

MULTIPLEX

Town hosts Community Resource Fair

YCE Multiplex project update...

by Niki Luymes

Edson and area residents got a welcome to the Edson Legion 11am to 2pm. chance to see what the town has and meet representatives from Each organization had a table including the Culture and Arts to offer at the annual different community set up where visitors could Network of

Community Resource Fair on organizations, clubs, and not- collect information and connect January 11. Everyone was for-profits. The event ran form with people. There was a wide

variety of groups represented continued page 2

see pages 3-4

COUNTY

County to seek contractors for **Recycling and Transfer Station Operations...**

see page 10

COMMENT

How Trudeau and Liberal Gov't failed Canada...

see page 6



The Edson Community Resource Fair on January 11, had 29 originations in attendance. Carole Haubi and Hayden Brandle were representing the Willow Winds Support Network for assisting those with FASD. photo Niki Luymes







TWO MEN AND A HAMMER INC. **New Homes, Shops, Garages and Additions** DALE WILLIAMS tmhdale@gmail.com Box 6666 Edson, AB T7E 1V1

Community Resource Fair connects people to local clubs and organizations

continued from front

Edson (CANOE), the Edson Youth Council, the Edson Food Bank, Edson Taekwondo, the Girl Guides, and more. This event was specifically limited to groups that offer a service beyond selling goods.

There were 29 different organizations represented. Booking a table cost \$10 per organization. Each group promoted themselves as they saw fit, though live demonstrations, free give-a-ways, or draws and prizes. The Town of Edson offered door prizes for all who entered.

The resource fair has been a reoccurring event in Edson for over 15 years. It has often used different locations, but the purpose remains the same. "The goal is to connect the community to resources," said Sarah McDonald, Edson's Family, Community Support Services, (FCSS) supervisor. "We want people to know what's available, because it's a busy world we live in. We really want people to be aware of what's in their community and maybe be able to get involved."

While this year had more organizations represented than the last couple years, turnout from the community was still a bit slow. "Is been tough the past few years to get people to come out to anything really; especially for something like this. But it's still busier this year than it's been the last couple years. All ages have been coming out and I think those people have really benefited," said McDonald.

"Another benefit is allowing our agencies connecting with each other," McDonald added. "So that's been a big positive from today."

This year, the Edson FCSS team also worked to put together a directory of all the local organizations in the community. That list can be found online or as a hard copy.

MacKay Community Association **Annual General Meeting** February 6, 2025 6:00 p.m. All are Welcome!

MacKay Community Hall

EVENT REMINDER

January 29 February 12, 26 March 12:

Family Time Peers Multiplex. This is a

free program for caregivers with

children 0-5

10:30AM-12:30PM. Registration is required.



The Edson Taekwondo Club was one of the groups represented at the January 11, Community Resource Fair. The event was held a the Edson Legion. Pictured are Rebekah and Cory Whitesell, and Jamie Hobbins. photo Niki Luymes

West Yellowhead 2025 **Visitor's Guide** Coming soon. Call or Email 0



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YCE Multiplex facility plans continue to progress



by Shaylyn Thornton and Niki Luymes

Background

Yellowhead County Council and Town of Edson Council each received updates on the YCE Multiplex at their January 14 meeting. Doug Wagstaff, General Manager of Community and Protective Services for Edson, and Crystal McNernie, General Manager of Community Services for the County, presented the updates.

The project has been ongoing and substantial progress has been made in the development and planning stages, with this update providing an overview of the project's status, milestones, and upcoming phases. A development permit has been submitted and is currently pending approval.

"It is an exciting time. There has been a lot of tedious work going behind the scenes. We are hitting a phase in this project where we're going to begin to see actual results of that work," said Wagstaff.

In November 2024, the detailed design phase was finalized, providing a comprehensive blueprint of the facility's layout, materials, and systems and allowing for more accurate cost estimation and project planning.

A Class B cost estimate based on that design was completed by Clark Builders and indicated an overage of 3.5% above the approved \$80.24 million budget, highlighting the need for further adjustments as the project moves forward.

In response, the project committee (which included the ownership group, GEC Architecture, Clark Builders, and Lewis Reilly from Tango Management) engaged in a value engineering workshop to determine alternatives that could help "drive that number down," said McNernie. Some of the changes were small, such as the change from wall-mount toilets to floor-mount toilets which would save \$50,000. "There were a number of these really small changes that cumulatively add up to some big changes," McNernie said. The biggest changes made include potentially reducing the lobby size, moving forward with a preengineered arena structure, modifying flooring options in the gymnasium and the pool area, and going back to bench-style seating in the arenas as opposed to bucket

seats.

The project team also engaged with the Edson Curling Club, Edson Orcas Swim Club, Edson Figure Skating Club, and Edson Minor Hockey. Three out of four of the groups provided feedback, but the EMH's response was still pending as of the Council meeting.

The groups' feedback will be incorporated into the design where possible but some requests, such as a commercial kitchen, are not feasible with the current budget.

A website has been launched, www.ycemultiplex.ca, which will provide residents with up-to-date information on the project's current status. Additional information, including construction photos and facility renderings, will be uploaded as the project progresses.

With an anticipated construction start in spring 2025, the project has now advanced to the tendering phase, with several tender packages to be released over the next several months.

Yellowhead County

Yellowhead County's Procurement Policy requires that all tender awards over \$500,000 require Council approval. However, with tight timelines, County Administration requested that approval authority for the first two tender awards be delegated to the CAO, which would allow for quicker decision-making, expedite the approval process, and maintain momentum for the project.

