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VOLUME 17 ISSUE 52

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Fire department makes strides

JOHN WATSON
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Strathmore's Fire Chief, Dave Sturgeon, described 2025 as "a very rewarding year" with changes made to local operations aimed to significantly improve services.

"There are some key developments in our fire service that helped us progress to the next step - primarily the Wildland Urban Interface response team that was awarded through the Province of Alberta," said Sturgeon. "(That) gave us that opportunity not only to respond throughout the province and help that way, but it put us on track to be able to provide 24/7 full-time staffing coverage for the town as well, which we started on Nov. 10."

He explained having a stable revenue source for the department has increased their response capabilities both throughout the province as well as within the town, as well as to quite simply have staff on hand at all hours.

In this respect, Sturgeon added response to medical calls has also been able to be improved.

Regarding the town's goal to see the construction of a new fire station, it remains a topic that is largely out of the fire department's hands.

"I know that was some of the councillors' priorities during the election and to this point, that is in their realm. We are hoping, obviously, that will get across the line, but that is up to the municipal leaders to make those decisions," he said.

Sturgeon specifically highlighted the success of the fire inspection program for all commercial and high-density residential areas throughout the town this year.

"That is over 500 inspectable properties which we completed in early December, and we will be starting again next year relatively soon here," he said. "Everybody has done some great work out there in the businesses and those residential developments."

Continued on Page 4



Holiday skate

Naomi Remple (13) glides across the ice at the Lions Outdoor Rink on Dec. 29 during the Christmas holidays. Remple was one of many skaters taking advantage of the mild temperatures that finally settled over Strathmore earlier in the week.

Melissa Piche Photo

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Kings close 2025 tied for second in South Division

JOHN WATSON
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Agra Risk Wheatland Kings closed out 2025 tied for second place in the South Division, ending the year with a win and a loss in their final weekend of play.

Sitting with 33 league points after 27 games played, the Kings are currently tied with the Cochrane Generals, though the latter has played 26 games. Leading the South Division with 39 league points are the Medicine Hat Cubs after 26 games played.

On Dec. 19, the Kings shut out High River on their ice, taking a 4-0 win. This was followed by a loss in High River 2-1, Dec. 21 to end the year.

“We were really shorthanded for both games, so that made it tough for us for sure. We went into High River and played a really solid game,” said Doug Raycroft, head coach for the Kings. “(When) we were in Sylvan Lake, they have the best record in the whole league right now and we lost 2-1, but we really played well. We easily could have won the game even though we were missing some of our best players.”

Raycroft emphasized despite the loss and difference in league points, he is

glad to see his team keeping pace with the top contenders this season.

Throughout the South Division, there is only a nine-point difference between the Top 5 teams, while High River trails by 20.

The Coaldale Copperheads and the Okotoks Bisons each boast 30 league points, tied for third within the division.

Raycroft continues to maintain the mindset of working to improve his team’s defense come the start of the new year.

“It is really a process that is kind of continuous. We were pretty happy with how they played, especially (on Dec. 21). It’s definitely a weakness for us, so we are going to have to work on it all year,” he said.

“I think we are pretty happy for the most part. We had to rebuild a little bit and thought we would be worse than we actually are. Right now, we are tied for second place so there is no problem sitting in that position for sure.”

With only nine games left in regular season, the Kings are eyeing the top spot in the South Division.

The players will be allowed a reprieve for the holiday season before returning to the ice Jan. 3 to face off against the Cochrane Generals.



WHEATLAND COUNTY

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.

- January 13, 2026, 9:00 a.m. | Council Meeting
- January 14, 2026, 9:00 a.m. | Municipal Planning Commission
- January 14, 2026, 10:00 a.m. | Agricultural Service Board

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 OPEN HOUSE

Lyalta Community Centre
263075 Township Rd 252

January 13, 2026 | 7:00 P.M.

Evening Agenda

- 7:00 P.M. Open House Begins
- 7:30 – 8:10 P.M. Formal Question & Answer Period
- 8:10 P.M. – Close Informal Discussion and One-on-One Conversations with Council and Administration.



Wheatland County invites residents to attend a community open house in Lyalta. This session will include project updates, an opportunity to ask questions, and time to speak directly with County representatives.

We encourage all community members to join us and take part in this informative evening.

New Years Day Closure

The Wheatland County Administration Office, Agricultural Service Board Shop, Waste Transfer Sites and Public Works Shop will be CLOSED January 1, 2026.

