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Voice

VOLUME 7 EDITION 52

THURSDAY,
DECEMBER 29, 2016

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Fun in the snow



Cold weather didn't stop Jeremy Winslow and his kids Willow and Brady from enjoying the perfect snowmobiling conditions in the area earlier this month.

PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT

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Eden CEO bids agency farewell after 35 years

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Eden Health Care Services CEO James Friesen will start off the new year with some new adventures.

Friesen, who has served as the head of the mental health organization for the past nine years, wrapped up his 35 year career with the agency just before Christmas.

"It's a combination of, personally, the place I'm in my life right now, my health, and the health of the organization. And those are all positives," he said. "I've invested a lot of effort and myself into this organization and so I wanted to leave at a time when the organization's strong.

"I didn't want to become that guy where it's, 'Is he ever going to retire?'" Friesen added, laughing. "My mantra's always been that work should be fun and meaningful, and it has been that. Now's just the right time."

Friesen got his start with Eden back in 1981 working as a front line care staffer at the housing program at Linden Place.

"I worked shoulder to shoulder with people who were getting their legs under them in terms of understanding their illness, finding resources in the community, as well as getting their self-confidence back," he said.

As a faith-based organization, Eden was a good fit for Friesen, who had returned to Winkler with his young family after spending a few years away studying at Bible college.

"I wanted to have an opportunity to work in a field that helped me express my own personal faith and values relevant to my work," he said. "I came into the job with basic, fundamental desires to make a difference, to do something meaningful, and to work with people."

He quickly worked his way up the ladder, spending nearly a decade as a program director at Linden Place

before moving over to the fundraising arm of the agency, Eden Foundation, working as its director for another nine years before taking on the CEO role.

"I never got tired of the work I was doing," Friesen said, adding that he's grateful to have been able to take advantage of such varied opportunities within the same organization.

A common theme through all the positions he's held with the agency has been a desire to build connections in the community at large.

"I think what I feel best about is we've been able to build and expand our partnerships in the community," Friesen said. "That is with businesses, with agencies, with government, with Southern Health.

"Southern Health has been incredible. We share a service purchase agreement, so we're delivering services on their behalf for the taxpayer," he explained, "and trying to do that with integrity, with honesty, with transparency."

Eden very much has to straddle the religious and the secular in its attempts to provide quality care while staying true to the values it was



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Eden Health Care Services CEO James Friesen has left the mental health organization after over 35 years of service in a variety of positions.

founded on.

"It's almost a dual citizenship where you're responsible to the faith community because that's our governing body, and we're also delivering services on behalf of the taxpayer," Friesen said. "So we're always chasing down leading practices and developing better models of care."

Through it all, he's always tried to keep the reason for the agency's existence very much top of mind with every decision that needed to be made.

"The strand that's run through the

whole thing has been to always be mindful of who we're working on behalf of," he said. "Not losing sight of the individuals I actually got to know at Linden Place, as an example ... those people changed my life, and those are often the pictures that come to mind."

Friesen said he'll miss his work with Eden, but he's eager to see what opportunities life brings him next.

"I'm open to what the next adventure is going to be," he said. "I want to continue to make a difference."

Morden approves 2017 financial plan

By Lorne Stelmach

The financial plan for the City of Morden in the year ahead will hold the line on municipal taxes while hiking overall spending by a third.

The 2017 financial plan approved by council Dec. 19 accomplishes that by tapping into surplus and reserve funds in order to take on some of its capital projects.

"I think it's pretty solid," Mayor

Ken Wiebe said in offering his take on the budget.

The final tax bills for Morden residents will not be known until into the new year once education levies are set, but the municipal portion charged by the City of Morden will not change.

Holding the line on the mill rate at 18.53 means a residential property valued at \$219,800 will have its municipal taxes remain at \$1,976.80,

while a commercial property valued at \$200,000 will still pay \$2,647.38.

"On average, our municipal mill rate is not onerous," suggested Wiebe, pointing out that it is lower than cities like Portage la Prairie, Dauphin, Neepawa, and Selkirk though higher than Winkler, Steinbach, and Brandon.

Continued on page 4

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We wish you all of God's Blessings in the New Year!

Publisher of the *Winkler Morden Voice*

The Bunker settling into new space

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Bunker will be settling into a new home as 2017 gets underway.

The youth ministry got the keys to their new 4,000 sq. ft. space just steps away from their old one at 545 Industrial Dr. last week.

The expansion to the building The Bunker shares with Central Station will allow the Winkler and District Food Cupboard to move from its home at the edge of town into the space formerly occupied by the youth centre.

"It's a very tight timeline," said executive director Kevin Hildebrand, noting they had to get out of their old space in the middle of the building as soon as work was completed on the new so workers could get started on renovating it for the food bank. "They want the food cupboard functioning in here by Feb. 1." It wasn't a move The Bunker was necessarily looking to make (they only just moved into the facility a little over three years ago) but it is one that will benefit the community, so they're happy to do it.

"The food cupboard definitely needs a better space," Hildebrand said. "Having it more accessible to people who need it in town ... it's going to be bigger for them, it's going to be better."

But the new location does come with some pluses for The Bunker, too.

"When it's all said and done, we'll have an extra 1,200 sq. ft. versus what we're giving up, Hildebrand said. "It also gave us the opportunity to set this up in a different, better layout. With what we moved into [the old space] we were limited to where we could put the stage, where we could put the canteen. And now, because we started totally from scratch, we could say, 'Okay, we want a stage in that end, we want the canteen here.' It's been great."

Perhaps the greatest perk the move brings is The Bunker's very own commercial kitchen.

"We were sharing one with Central Station, which worked for the most

part, but because they've expanded their stuff so much they were using it all the time," Hildebrand said.

"Which is great because that's ultimately what we wanted," he added. That said, having their own kitchen will give the youth centre more freedom in its programming while also benefiting the entire facility. "It'll be great because now they've got a kitchen, we've got a kitchen. So if they happen to need space, we've got it. So that's a big bonus."

All in all, the new Bunker is going to be very much the same as the old.

"When you walk in the vibe is very much the same," Hildebrand said, pointing out they're using the same colour scheme and decor. "The gym area will stay exactly the same, of course—we'll just access it from the other side."

The Bunker's programming, which shut down for the holidays, starts back up again Jan. 9.

That includes the Monday gaming nights, the Tuesday evening program-



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Work on The Bunker's new space at 545 Industrial Dr. was slated to wrap up last week. The Bunker's move into the expansion at Central Station will allow the Winkler Food Cupboard to join the facility.

ming for Gr. 7-10, and the Wednesday activities for teens and young adults in Gr. 9 and up.

"On an average week we have about 100 kids between the three programs," Hildebrand noted, stressing the programs focus on building meaningful relationships with potentially at-risk youth.

"All we can do is be open and available and hopefully they see us as a place that they can come to for whatever it is that they need," he said.

It's very much a safe space where teens can simply be themselves and find a sympathetic ear when they need it.

"Sometimes they just want a place just to be without having to wear a

mask or a smile all the time or pretend that they're feeling good," said Hildebrand. "They come because they appreciate the fact that they can come in here, sit down, and a volunteer will come and sit down with them."

The centre is hoping to expand their reach with some new programs in the year ahead, including one that will take advantage of the new kitchen.

"Because we have that kitchen space now, we'd really love to do a youth cooking program," said Hildebrand. "We've started talking to some people about getting that going."

The Bunker is also gearing up for its fourth mission trip to its sister facility

Continued on page 6

Morden on the right track for the future: Wiebe

By Lorne Stelmach

The emphasis for Morden's Mayor Ken Wiebe continues to be sustainable growth that meets short term needs while also planning ahead for the long term.

In a year-end interview, Wiebe suggested the city is doing well with about three to four per cent growth annually—a level he feels the community can sustain.

"We believe we're on the right track," he said. "We're not just working for today ... we're planning for the future ... we're looking at 10, 15 years down the road."

The past year was at times a bit rocky for council, but Wiebe suggested there have been significant accomplishments in 2016.

It started off rough with the introduction of the new waste collection system and some controversy surrounding the decision to contract with Municipal Waste Management over longtime local contractor Pembina Valley Containers.

"It got ugly ... but the majority of the citizens ended up actually open to discussion ... there were some, of course ... they had their minds made up," said Wiebe. "It got off to a rocky start ... they were upset with the fact that we had chosen to go with a different contractor.

"They make us stewards of the finances for the city," he continued.

"In the end ... there was a total turnaround after people gave it an opportunity to work. Looking back, could we have done some things differently? We could have done some informational stuff differently."

The new program for the collection of waste, recycling, and compost has proven quite successful, with over 800 metric tonnes of organic items composted and an estimated reduction of about 45 per cent in material going to the landfill.

"And we can do more. I personally believe that zero landfill is possible ... we're not going to get there in two or three or four years," said Wiebe. "We're going to have to get some of the industry on board. We have some that are participating now ... but it can go further."

Another significant accomplishment in 2016 was seeing a united front from municipalities to press the province for better municipal legislation, including a review of the Municipal Act.