"We're getting to the point now where we're kind of trying to lock in these dates," said McNernie of the projected dates for each tender. "These are reflective of the timelines that we need to achieve in

timelines that we need to achieve in order to get a spring 2025 construction start and a project completion in 2027." agreed. "Administration will represent Council and the steering committee 120%."

Councillor David Russell pointed out the "significant changes to our world and to our economy" since the original \$50 million budget range when the YCE Multiplex project was in its earliest stages. "Prices have skyrocketed, things have changed a great deal," he said, adding that potential tariffs could impact the project significantly. "To get this on the road and going and get some numbers locked in is important."

Mayor Wade Williams said that he often hears from the public that "they don't believe this project is ever going to get off the ground." "But here we are today, this is where the rubber hits the road," he said.

Council voted unanimously to give authority to the CAO, through YCE Steering Committee recommendations, to award the first two tenders (Pre-Engineered Arena and Pool Mechanical, Mechanical General, Electrical General) for the County's proportionate share of a total of \$19.9 million, for the YCE Multiplex Project, subject to the awards aligning with the program presented and the overall project budget of \$80.24 million.

Town of Edson

The Town does not require tender approvals to be brought to Council if they are under the approved budget. As such, the awarding of a pre-engineered arena contract has

continued page 4



Traditional Funeral Services, Graveside Services, Cemetery Monuments, Prearrangement Plans

The first tender will award the pre-engineered arena contract which "is a critical step in the completion of the construction documents and fabrication of the arena structure." The second tender package involved the pool mechanical, mechanical general, and electrical general components.

Councillor Brigitte Lemieux said that while this is "a super exciting time" it is "also a bit scary."

"This is a scary part, this is when we make that final decision to jump in with both feet and make this project happen," CAO Luc Mercier

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EMPLOYMENT ADS GO ONLINE at weeklyanchor.com

YCE Multiplex facility plans continue to progress

continued from page 3

already been selected. Each of the proposals was evaluated based on cost, design compatibility, and market risk factors.

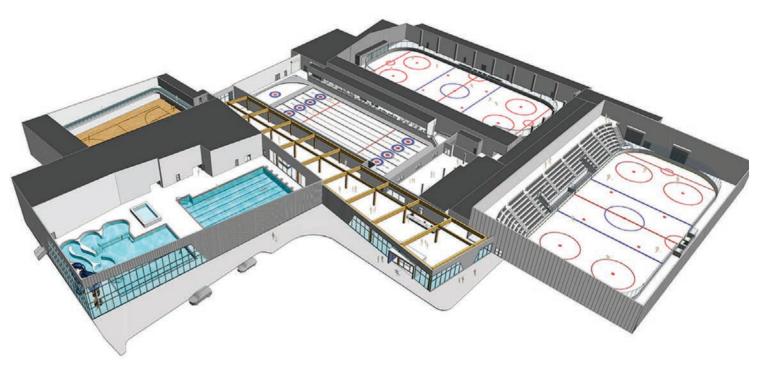
"As each supplier provides slightly different buildings, bringing them on board now allows us to complete the structural engineering coordination, while optimizing the added value and efficiencies," said Wagstaff.

Councillor Krystal Cacka asked for clarification on what it meant for the budget estimation to be

considered "Class B." Wagstaff explained, "At each stage of the process as you refine from concept to construction drawings, you can get more accurate pricing estimates. So, it started at a Class D, and now we are at Class B, and the final is a Class A. There, you get the construction drawings, and the tenders, and you know firmly what the cost is."

Councillor Peter Taylor asked, "In terms of the user group consultations, have you spoken to the men's hockey organization? I didn't see that within the note." Wagstaff replied that they had not consulted the men's hockey group, simply because they are not a formal organization.

Taylor also asked about the smaller cosmetic items that were cut or altered for



budget reasons. "Are these the types of things that down the road we could go back to, or are we looking at a facility that once we choose, we are locked in?" Wagstaff noted that it would be possible to add items in the future, as long as the project is designed correctly to allow that.

Mayor Kevin Zahara said, "There has been a lot of painstaking work in the past several months. It is a little scary, because we are now going to start spending some big dollars on this project."

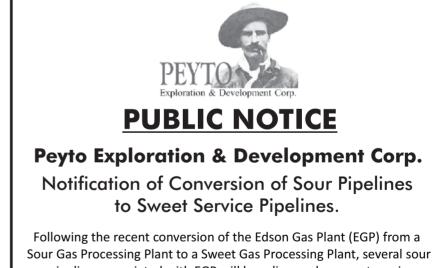
"But every time we have a delay in making a decision, that just adds more money to the cost of this project so it's really important that we continue to move forward," Zahara continued.

concept drawing

"At the end of the day, it's about getting this project done, getting this facility built, and making sure that it has the amenities this community not only wants, but needs."

"One of the things that we wanted to highlight is that there has been a lot going on behind the scenes. I think this is an opportunity to be able show our residents that things are happening," added CAO Christine Beveridge. "It's something that we are excited to do finally, to be able to let people know that there is work being done, we just couldn't share it. Now we are happy to be able to do so."





Sour Gas Processing Plant to a Sweet Gas Processing Plant, several sour gas pipelines associated with EGP will be relicensed as sweet service. As a result, notification letters regarding the changes will be delivered to residents and occupants living within the previously determined Emergency Planning Zones (EPZs) for all Peyto pipelines being relicensed. These notifications are a requirement of the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) whenever there is a change in operating license of a sour service pipeline. Some residents and occupants will no longer fall within the previously defined EPZs and will no longer be contacted to update contact information. Any residents or occupants that remain within defined EPZs will continue to be contacted to update contact information as required by the AER.