Normal operating hours resume January 2, 2026

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Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Ag Society reports another record-breaking year

JOHN WATSON
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Strathmore and District Agricultural Society winds down 2025 acknowledging another straight year of breaking event records and entertaining western audiences.

“Our Cowboy Town Concert, pretty well all days of our rodeo and chuckwagons, our ticket sales were up. We have kind of been setting records every year for the last few years, so we continued to do that,” said Doug Raycroft, CEO of the Ag Society. “Some of the challenges we had were weather. We had a big storm the day of the cowboy town concert so luckily the singer did two performances. One, the day of inside in the arena, and then another one the next day outside.”

Similarly, Raycroft added the weather shortly prior to the Strathmore Stampede was also adverse. The rain caused difficulties in being able to prepare the rodeo grounds for the event.

The Strathmore Stampede maintains a host of over 400 volunteers who come out to participate in making the event run as smoothly as possible. “It’s really a community event ... we are pretty lucky,” said Raycroft. “It’s important for us to be connected as much as we can with the community.”

Taking over as CEO of the Ag Society, Raycroft

initially took a backseat to operations which had largely been planned out prior to the start of his tenure.

Having now occupied the role for more than half a year, he explained he has settled into the chair and is working with the team to try and find efficiencies wherever possible while taking advantage of their available spaces.

“We do have our infield suites that are new so that has really helped, and then ticket sales just keep going up. We want to try to use our space and all of the things that we do in an effective way,” he said.

Regarding the Western Event Center soon to see construction in Wheatland County, the ag society was able to successfully acquire a \$5 million grant from the provincial government to support its development.

A committee will be meeting in January to continue the discussion about how to proceed with the “daunting” task of constructing the facility.

“It’s not really a big update, just that we are moving forward on it. We want to get together with our committee – we will have to make some decisions, contracting things and setting up timelines and getting all the financial things in place before we can break ground,” said Raycroft.

Through 2026, Raycroft said the idea is largely to stay the course and continue regular operations of their event roster.

Overnight Shelter maintains stable 24/7 operations, seeking contractor for renovations

JOHN WATSON
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Strathmore Overnight Shelter has been operating 24/7 for over a year and Elizabeth Karp, executive director, said the difference made for the local community has been extremely positive.

“It offers us more individual follow up, so we have been able to successfully place people more into homes or back with their families into rehabilitation – those types of situations,” she said. “It’s been more helpful because during the day, we can assist with calls and paperwork and things like that, and keep better track of the clients to see how they are doing.”

Throughout this holiday season, the overnight shelter has largely been operating below maximum capacity. Karp explained the facility has been on lockdown due to the spread of flu throughout the community.

The idea being to protect several of the vulnerable seniors currently relying on the overnight shelter.

Earlier in 2025, the shelter received a \$76,000 donation from Lakewood of Strathmore to support the construction of an expansion to the current building.

“I’m putting up a second story over the sanctuary. We have got the permits in place and the engineer drawings, but the actual construction has not started yet because we are having a terrible

time finding a framer and somebody that can do it,” said Karp. “It’s not budget, it’s availability. I can’t find anybody, and nobody has really stepped forward to say they have time to take this on. It’s hard to find a contractor.”

Once a contractor is found, Karp estimates that the renovation of the shelter will take approximately six months to complete.

To date, the Overnight Shelter has already completed their final liquidation sale of the year. These will resume in January following the holiday season.

Karp described that the liquidation sales hosted by the Overnight Shelter have been going a long way to helping to consistently fundraise, as well as offer affordable options for the local community.

“We sell things dirt cheap. We never know what we are getting in, so for instance we get detergents and things that sell in stores for \$15 and we are selling them for two dollars,” he said. “We want to bless the community, but it also does for sure fundraise for our shelter. Obviously, we put what we need into the shelter first before we sell (the rest).”

Regarding donations to the shelter, Karp added they could use an influx of materials such as winter clothing, hand warmers, and cases of water in addition to financial support.



