of partners throughout Strathmore, Drumheller, Hussar, and Cochrane, among others.

Turnout for the Dec. 6 auction attracted an estimated 130 people from throughout the county, which Rasmussen explained was a relatively average amount for the auction.





Strathmore, AB T1P1K1



The Standard Lions Club hosted their annual stag auction, Dec. 6, with the goal to raise money to redirect back into the community. Roughly 130 people were in attendance to bid on donated items for the cause.

#### John Watson Photos

"Hussar has about the same, Rockyford, they are a little bit less but they are about the same – they get a few less items than we get, but it works out to be about the same. Rockyford did very well this year," said Rasmussen. "All the Lions clubs, it is the same programs, it is for community benefit. That is what we are about."

In addition to hosting the auction, the event was preceded by a cocktail hour as well as provision of a dinner buffet and bar for those who purchased tickets to participate. All proceeds from the event are to be utilized for eventual community benefit.



**RCCG Peculiar People Assembly:** Dec. 22, 11 a.m. - Christmas Brunch

Harvest Healing: Dec. 24, 4 p.m. - Christmas Eve celebration

C3 Strathmore (Calgary Location)



#### Chestermere.Strathmore@assembly.ab.ca

Dec. 22, 10:10 a.m. – Christmas Service 3812 Marbank Dr. NE, Calgary



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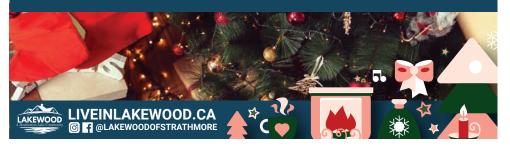








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Spirit of Christmas

The Town of Strathmore continued its Spirit of Christmas on Dec. 7 when they lit up the community Christmas tree in front of the municipal building. There was also hot chocolate and apple cider, the Mainstreet Christmas Market, straw bales and firepits and pictures with Santa. Joe Lepage Photos



#### Lacing up the skates

The Town of Strathmore, as part of their Spirit of Christmas, hosted the annual Skate with Santa on Dec. 8 at the Strathmore Family Centre. Santa also took time to read a story to the children in attendance. Joe Lepage Photos



**Upcoming Meetings** 

Council and committee meetings will now be open to the public and via teleconference.

#### For public hearings it is strongly encouraged that you attend in person. December 17: Council Meeting January 14: Municipal Planning Commission January 14: Council Meeting

To join the call, dial 403-917-1764 and enter the PIN 47001 when prompted. Agenda packages can be found on our website.



#### WHEATLAND COUNTY INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR 2025 COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT FUNDING

Wheatland County recognizes that its residents utilize various recreational, cultural and other community enhancement facilities and resources and has established the Community Enhancement Fund to provide financial support for such venues and activities.

The Community Enhancement Fund provides grant funding from Wheatland County to enhance, promote, and support groups and organizations that bring a broad range





(É)

Address: 242006 Range Rd 243, Wheatland County, AB T1P 2C4 Phone: 403-934-3321 Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. www.wheatlandcounty.ca @wheatlandcounty



of enjoyment, benefit, beautification, recreation, entertainment, participation, and enhancement projects to Wheatland County. The program is intended to invest tax payer dollars annually to support recreational, cultural and other community activities, facilities, and resources that are utilized by Wheatland County residents.

#### How to Apply:

Applications and Guidelines for the Community Enhancement Fund are available at the Wheatland County Office and on the County website: www.wheatlandcounty.ca/cerb

#### **Deadline:**

Applications must be post marked on or before January 31, 2025.

Please note that eligibility for 2025 funding is dependent on filing all previous funding reports with Wheatland County by January 31, 2025.

For more information please contact Jessica Salmon at 403-361-2021 or cerb@wheatlandcounty.ca

# Christmas book launch for local teacher

#### **BRAD EVERETT** *Times Contributor*

Holy Cross Collegiate teacher, Tony Hamilton-Irving, is hosting a book launch for his new book, *Christmas Stories* on Dec. 19 at the Sacred Heart Parish Hall beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Published by Friesen Press, the book is a collection of 40 short stories Hamilton-Irving wrote, each one focused on a Christmas miracle moment, where the main character discovers something more about the magic of Christmas.

"I love Christmas and get inspired at Christmas to write," he said. "Over the last 10 years I've written 10 or more stories each year."