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Jesse Kirillo, Senior Surface Landman – Edson Peyto Exploration & Development Corp. 780-712-0452 jkirillo@peyto.com

THE WEEKLY ANCHOR

TOWN OF EDSON



Public Information & Notices 2025

Town of Edson Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm (Closed Stat Holidays)

Edson **INVITATION TO TENDER**

Petroleum Products (ITT - 2025 - 001)

Interested parties should view the bid documents at www.edson.ca/tenders

RFP ISSUE DATE: Monday, January 13, 2025 RFP CLOSING DATE: Thursday, January 30, 2025 RFP CLOSING TIME: 14:00:00 (2:00 P.M) MST

Submissions attention to: Gil Belcourt, Fleet Supervisor Email: Gilb@edson.ca

<u>5</u>4 Edson **INVITATION TO TENDER**

Ice Resurfacer Advertising Opportunity (RFP No.: 2025-EDLC-001)

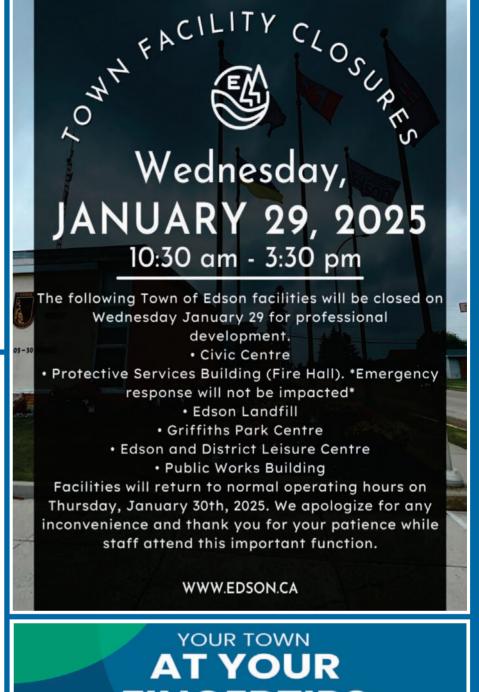
Interested parties should view the bid documents at www.edson.ca/tenders

RFP ISSUE DATE: Wednesday, January 7, 2025 RFP CLOSING DATE: Tuesday, February 4, 2025 RFP CLOSING TIME: 14:00:59 (2:00 P.M) MST

Submissions attention to: Vicky Bird, Recreation Manager Email: vickyb@edson.ca

Council Live Stream









THE TOWN OF EDSON

NOTICE OF DEVELOPMENT

Recent Development Permits approved by the Development Authority, under the Town of Edson Land Use Bylaw 2296 as amended, can be found at https://www.edson.ca/business/planning/development-permit-applications. Additional information can be requested from the Planning Department at 780-723-4402 or planning@edson.ca. Any person who is deemed to be affected by the issuance of any one of these permits may appeal to the Subdivision and Development Authority by 4:00 p.m., on the 21st day after the date of issue as published on the Town's website. On Permitted Uses, grounds for appeal must relate only to interpretation, variance, or relaxation of Land Use Bylaw 2296. On Discretionary Uses, all aspects of the proposed development may be challenged upon appeal. Written notice of appeal, accompanied by the appeal fee as established by Town Council, must be filed through the Office of the Secretary of the Intermunicipal Subdivision and Development Appeal Board (ISDAB) at Box 6300, Edson, AB T7E 1T7. Direct Control District Approvals cannot be appealed.





THE WEEKLY ANCHOR

NEWSPAPERS

MATI



Guest Editorial/Column

How Trudeau and Liberal Gov't failed Canada

A decade of scandals, coercive progressivism, and lost opportunities leaves Canada divided

As Justin Trudeau's time as Prime Minister finally comes to an end, it's worth reflecting on his tarnished legacy. For many, the past decade will be remembered as "the lost years" -atime of missed opportunities, deepening divisions, and unresolved challenges that have left Canada worse off.

Under Trudeau's leadership, Canada's national debt has reached unprecedented levels. While pandemic spending was necessary, much of it was poorly directed, creating inefficiencies and leaving future generations saddled with the fallout. Meanwhile, Canadians are struggling with an affordability crisis. Skyrocketing housing prices, persistent inflation, and stagnant wages have left families stretched thin. Despite countless promises to make life more affordable, Trudeau's government has largely offered short-term fixes that failed to address systemic issues.

National unity has also taken a significant hit during Trudeau's time in office. His policies on carbon taxes and energy development have alienated Western Canada, particularly Alberta and Saskatchewan, where frustration has boiled over into talk of separation. This sense of alienation has been exacerbated by Trudeau's perceived favouritism toward Quebec, with policies and funding decisions that often seem skewed to Quebec's advantage, further deepening divisions across the country.

Trudeau's time in office has also been plagued by scandal. From the SNC-Lavalin affair to the WE Charity controversy to the use of the Emergencies Act, Trudeau's repeated breaches of ethics laws have eroded trust in his leadership. These scandals highlight a troubling pattern of prioritizing political connections over integrity, tarnishing Canada's reputation for good governance both at home and abroad. Even more concerning is Trudeau's apparent inability to accept accountability for these missteps, often deflecting blame or offering vague explanations that fall short of genuine transparency. Adding to this is his embrace of wokeism, which many Canadians see as performative and divisive. Trudeau's focus on symbolic gestures - whether kneeling for cameras, wearing costumes during international visits, or issuing apologies that often feel hollow – has alienated a large population segment. These actions seem more about cultivating his image as a socalled "progressive" leader than enacting real change. His heavy-handed approach to social issues, often described as "coercive progressivism," has polarized Canadians, alienating moderates and conservatives while failing to deliver meaningful results for those he claims to champion. Trudeau's lack of leadership qualities has been glaring in moments of

national and international importance. Rather than uniting the country, his approach has often exacerbated divisions, creating an "us versus them" mentality. His tendency to favour style over substance – delivering carefully crafted soundbites instead of actionable plans – has left Canada ill-prepared to tackle the structural challenges it faces.

