



Moosomin offering free pool passes to families in need  
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Plain & Valley  
**Summer Directory**

A directory of great things to do this summer!  
**Pages 12-13**

# Plain & Valley

Covering Southeast Saskatchewan and Southwest Manitoba  
July 2020 • Volume 13, Number 7



A family enjoying the beach at Moosomin Regional Park



Enjoying a round of golf at Carlton Trail Regional Park.

## Record number of visitors at Regional Parks

BY VICTOR VAN DER MERWE, LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

After spending the weekend at Moosomin Lake, it is clear that people have been chomping at the bit to go out and do something with their free time. With restrictions being lifted one after the other, people are flocking to the lake and other surrounding regional parks. Festivals, rodeos, local sporting events and concerts are still cancelled, but it is clear that the local citizens need very little reason to go out and enjoy themselves. This is all good news for Moosomin Regional Park Manager Wayne Beckett, Clint Poelzer, this year's manager of the Lake Park Store, and Cassidy Buchberger Clubhouse manager at Carlton Trail Regional Park.

### Everyone expected a busy season

In May the provincial government started phase one of their Re-Open Saskatchewan plan. This included the re-opening of previously restricted medical services, golf courses, parks and campgrounds.

Knowing that folks would have fewer options than they did in the past, the regional park boards were sure that they would be busy.

"We thought it was going to be busy, because what else are people going to be doing,"

says Buchberger.

Beckett, who saw very little difference in early long-term site bookings, even when the fireworks weekend at Moosomin Regional Park was cancelled, shared this feeling.

"People booked that date in early March like they do every year. At that point nobody knew what was going or wasn't going to be allowed. When the park board made the decision to cancel the fireworks, some people cancelled their site, but very few actually," says Beckett.

The question now became how to accommodate everyone and still be safe. It seemed that the spirit of "we are all in this together" was alive and well with potential campers who were very understanding about new camp regulations pertaining to short term campers in early June. To keep everyone safe, the government asked that those who are camping for less than a month, have an empty camp site between them and their neighbors essentially allowing only for 50 per cent capacity for short term campers. However at the lake, there isn't a designated short-term and long-term camp site. To simplify matters, Beckett discontinued the online booking program and he and his team dealt with prospective visitors personally to make sure that everyone could be accommodated while still being safe and legal."

*Continued on Page 3*

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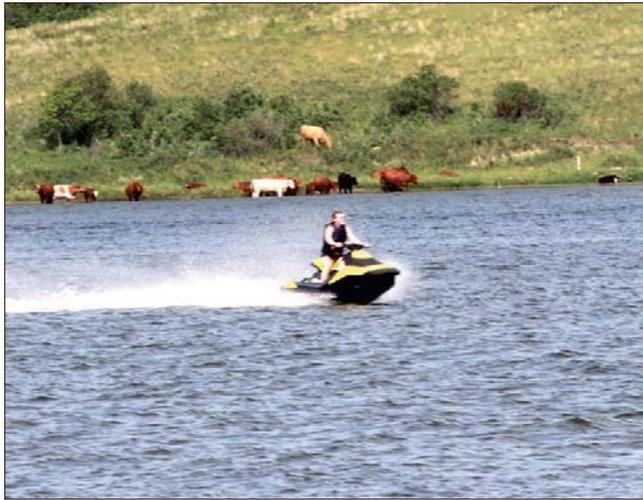
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A person enjoying Moosomin lake.



A family getting ready to hit the links at Carlton Trail Regional Park

# Record number of visitors at Regional Parks

Continued from front

"I think the people wanted to come camping but wanted to be sure we are following the new guidelines," says Beckett. "I think people were a little more understanding when we were trying to juggle them into our site. We tried to accommodate as many people as possible. We wanted more people camping and still follow the guidelines."

Beckett, however, used the province's business response group, created to gather feedback from businesses about how the government is handling the pandemic, to convey his concerns regarding the 50 per cent rule.

"The business response group that was responsible for administering those plans asked for feedback. I responded a couple of times and got other regional parks to respond as well just to help our cause. We weren't trying to bend any rules, we just wanted clarification and justification for some of the guidelines and it all turned out pretty good. We played by all the rules. If it meant shutting down some facilities, we did that. We still adhere to regulations," says Beckett.

As the month of June rolled on, and as the parks people kept an open dialogue with the province, it was soon decided that all sites could be booked at 100 per cent capacity as long as it is safe. It was during this time that Beckett learned that the Lake Park Store would be allowed to operate under new safety guidelines. Beckett sent out a notice via Facebook to see if anyone would want to run the store this year. Clint Poelzer answered the call.

"I applied for it in years past. I was beat out by somebody else. This year those two people didn't take it. Wayne put an add out on Facebook. I shot him a text and said I am interested and 10 minutes later my phone rang," says Poelzer.

Beckett was all too glad to get Poelzer on board, who in past years had a concession tent at the lake during the fireworks weekend.

"Clint responded right away. He is a good fit. He's been out here before during our fireworks event selling his products. He has been doing very good. The weather has been very good and he is reaping the rewards," says Beckett.

The store open and the campsite at 100 per cent capacity, everyone braced themselves for the campers to arrive, and even with all their planning, the number of people who came out to visit the lake was in Poel-

zer's words was "absurd!"

"It's a little bit surprising because we didn't really know what to expect with how the season started with all the Covid restrictions, but we have been pleasantly surprised by the amount of people wanting to camp," says Beckett.

## Carlton Trail's new clubhouse manager's trial by Covid

Over at the Carlton Trail clubhouse, Cassidy Buchberger had trouble keeping ice on hand.

"It has been insanely busy. We are always out of booze, ice, the kitchen is always busy. The campsites are full every weekend. The week is busy but there are still a few sites available. We had to up our staff. Everyone was kind of ready in here but I never knew we'd sell out (of everything) so fast all the time! We sold out of 80 bags of ice in four days," says Buchberger.

Last year, Buchberger was the person who helped out the clubhouse manager, Claire DeCock. However, when DeCock decided to step down and take it easy this summer, Buchberger took over.

Like all large gatherings, the Canada Day fireworks that happen at Carlton Trail

was also cancelled, yet it did not slow down camping.

"We usually have a big Canada Day celebration. We have fireworks in the evening, we have an events building and we usually have different bands playing all day and a bouncy castle and face painting. All that had to be cancelled. Every campsite was still booked that day," says Buchberger.

## Big plans for Lake Park Store

The first two weekends were a bit of a challenge for Clint Poelzer as well.

"I wasn't sure what to expect. Wayne had told me the park is full pretty much up to the August long weekend and that to date it as been busier than they have been in years past," says Poelzer.

Just like the Carlton Trail clubhouse, the

Lake Park Store is looking to up the number of staff, especially since Poelzer is hoping to expand his menu.

"If I can get enough people, we are looking to do a full lunch and full supper menu to go with our full breakfast," says Poelzer.

There is even talk of a reservations only lobster night if all goes well.

The loss of special events and festivals will absolutely see a reduced number of people in all the regional parks on the days that those events were to happen, however it seems the trade off is that average business is higher than in recent years past.

"I gotta think we are up 30 per cent or more just based on the activity around the park—the boats on the lake and the people on the beach. I have never seen it this busy (in July). It is nice to see the beach full of people and the lake full of boats," says Beckett.



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# Deeming rule means additional help for businesses

## Rule allows CEWS applicants an extra month of support

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

A little-known rule regarding the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy could mean millions of dollars in additional support for businesses that qualified for the support for one or more months.

Under the “deeming rule” a business that has qualified for the CEWS for one month can automatically qualify for the following month, even if they don’t meet the criteria for the second month.

The CEWS provides a 75 per cent wage subsidy for businesses that have seen a significant decline in income.

The threshold for the decline was 15 per cent for March, so if a business had a decline in income of 15 per cent in March, 2020 compared to March, 2019, it would qualify for the subsidy for the first period.

The threshold changed to 30 per cent for April, but the federal government says anyone who qualified in March also qualified in April under the “deeming rule” even if it never experienced a 30 per cent decline as required for April.

Under the rule, if a business qualified for CEWS in March, April, and May, for example, and didn’t qualify in June, it can still receive the CEWS for June due to the “deeming rule.”

Several members of parliament and business organization leaders contacted by the World-Spectator said they were unaware of the “deeming rule.”

The World-Spectator contacted the Ministry of Finance and Finance Minister Bill Morneau’s office, who provided a copy of the legislation and confirmed that the deeming rule allows businesses to receive CEWS in the period they qualify for, and in the following month.

The provision could mean anywhere from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars for individual companies because of the extra period of eligibility for CEWS.

### MPs say details haven’t been communicated

“The communication isn’t there from them on these programs,” said Souris-Moose Mountain MP Dr. Robert Kitchen.

“It’s going to be extremely challenging for businesses to know where they’re at, and individuals to know where they’re at, and the worries they may have down the road is where things are left once they go back and audit things.

“There are a lot of details in these programs. Some we’re aware of and some, like today, are things that weren’t on our radar or we weren’t aware of.”

Melville-Yorkton MP Cathay Wagantall agreed that communication from the government on government programs has been lacking.

“They didn’t inform us of this,” she said. “I guarantee they didn’t inform us. We don’t get a lot of communication unless we ask, and then they say ‘go to the website, go to the FAQs.’

