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# TIMES

VOLUME 18 ISSUE 5

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## County supports new lodge

JOHN WATSON  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Wheatland County council has renewed their support for the proposed Wheatland Lodge project aiming to see construction in Strathmore.

The topic was once again brought before council during the Jan. 13 meeting at the request of Coun. Glenn Koester, who also chairs the Wheatland Housing Management Board.

Sending a letter in support of the project serves ultimately to take advantage of the Alberta Housing Partnership Program (AHPP) process in the hopes to curry enough favour from the province in order to receive financial aid.

Without grant funding, the project will not be able to advance. The amounts which will be made available to distribute amongst grant projects in the next session has yet to be determined.

“The announcement will be in the second quarter. It’s a provincial presentation; the province has total control over the process – they have total control over how much money they give; they have total control over who gets it,” said Koester. “All we can do is ask and that is all we are doing now is asking. If we are accepted by the AHPP grant and they say ‘yes, you qualify,’ then we pass on to the next phase and that phase is, we have to get a Class A budget done and that is needed for federal submission.”

The topic of a Class A budget has been of debate for several months due to the cost associated with acquisition.

Koester added the ideal scenario, should the lodge finally be able to proceed with construction, would be to have new 120-bed facility available, as well as to retain the former (current) 94-bed Wheatland Lodge.

“The cost of this Class A budget is shared between the five municipalities. It is also assisted to by WAHS contributions annually to their share of the housing operating expenses,” said Koester. “They also share, which is currently 10 per cent, of all building and planning costs, but that has been ongoing for a while, and they will continue to do that.”

Continued on Page 4



## High-flying battle

KB6 launches a flying elbow otop Ryno Reynolds during Real Canadian Wrestling’s Final Countdown on Jan. 30 at the Strathmore Agricultural Pavillion. The action-packed event featured the top stars in RCW, including Strathmore’s own Steve Wilde. See Page 8 for more coverage.

Joe Lepage Photo



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## Move in with Us!

# Matt Blais makes Strathmore appearance

MELISSA PICHE  
Times Contributor

When Matt Blais takes the stage at the Strathmore Travelodge on Feb. 28, the audience can expect more than just a concert – they can expect connection.

The performance is part of the Musical Arts Society concerts, known for bringing high-calibre musicians into intimate, community-driven spaces, something Blais values deeply.

“One of my heroes is Joni Mitchell and she famously said that she preferred performing to small audiences – where you can see people’s faces because it feels very human,” Blais said. “I’ve always resonated with that. I perform for myself, but I’m also fuelled by that connection.”

Over a career that has spanned large festivals and quiet listening rooms alike, Blais has come to appreciate the intimacy of smaller venues.

“I’ve performed for 12,000 people and 12 people,” he said. “Each has its merits but the human element of it is really special. I’m not sure that big crowds have that same intimacy.”

That intimacy shapes how he prepa-

res for shows like the upcoming Strathmore performance.

“I love words, first and foremost. I consider myself a writer more than a musician,” Blais explained. “If I know they’re going to be listening then I want them to hang on every word. I’ll tell a few more stories and choose songs that have a deeper message.”

The Strathmore show will include new material, reflecting a creative period Blais describes as ongoing and deeply personal. Recognition such as Calgary Songwriter of the Year in 2024 has affirmed his path but he sees accolades as motivation rather than arrival.

“Winning that award was something to put on my mantle,” he said, “but really it was a push forward. It was saying, ‘Okay, the work’s not done. You’re on to something. There are more songs to write.’”

For first-time listeners Blais hopes the experience offers both release and belonging.

“I hope there will be some laughter and some tears or at least some introspection,” he said. “If they can forget about their worries for an hour and a half or two hours and leave smi-

ling, feeling like they really belonged in that moment, then my mission was accomplished.”

Opening the concert is Strathmore-based singer-songwriter Greg Rider whose path to music has been anything but linear.

“Music for me was kind of a Plan B, I never really saw myself becoming a musician,” Rider said, a late bloomer on guitar with his first open mic performance in Montreal. “My hands were shaking, my legs were shaking, my voice was trembling. I left that stage thinking it was the worst performance I ever could have done, but something caught hold of me.”

Rider’s journey took him from Ontario to Nashville, where he immersed himself in country music, before eventually finding his way west.

“It was a godsend for me to find Strathmore,” he said. “It was where I was meant to be.”

Tickets are \$60 and can be purchased online by visiting the Strathmore Musical Arts website (strathmorearts.com). The Feb. 28 event begins with cocktails starting at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m. and the show starting promptly at 7:30 p.m.



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# Strathmore schools declared to be unaffected by recent book bans

JOHN WATSON  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Public schools in Strathmore are reported to have been entirely unaffected by recent bans ordered by the province.

Jeff Grimsdale, superintendent of schools for Golden Hills School Division, though he declined to comment on record, did confirm that the school division already did not keep titles in its collections which had been deemed inappropriate for students.

Education Minister Demetrios Nicolaides issued an order, Sept. 8, requiring school boards to submit lists of the books they were removing from shelves by the end of that month.

The province's two largest divisions, Calgary Board of Education (CBE) reported removing 44 titles, and the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB) removed 34.

Rocky View Public Schools reported the removal of 35 titles from their shelves in order to come into compliance with the order.

As of Jan. 5, Ministerial Order 034/2025, the Standards for the Selection, Availability and Access of School Literacy Materials came into effect.

Under this order, school authorities are to ensure that materials featured in schools containing any explicit visual depiction of a sexual act are not accessible or available to children or students.

Instead of providing explicitly defined lists to school divisions, the province has indicated themes and content within the order for schools to locate individually and remove from their libra-

ries.

The only exception being materials such as dictionaries, technical materials or encyclopedias which are used for reference purposes and are not narrative in nature.

Chestermere-Strathmore MLA Chantelle de Jonge declined a request for comment regarding the bans; instead issuing a brief statement in support of the order.