Energy policy has been another sore point. Trudeau's government purchased the Trans Mountain pipeline in an attempt to placate Western Canada, but it also introduced Bill C-69 - the socalled "no more pipelines" law – which effectively stifled energy development. This balancing act has satisfied no one, leaving the energy sector in limbo while environmental goals remain unmet. The carbon tax, touted as a cornerstone of climate action, has disproportionately impacted rural and low-income Canadians while delivering minimal reductions in emissions. This mismanagement has left Canada without a coherent energy strategy, undermining both economic growth and climate commitments.

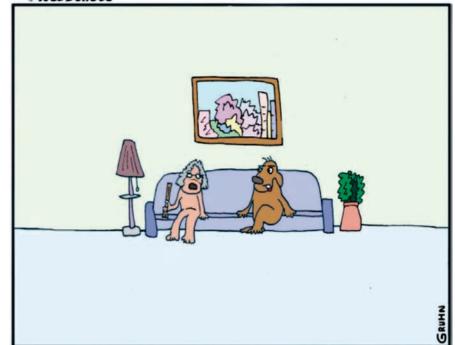
On the international stage, Trudeau's leadership has failed to inspire confidence. His government's failure to secure a seat on the UN Security Council was not just a symbolic blow but a reflection of Canada's diminished standing in global affairs. Relations with key countries like China and India have deteriorated, with Trudeau's infamous trip to India – complete with costume mishaps - turning into a global embarrassment. While Canada's rhetoric on climate change and human rights remains lofty, its actions often fall short, leaving the country sidelined on critical global issues.

Despite opportunities to position Canada as a global leader in innovation, energy transition, and reconciliation, Trudeau's government has largely focused on superficial policies. Health care reform, meaningful action on Indigenous reconciliation, and economic diversification have been neglected in favour of photo ops and performative politics. Canada's abundant natural resources could have been harnessed to drive a thoughtful, sustainable energy transition while bolstering its economy. Instead, those opportunities have been squandered. As Trudeau's time in office winds down, Canadians are left to consider the impact of the past lost decade. What could have been a period of growth, unity, and meaningful progress has instead been marked by division, stagnation, and lost potential. The next government faces a critical challenge: addressing the structural issues that have gone unresolved for far too long and steering Canada toward a future defined by real progress rather than empty promises. by © Troy Media

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Edson RCMP Occurrences

For the week of January 6 – January 12, 2025

Assistance Calls 14; Traffic Collisions 10 and Traffic Complaints 9; topped the list of Edson RCMP occurrences. Other investigations included: Abandoned Vehicles 2; Alarms/False Alarms 4; Animal Calls 0; Assault 1; Cause Disturbance 2; Child Welfare 0; Fail to Comply with Conditions 6; False/Abandoned 911 Call 3; Family Orders and Agreements 0; Fraud 2; Harassment/Criminal Harassment 1; Impaired Operation of Motor Vehicle 1; Information File 1; Lost or Found property 2; Mental Health Act 1; Mischief or Damage 4; Missing Person/Request to Locate 1; Municipal Bylaws 0; Obstruct/Resist Peace Officer 0; Possess Stolen Property 0; Recovered Stolen Property 0; Sudden Death 0; Suspicious Persons 7; Theft Complaints 5; Traffic Violations 3; Trespassing 4; Unlawfully in Dwelling 0; & Wellbeing Checks 3.



Note: The views, opinions, and positions expressed in the column are the author's alone. They do not inherently or expressly reflect the views, opinions and/or positions of The Weekly Anchor, its staff, or Troy Media.



Meet Tyce in Grade 6 at Vanier Community Catholic School.

Q: What's your favourite colour? A: Blue.

Q: What's your favourite subject? A: Gym

Q: Do you have pets? A: Two dogs and two cats



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Help create a FireSmart community

by Deanna Mitchener

Learn how you can help create a FireSmart community by FireSmarting your home, farm, or acreages. You can join in one of the many wildfire preparedness community sessions planned to help you better prepare.

Alberta Forestry is partnering up with Yellowhead County for another great FireSmart Community Series. "Join us at one of the open houses to learn more on how you can protect your home and property from wildfire," says Area Information Coordinator Caroline Charbonneau.

Sessions will be held on January 21 at the Rosevear Hall; January 23 at the Cadomin Hall; February 18 at the Trail Hall; February 20 at the MacKay Hall; and February 25 at the Carrot Creek Hall.

"These sessions are drop-in style and you can pop in anytime between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. There will be valuable information on how to FireSmart your homes, farms, and acreages," Charbonneau says.

You can also enter to win one of five home sprinkler kits and one of five portable fire pits during the free give away. "There will also be information on how to purchase your own sprinkler kit, as fire safety matters all year round," added Charbonneau.

"While fire permits are not required for burning outside of wildfire season in the Forest Protection Area of Alberta. Residents and industry planning a burn during winter should keep safe burning practices at the top of their minds and follow Alberta Wildfire's guidelines. This includes carefully selecting your burn site and do not burn until you have good snow cover in the area. Check weather conditions and refrain from burning when an inversion is in place or is forecasted. Actively manage burn projects to reduce total burning time," Charbonneau states. "Burn debris in stages so that you can adapt to changing weather conditions and reduce smoke. Ensure you have the right tools, water, and equipment on hand to keep the burn under control. Consult your local municipality on how to safely undertake larger winter burning projects near communities or roads," recommends Charbonneau.