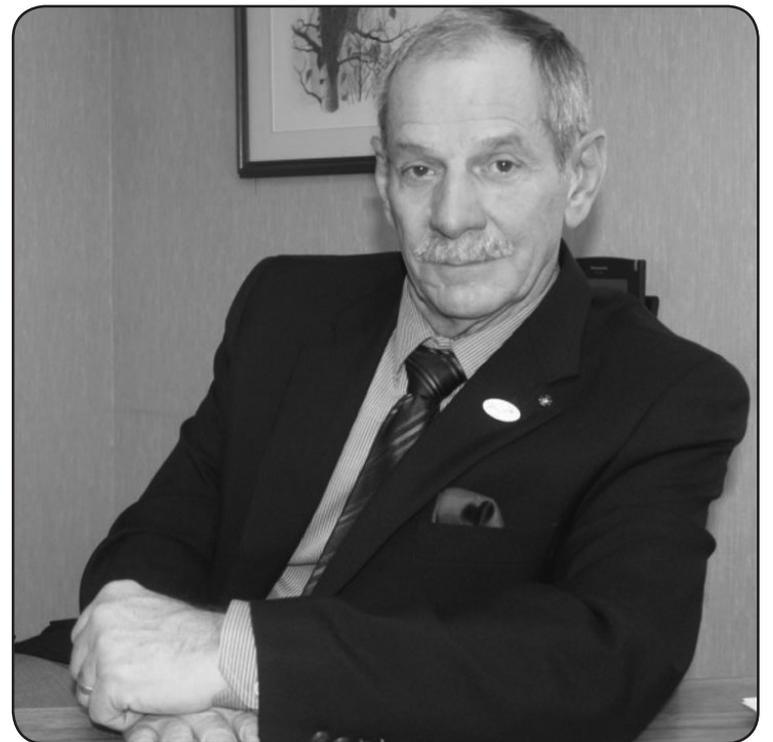
"The Municipal Act governs everything that we do. It is the rules by which municipal council operates," Wiebe stressed. "The Municipal Act hasn't been reviewed in 20 years."

Wiebe also cited Morden's continued successful efforts to promote immigration to the community as a highlight of the year, with about 70 new international families making Morden home over the past 12 months.

He estimates the city receives as

Morden Mayor Ken Wiebe says he believes the community is on the right track for sustainable levels of growth in the future.

PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE



many as 300 inquiries a week from potential future Mordenites, but they focus on attracting newcomers not only with a greater chance of success but who are also more likely to put down roots here.

"We are looking at folks who are entrepreneurial, who have the ability to sustain themselves," he said. "The people who we bring ... we want to set them up for success, not for failure ... and we are at about an 85 per cent retention rate."

Recalling the August storm that caused significant damage around the community, Wiebe said another important initiative was developing an inventory of trees in the city.

"It gives us an opportunity to see what's happening with our urban

forest," he said.

He also cited the long-term benefit that will result from the city developing an asset management plan that will give them better control over everything owned, operated, and maintained by the city.

"It inventories everything that the city owns ... in the ground, above the ground ... it gives you an opportunity to manage all of these different things ... and to plan financially to do those things," he said.

Looking ahead, Wiebe said working with the City of Winkler and the RM of Stanley towards a regional wastewater treatment plant is one of the biggest priority projects.

"If the funding is approved, we'll start construction."

> MORDEN FINANCIAL PLAN, FROM PG. 2

Wiebe said using surplus and reserve funds makes sense because they have been building up with a number of priority projects now eyed by the city including reconstruction of First Street and changes on Hwy. 3 near the east entrance to the community.

"We need to do stuff ... the money was given to us, particularly the gas tax funding ... to do capital projects within the community," Wiebe explained. "We have enough built up now that we can actually do that.

"A lot of these reserve funds were put in place to do the projects we're doing ... like First Street ... it needs to be done, we put money away to do that," he continued, noting that "the First Street reconstruction is not a one year job. It'll be a two year minimum, possibly going into a third year. It depends on how much rework we have to do."

Looking further ahead, the mayor didn't see tap-

ping into reserve funds necessarily having an impact in 2018, though he suggested "spending will probably be down a little bit because we wouldn't want to tap into a whole bunch more."

The \$34 million capital budget also identifies the regional wastewater treatment plant as a potential project with a \$30 million impact for the Morden, though only if funding falls into place from other levels of government.

"It is the biggest project the city has ever had to undertake," Wiebe said.

There are another \$4.5 million in capital projects identified, with big ticket items including \$1.6 million for reconstruction of Hwy. 3 at LaVerendrye, \$500,000 for the First Street project, and \$300,000 for other paving.

The 2017 budget is set at over \$15.7 million for 2017 compared to a 2016 budget of \$11.7 million.

Total net revenue from municipal taxes increases

by half a per cent to just over \$4.9 million, while other revenue sources will generate an additional 27 per cent to over \$4.9 million.

Just over \$3 million of that additional revenue comes through the transfer of reserve funds, while other revenue sources are projected to increase from about \$3.9 million to \$4.9 million.

The city projects provincial government grants to double to about \$1.5 million along with another \$1.3 million in annual provincial municipal tax sharing.

Other significant revenue sources include almost \$800,000 through recreation services and programs, \$261,000 from the Morden beach, and \$233,000 more in added taxes.

On the expenditure side, community services account for about 20 per cent of the budget at just over \$3.1 million, a 15 per cent increase.

Plenty of highlights for Winkler in 2016

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The year 2016 has been such a banner year in Winkler that Mayor Martin Harder struggles with where to start when sharing his highlights.

"When I look back at 2016, I don't know of a year in the last 10 years where so many things that we have been working on as a community ... all of a sudden we have a year where it all comes together," he said.

High on the list, of course, are the Buhler Active Living Centre and the Winkler Arts and Culture Centre, two projects that had long gestation periods and which saw their doors finally open in 2016.

The city has also seen great strides made in the development of its Roblin Blvd. industrial park.

"Looking at our industrial park and looking at the expansion of Roblin Blvd. East and the 12 some property sales that have taken place there in 2016, buildings that are already up and more to come, those are just absolutely huge pluses," Harder said, pointing to projects like Icon Technologies' purchase of 17 acres for a 100,000 square foot new facility.

The city's plan, he added, has always been to grow the industrial park responsibly.

"Our philosophy in Winkler has always been ... to own industrial property in order to sell industrial property and develop it as the sales go forward," Harder said. "So it's not sitting there empty. And once we start developing the property, we have a return, and that to me is important. We're not going and borrowing money to expand the industrial park."

Speaking of local industry, Harder said that, despite the necessity of recent layoffs and workshares at some companies, overall the manufacturing sector remains quite strong in Winkler.

Many businesses are expanding into markets right across North America, he said, pointing in example to the sight of a major piece of fracking equipment made by FB Industries heading down to Texas recently, while Ironmen Industries is working on building a snow buggy for a tourism company up in Churchill.

"It was just two days ago I saw this thing going to Texas and now I see this going to Churchill," Harder said. "You look at the significance in the world in terms of little Winkler, right?"

"ALL OF A SUDDEN WE HAVE A YEAR WHERE IT ALL COMES TOGETHER."

It's huge.

"And I'm just highlighting these two—there are many more that are doing great things," he added. "We are strategically located in the centre of Canada where you can go east and west, north and south and hit marketplaces that are readily available and giving us an opportunity right here in this region to be able to continue to expand and to become a service centre for all of Canada and the U.S., for that matter."

The mayor's 2016 highlight reel also includes homegrown NHL player Eric Fehr bringing home the Stanley Cup last summer, the new traffic lights finally getting switched on at the corner of Hwy. 32 and Pembina Ave. earlier this month, and getting the ball rolling on Winkler's Safer Communities Initiative.

That last project seeks to tackle the root issues of crime in our community in part by better connecting local social services and programs.

"That was huge and it is continuing

After one of the city's most successful years ever, Mayor Martin Harder is eager to get to work on the many projects underway for Winkler in 2017.

PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/ VOICE



to be developed," Harder said, noting it's bringing an unprecedented number of community agencies together to work toward a common cause. "I think it's going to make a huge difference."

BIG PLANS FOR 2017

Looking ahead to 2017, Harder says work will continue on projects like the new regional wastewater treatment facility.

It's expected the design and engineering phase should wrap up by next summer, with construction hopefully getting started within the next two years.

"It is our impression that funding for the next phase is going to be readily available ... the province and the feds understand that this is somewhat of an urgent situation because of the capacity of our lagoons and the failure to be able to expand," Harder explained.

The city also continues to lay the groundwork for the Meridian Exhibi-

tion Centre, the major expansion to the Winkler Recreation Complex that has been in development for several years now.

"I realize that process is a little slow, but taxpayers need to understand that the reason it's slow is because we don't want to burden them with an overly burdensome tax bill in order to build a facility that the community's going to struggle to maintain," said Harder. "We need to do it right, we need to have the right partners in place."

The expansion, which is awaiting funding commitments from upper levels of government before further progress can be made, has hit a bit of a snag when it comes to securing the land currently owned by the Stanley Agricultural Society.

"My greatest disappointment is, in fact, the Stanley Ag. Society's inability to make a decision," Harder said candidly.

Continued on page 7

Festival grant will help visitors find their way

By Lorne Stelmach

A provincial grant will help people more easily find their way around the Corn and Apple Festival.

The festival is receiving \$8,550 in funding through the Manitoba Star Attractions Star Celebrations Enhancement Grant program.

"It's a non-profit organization ... so every little bit counts," Dale Stambuski, president of the festival board, said on the importance of receiving any and all funding like this.

The money will be used to provide for signage at each street corner

along the festival route throughout downtown Morden. The signs will include maps to help direct people and other information related to the festival and the community, as well as key telephone numbers.