"Children should never be exposed to images of masturbation, sex toy use, oral sex, or child molestation in a school library book," she said. "That is why we created a policy to ensure these materials are not accessible to students, while also giving parents greater autonomy to know what books are in their child's classroom. This is about protecting children and empowering parents."

It is also outlined in the order that parents of children or students who are able to access a teacher's classroom collection are to be informed of the titles being personally made available.

Several titles which previously occupied recommended reading lists, particularly for high school students that are now being challenged on school shelves today include *The Great Gatsby*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Brave New World*.

Rachel Dick Hughes, director of library services for the Strathmore Municipal Library, also declined to comment on record regarding the recent bans.

The Strathmore Municipal Library engages in Freedom to Read week in Canada, which runs from Feb. 22 to 28.

# Library to host reading week programming for students during time off

JOHN WATSON  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Reading week will soon be upon many students which will translate into several days off of school.

In preparation for this, the Strathmore Municipal Library has scheduled several programs to keep the community engaged during the down time.

"Most of these just came to be very naturally. We weren't trying to offer something for every age group or anything like that, it just kind of came about," said Laura Henderson, assistant director for the library.

Much of the content being offered has been geared towards a wide array of folks within the community. First on the docket will be a story time event geared towards school age kids, operating Feb. 17.

"It's just a really fun, interactive story time. We run regular literacy programs, we have not run a dedicated story time in a few years so this will be just something a bit more interactive, geared to younger school aged children," said Henderson. "It's during a time when we wouldn't normally schedule something like this. We don't typically have school aged children in during the day ... it was an opportunity to have a story time but at a different time than normal, and available to those children at Golden Hills and Sacred Heart."

Moving up in the age groups for their target audience, the following day, Feb. 18, will feature a small carnival-type program for teens, and aims to highlight several of the more regular things to do at the library.

Henderson added in recent years, the library has gone from hosting little to no teen program-

ming, to seeing hundreds of faces coming in and out the doors for activities.

"We are really excited to have all these different programs. Our Dungeons and Dragons program last week had 30 teens in it, so we realized the teens are coming into the library, but they are spread out amongst all the different programs," she said. "We thought there are probably other teens in town that could benefit or enjoy some of the programming that we have and just do not know that it is happening."

Tables will feature games and snacks throughout the course of the event. Completing each activity will also enter participants to win a prize.

At the end of the week, the library will be hosting a "Draw our Story" event, inviting members of the community to continue efforts from Family Literacy Day in developing the children's story previously brainstormed.

"We invited the community to come help us write a children's story. One of our programmers facilitated that program ... I was a little concerned that she was going to end up writing a story herself, but there were about 12 participants that were actively involved in writing the story," said Henderson. "A children's picture book needs pictures so we thought we would invite the community back to illustrate the book. It will be a complete book, and we can publish it and have it available in the library."

The idea will be that participants can drop in, pick a page and illustrate what they would like to see on it. By the end, the drawings are intended to be implemented as created during the event.

**NEXT HOME PLAYOFF GAMES**

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

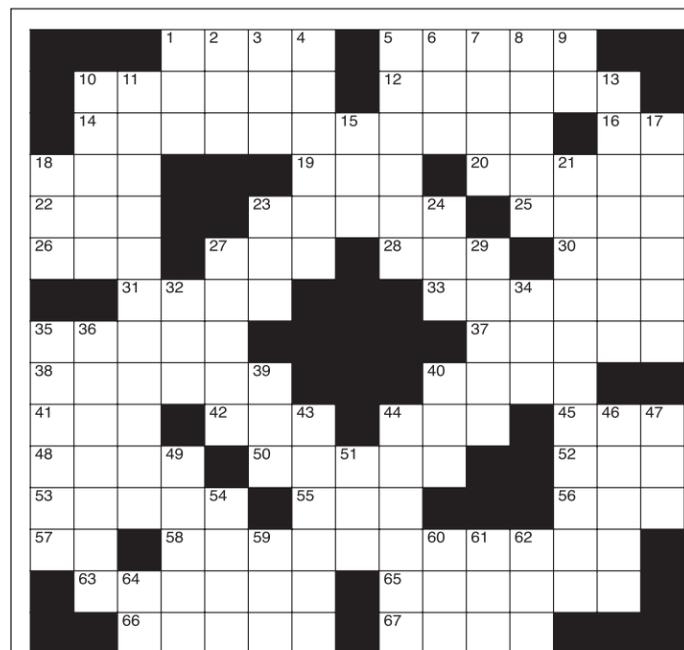
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Strathmore Times **PLAYER OF THE GAME**

Jan 30 **Connor White** Jan 31 **Evan McNair**

*Come Cheer on Your Agra Risk Wheatland Kings*



**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Native American group of N. California
- 5. Geological times (Brit. sp.)
- 10. Tool to remove
- 12. Rods
- 14. One who renews
- 16. They precede C
- 18. Chatter incessantly
- 19. \_\_\_ King Cole, musician
- 20. Insect parts
- 22. One from Utah
- 23. The world of the dead
- 25. Singer Redding
- 26. NBA legend Nelson
- 27. Indicates wrongly
- 28. Unhappy
- 30. Anger
- 31. Dark brown
- 33. Some are in kitchens
- 35. Made a mistake
- 37. Damp
- 38. Type of fuel
- 40. Actor Damon
- 41. What thespians do
- 42. One's mother
- 44. Disallow
- 45. Swiss river
- 48. A banana has one
- 50. Philippines lake and volcano are two
- 52. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- 53. Agave
- 55. Journalist Tarbell
- 56. One-time tech giant
- 57. Indicates upon
- 58. Intestinal bacteria
- 63. Loose sheaths around the spinal cord
- 65. It goes with nook
- 66. A fashion
- 67. Very eager to hear or see

