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# TIMES

VOLUME 18 ISSUE 7

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Spartans host

Page 6



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## County eyes lodge transparency

JOHN WATSON  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Wheatland County council is initiating further discussion with the Wheatland Housing Management Board (WHMB) regarding the finances and public transparency surrounding the Wheatland Lodges.

Concerns regarding the financial viability of the new lodge project, as well as the continued operation of the existing facility were brought forward during the Feb. 3 council meeting.

“The lodge will cost approximately \$70 million for 120 units, so \$583,000 a unit. They (WHMB) are projecting a \$10 million upfront cost and \$700,000 annual requisitions from the municipal partners to fund the build,” said Coun. Shannon Laprise, reiterating what was learned from the Jan. 6 WHMB meeting at Strathmore town hall. “Wheatland County will be responsible for approximately 65 per cent of that cost, and so then at that point, the WHMB requested letters of support from all municipal partners.”

County council voted to sign the letter of support, thereby aiming to help strengthen the next WHMB application to the province for grant funding, however noted specifically during the vote to omit mention of committed funds to the project.

Coun. Glenn Koester noted the current Wheatland Lodge facility operates on a deficit budget of approximately \$300,000 annually, though the exact amount tends to fluctuate.

Two years ago, a new roof was installed on the lodge, which cost approximately \$500,000. That year, the facility was operated on a deficit of \$800,000.

One of the primary ongoing concerns for the existing lodge is with respect to the heating system, which should it require new parts, will be extremely difficult, if not impossible to obtain due to its age.

Council suggested for the WHMB to appear before council to present their updated financials, operations, and projected budgets.

Continued on Page 4



### Time to celebrate

Emma Inglis celebrates a goal by riding her stick while teammate Tilley Gordon follows during the Wheatland Wranglers game at the Strathmore Minor Hockey U7 and U9 tournament Feb. 14-16. The Wranglers were one of many teams invited by the four U7 teams and three U9 teams to the tournament. See Page 7 for more coverage.

Joe Lepage Photo



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## MLA de Jonge updates town on provincial supports

JOHN WATSON  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A summary of advocacy efforts on behalf of the Town of Strathmore was highlighted during the Feb. 11 Committee of the Whole meeting.

Chestermere-Strathmore MLA, Chantelle de Jonge provided an overview of the province's support for projects in and around Strathmore over the last year.

First on the docket was the attention paid to the Shasta senior's living facility soon to see construction near to the Strathmore Hospital.

"The province is, through operational funding, supporting this and I know it will have a huge benefit for seniors for many years to come," said de Jonge. "Last summer, we had a really neat engagement here in town ... where we had two parliamentary secretaries of health come into town to meet with residents here, as well as physicians."

de Jonge indicated a priority towards highlighting existing facilities, as well as where the province can better support residents through initiatives and investments in hospitals, as well as rural family practice.

In Budget 2025, the province announced the rural hospital engagement program which was to support planning for upgrades and improvements at rural hospitals across Alberta.

"Each hospital underwent two different reviews – a facility condition assessment (FCA) and a functional evaluation (FE) ... the FCA has been completed and

the FE, it is on track and it is scheduled to be completed by April 30," said de Jonge.

She noted both assessments to be critical first steps to identify opportunities for future capital investments.

Immediately following, de Jonge spoke to the province's ongoing support of the Strathmore and District Agricultural Society, emphasizing the \$5 million earmarked for the development of the Western Events and Cultural Center.

The province provided the ag society with over \$200,000 in grants within the last year to support their activities.

Other recent funding efforts noted in the presentation included the \$1.4 million slated for the Wildland Urban Interface program, \$3.6 million in grants for the True North Society to support transitional housing, and \$125,000 for upgrades to the Lions' Club splash park.

Coun. Brent Wiley took the opportunity to inquire to de Jonge as to the potential extent the town may be able to set its ambitions in relation to the local hospital and health care in the near future.

"It is a bit early to say before the FE is completed ... I don't want to pretend I'm an expert, that is why we have front-line providers that will tell us what they think the need is and how they can best meet the need," said de Jonge. "That is why we are going through this process so we have boots on the ground, eyes in the facility, and also having those conversations with the staff at the Strathmore Hospital so they can tell us perhaps what that is when it comes to diagnostic equipment."

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# Village of Hussar looks ahead with new projects, growth plans for 2026

FERNANDO MORENO-PRADO  
Times Contributor

The Village of Hussar entered the new year with optimism and a sense of looking to the future. They are following through with some projects after months of preliminary planning.

“Our long-term plans are to grow as much as our small boundaries will let us,” said Mayor Les Shultz over an email.

The village has received a “much needed” grant according to the mayor, for the means to scope underground pipes to determine if they are liable for lining in lieu of digging them out and replacing them, which Shultz explains is one third of the cost. Some of the scoping has been done, but more planning is needed. Shultz assures that the council is hoping to have everything in place to do the next project this year.