"There will be four sides to them so everyone can see ... there will be maps of where things are from that area," said Stambuski. "It's just to provide a bit more detailed information for the visitors coming to the festival."

The Corn & Apple was among seven organizations to receive a share of grants totalling just over \$80,000.

Growth, Enterprise and Trade Minister Cliff Cullen said investments in programs like the Star Attractions and Star Celebrations "help shape experiences that exemplify the best of Manitoba."

"We are committed to supporting groups that improve our province's brand, increase the number of visitors to Manitoba, and uncover our greatest experiences for everyone to enjoy," he said.

The provincial government has increased grants for tourism marketing and development by \$3.4 million for 2016-17.

The *Winkler Morden*
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Just sit back and enjoy the ride

When I was a kid and we would have the opportunity in school to choose captains for various teams, sometimes we would gather together secretly and decide to put someone we felt was absolutely ridiculous into the position so we could sit back, smug in our private manipulations, and watch the damage unfold.

It was a cruel game, but then children can often be cruel. These days the same game is played by an internet culture that likes to hijack well-meaning projects like allowing the public to name a scientific vessel and ending up with the HMS Boaty McBoatface or the like. Funny? Absolutely. Juvenile? In the extreme.

Sometimes it feels like this is where we have landed in the west as a culture. We have become so isolated in our own heads, so bored and disenfranchised with the established order, that we have reached a point of playing societal Russian roulette with the mentality that "it can't get any worse ... let's see what happens."

> BUNKER, FROM PG. 3

in Puerto Rico.

Hildebrand will be bringing a group of Winkler kids there for two weeks in July to see the progress made on the youth centre.

These biennial mission trips serve as a valuable experience for the local kids who go on them.

"Perspective is huge. They go down there and they realize very quickly how much they have here," Hildebrand said, adding it also gives the youth the opportunity to give back in a meaningful way.

Take the recent American election as an example. A strategically large portion of the electorate decided it would be fun to place live hand grenade Donald Trump in the Oval Office.

When your biggest cheerleaders on the global stage are white supremacists (ironically in a fit of political correctness called the Alt-right), Russian dictator (he really is) Vladimir Putin, and North Korea's Kim Jong Un you might need to ask yourself some serious questions.

In Canada this has given rise to serious consideration of Kellie Leitch and Kevin O'Leary as leaders of the Conservative Party, two people who looked south and liked what they saw and decided, "Hey, I can be a live hand grenade as much as the next person.

And to what by now should be our utter non-surprise, their ideas are being embraced by large numbers of people.

Even the British thought it would be fun to see what would happen if they voted to leave the European Union. Guess what they learned the next morning, to their shock? They have to leave the E.U.

Now don't think this is going to be a rant against conservative right-wing thinking. Folks on the left have contributed significantly to this place we are now in as well. Democrats in the

United States and Liberals in Canada presented Barack Obama and Justin "Pierre resurrected" Trudeau as some kind of messiahs ready to save us all from ourselves.

What our neighbours to the south got was a cold dose of reality like a wet rag in the face after eight years of Obama with little of the "hope" he campaigned on.

Meanwhile Canadians are a year into the Trudeau version of "hope" branded "sunny ways" and things are feeling suspiciously like the old ways we seem so desperate to escape.

This leaves us, the audience, in a place where no matter where we turn we feel like we are getting one side or the other of a two-faced coin. In this scenario we become a little crazy and decide, not unlike the Joker in Batman, to make certain electoral decisions and sit back to watch the world burn. This is neither a good nor healthy place to be, although it is certainly self-destructive.

What is the solution? Personally it would be refreshing if we had a genuinely centrist perspective—neither extremely left nor right. Extremes are for extremists and extremists are dangerous, always. It would also be nice if elected leaders actually followed through on their promises (or stopped making them).

But this is neither here nor there because we have a good (?) four years until federal elections wreak havoc on our collective consciousness again.

In the meantime, sit back and try to enjoy the ride.



By Peter Cantelon

Letter policy

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fication purposes. Your name and city will be published with your letter. We do not print anonymous letters.

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RM working to manage growth

By Lorne Stelmach

The ongoing challenge for the Rural Municipality of Stanley is managing the region's continued strong growth.

Reeve Morris Olafson feels the municipality did well with that this past year and he aims to keep that up in the year ahead.

"We see ourselves as the caretakers of the RM, and we are doing so to the best of our abilities," he said in a year-end interview.

Olafson noted roads, drainage, and public works continue to be the big ticket items at about 50 per cent of their budget, or about \$3.2 million dollars spent annually.

He noted some major rainfall this past summer has put a strain on the RM's drainage systems.

"One single event caused water to run over the roads in over 90 places," said Olafson. "Our crews worked long hours, and we've been able to repair the damage in most areas. The remaining areas are a priority for repair in 2017."

Olafson said the municipality is halfway through a four year paving program that is geared at main routes in the villages.

"We hope to complete phase three in the southeast portion of Reinfeld in 2017," he said, noting it is a partnership with support from the province. "Council's goal is to continue the paving program, making it available to other villages in the years ahead."

With over 400 miles of roads, 12 communities, and an estimated population of around 9,000 people, the task of maintaining all the roads is no small thing.

"We live in a very busy area with our roads seeing a tremendous amount of heavy traffic," Olafson said, pointing out that the traffic counts on some roads exceed 1,800 vehicles per day. "Which on a gravel road means a tremendous amount of maintenance. We realize that a large percentage of our population needs to travel into the two cities."

Olafson said council is quite happy with the continued growth of the municipality.

He noted there had been over 140 building permits issued in the RM as of October, including 41 for new single family homes and four new commercial buildings. The value of all that construction comes in close to \$18 million.

"WE SEE OURSELVES AS THE CARETAKERS OF THE RM, AND WE ARE DOING SO TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITIES."

"These numbers are encouraging ... people continue to invest and build in our community."

On the regional side, Olafson stressed that working closely with both Morden and Winkler remains a priority, with the main project right now being working towards a regional wastewater treatment plant.

"This is something that you plan for 10 to 20 years in to the future and make investment decisions now," he said. "There is a good amount of money that a project like this requires ... as we plan for the future, I feel we are doing the right thing."

Olafson also pointed out that the RM continues to support and be involved with a number of projects, facilities, and organizations that are important



RM OF STANLEY PHOTO
Reeve Morris Olafson says infrastructure will be a focus of 2017 in the RM of Stanley.

to the community—everything from the health care facilities to libraries, veterinary services, and care centres like Tabor Home, Salem Home, and the Buhler Active Living Centre.

He concluded with appreciation for all of the municipal staff for their hard work.

"It takes good people to run this RM, and we do have a great and caring staff that are on the front lines making the municipality a safe and good place to live and work."

> REC. CENTRE EXPANSION, FROM PG. 5

The mayor said the city has been in discussions with the society for some time now, including making an offer above the assessed value of the land, but it's been to no avail.

"We have been very fair and we have been very patient, but our patience has been running out," he said, noting the society in recent months has repeatedly put off giving the city an answer on its offer to purchase

Council sent them a letter earlier this month setting Jan. 13 as a final deadline when they'd like a response of some kind.

"The next step is expropriation," Harder said. "But there's no need for expropriation ... they have already said they want to sell it, that's not the issue. They just can't make up their mind. And part of it is because they don't know what their future needs to look like ... and that is not our fault."

Harder calls this issue a minor "bump in the road" on the way to the project's completion, as it will be resolved one way or another in the months to come.

"This is one of the building blocks which is foundational to this project," he said. "And all of the reports that

we have done, it shows that this is where it needs to be."

Once the land issue is settled and assuming government funding can be secured, Winkler could see headway made on the new rec. centre soon.

"If we all of the sudden get the

funding and we get the land issue resolved, who knows, it could be 2017, could be 2018," the mayor said.

With these and many other developments also on the horizon, Harder firmly believes the future is very bright for the community.

"I would say Winkler is growing at

an ideal pace in a structured fashion that doesn't put undue pressure on the taxpayer," he stressed. "We have such a great balance of industry and commercial and residential development ... we're very well positioned for future growth."

Stanley Ag. Society responds

We reached out to the Stanley Agricultural Society for a response to Mayor Martin Harder's comments about the frustrations the city has had when it comes to purchasing the society's land in the Parkland area for the Meridian Exhibition Centre project.

Below is the statement provided to us via email by the society's new board chair, Toban Dyck:

"The Stanley Agricultural Society is a volunteer-run organization. Its board was elected to act in the best interest of the society, which, in this case, means taking the requisite time to make the best possible decision for the longevity of a group that is integral to this community.

"Negotiations have been slow. There have been mis-

communications. There have been setbacks.

"The society is in the process of finishing its own appraisal of its land. But, more importantly, the society is in the throes of finding available land in the R.M. We need to know that the value we're getting for our land in the heart of Winkler is enough for us to purchase attractive property elsewhere—property that will allow us to thrive, grow programming, and better serve our membership.

"If it comes to expropriation, neither the society nor the city control the outcome. It's not ideal.

The society's future looks bright, and we'd like to be in control of it as best we can."

Katie's Cottage off to a fine start

By Ashleigh Viveiros

For Ruth Reimer, the story that best sums up the work they're doing at Katie's Cottage is that of a wife who stayed with them while her husband received treatment at Boundary Trails Health Centre.