The book is a collection of the stories that made an impression on him and friends who read them.

"This is a project I had intended for my retirement, but I heard from so many they wanted to see the stories published so I moved it up," Hamilton-Irving said.

The book is divided into three parts; the first takes its name from the title of the book "Christmas Stories." The second part is "Christmas Miracles" and the third is "Looking Back," stories of Christmas in different times and places.

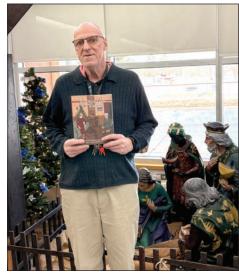
Oddly enough, Hamilton-Irving doesn't teach English, but pretty much everything else. For example, this semester he has Jr. and Sr. High Religion, Social Studies 7, Construction and Science.

Writing is a life-long passion that truly developed during an education course in university where he was required to write a one-page story every class.

"I thought, if I have to do this, why not write a book, and that became my first novel, which I'm still working on," he said.

That led to writing not only stories, poetry and songs, but also plays, which he produced while still in his home province of Prince Edward Island before moving west.

*Christmas Stories* is available on-line in e-book, paperback and hard covers (books.friesenpress.com/store, amazon.ca, and indigo.ca).



Tony Hamilton-Irving with his new book *Christmas Stories*. Brad Everett Photo



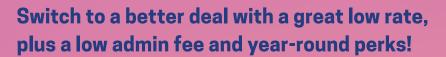
#### Kings on a roll

The Agra Risk Wheatland Kings improved to 16-4-1 on the season after a pair of home wins over the weekend. The Kings pulled out a 3-1 win over the Coaldale Copperheads on Dec. 6, before a solid 5-4 overtime win versus the Medicine Hat Cubs on Dec. 7. The local Junior B team will now travel to Medicine Hat on Dec. 13 before hosting the Cochrane Generals on Dec. 14 (8 p.m.) at the Strathmore Family Centre.

Joe Lepage Photo



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Bronze winners The Holy Cross Collegiate Hawks senior boys basketball team claimed a bronze medal during their home tournament Dec. 6-7. The Hawks defeated the Oilfield Drillers in the bronze medal game.





#### Home cooking

The Strathmore Spartans JV girls basketball team hosted their home tournament Dec. 6-7. The Spartans battled hard and claimed a bronze medal.

**Joe Lepage Photos** 

Joe Lepage Photo

## **Brentwood fine arts shine**

Year.

MELISSA PICHE Times Contributor

École Brentwood has had a long-standing history of being recognized for their fine arts program.

This year, under the guidance of the recent fine arts specialist Loralee Laycock, Brentwood is excited to spread the word of the upcoming performances the students will be presenting as part of the Fine Arts Program.

The first seasonal installment for the students was caroling for the Community Tree Lighting on Dec. 7.

"We (had) students in Grades 4 through six caroling at the town's (Spirit of Christmas)," said Laycock. "We're trying to incorporate a lot of singing of familiar Christmas songs and some less familiar Christmas songs so that they feel confident and ready to go and sing lots of different styles and varieties."

Laycock said in the future she would like to incorporate some French songs into her teachings and is preparing some French songs to start the New Laycock is also excited about their partnership with the Strathmore High School for the production of *The Wizard of Oz*. This is just one of many

*zard of Oz.* This is just one of many productions Laycock hopes to be involved with at Brentwood. "That includes 20 kids from our school who are all performing," said

school who are all performing," said Laycock of the Brentwood students who will be performing different roles such as munchkins, jitterbugs and Ozians. "It gives them a chance to be involved and experience what that would all be like backstage, costume changes, lots of entrances and exits. So far, it's just been a really incredible experience for them."

Greta Peterson (10) performing in *The Wizard of Oz* alongside her older sister Ella Peterson.

"It's really fun," said the younger sister. "I like the costume for it."

To cap off the holiday season Brentwood is hosting their annual Christmas concert on Dec. 19 with an afternoon matinee at 1:30 p.m. and evening show Fine Arts Specialist Loralee Laycock rehearses with her students for the upcoming production of *The Wizard of Oz.* **Photo Courtesy of** 

Loralee Laycock

at 6:30 p.m.

Brentwood is welcoming the public to attend the concerts as they are free and hope to inspire nostalgia of the holiday season to all who attend.