“There has been a lot of confusion. Everything could have been rolled out so much more simply than it was. It was so convoluted, and stress levels are so high for people trying to access support. It’s like a maze trying to work through it.

“The challenge was the announcement and then the waiting for the details. We are still in a waiting mode for the changes they’re making to CEWS for July and August. I don’t know what it’s going to look like going forward.

“They say they are going to encourage people to go back to work, but they wouldn’t take our recommendations for CERB where people wouldn’t lose their benefit all at once if they go back to work,” said Wagantall.

“The government could have done a better job of communicating the rules, and there should be less rules.

“It could have been more clear, more succinct, and the rules shouldn’t be constantly changing, too, because that’s been a huge issue. It’s been a real struggle for a lot of people and I don’t understand why it had to be that complicated.”

### Government says rule was intended to give businesses more certainty of cash flow as they deal with crisis

“To provide certainty for employers . . . once an employer is found eligible for a specific period, they would automatically qualify for the next period of the program,” according to the government.

“For example, an employer with a revenue drop of more than 15% in March would qualify for the first and second periods of the program, covering remuneration paid between March 15 and May 9.

“Similarly, an employer with a revenue drop of 30% in April would qualify for the second and third periods of the program, covering remuneration paid between May 10 to June 6.

“Once an eligible employer has determined that it has experienced the required reduction in revenue for a particular claim period, it is automatically considered to have experienced the required reduction in revenue for

the immediately following claim period (deeming rule). As a result, the employer does not have to make this determination again for that next claim period.”

The rule only applies to the period immediately following the period in which an employer does qualify for the wage subsidy—it doesn’t carry on indefinitely.

“However, this deeming rule does not automatically extend to apply to the period after that next claim period,” according to the government.

“For example, if an eligible employer meets the condition for the reduction in respect of the first claim period—March 15 to April 11, 2020, the employer will be considered to have met the required reduction in revenue in respect of the second reference period—April 12 to May 9, 2020, without necessarily making a determination. But the eligible employer will have to make a determination for the third claim period—May 10 to June 6, 2020.

“In a situation where the eligible employer, subsequently determines that it actually experienced the required reduction in revenue, without applying the deeming rule, for the second claim period—April 12 to May 9, 2020, the eligible employer will be considered to have experienced the required reduction in revenue for that third claim period because of the deeming rule that can now be applied to the third period.”

To contact Plain & Valley  
call 306-435-2445 or email  
world\_spectator@sasktel.net

### Steven Bonk, MLA for Moosomin Constituency

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# Moosomin rec department offering family pool passes for those in need

BY ROB PAUL  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

With summer here and the Prairie sun beating down relentlessly all hours of the day, it's the perfect time to utilize a swimming pool.

Covid-19 has put people across Canada in an unprecedented situation and it's been a cause for major financial impacts on families, but Saskatchewan is beginning to find some normalcy as it opens up.

Although things are getting back to normal in everyday life, Covid-19 has put some families in a tough situation with children who want to participate in recreation, but at times fun can be costly.

With the pool open and busy—while following Covid-19 protocols—Moosomin Rec Director Mike Schwean understands that some families might be in a difficult spot this summer.

With that in mind he applied and received \$10,000 in funding for families in the community who were financially hit by Covid-19 and are unable to afford pool fees.

The funding will go to 40 family pool passes to be given out free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis. Everything will be confidential with no questions asked upon getting in contact with Schwean for a family pass.



The Moosomin rec department will be offering two new opportunities this summer at the pool. There are 40 family pool passes available for those in financial need and a free swimming lessons week for ne Canadians August 10-14.

"We've accessed \$10,000 through a grant program," he said.

"Our season passes are \$250 so we'll give out 40 season passes. The way we'll do it is we'll have people contact our rec office and there won't be any questions asked.

"It's all confidential. It's a program meant to help people who are economically hit by Covid-19 and unable to afford the cost of the pool passes. We'll give them the pass and let the pool staff

know and they can carry on with their summer at the pool."

"I'm hoping we go through them and they get used. If we don't use them the money goes back so there's no value in not using them. I'm hoping by next week at least half of them are gone."

Although being a resident of Moosomin isn't needed to be eligible for the free family pass, Schwean hopes that families who do get a pass truly take advantage of

the opportunity. "They don't have to be Moosomin residents," he said.

"We just hope whoever would access it would be at the pool a lot. It would be unfortunate if someone grabbed one and only used it once this summer. But it is first-come, first-served and we want to get them out as quick as we can. It's an opportunity for 200 people or so to use the pool that might not have been able to."

The funding was to help

with recreation opportunities for families impacted by Covid-19 related financial issues and Schwean

thought putting it towards the pool was the obvious choice. *Continued on page 9*

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# Saskatchewan enacts Clare's Law, RCMP opt out

BY ROB PAUL  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

On June 29 Saskatchewan became the first jurisdiction in Canada to enact the Interpersonal Violence Disclosure Act (Clare's Law). Clare's Law allows police to disclose information that could help protect potential victims of interpersonal violence.

This will allow for Saskatchewan residents to apply to their local municipal police station for the release of information on an intimate partner's past violent or abusive behaviour.

The information can be disclosed to applicants who believe they may be at risk from an intimate partner ("right to ask"), and to persons identified by police to be at risk ("right to know").

"The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to addressing issues of domestic and interpersonal violence," said Justice Minister and Attorney General Don Morgan. "We hope that by implementing Clare's Law, we can inform those at risk and help protect them from potential violence and abuse."

In a Statistics Canada profile from 2018 of family violence in Canada, Saskatchewan had the highest rate of intimate partner violence among provinces with 655 victims per 100,000 people (5,919 victims from 2017 to 2018).

There will be an application process to follow before municipal police services release information on past violent behaviour to a potential victim and the government will train those involved to ensure all regulations are followed.

The Government of Saskatchewan has consulted with municipal police services and the Provincial Association of Transition Houses to provide the necessary training for police to process Clare's Law applications in accordance with legislation. All information released to applicants is subject to a stringent review process to ensure that the disclosure of information doesn't violate privacy legislation, the Ministry of Justice said in a press release.

All municipal police services will be participating in the new protocol, but the RCMP has said they will not participate.

"We have been involved with the planning for Clare's Law from the very beginning," the RCMP said in a statement. "We have been, and continue to be, supportive of this initiative. Early on in the discussions and planning for the implementation of Clare's Law, we identified to our partners that there may be some challenges with our participation because unlike municipal police services, the RCMP is subject to federal privacy legislation. The RCMP is continuing to look into the matter, and considering how best it can support Clare's Law objectives within its obligation under the federal Privacy Act."

Legislation was introduced in 2018 and unanimously passed in the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan in 2019 and Morgan has said he hopes the RCMP and federal government will work with the province on this issue.

"We are extremely disappointed to have been informally advised this week that the RCMP in Saskatchewan has now indicated its refusal to participate in an important new interpersonal violence protection program," Morgan said in a letter to federal Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Bill Blair. "As you know, Clare's Law is legislation passed in the province of Saskatchewan to protect primarily women from interpersonal violence by authorizing the disclosure of limited risk information to individuals regarding their intimate partners."

One of the main concerns with the RCMP opting out of participation in Clare's Law is it will put rural communities without municipal police services in a difficult situation. Communities that don't have municipal police services will have to request the information from the closest



municipal police force who will then need to acquire the information from the RCMP.

Morgan says he has not yet spoken with the RCMP to hash out their issues with Clare's Law, but will be speaking with them and hopes to resolve the problem.

"We have not," said Morgan. "We have attempted to reach them to set up a phone conversation. We've got a phone call set up for later this week. We've had no communication yet."

"I don't know whether they're concerned about liability issues or privacy issues," he said. "We went through the sort of yearlong process of working with municipal police forces and the RCMP and everybody participated to try and develop what we thought was a very good protocol to try and protect privacy and be able to have a meaningful release of information. It came as a bit of a surprise to us to hear that (the RCMP opting out) and I'm hoping that with discussions with Minister Blair and Minister Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada) that

we're able to resolve those issues.

"As we were going through the process we had the justice officials say to the RCMP that if anybody's got problems, let us know and we'll work through the legal side of it. That offer stands."

Clare's Law is named for Clare Woods who was murdered in England by her boyfriend, George Appleton, in 2009. Appleton had previously spent six years in prison for holding a woman at knife-point. Woods father, Michael Brown, campaigned to have Clare's Law enacted to help prevent domestic violence. It was enacted across England and Wales in 2014.

"If you look at Clare's situation, she had no idea there was an issue there," said Morgan. "Her dad had a sense that there was a problem with the individual. The protocol as it's developed, identifies if there's a person that could be at risk and it's not intended to be going out and saying, 'you shouldn't go out with this person because of A, B, and C in that persons past.' What it says is, there's a risk and there's an issue you should be aware of and leaves it open ended as to whether the person wants to, but the reason for that is to specifically avoid the issues of privacy and liability."

Morgan is hopeful the rift between the provincial government and the RCMP on this issue won't cause for long-term problems and still thinks they can resolve the problem.

"We worry about it," Morgan said. "We've had, over the years, a good relationship with the RCMP and they're based in Regina, training depot is here, and F Division headquarters is here. We've enjoyed a good working relationship with them on a variety of other issues. We're hoping that we're able to restore this and get this back."