"She was here for at least three weeks and her husband was in this one room at the hospital," Reimer says, gesturing to the medical centre located across the road from the respite home. "Every night she could stand here on the porch and wave to him good night and he could see her and wave good night back."

That connection is what Katie's Cottage is all about.

"That's what we're hearing from guests, that the person that's in the hospital is not as stressed because they know that their

loved one is just across the street, not having to drive far, and that they're safe and they have a good place to stay," Reimer says.

It's a weight off for the caregivers as well.

"Just the security of knowing that you're close at hand. That, to me, is huge," says Reimer. "We've been that beacon, that lighthouse for people, and that's been great."

Katie's Cottage has been up and running since early August. Since then they've welcomed an increasing number of guests, starting with just 13 rentals those first few weeks and jumping to 74 in September, 134 in October, and 100 in November.

Reimer says they're seeing guests

come from all across southern Manitoba and beyond—from places as far away as Estevan, The Pas, and Kenora.

She stresses that the home is not just for parents of children admitted to the hospital, but anyone who doesn't want to be too far away from a loved one who is a patient there.

"We've had palliative, maternity, dialysis, surgery, emergency. It's just all over the map."

While overnight rentals in the cottage's eight guest rooms continues to increase, the facility also hopes to see more people make use of them as a place to take a break from the hospital, even if they don't need to spend the night.

"Anybody that is across that street can come in for coffee," Reimer says. "We want people to know we're here and they're invited. Coffee's always on."

The building has several rooms where visi-

tors can put their feet up and relax, either in the company of others in the living room or dining spaces, or in one of the more private areas like the library or the meeting room.

"They can feel that they're at home here," Reimer says. "We give them as much space as they need."

It's certainly preferable to spending hours on end at the hospital, says Helen Harder, who stopped by earlier this month for coffee and company while her husband underwent physiotherapy treatment.

"This beats the waiting room," she says, adding it was too cold of a day to drive home to Winkler while waiting for her husband to finish.

"It's a beautiful space," Harder says.



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Helen Harder (far left) stopped by Katie's Cottage recently while her husband received treatment at the hospital. It gave her the chance to enjoy a cup of coffee and a chat with the respite home's Lynne Penner (centre) and Ruth Reimer. "Coffee's always on," Reimer says.

"A lot of people think that it's like Ronald McDonald House where it's just kids. But it's for everybody ... and it's not really just for overnighters, either."

A LEARNING CURVE

The first four months of operation have been a learning experience for the staff and volunteers at Katie's Cottage.

"It's been a good learning curve, though not as steep as I thought it would be," says Reimer, noting they've fine-tuned a lot of the behind-the-scenes details to make the operation run more smoothly.

"We've also learnt an awful lot about ourselves, about the community, about people in general," she adds. "How kind, how caring they are, and how appreciative they are of this place and what it has done."

The cottage currently has three paid staff members (their wages are cov-

ered by the \$45/night room rentals) working alongside about 45 volunteers who do everything from basic cleaning to baking to simply providing a listening ear when it's needed.

"Our volunteers are the backbone of Katie's Cottage," Reimer says. "They really do have a love for being here."

Looking to the future, Katie Cares hopes to get a safer walking path put in between the house and the hospi-

tal next year. Also on the to-do list is paving the parking lot and installing a patio space with a gazebo to provide another area of relaxation for guests.

Reimer expects they're going to need it as demand for their services continues to grow.

"I think as it gets more known it will get even busier," she says,

pointing out that they've already had several nights where every single room was booked, though they've been fortunate in that they haven't yet had to turn someone away.

"We're just seeing a little bit of the potential so far," she says. "We're so lucky that we have this place here ... it has fulfilled a need that has been long needed in this area."

If you'd like to help out Katie's Cottage, they are always accepting financial donations and can also use donations of things like non-perishable food, toiletries, and even pyjamas for people who find themselves staying there unexpectedly after a medical emergency.

For more information on Katie Cares and Katie's Cottage, find them online at katiecares.ca.

"THEY CAN FEEL THEY'RE AT HOME HERE."

"WE'RE JUST SEEING A LITTLE BIT OF THE POTENTIAL SO FAR."



The respite home across from BTHC has seen an increasing number of guests since opening in August.

Chamber Elf winners claim their prizes

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Two local shoppers got a pretty big Christmas gift last week after successfully tracking down the Winkler Chamber Elf.

The chamber's second annual Elf on the Shelf campaign hid the little elf doll at 12 stores in Winkler throughout November and December. Shoppers who found him were entered into a draw to win one of two prize packages full of gift cards and products from the participating businesses.

Last week, winners Lillian Nickel and Leonard Wiebe stopped by the chamber offices to pick up their prizes.

"I found him in many places ... inside helmets, in water bottles. I found it in ovens, I found it in a Christmas tree," Nickel said, noting she went to several stores looking for the elf. "A lot of places that I went to anyway, but it did get me to a few new places that I wouldn't normally have gone."

"I live in Plum Coulee, so if I would

be in Winkler I figured, well, let's just go and see where the elf is."

Nickel says she'll certainly be looking for the Chamber Elf again next year.

"Definitely! You could always win two years in a row, right?"

For his part, Wiebe lucked out by finding the elf at just one location he happened to be shopping at anyway, and that entry proved to be the winner.

"Just the one: Country Cycle," the Mordenite said. "My brother told me that it was going to be there ... it was pretty well hidden in a water bottle."

Chamber executive director Tanya Chateaufeuf says the campaign was an even bigger success this year than it was in its inaugural run last Christmas.

"We had way more entries this year than last ...

"IT DID GET ME TO A FEW NEW PLACES THAT I WOULDN'T NORMALLY HAVE GONE."

I would probably say at least double the entries this year," she said, adding they tried to get the word out about which store the elf was in each day as much as they could. "We tried to make it as visible as possible."

Many people set out to find the elf at every location he was at, which



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

The Winkler chamber's Tanya Chateaufeuf (far left) and Dianne Friesen (far right) presented the Elf on the Shelf winners Lillian Nickel and Leonard Wiebe with their prizes last week.

meant businesses saw an increase in foot traffic in the weeks leading up to Christmas—exactly what the shop local campaign was aiming for.

"I think that a good number of the businesses that participated really, really got a lot out of it," Chateaufeuf said, sending her thanks out to everyone, business and shopper alike, who participated.

The Chamber Elf will definitely be back next year, she added.

"Totally. This is just such a fun way to connect with people in the community and hopefully it's doing what it's supposed to do, and that's really drawing people into the retail businesses ... have fun shopping and just a little bit of an extra special experience while they're in the stores."

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PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Youth in the Active Start program for ages two to six enjoyed a variety of games and activities along with their parents earlier this month as the first session of the new Special Olympics programming in Morden concluded in 2016 run. The weekly sessions start up again in the new year.

Special O programs a hit

By Lorne Stelmach

Travis Penner is seeing the impact of having a Special Olympics program running again in Morden.

He sees it each week in his son, Easton, who has been going to the Active Start program for younger kids.

"He absolutely loves it. He looks forward to it every Thursday ... he's talking about gym night," Penner said as the first 12 week session wrapped up just before Christmas.

Penner believes his son is benefitting greatly not only from being with kids who are at a similar developmental stage, but also from the intangibles that come with the skills development aspect of the program.

"He gains confidence from the things that he learns, and it's a bit of a social aspect for him as well," he said.

About a dozen young athletes signed up for the new programs this fall, including Active Start for ages two to six and FUNdamentals geared to ages seven to 12.

Organizers with Special Olympics Manitoba hope that they may be able to expand to an older age group as well in the future.

For now, though, hour-long Active Start and FUNdamentals sessions have been offered Thursday evenings at the Morden Alliance Church. The sessions are slated to begin again in January.

Active Start program leader Angela Wall said she feels the program has been very



well received so far.

"I'm seeing such growth in them already," said Wall, who agreed progressing with basic skills like throwing and jumping has an impact in building the kids' confidence.

"They're feeling like they are part of a community. This has given them somewhere they can go and belong."

Wall added it is also a good support for the families, as parents are not only involved at the sessions themselves but are also given things they can work on with their children at home

"These kids come running in every week just excited to see what we're going to do next," she said. "They're happy to be here ... excited to be here ... so happy and positive. They're really resilient and try to do everything you ask."

FUNdamentals program leader Courtney Yeo said her sessions bring kids a little further along in their skills.

"It's just really working to further develop any skills that they do have," she said, adding that they also get more into some game play and specific sports like soccer or baseball.

"When they first started they were very shy and quiet and kept to themselves," Yeo said. "Now, I think ... they've formed friendships ... they come in and they start running around right away."

"They're happy to be here ... and with their movements and their progress ... you can see it," she added. "They're building their confidence because they know they can do this here with kids who are at their ability level. Their confidence and self esteem is just so much higher because they get this extra practice, and they know they can do it."

Learn more about Special Olympics programming online at www.specialolympics.mb.ca.

"THEY COME RUNNING IN EVERY WEEK JUST EXCITED TO SEE WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO NEXT."



get informed

NEWS > VIEWS > WINKLER > MORDEN > SURROUNDING AREAS

Coulee active living centre aiming for 2017 start

By Lorne Stelmach

Plum Coulee is well on its way towards realizing the dream of having a new community centre.

Planning has gone well so far for the proposed active living centre, which organizers believe will be able to move to the construction phase in the year ahead.

