



Red Deer Polytechnic's equity, diversity and inclusion advisor Rambo Nyirimihiho (left) speaks during the post-secondary institution's Black History Month kickoff event on Monday, Feb. 3. (Photo by Sean McIntosh/Advocate staff)

RDP observing Black History Month

Sean McIntosh

Red Deer Polytechnic, in collaboration with the Students' Association of RDP, will host a number of Black History Month events during February.

"At Red Deer Polytechnic, we are committed to continue fostering an equitable, inclusive and respectful environment that values all students, employees and guests," said Rambo Nyirimihiho, RDP's equity, diversity and inclusion advisor.

"By offering a variety of culturally immersive opportunities at RDP, members of our campus community are able to expand their perspectives and engage in meaningful conversation about a variety of topics."

RDP began its Black History Month initiatives with speeches in the main entrance on Monday, Feb. 3. Initially, the gathering was planned to be a flag-raising event, but it was moved indoors due to extreme cold temperatures.

Here's a list of other events and initiatives happening throughout the month:

— Book and Fabric Display: Feb. 3-14 at RDP Library

— Anti-Racism Workshop: Wednesday, Feb. 5 at noon to 3 p.m. at The Loft

— Panel of Black Thought Makers leading a discussion centred around Black Resistance: Monday, Feb. 10 from 1-2 p.m. at Global Hub

— Black Art Display: Feb. 10-28 at 1500 Wing on RDP's main campus

— Traditional Beef Patty Lunch (while supplies last): Thursday, Feb. 13 at 11 a.m. at Outside FarSide Bar and Grill

— Keynote Speaker Dieulita Datus, Care for Newcomers program manager and Ubuntu - Mobilizing Central Alberta co-founder: Wed., Feb. 26 from 12:30-2 p.m. at Global Hub

— Afro-Caribbean Night: Wednesday, March 5 from 4-7 p.m. at FarSide Bar and Grill

"This month is an important opportunity for us to reflect on the incredible contributions, achievements, and legacies of Black individuals, while also recognizing their lived experiences and ongoing struggle for justice and equality,"

said Jacq Patterson, president of the Students' Association of Red Deer Polytechnic.

"The Students' Association is committed to supporting Black voices, advocating for equity and continuing to work toward a future where every student has the opportunity to thrive on our campus."

In November 2024, RDP launched its new five-year Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: Connection. Empowerment. Bravery. This strategy exemplifies the Polytechnic's commitment to creating an environment where everyone feels valued and has equal opportunities.

In consultation with RDP's leadership team, campus groups and employees, 30 members that comprise the EDI Student and Employee Advisory Committees will contribute to the implementation of EDI principles and strategies and help champion EDI initiatives that create meaningful impact within the RDP community.

For more information about Black History Month at RDP, please visit: rdpolytech.ca/BlackHistoryMonth.

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Red Deer Weather: Feb. 5- 8

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mix of sun and cloud High: -18 C Low: -20 C Sunrise: 8:08 a.m. Sunset: 5:30 p.m.	Mix of sun and cloud High: -11 C Low: -20 C Sunrise: 8:06 a.m. Sunset: 5:32 p.m.	Mix of sun and cloud High: -10 C Low: -20 C Sunrise: 8:05 a.m. Sunset: 5:34 p.m.	Mix of sun and cloud High: -9 C Low: -21 C Sunrise: 8:03 a.m. Sunset: 5:36 p.m.

Construction on CPR Bridge started Monday

Red Deer Advocate Staff

The City of Red Deer began construction on the CPR Bridge on Monday.

The city said in a release Friday that since January 2023, progress on the bridge rehabilitation project has been ongoing. City crews and contractors conducted environmental and structural investigations, as well as site preparation and design work. Now, the next phase of construction has started and will result in an extended bridge closure and trail detours.

“We are excited to be moving forward with this essential rehabilitation project,” said Greg Sikora, Parks and Public Works Manager. “The CPR Pedestrian Bridge is an iconic landmark in our city, and this project will preserve its historical significance while enhancing safety and accessibility for our community.”

Faced with aging infrastructure and deteriorating components, the city chose to pursue restoration rather than demolition.

“We had to assess the value of the bridge from a historical perspective as well as its important connection to our Waskasoo trail system,” said Sikora. “Ultimately, with the help of the federal government, we were able to restore and preserve it for future generations, rather than demolish it at significant cost and serving no benefit to our community.”

The Government of Canada is contributing \$11.1 million to the bridge project, with the city providing an additional \$11.2 million.

Over the next year and a half, construction milestones will include:



The City of Red Deer is ramping up rehabilitation of the CPR pedestrian bridge in Red Deer this week. (Advocate file photo)

- Reconstruction of the timber trestle
 - Replacement of concrete foundations
 - Repair and replacement of corroded steel truss elements
 - Repainting of steel trusses
 - Replacement of the timber deck with a new durable concrete surface
- Upgrades to pedestrian-level lighting on and approaching the bridge
 - Public realm improvements

Originally constructed in 1908 by the Canadian Pacific Railway, the bridge served as a railway crossing until 1990, when the rail line was relocated out of downtown.
- Community members have advocated for its preservation it was saved from demolition and repurposed as an active transportation structure.

Recognizing its historical significance, city council designated the bridge a Municipal Historic Resource in 1991.



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Susan Zielinski

"First and foremost, the City of Red Deer and citizens of Red Deer are fully safe and fully covered with staffing changes at Station 2," Schaefer said. He said the changes were made as part of a council directive to manage excessive overtime



He said Station 2 was chosen because its area can be covered by other stations and still meet the standards for fire response. An engine with four members from another station is automatically sent out when the engine at Station 2 only has two members.

The city has 187 fire medics (who can staff

Belich said for a city the size of Red Deer, the North American standards would be about 220 staff to cover engines and rescue vehicles.

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Red Deer Chinese New Year celebration set for this weekend

Sean McIntosh

The Red Deer and District Chinese Community Society will celebrate the Lunar New Year this weekend.

The Lunar New Year, known as the Spring Festival in China, is a major festival celebrated in many countries. Wednesday marked the start of the Year of the Snake, one of 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac.

Snakes can be viewed with both fear and reverence in Chinese culture. On the one hand, venomous snakes are associated with darkness. But in Chinese mythology, snakes are also known as “little dragons,” and the skin they shed is known as “the dragon’s coat,” symbolizing good luck, rebirth and regeneration. The snake also symbolizes the pursuit of love and happiness. In Chinese culture, they are grouped with the turtle and crane as a symbol of longevity.

“Generally speaking, for the Lunar New Year, you should be debt free and have made sure your house and everything is clean so you have a fresh start to the new year,” said Lawrence Lee, president of the Red Deer and District Chinese Community Society.

“You should have no hard feelings for your neighbours, your friends or your family (coming into the new year).”

More than 300 people will be in attendance at the Red Deer event at Festival Hall on Feb. 8. Tickets are already sold out, Lee noted.

“For the Red Deer and District Chinese Community Society, this is one of our biggest events. It’s always sold out — we actually sold out in less than two weeks this year,” said Lee.

“We’ll have a lion dance, with performers coming from Calgary. We’ll also have martial arts performances, some singing, dancing and that sort of thing. One thing we’ll have this year is a live zither performance. A zither is a



The lion dance will be part of Chinese New Year festivities in Red Deer on Saturday Feb. 8 at Festival Hall. (Black Press file photo)

Chinese instrument that one of our members can play. That’ll be exciting.

“We’re really happy that there has been more than 50 years of support with the Red Deer and District Chinese Community Society. It’s going to be an exciting night with a lot of family fun.”

For more information on the Red Deer and District Chinese Community Society, visit www.reddeerchinese-society.com.

—With files from The Associated Press

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Westerner Park assumes management of Westerner Campground

Sean McIntosh

Westerner Park has assumed direct management of the Westerner Campground, effective Feb. 1.

“We are committed to maintaining the quality and care that guests expect while building on the campground’s strengths for its ongoing success,” said Shelly Flint, chief executive officer of Westerner Park.

Westerner Park states it is implementing a transition plan to minimize disruptions, maintain communication with patrons, and explore potential enhancements to the campground facilities.

“Our goal is to provide exceptional service while preserving the campground’s role as a valued community asset and welcoming destination for travellers,” Shelly Flint added.

Westerner Park expressed appreciation towards the contributions of the previous leaseholders, Chris Demers and the late Craig Maisley, whose efforts “have laid a strong foundation for the campground.”

“Plans are underway to ensure the campground remains a safe, enjoyable and



As of Feb. 1, Westerner Park has assumed direct management of the Westerner Campground. (Photo via Westerner Park)

well-maintained environment, continuing to contribute to the visitor experience in Central Alberta,” states a Westerner media release.

Demand on Red Deer Food Bank grew 10 per cent in 2024

Susan Zielinski

Red Deer Food Bank saw a 10 per cent increase in people who needed help to put food on their tables in 2024.

Executive director Mitch Thomson said last year 30,563 people were fed through the food bank's emergency hamper program, compared to 27,700 in 2023.

Demand has doubled in the last five years. A total of 12,323 hampers were distributed in 2024 compared to 6,046 in 2020 compared; the number of children served climbed to 11,983 from 5,583; adults served grew to 18,396 from 8,672.

He said fewer donation dollars also came in last year, particularly during the Christmas season during the Canada Post strike.

Now there's the threat of tariffs by the United States, and retaliatory tariffs by Canada.

On Saturday, Trump signed executive orders that laid out a plan to hit Canada with 25 per cent tariffs, with a lower 10 per cent levy on Canadian energy. Those plans were put on hold for 30 days Monday.

Thomson said alarm bells are ringing for food banks.

"We're nervous and worried about those impacts. They're talking about greater unemployment and fewer things being available on Canadian shelves and at higher prices," Thomson said.

"All of these things will create pressure on Canadians, and more so on lower-income Canadians and people who are on a fixed means, so we are expecting to see pressures on the food bank. If the average donor is spending more to look after their own family, then that impacts our donations as well."

He said the food bank relies on food donations from businesses that would be hit hard by a tariff war, but now that the food bank is growing its own food the charity has more resilience than in the past.

"We're in a fortunate space where with the food production



The Mustard Seed and the Red Deer Food Bank are hosting the Coldest Night of the Year walk on Feb. 22, 2025. (File photo by Advocate staff)

systems we started are now starting to produce results. We are now starting producing 400 to 600 heads of lettuce a week in our hydroponic sea can. We got our first tomato off the vine here last week so we're starting to harvest."

This month Red Deer Food Bank, in partnership with The Mustard Seed, are hosting the Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser on Feb. 22.

"We're looking at this fundraiser as an opportunity to help continue to build momentum moving forward in the year. We know with the pressures we felt last year, it's important to keep our efforts up," Thomson said.

"We're definitely putting our best foot forward to do that."

For more information cnoy.org/location/reddeer.

— with files from The Canadian Press

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Red Deer Chamber denounces U.S. tariffs

Sean McIntosh

The Red Deer District Chamber of Commerce has denounced the United States government's tariffs of 25 per cent on Canadian goods and 10 per cent on Canadian energy exports.

Following a phone conversation Monday afternoon, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that U.S. President Donald Trump is pausing threatened 25 per cent tariffs on most Canadian goods for 30 days. The tariffs were originally set to go into place on Tuesday.

Trudeau says he and Trump discussed Canada's \$1.3 billion border plan, which includes helicopter patrols, and announced \$200 million in new initiatives to address fentanyl trafficking.

In a news release Monday, the chamber said the tariffs pose a significant threat to businesses across Central Alberta, disrupting supply chains, increasing costs and limiting market access for exporters, the chamber said in a media release this week.

"Tariffs are an anti-business move that create economic instability for businesses on both sides of the border," said Scott Robinson, CEO of the Red Deer District Chamber.

"At a time when businesses are already navigating inflation, supply chain disruptions, and labour shortages, these tariffs further complicate the ability of Canadian companies to compete and grow."

A recent Chamber Member's survey revealed that 16.87 per cent of respondents export goods or services to the United States, and 25 per cent are aware of other local businesses that do. Meanwhile, 45.24 per cent of respondents import goods or services from the U.S., and 47.37 per cent know other businesses that do. Ninety per cent of respondents are concerned about tariffs, with 45.24 per cent being very concerned and 47.62 per cent being somewhat concerned about their impact.

"Central Alberta businesses rely on strong trade partnerships to remain competitive," said Mike Szyzka, president of the Red Deer District Chamber board of directors.



The U.S. government's recently announced tariffs on Canadian goods and exports are being criticized by the Red Deer District Chamber of Commerce. On Monday it was announced the tariffs would be paused for one month. (Contributed image)

"These tariffs put unnecessary strain on manufacturers, exporters, and local businesses that depend on cross-border trade."

The Red Deer District Chamber, in collaboration with the Alberta Chambers of Commerce and Canadian Chamber of Commerce, is actively advocating against these trade barriers.

"We fully support the Canadian government's announcement to impose retaliatory tariffs to counter these unfair measures and send a clear message that Canada will defend its economic interests," states the Red Deer Chamber's Feb. 3 media release.

"We urge policymakers to defend Canadian businesses in trade negotiations, ensure swift and targeted countermeasures to mitigate economic harm, and push for long-term trade stability

and diversification efforts."

While these tariffs pose challenges, they also reinforce the need for Canada to strengthen domestic supply chains, invest in critical infrastructure and diversify trade relationships beyond the U.S., states the media release.

"This is a pivotal moment for Canadian trade policy," said Robinson.

"Central Alberta, as the economic heart of the province, is ready to lead in expanding market opportunities, reducing regulatory barriers, and ensuring businesses have the tools to thrive in a global economy."

-With files from The Canadian Press

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RCMP on the hunt for O'Chiese First Nation man wanted for second degree murder

Red Deer Advocate Staff

Police say a man wanted for second degree murder has ties to the Red Deer and Edmonton area.

In a press release on Saturday, RCMP said the major crimes unit has laid charges in a November 2024 homicide on O'Chiese First Nation. RCMP have determined the victim to be 18-year-old O'Chiese First Nation resident Travis Strawberry.

As a result of the investigation, on Jan. 28 RCMP charged O'Chiese First Nation resident Derrick Phazar Whitford, 27 with second-degree murder.

Whitford is also wanted on several unrelated offences, including Breach of Probation, Dangerous Operation of a Motor Vehicle, Flight from Peace Officer, Robbery, and several firearm related offences.

Attempts to locate Whitford by the Alberta RCMP Major Crimes, Rocky Mountain House RCMP and other support services have had negative results. Whitford may be in the area of O'Chiese First Nation or Sunchild First Nation and has ties to the Red Deer and Edmonton areas.

RCMP are asking for public assistance in locating Whitford, who is described as:

- Medium complexion
- 6 ft tall
- Approximately 138 pounds
- Black hair
- Brown eyes

Whitford has been known to use the names Sunny, Sonny, Derrick Dumais, and Derrick Whitford-Dumais, or a combination of these.

Whitford is also believed to be armed and dangerous. Police say if you do see Whitford, do not approach and call 911 immediately.