Continued on page 10 <sup>ES</sup>

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# University of Saskatchewan working on Covid-19 saliva test

BY ROB PAUL

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

At the halfway point of the year the Covid-19 pandemic has defined 2020 and although things are beginning to move towards normalcy, nothing will ever quite be normal again. This is the new normal.

Until there's a vaccine, the global crisis caused by Covid-19 will not truly end, but an easily accessible testing system that can give instant results would be a huge leap in the right direction.

Led by the University of Saskatchewan's Dr. Walter Siqueira, a U of S team is collaborating with Western University in London, Ontario to develop a time and cost efficient Covid-19 test that can be taken anywhere.

Siqueira leads the University of Saskatchewan's Salivary Proteomics Research Laboratory and his research focusses on how saliva and salivary components can be used to improve the health of patients, both in the diagnosis and as therapeutics. He's considered an international authority in the field of salivary research.

"I've done work with saliva for more than 20 years," he said.

"In the past I was very successful creating tests for different outbreak and pandemic diseases like Zika virus in 2017. Now with the coronavirus I'm using a similar technology that I used in the past for the Zika virus where we try to identify the proteins and peptides of the virus directly in the saliva instead of a different component of the virus that is the most common test for coronavirus on the market.

"Our approach is very different where we're looking for proteins and peptides, this way we hope to increase the specificity and sensitivity of the test. Our approach will take different steps. The first step is collecting samples from positive cases from here in Saskatchewan. For example, that's why we're working with the Saskatchewan Health Authority to collect samples from positive cases in Saskatchewan. We then want to identify these biomarkers with proteins and peptides in saliva.



Dr. Walter Siqueira leads the University of Saskatchewan's Covid-19 saliva test research.

"The second step will be to synthesize, in my lab, these proteins and peptides and create a specific antibody for these proteins and peptides that connect to the specific proteins and peptides of the virus," he said.

While Siqueira's research is focussed on the medical side of the test, his counterparts in Ontario are building the physical device for the test.

"We then add this together with my collaborator at the University of Western Ontario, Dr. Jun Yang, who's working on a device that's the size of a cellphone where you put the saliva and you have it analyze and identify the proteins and peptides of the virus and it will give you a colour to tell you whether you're a positive case or a negative case. In a simplistic way, this is what we are working on here."

Siqueira stresses the importance of test accuracy and that's the top priority, but wants the test to be combined both simplicity and speed once it's out to the general public.

"Our preliminary data is giving us the information in 35 to 40 minutes," he said. "Our goal is to reduce the result time to five to 10 minutes without losing the specificity and sensitivity of the test. At the end of the project, the idea is to put a little bit more than a drop of saliva into the instrument and within five to 10 minutes do all of the chemical and colour reaction and change the colour according to if you're positive or negative."

With funding from the Government of Canada, Siqueira and his team have been working on the test for over three months and hope to have a prototype out in the next year.

"We've been working on this project since April," he said. "It was April when we got all the human ethics approval, contacted the Saskatchewan Health Authority,

and the Royal University Hospital to start to collect samples and put the samples to our methodology.

"We received funding from the federal government through the Canadian Institute of Health Research and this is a special grant that's a one year project. We expect to start to have a prototype with good results in eight months to one-year. We're targeting for March 2021 to have a prototype that we can test. We received \$937,000 and this is a project that's co-led between myself and my collaborator from the University of Regina, Dr. Mohan Babu, where he's going to work more in the treatment part of this and I'm working more in the diagnosis part."

In terms of how much the test will cost the public to purchase, Siqueira says, it's hard to put an exact number on it, but with the cost effective technology they're using, he doesn't suspect it will be overly expensive.

"This is a difficult question (test pricing) because there's so many aspects," he said. "All of the products and technology we're using are very cheap. Of course, it's difficult for me as a scientist and researcher to predict how much it will cost because it's not my expertise, but in an overview I think it will be less than \$45 that we are targeting here. Our idea is not to focus too much into the price, but to have something that's high in specificity and sensitivity, something we do not have in the market yet. The sensitivity and specificity of the tests we have now is not high, we have some problems with them."

With the accuracy of the test being the priority, Siqueira hopes they can create a far more reliable product than what's currently available.

"The goal is to get the test (accuracy) up to higher than 90 per cent. That would be much better than what we are currently using now. This will depend on several aspects that in turn will depend on how many samples we get to test and what the modifications are that we go through with the specificity and sensitivity of the test."

For now, Siqueira says, testing saliva is the key to moving this project forward, but the amount of testing they can do is limited to the amount of saliva they receive from the SHA or via donations.

"The testing depends on how many samples we get from the Saskatchewan Health Authority and how many people want to participate and donate the saliva," he said. "We aren't forcing anyone to participate, it's basically up to each person to understand how important this is and donate the saliva."

"Donating saliva is a very simple process and that's the beauty of this project. You don't need someone with expertise to collect saliva because it's basically just spitting in a tube or using a swab to collect it from your mouth. Then you donate it to us or in the future it will be introduced into point of care devices."

"This will facilitate a lot of the testing and collection of saliva, it's different than any other body fluid. For example to collect nasal fluid you need an expert or to collect blood you need someone to do that, but anyone can do it with this. I can give instructions in 30 seconds to make someone an expert in collecting saliva! It's a very easy process."

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# Plain & Valley

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# Free swimming lessons for new Canadians

Continued from page 6

"It was something that came across our office," he said.

"It wasn't anything to do with pools, it was just dealing with Covid-19 and community strategies to help people deal with it. When I looked at it I thought there was limited things you could do with kids.

"Our department tends to look at kids first and the pool was obviously a good spot. We applied and they thought it was a good idea and it went quickly."

"When it came up, there was nothing really else I could think of that we could use it for. I know kids love the pool. I think if I had 10 things to choose from, I probably would have chosen the pool anyway. To me it's the most unstructured and fun atmosphere they have all year."

This program is all about giving kids an opportunity for summer fun that they

may not have been able to have previously, says Schwean.

"The problem with families, sometimes, that can't afford stuff," he said. "Is they're often not visible, but I think there are some who might need this. It's \$250 for a family pass, and I think there are some people who could use some help and this is a fantastic opportunity."

"We would dearly love to see these used in the community so kids can all have the opportunity to access the pool."

"If you know someone who could use the help, please get ahold of them and let them know just to contact us or stop in at the town office," he said. "It's quick and simple, within five minutes of coming in they'd be able to use the pool. It's a good program and it's a great pool."

"There's no shame in needing something like this



The waterslide at Moosomin Swimming Pool.

and it's important to help the kids be kids. There are probably people out there every year that can't afford it, but this year in particular and I'm excited to help some kids enjoy the pool."

### Learn to Swim program for new Canadians

On top of the free family

pool passes, Schwean wants to further help people access the pool with a Learn to Swim program for new Canadians. It's a free swimming lessons program for both youth and adults that will be on a first-come, first-served basis for new Canadians.

Schwean wants to give new Canadians who may not have previously felt

comfortable in a swimming environment an opportunity to ease their way into it. He received a grant for the program from the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association.

"This was something, pre-Covid-19, that we applied for and got approved for," he said. "When we do programs in facilities, especially the ones we run, we mark and target who's there and who's not there. In my experience it hasn't been accessed as much as I'd like by our Filipino community and other new Canadians."

"This was something we thought would be a good opportunity to have them come use the pool and try it out."

"We can do adults and youth with four staff members there. We want them to come try it with their families. If they enjoy it, that's great and if it's not their thing then at least they had an opportunity to do it and

give it a try."

For people who are newer to Canada, a public swimming pool might not be a place they feel the most comfortable, says Schwean, so he wanted to give them an opportunity to have an introduction to it.

"It's an opportunity for them to try out our pool," he said. "For this they can go down to the pool and register for it. It's August 10-14 and we can take up to 30 people."

"We want to give them the opportunity to try it first because it's expensive. Like anything else, it can be intimidating and expensive to do swimming lessons if you don't know if the kids will like it. It's intimidating to go to public swim, too, because the pool's full."

"It's not meant to isolate them, but to give them an opportunity to try it in a less intimidating atmosphere. Hopefully they use it and it goes well."

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# Saskatchewan enacts Clare's Law, RCMP opt out

Continued from page 7

"I would hate to think that this kind of an issue would give pause to that. I'm hoping this is something we're able to work through or that if the federal government were willing to meet with our officials and discuss whatever the issues are, we would work that out. Right now we have a good relationship with the RCMP.

"They do a good job on national policing issues and in our province we have a blend here. We've got municipal police forces that deal with bylaws and municipal priorities, our conservation officers and highway traffic board officers deal with a lot of other things, and we do a lot of partnerships with the RCMP. As we go forward, those are discussions we might want to have, how best to maximize our working relationship, what we do in the future, how we apportion duties and responsibilities, but it's something that we don't have under active consideration at this time."

If the RCMP continue to be unwilling to participate in Clare's Law, Morgan says, they will have to work on alternate ways to help communities without municipal police forces.

"I would be deeply troubled and I said last week I would be more than disappointed" he said. "I think I would arrange for a meeting with one of the two federal ministers that are involved with the hope that we would be able to persuade them otherwise or allay their concerns. Failing that, we would have to look at saying to people in Saskatchewan that aren't under the jurisdiction of a municipal police force, can we do something for those people? We would make services available through municipal police forces or look at other options.

"We think it's an important service. We don't know how much it's going to be used, it's too soon to tell, but we're hoping it provides a tool. It's certainly not a silver bullet or the enemy. We think it's a good tool and it's worthwhile and we want to have it in place."