"We are calling this the Plum Coulee age-friendly facility because it's a facility built for all ages," said planning committee member Heather Unger.

"We're a very young community, so building an actual senior centre doesn't make a whole lot of sense ... we're kind of looking for a place a bit more active, a bit different than your average senior centre."

They see the new centre as a Canada 150 project for the community. Thus far, the committee has raised about \$100,000 towards the building.

"We basically started in May, so we're pretty happy with those numbers," said Unger.

"It's been a lot of local people com-

ing up and pledging," she noted, although the project has also received a couple \$20,000 grants, including one from the Thomas Sill Foundation.

"We got some special fundraising dinners planned for the winter ... we're just in the planning stage for those right now," Unger said, adding they estimate they'll need at least \$200,000 in place in order to move ahead with construction.

The idea of the active living centre was brought to the community last November at a public meeting that discussed the need to replace the aging senior centre building.

Given the average age of Plum Coulee residents is now around 26 years, the suggestion was that the centre be a facility that could interest and involve people of a wider age range and who are more active.

One option put forward was to build a new facility on the current senior centre location. Another location suggested was the town's old municipal office, which has become available as a result of the municipal merger with the RM of Rhineland.

"WE'RE KIND OF LOOKING FOR A PLACE A BIT MORE ACTIVE, A BIT DIFFERENT THAN YOUR AVERAGE SENIOR CENTRE."

The prevailing idea that came out of that first public meeting was that funding would be better put towards building new rather than renovating existing space, with a consensus favouring a larger facility.

Today, the issue of the location of this new centre still remains somewhat in the air.

"That isn't even completely clear yet," Unger said. "The first goal is for a

new build on the same location as the current centre ... if we cannot pull off the fundraising that we need to do for a new build, we still have the backup plan of renovating the municipal office, which is, since amalgamation, not in complete use anymore."

"We'll be needing to make some decisions probably early into the new year, so we will be making those decisions soon."

Legends Seeds manager named to Municipal Board

By Lorne Stelmach

An important provincial authority will be headed up by someone with a local connection.

Jeff Berezka, a business development manager with Legend Seeds Canada in Winkler, has been named the new chair of the Manitoba Municipal Board.

The Portage la Prairie resident was appointed along with five other new members by Indigenous and Municipal Relations Minister Eileen Clarke.

Berezka, who was a member of Portage la Prairie city council from 2006 to 2010 and a candidate for mayor in 2010, called it a great honour to serve and work with municipalities across the province.

"It's something that's very near and dear to my heart," he said, noting his past experience with the board through his municipal role.

"I hope that we can make a difference. Hopefully we can help some municipalities out by maybe shortening that process or helping them with some of their decisions. I hope to be able to help with some of my business experience."

Berezka comes to the position having also served on a number of other boards in the Portage area including in the areas of recreation, economic development, and the community foundation, and he helped spearhead the community's recreation complex project.

Continued on page 12

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arts & culture

New classes starting up at Winkler, Morden art galleries

By Lorne Stelmach

Engaging their communities in the arts is a significant role for the galleries in Morden and Winkler.

With that in mind, both arts centres are offering a new slate of classes and workshops in the new year as well as interesting new exhibits.

"We try to find a variety of things to reach people in different ways ... we're trying to do things that are not all the same," said Margie Hildebrand, program and outreach coordinator for the Pembina Hills Arts Council in Morden.

"We have a lot of one evening workshop classes that we're planning for the new year," noted Wendy Klassen, director of Winkler Arts and Culture. "There hasn't really been anything

like that for Winkler. Morden has had it for a long time ... but a lot of people from Winkler wouldn't necessarily go over there to see what's going on."

The Winkler gallery will also feature the *Faces of Winkler* exhibition starting Jan. 11.

The project focuses on 12 people who have had an impact on the community in some way.

"Those people were paired with an artist and a photographer. Each artist and each photographer will represent this face ... in whatever artistic form that they want," said Klassen, adding they will also include a brief write-up on each person for some background.

That will be followed in February by an exhibition that will tie in with Winkler's first Comic Con, and then March will feature a members exhi-

bition entitled *Inspirations* with artists paying tribute to those who have inspired them.

The centre will also be offering after school art classes for kids starting in January. Explore with Paint for ages 10-14 starts Jan. 11 and then a mixed media session for K-9 begins Jan. 12.

Beginning Jan. 9 is the eight-week Art Sense course for adults offering introductory or intermediate instruction in art basics.

In addition, every Saturday is Family Day at the gallery, with the doors open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Meanwhile, the Pembina Hills Arts Council introduces a new program called Creative Play Date for parents and their pre-school children aged three to five in January.

Taking place at the Access Event

Centre Wednesday mornings starting Jan. 18, Hildebrand said they hope it will help involve and interest more people in the arts.

"We try to provide programming for all age groups ... it's part of our mandate," she said. "We had wanted to do something for pre-school ... this is something new that we're trying out."

Other workshops and classes in January range from the Art Academy with a focus on ceramics to pottery sessions for both introductory and intermediate levels.

Exhibitions kick off in the new year with a January show presenting the work of Minnewasta School early years art students. February then will feature the Grey Elephant LGBT+ exhibit, followed in March by work from Brenna George and Barb Wiebe.

Morden Festival of the Arts entry deadline Jan. 26

By Lorne Stelmach

The new year will once again have Morden's young talent preparing for their moment in the spotlight.

The Morden Festival of the Arts is gearing up for the 42nd year of one of the largest festivals in rural Manitoba.

"For a rural festival, our numbers are right up there ahead of a lot of other communities," said festival spokesperson Erika Dyck. "It has stayed steady ... for as long as I've been involved, we've had well over 500 entries every year."

The festival aims to foster and promote continued interest, growth, and development of the arts in Morden. It provides a venue for student performance, instruction and adjudication in the areas of strings, vocal and choral, French and English speech arts, and piano.

"It gives our young people a chance to perform. They spend a lot of time practicing their disciplines, especially in the music," said Dyck. "It's good to give them an opportunity to perform for really good adjudicators from across the province. It can really give them a lot of confidence to be able to perform in front of people."

The festival's schedule for 2017 has strings, sacred music, and piano ses-

sions in March followed by speech arts, vocal, and the concluding highlights concert in April.

Entry forms are available at local school offices as well as the Morden Library and the festival website. Piano, sacred and strings registrations are generally done through students' music teachers.

Jan. 19 is the postmarked deadline for submission of entry forms by mail. Entries can also be turned in Jan. 25 at Maple Leaf School, Jan. 25-26 at Minnewasta School, and Jan. 26

at École Morden Middle School for Morden Collegiate students as well. Jan. 26 is the final deadline for all festival entries.

For information about the different class names and numbers for each discipline, the festival's syllabus is available at the school libraries and the Morden Library. Copies of the speech arts selections are available at each of the school libraries.

Anyone interested in assisting in individual sessions can call volunteer coordinator Marlene Britton at 204-

822-5794.

For general information about the Morden Festival of the Arts, check out its website at www.mordenfestivalofthearts.cfsites.org or contact Dyck at 204-822-6825.

Dyck urges the community to come enjoy the performances, as well.

"We would love for people to come out and watch some of the disciplines and see the kids perform. And if they want to be involved in volunteering with the festival, we would love to have them for that as well."

> MUNICIPAL BOARD, FROM PG. 11

He has also worked closely with the minister in the past through the local council in Gladstone.

"The Manitoba Municipal Board plays an important role in the province's land-use planning system," Clarke said in a news release, adding "members make decisions that directly affect Manitobans."

The Manitoba Municipal Board is a quasi-judicial tribunal whose members sit to hear applications, appeals and referrals related to various pieces of legislation, including the Manitoba Municipal Act, Municipal As-

essment Act, and the Planning Act.

The new board has 21 members. Previous board chair, Marie Elliott of Winnipeg, will remain as a mentor, while vice-chair Lori Lavoie of Winnipeg will continue on in that role.

The other new board members include Elisabeth Saftiuk, a city planner from Brandon, Denise Carlyle of Sandy Hook, a retired provincial civil servant, Kathryn Jasienczyk of Neepawa, a director with the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation, Steven Lupky of Winnipeg, a former councillor for the Town of Arborg,

and Anne Appleby of Steinbach, a dairy farmer.

Returning board members include Matt Allard of Winnipeg, Douglas Houghton of Lac du Bonnet, John Rudyk of the Interlake, Herm Martens of Rosenort, Maurice Tallaire of St. Adolphe, Sudesh Treon of Winnipeg, Robert Hanson of the RM of Mountain, Budd Mager of Lac du Bonnet, Patrick Fortier of Winnipeg, Gordon Daman of Niverville, Andy McMaster of Winnipeg, Tom Raine of Winnipeg, and Maxine Plesiuk of Carman.

• AN ARTIST'S LIFE

Spotlight on: Chance 2 Grow

Arts activities are an integral part of many children's growing up years, but the cost of these activities can be prohibitive for families.

Chance 2 Grow, a foundation based in Southern Manitoba, is working with parents to provide funds for children to take part in recreational activities who might not otherwise be able to.

Sandra Doell, the program administrator for Winkler, wants people to know that Chance 2 Grow would love to work with them to get their children involved in a range of programs and activities.

Sandra was kind enough to make herself available for an interview to learn more about what the founda-

tion does:

CH: What kind of activities does the foundation sponsor?