Laycock hopes to carry on the legacy of the Fine Arts Program at Brentwood though collaborative work with fellow teachers in the Golden Hills School Division such as Deanne Burtsch. The two teachers have known each other for a number of years as Laycock's own children have all gone through the drama program at Strathmore High School as well as the two are part of a collaborative group within Golden Hills School Division.



"I know Deanne and I've known her for a long time, so when I got this job at Brentwood and I knew they were going to be doing *The Wizard of Oz* – I approached her right away," said Laycock. "She is so gracious and so accommodating and welcoming."

Laycock knows that inspiring a love for the arts during some of the most impressionable years is important to establishing a passion that grows with the student and follows them through their academic years. She hopes to make the most of her time at Brentwood and is excited to help kids find the joy and love that only music can inspire.



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## CTR school division reporting 2023-24 assurance survey results above provincial averages

#### **JOHN WATSON**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Christ the Redeemer (CTR) Catholic Schools have released their 2023-24 assurance survey results detailing student statistics related to excellence in education throughout the school division.

According to the release, CTR is reporting above provincial averages in all 12 of Alberta's required assurance measures.

"In CTR catholic schools, we are really pleased to see that overall, our results continue to be very strong in all areas required by the government, and that includes our academic results from students, and our assurance results from our community surveys," said Andrea

Holowka, superintendent of schools for the division, both in regards to student the CTR division. "We really focus on research-informed practices that have high yield impact on student outcomes. We focus on ensuring our teachers are strong in their knowledge of curriculum and in pedagogical practices that allow students to be engaged in their learning."

Holowka said CTR schools puts a strong emphasis on their data and look to their collected information in order to inform where the division wishes to improve their practices, as well as to invest in learning improvement.

Assurance surveys that are required by the province, as well as information collected that is unique to CTR fuels analysis and decision making within education, and in areas related to the Catholic faith.

"We have additional engagement in each of our seven communities where we actually speak to various staff members, parents and our students to hear more about how our division is supporting them and areas where we can do better. We take that feedback and use that to help shape our education plan," said Holowka. "It would be really easy for us to just say we are doing really well, but within that, we still go through our results analysis and look at each outcome and study that very carefully ... our principals lead that work within their schools to look at the overall results and see areas of strength

and areas where there needs to be continuous improvement."

She explained part of being able to support students who may be outliers from the survey averages includes the placement of learning support staff in every school who watch for students who require more specific learning or behavioral support to be given the resources they need to succeed.

This can range from strategies to be made available at a classroom level, or for support to be brought in from the division as a greater entity.

Holowka estimated in Strathmore specifically, parental involvement scores are likely to see an increase following the opening of the Sacred Heart Church earlier this year.

## Wheatland County passes third reading for county, Strathmore IDP document

**IOHN WATSON** Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Wheatland County council approved third and final reading of the Strathmore Wheatland Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) during the Dec. 3 Council meeting

An IDP is a statutory document which fosters a collaborative planning approach for lands along common borders between two municipalities.

The document is in its final stages, which requires adoption and approval from both Wheatland County, as well as Town of Strathmore councils.

Wheatland County held a public hearing Oct. 1 and proposed a number of amendments to the IDP document. The Town of Strathmore held a public hearing the following day.

During the Town of Strathmore's Oct. 2 meeting,

first reading was passed, though the document was not approved with the proposed amendments put forward by the county.

A memo was provided Oct. 18 by the Town of Strathmore, agreeing with the majority of the county's proposed amendments, with the exception of one, to which an additional amendment was suggested to accommodate.

The IDP was presented before the county Committee of the Whole, Nov. 26, featuring the collective amendments to the document. At this point, the document was approved on principle and was accepted as information, but could not yet be voted on.

The Town of Strathmore had also scheduled to review the amended IDP document during the Dec. 11 regular meeting of council.

Originally scheduled to be reviewed Dec. 4, the document was pushed back in order to accommodate for ongoing town budget discussions and deliberations.

Deputy Reeve Scott Klassen motioned for the county to amend bylaw 2024-22 in accordance with the Town of Strathmore and Wheatland County's IDP document.

Prior to council voting, Coun. Shannon Laprise pointed out minor textual errors present in the document which would need to be removed prior to the final formatting of the document by administration.

Klassen's motion was passed by council unanimously without further discussion. Following this, a vote was called for third and final reading of the IDP document.

Coun. Tom Ikert made the motion bringing a vote on third reading to the floor. Council voted unanimously in favour of passing the document without further discussion or debate.