If you have any information as to the whereabouts of Derek Whitford, call Rocky Mountain House RCMP at 403-845-2881, or your local police. If you wish to remain anonymous, you can contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS), online at www.P3Tips.com or by using the "P3 Tips" app available through the Apple App or Google Play Store. To report crime online, or for access to RCMP news and information, download the Alberta RCMP app through Apple or Google Play.

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Extreme cold hitting Central Alberta hard

Susan Zielinski

Red Deerians woke up this week to a bone-chilling -33 C at 7 a.m. and an extreme cold warning issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Tuesday's high was just -25 C, with an overnight low of -31 C.

"We are having an area of high pressure at the surface which is allowing some arctic air from the north to settle in over portions of the prairie, and especially over Alberta," said meteorologist Justin Shelley.

"We're seeing temperatures close to, or lower than, -30 C in large portions of the province. With the wind, it's making it feel closer to -40 C."

He said temperatures are expected to moderate by Thursday, but won't climb significantly, with overnight lows of about -20 C. And there's a chance the extreme cold will return next Monday.

"A lot of the extended monthly outlooks look like we're going to stay below average for the month of February as a whole. So the trend we're seeing this week and next, might persist more or less for the month of February."

Extreme cold warnings are issued when very cold temperatures, or wind chill, creates an elevated risk to health such as frost bite and hypothermia. Risks are greater for young children, older adults, people with chronic illnesses, those working or exercising outdoors, and those without proper shelter.

People should watch out for cold-related symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest pain, muscle pain and weakness, numbness and colour change in fingers and toes.

Shelley recommended dressing in layers with a wind-resistant outer layer, cover up as much exposed skin as possible, stay dry and keep active.



Environment Canada issued an extreme cold warning for many parts of Alberta, including the Red Deer area on Feb. 3, 2025. (Advocate file photo)

"It's certainly important to take precautions if you do need to be outside because frostbite can develop in a matter of five to 10 minutes when we're talking about wind chills of -40 C or lower."

He said January is typically the coldest month for the

Red Deer area. Last month was three degrees warmer than average, making it the 18th warmest January on record out of 107 years of data for the area.

January has the coldest daily average for the month at -11.6 C. February's average is -9.8 C.



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First Stettler Coyote Classic a ‘success’

Kevin Sabo

The first annual Storm Mountain Outfitters Coyote Classic was held Jan. 25-26.

According to organizers, the hunting competition was being started to bring some regulation to an exploding coyote population in Stettler County.

“A number of counties have bounties on them,” said Storm Mountain owner and Coyote Classic organizer Lee Bates.

Bates says that coyote populations have doubled, if not more, in recent years and are causing problems across all parts of rural Alberta.

“They’re losing calves in agricultural communities,” said Bates. “A couple of people south of the town here (said that) coyotes are actually following their kids to the bus or to the barns (while) they’ll do chores and stuff.”

Bates also noted that some of the coyote populations in the region are coming down with mange, or even worse, grease mange.

“So, typically, when a population gets up like that, it harbours more disease,” said Bates. “We don’t want that spreading around the countryside either.”

Part of the problem with the coyote population is that they have no natural predators, says Bates.

“When populations get up, they need to be regulated.”

For the classic, hunters were able to go out within one hour of Stettler, but they have to be back in town by 6 p.m. with their coyotes. Prizes will be awarded for mangiest coat, nicest coat, and most coyotes hunted. Other prizes will be awarded as well.

The first prize for the event, for most coyotes, is \$2,500 and three rifles.

“So, you know, (we’re going to) get everybody who’s participating involved and then there’s a bunch of the door prizes to be given away and a nice meal,” said Bates. “You know, I must say this is a not-for-profit uh sanctioned event.”

Bates says that funds raised from the event will be going back into the event, and any funds left over will be donated to the Stettler and District Food Bank.

After the day of hunting on Jan. 25, there was a banquet at the Stettler Community Hall.

“You know, hunters like to B.S.,” said Bates,



A coyote. (Black Press file photo)

with a laugh.

“They said it was really run. The banquet went really well. Everyone was really impressed.”

The banquet was catered by Stettler’s own Jacked-up Coffee.

Bates notes that over the two days, around 90 coyotes were brought in around 25 of which had mange or other diseases.

In total, around 30 teams totalling around 120 participants took part in the two-day hunting competition, though Bates commented that there were some weather-related challenges for the hunters.

According to Bates, some of the teams were unable to make it into their blinds or other hunting areas due to the depth of the snow, so they had to make alternate arrangements on the fly.

Winning first place was the Chupacabras, second, Monty, Dale, Deven and Lola, and third, Trevor, Jared and Kai.

Colton Waddy and team won a special category for bringing in the heaviest coyote, Ron Benjamine and team brought in the

prize for mangiest, and Mike Bates and Al hunter brought in the prize for the coyote with the nicest fur.

Whether the Coyote Classic returns in 2026 is going to depend on what is happening with the coyote population, according to

Bates. If the population is still high, it will come back, if it starts reducing to manageable numbers again it may be paused.

More information about the Coyote Classic can be found on Storm Mountain Outfitters Facebook page.



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Published at 2950 Bremner Ave.,
Red Deer, Alberta, T4R 1M9
by The Red Deer Advocate Ltd.

Office hours are 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday to Friday.

Canadian Publications Agreement #336602
Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation
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LIFE IN RETIREMENT

Everybody has a doppelgänger

I heard about my doppelgänger long before I met her. Nicola is my distant cousin from Ireland and her uncanny similarities to me became a repeated theme among cousins in the 'Canadian line' who journeyed to the old country.

When my mom and dad first set foot in Ireland, they had all four of us kids in tow. I'm not sure how they managed to save enough to take us all over there for a month, but I'm forever grateful. I was 11 and believe that trip was what set my travel lust in motion.

It also solidified the folklore of the seven brothers who planted a cherry tree in the backyard before dispersing all over the globe in the mid 1800s – some to Australia and South America, some to New York (eventually making their way to Alberta), some as far away as Dublin! For this family of ancestors had lived at a tiny crossroads in a wee village just an easy drive to Dublin, but back then it was a world away.

It was the descendants of the brother who stayed on the farm that my family visited

on that trip in 1972. They were warm and welcoming, throwing open their doors and fluffing their pillows so we had a place to stay overnight. (My siblings and cousins and I have laughed since then, at the thought that they were likely secretly thinking 'here are more damn Canadian cousins'!) It was as memorable a step into the past as one can attain and even included standing in front of that same cherry tree (not sure if that is even possible, but we did stand near a tree of some sort).

We also heard tell of the Dublin line of cousins who had left the farm, which is still a tiny crossroads, to venture to the big city. This was the line of academics and doctors and my doppelgänger, who is an architect.

When my Calgary cousin first mentioned her to me after their trip, I felt quite insulted when she showed me a photo of Nicola. No offence, but did I really remind her of this tiny grey-haired lady? 'It's more the mannerisms, I think,' she explained.

Then, my niece went over for an extended stay and texted that she was really surprised

when I walked into a family barbecue. Yup, Nicola again. So when my sister and I visited Ireland just before covid, we actually met her and the entire set of Dublin cousins. They were all gracious and fun, and there was no mistaking that Nicola and I share a lot of similarities, in looks and build and humour.

There have been a lot of studies on doppelgängers, which indicate that people who appear nearly identical without being related 'actually are also astonishingly similar in their genetic makeup and often share life-style traits.' Even total strangers are similar in their DNA! As a doppelgänger who has shared a beer with my other half, I can tell you it already feels slightly unnerving to have so many similarities with someone. Those who have an unrelated doppelgänger have even more uncanny details to unravel!

Just another of life's interesting twists and turns, since theory has it that everybody has a doppelgänger. In fact, data shows the average person has seven! Think about that for a moment... Nicola and I will have to stock up on a lot more beer if they start showing up.

Visit Sandy's website at LifeInRetirement.ca



Sandy Bexon

LETTERS

A perfect example of want and need

The footbridge over the Red Deer river is a perfect example of want and need as well as government waste. I suspect most Red Deer citizens have not, nor ever will be on this bridge. I stand corrected, we are now all 'on' the hook to pay for it instead of CPR.

Probably a major justification by some councillors for voting for restoration was that the federal government is a major contributor. Talk about the blind leading the blind...the federal government cannot afford it either!

If one uses my example of a young person, say 17, who saves only \$5 a day (say two McDonalds' coffees) until age 71, which is \$150 in one month and \$450 in three months, and then puts it into either a TFSA or RRSP, it will almost surely grow, tax free to over \$1,000,000 if one were to buy RBC shares. The cost to buy shares is \$9.95. This bank's shares, with growth and dividends, has yielded 8 per cent on average, since anyone can remember. It may not have the purchasing power that \$1,000,000 does today...but then it might.

Now compare the wisdom of saving \$5 per day with borrowing millions, which in reality may never be repaid, just replaced with some other debt just as foolish. We citizens need a vote on all new debt because there may be more wisdom amongst voters than those we elect.

Terry Welty, Red Deer

Canada, the Glorious and Free

The absolute ridiculous and offensive comments by Donald Trump that Canada should become the 51th state of the USA, should mobilize EVERY CANADIAN to speak out against this thought process.

We have absolutely no need or desire to be governed by a foreign power. We value our heritage and freedom more than ever. This statement by Trump

will do more to unify Canadians and make them more fiercely and proudly independent than ever before. But we must be more vigilant than ever to push back against any conflicting ideas.

We have so very much to be thankful for and proud of. Canadian women and men fought in two world wars, many smaller wars and peace keeping missions.

We have Universal Health Care to be guarded strenuously, gun laws which are governed by the Firearms Act, the Criminal Code, the Canadian Firearms Program and administered by our trusted Royal Canadian Mountain Police.

We accept and care for refugees, migrants and our most vulnerable people. Our early settlers faced many hardships, beginning with our Indigenous people who lived in portable homes and traded with the Vikings. The European Vikings colonized Greenland around 1000CE. During the 17th century, European explorers built settlements in Canada. Then came the Pioneer settlers who travelled west on horseback, horse and wagon and on foot as they homesteaded, broke the land, built shelters in very dire circumstances and weather conditions.

We have freedom of religion, travel, thought, speech, peaceful assembly, association, and opinion, all of which are protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And don't forget we have these wonderful seasons to engage in every sport and activity possible. We are hardy and resilient.

We have always enjoyed democracy, never supported slavery, never suffered a civil war, or been attacked.

But most of all, WE STAND ON GUARD FOR THEE.

Mary Gardiner, Red Deer

Capstone

The *Red Deer Advocate* on Saturday, February 1, 2025, had an announcement about upcoming City of Red Deer capital projects borrowing of some 30 million dollars.

Seven million dollars is for Capstone Development a park and a road extension.

My first thoughts were about when these expenses will end.

Remember that originally, it was the

Riverlands, a dilapidated public works yard on 21 acres of land. Move the public works, and we could build high-end riverfront properties.

Moving the public works yard was the first thing. It had to be a show piece, it could not be a warehouse in the industrial park, it had to be a Taj Mahal of public works yards.

Budget was at one time 112 million dollars or 5 million dollars per acre. That ballooned to 135 million dollars, then to make it functional, have the wash bay wash or the drainage system drain and to mitigate flooding etc., it meant somewhere in the neighbourhood north of 150 million dollars.

To make use of the 21-acre abandoned yard, we needed to demolish buildings, realign roads, upgrade services, bury lines, and prepare for developments, bringing the costs over 210 million dollars.

This is all direct costs, peripheral costs, were also creeping up. Riverlands became part of a bigger project called Capstone. Councillor Lee used the Riverlands as rationale for spending 70 million dollars on expanding the downtown pool, which did not happen. The homeless shelter location and first possible new location were measured against the effects on Capstone.

Buildings including a restaurant, and hotel, were bought by the city and demolished because of Capstone.

Many items associated were part of other budgets and would need a forensic audit to determine the true cost of Capstone, but I dare to offer that these latest borrowings cost over 300 million dollars.

Twenty-one acres costing 300 million dollars or 15 million dollars per acre is selling for what \$750,000 per acre? Return on investment of 5 cents on the dollar? To wrap this up. This past year, we dealt with 18 million dollar budget deficit, we bailed out the Westerner with 19 million dollar loan, which they do not have to payback for years, we forgave the golf club their million dollar debt to the city approved millions more for the golf club to expand, and to pay for all this the increased or property taxes by 10.5 per cent.

People wonder why I am anti-status quo. What does a \$1,972,200 park look like? Nice, I am sure.

Garfield Marks, Red Deer

LETTERS POLICY

The *Advocate* welcomes letters on public issues from readers. Letters must give the writer's first and last name, phone number, and the community the writer resides in. Pen names may not be used. Letters will be published with the writer's name, and community only. Letters should be brief and deal with a single topic. The *Advocate* reserves the right to edit letters, which can be a maximum of 300 words.

Please send letters to newsroom@reddeeradvocate.com, or see our website reddeeradvocate.com under Contact us. Letters may also be mailed to the Red Deer Advocate, 2950 Bremner Ave., T4R 1M9.

ADVOCATE POLL



VOTE NOW AT:

<https://www.reddeeradvocate.com/polls>

How do you feel about the Government of Alberta's COVID-19 report?

- agree
- disagree
- indifferent

Are you worried about a trade war between the U.S. and Canada?

- Yes – 71%
- No – 29%

Between Jan. 23 and Jan. 30, 187 votes were cast in this poll.

What's on your mind

Send your letters to:
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New partner sought for downtown farmers market

Sean McIntosh

The Red Deer Downtown Business Association is looking for a new partner to take over the operation of the weekly downtown market.

“In recent years, the downtown market has faced challenges, including a decrease in vendor participation and attendees due to the pandemic, work-from-home trends and market saturation,” states a media release issued by the DBA on Thursday, Jan. 30.

“The DBA is now seeking a partner to ensure the market’s continued success and growth.”

The downtown market has been a staple in Red Deer for 13 years. The weekly market on Little Gatez Avenue aims to offer a diverse range of consumable goods and supporting local vendors. It is an Alberta Farmers Market Association (AFMA) accredited market.

The DBA is committed to providing the following financial and in-kind resources to support a new partner:

- Funding
- Road closure staffing
- Marketing
- Navigation of municipal requirements
- Knowledge transfer
- Collaboration on a transition plan to become an independent operator

Interested partners must have or be working towards not-for-profit status, as required by AFMA.

They must also identify a market manager to run the event and maintain AFMA accreditation.

Those interested in managing the Downtown Market can send inquiries to info@downtownreddeer.com.

Applications can be made online no later than Feb. 28 at downtownreddeer.com.

“We look forward to working with a new



The Red Deer Downtown Business Association is looking for a new partner to take over the operation of the weekly downtown market. (Contributed photo)

partner to continue bringing a vibrant market experience to Downtown Red Deer,” the DBA stated in a media release.

“For over 40 years, the Red Deer DBA has been dedicated to driving foot traffic into the downtown area to create economic vibrancy through promotion, beautification, placemaking and events. The DBA supports event organizers and delivers its own calendar of events, including the Downtown Market, Ross Street Patio musical entertainment, North Pole Stroll and Polar Glow.”