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Witch
- 2. Utilize
- 3. Writing utensil
- 4. Where rockers go to work
- 5. Subsides
- 6. Consume
- 7. Greek mythological figures
- 8. California mountain town
- 9. Tin
- 10. Muse of lyric and love poetry
- 11. Animates anew
- 13. Humorous criticisms
- 15. Cool!
- 17. Worst
- 18. Wet dirt
- 21. Designed to be useful
- 23. Hebrew unit of liquid capacity
- 24. High schoolers' test
- 27. Computer device
- 29. Indian territory \_\_\_ and Diu
- 32. A place to sleep
- 34. AI tool
- 35. Pass or go by
- 36. Indicates a purchase
- 39. A digital tape recording of sound
- 40. More (Spanish)
- 43. Disfigured
- 44. White (Spanish)
- 46. Church building
- 47. Georgia rockers
- 49. Type of surgery
- 51. Much \_\_\_ about nothing
- 54. Make by braiding
- 59. Local area network
- 60. Unit of work or energy
- 61. Member of indigenous people of Thailand
- 62. Liquefied natural gas
- 64. Distance to top

**STRATHMORE TIMES**

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### Local 4-H club gives back

Many 4-H members and families from the Crowfoot 4-H Multi Club were volunteering around the community to end 2025. They helped clear tables and wash dishes at the Standard Municipal Library Ham and Oyster Supper on Nov. 28, while some also decorated to spread Christmas cheer at the Strathmore Hospital on Dec 12. Then two different groups helped stock the fire and helped Santa at Santa's Cottage during the Celebration of Lights at the Strathmore Ag Grounds on Dec. 12 and 20. It was noted that all had a great time and were glad they could help out in the community.

Photos Courtesy of Connie-Lynn Harder, Gwen Cyr, Justina Sherstabetoff, Megan Baron-Black

# RCMP arrest impaired driver after hit and run

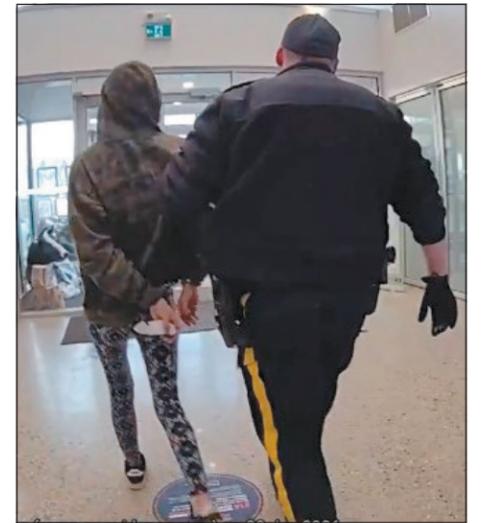
ALBERTA RCMP

On Jan. 29, at approximately 8:20 a.m., Strathmore RCMP members responded to multiple calls concerning an erratic driver on Wheatland Trail who was passing vehicles in the oncoming lanes. The vehicle carried on at a high rate of speed heading south as described by witnesses and attempted to pass a moving school bus on the right near the intersection of Willow Drive. The vehicle drove onto the sidewalk and side swiped the school bus causing damage to the passenger side and bus doors. The vehicle continued at a high rate of speed running stop lights and stop signs until it reached a business on Lakeside Boulevard at Parklane Drive. Bystanders noticed the dangerous driving pattern and erratic behaviour of the driver and called police.

The driver fled the vehicle and was reported to have entered the Strathmore Town Hall building. Upon arrival the driver was arrested in relation to the incident and taken to the Strathmore Detachment for further investigation where they later refused to comply with a drug recognition expert examination. The driver, a 36-year-old resident of Strathmore was turned over for medical treatment with release documents to appear in the Alberta Court of Justice on March 17 in Calgary. Charges

of Operation of a Motor Vehicle While Impaired, Failure to Comply with a DRE Demand, Fail to Stop at the Scene of an Accident, and Dangerous Operation of a Motor Vehicle are expected to be laid.

“Dealing with impaired driving remains a priority for Strathmore RCMP as part of our road safety initiatives,” Staff Sergeant Mark Wielogsz – Detachment Commander Strathmore RCMP. “I’d like to thank the public for their timely reporting, provision of valuable witness observations, and the location of the driver which led to their arrest. Fortunately, nobody was injured in this incident.”



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Thought for the Week  
~  
*Love can't be hidden. It's like light.*

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# County council signs letter of support for new lodge

Continued from Page 1

Contributions between the five participating municipalities for the project equate to \$10 million. Of this, Wheatland County's respective share – contingent upon support from the province through the AHPP, is approximately 66 per cent.

A significant portion of council's debate prior to voting support for the letter was regarding their financial commitments to the project.

Due to the fluid nature of costs of the project, council voted not to indicate specific dollar amounts in their letter in order to maintain that they are still behind the project without being perceived to be writing a blank cheque to the WHMB.

The votes were carried unanimously following discussion both to remove mention of dollar amounts from the letter of support, as well as for council to sign it.

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### Home cooking

The Strathmore Spartans junior varsity boys basketball team hosted the Saint Joseph Crusaders during their home tournament Jan. 30-31.

Joe Lepage Photos

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**YOUR WEEKLY HEALTH ADVICE**  
Gord Morck Pharmacist  
**Capsule Comments**

February is Heart Month in Canada, a good time to review some of the risk factors for stroke and how to avoid it. High blood pressure (BP) is a leading cause. Have you had your blood pressure checked lately? High BP usually produces no symptoms. Have your BP checked soon.

Smoking can double or even triple the risk of stroke. To put it bluntly, if you smoke... quit. The combination of smoking and diabetes has an additive effect on stroke risk, meaning the risk is greater than the sum of individual risks. Be sure to follow your doctor's advice regarding diet and medication. And again, if you smoke.....quit.

High cholesterol and obesity are two other risks of stroke and heart disease. Obesity is linked to high levels of "bad cholesterol" and triglycerides and tend to lower "good" cholesterol and can lead to high blood pressure and diabetes.