The previous year was “rather quiet but exciting,” said Shultz. The council now consists of himself, Coralee Schindel (deputy mayor) and Michelle Plante (councillor) after the stepdown of former councillor, Tim Frank, who served the community for 15 years.

The highlights of 2025 were the Hussar Summer Daze in June that consisted of a “wonderful parade,” a car show, baseball games, and Kid Zone fun. The Light Up the Night event was held in December at the local campground and was a huge success, recounts Shultz. Proceeds were

donated to the Hussar Crisis Recovery Fund as reported in the Drumheller Mail.

The village has seen growing commercial and residential interest. New houses have been built and moved into the village, in addition to a couple of new businesses. Shultz lays out how the village is currently subdividing six new lots along 1st Avenue, located on old school grounds. However, the lots are still being processed and are not for sale yet. An appraisal was done on a commercial lot in the “heart of downtown” and is currently for sale.

“We have some land also along the old rail line that we intend to subdivide into commercial lots as well,” said Shultz.

Local residents can look forward to a spring Open House meeting. It will serve as an opportunity for community members to give their thoughts on upcoming plans such as the addition of a spray or water park to the Hussar Campground.

The mayor assures that the Hussar Arena “is in full swing” for hockey events on most nights and weekends, and reminds that the curling bonspiels have begun.

“The future looks bright for the Village of Hussar, but it’s a lot of hard work,” said Shultz. He points out that it relies on coordinated efforts “from all the community groups and their volunteers down to village council and CAO to keep things running to the best of our ability.”

# Rockyford looks ahead to 2026

FERNANDO MORENO-PRADO  
Times Contributor

The Village of Rockyford enters 2026 with hope despite the budget challenges of the last year. The village is undergoing some land developments while looking towards annual events later in the year.

The municipality is working on preliminary budgets while also anticipating continued growth albeit with potential tax increases. Mayor Darcy Burke assures that the council is focused on balancing budgets and finding ways to compensate for rising costs through growth and increased revenues.

The development of six acres of raw land into residential lots is in progress. The goal will be to move forward with a developer. The biggest accomplishment of 2025 was the sale of residential lots on the south side of the former school property, which Burke indicates growth and interest in the community. Construction is expected to take place over the next few months.

In addition, the Rockyford Friendship Club leased a large portion of property intended to become the Prairie Ridge Historical Park, featuring turn-of-the-century farming equipment showcases.

In 2021, Rockyford had a population of 395 which was a 25 per cent increase from 316 in the 2016 census according to Statistics Canada. Burke states that the village currently holds a population of 425 despite no new homes being built in the last three years. He suspects that it may be due to single homes being sold to families.

“The cost of construction is certainly a determinant for new home buyers,” said the mayor who believes that everyone has the right to own

a home. “When you buy a lot in Rockyford, you’re paying quite a bit less money than you would in larger centres.”

The council has put in a tax incentive program for the lots. People will be on a four-year graduated program of 25 per cent per year unless they fail to complete the properties within the two-year time frame. Then the property reverts to a regular rate.

After some successful events last year, Rockyford can look forward to some returning attractions such as the Rockyford Rodeo & Bull-a-rama in the summer. There will also be the annual Maritime Madness hosted by the local Lions Club. Burke recounts how this event drew 200 people last year with the auction raising over \$100,000. Last year the village was chosen to host Cuborama by Scouts Canada, which saw 700 attendees according to the event’s website.

“It doubles the size of our community,” said Burke. “A real hub of activity.”

The proceeds were used to assist the Rockyford Curling Club and local ag society to finance the replacement of the curling rink last year, costing \$250,000. Burke considers this to be one of last year’s major accomplishments.

However, this year as well as the last has not come without challenges to overcome.

Burke explains about the “downloading of provincial government (responsibilities) onto the municipalities.”

There is an increase in the local government taking questions regarding increased taxes despite not being at the hands of the municipal government. The increases include education and police funding.

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Game 1 **Saturday, February 14**  
Game 3 **Wednesday, February 18**  
Game 5 **Saturday, February 21**

**vs Cochrane**

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Strathmore Times **PLAYER OF THE GAME**

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**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Cut quickly
- 5. A way to state clearly
- 11. River in NE Scotland
- 14. Expansive
- 15. Lacking social polish
- 16. Amount of time
- 17. Frame
- 19. Automobile
- 20. Toadstools
- 21. High school dances
- 22. Utilize
- 23. Experimented with
- 25. One-sided
- 27. Acquisitive
- 31. Potted plants
- 34. Everyone has one
- 35. Kalahari Desert lake
- 38. Unidentified flying object
- 41. Small amount
- 42. Daughter of Acrisius
- 44. Ornamental box
- 45. Government agents
- 46. Uncertain
- 49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
- 51. Treeless plains
- 55. One’s sense of self-importance
- 56. Consumer advocate
- 60. Type of lounge
- 61. Body part
- 62. Can be persuaded
- 64. Woman (French)
- 65. Ready and willing to be taught
- 66. Arab ruler title
- 67. Unhappy
- 68. Gradually went away
- 69. Able to think clearly