RED DEER COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Promote your Community Group Event!

Send your submission to: sales@reddeeradvocate.com. Subject Line: Community Calendar. Include your name, phone number & event. **Submissions must be received two weeks prior.**

GrammaLink-Africa’s Fabulous Fabric Sale Saturday April 26, 2025, 9:00 am -1:00 pm. Gaetz Memorial United Church 4758 Ross Street. Admission \$2.00. To donate fabric (one meter or more), yarn, or notions contact: Jane 403 343-1073 or Donna 403 343-6141 (call or text), All proceeds donated to the Stephen Lewis Foundation.	Red Deer Branch of Alberta Genealogy Society Meeting on February 20, 2025, at 7:00, at LDS Church 3002 47 Ave Red Deer, AB. Guest speaker, Jeanine Powell topic will be: HIDDEN TREASURES ON FAMILY SEARCH. The world’s largest genealogy site just keeps getting better and better. We will examine some of the new features that are being implemented and explore some of the lesser-known research helps. All interested are welcome. Free to attend.	Enjoying time at the Downtown House Senior Centre Are you tired of sitting at home, bored with watching TV, retired or just unemployed, then come join us at the Downtown House Senior Centre for some laughs and a chance to meet some very nice people. We have card games happening daily at 1:00pm, carpet bowling twice weekly, crib, whist or Euchre tournaments, monthly jam sessions 2 Saturdays a month. For more info call 403-346-4043 or stop in at 5414-43rd Street to pick up our monthly calendar, have a chat, a cup of coffee and meet some of our friendly card players and volunteers. We are open 9:00am - 4:00pm Monday to Friday, so please come join us for some fun and fellowship.
Blessings Thrift Store and Coffee Corner Grand Opening on February 14 from 11 am to 2 pm. Special events and sale items. Proceeds support St. Cyprian’s Outreach work. 5005 C&E Trail, Lacombe, lower hall.	Lunar New Year Festival Red Deer & District Chinese Community Society present Lunar New Year Festival. Join us at Festival Hall (4214 58 Street, Red Deer) for dinner and celebrations on Feb.8, 2025. Doors open at 5:00, Dragon Dance at 5:30, Dinner at 6:00 and performances at 7:00. Tickets can be arranged through text at 403-318-8862. Children 5 & under - \$10.00, Children 6 – 12 - \$15.00, Teens & adults - \$30.00, Seniors 65+ - \$20.00.	Golden Circle 4620 – 47A Ave Call 403-343-6074 for more information on events Mondays: 9:00-11:30am – Coffee Shack 11:30am – 1:00pm – Soup & Sandwich 10:00am – Quilting 1:00pm – Canasta 1:30pm – Golden Circle Singers Tuesdays: 9:00-11:30am – Coffee Shack 10:00am – Bocce Ball 1:00pm – Cribbage, UAVS Elder’s Lounge Wednesdays: 9:00am-11:30am – Coffee Shack 10:45am – Sit ‘n Be Fit 11:30am – 1:00 pm – Hot lunch 1:00pm – Hardy Walkers, Bridge, Pinocle 1:30pm – Ukulele Jam Thursdays: 9:00-11:30am – Coffee Shack 1:00pm – Mahjong, Mengagement 1:30pm – Art Club 2:00pm – Carpet Bowling Friday: 8:30 – 11:00am - Breakfast 9:00-11:30am – Coffee Shack 1:00pm – Scrabble, Euchre
Moose Family Breakfast Sunday Feb 16/25, 9:00-11:30. Moose Hall Gasoline Alley East, Everyone welcome.	Beyond Polarization – Finding Unity Among our Differences You are invited to the Central Alberta Interfaith Network’s Interfaith Café Series! We’re launching the series on February 6th during World Interfaith Harmony Week. These free events are open to everyone and offer a space for meaningful conversations across faiths and perspectives. Join us at the Cronquist Tea House for our monthly Interfaith Cafe. Our topic for our interfaith cafes is Beyond Polarization - Finding Unity Among Our Differences and will be presented by different faith/spiritual traditions each month from February to June, resuming in September. First Thursday of each month (February - June), 7:00–8:30 PM. Space is limited, so please register in advance for each monthly café. Register for each monthly cafe https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/central-alberta-interfaith-network-89839675183	
Canoeing alone across the Northwest Territories Wilderness Adventure Presentation Do you dream of outdoor adventure? Do you love outdoor adventure? Join Canadian adventurer Calem Watson as he takes you on an incredible 120-day, 3000 km solo canoe expedition across the spectacular Northwest Territories. Calem’s once-in-a-lifetime experience will inspire you to push your limits and leave you wanting to plan your dream adventure. Location: The Alberta Sports Hall of Fame, 6:30 PM: Doors open. 7:00 PM: Presentation begins. 8:15 PM: Q&A. February, 24. Tickets are \$25.00.		



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Pet of the Week

Submit
your pet to be
considered for
“PET OF
THE WEEK”

What to send:

Pet’s photo, breed, age, name, favourite toy and your name to Shayne Court, shayne.court@reddeeradvocate.com.

Red Deer Advocate
Pet of the Week



NAME: CHERRY

BREED: TABBY/SIAMESE

AGE: 2 YEARS OLD

FAVOURITE TOY: HAIR TIES

OWNERS: JERRICA

CENTRAL ALBERTA
HUMANE SOCIETY
Pet of the Week

Bambi

Meet Bambi!
This adorable pup waltzed into our lives as a lost little soul, and despite our best detective work to reunite her with her original humans, we struck out! Bambi’s looking for a patient buddy ready to take things slow with her timid heart. She’ll need a few meet-and-greet sessions before she’s ready to pack her bags and head home. But once she snuggles up and feels the love, she transforms into the sweetest companion you could ever wish for!

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Gender: Female
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Train whistle to end at Wolf Creek Drive rail crossing

Lacombe Express Staff

Lacombe City council has declared the discontinuation of train whistle use at the Wolf Creek Drive rail crossing.

City administration is working with Canadian Pacific Kansas City CPKC to end the use of whistles at this location within 30 days of the declaration date, according to a release.

In November 2023, the City and CPKC agreed that three of the five crossings within city limits were eligible for whistle cessation, but the Wolf Creek Drive intersection required pedestrian improvements to be completed before it was eligible for whistle cessation.

The City completed the installation of a pedestrian crossing across Highway 2A and the CPKC rail line connecting the sidewalk along Woodland Drive to the Len Thompson Fish Pond trail in 2024 removing the last barrier to whistle cessation for this crossing.

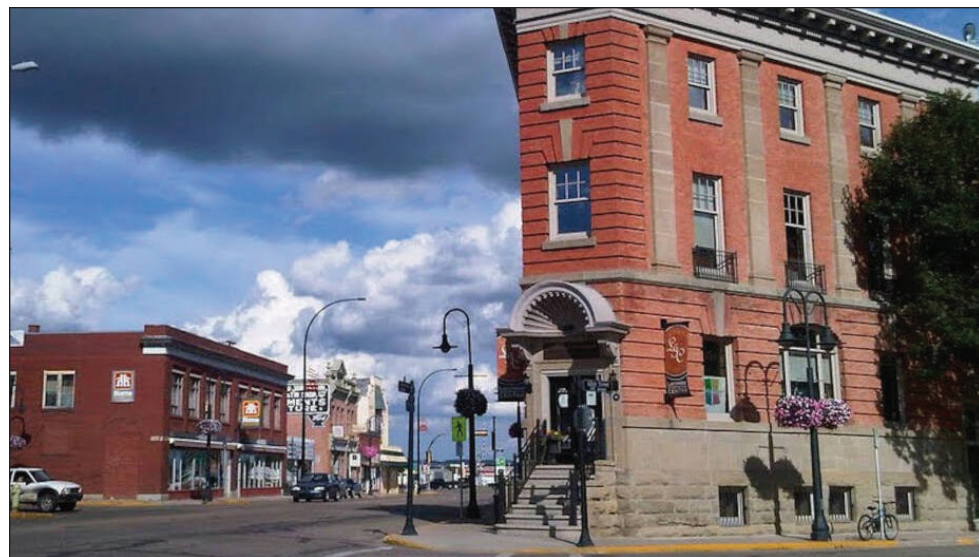
"Council is grateful for the work dedicated to removing train whistles at this intersection," Mayor Grant Creasey said.



(File photo)

"Whistle cessation is a frequent request of our residents, and the removal of noise pollution at this intersection is a key milestone towards the strategic goal of limited whistles in Lacombe."

The final steps to achieve whistle cessation at this location are the City notifying the rail company of the resolution and the rail company confirming whistling has stopped at the crossings within 30 days.



The Lacombe Heritage Committee wants to increase awareness about the historic resources program that they have in place in the city. (File photo)

Lacombe creating more awareness options for historic homeowners

Mark Weber

Historic homeowners in Lacombe can check out helpful tips and information about landing historical designation on the City of Lacombe's website.

"The Lacombe Heritage Committee wanted to increase awareness about the historic resources program that they have in place, and the Municipal Designation Program," said Daniel Becker, Lacombe Museum's executive director.

"They also wanted to increase the awareness of citizens about the \$5,000 they could be eligible to receive if they designate their historic houses," he said.

"One of the things that was found to be kind of a hindrance was a lack of information pertaining to just general knowledge in identifying some issues with heritage homes. So they then worked with Cariou Conservation (Darryl Cariou) and they applied for a grant through the Alberta Real Estate Foundation to draw up this maintenance guide, which gives a simplified run-down of the major areas and terms (involved)," he explained.

"One of the major hindrances I have observed is the misconception regarding the program (itself)," he said.

Under the guidelines for 'Designating and Restoring a Historic Resource' on the City's website, it's noted that once an owner has a location designated:

- A site/building cannot be demolished
- Inappropriate changes cannot occur, and any alterations must be in character with the original structure
- The site will be maintained in a fair to good condition
- Any modifications, restoration, or rehabilitation to the character-defining elements must have approval prior to work being started
- A caveat will be placed on the property title
- The site becomes eligible for incentives at various government levels

Becker noted that there are misconceptions

about some of the guidelines, particularly when it comes to changes and modifications to the site in question.

"A lot of times when the owner gets the site designated, they will have a walk-through with a representative from the committee."

Features of the building that are the most relevant to its historic nature will be noted. Those are the specific elements that need to be preserved, like an original staircase, for example.

But some folks have a misconception that they cannot change anything about the given building.

But it's actually more flexible than that, he said.

"It's not as rigid as people think."

According to the City's website, "Lacombe's efforts to maintain and preserve its unique collection of not only commercial but also residential historic properties began in earnest in the early 1970s."

The Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings (CIHB) conducted the first official survey of Lacombe's heritage buildings in 1972.

"Fifteen years later, Lacombe became one of the first communities in Alberta to benefit from the provincial government's Alberta Main Street Program."

Ultimately, Becker said Lacombe is unique in its overall commitment to preserving its architectural history.

Another unique feature of the municipality is the vision of the local committee to guide this preservation process in general.

"In other communities, it's (done) though a lot of community-led programs," he said.

"It's very interesting that the Lacombe municipality has taken a very strong stance of saying, 'We will support you, we will give funds, and we will help you.' But it's also about the local owners as well - they are very interested in preserving the history, too."

For further information, visit the Heritage Resources section under the City of Lacombe's website.



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Winter has arrived, bringing with it snow and ice covered sidewalks. Our newspaper carriers are having difficulties getting to front doors located at the end of icy sidewalks.

I am asking that you please help keep our carriers safe by doing your best to remove the snow and ice from your walkways as soon as possible.

I understand with the recent weather and the constant thaw and freeze, it may be difficult to keep up with this task and I appreciate your efforts.

Our carriers are out every week no matter the weather delivering our newspaper and flyers and I would like to thank you for doing all you can to make your walkway safe for everyone.

Sincerely

*Deb Reitmeier
Circulation Manager
Red Deer Advocate*



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Sweet Home on the Lake sudden closure causes outrage

Sarah Baker

Customers of local business Sweet Home on the Lake feel outraged after the business announced a sudden closure without any notice.

The business owners Cody and Eva Borek first announced the closing of all of their Sweet Home locations on social media on Monday, Feb. 3.

“This is a post we never thought we would have to write. After years of pouring our hearts into Sweet Home, we are devastated to share that we will be closing all of our locations, effective immediately with the exception of Sweet Home on the Lake which we will be open for as long as we can be.”

In their post, the owners also brought up how the closure of the parking lot was one of the biggest detriments to the business.

“One year ago, we faced an unexpected and life-changing challenge- the closure of the parking lot at Sweet Home on the Lake, our busiest location. At the time, we believed it would be a temporary issue, something we could quickly resolve. Instead, it became the greatest battle we have ever faced,” they said.

When the parking lot first closed, the Borek’s had just opened two other businesses, one in Drumheller and another in Red Deer.

“With no ability to negotiate as tenants and a landlord recently widowed and unable to fight for it, we were left with two choices: walk away or fight for our future. We chose to fight. We sold our home, invested every-



Owners of Sweet Home on the Lake, Cody and Eva Borek announced they would be closing the business on Monday, Feb. 3. (Contributed photo)

thing we had, and pushed forward with legal battles, financial restructuring, and a mission to keep serving the communities we love.”

Later an offer came to purchase the Sylvan Lake property and the Borek’s were told their lease would not be renewed.

“We turned to our community for help, and

you showed up for us in ways we will never forget. Your support gave us the strength to keep going,” they said.

“Unfortunately, despite all of our efforts, ongoing financial struggles, legal delays, and high-interest borrowing have made it impossible to continue. Our lender, who holds our inventory and fixtures as collateral, will be taking possession, forcing us to close our doors permanently.”

This first message was followed by another on Tuesday, Feb. 4, saying the store was officially closed.

“When we received notice last week that we would be going into receivership. Our life turned upside down. No more time to plan? No more ways to pivot? No more options? That is our reality now. We are heartbroken, devastated and we are so extremely sorry,” the Borek’s said.

In their post, the owners said they wouldn’t be able to answer all of the questions as it is now out of their hands.

“We are in receivership and unable to operate and unaware of what the future looks like. We are so thankful for the meaningful relationships sweet home has created in our lives and we will hold on to those memories so dearly. We hope you do as well. We know “I’m sorry” doesn’t cover the gravity of what is left in this aftermath, But we truly are.”

With the very sudden closure, many former customers are left outraged, including Jennie Nowe, who was one of many commenters on the posts.

“Stop playing the victim – your employees and customers deserve better. Let’s be honest here. This “difficult goodbye” isn’t some tragic, unforeseeable loss - it’s the direct result of your own reckless business decisions,” Nowe said.

“You chose high-interest lending. You chose to expand aggressively when you were already in financial trouble. And now, instead of taking full accountability, you’re

spinning this as if you’re the victims while your employees and customers are the ones actually suffering.”

Many customers are also left with gift cards worth hundreds of dollars.

“Money was taken in good faith from loyal customers who now have nothing to show for it. That’s theft, plain and simple. And we all know the vast majority of those people won’t be able to use them before the doors shut for good. How do you justify that? Your so-called cherished community is being forced to eat dirt by your actions,” Nowe said.