Genetics can also play a role in stroke risk. Having a first-degree relative (parent, sibling) who has had a stroke can increase your own risk by as much as 40%. The risk is higher if the family member was diagnosed before the age of 55 for men and 65 for women.

The bottom line for stroke prevention: maintain a healthy diet, get regular physical exercise, maintain a healthy weight, ensure your blood pressure is under control, and finally (again!) if you smoke.... quit.

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# Kings lockup home ice advantage for upcoming playoff series

JOHN WATSON  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Agra Risk Wheatland Kings earned home-ice advantage and will open the playoffs against the Cochrane Generals in their first-round series.

The Kings finished the regular season with 46 league points, closing out their schedule with a loss to the Mountainview Colts followed by a win over the Red Deer Vipers on the road Jan. 30-31.

The Generals, who had been neck and neck with the Kings and were vying for second place in the south division, were bested 5-3 by the Okotoks Bisons on Feb. 1, solidifying the Kings home ice advantage.

"We were in a close battle for second place. We wanted to get that second place home ice advantage if we (could), so winning that last (game) was important," said Doug Raycroft, head coach of the Wheatland Kings.

If the Generals had been victorious in their final game and tied the Kings for league points, home ice would have gone to them, as they boasted a stronger record against the Kings throughout the season.

To date, of the five games the Kings and Generals have played against each other, two have gone to the Kings, and three have gone to the Generals.

"They are a really solid team, a well-balanced team, so we have to play good, solid defense, be disciplined and stay out of the penalty box for sure. You want to be playing your best hockey so we can beat them," said Raycroft. "We just want to make sure that we are ready to go and firing on all cylinders as we play them. Playoffs ... everybody gets hyped up and some people have trouble handling their emotions and that can be a problem sometimes."

Raycroft emphasized the importance of discipline for his team as they go through this round of the playoffs.

Similar to last year, the Kings will debut in the second round of the playoffs, having been granted a first-round bye.

In franchise history, the team has never been able to advance to the division final round.

"Last year, we had our best season ever. We are not quite there ... and there is a lot more parity in the league this year. I think our chances going into the playoffs are probably better than last year even though our record was not quite as good," said Raycroft. "We got a lot younger this year ... we feel pretty happy about where we are with our team considering that we lost quite a few really good players from last year's team."

The Kings are expected to enter the playoffs with most of their roster intact. However, Luke Nottveit will remain sidelined, as he is still serving a suspension and will be unavailable for at least one more game.

**Chantelle de Jonge**  
MLA, Chestermere-Strathmore

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**FARMING WINS.**

# Laurie Morton Ruppe tournament reaches new attendance record

JOHN WATSON  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Close to 800 athletes across 56 teams flocked to Strathmore and area over the weekend to take part in the Strathmore Minor Ringette Association's (SMRA) annual Laurie Morton Ruppe Memorial Tournament.

Local teams ranged from Active Start all the way to U19, featuring SMRA and R.I.S.E. (Rockyford, Indus, Strathmore Extreme Ringette) teams.

The rest came from across Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba to participate. Athletes as young as four and as old as 18 were in attendance.

"Laurie had a true passion for the game and played on the women's team for 10 years. She was also very competitive and displayed good sportsmanship both on and off the ice," said Payton Vogelsang-Bundy, tournament director. "Laurie also coached her daughter, Kim's team, that went on to win the gold medal and the Golden Ring in Calgary in 2009. In 2010, the SMRA renamed their annual tournament in honour of Laurie."

Prior to the renaming, Vogelsang-Bundy and associated tourney volunteers estimated the tournament has been an annual event since the 1980's.

Approaching 800 athletes coming out to compete was noted to be the best attended event in its history. In order to accommodate all of the games necessary, arenas were utilized in Strathmore, Rockyford, Indus, and Chestermere.

"It took a lot of volunteers, a lot of hours, a lot of collaboration with this passion, (and) the love for our kids," said Vogelsang-Bundy. "The draw here is tournaments are fun, especially an away tournament. You get to go away with your team, stay in a hotel, have team get-togethers, (and) team bonding."

Among the tournament activities over the course of the weekend were two games dedicated to players unable to be on the ice.

Taya Arnold, 17, passed away Jan. 1 from what doctors believe to be the result of a heart arrhythmia. Before her death, she played with the SMRA, displaying a passion for the sport.

Livy Krall, 9, was rushed to hospital in December, ultimately receiving a diagnosis of acute necrotizing encephalopathy of childhood. The rare neurological condition is characterized by lesions in the brain which typically arise after a viral infection.

She was able to attend the dedication game, Jan. 31, walking onto the ice at the conclusion of the game.

Being a not-for-profit organization, fees related to tournament attendance, as well as from raffles were aimed at recovering costs and being put back into the organization.

Last year, the tournament hosted under 600 players. Moving forward, the SMRA team anticipates soon to be over 1,000 players attending in the next few years as both the event, as well as the sport as a whole continue to grow.

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## 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.

**February 10, 2026, 9:00 a.m. | Municipal Planning Commission**

**February 10, 2026, 10:00 a.m. | PPC & COW**

**February 17, 2026, 9:00 a.m. | Council Meeting**

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

### 2026 Farmer Pesticide Certificate Course

Wheatland County Administration Office

- When:** March 11, 2026, 8:30am - 5:30pm
- Where:** Wheatland County Administration Office: 242006 HWY #1 & RR 243
- Cost:** \$100 + tax (lunch included)
- Instructors:** Dr. Bill Hamman & Erin McIlwraith
- Register before March 2 at:** 2026 Alberta Farmer Pesticide Applicator Certificate Course Tickets, Wed, Mar 11, 2026 at 8:30 AM | Eventbrite
- For more information contact:** Albert.Anderson@wheatlandcounty.ca Ph: 403-934-4949

Note: Recertification is no longer an option, the course must be re-taken every 5 years.