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Brushed
- 2. Small water spirit (Germ.)
- 3. Heroes
- 4. Monetary units
- 5. Some don’t want to share theirs
- 6. Free-swimming invertebrate
- 7. Litigates
- 8. Outer
- 9. Parallelograms
- 10. Uneasy feelings
- 11. Cross
- 12. A way to remove
- 13. Pages can be dog-\_\_
- 18. Ukrainian city
- 24. A citizen of Denmark
- 26. Month
- 28. Hindu queens
- 29. Group of chemicals
- 30. Rider of Rohan
- 31. Wet dirt
- 32. Southwestern Russia city
- 33. Observed
- 36. Angry
- 37. Drivers’ licenses
- 39. Musical composition
- 40. Auction
- 43. They \_\_
- 45. Women
- 47. Be filled with love for
- 48. Thick-soled sock
- 49. Appears
- 50. Old World lizard
- 52. The leading performer
- 53. Protein
- 54. “Gunga Din” script writer
- 57. Art \_\_, around 1920
- 58. \_\_ Blyton, children’s author
- 59. Abnormal breathing
- 63. A place to rest

**STRATHMORE TIMES**

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# Alberta moves forward

CHANTELLE DE JONGE  
Chestermere-Strathmore MLA

I hope everyone had a good Family Day weekend with your families and loved ones.

Alberta is moving forward because our government is focused on supporting families, students, and communities – from classrooms to energy innovation. That means giving teachers the tools to meet today’s classroom challenges and backing technologies that keep Alberta’s energy sector competitive.

Classrooms in Alberta are more complex than ever. Recent data from 89,000 classrooms across 1,549 schools show that while average class sizes remain manageable, particular school divisions in rapidly growing communities face disproportionately increased enrollment pressures, and student needs across the province are growing. Some students require extra academic support, some are learning English, and others need behavioural or emotional guidance. Teachers face increasing demands, and Alberta’s government is making sure they have the help they need.

That’s why our government is investing \$143 million to create 476 K-6 complexity teams, each made up of one teacher and two educational assistants. These teams will work directly in classrooms across Alber-

ta to provide extra support to students with diverse needs. By focusing on early intervention, these teams will help students succeed before challenges grow and give teachers more capacity to do their work effectively. Schools with the highest complexity factors are being prioritized, ensuring resources reach the students who need them most. This targeted, evidence-based approach reflects our commitment to practical solutions grounded in data.

Strong classrooms are the foundation for strong communities, and Alberta is also leading in responsible energy development. Through the industry-funded Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction (TIER) program, our government is investing \$28 million in six projects using innovative technologies to help energy companies remain globally competitive. These projects include converting cattle farm waste into natural gas, restoring old oil and gas sites, and improving well efficiency.

These energy projects are expected to create roughly 1,000 jobs, contribute nearly \$167 million to Alberta’s economy by 2027, and reduce about 260,000 tonnes of emissions by 2030. By supporting innovation and sustainability in the energy sector, Alberta is demonstrating that it is possible to grow the economy while reducing environmental impact.

Strong leadership means making choices that deliver real results for Albertans. Our government is ensuring classrooms have the support teachers and students need, while energy projects keep our industries competitive and sustainable for decades to come. By focusing on practical solutions and long-term planning, we’re building a stronger and more resilient province for everyone.

Finally, I am pleased to share that the Chestermere Historical Foundation has received \$42,643 in funding from the Government of Alberta for the completion of their ‘Word of Mouth’ Public Art Project. Launched in 2018, this project features historical items from the former Summer Village of Chestermere Lake and the Town of Chestermere. This funding will support the final phase of the initiative – the creation of a time capsule. This capsule will offer residents a unique opportunity to contribute personal reflections and stories about their life in Chestermere for future generations to discover 50 years from now.

As always, please feel free to reach out to my office with your feedback and questions (Chestermere.Strathmore@assembly.ab.ca).

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

## Tips to prevent business break and enters

ALBERTA RCMP

The Alberta RCMP is reminding business owners of crime prevention practices that can help reduce risk of theft and damages.

In 2025, there were 3,858 business break and enters across Alberta RCMP jurisdiction. This number is down from 4,574 business break and enters in 2024.

The Alberta RCMP recommends the following for business

owners:

- Install an alarm system and ensure it’s armed at the end of each day.
- Invest in good quality cameras that provide full coverage of the space, or points of entry at a minimum.
- Ensure there’s appropriate interior lighting that can be left on to provide optimum visibility and install exterior motion lighting to deter thieves from the outside.
- Keep track of all keys and fobs that access your commercial property.
- Keep windows clear of posters or stickers and consider installing shutters or bars for added protection.

- Ensure valuables are secured and away from windows after hours.

- Consider investing in fences for extra protection and ensure they are well maintained.

Budgeting for security measures such as sturdy locks, quality cameras and an alarm system can pay off in the long run. These investments can make a difference in preventing theft and identifying criminals.

