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Grande Prairie Press

Grande Prairie's Independent Local News

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GPPS welcomes 15 officers ahead of municipal policing transition



By Haylee Winger

The Grande Prairie Police Service has welcomed 15 new officers as it prepares to take over municipal policing in the city on October 21.

The group consists of 10 recruits and five experienced officers who have served with police services elsewhere in Canada. All 15 were recognized during a ceremony at Bonnetts Energy Centre on October 9.

Recruit Class #4 is the final group to graduate before GPPS takes over as the police service responsible for the City of Grande Prairie on October 21, marking the transition to municipal policing.

The recruits spent six months in training, completing the Lethbridge Polytechnic Police Cadet Training Program and earning a certificate in Police Cadet Training.

Their backgrounds include law enforcement, military service, municipal enforcement, resource industries and private-sector work.

GPPS Chief of Police Dwayne Lakusta said the class holds a special place in the service's history as it prepares to take over municipal policing.

"Recruit Class #4 will forever hold a unique place in the history of our organization as the final class to graduate before we assume responsibility for policing in our community," Lakusta said in a GPPS press release.

The recruits will continue their training alongside experienced GPPS officers before taking on their duties in the community

GPPS now has 80 sworn officers as it prepares to take over municipal policing on October 21, 2026.

"The addition of experienced officers alongside newly trained recruits reflects our balanced approach to building a strong and sustainable police service," Lakusta said. "Their diverse backgrounds and policing experience will enhance our ability to provide professional, effective, and community-focused policing from day one."

Photo: Grande Prairie City Police



Photos: Anjenette Timblique

Victoria's Attic gala brings more than 400 women together for breast cancer support



More than 400 women gathered at the Pomeroy Hotel & Conference Centre in Grande Prairie on Thursday, October 8, for the seventh annual Victoria's Attic Support the Girls Fashion Show and Gala Evening. The event raises funds to help provide support for breast cancer patients, survivors, caregivers and their families.

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Grande Prairie Live Theatre brings gothic comedy to the stage this month



Photos: Grande Prairie Live Theatre



By Valerie Winger

Grande Prairie Live Theatre is in rehearsals for The Mystery of Irma Vep – A Penny Dreadful, which opens Oct. 22 and runs until Nov. 7.

"Things are getting a little batty in rehearsal… and that's before the murders!" the theatre said.

The theatre describes the show as one where the costumes are dramatic, the screams are loud, the romance is questionable, and nobody is having a normal evening. It promises audiences "gothic chaos, frightful shenanigans, and theatrical madness."

The production includes death, murder, loud screams, jump scares, sexual innuendo, and simulated onstage sex with no nudity. The theatre recommends it for audiences aged 13 and older.

Tickets are available through Showpass. Audiences are invited to come for the mystery, stay for the mayhem and try not to scream.



Grande Prairie biathlete continues pursuit of Olympic dream



By Haylee Winger

For Grande Prairie's Liam Tinworth, what began as a passion for biathlon has grown into a goal of representing Canada at the Olympic level.

Tinworth got his start at the Wapiti Nordic Centre in Grande Prairie and continued to progress through the sport, earning opportunities to compete nationally and internationally.

He represented Alberta at the Canada Winter Games, where he earned two silver medals and a bronze medal in the relay. He also earned a bronze medal in the 12.5-kilometre mass start at the Canadian National Biathlon Championships.

Tinworth went on to represent Canada at international competitions in Europe and elsewhere. Most recently, he earned a spot on Biathlon Canada's National Development Team for the 2026-27 season.

His sister, Amanda Udey, said she had the opportunity to see firsthand the dedication Tinworth has put into his sport.

As a third-generation Grande Prairie resident who was born and raised in the city, Udey said Tinworth embraced what it meant to be a local athlete pursuing a big dream.

"He had posters of Canadian biathletes in his room growing up, and now he is training with the top in the sport and representing Canada himself," Udey said.

Tinworth's long-term goal is to compete for Team Canada at the 2030 Winter Olympics in France. Reaching that level requires a significant investment of time, training and financial resources. Travel, equipment, accommodation, competition fees and international racing expenses are among the costs that come with competing at a high level.

"The funds raised through the Olympic Pursuit Fundraiser will help ease some of that financial pressure and allow Liam to focus more of his energy on training and competing," Udey said.