"To assist the Edson Forest Area, please let us know if you plan any large scale winter burning by contacting the dispatch line directly at 780-723-8507 please leave a message if closed with the name of landowner burning or company and representative name. Leave a phone number in case of emergency and legal land description or latitude/longitude," Charbonneau says.

The Town of Edson has indicated that their 2025 FireSmart plans aren't finalized yet as they work on planning and grant funding.

RCMP encourages safe winter recreation activities

Winter offers the opportunity for many different recreational activities. However, the weather can also cause unsafe conditions like extreme cold, obstructed vision, and thin ice.

Whether you're driving your ATV, skiing in the mountains, skating with friends, or ice fishing, the RCMP reminds us all to prioritize safety.

The RCMP offers the following advice to be safe and responsible during the winter months:

Use proper safety equipment: When you're out skiing, skating, or riding your ATV always make sure to wear the proper safety equipment. Windshields, handguards, helmets and reflective material can all help keep you safe when enjoying winter activities.

Always check ice thickness: Use a tape measure, drill, or auger to make sure the ice is thick enough and check in multiple locations. As a general rule, ice should be at least 20 cm (8 in) thick for walking or 25 cm (10 in) for snowmobiles.

Be mindful of how the cold can effect your gear: Tire pressure, engines, and batteries can all be impacted by extreme cold. Always make sure that your vehicles are functioning and electronics are charged before heading out into the cold.

Have a plan and share it: Always make sure to check conditions and the weather before you head out. Make a plan and let your loved ones know where you're going, when you'll be out, and what time to expect you home.

Have an emergency kit and know how to use it: Emergency kits should include first aid supplies, tools, and extra clothes/blankets. Depending on what you're doing you may also want to including additional items like tow straps and extra fuel.

Follow the rules: Closed trails, speed limits, and ice warning signs are not suggestions, they are there to keep people safe. Always make sure that you are checking for signage and following the rules.

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County to seek contractors for Recycling and Transfer Station Operations

by Shaylyn Thornton

At their January 14 meeting, Yellowhead County Council heard from Solid Waste Manager Kevin Myles on recycling and transfer station operations in the County.

At their November 19 meeting, Council participated in in-camera discussions on the two matters, resulting in motions to bring options for the recycling program and transfer stations to a future meeting for further discussion.

For recycling operations, Administration recommended that the County issue a request for proposal (RFP), intending to have one or more contractors in place at the expiry of the existing contract and cost sharing agreement with the Town of Edson by June 30, 2025.

Myles noted that due to ongoing discussions between Circular Materials (a producer responsibility organization) and the Edson and District Recycling Society (EDRS), it is unknown at this time if the EDRS will be an option for contracted services in the region, or if Circular Materials will provide an option for direct Yellowhead County engagement.

By issuing an RFP, there will also be an opportunity for other contractors to bid on providing recycling services to Yellowhead County.

Following a business analysis completed in late 2024 and presented during the closed discussion on November 19, the County's most cost-effective option is to contract out the provision of recycling services, rather than

hiring additional staff and acquiring additional equipment for the program.

Because of this, Administration requested Council's direction to proceed with acquiring a contractor for the provision of recycling services, which would be consistent with the business case examination that determined the most cost-effective program model for recycling services. Council voted unanimously to provide this direction.

Similarly, the business case identified contracting out transfer station operations as the lowest operational and capital cost delivery model. This prompted Administration to ask for direction from Council to issue an RFP seeking one or more contractors to provide resources to deliver the transfer station program.

"It is the position of Administration that if the option for more than one contractor to provide these services is created, program efficiencies will be possible to achieve," said Myles. Administration's intent would be to have contractor(s) in place by the expiry of the existing transfer station and lagoon contract on November 30, 2025.

Mayor Wade Williams noted that, in the past, they've "experienced only lone company bidding on these." "I'm really hoping that we get a bit more competitive bidding, and we do have a little time to react so that is really good," he said. "I think Council will all be happy about that."

Council voted unanimously to direct Administration to issue a Request for Proposal

for transfer station operation with the opportunity for one or more contractors to be engaged in this program delivery.

Winter Run Club

Get ready to dash through the snow and explore the wonders of Yellowhead County this winter! We're hosting exciting group runs in all eight hamlets. Picture yourself racing through frosty trails, feeling the crisp winter air on your face, and enjoying the thrill of running with friends. Here are the details for each run, all starting at

noon:

Jan 23: Brule Community Hall Jan 30: Cadomin Community Hall Feb 13: Robb Multiplex Feb 20: Marlboro Community Hall Feb 27: Peers Multiplex Mar 6: Niton Playground Mar 13: Wildwood Rec Complex Mar 20: Evansburg Arena

Safety Tips for Winter Running: Stay Visible: Use reflective gear and a headlamp if running in low-light conditions. Stay Hydrated: Even in cold weather, it's important to stay hydrated.

Watch Your Step: Be cautious of icy patches and uneven terrain.

Run with a Buddy: It's safer and more fun to run with a friend.

Pre-register for the runs vou'd like to join! For more information contact Jina at 780-723-4800 or jmateri@yhcounty.ca



Visit www.yhcounty.ca/jobs to see full position details and to apply. Postings closes January 31 4:30 PM.

www.yhcounty.ca/jobs



Third Annual Element Zone 13 Winter Bash

by Deanna Mitchener

The Element Zone 13 will be holding their third annual Winter Bash on February 8. The event is being held at the Pine Grove Community Hall. So get ready, as Cole Malone is bringing his electrifying One Man Army Acoustic Show to the Bash!