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CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Paddles
- 5. Sunscreen rating
- 8. Very fast airplane
- 11. Immune responses
- 13. “Partner” to feather
- 14. New England river
- 15. Longest river in New Guinea
- 16. Midway between east and southeast
- 17. Israeli politician
- 18. Back bones
- 20. Consumed
- 21. One you can rely on
- 22. Dressed up gaudily
- 25. Representatives
- 30. Dog breed
- 31. Pitching statistic
- 32. Manpower
- 33. S. Korean entertainer
- 38. Outsourcing firm
- 41. Viceroy of Egypt under Turkish rule
- 43. One who removes antlers from a flower
- 45. Potluck dish
- 48. Discount
- 49. Airborne (abbr.)
- 50. Cavalry sword
- 55. Basics
- 56. Hollywood director Howard
- 57. Afflicted in mind or body
- 59. Horsley and Majors are two
- 60. Midway between northeast and east
- 61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 62. Malaysian isthmus
- 63. Fall back
- 64. Check

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Former CIA
- 2. Baseball’s best pitchers
- 3. ___ Nui, Easter Island
- 4. Invests in little enterprises
- 5. Constant
- 6. Hobby
- 7. A place to store food
- 8. Short-tail marten
- 9. Burn with a hot liquid
- 10. Left his heart in San Francisco
- 12. Swedish krona
- 14. Legendary actor Connery
- 19. French cleric
- 23. Former measure of length for textiles
- 24. Opaque glassy substance
- 25. Residue of burned item
- 26. A place to unwind
- 27. Japanese honorific
- 28. Terminus
- 29. Fails to make a shot
- 34. Journalist Tarbell
- 35. College hoops tournament
- 36. Monetary unit of Macao
- 37. Of she
- 39. Spoke ill of
- 40. Elements
- 41. Kilocalorie (abbr.)
- 42. Shades
- 44. Poem of fourteen lines
- 45. Pole used in Scottish sport
- 46. Hollyhocks genus
- 47. Street name for marijuana
- 48. Polio vaccine developer
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Prejudice
- 53. Actor Idris
- 54. Confederate soldiers
- 58. Criticize

STRATHMORE TIMES

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Thought for the Week

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Could it be that failure is only a calamity if we learn nothing from it?

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Rusty Spurs continue to flourish

SARA WOLFS
Strathmore Rusty Spurs 4-H Club

The Strathmore Rusty Spurs 4-H Club is back for the 2025-2026 year, welcoming back the majority of last year's members as well as two new members.

The Rusty Spurs started out in October with lessons at the Siksika Agriplex. The club ended their lessons with a Halloween Funday on Oct. 25, where members took part in games both on foot and mounted. On Oct. 7, the Rusty Spurs had

their first meeting, where club officials and project leaders were elected, and on Oct. 21, the club held a pumpkin carving party, where members carved pumpkins and watched a movie.

On Nov. 15, the Strathmore Rusty Spurs hosted the Wheatland 4-H District Dance with the theme of neon, inviting the Hussar Crowfoot 4-H Multi, Rockyford Beef, Standard, and the Arrowwood River Wranglers, as well as several regional 4-H ambassadors. The Rusty Spurs assisted in setting up and decorating Nightengale Hall, where the dance was held. 4-H members played several games, enjoyed pizza, learned line dances, and had fun dancing the night away.

The club had scheduled the yearly Scrapbooking night, where the club creates About Me pages for themselves and their horses as well as the Declaration of Mounts completed, on Nov. 18, however it was rescheduled to the 25th due to weather.

And lastly on Dec. 2 the club held their yearly Christmas party. The club enjoyed playing games and partaking in a secret Santa gift exchange, but the focus of the night landed on the yearly Adopt a Family, where the club was given the chance to get Christmas gifts for community members in need, and the yearly basket lottery fundraiser, where two baskets were awarded.

The club will pick back up in the new year for even more fun activities. Be sure to follow the Strathmore Rusty Spurs on Facebook and Instagram to keep up to date.



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| <p>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.</p> | <p>C3 STRATHMORE C3 CHURCH NORTH CALGARY 3812 Marbank Drive N.E., Calgary, AB 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.</p> |
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Strathmore's Fire Chief reflects on 2025

Continued from Page 1

Among the popular events which the fire department participates in is the Canada Day pancake breakfast. Sturgeon added it is always a huge draw for local residents to come out.

The fire prevention program which has been implemented over the last several years was also among the notable success stories, being able to tour schools and senior living facilities to conduct safety presentations.

"In 2026, a big (program) for us, council through the budget process has supported us with the start of our own fire training center. We are starting relatively small, but it will have a huge impact locally," said Sturgeon.