International competition has also given Tinworth valuable opportunities to gain experience, challenge himself against strong athletes and continue developing as he progresses through the national development pathway.

For Udey, the support Tinworth has received from the Grande Prairie community has been an important part of his journey.

"This is where his journey began, and it means a lot to have the people and community who supported him in those early years continue to be part of his story," she said.

The Olympic Pursuit Fundraiser was held October 16 at the Grande Prairie Golf & Country Club. The evening featured silent and live auctions, a fireside chat, "Beat the Biathlete," an opportunity for guests to try biathlon, food and an evening of community connection.

Funds raised through the event are helping support Tinworth as he continues working toward his goal of reaching the Olympic level. The fundraiser also gave attendees an opportunity to learn more about biathlon and the work involved in competing internationally.

Udey said she was proud of her brother and grateful for the people who have supported him throughout his journey.

"Every donation, sponsorship, volunteer hour and show of support makes a difference," she said. "It reminds Liam that he has an entire community cheering him on as he works toward his Olympic dream."

Grande Prairie tests AI assistant for after-hours City service



By Haylee Winger

Residents in Grande Prairie now have another way to get answers to questions about City services when regular phone service is closed.

The City of Grande Prairie has launched a trial of an artificial intelligence voice assistant called Riley. The pilot program began October 13 and is scheduled to continue until December 31.

After 6 p.m. on weekdays, as well as on weekends and holidays, callers are connected with Riley. Rather than working through a standard automated phone menu, residents can speak with the assistant and ask questions about City services.

Riley can provide information about several common City services, including recreation, transit, roads and construction, snow clearing and facility hours. The assistant can also direct residents toward appropriate City resources.

If Riley cannot answer a question using the information available to it, the inquiry can be submitted to AccessGP staff for follow-up during regular business hours.

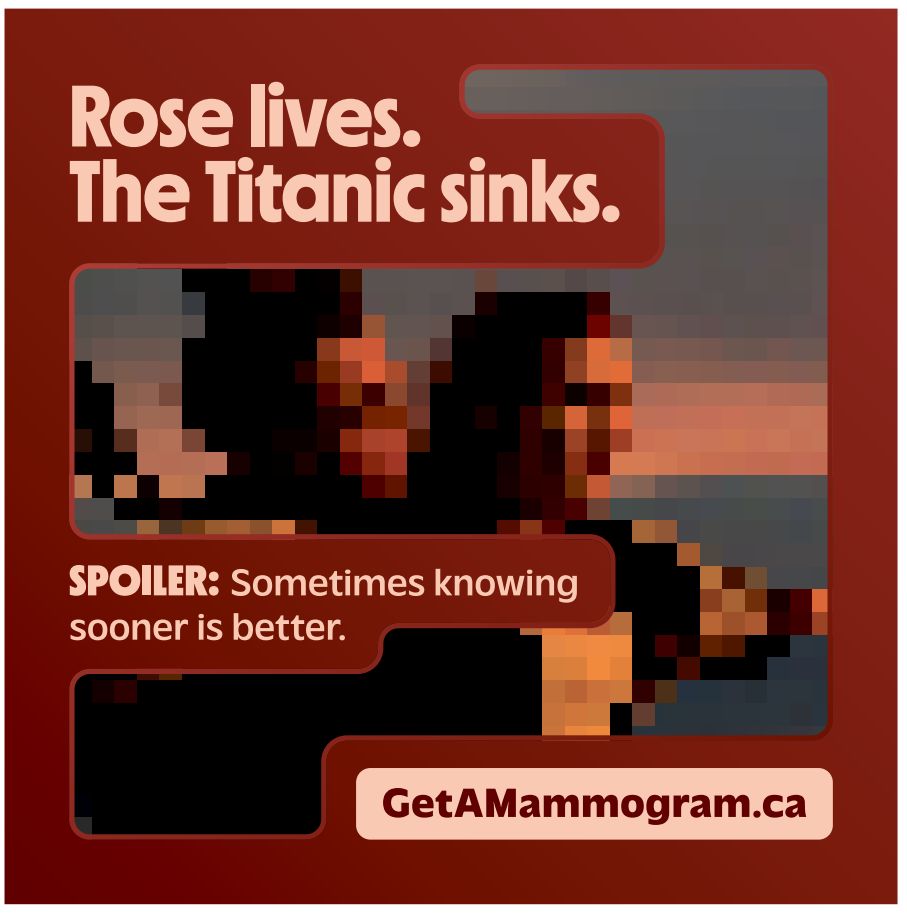
The pilot is being offered in addition to the City's existing services, with no changes to regular daytime staffing or operating hours.