“You created this mess, and now you’re trying to wrap it up in flowery words and a heartfelt “thank you” to avoid the consequences. Expect lawsuits. Expect anger. And stop pretending this wasn’t preventable. You weren’t just unlucky - you were irresponsible. Take some real accountability. Your staff and customers deserve at least that much.”

While this has been going on other local business owners have stepped up to help try and ease the situation.

“As a small business owner, I know how hard it can be when a beloved store closes, leaving gift cards in limbo. While we can’t get that money back for you, I want to help ease the frustration and offer a little support,” owner of Spotted Gecko Clothing Lori Black said.

“To all the customers and employees affected by the recent Sweet Home closure, I’m offering a \$10 gift certificate as a small way to help you keep faith in our Sylvan Lake downtown and small businesses.”

Similar to Black, the owner of White Frog Cafe, Kelly McMillan, has also reached out to the community.

“Bring your gift certificate to White Frog Cafe in Sylvan Lake, and use it to pay for 50 per cent of your purchase! Offer valid until you use the total amount of your gift certificate.”

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Canadian Owned and Operated

Alberta government overhauls board of health authority

By The Canadian Press

Alberta's government says it has dismantled the board of Alberta Health Services — for the second time in nearly as many years — and appointed a high-ranking bureaucrat as administrator.

The move comes weeks after Athana Mentzelopoulos was let go as chief executive officer just over one year into her four-year contract. Deputy minister of health Andre Tremblay was appointed interim CEO on Jan. 8.

The government says Tremblay will now take on the role of official administrator in place of the board, while also retaining his deputy minister duties.

Tremblay will oversee the remaining transition period for AHS, which is being reduced from Alberta's overarching health authority to a hospital service provider as part of the government's health system overhaul.

The government has created four new agencies to replace AHS — Recovery Alberta, Primary Care Alberta, Acute Care Alberta, and Assisted Living Alberta. Each new agency has its own team of executives.

Under the new system, Alberta Health Services will continue operating the majority of Alberta's hospitals, but will report to Acute Care Alberta.

The government says Acute Care Alberta will become a legal entity on Saturday.

Health Minister Adriana LaGrange's office said in an email Friday that greater government oversight of AHS was needed.

"This is a critical time in our refocusing efforts as AHS continues to transition to a hospital-based service delivery provider, so it is essential that we remain extremely nimble in addressing any issues that arise," LaGrange's office said.

"We believe this is best achieved by increasing government oversight and involvement in the winding up of AHS as a regional health

authority and overseeing its final transition to a service provider."

The statement goes on to thank the outgoing AHS board members, including board chair Angela Fong, who had only been in the role since September.

The outgoing board was appointed in November of 2023, one year after the United Conservative Party government fired the previous board of AHS and installed Dr. John Cowell as administrator.

The 2022 board firing was a campaign promise made by Premier Danielle Smith, who took office that October.

Smith had said AHS was responsible for a number of perceived shortcomings during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as shortages of health-care workers and intensive care units.

Opposition NDP health critic Sarah Hoffman said in a statement Friday that dismantling the board of AHS only furthers the chaos.

"No one is asking for dismantling, mass firings, chaos and new logos," Hoffman said. "We all deserve public health care that is there when and where we need it."

Friends of Medicare executive director Chris Gallaway also called the move chaotic.

"This is a massive amount of time, money and energy that would be better spent bolstering front line health care and ensuring that workers are being paid fairly," Gallaway said in a statement Friday.

"Instead of creating an expensive revolving door of leadership at the top of our health-care system and agencies, the government should be laser-focused on a workforce plan for the front lines, where a strategy for retention and recruitment of skilled health professionals is desperately needed."

The government says the health ministry will now take over the responsibility of finding a new CEO for AHS, which the outgoing board had been tasked with doing earlier this month.

LaGrange's office said Friday the search for a new CEO would begin immediately.

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Tropical plants a good alternative on Valentine’s Day

Valentine’s Day has a long, vague, but sordid history from Pagan feasts where goats were sacrificed to beheading a priest for marrying soldiers.

In the end, it was merchants that made Valentine’s popular through advertising sales of cards and, later, flowers, jewellery, plants, candy and evenings out.

The demand for flowers during the week before the event explodes, increasing the price of live flowers, which are passed along to the consumer.

An alternative to flowers are tropical plants, especially ones that are not always on the shelves. Flower Fest is still up and running, which means more variety of plants are available in various sizes, from the usual to the unique.

Ficus microcarpa, also known as the Chinese Banyan tree is a bonsai with large, interestingly shaped roots.

Place the Ficus in an area where it will receive bright, indirect light. Allow the top 2 cm (1 inch) of soil to dry out between watering. Fertilize during the growing season and repot when needed. Shape the foliage as needed.

Pachira aquatic, Chinese Money Tree, is usually sold as a number of stems in one pot, braided together. The tops of the stems are often clipped to encourage more branching.

Place the plant in an area where it will



Linda Tomlinson

receive bright indirect light. Water it until excess moisture flows out the bottom of the pot then remove the excess. Then ignore the plant until the top 5 cm (2 in.) of soil is dry.

These plants do best if left in 1 spot. They will often drop leaves, to regrow them as a later date when moved.

Looking for a more unusual plant? People have been selecting plant cultivars from plants that have mutations in their foliage for centuries. During the lockdown tropical plants came into favor and a new mutation would sell on the internet for hundreds of dollars. Due to mass propagation the prices are now more reasonable.

Monstera Thai Constellation area mutated Monstera with white and green leaves. The plant, like the common Monstera delicosa does best in a bright area or dappled shade. To keep the variations prominent place the plant in bright light. Direct light will burn the leaves.

Water when dry, removing all excess moisture from the pot or tray.

There are four variegated philodendrons that are available at present time: Pink Princess, White Princess, White King and White Wizard. The difference between the Wizard, Knight and White Princess comes down to the color of the stems. If the col-



Avoid the flower rush, and purchase a special plant for the occasion. It will last longer than cut flowers. (Black Press file photo)

oration on the stem is green and white, it is the White Wizard. Pink and or red markings are on the White Princess’s stems while the White Knight’s stems are red or burgundy.

To keep the color variation strong, place the plants in a bright location, out of direct sunlight. These plants do best in soil with good drainage.

As these plants are from the jungle, they do appreciate humidity and warmer temperatures.

Avoid the flower rush, and purchase a special plant for the occasion. It will last longer than cut flowers.

Linda Tomlinson is a horticulturalist that gardened in Central Alberta for over 30 years. She can be reached at your_garden@hotmail.com

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Rebels record two straight shutouts

Sean McIntosh

The Red Deer Rebels had a successful weekend in Saskatchewan, recording two straight shutouts.

On Friday, Jan. 31, Rebels goaltender Peyton Shore stopped 18 shots to earn his first Western Hockey League shutout in a 3-0 victory over the Regina Pats.

"It was awesome to see (Shore) get the win and get his first shutout. The players were super excited for him. He battles, works hard every day, whether he's playing the game or not," said assistant coach Mike Egner.

The Rebels forward Talon Brigley tipped a point shot from defenceman Doogan Pederson past Pats goaltender Kelton Pyne just 1:27 into the game to put his team ahead.

Kalan Lind scored in his return to the Rebels lineup. The Red Deer forward had missed eight games with an upper-body injury. Rebels captain Ollie Josephson also returned to the lineup on Jan. 31 — this was his first game since Dec. 30.

Derek Thurston added an empty-netter to give Red Deer the 3-0 victory.

"It was a pretty complete game by our group," Egner added.

On Saturday, Feb. 1, Chase Wutzke backstopped the



Red Deer Rebels goaltender Peyton Shore recorded his first career Western Hockey League shutout against the Regina Pats on Friday, Jan. 31. (Photo by Keith Hershmillier/Regina Pats)

Rebels to another 3-0 victory, this time over the Moose Jaw Warriors.

"It's nice to get two shutouts back to back. It's a really good boost for this team right now," said assistant coach Clayton Beddoes.

"We're taking care of the puck through the neutral zone and getting it into the offensive zone more. Getting those high percentage plays along the offensively blue line is really important. It contributed to our defensive game, in that we're not playing in our end as much and reducing turnovers."

After two scoreless periods, Noah Milford scored his first WHL goal 2:41 into the third period to give the Rebels a 1-0 lead.

"He's played a couple really good games. He's come a long way since training camp, especially his strength and confidence. I was really happy to see him get a goal tonight," said Beddoes.

Lind scored his second in as many nights 5:10 into the final period and Derek Thurston added an empty-net goal to life Red Deer to the 3-0 victory.

Red Deer is currently 10 points out of a playoff spot. The club sits ninth place in the WHL's Eastern Conference with a 18-25-4-2 record.

The Rebels will play three straight home games over the next week: Friday, Feb. 7 against the Moose Jaw Warriors, Saturday, Feb. 8 against the Lethbridge Hurricanes, and Tuesday, Feb. 11 against the Regina Pats. Puck drop is 7 p.m. for all three of these home games.

Kings and Queens hockey get back to winning ways

Red Deer Advocate Staff

The RDP Kings and Queens hockey teams had successful outings as the Alberta Colleges Athletic Association regular season rounds into its final month.

Both teams earned a pair of wins on the weekend, with the Kings knocking off the University of Alberta- Augustana Vikings 3-2 on the road Friday before a 5-2 victory on the Gary W. Harris Canada Games Centre Saturday. The Queens knocked off the NAIT Ooks 2-1 Friday at home, before topping them 4-0 in a special game in Jasper Saturday.

Izzy Palumbo earned the shutout for the Queens with 27 saves, and Camryn Ward scored a pair of goals in the victory. Julie Wagner and Mia McGregor each had goals, while Hayley Kolosky chipped in two assists.

In the Kings 5-2 home win, Nathan DGraves and Easton Haygarth had first period tallies. The Vikings cut the deficit in the

second, but Dawson Leroux restored the two goal lead late in the period.

Leroux added his second of the night 4:50 into the third, before Matt Raymond cut the Kings deficit in half again at 14:15 of the frame. Kasey Hiemstra scored an empty net goal with 1:29 to go to close out the scoring for RDP. Kristian Lyon made 43 saves in the win for the Kings.

The Kings will host the Briercrest College Clippers for a pair of games next weekend. Puck drop is 7 p.m. Friday at the Gary W. Harris Canada Games Centre, followed by 1 p.m. Saturday at the GWHCGC. The Kings are third in the ACAC with an 11-9 record.

The Queens have six games left in the year and will play at SAIT twice next weekend. They sit third in the ACAC with a 12-7 record, with two games in hand on Lakeland and NAIT.

Basketball

Both the Kings and Queens basketball

teams suffered losses on the road Saturday. The Kings lost 96-82 to the SAIT Trojans, while the Queens fell 86-64.

Cole Wicker had a monster night for the Kings with 32 points, six steals and four rebounds. José Mauro Barrozo Júnior had 13 points, eight rebounds, one assist, one steal and one block. The Kings shot 45.2 per cent from the field, 46.7 per cent from three and 76 per cent from the free throw line. RDP trailed by just one point heading into the fourth quarter, but were outscored 29-16 in the final period.

Rachel Harvey led the way for the Queens with 16 points, eight rebounds, two assists and one steal. Salome Nuako chipped in 12 points and Jayden Demchuk had 10. The Queens shot 51 per cent from the field, 18.2 per cent from three and 62.5 per cent from the free throw line.

Volleyball

The RDP Kings continued their dominant

run with two more victories on the season. They have only lost one match all season. The Queens lost both matches on the weekend to SAIT. Friday's loss was the Queens first since Nov. 2, snapping a nine match win streak.

Lauren Junck had a strong night for the Queens in a three set loss to the Trojans (11-25, 21-25, 22-25) Saturday.

She recorded 12 kills and two aces to lead the way for RDP.

Colby Nemeth led the Kings in a four-set win over the Trojans Saturday (25-20, 25-15, 22-25, 25-15), he had 17 kills, four aces and a block. Brett Lower had 12 kills, Owen Langberg had nine and Nic Possingham had seven.

Both the Kings and Queens have four matches left in the regular season, with three of them on the road. They will be at Briercrest for a pair of matches next weekend, before rounding out the season against the Olds College Broncos.



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Central Alberta Bullseye Blind Hockey host challenge event

Mark Weber

Players with the Central Alberta Bullseye Blind Hockey team couldn't wait to hit the ice on Feb. 1 for the 2025 Alberta Blind Hockey Challenge at Red Deer's Gary W. Harris Canada Games Centre.

"We always host a Bullseye Blind Hockey game once a season," said Dustin Butterfield, the team's founder, who lives near Lacombe. "We also usually have 10 to 12 practices per year, too. It's about the joy of sport, and of competing - and the camaraderie, too."

The event, which ended up with the Bullseye team winning 6-5, also included two players from the Edmonton area.

"I think (this opportunity) opens doors as well, for those who want to go to the Canadian Blind Hockey tournaments," he added. "Thank you so much to all of our visiting players and volunteers for making our game day a great event."

Raised in Stettler County, Butterfield launched into rodeo for a time during his youth, but hockey was never off the radar. In 2017, he made a key connection — he attended a dinner for Fighting Blindness Canada in Edmonton and met a couple of guys who played on a blind hockey team there.

Later that fall, he took part in a Leduc blind hockey tournament. Two games into that, he was absolutely hooked.

Butterfield, who has a genetic eye disease that has left him partially sighted with some peripheral vision, played minor hockey from about the age of five or six until he was 11.

Meanwhile, Devon resident and new team player Barney Press explained how he was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa in his early 20s.

"I went through my whole life - up to two years ago - ranching near Calgary. But my condition has progressed to the point where I can't drive or work anymore.

"I had played hockey when I was a kid, and absolutely loved it."

Without the daily routines that had once kept his days pretty full, Press knew he needed to find something new. His thoughts turned to a sport he once had - and still very much has - a passion for.

"Hockey was it! It's fantastic. This is my first organized hockey game in 30 years," he said with a smile. Aside from the sheer joy of the experience, he had to admit it was at first a bit taxing physically.

"I haven't played three periods of hockey since I was 18 years old. It's fun, though. I am also a member of the Edmonton SeeHawks Blind Hockey team, but I have only had one skate with them," he explained. "And so because of all this, I'm going to the gym and I skate every day. And I'm going to make



Players with the Central Alberta Bullseye Blind Hockey Team held the annual hockey challenge on Feb. 1 at Red Deer's Gary W. Harris Canada Games Centre. (Photo by Mark Weber/Lacombe Express)

a go for the national team next year, too. This is just great."

Press explained he has lost pretty much all of his peripheral vision.

"So it's fantastic being able to do this," he said. "It's good hockey out there, too."

For those who live with visual impairment and would like to try out the team, but feel a bit wary of it all, Press encourages them to give it a try.

"Don't be reluctant. I was reluctant - even going out in public spaces now, or unfamiliar territory, can be uncomfortable."