For more tips and information, Business Security brochures are available for free at all RCMP detachments across the province. To keep learning about business safety, follow our social media accounts on Facebook (@RCMPinAlberta) and X (@RCMPAlberta).

Alberta RCMP encourages the public and business owners to report any suspicious activity to police. If you see a crime in progress, dial 911. If you wish to remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS), online at [www.P3Tips.com](http://www.P3Tips.com) or by using the “P3 Tips” app available through the Apple App or Google Play Store.

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**Thought for the Week**

~

*Perhaps what lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.*

Emerson

## SUDOKU

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## County aiming to establish more transparency regarding lodge operations, finances

Continued from Page 1

“We don’t know for sure yet, but the requisition structure stays the same and the capital part stays similar as well if we all agree to it,” said Reeve Scott Klasen. “It’s all that how people understand so everybody has the same information and the public has it as well.”

Koester noted the existing lodge currently operates with approximately \$900,000 in its administrative reserves and does not have enough of a reserve to tackle a large emergency project such as another roof replacement should that situation arise.

“If we had to put a roof on the building at \$600,000, we would have to come to the municipalities and ask for an advance, or you can go and ask the minister for a loan and they are very stringent,” he explained.

Council passed a motion to direct administration to invite the WHMB to an information session in order to provide an overview of the operation of the existing lodge, and the proposed new lodge.



### Home tourney

The Strathmore High School senior boys and girls basketball teams hosted their annual tournament Feb. 13-14. The boys, shown here beating the Bow Valley Bobcats 79-76, and the girls, shown here playing the Medicine Hat Colts, are looking to build their game heading into the zone championships later next month.

Joe Lepage Photos

There is nothing like fresh produce in the peak season of summer. However, when not available, frozen produce is an excellent substitute. On a weight basis, frozen foods are less expensive. Also they are just as nutritious as fresh, being picked at their peak ripeness. Frozen foods are already prepped so they save you time in the kitchen.

*Glaucoma* is an eye disease caused by high pressure within the eye. The condition is effectively treated with prescription eye drops. *Age-related macular degeneration* (AMD) is a loss of vision in the central part of the eye but not the outer edge of the visual field. Those vitamin formulas (AREDS) may be helpful for AMD but will not help glaucoma.

Those skin patches, called transdermal patches, each contain a measured amount of medication to be released slowly over time. They should not be cut in half. This could result in the release of medication too quickly resulting in an overdose. If in doubt, check with your pharmacist. To dispose of a used patch, fold the sticky sides together and store away from children.

Are you a bathroom reader? Evidently, prolonged sitting on the toilet is a major cause of hemorrhoids. It puts extra pressure on the veins in your rectum causing them to swell. It is best to limit toilet time to 5 to 10 minutes, avoid straining, ensure enough fibre in your diet, drink plenty of water, and stay active. And don't take your smart phone into the bathroom.

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### Fused glass

Inspiring artists celebrated Valentine's Day with creativity and colour at a special fused glass workshop held Feb. 14 at the Wheatland Society of the Arts. The hands-on session gave participants the opportunity to design and create their own fused glass serving dish – with a relaxing afternoon workshop where participants were guided through the basics of glass design.

Joe Lepage Photos



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**Hockey Day in G.A.**

Special guest Ron Sutter joined 87 athletes on the ice during Hockey Day in G.A. in Gleichen on Feb. 14. The annual 4-on-4 pond hockey tournament drew strong community support and delivered a full day of spirited competition and sportsmanship. Hosted by the Gleichen Minor Hockey Association, the successful event highlighted the organization's mission to provide local youth with opportunities to develop skills, teamwork and a lifelong love of the game.

Melissa Piche 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.

- March 3, 2026, 9:00 a.m. | Council Meeting
- March 10, 2026, 9:00 a.m. | Municipal Planning Commission
- March 26, 2026, 9:00 a.m. | Committee of the Whole

For call-in details, access links, and agenda packages, please visit our website. <https://wheatlandcounty.ca/agendasandminutes/>

**COFFEE & CONVERSATION**

Join Wheatland County Division 3 Councillor, Donna Biggar for Coffee & Conversation - an informal community drop-in to connect, share ideas, and talk about local matters over coffee.



February 21, 2026  
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Jetsetters Room,  
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U7 Wranglers

## Tourney time

Strathmore Minor Hockey hosted their annual U7 and U9 hockey tournament Feb. 14-16 at the Strathmore Family Centre and Standard Arena. There were four U7 teams and three U9 teams hosting, while the local U9A Wranglers also played.