"People need access to City information at different times, and this pilot gives us an opportunity to provide more support outside our regular business hours," said City of Grande Prairie Mayor Jackie Clayton in a City of Grande Prairie release. "We're adding another way for residents to connect with the City while keeping the people and services they already rely on in place. Over the next few months, we'll be listening to residents and looking closely at what works and what doesn't."

Throughout the trial, the City will monitor how Riley performs and gather feedback from residents. Officials will look at how accurately and reliably the assistant responds, how useful it is to callers and what kinds of questions residents are asking. Those findings will help determine whether the technology could be used by the City in the future.

Riley cannot handle 9-1-1 calls or emergencies.





Tiny Hands of Hope receives $5,000 from Rotary lottery



The Swan City Rotary Club presented a $5,000 cheque to Tiny Hands of Hope as part of this year's Cash and Camping Super Lottery distributions. The lottery, organized in partnership by Grande Prairie's Rotary clubs, distributed $60,000 to local organizations this year, with proceeds supporting charities and community initiatives.

New online tool helps Albertans navigate cancer screening

Primary Care Alberta's (PCA) Screening Programs has launched a new online guide to help Albertans understand when they should start screening for breast, cervical or colorectal cancer. The guide, which is available at screeningforlife.ca, is designed to translate complex screening recommendations into an accessible and interactive experience, helping Albertans navigate screening with greater confidence and clarity.

"Early detection can make a life-changing difference. This new online guide gives Albertans clear, accessible information to help them understand when to get screened and take an important step in protecting their health."

– Justin Wright, Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month, a time when we remind the public about the importance of staying on top of screening recommendations. In Canada, breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women. Raising awareness and encouraging screening is an important step to ensuring patients get the support and care they need.

"Screening can detect cancer early, before symptoms appear and when treatment works best. We want to empower Albertans to make informed decisions about cancer screening and support increased awareness of recommended screening across the province."

– Kimberley Simmonds, CEO of Primary Care Alberta

Alberta currently has provincial screening programs for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers. The goal of these programs is to reduce the numbers of breast, cervical and colorectal cases and cancer deaths in Alberta.

PCA supports Albertans acrossthe province in accessing this important care. We provide timely information, education and resources to the public and primary healthcare providers.

PCA's cancer screening notifications are moving towards becoming paperless. Starting in the fall of 2026, mailed invitation and reminder notifications for cancer screening will be phased out, when possible, and patients will get notifications and information through MyHeathAlberta's MyChart online platform. This change makes it easier to review messages, alerts and results, better keep track of your screenings and remind you when to book an appointment.



Albertans who are able and not already signed up, are encouraged to set up a MyChart account by visiting myhealth.alberta.ca/help/KB/setting-up-myhealth-records.

For additional information about screening, talk to your primary care provider or visit screeningforlife.ca.

Care is a lifelong commitment for Primary Care Alberta. We plan, fund and support primary healthcare across the province, improving access to care providers and offering front-line services through Health Link 811 and public health teams. Throughout the health journey, we are by your side – managing, preventing and reducing illness. Along with our partners, we nurture the connections our communities need to thrive and strengthen the health of all Albertans.

County of Grande Prairie Council highlights

Proposed Land Use Bylaw Amendments — Council approved first reading of Bylaw #2680-26-046, amendments to the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) that establish a new Data Centre Campus (DAT) District and remove "Data Processing Establishment" from all other land use districts.

The proposed amendments reflect the changing nature of data centre development and are intended to modernize the County's planning framework while providing greater transparency when considering data centre proposals.

Residents can now review the proposed amendments, provide feedback and participate in a public hearing at 1:00 p.m. on December 2, 2026, before Council makes a final decision on the bylaw. Read the media release to find out how to participate.