Having worked with the RCMP on the protocols for Clare's Law, Morgan was surprised that they opted out and never raised their concerns during the process of working with the provincial government.

"I wish they would have raised it (their issue) a year ago when we started to engage with the RCMP," he said. "We've had ongoing discussions and it's been fruitful. We've worked with them on protocols and we were caught off guard that they went ahead with this a week ago and said, 'no, we're not participating' after a yearlong process where you develop the protocols. It was definitely something that caught us (off guard) because we worked with them. We were disappointed."

"We don't have access to police officers from the RCMP," he said. "We certainly have access to the database and the information that's there. What might be missing is if there's

some local information in the hands of a detachment that you may want to use as one of the trigger points. For that, we're certainly disappointed and we're hoping we can resolve it."

Although Morgan says it seems like the RCMP won't change their stance on Clare's Law, as other provinces move towards enacting it, he hopes either the RCMP will reconsider or the federal government will step in.

"They made it appear that it was closing the door," he said. "I want to work with both the two federal ministers. We worked well with them as we went through Covid-19 issues, and a number of other issues. This is something I think we can certainly agree the issue of interpersonal violence is important to all Canadians and every time there's a tool—whether it's developed at the provincial or national level—all of us should want to use those things and look carefully and see whether we can benefit."

"The other provinces are certainly looking at it and working towards their protocols. I would hate to see the RCMP be the odd one out on this. Hopefully they get there."

"This was a tool that was intended to give an individual the right to minimize or avoid a risk and it depends on the ability of the police officer to work with that individual to access the appropriate database, access the appropriate files, and if you're in a community that doesn't have a municipal police force, the information you may very well need that could save your life may not be available to you," said Morgan.

MP for Yorkton-Melville Cathay Wagantall is glad Saskatchewan is taking steps to address the issue of domestic violence.

"We all know Saskatchewan has a high rate of domestic violence," said Wagantall. "So I'm pleased that the provincial government is looking at various ways, including Clare's Law, to deal with that issue."

Wagantall says, she's optimistic the federal government will be able to work with the provincial government on finding a way for the RCMP to participate in Clare's Law.

As far as the RCMP's involvement, they have concerns around the privacy issue, the minister in Saskatchewan has said they've dealt with that," she said. "They've also mentioned they've been researching it further."

"I appreciate all of our police forces and the work they do. I do hope there are ways Minister Blair can take a look at this and see how they could participate without any issues around the fact that they're a federal entity and the privacy laws impact them differently. I look forward to seeing further discussion and the possibility of working that through."

With Saskatchewan being the first jurisdiction in Canada to enact Clare's Law, Wagantall thinks it's impact could lead to other provinces taking steps towards implementing it.

"I'd assume they'll (other provinces) be watching for sure

to see if it makes an impact in making relationships safer," she said. "I really think it's important that people are aware of circumstances in a relationship and this can be so challenging in extreme circumstances. I hope it will make a difference."

"This is clearly something the provincial government has looked at and see as a way of improving outcomes for individuals. I'm aware of relationships where violence has been a part of relationships and it's such a disturbing dynamic and I'd be pleased to see this be very successful. I'll be watching this closely and I'm very encouraged for the province."

"We want to be recognized as the province with the least level of domestic violence," she said. Life in our province is pretty special so I hope this leads to good outcomes."



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# Group discusses formation of First Nations hockey league

BY TRAVIS LONGMAN

Exciting times could be ahead for male First Nations' hockey players in the province.

Several First Nations' leaders from across Saskatchewan met in Regina on Sunday, July 5 to discuss forming a new hockey league.

Many questions were brought up at the meeting such as how many teams and divisions there would be, where games will be contested and who the league is open to.

While these questions still need to be answered, Morley Watson, First Vice-Chief of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations in charge of Sports and Recreation, was happy with the first meeting. He believes there could be 24 to 30 teams competing in the league.

Ochapowace, Cote, Keeseekoose, George Gordon, Peter Ballantyne, Yellowquill, Little Pine, Ahtakakoop, and Lac La Ronge were some of the communities represented at the meeting. Should the league be formed, there will likely be two divisions. The league will be sanctioned by the Saskatchewan Hockey Association.

Watson says the reason for the formation of the new league is because First Nations people are victims of systemic racism. "We have faced it many times, and you can only know that when you're the one that is facing the racism. If there is racism on the streets you know there is going

to be racism in the boardroom and on the ice, and so on and so forth."

The new league will have strict rules. Everyone involved will be held to a high standard. Watson feels the league is more important to First Nations' people than just playing the sport of hockey.

"A league like this I think can do things for us," Watson says. "Not everybody's going to play junior hockey or CIS hockey, but if they can play good hockey and just become good citizens through the sport of hockey, then that's a good thing as well."

"The league has a lot of potential, and by potential I don't mean winning and losing, but the development of a lot of fine young people," Watson adds. "A lot of them go on to get education, they come home and help develop our communities, and those are the kind of people that we can build around, and so I think this league will be good because it is going to create opportunity."

Watson believes the league is needed for First Nations people because of lack of opportunity in neighboring leagues. He finishes off by saying "The First Nation people are going to take it upon themselves to do their own leagues, govern their own league, structure their own leagues, not only in southern Saskatchewan but northern Saskatchewan as well."

The FSIN has called a provincial-wide meeting of interested senior hockey clubs and authorities to be held Sunday, July 19 in Saskatoon.



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# Black Bear interactions on the rise in Manitoba

BY VICTOR VAN DER MERWE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER  
Due to a higher than usual number of black bear interactions being reported, Manitoba Fish and Wildlife is reminding citizens of the simple measures that can be taken to reduce bear-human conflict.

Bears that are labeled problem animals could be subject to trapping and relocation and in worst case scenarios, but some problem animals are dealt with by using lethal force.

Like most creatures, bears are motivated by their stomachs. This is why the government has asked people that their bird feeders and bird houses be removed between the months of April and November.

During the winter months bird feeders should also be used with care, hanging them at least two meters from the ground and cleaning up any and all spilled seeds. It is also wise to make sure that all garbage and compost be kept indoors or in bear resistant containers.

There are additional "Wildlife Smart" tips that can help reduce the interactions with bears and other animals such as coyotes, foxes, raccoons and skunks.

Use a leash when walking a dog and thoroughly clean barbecues after every use this summer.

If need be, use an electric fence around your property.

People who have fruit trees on their property should make sure that any rip-

ened or fallen fruit be removed first thing in the morning and again at dusk.

According to a CBC report, the Manitoba black bear population in 2018 was around 25,000 to 30,000, but the province doesn't conduct official counts of Black Bears.

"It is important to note that increased sightings do not necessarily mean an increased number of bears," says John Neufeld, spokesperson for the Manitoba government.

Bears enjoy the more tree dense areas of the province. This is also where most humans enjoy going camping and building their cottages.

According to Manitoba Fish and Wildlife, "Bears are wild animals and must be respected. When in bear country, it is best to assume bears are in the vicinity even if no recent conflict or encounters have been reported."

"Carry bear deterrent spray and know how to use it. Be aware of surroundings, walk or jog in groups, make noise and make sure things like listening to music with earphones do not impede hearing."

Neufeld also stated that decreased activity because of Covid-19 doesn't appear to be related to the increased bear activity, but "the only pandemic-related impact that we are aware of is the travel restrictions that we are in place that prevented out-of-province hunters from being able to enter Manitoba in order to bear-hunt this spring."



Manitoba is reporting more bear interactions. Southeast Saskatchewan has also seen an increase in bear sightings in recent years. This bear was seen last year at Moosomin Regional Park.

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# Lots of bear sightings in Southeast Sask

By VICTOR VAN DER MERWE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

In a press release sent out recently, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment urged people to be bear aware this summer.

Kevin Harrison a conservation officer with the Ministry, say that there have been quite a few incidences in the south east of Saskatchewan.

“From April 1, 2020 to today, there has been 67 occurrences in the Yorkton, Duck Mountain, Preeceville, Melville, Moose Mountain area,” says Harrison.

This would explain why Cory Woywada photographed a bear walking around the Rocanville School grounds.

“I’m new to this area and this was the first time I ever seen a bear in town,” he says.

Woywada is not a stranger to bear sightings. Having recently moved from Strathclair, Manitoba, he would see bears in the farm yard.

The reason seems to be that we had a late spring this year.

“The bears’ food sources of berries, grubs and shrubs (became available) a little later than usual. They live by their stomachs and if they can’t find their usual food sources they will find something else,” Harrison continues.

The healthy black bear population of Saskatchewan is out and trying to establish new territory, so it is not unusual to see bears in the wild or exploring communities and campgrounds this time of year. This is why the government is asking people to practice vigilance when it comes to proper food storage, cooking methods and garbage handling. These actions are essential for safe camping in bear country. If these guidelines are followed, chances are that bear incidences will decline.

“When the berries start coming out we will be seeing less and less (bears)” says Harrison.

Like Manitoba, Saskatchewan doesn’t keep a record of the black bear population, but Harrison is sure that there has been an increase in bears this year.

“Our population of bears are on the healthy side. The spike due to Covid could be because hunters could not hunt this year,” Harrison explains.

There are only two bear hunting seasons in Saskatchewan, and with the one already over and the government not planning on extending hunting into the summer, it is safe to say that being bear aware is a good idea.