Joe Lepage Photos



U9C Storm



U9B Storm

U9A Wranglers



U7 SR Devils



U9A Storm



U7 SR Devils



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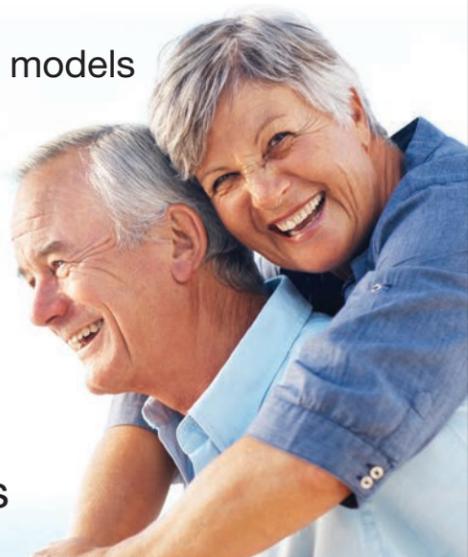
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The Strathmore Legion celebrated several local students who were awarded for their creative submissions through the annual remembrance contest. The ceremony, held Feb. 14 at the legion building, distributed certificates to the award winners, as well as returned their works to the students

John Watson Photo

## Strathmore students recognized for remembrance-themed creative works

**JOHN WATSON**  
*Local Journalism Initiative Reporter*

Several Strathmore students were recognized by the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 10 for their creative works submitted to the annual remembrance contest.

A ceremony was hosted Feb. 14 at the legion building, with family and interested public invited to join and celebrate the successful entries.

“(It is) a national program that invites children to tell us what they think remembrance means, and so through their poems, posters and essays, and for high school students, two-minute videos if they want,” said Jennifer Fransen, chair of communications and community outreach for the legion. “The idea is we want kids to remember to understand that the legion does not promote war, that we promote peace and that is why we have soldiers and sailors. I get veterans to actually judge ... and they have a tough job.”

Entries that are awarded through the contest receive monetary prizes in addition to their certificates.

Those that placed first in each respective cate-

gory had their submissions move on to a similar competition at the district level. From there, should entries continue to be victorious, they may be allowed to move on to provincials, then be judged nationally.

“We go out of our way to educate these kids about remembrance. We go into the schools, we do this – we invite them here as often as we can because we want them to understand that democracy is hard earned. It does not just happen and they need to be aware because they are the future,” said Fransen.

Due to the teachers’ strike which took place in the fall of 2025, the contest experienced significant delays. The awards ceremony typically takes place in January following judging in December.

Similarly, due to kids not being in schools for a significant portion of the educational year, the contest received fewer submissions than normal.

“I made sure that it got out to all the schools and I was grateful that we got this many because we were afraid we wouldn’t get any because we knew that the teachers were a month behind,” said Fransen.

*Continue on Page 9*



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# Spurs host communication event

SARA WOLFS  
Strathmore Rusty Spurs 4-H Club

The Strathmore Rusty Spurs competed in their annual communications event at Nightingale Hall on Feb. 7. A huge thank you to the lovely people who came out to judge the event for the Rusty Spurs!

Members had many amazing speech and presentation topics, such as a speech on axolotls and a presentation on war photographer Lee Miller, as well as so many more creative and insightful topics!

The placings of the communications events are as follows: for the junior speech category, Gabe won first, Kinsley won second, and Preston won third. For the senior speech category, Abby won first, Sydney won second and Chelbea won third. Lastly in the senior presentation category Kayla won first, Amiah won second, and Sara won third. First and second place winners have the choice to advance on to the district level.



Then intermediate or senior members who win first or second are able to advance to Regionals and seniors are able to advance further onto provincials.

Districts will be held at the Strathmore Civic Centre on Feb. 28 at 8:30 a.m. and will include members from Crowfoot 4-H Multi, Arrowwood River Wranglers, Rockyford Beef, Hussar and Standard

clubs. All are welcome to come watch and it's a great way to support your local clubs as well as a wonderful way to spend a morning!

Remember to follow the Rusty Spurs on Facebook and Instagram at Strathmore Rusty Spurs 4-H Club for more regular updates on what the club is up to and for any fundraisers.

# George Freeman vice principal says goodbye after 16 years with Golden Hills School Division

JOHN WATSON  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Matt Laslo has resigned from his position serving as vice principal of George Freeman school, taking on a new role as an educator in Salmon Arm, B.C.

"Obviously there are some mixed emotions. I was the vice principal over at George Freeman for the past two years and it was the best job in the world," said Laslo. "It was awesome, the school is really good, we were able to do some pretty awesome stuff, getting that sport court build, and getting some of that landscaping done outside and building up the sports programs, but I am excited for a new opportunity to move out here to B.C. and try something different."

Laslo added he has lived in Strathmore for over 30 years. Prior to serving at George Freeman, he spent

five years at Crowther Memorial, and eight years at Strathmore High School. In total, he was with the Golden Hills School Division for 16 years.

He explained he was inspired to become an educator by the teachers he learned under, who instilled a love of learning and a love of being in school. To this extent, Laslo credits Rob Pirie, Brad Steele, and Dion Galandy, among others.

"During the teachers' strike, we started looking around and it is not completely the strike or the government or anything, but it was a part in that, and (seeing) how our provincial government handled that situation," said Laslo. "I ended up stumbling on a ... job up here in Salmon Arm. We had camped up in the Shuswap region for the last couple summers, and we really liked the area, especially the trees, the lakes, the mountains, the access to the out-

door lifestyle."