The Farmer Pesticide Certification course is a tool intended to help farmers to reduce risks associated with pesticide use. This course is recommended under the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan, but is also mandatory for farmers who wish to use restricted pesticides that require certification such as Aluminum phosphide.

Online home study of the course would be beneficial. The online training is located at the following link or simply search Farmer Pesticide Training on the Alberta Agriculture & Irrigation website <http://open.alberta.ca/dataset/farmer-pesticide-training-certificate-course>

The Certificate will be sent to you by Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation after successfully passing a closed book exam at end of day.

Dr. Bill Hamman and Erin McIlwraith are certified trainers who have been teaching pesticide application legislation, applicator and environmental safety for many years.

# JOIN OUR TEAM!

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Teams from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba filled arenas across Strathmore and surrounding communities for Strathmore Minor Ringette Association's annual Laurie Morton Ruppe Memorial Tournament Jan. 30 to Feb. 1.  
Joe Lepage Photos





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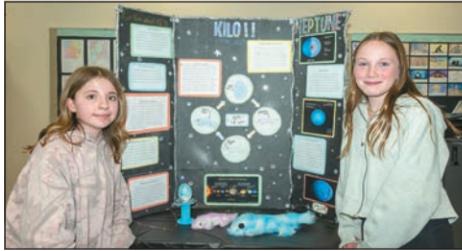
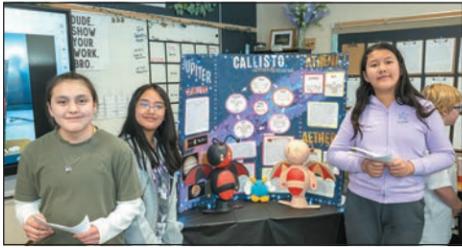
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**Alien exhibition**

Grade 6 students at Sacred Heart Academy combined science, creativity, and imagination during a recent Alien Exhibition that transformed the classroom into an out-of-this-world learning experience on Jan. 28. As part of the project, students each selected a planet from the solar system and researched actual, factual information about its environment. Students designed their own alien inhabitants, explaining how the creatures would survive, what they would eat, and how they would behave based on the real conditions of their chosen planet.

Joe Lepage Photos



**Final Countdown**

The top stars in Real Canadian Wrestling made their way to the Strathmore Agricultural Pavillion on Jan. 30 for RCW's Final Countdown. The card featured eight action-packed matches, including Strathmore's own Steve Wilde, who took part in a main event barbed wire match.

Joe Lepage Photos

# Library renews programming for non-verbal community

JOHN WATSON  
*Local Journalism Initiative Reporter*

The Strathmore Municipal Library is continuing their efforts to provide enrichment environments and opportunities for those with exceptional needs.

Laura Henderson, assistant director for the library, explained the team is bringing back their Building Bridges program, which aims to serve those who are pre or early verbal communicators.

"It's been designed by one of our volunteers who said that she really wanted to work with children who are with exceptional needs ... they could be any age from toddlers up until teenagers – really that they are negotiating life with exceptional needs," she said. "We have seen a need for that type of programming in the community, and we have not had an opportunity to offer anything that served that group of people."

Serving those with exceptional needs often also includes individuals who experience sensory challenges such light, touch, or sound sensitivities.

According to Henderson, the program is unique within the local community, having not seen any similar services or activities having been made regularly available to the public.

"We ran the program a few times in the fall just to try it out and it was overwhelmingly positive. Families were saying that they were so grateful

to have this option ... and they were just so impressed with (the amount of) dedication to each child," she said.

Scheduling for this type of programming has not yet been set in stone at the library; however, the team does intend to see it continue with some regularity.

The previous iteration of the program operated at the library was offered four times in the fall of 2025. Throughout February, two more have been scheduled to take place, Feb. 10, and Feb. 24 respectively.

"It is a registered event, but we are happy to have drop ins come in. We know that sometimes it is hard to register; maybe they don't know if they are going to be able to make it, but then see it and want to show up," added Henderson. "The registration is nice just so that we have an idea of how many are going to be in attendance, but we will accommodate everyone."

Rather than advertise the program based on age accommodations, it is more so concerned with addressing the needs of non-verbal, pre-verbal, and early verbal communication with the anticipation that families in the target demographic will understand the particular choice of language and potentially attend.

The Feb. 10 session will take place at 10 a.m. and the Feb. 24 will be at 4 p.m. The idea being to give any family the opportunity to have a time which may work for them.

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### B Event - Firkus

Addy Ashlee, Brent Ashlee  
Shannon Collett-Gordon, Darren Firkus



### C Event - Sander

Melinda Sander, Ken Shackleton  
Cindy Shackleton, Randy Sander

### D Event

Jim Woods, Mel Kent  
Denise Kent, Ryan Pender



### Successful playdowns

The Holy Cross Collegiate boys curling team won a round of playdowns against the Wheatland Crossing Coyotes with a 10-5 win on Jan. 29 at the Strathmore Curling Rink. Members of the HCC team are Nathan Bellanger (lead, l-r), Nate Everett (third), Jake Maunsell-Wybrants (skip), Finn Viger (second) and coach Tyler Damen.

Manny Everett Photo

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Sovereignty, freedom and Afghanistan

To the Editor

The Royal Canadian Legion has issued a formal letter to Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada, in the wake of recent talks at the NATO meeting in Davos, Switzerland. The letter encompasses the organization's reaction to remarks made internationally by the Prime Minister and addresses Canada's role in Afghanistan. The content of the letter is reproduced below.

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to you on behalf of The Royal Canadian Legion in a time of unprecedented attacks by the United States' administration on our sovereignty as a strong and independent nation. We would like to commend your recent remarks on the world stage in Davos, which provided a clear and important statement in support of the essential values that Canadians – and all who believe in freedom – hold dear. Your remarks were both needed and provided a global "wake-up call."