SD: We sponsor a wide variety of activities ranging from music lessons, arts camps, choir camps, workshop attendance, art classes and supplies, dance classes, and many other activities, including sports as well. If you do not see an activity on the list that you would like to try, we encourage you to contact us and see if we might be able to help you out with your chosen recreational activities.

CH: Who is eligible for funding through the foundation?

SD: Eligibility is determined solely based on income and financial need,



By Candace Hamm

and we would like to be very clear in saying that we do not discriminate in any way. If your income meets the eligibility requirements, then we would love to help you out. Families can find more information about their eligibility on our brochure.

CH: What do people need to know before they apply?

SD: Families who wish to apply for funding will need to fill out the Chance 2 Grow application form available on our website at cfscmfoundation.com/chance-2-grow.

They will need to have a specific activity in mind, as well as an instructor (for example, families wishing to take piano lessons will need to connect with and choose an instructor before applying.) Many of our families are referred by private/public teachers and recreation programmers, but they can also go to our website and download the application there.

CH: How can the public get involved

in helping out Chance 2 Grow?

SD: We are always looking for board members to help us by providing their time and expertise.

At the moment, we are particularly in need of people who have an arts background and are willing to share their knowledge with us. We would be extremely grateful for a few people in the area to consider joining us.

Chance 2 Grow is also a registered charity, so anyone wishing to help financially is welcome to donate in that area as well.

If you would like to learn more about the foundation and its mandate to help provide access to recreational activities, or you would like to help the foundation by serving on the board, check them out online at the website listed above.

Reach Candace Hamm at ibcnu@mts.net

Contest puts call out for entrepreneurs with disabilities

By Lorne Stelmach

Local entrepreneurs with disabilities are being encouraged to share their stories through an annual province-wide contest aimed at celebrating their achievements.

Apryl Harel of Apryl Harel Photography from Steinbach won last year's Just Watch Me video contest and credits it for helping to put her business in the spotlight.

"This contest has brought me a bunch of media attention," said Harel, who is now one of this year's judges.

"I'll be looking for people who believe in themselves," she said. "I think the biggest key to success is believing in yourself and knowing you can do anything you put your mind to."

The contest celebrates those who have taken the leap into entrepreneurship and aims to help create a welcoming space for those considering self employment, said Susan Bater, Entrepreneurs with Disabilities program manager and spokesperson for the contest.

Entrants who share their business story will have a chance to win cash and other prizes. The first place winner will receive social media services from Exchange Digital PR valued at \$5,000.

The competition launched Dec. 2

in recognition of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and participants have until Jan. 25 to submit their entries.

It is open to all rural entrepreneurs with disabilities or health conditions in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

"We know that there are so many stories out there and we want to hear them," said Bater, adding they want it to help show that "self employment is

a viable option for anyone with a disability or health condition that has the drive and desire to be an entrepreneur."

There are two contest categories: the Entrepreneurship Manitoba Start Up Category for entrepreneurs who have been in business less than a year as of Dec. 2, and the Seasoned Category for businesses that have been open for more than a year.

The top four contestants in the seasoned category will move on to public voting starting Feb. 1. The entrepreneur that receives the most public votes will be declared the winner Feb. 17.

For more information about the competition and the prizes, check out www.justwatchmecontest.ca.

> MORDEN FINANCIAL PLAN, FROM PG. 4

Over \$1.6 million goes towards recreation services followed by over \$660,000 towards parks. Another quarter million each is put towards the beach and campground as well as the Minnewasta golf course followed by over \$100,000 for the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre and \$120,000 for the library.

Spending on protective services makes up over 16 per cent of the budget with just under an eight per cent increase to \$2.6 million. Salaries and benefits account for over \$1.8 million for the police service and \$174,000 for the fire department.

At about eight per cent of the budget are transportation services, which sees a three per cent in-

crease to over \$1.2 million. Almost half a million of this spending is for planning and engineering services, while other areas accounting for over \$100,000 each include equipment repairs and maintenance, road maintenance, snow removal, and street lighting.

Also at eight per cent of expenditures are general government services, which receive eight per cent more at a \$1.2 million budget. Over half a million of this spending is for the city administrative staff costs.

Economic development services accounts for five per cent of spending, with the budget increasing almost eight per cent to over \$868,000. Most of this is almost half a million

for community development programs and services along with close to \$100,000 for industrial development.

Environmental health services make up another three per cent of expenditures, though spending has decreasing 21 per cent to over \$548,000. This includes over \$387,000 for recycling services and \$117,000 for garbage collection.

Public health and welfare services take up about one per cent of spending with the budget bumping it up about 15 per cent to over \$116,000. This area includes \$75,000 going towards the Agassiz Medical Centre.

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Winkler Flyers have their eyes on the prize

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Winkler Flyers head coach and general manager Ken Pearson is feeling good about the team's chances of vying for the MJHL championship next spring, though they need to keep their focus on one game at a time to get there.

The hockey club currently has a firm hold on the Manitoba Junior Hockey League's second place ranking with a 25-10 record. At 50 points, they trail the first place Steinbach Pistons by seven points and are ahead of the OCN Blizzard in third by three.

"I think where we are right now, it's kind of where we envisioned us being when we finished camp," Pearson said just before Christmas.

The season has brought a few upsets to the roster, especially on the goaltender front. Since September, the Flyers have seen a fair bit of turnover between the posts.

They started the regular season with Cole Weaver and Connor Slipp. Then Josh Williams was brought in when Slipp got injured (he was eventually traded to Swan Valley), but the Calgary native wanted to play back in Alberta and so was traded to Fort McMurray just a few weeks later.

"That put us in a bit of a tough spot again," Pearson said, noting they then brought on Troy Martyniuk to back up Weaver in net. "I think we're pretty set there now."

Weaver has really stepped up to the challenge, he added, and Martyniuk brings a depth of experience to the position.

Other recent trades have also served to bolster both the team's offensive and defensive lines, and Pearson is eager to get everybody back to work after the holidays in the lead-up to the end of the season.

"Going into the new year, we've only played Steinbach once, so those games [Jan. 7 and Jan. 17] with them are going to be so important," he said. "And obviously, we've also got to continue to beat teams like Neepawa, Wayway, Swan Valley, the Blues. That's who we're playing here in the next month. Those games we can't take for granted ... We've got to make sure we're physically bringing out best effort for the entire 60 minutes, every game."

Overconfidence is something the team definitely can't afford, as the entire league is very evenly matched this season.

"We're as good as any team in the league, but it is very tight," Pearson said. "There's not a lot of wiggle room from first to eighth. You take a night off and you can get into some trouble."

"That is going to be the challenge here for us is just to approach every game with the same mentality as a playoff game," he said. "Once you get into January, February, the games go so quick and the points mean so much



PHOTO BY LANA MEIER/VOICE

Wins at the MJHL Showcase and against Portage last week bumped the Flyers into second place. They're setting their sights on a strong finish in the back half of the 2016-2017 season.

more. As you're in those two months leading up to the playoffs, you want to get as high as you can to have that home ice advantage, and that's what we're going to strive to do here."

Fan support is certainly a key component to the team's success, Pearson noted.

"When you've got a thousand peo-

ple there cheering you on, the atmosphere's just so different. You can feel the buzz and that really gets your adrenaline going and makes you play a little harder.

"It's been an exciting year and I think we're attracting a lot of new fans and hopefully we can continue to attract new people as we go forward."



Team Friesen off to junior provincials

Team Brooke Friesen of the Winkler Curling Club won the Central Region Playdowns in Cartwright earlier this month, earning them a spot at the Canola Junior Provincial Championships Jan. 1-6 at the Pembina and St Vital Curling Clubs. From left: Holly Friesen, Kelsey Sagert, Katelyn Derksen, and Brooke Friesen with coach Ross Derksen

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Hawks looking to put pressure on teams above them

By Lorne Stelmach

It has been a turnaround season for the AAA midget Pembina Valley Hawks, who were solidly in sixth place going into the Christmas break.

Last year at this time, they were a young team at the bottom of the Manitoba AAA Midget Hockey League standings, struggling to come up with wins.

Fast forward to today and they had put together a four game winning streak going into their Dec. 21 match-up with the Southwest Cougars.

"It definitely is a group that is very confident right now, and it's just a matter of keeping them focused and playing with that confidence and trying to win our next game," said coach Rylan Price.

At press time, the Hawks' record of 16-10-0-1 had them at 33 points—seven up on both the Southwest Cougars and Eastman Selects.

Rather than looking back, Price wanted to look ahead in the standings, with Pembina Valley just two points behind the Winnipeg Thrashers and six back of the Central Plains Selects.

"We want to keep putting pressure on the teams ahead of us ... let them know we're coming," he said.

Price said he felt the Hawks were

going to have a good group of talented kids this year and sounded an optimistic tone right from the start of the season, knowing the team was getting most of its players back with a bit more experience under their belts.

"I feel that we've got the best players in the Pembina Valley ... it's rare that you can get all of your players back from junior and the western league, so I feel we have a special opportunity this season.

"It's just a matter of trying not to get in too big of a lull and making sure that we keep tacking wins on and getting a little better each day."

The team so far has been getting some clutch performances in net as well as in the offensive zone.

"We've got some very strong goaltending, and we have a good group of forwards who are able to put the puck in the net," Price said, noting the top line with league leading scorer Elijah Carels was leading the way.