## Stopping the cash cow

**CHANTELLE DE JONGE** Chestermere-Strathmore MLA

For years, photo radar sites have been used as a cash cow revenue generator, rather than a tool to enforce the law and enhance public safety. For many Albertans, photo radar sites have felt more like a scheme to catch drivers off-guard. Alberta's government has listened to public concerns and are implementing changes to the way photo radar is used across the province.

Alberta has over 2,200 photo-radar sites - 70 per cent more than the second highest province. Over the next four months, Alberta's government will evaluate and conduct a thorough review of every site, assessing whether it truly improves safety. We will remove all photo-radar sites deemed unnecessary for safety. We anticipate reducing the number of photo-radar sites from over 2,200 to approximately 650. A 70 per cent reduction, which would better align with other provinces. Alberta's government will direct the positioning of the remaining photo-radar sites around playground, school, and construction zones locations where excessive speeding genuinely presents a detriment to public safety. If municipalities wish to place photo-radar locations outside of these priority zones, they will have the opportunity to make a strong case. However, any deviations from the established safety priority zones will have to prove that all other safety

measures have not worked. The province will also help make roads safer by providing municipalities with support to reengineer roads and intersections that have been proven to be unsafe. Up until this point, photo radar has presented a means for revenue generation at the expense of responsible, Albertan drivers just trying to get to work on time, pick up their kids from school, or make it to hockey practice on time.

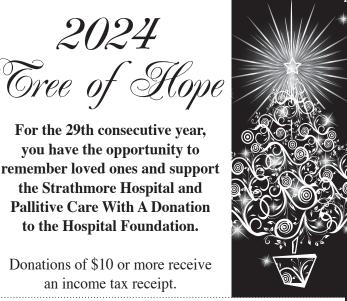
Furthermore, Alberta's government will remove all speed-on-green traffic light photo radar. Photo enforcement at traffic lights will exclusively involve fines for drivers who run red lights. This is about fairness. The previous overreach of photo radar enforcement penalized drivers for marginal infractions that posed no safety risk. Our government is putting an end to these operations and focusing enforcement on areas where speeding genuinely endangers lives.

to support Albertans and strengthen health care and education. At the same time, it will make sure the economy is in a solid position to weather future storms.

Albertans can provide their thoughts and ideas on what matters to them and their community by filling out the Budget 2025 online survey at alberta.ca/budget-2025-consultation by Jan. 12.

As always, please reach out with your questions or feedback via email (Chestermere.Strathmore@assembly.ab.ca).

(Chantelle de Jonge is the MLA for Chestermere-Strathmore and the Parliamentary Secretary for Affordability and Utilities)



Effective April 1, this policy will deliver meaningful, tangible improvements to the lives of Alberta's drivers, ensuring our roads are safer while respecting the hardworking individuals who rely on them every day.

Lastly, Alberta's government wants to hear from Albertans as it develops Budget 2025. Albertans' perspectives are an important part of the budget process as the government sets financial priorities and supports the ever-increasing number of people choosing Alberta as home. Budget 2025 will continue the government's responsible plan

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#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### UCP authoritarian or democratic?

#### To the Editor

Smith's UCP AGM approval of 91.5 per cent of those that attended is still 1 per cent of Albertans. Do you see the areas noted below as Authoritarian or democratic? Smith's UCP government, with their recent bills that were just passed in taking people's and families' rights away (regarding) diversity in schools, appears to be little to no consultation with schools.

If you look at Alberta's FOIP: Freedom of Information and Protection of the Privacy Act, and on Page 22 Guide to Providing Counselling in School Jurisdictions, you can read for yourself on children's rights when sharing information with a counselor. However, Smith's UCP government states that families need to be directed to what the government feels it should be. Authoritarian or democratic?

In an Aug. 14, 2023 article in the Calgary Herald, Smith said the pause on renewables started because the Alberta Utilities Commission and the Alberta Electric System operator wrote to the government asking for it. However, neither letter asks for a moratorium. Also as reported this industry stated it wasn't consulted. As reported in the Canadian Press, the capacity of the cancelled projects adds up to more than 8,600 megawatts of generation - more than enough to power every home in Alberta. Many of those projects would have come with substantial storage capacity. And as we know, less supply and more demand equal higher prices as we're seeing now. Authoritarian or democratic?