Council Seeks Highway Project Update — Council directed Administration to invite representatives from Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors to a future Council meeting to provide an update on highway projects within the County, including activity around the Highway 724 and Highway 43 intersection.

Council Streamlines Operating Assistance Grant Program — Council approved Policy K14 – Operating Assistance as presented, and rescinded Policy G14 – Seniors and Accessible Transportation Operating Assistance Grant. The updated policy allows operational funding for both facilities and organizations to be allocated under the same policy, creating a more consistent application process.

Council also directed Administration to develop a procedure outlining the term of funding for Policy K14 and bring it back to a future Council meeting. Under the policy, groups receiving term funding would automatically receive funding throughout the term.

Clairmont Food Bank Building Replacement — Council approved $142,677 to purchase and install a new 14- by 62-foot well-site office building at the current Clairmont Food Bank site.

Recreational Use of Stormwater Ponds Policy Updated — Council approved Policy K18 – Recreational Use of Stormwater Ponds as presented. The policy was updated to include a clearer policy purpose, updated terminology, enhanced training requirements, and revised guidelines for fire pits and fire barrels on pond ice surfaces.

Land Use Zones Redesignated — Council gave final reading to:

- Bylaw #2680-26-037 redesignating a portion of land from a Rural Medium Industrial (RM-2) district to a Rural Heavy Industrial (RM-3) district. The land is located west of Range Road 111 and south of Highway 43, within the Hamlet of Hythe.
- Bylaw #2680-26-038 redesignating a portion of land from a Rural Light Industrial (RM-1) district to a Rural Industrial – Direct Control (RM-DC) district. The land is located east of Highway 43 and south of Highway 672, immediately south of the Hamlet of Hythe.
- Bylaw #2680-26-039 redesignating a portion of land from an Agriculture (AG) district to a Rural Medium Industrial (RM-2). The land is located east of Range Road 63 and 0.5 miles south of Highway 672, approximately four miles southwest of the Town of Sexsmith within the Emerson Trail Industrial Area.

The three rezoning applications were considered during the September 21 Public Hearing.

Bylaw Deferred — Council deferred third reading of Bylaw #2680-26-040 to redesignate a portion of land from a Comprehensive Commercial (CC) district to a Rural-Medium Industrial (RM-2) district until the Bylaw #2680-26-046, amendments to the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) are considered for third reading.

Portions of Public Works Road Closed — Council gave third and final reading to Bylaw #3285 - Road Closure of Portions of Public Works Road (Service Road), Plan 262 0772 located at 11041 97 Street, Clairmont.

ATCO Gas and Electric Franchise Fees — Council directed Administration to reduce the ATCO Gas and Electric Franchise Fees to zero per cent for the Hamlet of Hythe, and to maintain the additional Tax for Hythe related to the debt repayment for the 2027 tax year.

As part of debt repayment considerations, Council also directed Administration to bring forward options for a vitality fund and community programming through local community boards, including funding opportunities, for consideration at a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

Council Internal, Intermunicipal, Regional Boards and Committees Review — Council received and approved the summary of Council's various internal, intermunicipal, regional boards and committees as presented.

Honouring Milestones in Municipal Leadership — Council approved Policy F3 – Council Recognition as presented. This policy recognizes and honours County Councillors for their years of service through milestone service pins and certificates and provides a recognition plaque when they leave office.

Grande Prairie Live Theatre Society Receives Emergency Funding — Council provided the Grande Prairie Live Theatre Society $10,000 in emergency operating funding, to be directed toward the Society's 2026 operational deficit.

Public Hearings:

- Council gave final reading to Bylaw #2680-26-042 to redesignate land located approximately 2.25 miles northwest of the Hamlet of Bezanson, west of Range Road 40, and north of Township Road 724 from an Agricultural (AG) District to a County Residential (CR-5) District.
- Council gave final reading to Bylaw #2680-26-043 to redesignate land located approximately 2.5 miles east of the Town of Sexsmith, between Range Roads 53 and 54, and south of Township Road 734 from an Agricultural (AG) District to a County Residential (CR-5) District.
- Council gave final reading to Bylaw #2680-26-044 to redesignate land located approximately 5.22 miles from the Town of Beaverlodge, east of Range Road 112, and north of Township Road 720 from an Agricultural (AG) District to a Country Residential (CR-5) District.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police News

Alberta RCMP issues 1,861 tickets as part of #Operation Impact2026 traffic safety campaign

During the Thanksgiving long weekend, the Alberta RCMP participated in enforcement initiatives as part of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police's #OperationImpact2026, a campaign aimed at reducing injuries and fatalities on Canadian roadways.