The press release goes on to say that “When bears start to associate their food with humans, they become a nuisance and a public safety concern.”

Some government tips that the Ministry of Environment has laid out include:

- Store garbage in a secure building or buy a bear-resistant container. Only put the bin out on the morning of collection.



These two photos, taken by Cory Woywada, show a bear at the Rocanville School grounds on July 4.

- Avoid leaving pet food accessible to wildlife.
- Only use bird feeders in the winter when bears are hibernating and natural bird food is limited.
- Properly clean and store barbecue grills after each use.

Following these guidelines will help ensure that our healthy black bear population lose interest in human populated areas and go find food elsewhere.

The ministry also asks that “if a bear is repeatedly doing damage in your community, or you have an aggressive encounter with a bear, contact your local Ministry of Environment office or call the Turn in Poachers and Polluters (TIIPP) line at 1-800-667-7561 or from your SaskTel cell phone at #5555”.

Additional information about bear safety is available at [www.saskatchewan.ca](http://www.saskatchewan.ca).



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# Wet fall, Covid-19 haven't impacted Foodgrains Bank projects

BY VICTOR VAN DER MERWE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The wet fall last year and Covid-19 complications haven't impacted two Canadian Foodgrains Bank growing projects in the area—the Harvest of Hope near Moosomin and the Cross-Borders Growing Project near Kola.

Kyle Penner is very optimistic about this year's Harvest of Hope, one of the many growing projects that grow grains and oilseeds for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. This year the Moosomin farmers involved with Harvest of Hope are planting canola. Penner has been involved with the Harvest of Hope since it began in 2013.

"The seed is in the ground, the plants are all sprouted and everything is running as per normal," says Penner before going on to explain that the project has not lost any ground due to the pandemic. Using some new measures like electronic banking and social distancing when it came to picking up seed, has ensured that the Harvest of Hope is going ahead. Not even last fall's wet weather could keep the Harvest of Hope down. "The excess moisture in the ground has helped to sustain and get the canola we planted off to a good start," Penner explains.

Penner's optimism is shared by Canadian Foodgrains Bank's Regional Co-ordinator for Manitoba, Gordon Janzen, where Kola's Cross Borders Growing Project has been going strong for decades. However, he did stress that the need for food around the world has increased.

"Growing projects and especially the support from rural communities are still going strong and we have not really slowed down any of our overseas programs, but the need is actually increasing," says Janzen.

He explains that due to the downsizing of economies around the world, the World Health Organization and others have predicted a steep increase in acutely hungry people.

The problem might seem insurmountable, but Janzen is hopeful that the Canadian Foodgrains Bank will meet or succeed the aid they gave in the previous years.

"Our supporters have been strong so we are hoping to be as robust as in previous years."

In 1976 the Mennonite Central Committee created a pilot project that would allow Canadian grain producers to share their harvest with those less fortunate in countries around the world. In 1983



A scene from a Harvest of Hope harvest day, where local farmers volunteered to harvest a crop for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

the program was reorganized and re-established as the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. This happened just in time that the Canadian Foodgrains Bank could help with the 1984 famine in Ethiopia. The Mennonite Central Committee became one of 15 Canadian church agencies that now make up the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Together with sponsors and government support they work towards having a world without hunger.

The Canadian government, which matches all donations made to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank up and including \$25 million a year, will do so this year again, but the multi-year agreement between the Foodgrains Bank is coming to an end.

"We are hoping and expecting that the arrangement will be renewed for another multi-year period. The government and Foodgrains Bank are

talking about it, but nothing has been decided yet," says Janzen.

It is summer and some restrictions have been lifted, however no one can predict what will be happening when it comes time to harvest.

"I guess fall will be an interesting time. That is usually when we see people come together," says Penner.

For now, everyone involved seems to be optimistic about this year, and with support from the government, farmers and rural communities still going strong, Canadian Foodgrains Bank believes they will be able to help just as they have in the past.

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# SE College students receive over \$17,250 in student awards

Southeast College students from Moosomin, Whitewood, Redvers, Ochapowace, Carry the Kettle, Cowessess, and Kahkewistahaw received \$17,250 in scholarships and bursaries.

The awards were distributed to students in various regional programs including Electrician, Office Administration, Continuing Care Assistant, Early Childhood Education, Primary Care Paramedic, and Adult Basic Education.

This year a formal luncheon was unable to take place, but that did not subtract from the value of the awards.

"We are incredibly proud of our students, and everything they have achieved, and continue to work towards," said Kassandra Lawrenz, Manager, College Advancement. "Student awards are a great opportunity not only to celebrate the work our students put in, but also to recognize and express our most sincere gratitude to the outstanding support we receive from the community and our partners!"

Southeast College scholarships and bursaries are made possible by donations from community organizations, businesses and individuals, as well as various fundraising events such as the College's Swing for Scholarships Golf Tournament.

Eligible funds are matched by the Ministry of Advanced Education through the Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship (SIOS) program.

Southeast College is proud to be the Trainer of Choice in southeast Saskatchewan offering educational opportunities that encourage students to learn where they live. A number of post-secondary programs are now accepting applications for 2020-21. Interested students can find program information and apply for the program of their choice online at

www.southeastcollege.org or call any of the College's campus locations for more information.

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**Weyburn Oilwomen Association "Pursuit of Education" Scholarship**  
 Sierra George-Early Childhood Education  
**Town of Whitewood**  
 Elizabeth Oslund-Continuing Care Assistant  
**Kipling Lions Club Bursary**  
 Monica Clark-Continuing Care Assistant  
 Maryfield District Lions

**Club Bursary**  
 Amanda Wiebe-Office Administration  
**Moose Mountain Knights of Columbus Bursary**  
 Elizabeth Oslund-Continuing Care Assistant  
**Southeast College Governors Bursary**  
 Debra Kequahtoway-Adult Basic Education  
 Colinda Eshappie-Tanner-Adult Basic Education  
**Southeast College Post-**

**Secondary Saskatchewan Opportunity Scholarship**  
 Chelsie Runns-Continuing Care Assistant  
 Monica Clark-Continuing Care Assistant  
 Sierra George-Early Childhood Education  
 Tyler Muir-Electrician  
 Tara Desjarlais-Office Administration  
 Amanda Wiebe-Office Administration  
 Tracy Sproat-Primary Care Paramedic

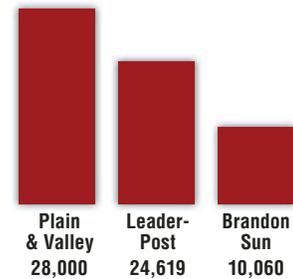
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# Manitoba schools set for September 8 return

BY ROB PAUL  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Schools in Manitoba closed on March 23 due to Covid-19, but reopened June 1 with the limited use of facilities for specific programming. The provincial government has now announced tentative dates for a return to classrooms for the 2020-21 school year with staff returning on September 2 and students on September 8.

Manitoba Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen said that the plan is for a return in the fall, but final confirmation on which return plan will be implemented will be announced on August 1 based on public health directions.

The government has released a return to classrooms planning framework that provides guidance for school divisions to then develop their own reopening plan with specifics to their region applied. Once the school divisions develop these reopening plans, they will be submitted to Manitoba Education for approval. Each school division will have three different return scenarios: in-class learning with near-normal conditions, in-class learning with additional public health measures, and remote learning from home with limited use of school facilities.

"We are planning to have all students, from kindergarten to Grade 12, back in classrooms in September," said Goertzen.

"While we can't be sure what the Covid-19 pandemic will look like in the fall, detailed planning is needed to ensure schools can resume in-class learning and to prepare for different scenarios. This framework will allow schools and school divisions to prepare plans that are flexible at the local level, yet consistent with those at other sites across the province."

With the ever-changing landscape of the Covid-19 pandemic, Manitoba's Ministry of Education wants each school division to be prepared to adapt to different learning circumstances.

"Public health officials expect the COVID-19 virus to be around for some time and that's why schools need to develop plans for the fall," said Manitoba's Chief Medical Health Officer Dr. Brent Roussin. "In addition to these plans, it will continue to be important for people to stay home if they are sick, ensure physical distancing, continue to practise good hand hygiene and cover coughs."

The framework provided by the Government of Manitoba outlines what each school division's return plan should include:

- Ability for schools to adapt to changing public health orders and guidance.
- Necessary physical distancing requirements.
- Using cohorts in classrooms, buses, and during activities.
- Planning with a focus on in-class learning and establishing priorities.
- Looking at ways to accommodate speciality programming and extracurricular activities.
- Safe options for school transportation.
- Blended learning options that can quickly be implemented.
- Arrangements for students, teachers, and staff who may be at higher risk of Covid-19.
- Considering learning and assessment needs, as well as any educational gaps as a result of the pandemic.

"Students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators have had to make many adjustments in a very short period of time, and I thank everyone who has worked hard to find solutions to keep everyone safe during the pandemic," said Goertzen. "By taking the time to develop thorough plans, we can continue to protect the health and well-being of our school communities while ensuring that students have the opportunity to learn and develop their skills."

## Fort La Bosse School Division

The Government of Manitoba has given each school division in the province the tools to develop three different return scenarios for the fall, says Fort La Bosse Superintendent Barry Pitz.

"They gave us three scenarios with some underlining guidelines in which to prepare for the return in the fall," he said. "The three scenarios are different stages and phases of readiness. The information we received from the Department of Education was very helpful and useful for creating our own plan."