Laslo will now serve as the vice principal of JL Jackson Secondary. His official start date was Tuesday, Feb. 17. Jillian Terry will take over the vice principalship at George Freeman.

His new school currently operates with students in Grades 9-11 and will adopt Grade 12 students in the next educational year. Grade 8 students will be introduced into the school in the following year.

"It is hard to say goodbye to a community you have been a part of for so long, and yesterday just during the drive, you just deal with all those mixed emotions and mixed feelings," said Laslo. "When you get out here and you see the mountains and you see the trees and you see the Shuswap Lake, a person starts to feel pretty lucky that I'm even getting an opportunity to try and experience something like this."

# Elks turn grief into action

MARIO PRUSINA  
Times Editor

When the Strathmore Elks Lodge 491 lost a fellow member to suicide, the grief was profound.

Members of the Elks chose to transform their sorrow into action – launching a community-wide mental health initiative now making a difference across Strathmore and Wheatland County.

The powerful initiative began when Elks member Sean Duthie suggested that the grief be turned into action by making a meaningful difference in the community, raising awareness around suicide prevention and reminding people that help can be available.

Funds raised through the committee's efforts directly support individuals and families who require mental health services but face obstacles such as cost or long wait times. Through an application process with either Strathmore FCSS or Wheatland FCSS offices, residents can now access free or low-cost counselling services.

"We're partnering with Grit Psychology, Bloom, and Refreshing Insight Counselling Servi-

ces to provide both in-person and virtual counselling, with a focus on reaching those who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford or access services," said Budd Brazier with Strathmore FCSS in a release. "Community members can contact either office and our team will complete an intake, support the application process, and once approved, match that individual or family with a counsellor that best suits their needs."

In addition to counselling services, the committee has developed an education program that will travel to communities throughout the area. The first session is scheduled for Feb. 21 in Carseland from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with lunch provided.

The sessions are designed to share information about available resources, help residents recognize mental health challenges and provide guidance on how to offer support. Additional sessions are planned for Gleichen on March 14, Standard on April 18, and Rockyford on May 9.

"This committee is formed to bring awareness around mental health and suicide prevention," Brazier said. "The more awareness we can build, the greater folks within the region can access sup-

port."

Now in its second year, the committee has already seen significant success. The inaugural Strathmore Elks Mental Health golf tournament last August was followed by a dinner gala in November that drew more than 230 attendees – an impressive turnout that exceeded expectations. In total, more than \$20,000 was raised to fund counselling services.

"It was all highlights, really," Brazier said of the committee's first year. "It was a great group of people from the Strathmore Elks and then a few others within the community."

# Strathmore Legion celebrated students

Continued from Page 8

"We had stacks of things coming from Holy Cross this year, and Westmount did a great job, but we understand that their curriculum is critical and so we are grateful when we fit in and if they can't, we understand that too."

Fransen noted this year's contest received 45 submissions – roughly half of what is typically seen.

Next year, the legion is aiming to add the No Stone Left Alone program to its itinerary, speaking to high school students about researching local ve-

terans who now lay in the local Field of Honour.

"Our hope is to learn about veterans who come out of this area. We know that during World War I and World War II, some of the largest numbers of veterans came from this community," said Fransen. "It's a national program whereby you take school kids and they go out to the Field of Honour, you talk to them about what it means and then we ask the students to place poppies on the graves so that they make the connection (that) there is a story behind that grave and we need to remember what that person did for us."

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STRATHMORE TIMES

# Connect Leisure Services aiming to raise awareness for local neurodivergent support programs

**JOHN WATSON**  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Connect Leisure Services hosted an open house, Feb. 16, aiming to raise awareness for the organization and the supports they provide to the local community.

“We are a day program for adults with neurodiverse abilities – just teaching them some life skills, some social skills, all of those elements,” explained Rina Hempel, founder of Connect Leisure Services. “We have been operating for five years, we have been in this building since 2023, and we have just expanded to include a support home.”

Hempel explained several of the families who utilize Connect Leisure Services were curious about the new facility, which was acquired approximately six weeks ago.

Among its other goals, the open house aimed to also attract the notice of potential sponsors to support their ongoing services and endeavors.

“We are specifically seeking out corporate sponsorships to just help

sustain the home because for the individuals (living there) of course, the operating costs are high, staffing, and the cost of living is high,” she said. “The individuals can’t possibly finance (the house) solely. We are looking at corporate sponsorship in whatever way that looks.”

Connect Leisure Services currently supports 20 families throughout the local community. Among these, 10 individuals are currently enrolled in the Strive Program through local schools.

Hempel added there are 19 more students currently at the junior high level who will be joining the program in the near future.

Those with neurodiverse abilities and cognitive issues served by the programs include but are not limited to those with autism, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome.