"Eli seems to score every game. He's got a knack of getting open in the zone ... he finds the soft spots. He's got a really good winger ... Cade Kowalski is able to find him ... and their centreman Caleb Unrau is a big strong boy, he wins battles in the corner, so they seem to have things going as a line between the three of them."

Of course, there is always room for

improvement.

"One of the weaknesses we've had has been on our powerplay," Price said. "We've haven't seemed to be clicking, but that last weekend we ended up scoring four powerplay goals ... hopefully that's a sign that things are starting to turn around there."

In the end, Price is looking for con-

sistency from his players, and he feels they can be a real contender in the playoffs if they maintain their play.

"There's a few games that we probably should have won ... third period leads that we let slip away on us ... hopefully at the end of the year we don't look back at say what if we would have won those ones?"



PHOTO BY LANA MEIER/VOICE

The Pembina Valley Hawks hope to claw their way up the standings in the new year. They're currently in sixth place, just a few points behind the teams ahead of them.

Every game counts as female Hawks vie for top spot

By Lorne Stelmach

Considering how crowded it is at the top of the Manitoba AAA Female Midget Hockey League standings, every single game matters for the Pembina Valley Hawks heading into the last half of the season.

A 4-3 overtime loss to Westman before Christmas provided the margin of difference that had the Wildcats one point up on the Hawks.

It was a rare back-to-back defeat for Pembina Valley, which had come off a 2-1 shootout loss to Winnipeg which they later avenged with a 3-2 victory that helped keep them in second place.

"The standings are very tight now ... it will be an interesting second half. There's definitely no room for letting your foot off the gas," said assistant coach Shanley Peters.

The Hawks' record of 13-2-2 for 28 points also had the Avros (12-6-0) nipping at their heels in third place with 24 points going into their Dec. 21 game against the Eastman Selects

(results were not available at press time).

The Yellowhead Chiefs were also at 24 points on a 12-5-0 record, so it all means the Hawks can't afford to let up.

Peters said the coaching staff like a lot of what they have seen from the girls so far.

"There's been a few games where we hadn't done as well as we wanted, but we've battled back. I think we're right where we wanted to be going into the second half of the season.

"I think one of our big things this year is our teamwork, our team dynamic. We have a great group of girls ... they all work together very well,"

Peters continued.

"The energy is always there ... work ethic is a big thing that we've seen ... our character is another thing. In tough situations, we always seem to come together and battle through it."

Peters said they would like to see more offensive output from the team, as their solid defensive and neutral zone play often carry the day right now.

"Something that we continue to work towards is our scoring ability ... you often see low scoring games," said Peters. "I think it's just building on what we've already worked on."

Just before Christmas, veteran Sage McElroy-Scott was leading the Hawks

offensively at 12 goals and 29 points, ranking second in scoring only to Westman star Ashton Bell.

Makenzie McCallum was leading the Hawks in goals with 18 and was second overall in the league in that category behind Bell, who had 26 goals and 35 points through 16 games.

Meanwhile, Halle Oswald ranked third among goaltenders with a 1.31 goals against average and .940 save percentage, while backup Kadynce Romijn was sixth with a 1.60 GAA and .923 save percentage.

The Hawks return to league play Jan. 4 with a visit to Shoal Lake to take on the Yellowhead Chiefs. They then host Westman in Manitou on Jan. 6.

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Agriculture

Prairie Livestock Expo a huge success

By Harry Siemens

Agricultural industry movers and shakers came together in Winnipeg on Dec. 14 for the annual Prairie Livestock Expo.

Originally organized more than 30 years ago for the hog and poultry sectors, the show has since expanded to showcase the newest technology and information for the production needs of all livestock producers.

A highlight of the expo every year is its Pork Quality Competition, which pits producers against one another to showcase the best hog raising and feeding programs.

There were 34 entries from across Manitoba this year, each judged according to the criteria used by pork processing plants to grade pork quality, including carcass weight, meat colour, and loin eye size.

First place went to the Starlite Colony near Starbuck.

The colony's Jamie Hofer says the 600 sow farrow-to-finish operation runs Topigs Genetics with a PIC 337 boar line and ships upwards of 15,000 market hogs per year to HyLife Foods in Neepawa.

What's the key to the colony's success in producing championship pork?

"The big thing is genetic improvement. Genetic companies, genetic research, they're improving the genetics with every generation at amazing speeds," says Hofer, adding that quality feed is also key. "You've got to have good feed, good quality grains and water. Water is very important. Have good quality clean water with good feed and water delivery systems and then animal handling.

"You've got to handle and treat the pigs in a calm and respectful manner," he adds. "And then you need a blessing from above."

Hofer says working in a hog barn can be a monotonous job, but it's fun to prepare and select pigs for the show and being named grand champion is a real motivator for barn staff.

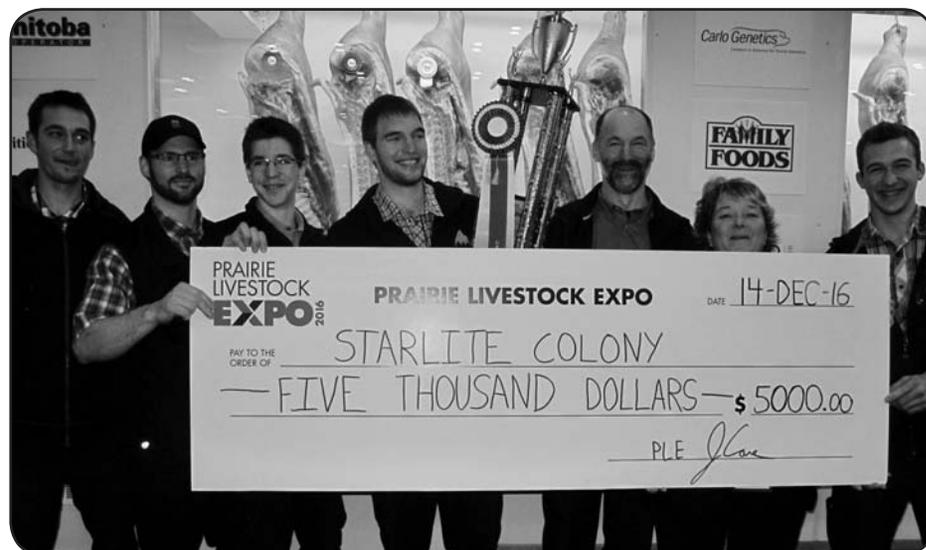
"I applaud the competition organizers and sponsors, but the real win-

ners are the charities to which the prize money gets donated and the less fortunate who receive the pork through local food banks," he says. Starlite donated its \$5,000 cash prize to Siloam Mission.

Competition coordinator Dennis Stevenson agrees that it's the charities and food banks who are the real big winners of the event each year.

"The winner can contribute all the money to charity or they can keep up to a maximum of 50 per cent of the prize money for use on their own farms ... but in previous years we've seen most of the folks donate 100 per cent of their winnings to charity," he says. "This year the winner gets an additional prize: a trip down to the Iowa Pork Expo."

The judged pork itself also goes to



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Starlite Colony were named the Grand Champion at the Prairie Livestock Expo, winning \$5,000 on behalf of Siloam Mission.

charities in Winnipeg, including Siloam Mission and Winnipeg Harvest.

In addition to the Starlite Colony in first place, the winners of this year's competition included Boundary Lane Colony as the reserve grand champion and Aspenheim Colony in third place, followed by entries from the

Barrickman Colony, Rolling Acres Colony, New Haven Colony North, Skyview Colony, Rose Valley Colony, Waldheim Colony, and another Aspenheim Colony entry in 10th place. Each earned cash prizes ranging from \$4,000 to \$500 for charities in their communities.



> HARRY SIEMENS

What an inspiration during the Christmas season and all year around—Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall, just as I sat down to write some thoughts about Christmas, tweeted his Christmas message.

"As we celebrate the special birth of a tiny baby, the Light of the World, let's shine our light and follow His example."

That comes a politician who very well could become the prime minister of Canada some day who puts his faith a trust in a risen Saviour.

The light of the world

This Saviour who is Christ the Lord born in a humble stable of a virgin birth who went on to the cross of Calvary giving His precious blood for all mankind, yet only small number actually take advantage of this gift which also gives eternal life.

I get to sing and serve in various personal care homes, seniors homes, and even assisted homes for seniors and while I enjoy my work as a farm journalist and farmer's advocate, I enjoy bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ through message in song, the spoken word, and that word of encouragement that takes time to sit and stay, listen, and talk.

There are many lonely people in this world where people are consumed with taking selfies, winter vacations, three-car garages, and the like. I'm not pointing fingers, just thinking aloud about all those people in the rest of the world who don't have it nearly as good as we have it here.

Premier Wall brought it to the at-

tention of thousands of people through his Twitter account how good the people in Saskatchewan have it, and how he is proud to be a citizen of that province. Not because of who he is—though, yes, he provided the leadership to get them back on track—but because of the people in that province.

I often walk through Bethel Heritage Park on my daily walk, taking time to read about the people responsible for giving us this great community where we are able to worship freely, have input in our schools and, if we don't like what happens, to then teach the children at home, and have the ability to fit in either working for a living or starting our own business and working even harder to make a living.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not opposed to the affluence in this community because I know when it comes to giving to people in need, to

Continued on page 17

Manitoba fall weather cuts the winter wheat acres

By Harry Siemens

Winter wheat continues to do battle with wet falls and late harvests because there is a certain date farmers need to have the crop in the ground to be eligible for crop insurance.