Cole is originally from a small town in Ontario.

He now roams the prairies of Alberta, bringing an edgy country-rock sound to all types of stages from small bush parties and bars, to large festivals like the Calgary Stampede.

Travis James, owner and CEO for Element Zone 13, says, "The Winter Bash is our annual sponsorship and fundraising event for the year. We auction off our chute sponsors and buckle sponsorship for the year. It's a silent auction and a live auction along with a supper and dance." Ham, scalloped potatoes, mix salads, and desserts will be served for supper. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. and supper will be served at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets usually sell out fast, so if you plan on attending this event, you best get your tickets early. They go on sale January 20. Very limited tickets will be available for the public after sponsors have had the opportunity to pick up tickets. They will be available at the Boot Shop.



Ashton two and a half years old and Carley nine months old, were out enjoying some beautiful winter weather recently. photo submitted by Deanna Mitchener



A large gathering of the residents at Parkland Seniors Lodge were playing in a monthly crib tournament on January 11. photo submitted by Deanna Mitchener

THANK-YOU!

CN Donates \$10,000 to the Edson & District Public Library

The Edson & District Public Library is excited to announce that it has received a \$10,000 gift from CN in support of their Furniture Fundraising Drive.

"We are thrilled to be supporting such an integral piece of infrastructure, that serves as such an important gathering space in the community" said Karen Jensen, Senior Manager Business Development, when she and the team from CN were on site September 16, 2024, to present the cheque to the library. "This wonderful donation from CN will be used to purchase new shelving for our book collection" said Robin Corser, Library Board Chair. The library is currently fundraising to replace the existing bookshelves with lower and more accessible ones to better serve our patrons and improve sight lines throughout the library for our staff.



"We are very grateful for this \$10,000 donation that brings us even closer to our \$250,000 goal to purchase shelving, equipment and furniture for the renovated library. Thanks to the wonderful generosity of The Edson & District Public Library was thrilled to welcome the team from CN to our new space on September 16th to celebrate their generous \$10,000 donation to the library in support of the library's furniture fundraising campaign. Pictured from left to right: Sara Tonowski (Library Manager), Robin Corser (Library Board Chair), Ed Ogloza (Library Board), Donna Williams (Library Board), Kyri Anayiotos (CN), Karen Jensen (CN), Mike Hiscock (CN) and Chad MacDonald-Winsor (CN and Library Board). submitted

CN and so many others in our community we have reached a fundraising total of \$202,000 to date," said Robin.

If anyone wants more information or would

like to join CN on the Library's Wall of Recognition, please contact Sarah Tonowski Library Manager at (780) 723-6691, stonowski@edsonlibrary.ca.

<u>A year-end interview with Premier Danielle Smith</u> Rural concerns stay high on UCP's agenda

by George Lee

Alberta's rural heartland will continue to inform the UCP agenda in 2025, Premier Danielle Smith said in a year-end interview aimed at audiences beyond Calgary and Edmonton.

The following interview was edited for flow, clarity, and space:

Q: Good day, Madam Premier. It's nice to connect with you. As you look back on 2024, how would you describe the approach you've taken in advancing your agenda and serving Albertans?

Premier Smith: Yes, it is nice to connect. We went into the election talking about key issues that my caucus had identified, like affordability, jobs and the economy, and making sure we have enough people to fill the growing demand for new workers. We had to deal with the significant and growing issues of public safety and mental health, and we also had to reform the health-care system and stand up to Ottawa. So those have been my guiding principles for my first two years on the job.

Q: Starting with affordability, jobs and the economy, what have you and your government accomplished?

Premier Smith: We've introduced major affordability initiatives. Over the past three years, some \$6.5 billion has been spent on helping people with everything from electricity prices through to a fuel tax reprieve through to subsidized childcare, low-income transit passes, food bank grants and discounts for seniors.

It's just remarkable to see the number of people who have come here and who keep coming because there are so many great jobs. Yes, there's a higher level of unemployment because when people arrive and they're looking for work; there's always a lag time. But the economy keeps building and keeps creating incredible numbers of new opportunities.

Our construction sector is booming, up 35 per cent year-over-year, including an increase in home construction. We keep hearing multi-billion-dollar announcements, like those from the Industrial Heartland area, all the way to De Havilland and their development of water bombers in Calgary. So we're pleased about what's happening there.

Q: Albertans are still experiencing that lag and other economic challenges. What do you see coming to fruition in 2025 that will help catch things up to the positives in the economy?

Premier Smith: We constantly have new projects that are being updated and announced. And one of our most effective ways of getting to the finish line on those is with our Investment and Growth Fund. We like that program, especially, because it has allowed us to announce things in rural Alberta and elsewhere.

We're getting concerned that there's only so many houses that can be built and so many jobs that can be created, and that we're getting overwhelmed by the number of newcomers over the last three years. That's why we've gone to our federal counterpart to allow us to have more control, so that we can identify economic migrants who fit into the jobs that we need and so we can get a handle on the overall number of people coming into the country through various streams. Because it's overwhelming not just us but all the provinces.

We're worried that we're out of balance and that it's going to start impacting Albertans. We want to continue to be a destination point for economic migrants because that's a mutually beneficial relationship. If we can have a pathway for someone to become a citizen and fill a job gap, that's perfect. But we're very concerned that the numbers of international students, temporary foreign workers and asylum seekers are just too much for the country to handle. And we've been telling the federal government that. rural Alberta, with our corrections facilities that have therapeutic living units, and our recovery communities in Red Deer, Lethbridge and Gunne. We've got several more coming, including on First Nations, that will create 1,000 new beds dedicated to treatment for mental health and addiction.