I did a survey on all MLA type of positions across Canada four years ago and found Alberta MLA's were the highest paid. At that time the UCP government was stating Alberta's civil servants, meaning all the other government employees, should reduce their salaries to match other provinces. So, I ask my MLA, what about your salary doing the same as you're also a civil servant? After many reminders and phone calls and office visits over four years for an answer to the question which I was told it was being looked at, resulted in no reply. Now we hear when Albertans are getting no relief from skyrocketing rents, the UCP decided to give themselves a 14 per cent retroactive increase to their MLA housing allowance and inflation-proof it into the future. The NDP voted against this. Question is, who do you know is getting a 14 per cent increase in anything these days, especially with using your tax money? Authoritarian or democratic?

Have you asked for the survey results numbers on the APP? You know, the one we Albertan's paid for? I can't seem to get an answer. My current understanding is that more than 50 per cent are not in favour, so why does Smith's UCP continue to spend our money chasing it? Authoritarianism or Democratic?

In regards to the orphan well issue, and the billions to clean up after those that are legally responsible to do it but won't, now Smith's environment minister is stating that the Albertan taxpayer could be the ones to help pay for it. Authoritarianior democratic?

The delay to accept pharmcare in helping those Albertans that are struggling with day-to-day expenses, is that putting politics ahead of supporting Albertans; is that who we are as Canadians? What do you think about a government that constantly complains and spends millions of your tax dollars fighting the federal governments on the so-called overreach, well then what do you think the above statements are saying to you about Smith's UCP overreach on Albertans? Authoritar or democratic?

You have the choice and power on how this continues. Talk to your representative MLA as they work for you or get ready to pay more tax bucks.

> Dennis Bigras Wheatland County



## County passes amendment to Agriculture Service Board Bylaw

#### JOHN WATSON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Wheatland County council passed third reading for bylaw 2024-38, being the Agriculture Service Board Bylaw during the Dec. 3, council meeting.

During the Nov. 12 regular meeting of council, a resolution directing administration to prepare and present for council's consideration was a drafted revision of the Wheatland County Agricultural Service Board Bylaw 2024-28.

Amendments were detailed regarding the appointment of members to the agriculture service board, as well as about the policy approval authority.

As presented before council, section 5.11 reads: "Members at large shall be appointed for a term of up to three years, with their term expiring at the start of Wheatland County's Organizational Meeting, held within the third year following their initial appointment. Members at large may be reappointed to the board upon expiration of their term."

Section 8.1, Subsection F, now reads: "promote, develop, and hold the authority to approve agricultural policies and programs that address the needs of the municipality's local agricultural sector."

Coun. Shannon Laprise motioned for council to approve first reading of the Agriculture Service Board Bylaw. This motion was passed unanimously without discussion or debate.

Coun. Donna Bigger motioned to approve second reading immediately following.

Prior to the vote, Laprise pointed out a clerical error present in section 10.2 which suggested board meeting minutes would be provided for council's approval. Wheatland County council is not the body which approves those minutes and a minor amendment to the bylaw was required.

The amendment made now states board minutes act as a board report to council and are provided for council information.

"10.2 was put into this bylaw for a reason. The Ag Service Board meets four times a year. If there is a timely motion, it can't be acted upon until the minutes are amended, which is three months out. If it goes to the next council meeting, it is approved there and then it is going to be acted on," said Coun. Glenn Koester. "If there is any budgetary or money spent, ASB does not have the authority to do any of that and that also has to go to council. When this bylaw was drafted, it was meant to say 'for council approval' for timeliness."

He expressed opposition to that specific wording to be changed for the sake of efficiency.

Brian Henderson, speaking on behalf of county administration, clarified motions made by committees and boards are undertaken immediately by administration instead of waiting for following council meetings.

Second reading, permission for third, and third reading were passed by council following discussion. Ultimately none of the motions were objected to passing by council members.

## New roping club establishing within Wheatland County

#### JOHN WATSON

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Wheatland Roping Club is a new organization kickstarting in order to provide a local and affordable option to practice roping sports within the county.

"What we are doing is that a group of us have, for quite a while, recognized that there just are not any places that are available for new ropers, young ropers, people who are just wanting to go and have some fun for an evening and do some roping," said Scott Campbell, president of the Wheatland Roping Club. "There are a number of private stables that do roping, but they are private stables, usually smaller ... so we are just looking for an opportunity to give people that opportunity to get started in the sport and grow the sport forward in a positive way." Prices for entry to the club are not yet set in stone, as it has only been operating for several weeks; however, both drop-in rates and regular membership options are being made available.