"Our firefighters will be able to do what's called live fire training right here in town and not have to travel for several hours to get to different facilities. We will see, obviously, that contingent of firefighters to be able to stay locally and train locally."

He added the goal is to see the program eventually develop and grow regionally once operations are fully cemented.

Memory Tree program renamed to continue operations

JOHN WATSON
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Previously the Tree of Hope, the beloved program which has been operating in Strathmore for 29 years has been renamed as the Memory Tree.

Established in 1996, the Tree of Hope program gathered donations to support palliative care at the Strathmore Hospital. It has funded contributions such as furniture, bedding, entertainment, roll-away cots, and an assortment of other quality of life improvements.

“Just because there are no palliative care rooms to furnish anymore and it’s been going for 29 years, they were going to discontinue the program and we thought it was too valuable of a program to discontinue,” said Florence Vander Velde, vice president of the Strathmore District Health Foundation and Auxiliary. “The new board renamed it and called it the Memory Tree with basically the same goals behind it where people can donate money in memory of their loved ones to the foundation to support the purchase of equipment for the hospital.”

She added this is the first year that operation of the program has been taken over by the foundation.

This year, the foundation is largely working to raise awareness about the Memory Tree being the continuation of what the Tree of Hope used to be.

“We got started kind of late on it so other than getting it in the newspaper, we haven’t been out and around too much in order to have our pamphlets anywhere,” said Vander Velde. “I’m not sure how successful we will be this year just because we were so late getting it organized but hopefully people will see it and continue to donate.”

The acquisition of the program took place at the beginning of December, and similar to prior years, the donation period effectively operates over the course of the Christmas holiday season.

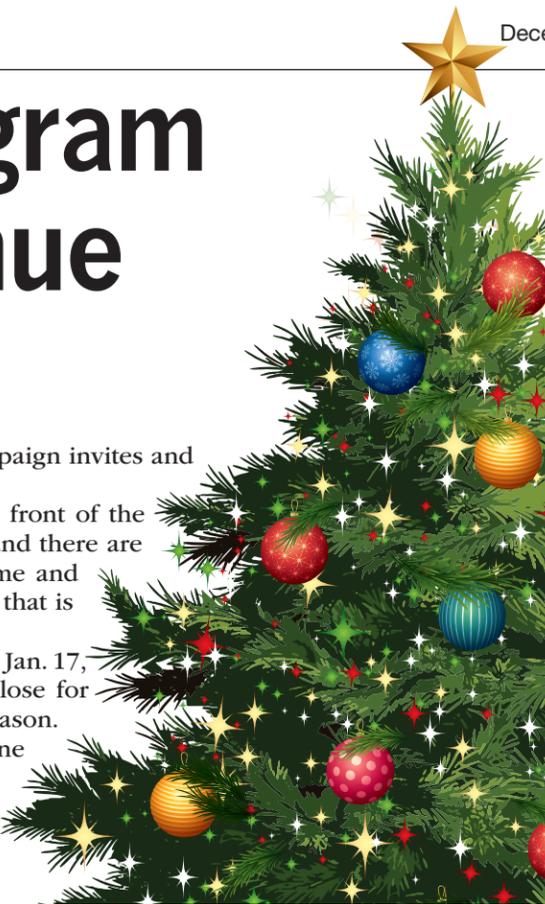
Vander Velde added members of the community are able to make donations year-round; however, particularly during the holidays when family and

friends are top of mind, the campaign invites and encourages donations.

“We have a tree placed at the front of the hospital by the admitting desk and there are little cards with the donor’s name and who they are remembering, and that is placed on the tree,” she said.

The Memory Tree will run until Jan. 17, then the donation period will close for the year until the next holiday season.

Donations may be sent in online via strathmoredistrictfoundation@gmail.com or made in person at the hospital. Donations of \$20 or more are eligible for income tax receipts.



NEXT HOME GAMES

Friday, January 9
• 7:45 pm VS Medicine Hat

Saturday, January 10
• 7:45 pm VS Coaldale

Friday, January 16
• 7:45 pm VS Didsbury

Saturday, January 17
• 7:45 pm VS Medicine Hat



Strathmore Family Centre - Gold Arena

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YOUR WEEKLY HEALTH ADVICE
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Capsule Comments



National Non-Smoking Week in Canada is January 18-24. This is a time when smokers and non-smokers alike will unite in their mission to promote healthier, smoke-free lives. Do you need one day to start your non-smoking life? Weedless Wednesday is on January 21, a great time to stop. Good luck!