Q: Is it the government's goal to replace the RCMP in Alberta?

That's going to be very much up to the RCMP. The RCMP have not lived up to their obligation to us. We have contracted for 1,911 officers, and at any given time, we're down by 400. We can't let rural Alberta go without policing.

If the RCMP can't find the personnel to fill those seats, we're going to. We're going recruit sheriffs, train them up to the level where they can be deployed as police officers, and we're going to do the job.

And we've done that with our Fugitive Apprehension Sheriffs Support Team and with our Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods unit. SCAN has investigated more than 9,500 properties in 126 communities that have been issued safety orders.

We've got north and south surveillance teams in place to support communities, and now there are these border and fentanyl teams we want to put in place. We want rural Albertans to feel safe. That's the number one goal. And perhaps if the RCMP is able to meet their obligation to us, then we'll see more officers from them. But we can't wait. We have to make sure that we're filling that gap, and that's what we're doing.

Q: Policing relates directly to the government's relationship with the two associations representing municipalities in Alberta — Rural Municipalities of Alberta and Alberta Municipalities. A common complaint from them in 2024 has been that the province does not consult with them enough when it comes to legislation directly affecting their member municipalities. How do you respond to that?

Premier Smith: We were very unhappy when the federal government came in and inked side deals with a couple of municipalities on housing. We've got a big problem with housing affordability. What we perceived is that the federal government was picking winners and losers, and when you've got a province with 320 municipalities, and only four or five contracts are signed, that makes a lot of losers.

So we looked at what they were doing in Quebec. The reason Quebec announced a \$900 million partnership with the federal government is that they have a law that says you can't do a workaround. If you want to have dollars flow through, you have to go through us, and that's so the province can use its partnerships with municipalities to make sure that communities are treated fairly.

How was a small community supposed to have any leverage in trying to put their issues on the radar screen of the federal government? That's part of the reason why so many are left out.

We treat our municipalities fairly. We have a local government fiscal framework, and we made sure every single municipality was no worse off under the new formula than under the old one.

We also have processes in place to hear different pressures and be able to do different grants. The feds don't have that, so they should be working with us to use the network that we have to ensure the dollars get to where they're needed.

Q: What's your perspective on health care issues in Alberta, especially rural Alberta, and what is your government doing to address them?

Premier Smith: We've got a major rural strategy that

facilities closer to home.

Q: Has the restructuring of Alberta Health Services gone as smoothly as you would have liked?

Premier Smith: I'm very happy, actually, with where we find ourselves. We're entering 2025 with real clarity. We've got Primary Care Alberta, which is going to be responsible for doctors, nurse practitioners, pharmacists and other frontline professionals to get everyone attached to a family doctor. That was really important work to do.

We've got Recovery Alberta, which is going to take the lead on building out 1,000 beds for mental health and addiction, as I mentioned earlier, to make sure we have another and better place for people who are suffering from those two ailments to be able to get recovered and hopefully live normal lives outside of the hospital.

We made the decision to create Assisted Living Alberta, under Minister Jason Nixon, so that we can partner with communities and with municipalities, the nonprofit sector and the for-profit sector, on building what we think is going to need to be 12,000 new beds for seniors. So I'm very pleased that we've got that.

And with acute care, we finally have Alberta Health Services as a service provider, focusing on the hospitals that they run, Covenant Health focusing on the hospitals they run, and the charter surgical centres I mentioned before.

We've got a new approach to making sure we've got EMS drop-off, so we've got our well-trained paramedics able to be out treating patients. I feel like the structure is finally what it always needed to be, to be able to make the changes that we need to make. And so I think it's going to be amazing the progress that we'll make in 2025 and beyond.

Q: And would that include attracting more doctors and oncologists, for example, and other professionals to make health care more accessible in Alberta?

[Editor's note: The interview took place before the province's announcement of a new model for compensating doctors.]

Premier Smith: The opening of the cancer centre in Calgary, I think, was a huge catalyst. Being able to offer a research environment for oncologists is going to be such an advantage, at the preeminent, most modern facility in the country.

It takes time, from when construction is completed to when you're able to fully staff up and have the equipment ready to go. But we're there now, so I'm excited about that.

Also, in partnership with the premiers across the country, we've all realized that we've got these issues of labour shortages in different areas, and that we've got to have a better understanding of how many of each type of specialty we need to graduate and where we are going to do that work. There'll be a report back on that in the spring.

We've already begun building out additional training for nurses in rural Alberta, and initial additional training for doctors in rural Alberta with new programs in Grande Prairie and Lethbridge. The idea is that if you train them in place, they'll probably stay in place. And so we'll see a lot more of that: training locally to be able to meet local needs.

Q: Anything else specific to rural Alberta that readers should expect in 2025?

Premier Smith: We are about to launch a broadbased review of rural hospitals. We want to know: how are they running? What are they doing? What do they need to do more of? What repairs need to be made? What equipment needs to be put into place? What kind of personnel do they need to make sure people can get care closer to home? There's building out our schools, through the \$8.6 billion in spending over three years we've announced for accelerated construction. We've got a big demand all over the province, but some communities are hit more than others. Some are bursting at the seams. We'll be hearing from school boards about what their priorities are, and hopefully we'll be able to get those schools built faster.

Q: Public safety is among the priorities you've mentioned. That's a huge issue in rural Alberta, especially as it relates to high crime rates and policing shortages.

Premier Smith: We've empowered our sheriffs and continued to roll out new teams, and we've got a couple more teams to come to deal with the border and with fentanyl and with shutting down drug houses. We've heard loud and clear from rural Alberta that they need more hands on deck, and we've been delivering on that.