Currently the school division is planning and preparing the three different scenarios as if each will be implemented, but they'll find out which plan the Government of Manitoba is going forward with on August 1.

"We have some time for sure (to have the three plans ready)," he said. "The three scenarios are pretty straightforward. The first scenario is pretty much a standard return to normal with classes on September 8. That's pretty easy to prepare for and we're all hoping for that across the country. That's the first scenario and it's basically a normal return to school with proper sanitization, hand washing, physical distancing and health protocols, but very much a normal return to school."

"Scenario three, is what we're currently in here in Manitoba. It's limited access to our buildings, which would then mean we're trying to create scheduling where we would have staggered classes coming in or arranging timetables to have alternate days for kids. We would also have enhanced remote learning via technology, especially with our high school kids because they have more capabilities that way. That would be very similar to what



Students will return to Virden Collegiate Institute September 8 as a member of the Fort La Bosse School Division.

we're in right now. A lot of planning has already taken place with that.

"Scenario two is the one that would probably take the most work," he said. "It's a happy medium between scenario one and three."

Every school division will have slightly different return plans based on the size of the division and then each school within the division will specify to their own specific needs like building size, transportation, and programming.

"We'll all (the school divisions) be in the same position where we'll have to implement whatever scenario the province wants us to on August 1 for September 8," he said. "We're all planning in the same way, obviously, there may be more work required in a school division that has 1,000 kids in one school, that would require more work and attention to make the schedule work. In rural Saskatchewan and Manitoba, sometimes it's a little easier, bigger not necessarily better."

"How it will work is, we'll have a divisional plan for the three scenarios and then we'll filter that down to the schools and then the schools streamline it for their individual schools," he said.

"The schools will work on the specifics in terms of how operationally their schools can function under the three scenarios provided by the division. Of course, our guidance is from the province."

Pitz says, the most important piece of the return is following the hygiene and sanitization guidelines that have been laid out and ensuring everybody in the schools is educated on how to keep themselves and others as safe as possible.

"Our province and the Department of Education in Manitoba are being very reasonable with how they're conveying the message of, 'to the greatest extent possible, that's what the underlining message is from the department,'" he said. "Try to make this work to the greatest extent possible because as we know, little kids like to interact with little kids and that's important for their development, mental health, and wellness. We're not going to totally restrict that, but proper hand hygiene, sanitizing, every effort will be made to keep the kids safe."

"It boils down to proper hygiene and distancing. It's not going to be perfect because kids are going to want to play with kids, but at the end of the day as long as kids are not exhibiting symptoms they'll be in school."

"If they're exhibiting symptoms of Covid-19—which are very similar to flu-like symptoms—then they need to stay home, same with staff. In some ways I think it will probably make our schools even healthier. People just need to be smart."

The new normal of the Covid-19 era will have health and safety protocols as part of the student orientation, says Pitz, while staff will spend their first week back in school training to for the return.

"It will definitely be part of the student orientation (Covid-19 protocols)," he said. "When they come in on the first day of school September 8, doesn't matter what stage we're in, there will be orientation on it. We'll certainly make sure the kids are excited to get back to school and back into as much normalcy as possible. Extracurriculars will vary from scenario to scenario."

"September 2, all of our staff will receive training in terms of protocols and expectations on which ever of the

three scenarios is being implemented and it will be ongoing. We'll work with our staff to make sure they're ready for when the kids walk in the door."

Pitz is thankful for the support of parents through remote learning, but says everybody is ready to get back into the classroom.

"I haven't heard a lot (of feedback on the return) yet," he said. "I just know the parents in our school division here have been extremely supportive and a very key piece in terms of what we've gone through the last few months with our kids in remote learning. I think everybody is hoping our kids can return in the fall and that we can move on with a normal education vs. a remote style of learning and teaching."

"When those kids come in the first day we want to get things rolling. We want to get kids back into the groove. They all miss their friends and connecting with friends, teachers, and other staff is all very important for mental health and well-being. That's why we want the kids back in school, parents want the kids back in school, and we want to make sure we're safe, healthy, and every precaution is taken, yet, kids need to have fun."

*Continued on page 24*

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# APP to help farmers monitor mental health in development

BY VICTOR VAN DER MERWE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A new app is being tested in Saskatchewan that will help farmers, ranchers and other rural workers gain easier access to mental health services.

The app is the product of a province-wide Innovation Challenge where technology entrepreneurs were asked to offer solutions on how to best assist Saskatchewan farm, ranch and rural workers with tracking their mental health.

Previous projects that Innovations Challenges helped introduce tech responses to include rural crime, online permissions for hunting and fishing on private land and tracking landfill waste.

The app selected by Innovations Saskatchewan was developed by Bridges Health, a mental health service organization based in Saskatoon.

Bridges Health has received a contract and will now begin a 16-week residency to develop their solution further. Bridges Health will use the residency to adapt their solution and materials to reflect the needs of Saskatchewan farmers and rural communities.

The app is currently in development and will be piloted in the fall of 2020 before it becomes widely available for download.

The app, called 'Avail', will analyze wellness data supplied by the user and will also offer support in the form of articles, videos, online tips and even immediate help from a personal support network.

"While we are moving as a society to remove the stigma (around mental health), the ability to access an app from the privacy of one's

own home is critical to asking for, and receiving, help. In the future, apps like this one may play a role in delivering health services in a way that provides access and help when and where an individual needs it, instead of a traditional service that may require travel or signing up for a waitlist or schedule," said Karen Prokopetz of Innovation Saskatchewan.

Calls to the Saskatchewan farm stress line have doubled in 2018 and 2019.

"Producers encounter a number of different stressors in the course of daily operations," said Charlotte McGraw of Saskatchewan Agriculture. "While we cannot comment on which single issue is causing the greatest amount of stress, many producers deal with a significant amount of uncertainty and are often faced with circumstances that are beyond their control. These circumstances can increase the difficulty of doing business. We encourage anyone dealing with mental health challenges to contact the Farm Stress Line."

"Despite progress made, there is still stigma associated with asking for support when it comes to mental health," Minister Responsible for Innovation Saskatchewan Tina Beaudry-Mellor said. "Having access to an app in the privacy of one's own home will enhance the likelihood of people asking for help when they need it the most."

"Saskatchewan producers face unique challenges when it comes to dealing with mental health and we are committed to providing resources and strategies to help support them," Agriculture Minister David Marit said. "We

know there is a need for solutions like this and I'm looking forward to working with Bridges Health to provide a resource custom-built for the agriculture industry."

Bridges Health is a mental health service organization based in Saskatoon. As Innovation Challenge winners, the company receives \$10,000 in funding and a 16-week collaboration with government to develop the mobile app.

"As a company founded and based in Saskatchewan, the agriculture sector touches both our business and our families," Bridges Health Vice President Leon Ferguson said. "We are honored to have this opportunity to work with government and partners to develop and advance this mental health and overall wellness tool."

The app allows users to complete check ins and measure their mental, and overall health in a variety of different areas. Beyond

physical health, it goes into areas like sleep hygiene and financial well being, stress and anxiety, according to Kyle Anderson, business development consultant with Bridges Health.

The self-assessment will ask 10 different questions, and those questions vary each time. "A sample question might be, 'Over the last week, I enjoyed time spent with friends and family,' and then you answer based on a sliding scale from zero to six," Anderson said. Self assessment is just one aspect of it. Users will be able to track their wellness over time, noting increases or decreases in their scores.

The app will send periodic reminders to the user for them to make use of it.

"After that, there's a library with articles and videos and tips and suggestions and activities of things that you can do that are specifically geared towards all of those different areas. So, if I noticed that I wasn't doing well

and my stress and anxiety score was low, then I can go through and access all of the different resources specific to distress and anxiety," Anderson said.

It will tie into specific resources available in Saskatchewan.

Anderson said, "If I was looking to go see a physiotherapist and I'm located in Swift Current, I'd be able to search that and see all available physiotherapists that are within a specific distance to me. If I'm looking to go see a counselor, and I'm located in say Rosetown, there's not many professionals out there. I'd be able to see who offers remote services, virtual or telehealth."

He added there's a social connection so you can connect with peers and other individuals, and have that social support within the app as well.

NDP Finance Critic Trent Wotherspoon said, "Mental health pressures are real right across Saskatchewan

and supports are needed. "I would welcome the application and recognition that people are struggling with mental health from right across our province, and certainly agricultural producers are facing real mental health challenges. There's been some real important voices identifying that within our province within the agricultural community, and I commend them for that."

Wotherspoon said it was important that there are resources, and a person, available, to talk to, that there are the "wraparound supports, which are often so absent, and often so delayed, or in place to extend the supports that people need when they need them."

He said it was important "not to leave people in the darkness and despair and depression, that all too often they're being left, and right now, due to a lack of timely and appropriate supports being extended."

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# Manitoba schools set for Sept. 8 return

Continued from page 22

## Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine

Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine Superintendent Alain Laberge says his school division is in a unique situation for the return because they're Manitoba's francophone school division and spread out across the province.

"The francophone education authority is a province wide school division," he said.

"Challenges are everywhere because we're bigger. We have one school close to the Saskatchewan border, one in Thompson in the north, one close to Ontario, so we have problems everywhere.

"The Ministry of Education gave us three scenarios for a school return in September and we're preparing for all three for when they make their decision on August 1.