FYI. One cigarette contains 1.5 mg of nicotine; 1 large cigar equals 20 cigarettes; 1 pipe-bowl of tobacco equals about 3.5 cigarettes; one tin of chewing tobacco equals 60 cigarettes (3 packs)

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Proceeds will go towards the Rockyford Ag Society curling ice plant upgrade, the Rockyford Community Centre and other community needs.

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Wheatland County Food Bank reports successful year supporting the local community

JOHN WATSON
 Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Closing out 2025, the Wheatland County Food Bank has reported the highest numbers it has ever experienced both in terms of client use, and donations received.

“(With) our current economic climate, rentals are extremely expensive – we are seeing our clients using up half or more of their income just on housing and utilities, so it is not leaving a lot of room for food and other things,” said Lynnette Aschenbrenner, executive director for the Wheatland County Food Bank. “We can definitely keep up with the demand; the community is very generous. We have lots of food and we do keep up a really strong volunteer base as well.”

Aschenbrenner added the food bank is just coming off of the Loblaw’s Feed Families Food Drive, which is among one of the more successful events that takes place in Strathmore annually.

Additionally, donations were received earlier in December as a result of the Hockey for Hunger event, hosted by Crowther Memorial Junior High School, and a food drive which took place in the community of Lakewood.

“The firefighters and (Holy Cross did) a big challenge early in the year in the spring. That one is very successful. We also do our community-wide food drive every year in September as well,” said Aschenbrenner. “There are always things – all the schools will do them throughout the

year, whether it’s Halloween or Christmas or any of those things.”

She emphasized that the need for the food bank does not go away at the conclusion of the holiday season.

Greatest in demand at the food bank is regularly for non-perishable supplies. Cereal is among the most in-demand items that passes through the food bank.

“Other things that people don’t think of are personal hygiene items that we do give out as well, like shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, diapers and that kind of stuff,” said Aschenbrenner.

Once the time of year loops back around, 2026 will be the third year running that the food bank will operate its now annual community-wide food drive.

This year, donation numbers were down from 2024 during that particular event, which could be due to any number of factors.

Aschenbrenner added that as word of the food drive continues to spread, she hopes the event will grow and be able to support more individuals.

“We run it at the same time as the Calgary Food Bank and many other local food banks do their

community-wide food drives so that we can all piggyback off of each other.”

The Wheatland County Food Bank is currently confident in its food stores to be able to support the community in need for some time leading up to the next string of food drives.



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THANK YOU

The family of **Michael Gutsfeld**, Marcia, Teren & Brayden wish to extend our sincere appreciation to the Strathmore Fire Department, Strathmore EMS, Strathmore RCMP detachment, all our friends and relatives during the emergency at home. You do not know how much you're appreciated. Thanks again! Donations can be made to the Heart Foundation.

The Gutsfelds

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January 14, 2026 | 6 p.m.

January 21, 2026 | 6 p.m.

February 4, 2026 | 6 p.m.