The same with our mental health and addiction work. We know that you aren't going to solve this problem just by addressing the supply side. You've got to address demand. We've got to make sure fewer people are getting addicted and staying in addiction.

So we've got a strategy we've been rolling out in

has us spending \$311 million upgrading our existing operating rooms so that they can be high performance and get more surgeries done in local communities. We're also doing this through charter surgical centres. We've got knees and hips now happening in Rocky Mountain House, and we'll be having more in central Alberta and southern Alberta as we finalize contracts.

The nurse practitioner initiative is all about giving people another health-care option. So we've got nurse practitioners incentivized to set up shop in rural Alberta and work evenings and weekends, and 60 or more have signed up.

Our pharmacy strategy gives more ability for pharmacists to practise in a broader scope. So we've got a network of pharmacies that are building out all over the province to make sure they can provide those services, including prescriptions and some primary care.

And then the major reform we're doing of Alberta Health Services will involve a rural strategy. We want, for example, to get more surgeries done in more **Q:** Premier, thank you. I hope we can connect again soon.

Premier Smith: Yes, let's do this more regularly. Thanks and good-bye.

George Lee is a reporter covering the Alberta Legislature for The Fort Macleod Gazette and other newspapers under the Local Journalism Initiative.

THE WEEKLY ANCHOR

Edson Sabres hold home tournament

The U18-2 Hughes

Auto Repair Edson

Sabres (white

jerseys) held their

home tournament on

January 11 and 12 at

the Edson & District

Leisure Centre.

Here, they take on

the Wood Buffalo

Falcons. photo

Shaylyn Thornton



The U18-2 Hughes Auto Repair Edson Sabres held their home tournament on January 11 and 12 at the Edson & District Leisure Centre. In addition to some great hockey, patrons enjoyed the team's raffle table that had lots of great prizes to be won. photo Shaylyn Thornton





NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND CLAIMANTS

Estate of: Gregg Allan Watson who died on October 3, 2024. If you have a claim against this estate, you must file your claim by: February 27, 2025, with: Shari L. Boisvert; Boisvert Law Group at: 324-50th Street, P.O. Box 6568 Edson, AB T7E 1T9

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PAGE 14 MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 2025

THE WEEKLY ANCHOR



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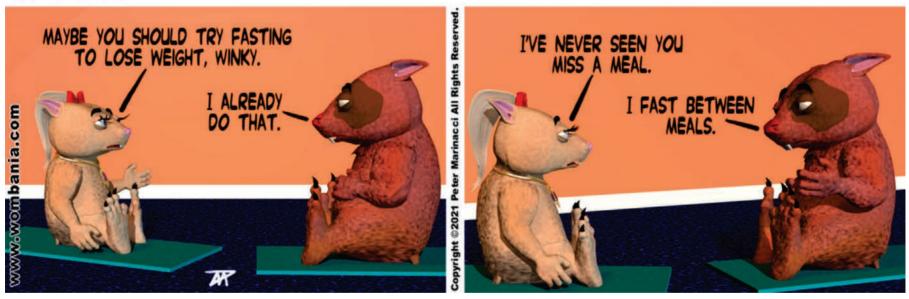




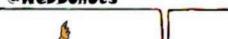
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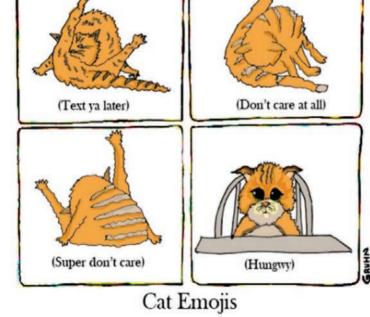
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January 22: Wellness Wednesday Jeopardy Game night. 6:00pm-8:00pm Location Griffiths Park Centreages 18+ Regiter www.edson.ca/cdprograms

January 23: Ladies Night Clay pottery. The Griffiths Park Centre 6PM-8PM AGES 18+ Register at <u>www.edson.ca/cdprograms</u> January 25: Gospel Jam for January. Admission is free. Niton Community Hall 1-4pm Call Jill for more info 780-795-3961 January 29 February 12,26 March 12: Family Time Peers Multiplex. This is a free program for caregivers with children 0-5

Email us with your non-profit event date at: anchorwk@telusplanet.net **February 7:** Ice Skating and Winter Fun12-2pm Niton Skating Rink and Park. Bring your skates and snow gear and come out for some family fun. Free Drop in style but please Register at yhcounty.ca/registration

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T he Weekly ANCHOR Farm & Field News and Views

New intake period for Youth Employment and Skills Program

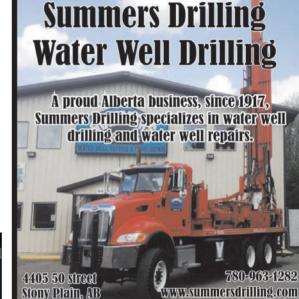
Applications for the Youth Employment and Skills Program (YESP) will open on January 27, 2025. Supported by an investment of approximately \$13.5 million, YESP is an initiative aimed at helping young Canadians access employment opportunities and gain valuable work experience in the agricultural sector, while contributing to the growth of the agricultural community in Canada.

Eligible applicants include producers, agribusinesses, industry associations, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous organizations and research facilities. Applications from

Indigenous employers will be prioritized for the 2025-2026 program year.

Each project will be eligible to receive up to \$14,000 in matching funds to employ one (1) employee. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada is one of several Government of Canada departments participating in the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy.

For more information visit: https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/programs/youthemployment-and-skills



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Jayd used her imagination when building her fallen snowman on January 11. Jayd is 10 years old and enjoys being outdoors. photo submitted Deanna Mitchener



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