He noted that his mom also strongly encouraged him to give it a shot as well. "She said, we are doing this this year - we are going to get your stuff. So she's a hockey mom again!" he chuckled.

Cory Gaskin, who is originally from Red Deer but recently relocated to Edmonton, remembers getting a call from a mutual friend of Butterfield's who was with the CNIB.

"She asked if I wanted to play hockey, and I said, yes, I will

give it a shot. So this is my sixth or seventh season," he said. "And in my second season, I decided I wanted to be a goalie.

"It's a lot of fun, and we accept all skill levels," he said.

Like Press, he'd like to see more people discover how terrific it is to not only have to opportunity to play, but to be part of a like-minded and very supportive community, too.

"If you are interested, come out and try it - we will make it work," he said. "It's a really good group of people."

Gaskin, 39, has no central vision. "I can't really see colours all that well - no distance, and no detail. I was diagnosed with my condition when I was seven years old," he explained.

As for being part of the team, the experience has paid dividends in many ways.

"I love coming down here," he said. "It's the camaraderie - everyone knows how you are feeling. We all have different eye conditions, but we can all lean on each other."

You can find Central Alberta Bullseye Blind Hockey on Facebook.



Dakota Buttar, of Eaton, Sask., won the PBR's Red Deer Classic on Saturday, Feb. 1 at the Peavey Mart Centrium. (Photo via Covy Moore/CovyMoore.com)

Dakota Buttar wins Red Deer Classic

Sean McIntosh

Dakota Buttar won the first event of the 2025 Professional Bull Riders Canada Cup Series in front of a sold-out crowd in Red Deer this past weekend.

The Eaton, Sask. native went a perfect two-for-two to win the Red Deer Classic at the Peavey Mart Centrium on Saturday, Feb. 1. With the win, Buttar earned 126 national points to overtake the No. 1 rank in the 2025 PBR Canada Championship, as well as an accompanying \$100,000 bonus.

Buttar is now No. 1 in the Canadian standings, sitting 43 points ahead of No. 2 Jordan Hansen, of Amisk, Alta. Hansen was the only other rider to be a flawless two-for-two in Red Deer,

collecting 83 national points with his second-place finish.

A two-time PBR Canada Champion, Buttar is seeking history this season. Should he win the 2025 PBR Canada Championship, he would tie Aaron Roy for most national titles won by one rider with three.

Riding outside of his home nation of Brazil for the first time, Jerson Arantes dos Santos excelled on Canadian soil, logging a third-place finish at the PBR Red Deer Classic. Garrett Green, of Meeting Creek, Alta. finished fourth in Red Deer.

Red Deer's Ashton Sahli rounded out the Top 5. The hometown cowboy earned 33 national points for his 85-point ride in Round 1. Marking his 2025 season debut in Canada, Sahli

is now ranked No. 11 in the national standings, 93 points behind top-ranked Buttar.

In the bull pen, 2024 PBR Canada Bull of the Year Grand Funk (Kinky Buckers) and Moonwalk bucked a cut above the rest, crowned the YETI "Built for the Wild" Bulls of the Event for their 43.5-point bull scores in the championship round.

Grand Funk earned the marks for his 6.18 seconds of work against two-time and reigning PBR Canada Champion Nick Tetz (Calgary), while Moonwalk lit up the scoreboard when he upended Round 1 winner Santos.

The 2025 PBR Canada Sup Series will next travel to Lethbridge for the PBR South Country Co-op Showdown on Feb. 28 and March 1.

Raptors fans game continue trend of booing US anthem

Associated Press

Fans at a Toronto Raptors game continued an emerging trend Sunday of booing the American national anthem at pro sporting events in Canada.

Fans of the NBA's lone Canadian franchise booed the anthem after similar reactions broke out Saturday night at NHL games in Ottawa, Ontario, and Calgary, Alberta, hours after U.S. President Donald Trump made his threat of import tariffs on America's northern neighbor reality.

After initially cheering for the 15-year-old female singer, fans booed throughout "The Star-Spangled Banner" performance. At the end, mixed boos and cheers could be heard before the crowd erupted in applause for the Canadian anthem, "O Canada."

Fans also booed Sunday night when Agasha Mutesasira began her performance of the American national anthem in Vancouver, British Columbia, when the NHL's Canucks hosted the Detroit Red Wings.

"I mean, it's too bad, right? It is what it is," Red Wings forward Patrick Kane, who was born in New York, said after Detroit's win. "I guess you can maybe understand it from this side but

seems like it's a thing that's going around the league right now."

Trump declared an economic emergency Saturday in order to place taxes of 25% on imports from Canada and Mexico and 10% on imports from China. Energy imported from Canada, including oil, natural gas and electricity, would be taxed at a 10% rate.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexico's president ordered retaliatory tariffs on goods from America in response.

Raptors forward Chris Boucher, a Canadian citizen, was asked after his team's win over the Los Angeles Clippers whether he'd ever experienced something like that.

"No, no, no," he said. "But have you ever seen us getting taxed like that?"

Joseph Chua, a Toronto resident who was at the Raptors game, said he's going to be feeling the tariffs "pretty directly" in his work as an importer.

Still, he said he doesn't think booing is "the right thing to do in this situation." He chose to stay seated instead.

"I have a bunch of American family, friends that live in the states that are Americans, we travel to America all the time,

but I thought chanting, 'Canada,' would be a more appropriate stance," said Chua, who was deliberately wearing his red Canada Basketball cap. "Usually I will stand. I've always stood during both anthems. I've taken my hat off to show respect to the American national anthem, but today we're feeling a little bitter about things."

"We were already talking about what businesses are Canadian, specifically, what are American, specifically, what to avoid. When I go grocery shopping, I will definitely be trying to avoid American products and groceries."

U.S. national anthem boos in Canada are rare, but not unheard of especially when tied to world events. In the early 2000s, fans at games in Canada booed to show their disapproval of the U.S.-led war against Iraq.

Clippers star Kawhi Leonard, who won an NBA championship with the Raptors in 2019, and coach Tyronn Lue declined to comment on the booing.

Lue, however, sang along to "O Canada." He said he just likes the song.

"I heard it a lot of times being in the playoffs here, so I know it by heart," he said.

Trading star centre J.T. Miller was 'a tough decision': Canucks GM

By The Canadian Press

As the Vancouver Canucks struggled to string together wins over the past two months, the team's general manager was quietly working in the background on finding a new home for one of the club's top stars.

Patrik Allvin spoke to reporters Saturday, less than 24 hours after executing a trade that sent centre J.T. Miller to the New York Rangers.

"Great hockey player, did a lot for the Vancouver Canucks on and off the ice," Allvin said. "And it was a tough decision. But I'm happy for JT and his family and wish him all the best."

It's been a difficult season for both the Canucks (23-18-10) and Miller, who had nine goals and 26 assists in 40 appearances for Vancouver and missed 10 games in November and early December for personal reasons.

When he returned, Allvin decided it was time to start looking for a trade.

"With his health and the environment we had ... I felt that he probably needed a fresh start," the GM said, adding that Miller did not request a move.

"And where he was in his life and in his age and with his family, this was the best option."

The move came days after Canucks president of hockey operations Jim Rutherford confirmed a long-rumoured rift between Miller and fellow centre Elias Pettersson. In an interview with the Globe and Mail, Rutherford said he didn't see a way to keep the roster together amid the spat.

The story did not detail what the issue was between the two players, but Rutherford said the drama had impacted the entire team.

"J.T. Miller, the reason why he's good in the league is that he's super competitive. And he's walking the fine line at times. And I also think that he's been dealing with a lot of other things," Allvin said. "And I wouldn't just say it's about two players — it's about 23 men that in a dressing room, you hold each other accountable."

"We're not running a country club here. We're running a professional hockey team. And the players are demanding a lot from themselves and each other. So it's going to be a competitive environment."

The GM admitted that with Miller gone, there will likely be more pressure put on the Canucks'

star centre, Elias Pettersson.

That pressure is part of being a professional hockey player, he said, particularly one who's on an eight-year, US\$92.8-million contract.

"My expectation is higher on him than anyone else on our team. And I expect him to meet my expectation, and I expect him to meet his own expectations. And so far, he has not done that," Allvin said. "If you talk to him, he's disappointed, but he's aware of it. And I know that he's capable and he will work at it."

Pettersson has 11 goals and 22 assists in 45 games this season, and is far from on pace for matching the career-high 102 points he posted in the 2022-23 campaign.

In recent games, though, Allvin said he's seen the 26-year-old Swede "committed to doing the right things, finding his way to play to the level where we all know that he's capable of."

"I know that he is doing the extra work that is needed. And I hope that he is one of them that's going to continue to carry the team and lead the team playing the right way."

"And we need his production here, moving forward as well."

The Miller deal also sent defenceman Erik Brannstrom and defensive prospect Jackson Dorington to the Big Apple, while the Canucks received centre Filip Chytil, defenceman Victor Mancini and a conditional first-round draft pick in the 2025 NHL entry draft.

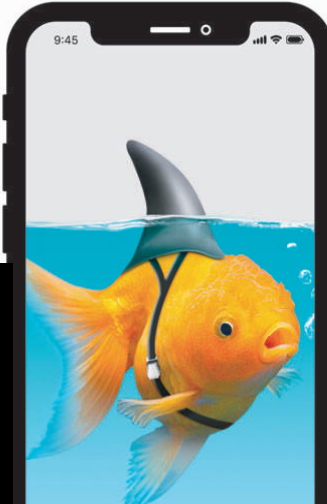
Hours later, Vancouver announced it had flipped the pick in yet another transaction. Along with the selection, the Canucks dealt forward Danton Heinen, blueliner Vincent Desharnais and the rights to forward Melvin Fernstrom to the Pittsburgh Penguins.

In exchange, the club received defenceman Marcus Pettersson and forward Drew O'Connor.

Mancini has been assigned to the American Hockey League's Abbotsford Canucks, but Filip Chytil, Marcus Pettersson and Drew O'Connor are expected to be available to play — at head coach Rick Tocchet's discretion — on Sunday when Vancouver hosts the Detroit Red Wings.

Ensuring the team is cohesive after the drastic moves will be up to the players, particularly the leadership group, and the coaching staff going forward, Allvin said.

"Winning solves a lot of problems," he said.



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THE ADVOCATE

The Canadian men's curling championship will return to St. John's, N.L., next year. Canada skip Brad Gushue holds up six fingers to represent his sixth championship as he poses with the Brier Tankard after defeating Saskatchewan in the final at the Brier, in Regina, Sunday, March 10, 2024. (The Canadian Press/Darryl Dyck)



Canadian men's curling championship to return to St. John's

By The Canadian Press

The Canadian men's curling championship will return to St. John's, N.L., next year, Curling Canada announced Monday.

The 2026 Montana's Brier will be held Feb. 27-March 8 at the Mary Brown's Centre. St. John's-based skip Brad Gushue, who won his first of six Brier titles at the venue in 2017, confirmed the news at a morning press conference.

"I feel very comfortable and confident speaking on behalf of (my team) and also all of the top male curlers in the country that we are thrilled and excited to be back here in St. John's," Gushue said. "Hopefully we'll experience the passion and the excitement that we had back in 2017."

The playdowns will begin five days after the closing ceremony at the 2026 Milan Olympics. The men's team that represents Canada will be able to play in the Brier as well, provided the rink has qualified.

The Newfoundland and Labrador capital also served as Brier host in 1972 when Manitoba's Orest Meleschuk was victorious at Memorial Stadium.

"I have no doubt that the entire curling community and its passionate fans are celebrating with us today," said Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey.

The 2017 competition was one for the ages as the hometown favourites won on a Gushue draw to the eight-foot ring that required a furious sweep from vice Mark Nichols and then-second Brett Gallant.

The sold-out crowd erupted after the game-winning shot, kicking off a celebration downtown that lasted well into the wee hours.

"The memory of being in the building and watching Brad win that final, and seeing how the city and province embraced the event, is something that I'll always cherish and it certainly made our decision this year easier," Curling

Canada CEO Nolan Thiessen said in a statement.

"It shouldn't come as a surprise that the organizing committee there is ready to put in the work to make the 2026 Montana's Brier even better than 2017, if that's possible."

Gushue, who won Olympic gold in 2006 and took bronze at the 2022 Games, is the reigning Brier champion. His team of Nichols, second Brendan Bottcher and lead Geoff Walker will wear Canada colours at the 2025 Brier beginning Feb. 28 in Kelowna, B.C.

The winner of that event will earn the first entry in the 18-team field at the 2026 playdowns. The top three teams in the Canadian rankings not already qualified at the end of the 2024-25 season will pick up pre-qualification spots.

"There is so much pride in our province and our city and I really do share in the excitement today," said Gushue, who's currently fourth in the national rankings.

"It's going to be an amazing event, and I'm already counting down the days."

The Mary Brown's Centre, which has a seating capacity of about 6,300, is home to the Newfoundland Rogues of the Basketball Super League and will be home to the QMJHL's Newfoundland Regiment starting next season.

The venue hosted the Grand Slam of Curling's Kioti National last fall and was also the site for the 2005 Scotties Tournament of Hearts. Manitoba's Jennifer Jones won the national title that year with a dramatic 10th-end in-off take-out to score four for the victory over Ontario's Jenn Hanna.

The 2025 Scotties will begin Feb. 14 at Thunder Bay, Ont. The 2026 Canadian women's curling championship will be played in Mississauga, Ont.

The Brier has been played in 31 cities across Canada since the inaugural event at Toronto's Granite Club in 1927.

Rory McIlroy overpowers Pebble Beach and wins in a runaway

By The Canadian Press

Pebble Beach looked as spectacular as ever. So did Rory McIlroy.

The combination of one of golf's biggest stars and America's most scenic coastal golf course was the just the spark the PGA Tour needed, and both lived up to their reputations Sunday in the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

McIlroy was in complete control of his shots, leading to two key birdies when he made the turn against a pack of contenders. And then he delivered a haymaker, blasting his drive over a tree down the 14th fairway, leaving him only a 7-iron to the 571-yard hole to set up eagle.

"We both hit 7 there," Sepp Straka said. "His was 7-iron, mine was 7-wood."

All that was left was a soothing stroll down the 18th fairway, enough sunshine to turn the surf turquoise, enough of a cushion to have no stress. McIlroy finished with a par for a 6-under 66 and a two-shot victory over Irish pal Shane Lowry.

"There's some venues in our game that just mean a little bit more than others and that's probably to do with the history and the people that have won on those courses and what those people have meant to the game of golf," McIlroy said.

"I've had a few close calls at St. Andrews. Augusta National being another one," he said. "So to be able to get a win on one of those iconic venues is awesome."

On a day when six players had at least a share of the lead, McIlroy took the top spot for good with a 6-iron out of the bunker to 18 feet for birdie on 10th hole into a stiff breeze along the Pacific. He hit a towering 7-iron to 8 feet for birdie on the par-3 12th to stretch his lead to two.

And then the 14th was effectively the clincher, leaving everyone else scrambling for second. McIlroy hit 5-iron off the tee with a three-shot lead and was happy to get his hands on the crystal trophy, the 27th of his PGA Tour career.