These values are of great importance to the Legion, in alignment with its founding principles which were established by First World War Veterans one hundred years ago, in 1926. Many thousands of Canadians have fought and died for these same values throughout our history and all over the world.

We were therefore appalled to hear the

President of the United States share his view that troops from other NATO countries had played an inconsequential role in Afghanistan. Our country's mission there saw over 40,000 troops deployed, and 158 Canadian Armed Forces members gave their lives. It is completely unacceptable that the outstanding service and selfless sacrifice of so many allied troops, including Canadians, was trivialized. Especially given they were part of the response to the 9/11 attacks on America. We cannot stay silent when hurtful untruths are shared on a global scale.

It is not the norm for us to comment on speeches by national leaders; however, the Legion shares the values you have articulated, and we believe it is critical that we show our clear support at this time.

We thank you for your inspiring words which truly met the moment. Please know that The Royal Canadian Legion stands ready to support Canada and Canadians across this country as we navigate these troubled waters together.

With appreciation,

Berkley Lawrence,  
Dominion President,  
The Royal Canadian Legion  
Larry Murray,  
Grand President,  
The Royal Canadian Legion

## Alberta separatist movement has consequences

To the Editor

Have you asked yourself why the leaders of the Alberta separatist APP movement have not used the proper process for their Canadian concern in visiting a foreign country asking for support multiple times?

They have stated it's not because they want to join the US as non-Canadians. However, the reaction from the US leadership expressing interest in the movement, citing how Alberta is a good fit because of our resources seems to indicate differently.

What would you take away from a statement like that? Kind of makes you wonder where the ex-Canadians would fit in on the world stage. Sorry to disappoint the APP, as Canadian Albertans are not that naïve. As reported on the local news this week, the APP is looking for a \$500 billion US loan in supporting separation. Are you willing to trust your investments, family's future and take on historical debt to unelected people that think they know what they are doing? Are these actions just a set up in allowing the US a reason to step in and break up Canada? Is that a risk you're willing to cross your fingers on by doing nothing?

We've seen this type of action with Putin in finding a similar excuse to save the people of Ukraine. Why do you think the leaders of France, Canada and just recently the UK are having meetings with China, a non-democratic country? If you're still unsure that staying with Alberta is better, then here's a reality check in a well-balanced report that goes far beyond in the detail that I'm not able to do within the parameters of this format. It outlines the process of many areas if Alberta was

to leave Canada and consequences of that, as reported by the CCPA Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. It basically states, if Alberta left Canada, it would become a landlocked, resource-dependent nation facing complex, lengthy negotiations over debt, treaties, and borders. While separatists argue it would boost economic autonomy, legal experts say separation isn't automatic, requiring constitutional amendments and consent from other provinces. It would be a major economic and political shock which would affect investment opportunities as currently being stated by Alberta businesses and investors today. Could this affect the De Havilland long-term project in proceeding? I have referenced these concerns in conjunction to the following report link as reference (<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/reality-check-if-alberta-left-canada/>) or do a search on CCPA reality check if Alberta left Canada.

Inform yourself if you're still on the fence with being a Canadian, as ignorance of potential reality is not a plan for successful expectations. I find it interesting our Alberta government is not outlining any concerns of this risk. Once voted there's no going back to "I didn't realize," which is no one's fault except your own. Talk to your MLA, ask them where they stand. Our Premier appears to be dogging responsibility and accountability and not calling out those that want to break away from Canada. The Premier needs to remember who she "currently" represents; you were elected and are paid by Alberta Canadians. The question is will we collectively allow this to continue? Your choice.

Dennis Bigras,  
Wheatland County

# Making Alberta more affordable

**CHANTELLE DE JONGE**  
Chestermere-Strathmore MLA

Alberta is a big province with strong communities, hardworking families, and a deep sense of pride. Whether you live in a city, small town, or remote community, most Albertans want the same things: a good job, a fair shot for their kids, and a government that always respects their time and money.

That is why our government remains focused on making life more affordable, cutting unnecessary red tape, and investing in opportunities that benefit real people in real communities.

For many families, the cost of registering a child for hockey or soccer can be a major affordability concern. That is why Alberta's government is helping more kids get in the game. Through programs like KidSport and Every Kid Can Play, thousands of young Albertans are getting help with registration fees, so costs will not keep them stuck on the sidelines. Sports help kids stay active, build confidence, and become leaders. Supporting families so their kids can participate is an investment in a healthier and stronger tomorrow.

Last year, our government provided \$8 million in funding through the Every Kid Can Play program to expand access to sports and recreation for children and youth. KidSport Alberta received \$3.5 million in 2025 with an additional \$547,000 in funding this year to reach even more Alberta families. This combined funding will directly support more than 1,500 additional kids to join a soccer league, play hockey, or learn martial arts.

Alberta families can apply for up to \$350 per child to offset registration fees, through funds directed to KidSport Alberta. For more information, please visit

[www.kidsportcanada.ca/alberta](http://www.kidsportcanada.ca/alberta).

At the same time, we know families and small businesses are tired of paperwork, delays, and outdated rules. That is why Alberta's government has been leading the way in cutting red tape.

Since 2019, we have eliminated nearly 220,000 government hurdles and saved Albertans over \$3 billion. With faster, simpler approval processes and the Automatic Yes Toolkit, businesses that follow the rules can open, expand, or invest with more confidence. So far, the toolkit has reduced wait times for about 25 per cent of all government permits. That means businesses can make first sales sooner, expand faster, and give investors more certainty.

By keeping life affordable, cutting red tape, and investing in opportunities that reach every corner of the province, our government is ensuring Alberta stays the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

Finally, I am pleased to share that the Bow Valley Agricultural Society has received \$58,845 through the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women's Community Facility Enhancement Program (CFEP) – Small Stream to support upgrades to the Indus Recreational Centre. The Centre is a vital hub for the Indus area, offering a welcoming space where residents come together for recreation, community events, and social connection, and it plays a key role in supporting a strong, engaged rural community.