The latest production numbers from Statistics Canada show the acres of winter wheat planted across the prairies fell this fall.

Jake Davidson, the executive director of Winter Cereals Canada, says from about Aug. 15, when the harvest gets going, conditions in Manitoba were wet, the canola crop—the primary stubble crop for winter wheat—did not come off, and so the winter wheat didn't get in, especially in western Manitoba.

"Overall the prairies saw 535,000 acres of winter wheat planted this year, down from around 600,000, basically all in Manitoba, where producers took quite a hit re winter wheat acres," says Davidson. "We've been running in the 200,000 to 225,000 and, because of our fall conditions, we're down to 140,000 in Manitoba.

"Saskatchewan, however, did much better. They're up to 265,000, which is an improvement over where they've been running at around 220,000.

"It's interesting: approximately 50

per cent of the winter wheat grown in western Canada right now is coming out of Saskatchewan."

Producers in Alberta, meanwhile, held their own in winter wheat acres, as they do every year, in the 130,000 acre bracket.

Davidson says that with the late fall, the planted winter wheat acres got off to a good start. There was a long vernalization period, giving the crops a good opportunity to prepare for winter, and now there's good snow cover and growers will be looking for that snow to remain in place.

Despite the acres being down, he says winter wheat continues to provide a dramatic yield advantage over wheat varieties planted in the spring, and that spread could widen.

Davidson says winter wheat typical-

ly provides a dramatic yield advantage over the spring seeded wheat varieties, and the crop harvested in 2016 was pretty consistent with that trend.

According to Statistics Canada, overall on the Canadian prairies spring wheat did 43.8 and winter wheat did 51.1 bushels per acre.

"That still leaves us with a considerable yield improvement over spring wheat. Manitoba saw winter wheat at 61.4 and spring wheat at 49.5. Saskatchewan had a bit of a rough year this year," Davidson says. "They were 39.2 both winter and spring, because of the growing conditions. Alberta showed a spring wheat of 47.2 bushels per acre versus winter wheat of 55.3.

"Overall across the prairies, and if you look at the many years aver-

age, winter wheat significantly out yielding spring wheat again this last year. With our new varieties coming out and new agronomy, that spread should continue and possibly grow."

While the fall-seeded winter wheat crop is off to a good start, the harvested winter seeded last fall also appears to be fairly decent with not a lot of fusarium and fairly decent protein levels.

Davidson says sometimes, even though the quality is down a little, it will end up going somewhere where the quality won't affect the premium.

But, overall, those people who did get the crop off were fairly pleased and, judging by the levy numbers, the crop is moving at a fairly good rate.

> SIEMENS SAYS, FROM PG. 16

furthering the gospel of Jesus Christ, people in this community continue to give beyond any other place in the world.

I once took a business course where the one line used by the instructor, Brian Tracey, where a person quit his job to start his own business so he could finally work half days. After running that business for a short

time, he realized that no one had told him which 12 hours.

We are blessed, both my wife Judith and I because we love what we do. Yes, some days it gets a bit much, but then we need to take a break.

One more thing on this topic: in pondering those who have gone on before us, some giving their lives and others struggling to make it better

for others, I truly believe the blessing bestowed on this area come from those men and women who sacrificed for us, yes, but also their unwavering faith in steadfast God.

That God sent his son Jesus as a tiny little baby to be the Light of the World. This Christmas season, and every season of the year, let's take up that Light and shine it to those around us.

get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS

Roasted Figs with Honey



- 8 fresh ripe black figs
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) liquid local honey
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) sliced hazelnuts or almonds
- 2 tbsp (25 mL) crumbled goat



cheese or ricotta (optional)

Directions

Cut figs in half almost all the way, leaving them still attached on one side. Place them open slightly in small casserole dish.

Drizzle with honey and sprinkle with hazelnuts. Bake in 375° F (190° C) oven for about 15 minutes or until nuts are light golden and juices start to release from figs. Remove from oven and sprinkle with goat cheese if using.

Apricot variation: Use 8 large fresh apricots for the figs.

Tip: Enjoy warm or cold. Wrap leftovers with plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

Hickory Nut Pie

- 1/2 recipe Plain Pie Pastry (see box)
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Preheat the oven to 325 F. Line a 9-inch pie plate with the rolled out crust and pour the nuts into the crust.

Combine the corn syrup, butter and sugar in a saucepan over low heat and cook, stirring constantly, until sugar is entirely dissolved, about 15 to 20 minutes. Cool for about 10 minutes.

Beat the eggs, vanilla and salt in a small bowl, then add to the sugar mixture and beat well. Spread the filling evenly in the crust.

Bake for 50 to 55 minutes, until the center is set and doesn't jiggle when the pan is tapped. Cool on wire rack for at least 30 minutes before slicing. This pie can be served warm or cold.

SIDEBAR: Plain Pie Pastry
Makes two 9-inch pie crusts

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup vegetable shortening
- 5 to 7 tablespoons cold milk

Sift the flour and salt into a bowl. Cut in the shortening with a pastry blender until it is the size of small peas. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon of the milk over part of the flour mixture. Gently toss with a fork and push to the side of the bowl. Sprinkle another tablespoon of milk over another dry part, toss with a fork and push to the side of the bowl. Repeat with the remaining milk until all of the flour mixture is moistened.

Press the dough together to form 2 equal balls, then flatten into disks. Roll out the crusts right away, or wrap the dough tightly, smoothing out any little wrinkles or air pockets, and refrigerate for up to 2 weeks. On a lightly floured surface, roll out each ball to a thickness of 1/8 inch. Use a light touch and handle the dough as little as possible.

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CAREERS

Invites applications for a Career Opportunity Position **GENERAL MANAGER**

The Solid Waste Area Management Project 'SWAMP' Regional Landfill is looking to fill the position of General Manager. Reporting to a Board of Directors, the General Manager is responsible for the overall management, administration and operational components of the landfill operation.

The General Manager position includes supervisory & management functions as well as a wide variety of operational requirements including the operation of machinery and equipment.

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The SWAMP Regional Landfill offers a competitive compensation and health benefits package and pension plan. Please note that only those applicants selected for interviews will be contacted.

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The Winkler Police Board quarterly meetings will be held on **April 12, July 12, October 11 & December 6 of 2017 at 12:45 p.m.**

Meetings are open to the public and will be held at Smitty's Restaurant, 777 Norquay Drive, Winkler, MB. Anyone wishing to come forward with a delegation is asked to contact the City Manager a minimum of 1 day prior to the meeting.

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take a break > GAMES

SUDOKU

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

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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

Sudoku Answer

	X	V	F	S	S	E	S	I	B	
S	S	U	H	O	S		D	K	C	V
C	D	E	T	W	I	T	I	G	E	L
O	I	T								
E	C	A		D	E	S	V	C	S	B
D	R		H	V	R	V	V	U	H	T
E	E	T	V	S		L	V	R	C	V
E	N	E	R	A	V	N	N	O	C	V
S	T	E	W	O	C		N	V	E	G
O	V	G	T	V	S	R	I	S	V	S
I	D	C		S	E	B	V	T	C	B
T	O	R	T	V	K	D	V	B	V	I
O	R		C	I	G	O	T	O	E	H
G	N	I	E	S	S	O	P	E	O	C
E	P	L	E	A	P	R	A	B	I	R

Crossword Answer

X CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

- Isodor __, American Nobel physicist
- One a day keeps the doctor away
- Extents
- Noticing
- Scriptural
- Star Trek character Laren
- "The Crow" actress __ Ling
- Not good
- Measures gold
- TV network
- Wasting
- Money in Ghana
- Young girls' association
- Title of respect
- High schoolers take this test
- Crunches federal numbers
- Wild or sweet cherry
- Celestial bodies
- Fruit of the oak tree
- Royal Navy ship during WWII
- Of cherished symbols
- Satisfy
- 5th. day (abbr.)
- Swiss river
- Royal Albert Hall (abbr.)
- Cool!
- Flat metal shelves
- Enclosed
- A way to pass
- City in Iraq
- Printing speed measurement
- Twitch
- Indicates position
- Made lawful
- Took down
- A way to travel on skis
- North winds
- Tunisian metropolis

CLUES DOWN

- Seafood

			1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9				
	10	11							12					13		
		14						15						16	17	
18								19			20		21			
22						23				24		25				
26						27				28		29		30		
		31	32							33		34				
35	36										37					
38						39				40						
41						42		43		44				45	46	47
48				49		50		51						52		
53						54		55						56		
57						58		59				60	61	62		
	63	64								65						
										66						
											67					

- Incan god of mountains
- Ritzy LA neighborhood __ Air
- Line that connect points of equal pressure
- Audience-only remarks
- Chest muscle (slang)
- Pointed top
- Lavender
- Linear unit
- Knives
- 2016 World Series champs
- A way to arrange
- Talk
- Serving no purpose
- Container
- Breathes new life into
- Beloved dog Rin Tin __
- A bag-like structure in a plant or animal
- Yemen capital
- Sacred book of Judaism
- Make a mistake
- Wrestlers wrestle here
- Respiratory issue
- In league
- Resinous insect secretion
- Unhappy
- Turbulent area of a river
- Neglectful
- Sours
- Calendar month (abbr.)
- Grooves
- Sony Pictures Television
- Monetary units
- Command right
- 1,000 cubic feet
- Expression of triumph
- Dinner jacket
- The first two

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