Among players still actively playing, only Tiger Woods (82) and Phil Mickelson (45) have won more. Mickelson also was 35 when he got his 27th tour title.

Lowry fell out of a share for the lead when he sent his second shot over a cliff to the right of the par-5 sixth. But he shot 31 on the back nine, including a birdie on the final hole for a 68 that gave him second place alone.

Lucas Glover (67) and Justin Rose (68) were another shot behind. Straka, who started the final round with a one-shot lead, had a 72 and tied for seventh.

Scottie Scheffler, the world's No. 1 player whose season was delayed by minor hand surgery from punctured glass while making ravioli,



Rory McIlroy, of Northern Ireland, celebrates at Pebble Beach Golf Links after winning the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am golf tournament, Sunday, Feb. 2, 2025, in Pebble Beach, Calif. (AP Photo/Nic Coury)

closed with a 67 and tied for ninth.

McIlroy was inspired by Scheffler's tendency to avoid mistakes, he stole a page from that book this week at Pebble by tempering his aggressiveness nature. He made only one bogey on the weekend at Pebble Beach, including the wet, cold wind of Saturday.

McIlroy has talked about this being an important year for him, though his focus was more on April through September — an 11th chance to complete the career Grand Slam at the Masters, a return home to Northern Ireland for the British Open, a road Ryder Cup at Bethpage.

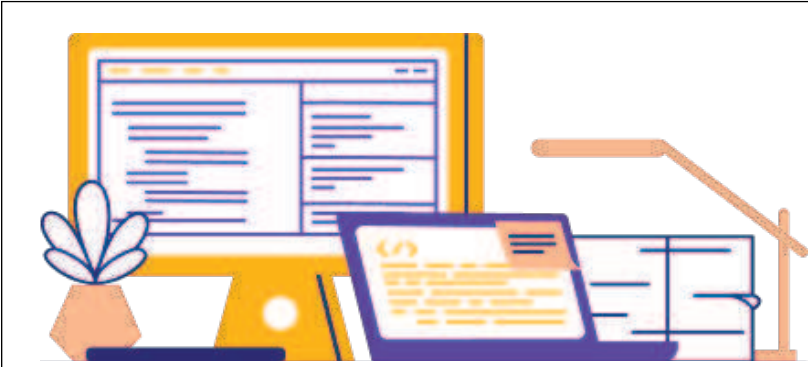
This wasn't a bad start.

"It's a really cool way to start the season," McIlroy said. Winning makes everything sweeter, of course, but this week also featured a hole-in-one at Spyglass Hill in the opening round and his first time venturing over to play Cypress Point.

And now he heads back to Florida with another trophy, and loads of momentum for what he hopes will be a big year.

The sixth hole began to separate the pack a little. In consecutive groups, Rose went over the cliff with his tee shot and Tom Kim hit down the hill toward the ocean with his second shot. Lowry followed him in the final group, leading to bogey.

But really, McIlroy looked as though he was the player to beat from the second hole, when he hit a tough pitch from 50 yards away over a bunker to a back pin with enough height and spin to set up a 2-foot birdie putt.



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Alberta law society reprimands Madu, orders \$39K payment

By The Canadian Press

Alberta's law society has formally reprimanded former provincial justice minister Kaycee Madu and ordered him to pay nearly \$39,000 in costs.

Madu was found guilty last year of conduct worthy of sanction when, as justice minister in 2021, he phoned Edmonton's police chief after receiving a traffic ticket.

He told a hearing last year that he didn't call Chief Dale McFee about the ticket, but instead was looking for reassurance that he wasn't being racially profiled or illegally surveilled.

A panel of law society members determined last fall that Madu's actions were irresponsible, and that he tried to use his position of power to influence a personal issue.

"Mr. Madu's duties required him to avoid even the perception of impropriety," the panel wrote in its October decision.

On Monday, the panel issued the former United Conservative Party cabinet minister a formal reprimand and ordered him to cover hearing costs.

Other penalties that could have been imposed included a fine, licence suspension or disbarment. But the law society and Madu's lawyer jointly recommended the reprimand and order to pay costs.

The reprimand, which panel chair Tamela Coates read aloud during the virtual hearing Monday, is to go on Madu's conduct record as a member of the law society.



Kaycee Madu speaks at an announcement in Calgary, Friday, April 14, 2023. The provincial law society is to hold a hearing Monday to sanction former Alberta justice minister Madu. (The Canadian Press/Jeff McIntosh)

"You have failed in your commitment and obligations as a lawyer," Coates told Madu, adding that he should consider the reprimand to be more than just words.

"Your conduct has been found markedly wanting, and this reprimand is intended to convey the strongest possible message to you."

Madu's lawyer, Perry Mack, asked that the

guilty verdict and publicly available hearing report stand as the reprimand itself. The panel rejected that request. Mack argued the public attention the case garnered was punishment enough. He said Madu continues to face "the perpetual punishment of the internet" for his actions. He said his client has already suffered professional consequences, including being removed from the justice

portfolio in 2022 by then-premier Jason Kenney and losing his Edmonton legislature seat to the NDP in 2023.

Madu remained in Kenney's cabinet as labour and immigration minister after the shuffle, and Madu went on to briefly serve as deputy premier to Danielle Smith.

"Further reprimand serves no practical purpose," Mack told the panel Monday.

Ken McEwan, who represented the law society during the hearing, disagreed with Mack's request, saying it would be an "unprecedented" choice.

McEwan said that the facts of the case, namely that Madu was Alberta's top lawyer at the time of the phone call, meant that an extra effort needed to be made to ensure that any sanctions he faced weren't seen as unusual.

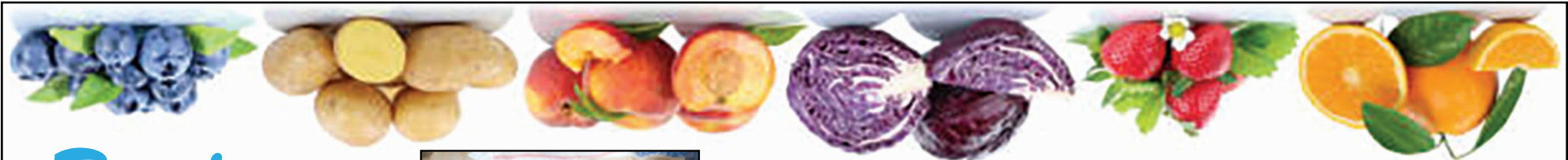
McEwan said there weren't any previous law society cases in Canada that dealt with misconduct as "unique" as Madu's.

He said a reprimand would serve to restore the public's "faith in the administration of justice" and restore "integrity of the profession" of lawyers in Alberta.

Madu, who appeared in the virtual hearing Monday but didn't speak, is appealing the panel's guilty verdict.

The nearly \$39,000 in costs he has been ordered to pay are considered stayed until a decision is made on the appeal.

Since leaving government Madu, has been working as a lawyer in private practice in Edmonton.



Recipe of the Week



Cherry Pie Bars

Cherries are the star of this Valentine's Day treat

Cherry Pie Bars

Yield: One 9-by-13-inch pan

Ingredients

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 21-ounce can cherry pie filling

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Line a 9-by-13-inch pan with parchment paper.
2. In a stand mixer, or with a hand mixer, cream sugar and butter on low. Add the eggs one at a time. Beat until just combined.
3. Add the flour, baking powder and salt. Spread a little over half the cake batter into the pan. Evenly spread the pie filling over the top and spoon the rest of the cake batter over the pie filling. It's fine if the cherries show through.
4. Bake 35 minutes or until the top has turned slightly golden. Do not over-bake. Allow to cool and slice into squares. Enjoy!



International study permit data an 'earthquake' for Canadian university finances

By The Canadian Press

A dramatic decline in international study permits issued last year is quickly becoming an existential threat to the finances of Canadian post-secondary schools, say organizations representing the institutions.

"The drop in international students is like an earthquake hitting an education system that's already structurally weakened by years of underinvestment," said Gabriel Miller, president and CEO of Universities Canada.

Provinces where international permit allocations were increased last year are also experiencing a decline in international enrolment, creating gaps in budgets that may lead to program cuts.

The federal government said last week that Canada issued about 40 per cent fewer international study permits among kindergarten to Grade 12, post-secondary and postgraduate students last year, overshooting its 35-per-cent target.

This year, it's seeking a further 10-per-cent reduction.

A recent report from ApplyBoard, an online marketplace for learning institutions, said the number of permits approved for college students likely dropped by about 60 per cent, while approvals for international undergraduate students fell about 40 per cent.

The total number of international study permits issued by Ontario was also essentially cut in half by the cap. ApplyBoard said it's projected the province had a 55 per cent decline in international permit approvals for 2024.

The dramatic decrease led Toronto's Centennial College to suspend 49 full-time programs. The University of Winnipeg recently cut its women's soccer team and English language program to find cost sav-

ings, citing pressure from lower international enrolment.

Alberta's quota for international students was boosted by about 10 per cent last year, but it's expected to see a 30 per cent decline in total study permit approvals when the 2024 data is tallied, said the ApplyBoard report.

Meti Basiri, co-founder and CEO of ApplyBoard, said the federal government's new policies aiming to cut the number of international students have caused confusion and uncertainty for students planning to continue their studies in Canada.

"That's pretty much all across every single level, whether that's PhD, master's, primary — even the programs or levels (and) institutions that were not part of any of these policy changes," he said.

Basiri said the decline of international students has forced many colleges and universities in Canada to cut programs and close campuses, which means fewer programs for domestic students in the coming years.

"Domestic tuition fees (are) going to go higher," he added.

Miller said the numbers are a "big, bright, flashing yellow light for the country."

The cap will hurt Canada in the long-term by forcing it to lose out on future workers, he said.

Universities have already been teetering due to various decisions made by provincial governments that have inhibited their ability to create revenue, Miller said.

The Ontario government, for example, has frozen tuition for domestic students until at least 2027, though it injected more than \$1.2 billion in one-time funding last year in response to federal immigration reforms. In Alberta, cuts to the provincial post-secondary budget have led to significant tuition increases for domestic students.



A dramatic decline in international study permits issued last year is quickly becoming an existential threat to the finances of Canadian post-secondary schools, say organizations representing the institutions. (The Canadian Press/Adrian Wylde)

Plummeting international enrolment and governments' funding decisions will likely result in layoffs, larger class sizes and hiring freezes, Miller said.

"A major drop in international student enrolment represents a fundamental change in the funding system for Canadian universities," he said.

"And unless that system now is repaired by governments, we're not going to be able to meet the need for education among our own native-born population."

The University of Calgary welcomed nearly nine per cent fewer international students last fall than in the fall of 2023, the school said in a statement.

It said the drop equates to an impact of about \$11 million on tuition revenue for the year. It didn't say how it would be affected. "This impact will grow over time, as students would have been anticipated to attend over multiple years."

The university said in a statement that while it's too early to speculate on the cap's impact, it will "certainly lead to a budgetary shortfall, the full extent of which is currently being assessed."

Ermia Rezaei-Afsah, president of the University of Calgary students' union, said several programs at the school have been frozen.

"We're seeing that the caps are working better than they're intended to," Rezaei-Afsah said.

"It's going to get worse in 2025," he said. "The reputational damage is immense."

Pari Johnston, president and CEO of Colleges and Institutes Canada, said it has been warning about the "devastating" impacts from the reforms.

"Canadian student access to high-demand programs, the training and talent pipeline employers depend on, and local research and innovation capacity are all at risk," Johnston said.

The federal government has maintained that funding challenges related to the cap are not its problem.

Immigration Minister Marc Miller said in December that the government "didn't tell any university or college to charge international students four or five times what we charge domestic students."

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Legal Notices

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If you have a claim against this estate, you must file your claim by the 28th day of February 2025,
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at 101, 37 Beju Industrial Drive,
Sylvan Lake, Alberta T4S 0K9
and provide the details of your claim.
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NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND CLAIMANTS
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Canada presses on with trade strategy in face of Trump's threats

By The Canadian Press

As U.S. President Donald Trump continues to hold out the threat of steep tariffs on Canadian imports, the federal trade minister is citing new trade deals with Ecuador and other nations as proof that its trade diversification strategy is working.

Mary Ng told *The Canadian Press*, the free-trade agreement with Ecuador, the sixth-largest economy in South America, is the 16th such deal signed since the government launched its trade diversification push eight years ago.

A lot of the existing trade with Ecuador is agricultural, with the South American nation sending Canada bananas, cocoa beans and seafood, while Canada sends wheat, cereal and lentils.

Statistics Canada says the top products traded between the two nations also include petroleum products, fertilizers and precious metals. Ng said she sees opportunities in services as well.

Canada hasn't had much luck in talks with its traditional trading partners in recent years. The U.K. walked away from trade talks with Canada last year over access to the cheese market.

Ng said that while she would welcome the U.K. back to the talks, she's currently focused on expanding trade with other countries.

"Canada welcomes the United Kingdom back at any time they wish to come back to the table," she said.

"But in the meantime, we have concluded an agreement with Indonesia. In the meantime, I've launched exploratory discussions with the Philippines. In the meantime, we are at the negotiating table with the ASEAN group of countries and nations."

Ottawa is in trade talks with the ten nations in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It also launched exploratory discussions with the Philippines late last year, around the same time it finalized a comprehensive economic partnership agreement with Indonesia, one of the most populous countries in the world.

Ng said she is considering travelling to Australia and Singapore this month as well.

Boosting trade with ASEAN countries is part of Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy. But that strategy has encountered turbulence as well.



International Trade Minister Mary Ng speaks to reporters at the APEC CEO Summit in Lima, Peru on Friday, Nov. 15, 2024. (The Canadian Press/Sean Kilpatrick)

Trade talks between Canada and India, which had been stop-and-go for about a decade, were abruptly put on ice in the fall of 2023 and have not resumed since.

That rupture happened immediately after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stood in Parliament to state that his government had "credible allegations" linking agents of the Indian government to the murder of Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was shot to death in Surrey, B.C. months earlier.

Vina Nadjibulla, Vice-President of Research and Strategy at the Asia Pacific Foundation, said while Canada needs to find a way around the diplomatic crisis with India, all of the concerns Canada has with China didn't go away just because the bilateral relationship with the U.S. has become more difficult — making these diversification efforts important, even if the economies are smaller.

"There are limits to how much we can do with China, whereas there are no limits with how much we can do with the 11 economies part of the CPTPP, many of which are growing. There are no limits to how much we can do with ASEAN," she said.

The U.S. has given Canada a month-long reprieve from

Trump's threat to impose steep tariffs in response to what he claims is Canada's inaction on border security and drug trafficking. But the incoming administration also has indicated there are other major sticking points that will come up down the road.

"Canada, as we spoke about, treats our dairy farmers horribly. That's got to end," Howard Lutnick, Trump's pick for commerce secretary, said at a hearing on Jan. 29. "I'm going to work hard to make sure, as an example, for your dairy farmers — (that) they do much, much better in Canada than they've ever done before, and that is a key focus of this administration."

Ng suggested Ottawa won't put supply management in the dairy sector on the table with the Trump administration, citing the last major round of trade talks with the U.S. after Trump reopened NAFTA.