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

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

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### Hockey Day in GA February 14, 2026 Registration

Registrations are now being accepted for the

#### Gleichen Gunners Annual Pond Hockey Event

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Individual players 4-17 years old, male or female from across Alberta can register for our non-contact shinny style 4 on 4 event. Celebrating Canada's winter sport **"HOCKEY"**

A \$10.00 registration fee per participant will include: 3 games, lunch and an event souvenir package. Games are played on 2 indoor ice surfaces. Players not currently registered with Hockey Alberta are welcome to participate.

Registration is through TeamLinkt  
[HockeydayinGA2026](http://HockeydayinGA2026)  
Etransfers: [gleichenph.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:gleichenph.treasurer@gmail.com)  
For more information contact Shelah Downey [gleichenph.reg@gmail.com](mailto:gleichenph.reg@gmail.com)  
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Registration thereafter is at the discretion of the Executive Board of Gleichen and District Minor Hockey Association



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**TIMES CLASSIFIEDS**

*Obituary*



**LASSITER,**  
**Robert "Rob"**  
1958 - 2026

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Robert Dale Lassiter on January 27, 2026, surrounded by his loving family. Rob was born in 1958 at the Bassano Hospital to Robert Stanley and Ruth Lassiter (Meidinger). He grew up in Bassano alongside his siblings building deep roots in the community that would remain home for his entire life.

Rob attended school in Bassano and graduated in 1976. A gifted athlete, he excelled in hockey, curling, swimming, baseball and golf, and was known for his dedication, competitiveness, and love of sport. He played hockey throughout his youth and into adulthood, beginning with minor hockey in Bassano and continuing through to Junior B with the Brooks Tubers and Lakeside Spurs. In 1977, Robert attended Camrose Lutheran College on a hockey scholarship and then played Jr. A Tier 1 for Calgary Wranglers (now called Calgary Hitman). He went on to play senior hockey with the L.K Royals, where he was known for his strong presence on the ice and leadership.

His love for the game extended beyond playing. Rob coached minor hockey in Bassano for 27 years. He was instrumental in the fundraising efforts for the arena. He believed deeply in giving back and quietly did so whenever he saw the need.

In 1980, Rob chose farming as his life's work, alongside his father and brothers. He was deeply proud of the farming life and built a business rooted in hard work and integrity. Rob later expanded into purebred Red Angus cattle, co-founding Triple X Red Angus. Where it earned respect across Western Canada.

Robert married Cheryl (Massie) on October 9, 1982. Together they moved out to the Makepeace farm where they built a beautiful life together and raised their family. Rob was a devoted husband and father, always so proud of his boys, Payden, born in 1988 and Clayton, born in 1990.

In his later years, Rob was especially proud of his role as Papa. He always gave them the best advice and the warmest hugs. He loved watching his grandchildren play sports, attending their games and cheering them on. He loved taking them in the tractor to feed cows, in the semi-truck during harvests, boating on the lake or fishing off the docks at Crawling Valley. Rob was deeply committed to his community. He served on numerous boards and committees including the Alberta Wheat Pool advisory committee, Bassano Gas Coop for over 42 years and Crawling Valley Campground for 21 years.

Crawling Valley held a special place in his heart. Each summer, it was his place to relax and kick off his farming boots. He was able to slow down and create lasting memories with his family – boating on the lake, fishing, campfires, and peaceful nights under the stars. Rob will be remembered for his work ethic, loyalty, leadership, commitment to his community and most of all unwavering love for his family. He was a man who showed up- for his family, his teams, his farm, and his town.

He will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered by his wife, Cheryl; his children, Payden (Christy) and their children, Rayne, Loki and Wrennyn; Clayton (Jennica) and their children, Penelope and Clarke. His siblings, Barry (Leslie Hannah), Connie (Greg Long), Kent (Nancy), Brenda (Randy Johnson), and Darrel (Carrie), Kerry (Milly), Daryl (Donna), Patty (Ian); mother-in-law, Joyce Massie; and so many extended family members, friends, and community members. Robert was predeceased by his loving parents, Stan and Ruth; his grandparents, Albert and Rosina, Oscar Bruce and Mary Alice.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the staff at St. Joseph's Hospice and Grace Memorial for their compassion care and kindness. We will have a private Celebration of Life for Robert at a later date.

Condolences may be made at [www.gracememorial.com](http://www.gracememorial.com). Arrangements are made by GRACE MEMORIAL AFFORDABLE BURIAL & CREMATION 1924 10th Ave NW, Medicine Hat, Alberta T1C 1T5 403-905-0440 [info@gracememorial.com](mailto:info@gracememorial.com).

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**Upcoming Council Meetings**

February 4, 2026 | 6 p.m. Regular Meeting of Council  
 February 11, 2026 | 6 p.m. Committee of the Whole  
 February 18, 2026 | 6 p.m. 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.

**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](mailto:LSAdmin@strathmore.ca) or call **403-934-3133**.

**Strathmore Motor Products Sports Centre. School Closure Camps.**

Got a day off school coming up? We've got a plan. The Strathmore Motor Products Sports Centre offers day camps and seasonal break camps designed to keep your kids busy and having fun.

Registration is available through PerfectMind. Be sure to visit [Strathmore.ca/SchoolClosureCamps](http://Strathmore.ca/SchoolClosureCamps) to register and ensure all required forms are completed.

If you have questions or concerns, give us a call at **403-361-2121**.

Course ID	Dates	Days	Time	Cost
39662	Mar 13, 2026	F	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	\$47.50
39677	Apr 24, 2026	F	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	\$47.50
39679	May 1, 2026	F	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	\$47.50
41349	May 15, 2026	F	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	\$47.50

**Winter Break Camp**

Course ID	Dates	Days	Time	Cost
39660	Feb 17 - 20, 2026	T - F	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	\$148

**Spring Break Camp**

Course ID	Dates	Days	Time	Cost
39676	Apr 7 - 10, 2026	T - F	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	\$148

**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)

**License fees due in January. Business license fees.**

A valid business license is required for every business operating within or partly within the Town of Strathmore. Business licenses are valid for the calendar year of the application date. Business license fees are due in January, so be sure to submit your payment on time to avoid any disruptions.