"The first scenario won't be a problem because it's a return to normal. The second would be K-8 in class all week and to have a hybrid form of education for 9-12—blended learning with online and in school. Scenario three is what we're going through now with suspended classes and kids using online education.

"Right now we're working on those plans and sending our thoughts to the ministry because right now there's a lot of questions that are still unanswered, especially with transportation issues."

"As of now with the bussing the rule is not more than one student per bench, which would mean doubling the routes and price or we have a different schedule, which would still mean more busses.

"Transportation is huge for us," he said. "We have over 150 routes as of now. We also can't really move any teachers because of the bargaining agreement that says they can only be moved within 50 kilometres.

"If we're missing two or three teachers—because we have classes over 25—where are we going to get these francophone teachers? It works in the city because we have six schools within 50 kilometres, but all of our schools are overcapacity in Winnipeg itself. That's a huge problem. We don't have substitute teachers and if we need more teachers that speak french that will be huge and we'll be missing a lot of EA's (educational assistants).

"Then with technology, we have some areas in Manitoba where kids don't have access to internet," he said. "What do we do with them? It's not even like they can't afford it, it's just not there. Then we also have people who can't afford internet. What do we do with them if we fall back to remote learning? What do we do with prep time for teachers? We have to come up with solutions. Like I said, there's a lot of questions, but only a few answers."

With more adjustments and problems for the Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine then other school divisions in the province, Laberge says, the Ministry of Education isn't giving them any extra guidance.

"It's all the same for all school divisions," he said. "We're working together. We're working with them and they're working with us, but I don't think people always realize the uniqueness of the situation. I think there's only the Frontier School Division—the northern Manitoba school division—and us who cover so much of the province."

In preparation for scenario two, Laberge says, the schools are currently setting up classrooms by creating as much space as possible.

"All of our schools as of now have emptied their classrooms because we want to make sure we can fit as many students as we can," he said.

"We took out shelves and things like that, that were in the classroom to make sure we could put desks. We're measuring every single classroom and for example, we received a report saying, 'school X needs 30 desks.' We need to buy them or transfer them from another school. Some schools will need to use a gym, library, or music room as classrooms. We have a detailed report on all the needs of all of our schools and we've marked all schools with two metre lines and recesses zones. We're all set up for scenario two, which would be the worst one for us."

"Our plan right now is not to have all students return in September at the same time, especially the youngest ones," he said. "We want to make sure that teachers and principals will be able to take time to go over the new routine and situations."

"We'll also have extracurricular activities as part of our plan. We've already heard from the MHSAA that most of the team sports in September are cancelled. We're still encouraging our students to participate in the available ex-

tracurricular activities that they can do with physical distancing. We'll try to do as much as we can."

Laberge says, to ensure staff are healthy, they'll be asked to take an online Covid-19 test every morning before coming in.

"We have a protocol in place," he said. "We're asking every employee to take the test on the internet and if they're fine they have to sign a document saying they took the test and are okay. If they show signs of Covid-19, the program will let them know to seek medical help and not to come into school. We're asking them to do the test every morning. We'll have the students in cohorts so if a teacher does test positive we'll know which students they've been around."

It's early in the return process, but Laberge has heard feedback from parents who are concerned about their kids mental health upon a return.

"We've heard from parents letting us know that they're worried about September," he said. "A lot of parents are letting us know that kids are anxious and mental health could be a challenge for some of them because of what they went through—same for staff. Mostly our parents are behind us and understand this is an extraordinary situation where we can't control much and we're all in it together."

Covid-19 has caused people to change the way they look at everyday life and that's not necessarily a bad thing, says Laberge.

"We're ready to adapt to the situation," he said. "We don't really know what September will look like. Scenario two means that it's still there, but we can't panic and get into an anxiety mode. Covid-19 is one thing, but what we've learned from it is that maybe we weren't taking the right approach before."

"Before we didn't necessarily insist on washing hands, or we'd have staff that would come to school with a cold, same with students, and we know it's not easy for parents to let their kid stay home when they're a little sick, but it's a matter of contamination. Covid-19 or not, when you're sick you should stay home because you can contaminate other people. Schools are tight—if you touch a book or a ball or eat at the cafeteria or even shaking hands was natural before—we never really realized how close we are to people."

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# Sask announces \$4 billion irrigation project

BY BRIAN ZINCHUK,  
LOCAL JOURNALISM  
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Carrots, beets, lettuce, corn, cabbage, cucumbers and, yes, potatoes—all of these could soon be produced in large scale within Saskatchewan over the next decade. It's the promise of high-value crops, and the value-added processing that goes with it, that the Government of Saskatchewan is aiming for in its announcement on July 2 of a \$4 billion, 10-year expansion of the province's irrigation network centred on Lake Diefenbaker.

If fully built out, the actual capital costs would be much higher than that, as that cost does not include the "last mile," the actual irrigation equipment farmers need to put in their fields like pivots, pumps and electrical hookups required to get the water from the irrigation canals onto the actual crops. Nor would it include the capital equipment cost for farmers growing new, specialty crops.

Premier Scott Moe and Legislative Secretary Lyle Stewart (a former agriculture minister) made the announcement in Regina on the second last day of the spring legislative session. With a fall election scheduled on Oct. 26, this big announcement will likely form a major plank in the Saskatchewan Party's re-election platform.

Moe called it the "first steps in a generational project that will impact our Saskatchewan agricultural sector and the entire province for the next century. This project will fulfill the vision of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker to ensure the prosperity of Saskatchewan people."

After Gardiner Dam was com-

pleted in 1967, the initial phase of irrigation projects were completed by 1972, but not much has happened since then.

The new proposed project would more than double the amount of irrigated land in Saskatchewan, adding up to 500,000 acres under irrigation. The July 2 announcement allocated \$22.5 million for preliminary engineering and initial construction.

The first phase of the project is estimated to come at \$500 million and would rehabilitate and expand the Westside irrigation canal system. The idea would be to get this nearly complete system up and running in short order, bringing 80,000 acres in the area under irrigation. Stewart called it "shovel-ready."

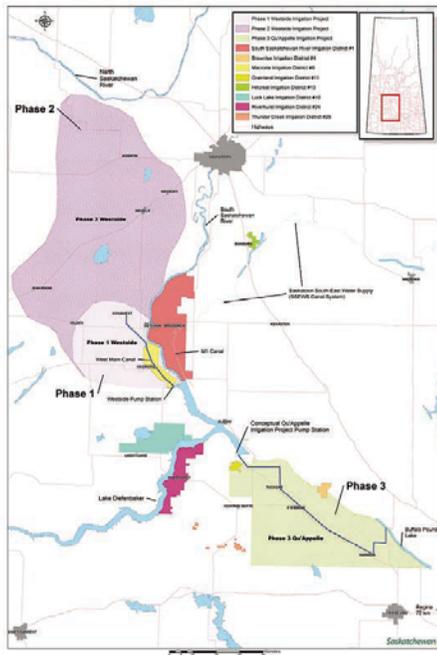
Phases 2 and 3 are expected to cost up to \$3.5 billion, not counting the costs to the individual farmers connecting to the system and setting up their own irrigation equipment. It is expected to create 2,500 jobs for the duration of the project.

West of Outlook in 1999, that unused, uncompleted canal was bone-dry, with a four-inch thick tree growing in the middle of it.

Phase 2 will see the further expansion and buildout of the Westside Irrigation Project, adding an additional 260,000 acres of irrigated land. Once fully built and developed, the project will eventually see land made available for irrigation near Macrorie, Mildred, Zealandia, and as far north as Delisle and Asquith.

Phase 3 will see the buildout of the Qu'Appelle South Irrigation Project, adding an estimated 120,000 acres of irrigated land. Starting at Lake Diefenbaker and going south, the project

Lake Diefenbaker Development Area



would run near the communities of Tugaska, Eyebrow, down to Marquis and into Buffalo Pound Lake.

"It would provide the Moose Jaw-Regina corridor and southern Saskatchewan with a secure source of water for the next century and act as a catalyst for sig-

nificant industrial expansion in the years to come," Moe noted.

Moe said that in recent years, a major food processor had looked at setting up in Saskatchewan, but chose not to do so as there was insufficient irrigated land available to contract.

While there was no announce-

ment of federal funding, Moe said, "The federal government is keenly interested in participating in this project. I believe they ran on it, to some degree, in the last federal election."

Stewart said, "Yes, the farmer pays for the connection and getting the irrigation equipment, the pivots, the electrical hookups, things of that nature."

He didn't know what the costs would be for the farmers to hook up, but, "It will be substantial for individual producers."

He noted the Ministry of Agriculture has a program that helps with that as well as "irrigation experts that can advise producers on virtually all aspects of irrigated production for those who are not experienced in it."

He felt producers would take advantage of the opportunity, and "I know that lending institutions are very keen to lend money for irrigation expansion because they recognize that it is a substantial increase in production and profitability follows along with that," he said.

Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan (APAS) President Todd Lewis is all for the massive irrigation project announced by the Saskatchewan Party government.

Lewis said on that day, "It's very welcome. Lake Diefenbaker has been chronically underdeveloped, as a major infrastructure project that began in the 50s, sitting there. A lot of the water just flows through or evaporates. It's really important for that water to create economic activity."

He noted field crops, greenhouses and secondary processing are all potential benefits.