"When we negotiated those provisions with respect to dairy and agriculture, they're a part of a balance of a whole number of things that were negotiated at the time," she said, adding it was ultimately Trump's deal. "Agriculture, dairy, supply management was part and parcel of a broader negotiation."

But the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA) will be up for review in the summer of 2026.

More than 77 per cent of Canadian exports go to the U.S., and bilateral trade makes up some 60 per cent of Canada's gross domestic product.

Ng, who has helped spearhead Canada's approach to the incoming U.S. administration for the past year, said she and Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne have had upwards of 1,300 meetings with American stakeholders and politicians to send the message that it's not worth the pain to squeeze Canada with tariffs.

"I keep reminding people that Canada buys more from the United States than Japan, than China, than the United Kingdom combined," she said. "We are a big customer and tariffs only hurt the American consumer. They hurt them at the grocery stores, at the pumps."

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has urged the federal government to press for the elimination of internal trade barriers, now that the trading relationship with the U.S. is under threat.

It estimates internal trade barriers act like a 21 per cent tariff on Canadian goods.

Alberta creating new social support program for people with disabilities

By The Canadian Press

Alberta's government says it's looking to help people with disabilities join and stay in the workforce without losing access to their existing benefits and governmental supports.

To do this, the government plans to launch a new social assistance regime, the Alberta Disability Assistance Program, in 2026.

Community and Social Services Minister Jason Nixon told a news conference in Calgary on Tuesday the new program will be similar to, and will work in conjunction with, Alberta's existing Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped program or AISH, which provides monthly financial and health benefits to eligible applicants.

The new program will also provide monthly financial and health benefits, and Nixon said the program is being designed to address a long-standing issue where those who receive AISH lose some of their benefits depending on how much they make each month.

Those who earn more than \$1,072 per month lose 50 per cent of their benefits, while AISH recipients who earn more than about \$2,000 per month lose their benefits entirely.

He said the new program will still have income limits that lead to benefit reductions, but those limits will be higher.

What those limits will ultimately be and what level of benefits will be available are still being finalized.

"I don't want to make this final program in a silo," Nixon said when asked why the program was being announced without key details being known.

"We'll be making some final decisions in consultation with others in the coming weeks."

More than 77,000 Albertans received AISH in 2024, and the government estimates close to 15 per cent, or 10,000, of those who did also held jobs.

"Those 10,000 individuals that we know are already working on AISH are going to be economically better off underneath that

new program," Nixon said.

"People with disabilities shouldn't have to choose between getting the support they need and having the opportunity to pursue a meaningful career."

Nixon said those currently receiving AISH will be reassessed to see if they qualify for the new program leading up to the 2026 launch, but they will continue to receive regular AISH benefits in the meantime.

He said those deemed not able to work will continue to receive AISH as usual, while those deemed able to work will be transferred under the new program.

Nixon said applications for both programs will be handled under one process and will be assessed by a new panel of medical professionals.

Greg McMeekin, Alberta's Advocate for Persons with Disabilities, told reporters that he thinks the new program will help reduce barriers to employment that people with disabilities face, namely by ensuring that health benefits aren't at risk when individuals begin to work.

"We know that people with disabilities are concerned about making too much money while on the AISH program and having that money clawed back. And we also know that people are concerned about receiving ongoing medical benefits as needed," McMeekin said.

"From what I understand, this new program will not (perpetuate) either of those two things."

Nixon also said the government plans to provide additional resources for those with disabilities to gain job skills and encourage businesses to break down employment barriers.

Opposition NDP social services critic Marie Renaud said Tuesday that the province should introduce accessibility legislation if it wants to increase job opportunities and reduce unemployment for those living with disabilities, which she said is twice as high as Alberta's overall unemployment rate.

About \$1.65 billion was committed to the AISH program as part of the government's 2024-25 budget.

Smith lauds pause on U.S. tariffs, deal to create fentanyl czar

By The Canadian Press

Alberta Premier Danielle Smith says she’s “greatly heartened” by U.S. President Donald Trump’s tariff pause, saying the eleventh-hour deal with Canada follows through on a border security measure she had been calling for.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said late Monday the tariffs will be paused for “at least 30 days” while Canada appoints a “fentanyl czar” and works with the U.S. to combat drug trafficking and organized crime.

Trump’s duties of 10 per cent on energy and 25 per cent on all other Canadian goods were to go into effect Tuesday.

Smith, in a social media post, said it became clear in her discussions with U.S. officials that Canada needed to appoint the special czar to avoid the tariffs.

“Diplomacy has won the day. Let us ensure that continues as we know there is much more work ahead of us,” she wrote.

Smith began calling for Ottawa to appoint a retired military general as “border czar” to work with Trump appointee Tom Homan last week.

On Monday, Smith reiterated her call for federal government officials and fellow premiers to de-escalate their rhetoric and abandon non-tariff measures for now.

“There are so many win-win solutions on trade and security between our two nations. Let us turn this crisis into an opportunity to find them for the benefit of Canadians and Americans,” said Smith.

The news came after other provinces announced planned measures to restrict or cancel contracts with American firms and stop U.S. alcohol sales in provincial liquor stores.

For many, those plans, too, are now on hold.



Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, left, talks with colleagues during the fall meetings of Canada’s premiers hosted by Ontario in Toronto, Monday, Dec. 16, 2024. (The Canadian Press/Nathan Denette)

Trudeau has said Canada would retaliate against Trump’s duties with tariffs of its own on \$155 billion of American goods, including alcohol, furniture and natural resources.

Smith has been committed to a diplomatic approach with

American lawmakers and is to travel to Washington, D.C., again this month.

A delegation of three Alberta cabinet ministers is to be in Washington this week to attend the National Prayer Breakfast events in a continued effort to sway lawmakers south of the border.

In January, Smith broke ranks with her fellow premiers and Trudeau, dismissing the possibility of a counter-tariff on Alberta’s oil and gas shipments.

Trump has linked the levies to fentanyl flooding the U.S. from Canada, and Smith has said he is right to focus on “major problems like our broken border” and the dangers of the drug.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection statistics show less than one per cent of all fentanyl seized comes from the northern border.

Alberta NDP Leader Naheed Nenshi said the reprieve buys time, but he called on Smith’s United Conservative Party government to create an all-party committee on market diversification.

He said nothing has been done on that critical file for the five years the UCP has been in government.

“Danielle Smith is still parroting the talking points of the U.S. president, flying an American flag on her desk, taking credit for something she had no part in,” he said.

Nenshi added that Albertans can do their part to support Alberta businesses and Canadian-made goods by buying local.

“This is a time to stand with our local businesses and workers in the face of massive economic strife.”

American killer and fugitive lived 50 years in Alberta town

By The Canadian Press

For half a century, Diedra Glabus lived a quiet life in the small town of Taber, Alta., three hours southeast of Calgary.

She was married, had a family, worked as a Realtor and died three years ago at the age of 81.

It was only after her death that her secret life and her real name was made public.

Glabus was in fact a fugitive killer and prison escapee named Sharon Kinne in a case that began in the 1960s and stretched from Missouri to Mexico to Canada.

Kinne, also known as Jeanette Pugliese and in Mexico as La Pistolera, was charged before her 25th birthday with killing her Missouri husband, her boyfriend’s wife and a man she’d picked up at a bar in Mexico.

In the third killing, she was sentenced to 13 years in a Mexican prison but escaped in 1969 and wasn’t seen again.

“I would love nothing more (than) to one day sit across the table from her, and I would like to pick her brain,” said Sgt. Dustin Love of the Jackson County Sheriffs Office at a joint news conference with Kansas City Police on Thursday.

“It’s unfortunate we couldn’t catch her when she was alive. She was really good at what she did.”

The two groups received an anonymous tip about Kinne in December of 2023.

“I have already extended my apologies to both sides of the family that we weren’t able to catch her during her life,” Love said.

“It just so happens that someone had that tip and was not willing to release it until

after her death.”

The Alberta RCMP was aware and provided assistance to the Jackson County Sheriff’s office and Kansas City Police.

“We helped co-ordinate, but ultimately they ended up being able to identify her through their own means without our assistance,” said Alberta RCMP spokesman Cpl. Troy Savinkoff.

“She was able to stay very, very low key over all those years and start a new life, a new relationship. It’s a pretty incredible story.”

An obituary for Kinne’s husband, Jim Glabus, said the couple moved to Taber in 1973 and owned a motel and started a Century 21 real estate agency.

Taber Mayor Andrew Prokop did not immediately respond to a request for com-

ment.

Kinne was the subject of the longest outstanding arrest warrant for murder in the history of Kansas City, Mo., and one of the longest outstanding felony warrants in U.S. history.

Kinne’s family issued a statement after the news became public.

“We would like to state how happy we are that this chapter in our family history can be closed,” it read.

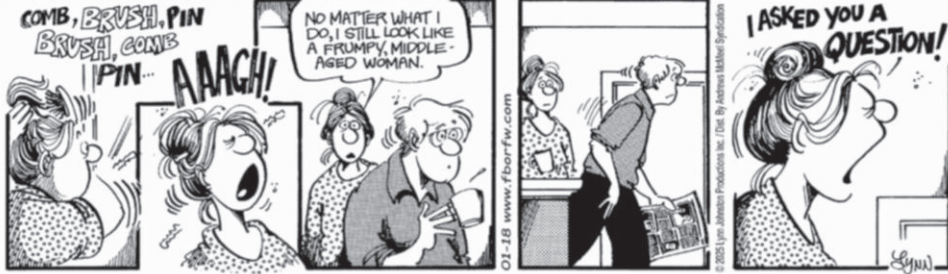
“Sharon was a woman that never faced the consequences of her actions, leaving them for her children to deal with. She caused great harm without thought or remorse. Hopefully, this closure will allow the family a chance to heal from her traumatic legacy.”

Savinkoff said it reads like a novel.

“Someone will publish something.”



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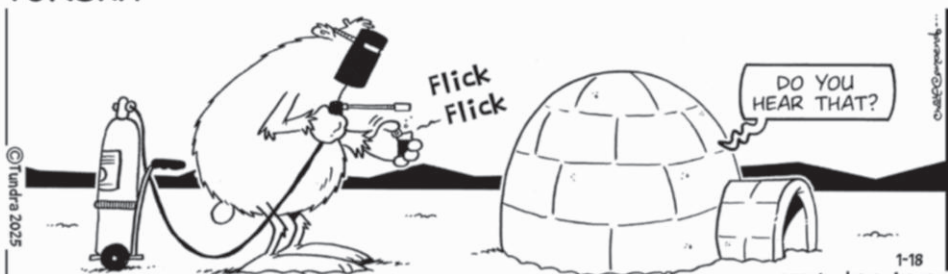
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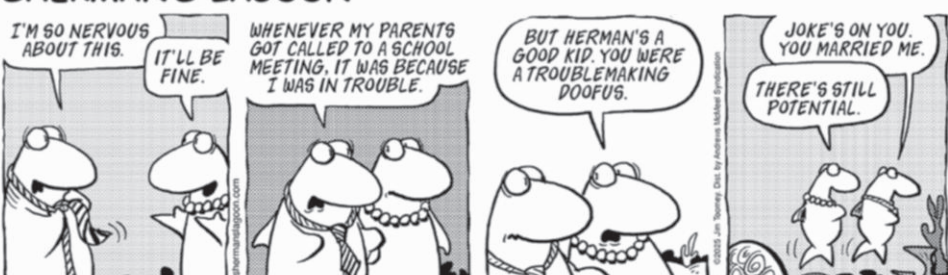
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Puzzle Page

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-18 CRYPTOQUOTE

V R V K P A M P T V X F P I
D Z K Q Z T H B F Z I Z F A M Z R
D Y P A B E H F , L X I Z R K H F ,
J Z K H F , V F Z D D V T P Z F V A
V F P K V A V F B I Y H D Z K K Z F
D Z A B . — Z W B H F F V T Y

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THE MORE YOU PRAISE AND CELEBRATE YOUR LIFE, THE MORE THERE IS IN LIFE TO CELEBRATE. — OPRAH WINFREY

			5	2				
7	2							
5				4	3			6
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	8			1			5	
3				8		2		
9			6	5				7
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				3	9			

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★★

SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, every column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 through 9.

2	9	9	6	8	1	8	7	4
8	1	6	2	7	4	9	8	9
7	8	7	9	8	9	2	1	6
1	7	2	9	8	7	6	9	3
6	9	4	1	8	7	8	2	7
8	7	8	9	6	2	9	7	1
9	2	7	8	4	8	1	6	9
9	8	8	1	9	6	4	7	2
4	6	1	7	2	9	8	9	8

Solution

TODAY'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Hiding place
 - 5 Reduces
 - 10 Imperfection
 - 14 Part of AD
 - 15 Wireless set
 - 16 "That stings!"
 - 17 Type size
 - 18 Last of the Greek letters
 - 19 "Do — others ..."
 - 20 Strong
 - 22 Grows smaller
 - 24 Length times width
 - 25 Exam
 - 26 Garb
 - 30 Ornamental headband
 - 34 Farm animal
 - 37 Work dough
 - 39 Blockade
 - 40 Daring
 - 42 Storage facility
 - 44 Fasten firmly
 - 45 Plait
 - 47 Negative factor
 - 49 Tripper's drug
 - 50 Perceived
 - 52 Ledger entry
 - 54 Equal
 - 56 — of faith
 - 59 Disconcert
 - 62 Casts an angry look
 - 64 Narrow opening
- DOWN**
- 65 Overact
 - 67 Achy
 - 68 "When in — ..."
 - 69 Flow of water
 - 70 Arab VIP
 - 71 Farming need
 - 72 Cook a certain way
 - 73 Car racer — Earnhardt
 - 1 Circuits around a track
 - 2 Writer — Loos
 - 3 Bring on oneself
 - 4 Bellowed
 - 5 Helen of —
 - 6 Zodiac animal
 - 7 — of March
 - 8 Power
 - 9 Skyrocketed
 - 10 Water feature
 - 11 Awkward fellow
 - 12 Behaves
 - 13 "The Spy — Loved Me"
 - 21 Dinky
 - 23 Wife of Osiris
 - 27 Come to a close
 - 28 Appear
 - 29 Flavorful
 - 31 Bargain hunter's quest
 - 32 Sponsorship (Var.)
 - 33 Blend

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

G	I	S	T	Z	O	R	R	O	M	O	S	S
A	V	E	R	E	T	H	E	R	I	D	O	L
L	A	M	A	A	I	O	L	I	R	I	M	E
A	N	I	M	A	L	S	Y	E	A	R	N	E
P	R	O	P	R	O	N	C	O				
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S	E	T	S		E	N	D	E	D	O	S	S

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- 34 Flows back
- 35 Had on
- 36 — vital
- 38 Sufficiently cooked
- 41 Not agreed upon
- 43 Large container
- 46 Fourth letters
- 48 Place for a window box
- 51 Hinders
- 53 Pestered in fun
- 55 Send, as payment
- 57 Bouquet
- 58 Hazard
- 59 Ice mass at sea
- 60 Juicy fruit
- 61 Wander
- 62 Bug
- 63 Dried out
- 64 Soon-to-be grads (Abbr.)
- 66 Herb drink