For more information, please visit [Strathmore.ca](http://Strathmore.ca). If you have questions or concerns about your business license fees, reach out to us at [development@strathmore.ca](mailto:development@strathmore.ca)

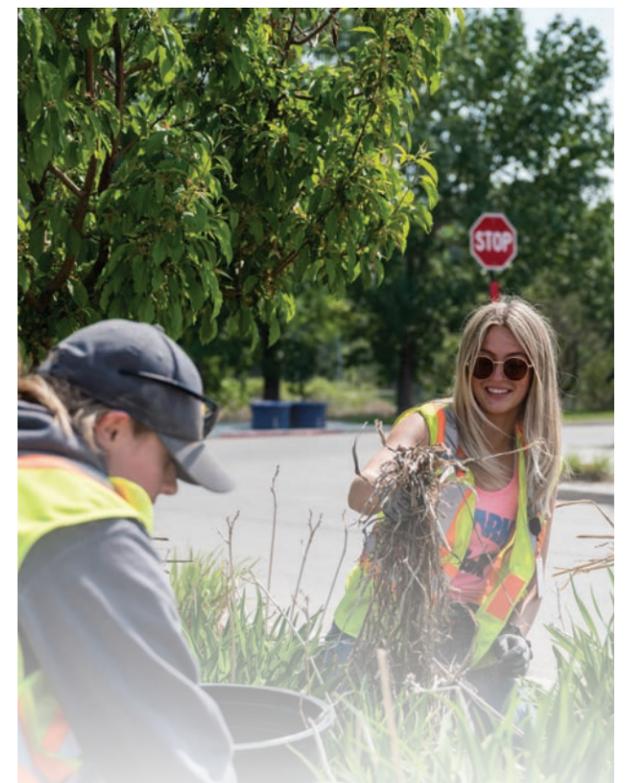
**How will you get active? Heart Month in Strathmore.**

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).

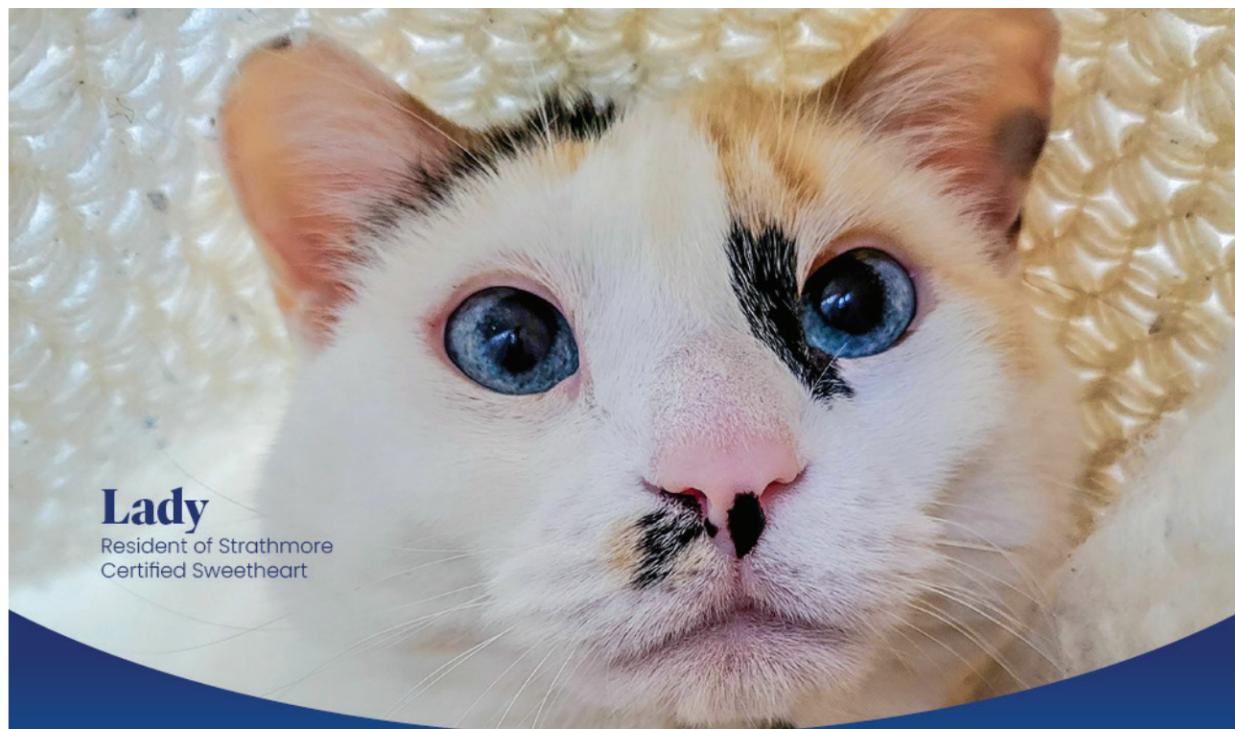


**Join our team. Career opportunities available.**

Are you looking for a rewarding career in a vibrant community? The Town of Strathmore is hiring! We have a variety of positions available across different departments.

- Casual Building Services Worker
- Contract Group Fitness Instructor
- Facility Operator
- Lead Facility Operator (Arena)
- RCMP Watch Clerk
- Seasonal Parks Operator (Summer)
- Summer Camp Counsellor

Check out [Strathmore.ca/Careers](http://Strathmore.ca/Careers) for more information about current opportunities and discover your bright future with the Town of Strathmore.



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**License your pet. It's their best bet for making it home safe.**

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