“At the clubhouse here, we use recreation therapy as the model of learning. We run baking programs, we run life skills programs, we run healthy habits, we do lots of activities in the community,” said Hempel. “We work on the emo-

Connect Leisure Services hosted an open house, Feb. 16, showcasing their clubhouse, as well as their new supportive living facility. The event aimed to raise awareness for the organization in order to attract volunteers and corporate sponsors who could support ongoing operations.

John Watson Photo



tional wellbeing, social skills, cognitive skills, physical abilities, all of those important elements.”

Regarding the imminent population increase anticipated to occur in Strathmore and the surrounding area in the next several years, she added the team is taking their programs one day at a time and growing where necessity is discovered.

In addition to sponsorships, the or-

ganization is also seeking volunteers to help at the clubhouse with regular operations.

“There are lots of different ways people can add to programs,” said Hempel. “We started with one person and now we have 20 families, so the need is there for sure.”

Further information about Connect Leisure Services and their programs has been made available online.

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After earning a hard-fought 5-4 win in Game 1 on home ice on Feb. 14, the Wheatland Kings, wearing their road whites, were hammered 7-1 in Game 2 in Cochrane on Feb. 15.

Photos Courtesy of Patrick Price

## Kings earn split heading into Game 3

**JOHN WATSON**  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Agra Risk Wheatland Kings stand on even footing with the Cochrane Generals after the first two games of their best of five playoff series.

Rejoining the league after their first-round bye, the Kings have claimed home ice advantage. Squaring off for Game 1, Feb. 14, the home team took the win 5-4. The following day, the Generals struck back on their home ice, demolishing the Kings 7-1.

“Saturday in town here was a pretty close game, then (Sunday) it was one-nothing halfway through the game and they got a few and pulled away from us there in the end,” said Doug Raycroft, head coach of the Wheatland Kings. “We are hoping we can get the win Wednesday at home, and then hopefully finish them off on the road there on Friday. We will see.”

Throughout the regular season, the Kings and the Generals met on the ice five times. Of these, the Kings were victorious only twice.

When it came to the regular standings, the two teams were neck-and-neck all season, largely boasting the exact same win-loss records right up until the very end.

“They are a good team. We knew it

was going to be a tough series, and it is not disappointing so far. That’s exactly what it’s been,” said Raycroft. “They are playing like we thought and the biggest thing for us is just playing our kind of game that we need to play. That is the thing we are trying to get our guys is just to focus on our game and be disciplined.”

Raycroft emphasized the need for his team to take as few penalties as possible throughout the series and not give the Generals any potential advantages.

Despite feelings being elevated for the playoffs, the trick will be to remain as collected as possible and maintain the team’s systems.

“We could play better. (Sunday), we did not play well. I don’t think we played well at all. To be one and one against a good team and still hoping that we get our best hockey still ahead of us, we feel fortunate about that,” he said. “I think our guys have to play our game. It sounds simple but I think a lot of times, people get fired up because it’s playoffs and they don’t keep their emotions in check, they start doing things that maybe they wouldn’t normally.”

Following Game 3 in Strathmore on Feb. 18, the Kings will travel to Cochrane to play Feb. 20. Should it be required, Game 5 will be back in Strathmore on Feb. 21.

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**ANNOUNCEMENT**

"THINKING OF YOUR DREAM VACATION?" How about the Knights of Columbus Airdrie Dream Vacation Raffle. BUY YOUR TICKET TODAY! at airdriedreamvacation.ca"

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**NOTICE**

**REVISED DATE**



Quality Water. Western Legacy. Since 1894

**Form 3 A  
Irrigation Districts Act  
(Section 12)**

**Notice of Public Meeting  
Western Irrigation District  
Change to the Expansion Limit**

TAKE NOTICE that a public meeting will be held at Western Irrigation District's main office at A-1000 Pine Street, Strathmore, Alberta, on the 13th day of March 2026, beginning at 10:00 o'clock in the AM to discuss a proposed change to the expansion limit of the Western Irrigation District from the existing limit of 110,000 acres to 140,000 acres.

Additional information regarding this proposed change is available to the public at the office of the District.

Dated at Strathmore, Alberta, this 9th day of February 2026.

Troy Tangedal  
Chief Executive Officer  
Western Irrigation District



**Upcoming Council Meetings**

**February 18, 2026 | 6 p.m.**

**March 4, 2026 | 6 p.m.**

**March 11, 2026 | 6 p.m.**

Regular Meeting of Council

Regular Meeting of Council

Committee of the Whole

**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.

**Notices coming out in February.**

**Property assessment notices.**

On February 17, 2026, more than 6,400 annual property assessment notices will be mailed out, signaling the start of the 2025 Customer Inquiry Period, which wraps up in April.

The Customer Inquiry Period is an important time for property owners to check, compare, and review their assessment for accuracy, fairness, and equity.

When you receive your notice, there's a few things you should do.