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HOROSCOPES

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2025

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Ask, and you shall receive as well as gain respect and an opportunity that can influence how you earn your living or handle your affairs. Refrain from pondering your next move for too long. Ideally, the quicker you take the initiative, the better the results. 3 stars

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Change begins with you. Be inventive, show discipline and start putting your plans in motion. Your drive will determine how well and how much you achieve. Don't hide out when you belong in the spotlight. Do what you do best and be proud of what you accomplish. 3 stars

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Think twice before you trust someone hyping something you know little about. Get the lowdown and research before you participate in something foreign to you. Opportunity begins with you, not someone's empty promises. Do your own thing, follow your heart and finish what you start. Avoid excess. 3 stars

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Take better care of yourself, your reputation and your position. Do everything by the book, stick to the rules and regulations, and only change what's necessary. Trying to please everyone is impossible. Strive to achieve your expectations, and you'll maintain your status quo. Personal growth will follow. 4 stars

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Implement energy and discipline to help you accomplish your goals. Refuse to let anyone talk you out of taking care of your responsibilities. You will feel at ease once you complete your tasks and can turn your downtime into fond memories. 4 stars

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You'll desire change. However, procrastinating won't satisfy your needs. Stop letting others sway you or get in your way. Focus on a plan to get things done and bask in the glory of your achievements. A home improvement project will offer greater fulfillment than you expect. Enjoy the benefits of your labor. 3 stars

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Mixed emotions will surface. Refuse to get swept up in someone's frenzy when you have plans to put in motion. You can make headway professionally if you set high standards and go above and beyond your expectations. Think big, and move forward until you wow those who can influence your prospects. 3 stars

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You'll gain insight into possibilities and how to use your skills to reach your financial goals. Work diligently to upgrade your skills and stay on top of what's trending. Displaying confidence and talent with finesse will make a difference in how others treat you. Some will be

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Think twice before you bend to someone's whims. It's up to you to choose opportunities that can help you get ahead. A conversation will offer insight into the best way to move forward without controversy. Let your intuition lead the way, and your experience help you ward off interference. 2 stars

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Reluctance to see or acknowledge what others want will prevent you from getting your way. Indulge others by listening, observing and offering valid alternatives. You can get what you want with a positive and informative attitude. When uncertainty takes over, take control, ask questions and lead the way. 5 stars

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Draw from your reserves and participate in something that offers a unique perspective regarding something causing uncertainty in your life. Immerse yourself in conversations, events and research that provide insight into how to help. Head in that direction, and you'll meet someone inspirational. Personal growth is favored. 3 stars

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Ignore the riffraff you hear in the background and channel your energy into what matters. Taking charge and getting things done will have a much grander effect on you and how things unfold than someone pontificating on the sidelines. Choose the people you want to associate with: the doers or critics. 3 stars

jealous, and others in awe. 3 stars

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Participate in events that offer access to individuals of interest, talent and partnership possibilities. Wheel and deal your way forward with heartfelt talks and entertaining ideas. Follow through by making suggestions to share in-depth plans that are hard to resist. Reunite with someone from your past. 4 stars

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Pay attention to deadlines and finishing what you start. Refuse to let anyone or anything slow you down or create chaos or confusion in your life. A change will be uplifting, but refuse to let it put you in debt. Getting together with someone who makes you smile is sufficient. 2 stars

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Open your eyes, ask questions and absorb the information that comes your way. Participate in an event, reunion or activity that brings you in touch with people heading in a similar direction. Communication will be vital to discovering what's best for you and how to make it happen. 5 stars

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Mingling will help you put your life situation in perspective. Be a keen observer and listener, and you'll map out a plan that enables you to find your niche. Attending events offering a wide selection of people and options to ponder will ensure mental stimulation and progressive ideas with promising results. 3 stars

a difference, and you'll rise to the top. 3 stars

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Plant your feet firmly on the ground regardless of the temptation you face. It's better to do what's right and avoid backlash than to take a risk that can cost you financially, emotionally or physically. Learn from your mistakes and let go of who and what holds you back. 4 stars

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): A plan that frees up time and allows you to work toward something you enjoy or offers higher returns looks promising, but first, build a safety net before you begin. Resist taking on too much prematurely. Set yourself up for success, not failure. 2 stars

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Remain calm, view the situation and summarize what it will take to navigate your way forward with the least friction. Build a circle that supports your long-term goals, and you will gain momentum while gathering positive input to attract success. Self-improvement projects, plus partnerships, romance, communication and learning, are highlighted. 5 stars

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You'll have choices. Set priorities to ensure you reach your target. Take care of responsibilities before you indulge in socializing or creative endeavors. A clear head and calendar will make life easier and more enjoyable. A domestic change will turn out better than anticipated. Your efforts will pay off. 3 stars

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Stick to the script. Any deviation will lead to trouble. Someone will be eager to send you on a wild goose chase. Call on allies to back you up, and block anyone you think may be trying to sabotage your efforts. Trust and truth will help you find the best way forward. 3 stars

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Pay attention to what's happening at home. Someone is experiencing emotional changes that can alter your life if not addressed properly. Show kindness and consideration, ask questions and see what you can do to improve things. Your reassurance will make a difference and encourage personal growth and positive alternatives. 5 stars

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Know and use the rules to your advantage. Staying one step ahead of everyone else will keep you in the running and give you the confidence to complete your mission. Refuse to let suggested changes scare you. Listen, revise and use your charm to bend others to see things your way. 2 stars

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Concentrate on what you want to accomplish and forget everything else. Your undivided attention will prove valuable, helping you reach your quota with time to spare and accolades coming your way. Refuse to let anyone or anything stand between you and the victory you deserve. Positive change is heading your way. 4 stars

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Let your emotions take over and make your feelings known. Conversing with people who play an intricate role in your life will help you understand and articulate what's in your best interest. You may desire change, but take care of unfinished business before venturing down a different path. 3 stars

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): An energetic approach to relationships, striving for equality and creating a plan that feels comfortable for you and those you want in your circle will help you bring about positive lifestyle changes that surpass your expectations. Don't dillydally when thought and action are your ticket to peace of mind and personal freedom. 3 stars

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Stick close to home and make gratifying adjustments that encourage spending more time with loved ones. Work fast and furiously, put your responsibilities behind you and relax. Taking your time and doing what matters most will ease stress and encourage a healthy lifestyle. Make love and romance a priority. 5 stars

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Slow down and rethink your strategy before you take on too much or let temptation take over. Participating in something that requires mental and physical agility will take your mind off your worries, giving you a chance to conceive a practical perspective regarding a situation that requires common sense. 2 stars

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2025

ARIES (March 21-April 19): More action, less talk. How you deal with concerns will impact and influence those you encounter. Concentrate on changes that add to your convenience. Ease stress by distancing yourself from those choosing to take a different path. Laboring over something you cannot change won't get you where you want to go. 4 stars

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You may crave change, but first consider why, and what's involved in making it. Review your finances and how to lower your overhead before signing up for more debt. Helping others or a cause is honorable and can raise your awareness and gratitude if it's within your budget. 3 stars

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Concentrate on helping yourself before focusing on helping others. Make gaining stability a priority, and you will be in a better position to reach out and make a difference. Think big, but put a strict budget in place and stick to it. A change will do you good. 3 stars

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Combine energy, integrity and determination, and you'll rise above anyone who gets in your way. Embrace what resonates with you most, and don't hesitate to go directly to the source with your grievances and some positive suggestions. Stand up, be counted and make

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Keep the momentum flowing. Refrain from letting what others do put a strain on your plans. Follow your instincts and do whatever promises peace of mind and happiness. It's up to you to leave what you cannot control alone and pour your energy into pleasing yourself and your loved ones. 3 stars

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Put your heart and soul into meaningful relationships, getting ahead and making your life sustainable. Change what doesn't feel right and say no to temptation and those trying to manipulate you. Taking control and embracing prospects that encourage peace of mind are in your best interest. 3 stars

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Formulate a plan and stick to it until you reach your objective. Your determination and courage will help you start and recognize that you have the power, persistence, enthusiasm and positive attitude to get things done. You've got this; go do your thing and enjoy the results. Personal gain is favored. 5 stars

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Observation is necessary to sidestep drama. Focus on something that pleases you or makes you feel good about yourself, your appearance and your achievements. Social events will allow you to connect with and charm people of interest. Don't doubt your ability to turn heads and persuade others to see things your way. 2 stars

ANNIE'S MAILBOX

Struggling with disrespectful patients and finding forgiveness for a toxic parent



Annie Lane

Dear Annie: Last week, I was caring for a patient named “Mr. Thompson,” who had come in with severe back pain. After completing my initial assessment, his daughter, “Sally,” arrived and immediately demanded that I give her father “the strongest pain meds you’ve got.” I explained that we had protocols to follow and that the doctor would need to approve any narcotics. She became furious, yelling, “What’s wrong with you? Can’t you see he’s suffering? Just give him something!”

I calmly assured her that we were doing everything we could to manage his pain, but she stormed out of the room, swearing under her breath. Later, when I stepped away for a moment to grab supplies, she cornered me in the hallway and accused me of ignoring her father. It was degrading and exhausting, especially after a 10-hour shift without a proper break.

This kind of treatment has become all too common, and

it leaves me questioning how society has lost its sense of respect and gratitude for nurses who are just trying to do their jobs. — **Tired Nurse**

Dear Tired: First and foremost, I want to personally thank you for your dedication to such a vital profession. Nurses are one of the most noble and important professions you can choose, and I am deeply grateful for you and all the hardworking nurses out there.

While there is no excuse for rude behavior, it might help to remind yourself that this behavior often reflects the stress and emotions of the patient or their family, not your incredible work or character. Please know in your heart how valuable and impactful your job is. You make a difference every single day, even when it doesn’t feel like it. Thank you for all that you do.

Dear Annie: I grew up with a mother who was an abusive alcoholic and drug addict. She also struggled with anorexia and severe mental illness, which made my childhood incredibly painful and traumatic. For years, I resented her for the damage she caused and the anger she directed toward me and my siblings.

Later, I learned that as a child, my mother had been sexually abused by her brother. While this knowledge doesn’t excuse her behavior, it did help me understand the deep pain she carried and why she acted the way she did. In time, it allowed me to find some forgiveness and compassion for her.

How can others in similar situations — dealing with abusive or toxic family members — work toward understanding, healing and forgiveness while still protecting themselves from harm? — **Seeking Peace**

Dear Seeking: By forgiving your mother and understanding her pain, you have given yourself the greatest gift of all — peace through forgiveness. This does not mean you must maintain a close relationship with someone who continues to harm you. True growth and healing take time, and therapy or counseling can be invaluable in helping you process your emotions, understand your reactions and develop healthy coping strategies.

Thank you for sharing your experience. By printing your letter, I hope it inspires and helps others in similar situations.

Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com.

NATIONAL

Alcohol-related deaths rose 18% during pandemic: report

By The Canadian Press

Alcohol-related deaths rose about 18 per cent during the pandemic, according to a study that points to the harm of making liquor more available at a time of increased vulnerability.

Researchers with the Public Health Agency of Canada compared alcohol-related deaths and hospitalizations before and after the pandemic, finding 1,600 more deaths than expected.

They also found hospitalizations jumped eight per cent, with an even higher increase of about 14 per cent in 2020 and 2021.

This happened as alcohol retail sales saw the highest increase in a decade — despite an absence of tourists in Canada. The study says provinces designating alcohol as “essential” and allowing liquor stores to remain open during lockdowns while making it easy to access with home delivery, could have undermined public health messaging about its harms.

Lead author Dr. Yipu Shi says these findings confirm the harm of drinking more alcohol, which may be attributed to increases of stress, boredom and worsening mental health during the pandemic.

The study shows certain demographics faced more alcohol-related harm than others, including females, young adults and low income earners, exposing pre-existing disparities in these groups.

Their findings, published Monday in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, examined data between 2016 and 2022 and only included deaths that could be fully attributed to alcohol, such as alcohol liver disease, which accounted for almost 10,800 in total.

They found hospitalizations linked to drinking rose three times more among females than males — 15.6 per cent compared



Researchers with the Public Health Agency of Canada compared alcohol-related deaths and hospitalizations before and after the pandemic, finding 1,600 more deaths than expected. (Advocate file photo)

to 5.7 per cent — which Shi says could have been attributed to higher stress, loneliness, exposure to intimate partner violence, and job loss than males.

The study also reported a 55 per cent increase in mortality for those aged 25 to 44 years old, a “very concerning” spike that suggests younger adults had trouble with drinking before the pandemic, and it only got worse.

Higher alcohol consumption was recorded among the highest income group, but mortality rates for this group were the lowest. Dr. Daniel Myran, Canada’s research chair at the University of Ottawa department of family medicine, says this highlights the fact that people who are lower income tend to experience more harm and face more risk of chronic diseases.

“It’s interesting that the richest 20 per cent of neighborhoods see almost half the in-

crease in mortality that the lowest income groups, the lowest income neighborhoods, see. I think that there were very different pandemic experiences for people based on socioeconomic status,” he said.

Shi says the lower prevalence of pre-existing alcohol-related diseases for high income earners could have mitigated the adverse effects of drinking more liquor.

The report also shows regional differences with the Prairies and British Columbia seeing three times the deaths tied to alcohol than in Ontario and the Atlantic provinces, and six to seven times the deaths seen in Quebec.

Researchers say these differences could be tied to public health restrictions, economic impacts, and health care capacity during the pandemic. For example, they say major waves of COVID-19 in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan likely delayed care for

alcohol-related conditions. In contrast, the low infection rate in the “Atlantic bubble” may have translated to more health care capacity and reduced harm.

A rise in alcohol-related deaths has also been noted in the United States — where it jumped 29 per cent — and 19 European countries, where it rose 18 per cent.

The study says the surge in deaths due to alcohol dropped after 2022 as vaccines and COVID-19 treatments became available. But Myran says the pre-pandemic baseline is still a bad state of affairs. Before the pandemic, alcohol use was already a leading cause of mortality in Canada.

The challenge is alcohol control policies are not viewed as a “political win,” Myran says, but expanding alcohol sales to convenience stores, making liquor cheaper, and giving tax breaks, are easy popularity points for politicians. Many provinces allowed liquor stores to start doing booze home deliveries during the pandemic, and still do.

“There really is a very influential and powerful alcohol lobby who meet regularly with decision makers and politicians who are not interested in policies that will reduce the sale of alcohol because that is how their companies make money,” says Myron.

Dr. Tim Naimi, director of the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research at the University of Victoria, says the rollback of alcohol policies that took place during this period that have persisted, such as making it available on delivery apps, will be among the lasting negative impacts of the pandemic.

“Rather than leading to a strengthening of alcohol policies during a period when people were even more vulnerable than usual, it led to an erosion of those policies, and that has continued,” Naimi said.

Naimi said he hopes this study will spur reflection for policy makers.

RED DEER
THE ADVOCATE



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