Continued on page 26

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## Farm Equipment Auction

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**OPENS: SATURDAY, JULY 25 @ 10 A.M.**  
**CLOSES: WEDNESDAY, JULY 29 @ 1 P.M.**

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## FARM EQUIPMENT AUCTION

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2007 JD 7630 FWA tractor with JD 746 FEL and grapple showing 5320 hours, 1998 Case IH 9370 4WD tractor with triple rubber and Ag-Leader Auto steer, Case 2390 2WD tractor with 6140 hours, 2004 Case IH JX 75 2WD tractor with PTO and 3PTH and 2275 hours, MF 65 2WD tractor with 3PTH and FEL, 2010 JD 9770 SP combine and JD 615 pickup header with 1325 rotor hours and fresh Greenlight, 2009 Macdon D60 35' Draper Header with JD adapter and transport, 2009 JD 635F Flex header with full finger auger, 36' Case IH WD 1203 SP swather with 1316 engine hours with double knife drive, ARC Fab straight cut flex header trailer, Trail Tech straight cut header trailer, 1986 Cat D7H Dozer with 3 tooth ripper, 1997 Cat 426C 4WD Backhoe with 6670 hours, Arne's 35' Tri Axle equipment trailer with beaver tail, Leon 850 PT scraper, 2015 Double A Trailers 80' water cannon/irrigation PTO pump with 6" discharge boom and 2" water cannon, 1200' of lay flat discharge hose, 1995 Freightliner tandem axle Hwy tractor with fresh rebuilt 3406 Cat engine and sleeper, 1998 Mack CH613 Highway tractor with 15 speed and sleeper, 1989 Mack Maxidyne tandem axle 12 speed grain truck with 16' box and roll tarp, 1995 Timpette tandem axle grain trailer with 2 compartments with electric tarp and hopper openers, 1986 Univision 34' tandem 2 compartment grain trailer, 1986 Univision 17' grain pup trailer, shop built tandem axle grain trailer with hydraulic dump, 2000 Walker 44 SP 90' sprayer with 1200 gallon stainless tank and Outback S2 Auto Steer, 4-BKT 300/95R46 Incrop tires and rims, 4-Tridekon Crop Dividers, Vale MFG Sprayer tire lift, 2004 Brandt SB4000 Suspended Boom 100' PT sprayer with 1600 gallon tank, Chem Handler 1, 2001 52' Seed Hawk 12-52 air drill and 2005 Case IH ADX 3360 air tank with double shoot plus anhydrous sectional control, 2005 Bourgault 7200 60' heavy harrows, 45' Degelman 7645 land roller, 2015 Highline 15' RCH Rotary mower, Schulte Jumbo 320 hydraulic drive rock picker, Anhydrous Pto 261 1450 gallon cart certified, 49' Case IH 5600 cultivator with Morris double harrows, Kellogg Bros 14' tandem off set disc, Willmar tandem axle granular spreader, Farm King 1370 auger with Tridekonteleveer swing attachment, Brandt 5000 EX grain vac with 220 hours, Farm King CX 1051 auger with Kohler engine and mover, Brandt Grainbelt 1545 conveyor & Kohler 30 HP engine, Wheatheart 8-36 auger and Linamar 18 HP engine, Sakundak 7-1200 auger with electric SHP motor, 10' transfer auger with Honda engine, Kwik Clean grain cleaner, Watings 510 grain vac, 2006 Chev 2500 HD crew cab 4WD truck with 6.0 litre gas, 1997 Chev 1500 truck, 18' PJ 620 tandem axle flat deck trailer with 7,000 lbs. axles, Master Tow single axle car dolly, shop built deck over trailer, Ajax hydraulic dump trailer, EnduraPlast 5000 gallon liquid fertilizer tank, 2-1600 gallon poly liquid fertilizer tanks, fuel tanks on stands, slip tank with electric pumps, 300 gallon truck box water tank, shop built engine hoist, Case IH Scout UTV side by side with 156 hours, 1969 Suzuki street bike, Honda 200 ATC, Artic Cat 550 EXT snow machine, Super Brute snow machine, Field Ling yard sprayer, JD push mower, Baltmatic 3PTH grass seeder, Allied 3PTH finishing mower, plus much more!

1998 NH 9682 4WD tractor with 6495 hours, 2007 Case IH 2388 SP combine and Case IH 2015 pickup header with 2636 rotor hours, 2003 Prairie Star 4952 SP swather with 30' Macdon 972 harvester showing 1675 hours, Macdon 960 36' straight cut header with pickup reel and Case IH adapter, steel drum swath roller, 50' Bourgault 8810 seeding tool and Bourgault 5250 air tank with 10" spacing and mid row banders with anhydrous, Degelman 70' Strawmaster 7000 heavy harrow, Schulte RS600 ground drive rock picker, Morris Magnum II 40' cultivator, Chem Handler I, Willmar 90' Eagle SP sprayer with Trimble EZ-Guide 250 GPS and rear duals, 2007 Freightliner Columbia tandem grain truck with 10 speed automatic and Mercedes engine, 1975 GMC 6000 grain truck with 16' steel box, Behlen 2911 hopper bottom grain bin, Westfield MK-100-61 swing auger, Brandt 8-44 grain auger with mover and 23HP Kohler engine, REM 562 grain vac, aeration fans, hog panels & pens, stainless steel feeders, hopper bin with feeder auger, 15' aluminum fishing boat with 50 HP engine, Artic Cat 250 4WD quad, gas powered air compressor, 1000 gallon fuel tank with electric pump, ATV yard sprayer, bumper pull tandem axle stock trailer, plus much more.

# Sask announces \$4 billion irrigation project

Continued from page 25

In making the announcement, Premier Scott Moe and Legislative Secretary Lyle Stewart emphasized the intention is to grow vegetables and corn. Carrots, beets, cabbage, cucumbers and potatoes were all listed.

"You know, so certainly on the side of greenhouse production, we have a wonderful natural gas resource here in the province," said Lewis. "There's lots of it and (it can) provide heating for greenhouses in the winter-time and so on. There's lots of sunlight hours as well. I think we're well positioned now that there's a water source to allow more development of greenhouses and certainly field production and development of a vegetable industry as well.

"We're certainly seeing, with Covid, how it affects

the security side of things and how we rely on foreign sources of vegetables from places like California," Lewis said, adding there are water availability issues in California.

He said, "If you look at some of the developments, the history of irrigated areas and so on, if you look at southern Alberta ... and the industry that that's attracted, be it potato processing or, even things like seed, canola and so on, that has grown in that area. This will make a large part of Saskatchewan able to grow high value crops."

He added there will be opportunities for industrial development and potash mining, too.

Asked what sort of uptake there might be from farmers, Lewis responded, "People are making very good money with irrigated farming. If that water's available and the business lines up, farmers will invest the money.

"It's a great investment for the province and \$4 billion dollars sounds like a lot of money, but I think we'll see the rewards many times over," he said.

Lewis personally farms south of Regina, at Gray, so he won't have the opportunity to tie into this project. But given the chance, would he?

"Absolutely. I think it's a great opportunity. You look at the value, the increased land value when the opportunities are out, in the Lethbridge area, for instance, and the long term build it does for these communities. It's going to be fantastic. It really is a great opportunity. And as I say, this is long overdue.

"You know, more water evaporates from Lake Diefenbaker than is actually used for economic opportunity. It's great they're doing it and I really think we're going to see a long-term reward to the province."

## 30,300 more jobs as Sask reopens

Saskatchewan had one of the strongest rates of job growth in Canada in June

as more of the economy reopened and the province continued its strong recovery

from the impact of the pandemic.

According to job num-

bers released by Statistics Canada today, Saskatchewan saw an increase of 30,300 jobs (seasonally adjusted), or 6.0 per cent, in June compared to May.

Saskatchewan ranked fourth highest in month-to-month job growth slightly ahead of the national average growth rate of 5.8 per cent. Employment in Saskatchewan is now at 92.6 per cent of its pre-COVID February level, ranking third highest employment

recovery of all provinces, ahead of the national average of 90.8 per cent.

"The increase in jobs over the previous month shows significant recovery and indicates that the effects of COVID-19 on the province's labour market are beginning to moderate," Immigration and Career Training Minister Jeremy Harrison said. "As Saskatchewan is working toward a strong economic recovery, we are pleased to

see these positive indicators that show our province is taking the right course of action with the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan."

Saskatchewan's unemployment rate in June was 11.6 per cent (seasonally adjusted), down from 12.5 per cent in May 2020, and below the national average of 12.3 per cent.

Other positive signs of a strong economic recovery include the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) business barometer index for small business confidence showing Saskatchewan with the second highest ranking among provinces at 59.1 points, above the national average of 54.6 points.

Also, in the first half of 2020, Saskatchewan's urban housing starts had the highest year-over-year growth in Western Canada, second highest among all provinces, with an increase of 23.2 per cent, compared to the same period in 2019. Nationally, urban housing starts declined by 6.5 per cent over the same period.



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Kevin Weedmark Editor and Publisher • Kara Kinna Associate Editor  
Richelle Adriaansen Editorial Assistant

Rob Paul • Victor van der Merwe • Shayna Zubko • Ed James • Donna Beutler • Travis Longman Reporters  
Jennifer McMillan • Jacqui Harrison • Samantha McGonigal Design and Layout  
Kim Poole • Josh Deramas Photographers • Cassidy Griemann Student employee

#### Contact us

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