- Review the details on your assessment notice.
- Check what makes up your property's assessment value and compare it with similar properties in your neighbourhood using our property search function, found at [Strathmore.ca/Assessment](http://Strathmore.ca/Assessment)
- Contact the Town's assessor, Wildrose Assessment Services, for one-on-one support by calling 403-343-3357. Their property assessment experts can answer most assessment related questions with no formal complaint fees required. To help address concerns, please have your latest assessment notice in front of you with the account number and validation group information ready.
- If you disagree with your property's assessment, you can file a formal appeal with the Assessment Review Board by the deadline stated on your latest property assessment notice. You can find information on this process at [Strathmore.ca/Assessment](http://Strathmore.ca/Assessment)

**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 open.
- Family and Community Support Services Advisory Board - 2 positions open.

For questions about Volunteer Boards and Committees, please email [LSAdmin@strathmore.ca](mailto:LSAdmin@strathmore.ca) or call 403-934-3133.

**How will you get active?**

**Heart Month in Strathmore.**

In Strathmore, building a healthy community means supporting residents in living active lives at every stage. Heart Month is a great opportunity to do just that.

Join us for the fourth annual Heart Month Challenge and make moving a priority this February. Here's what to do:

- Walk or swim as much as you can throughout the month.
- Track your distance with us.
- Beat last year's distance of 3,227.29 km

Learn more about how to get active with the Strathmore recreation team at [Strathmore.ca/StrathmoreHeartMonth](http://Strathmore.ca/StrathmoreHeartMonth).

**Every donation matters.**

**Fourth Annual Food Drive.**

Over the past three years, this community has broken it's own record for amount of food donated to the Wheatland Food Bank. In 2023, residents donated 4,667 pounds of food. The total grew to 4,735 pounds in 2024, and in 2025, the drive collected an impressive 5,456.15 pounds of food.

Let's break the record for a fourth time.

The Strathmore Fire Department, joined by members from RCMP, FCSS, Operations, Wheatland EMS, and Municipal Enforcement, will be taking part in our annual food drive for Wheatland Food Bank.

This year's food drive runs from February 26th to March 6th. Volunteers will be dropping bags off at select neighborhoods on February 26th, and will return to collect filled bags on March 6th.

If you didn't get a bag but want to contribute, give the Strathmore Fire Department a call at **403-934-3022**. Items can also be dropped off at the Firehall any day between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.

**Good food, great food.**

**Get the Good Food Box.**

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

**Public notice to electors.**

**Borrowing Bylaw.**

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Town of Strathmore, in the Province of Alberta, has given first reading to borrowing By-law No. 26-02 which will, upon final passage and approval, authorize the proper officers of the said Town to borrow monies from a Canadian Chartered Bank or the Government of Alberta on the general credit and security of the municipality, to pay for upgrades to the Central Trunk Sewer located in Strathmore, Alberta.

The total borrowing required for the aforementioned project is \$4,927,000. The borrowing is to be repayable in monthly, semi-annual, or annual equal payments of combined principal and interest installments not to exceed a repayment period of twenty-five (25) years, at an interest rate as fixed from time to time by the Canadian Chartered Bank or other financial institution. The annual rate of interest is not to exceed six percent per annum (6.0%).

NOW THEREFORE NOTICE is hereby given by the Council of the Town of Strathmore that, unless a petition of the electors for a vote on By-law No. 26-02 is demanded, as provided for by the terms of Section 231 of the Municipal Government Act, the said Council may pass the said borrowing by-law.

All persons interested are hereby notified and they are required to govern themselves accordingly. The Bylaw can be viewed online at [Strathmore.ca](http://Strathmore.ca) or at the Strathmore Municipal Building between the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

DATED at the Town of Strathmore, in the Province of Alberta this 21st day of January 2026.

Per: Riley Brolly, CPA  
Manager, Financial Planning, Budgeting & Reporting

**Information for Electors**

Persuant to Section 1(o) of the Municipal Government Act an "elector" means: A person who is eligible to vote in the election for a Councillor under the Local Authorities Election Act.

Persuant to section 47(1) of the Local Authorities Election Act a person is eligible to vote in an election if they are:

- at least 18 years old;
- a Canadian citizen and;
- has resided in Alberta for the 6 consecutive months immediately preceding election day and is resident in the area on election day.

A poll may be demanded in the Town of Strathmore by electors equal in number to at least:

- in the case of a municipality other than a summer village, by electors of the municipality equal in number to at least 10% of the population and
- in the case of a summer village, by 10% of the electors of the summer village

In accordance with the provisions of section 223 of the Municipal Government Act and in accordance with the provisions of section 251 of the Municipal Government Act.

The petition for a vote must be received by the Chief Administrative Officer within 15 days of the last publication of this notice and shall contain on each page "an accurate and identical statement of the purpose of the petition".

(Further requirements of the petition are provided in section 224 of the Municipal Government Act.)

Date of the last publication of this notice is 18th day of February 2026.



**Bored? Join a board.**

Multiple positions available.

Visit [Strathmore.ca/BoardsandCommittees](http://Strathmore.ca/BoardsandCommittees) for more information.