Additionally, a group of instructors have been recruited to assist the club in both teaching new ropers, and to aid those looking to refine their skills in the sport.

"Several years ago, when my son started to show real interest in roping, we needed to find a place that we could rope at that was going to be good, was going to be safe, and a place where he could learn," said Campbell. "Through our searches, we discovered the Cochrane Roping Club, which is a fantastic group of people and they were hosting through the summer, a youth roping night." The inspiration to start a more local option stemmed from the prior requirement to drive over an hour into Cochrane in order to participate. Though Campbell and his family have no qualms about making the journey regularly, it may not be something that would be as appealing to others interested in roping. Campbell added the club is currently seeking sponsorships in order to keep costs to participants as low as possible, as well as to purchase hay and cattle. The ultimate goal, he said, is to host an official launch as a not-for-profit organization in February of the new year once more of the paperwork required has been filed with appropriate authorities.

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Club activities are typically hosted Friday nights at the Tyrell Riding Academy, weather permitting, generally beginning at 6 p.m.

Campbell explained activities will range from roping static dummies on the ground to heel-o-matic training, which consists of a dummy being pulled erratically behind a quad.

"That is really good for people who have never roped before, and even for the pros ... who spend hours roping dummies every day," he said. "I know when I was competing, I would throw 80 to 100 times a day at a dummy. It is just solid practice and it is a great way to learn those basics on roping."

### TIMES CLASSIN DS

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Condolences, memories, and photos may be shared and viewed with Patrick's family at www.MHFH.com. In living memory of Patrick Kelly, a tree will be planted in the Ann & Sandy Cross Conservation Area by McInnis & Holloway Funeral Homes.

> McInnis & Holloway 403-243-8200

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#### **Upcoming Council Meetings**

December 11, 2024 | 6 p.m. January 15, 2025 | 6 p.m. January 22, 2025 | 6 p.m.

**Regular Meeting of Council** 

Committee of the Whole **Regular Meeting of Council** 

#### Come Say Hi

Hearing from the community is really important to us, so you're welcome at any Council or Committee of the Whole meeting. You do not need to call ahead or register to observe Strathmore Council in action. There is ample public seating and additional standing room if needed. You can also watch livestreamed meetings online as they happen, or catch up later on YouTube.

#### Have you signed up yet?

#### Tax Instalment Payment Plan (TIPP)

The Tax Instalment Payment Plan is the Town's most popular property tax payment method. With TIPP, instead of paying one large lump sum payment in June, smaller monthly payments automatically come out of your bank the first day of every month. Smaller monthly payments help you save time and money by making your budgeting easier and removing the risk of late payment penalties.

If you're not enrolled in TIPP and would like to do so for 2025, please email tax@strathmore.ca or stop by the Strathmore Municipal Building to complete your application by December 16, 2024.

#### Good food, great food. Get the Good Food Box.

The Good Food Box is a non-profit organization offering access to nutricious, quality produce while ensuring variety, freshness and affordability. The contents of your Good Food Box change depending on the seasonal produce available and size of the box ordered. This program is accessible for everyone regardless of income level. Boxes are available for pick-up or delivery once a month, for more information visit Strathmore.ca/en/residents/good-food-box-program.

#### In the arms of the (snow) angel.

#### Be someone's Snow Angel.

While the winter season makes for a beautiful and icy landscape, it also comes with its icy challenges. Navigating icy sidewalks can be daunting, especially for those who face mobility limitations or health concerns. Shoveling those same sidewalks is an even more daunting challenge. This is where the Strathmore Snow Angels Program comes in. Here's how it works:

- Identifying those in need: Residents in need of snow removal assistance are marked with a "Snow Angel" sign, letting you know they could use a helping hand keeping their walkways clear during winter.
- Be a Snow Angel: Spread your snowy wings and help out your neighbour by clearing their sidewalk, driveways, and paths. You don't need to register to volunteer, simply look for a Snow Angel sign and help out your neighbour.

Need the Snow Angels help? Call FCSS at 403-934-9090 to request a sign or visit the Strathmore Municipal Building. Visit Strathmore.ca/SnowAngels for more information.





# **STRATHMORE** CHRISTMA

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