From Oct. 9 to 12, 2026, the following Immediate Roadside Sanctions (IRS) were issued:

- Four drivers received IRS 24-hour suspensions
- 21 drivers received IRS WARNS
- 55 drivers received IRS FAILS
- Seven novice or commercial drivers received IRS ZEROES.

Additionally, officers issued 1,861 traffic violation tickets, including 755 for speeding, 32 for distracted driving, and 25 for seatbelt infractions.

Despite enforcement efforts, there were 15 injury collisions and two fatal collisions during the enforcement period. In total, two people lost their lives.

"Operation Impact is an important reminder that road safety requires constant attention behind the wheel," says Sgt. Darrin Turnbull, Alberta RCMP Traffic Services. "While enforcement plays a role, every driver has a responsibility to make safe choices and help keep Alberta's roads safe."

For more traffic safety information, follow us on Facebook @RCMPinAlberta and on X @RCMPAlberta.

Alberta RCMP reminds road users to stay safe during low-light conditions

As daylight hours decrease and more Albertans commute during periods of limited visibility, the Alberta RCMP is reminding drivers and pedestrians to take extra precautions to stay safe on roadways.

Motorists should remember:

- Be especially mindful when driving in school and playground zones during periods of low light.
- Always obey the posted speed limit so you can stop safely when necessary.
- Never pass vehicles that are stopped at a crosswalk. There may be pedestrians crossing that you cannot see.
- Never assume pedestrians can see you. Before turning at an intersection, make eye contact with pedestrians whenever possible and ensure the crosswalk is clear before proceeding.
- Drivers should be aware that both marked and unmarked crosswalks may exist at intersections and must yield to pedestrians who are lawfully crossing.
- Pedestrians should remember:
- Follow the rules of the road and obey all posted signs and signals.
- Always try to cross at marked crosswalks. If a crosswalk is not available, locate a well-lit area where you have the best view of traffic, and only cross when it's safe.
- Make sure motorists can see you and that traffic has come to a complete stop before entering a crosswalk.
- If you are walking when visibility is low, consider wearing high-visibility gear or clothing.
- If no sidewalk is available, walk facing oncoming traffic and keep as far from vehicles as safely possible.

"Reduced visibility can make it harder for drivers to see pedestrians and for pedestrians to accurately judge approaching traffic," says Sgt. Darrin Turnbull, Alberta RCMP Traffic Services. "A few extra seconds of caution can help prevent serious collisions and keep everyone safe."

For more traffic safety information, follow us on Facebook @RCMPinAlberta and on X @RCMPAlberta.

High stakes:

Unpacking Canada's beef price surge

ATB Economics

Key points

- Droughts and processing bottlenecks have pushed beef prices beyond general food inflation, placing a squeeze on both consumers and producers.
- The herd rebuilding cycle has begun, but because cattle production follows a strict 24-to-36-month biological timeline, tight market supply and elevated prices will persist in the medium term.
- Choosing Canadian beef over foreign imports preserves essential price signals, encouraging Canadian producers to expand their herds, supporting industry longevity and protecting Canada's food sovereignty.

Step into the meat department of any Canadian grocery store, and the price tags on ground beef and your favourite cuts of steak tell a stark story. The increase in beef prices has been outpacing general food inflation, forcing consumers who want to eat beef to stretch their grocery budgets, switch from premium cuts to less expensive options like ground beef and brisket, or cut back in other areas.