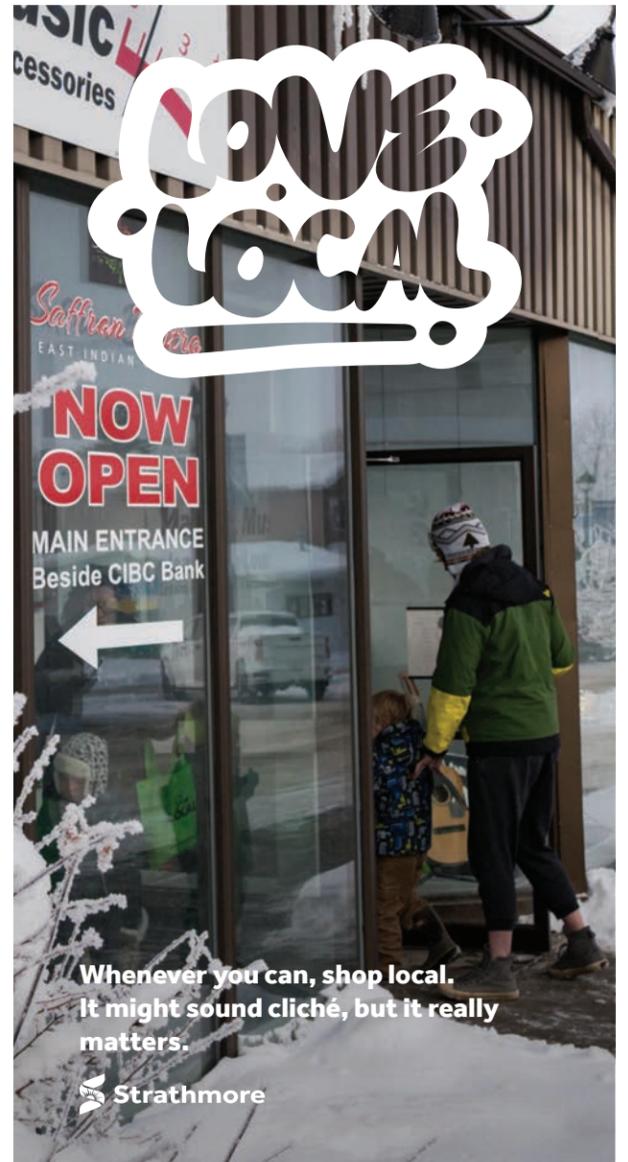
Committee of the Whole

Regular Meeting of Council

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.



Good food, great food.

Get the Good Food Box.

The Good Food Box is a non-profit organization offering access to nutritious, quality produce while ensuring variety, freshness and affordability. This program is accessible for everyone regardless of income level. For more information visit Strathmore.ca/GoodFoodBox

Help keep hydrants from looking like snowmen.

Adopt a hydrant.

In the winter months, heavy snowfall turns hydrants into snowmen lookalikes, making it difficult for firefighters to locate and access them during emergencies. By adopting a hydrant and keeping them clear all year long, you're helping firefighters help others.

Visit Strathmore.ca/adopt-a-hydrant to learn more, or be the proud adopter of one of the 370+ hydrants in town.

Bored? We can fix that.

Join a board.

Boards and committees have always played an important role in our community. If you're looking for a way to make an impact, this is your chance to get involved. The Town is currently accepting applications for the following boards or committees:

- Assessment Review Board - 1 position available.
- Family and Community Support Services Advisory Board - 3 positions available.
- Municipal Library board - 1 positions available.
- Municipal Policing Committee - 1 positions available.

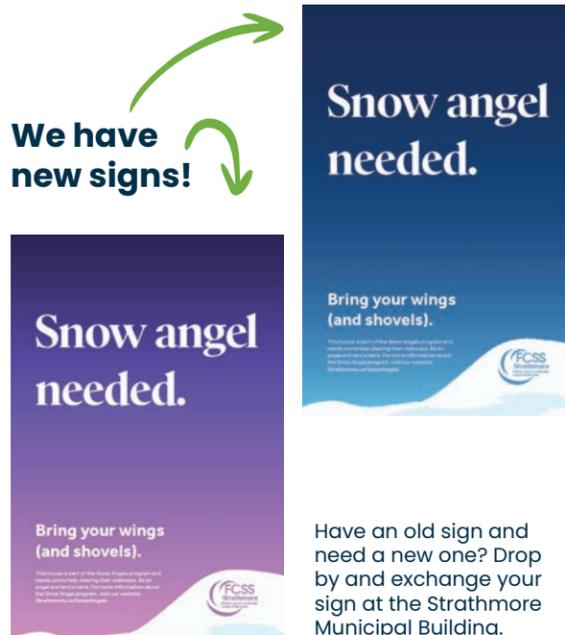
For questions about Volunteer Boards and Committees, please email LSAdmin@strathmore.ca or call 403-934-3133.

Now with new signs!

Be someone's Snow Angel.

While the winter season makes for a beautiful snowscape, 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.

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.



Level of service during the holidays.

With the holidays coming up, there will be some changes in service levels. The Strathmore Municipal Building will be closed from December 25, 2025 to January 1, 2026 for the Christmas holiday.

Town of Strathmore recreation facilities may have reduced or altered hours. Check our website, Strathmore.ca/Recreation, for updated hours before visiting.

Please note that waste collection will also be altered. For the collection schedule and more information, visit our website, Strathmore.ca.

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- Power outages 310-WIRE(9473)
- Town operations 403-899-1428
- Police, fire, ambulance dial: 911

For more information about available contacts, please visit our website, Strathmore.ca/Contact.