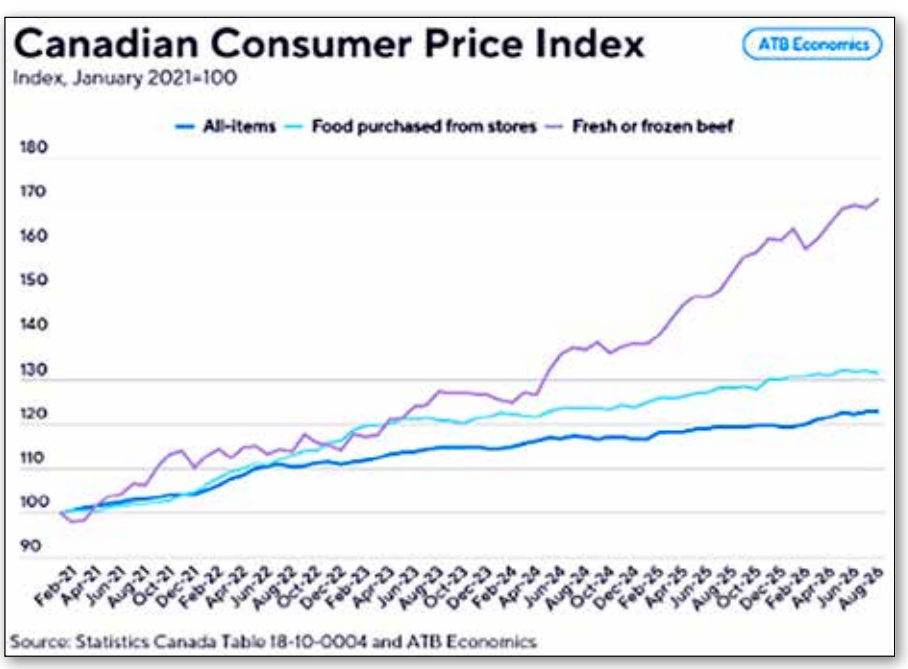
For today's Twenty-Four, we sat down with Lee Irvine, Director and Beef Segment Specialist at ATB Financial, and second-generation cattle producer, to unpack what's driving beef prices, how we got here, and when—or if—we can expect relief.

Compared to five years ago, the price of food in Canada purchased from grocery stores is up 29%; for beef, it's 61%. Shoppers are feeling the squeeze, but higher beef prices aren't yielding windfall profits for local ranchers.

"Ranchers and feedlots don't set the price and they're not getting rich," Lee notes. Like consumers, ranchers are also dealing with inflation due to rising operating expenses and the increased cost of replacing breeding stock and feedlot inventory.

Beyond the price

To understand what is driving prices, it helps to examine how value flows through the beef supply chain. Retailers and meatpackers establish wholesale prices based on consumer demand, sending a price ripple backward to feedlots (where cattle are fed to reach their optimal weight before harvest) and, ultimately, cow-calf producers on the ranch.



The primary catalyst for today's tight supply was severe droughts between 2021 and 2023 in western Canada and the United States. Parched pastures and soaring feed costs forced ranchers to reduce their herds, shrinking North American cattle inventories to multi-decade lows. Initially, this shortage gave feedlots short-term pricing power as meatpackers bid aggressively to keep plants running. But as packers absorbed severe operational losses, they pivoted to their primary operational lever of slowing down processing line speeds and reducing shifts.

"The packers slowed their chain speeds and reduced shifts, which backed up the feedlots," Lee explains. "That increases the supply of cattle waiting, allowing packers to bid lower and shift leverage back into their favour."

By restricting plant capacity, packers created a bottleneck that backed up feedlot inventories well above normal levels, escalating cost pressures and eliminating margins for operators.

The farm gate

As feedlots absorbed those losses, lower purchase offers trickled down to cow-calf ranchers. Faced with weaker market bids for calves, ranchers made a decision that will ultimately set the stage for consumer price relief down the road: keeping young heifers on pasture to breed rather than selling them into a losing market. Expanding breeding herds today is the essential first step to increasing tomorrow's beef supply and bringing retail prices back down.

While heifer retention officially marks the beginning of the herd rebuilding phase, relief for family food budgets will not happen overnight.

"This is a time functionality that we don't have—we physically cannot speed it up," Lee emphasizes. "This isn't like putting another shift onto a manufacturing facility to just make more widgets."

Because it takes 24 to 36 months to retain a heifer, breed her, raise her calf, and bring that beef to retail shelves, North American supplies will remain tight. In the meantime, controlled processing speeds will keep wholesale supplies disciplined and retail prices elevated.

Food sovereignty and the future

When domestic prices spike, a common question arises: why not import cheaper foreign beef? While meatpackers may favour foreign imports to lower costs, Canadian cattle ranchers strongly oppose them. Flooding the market with cheap imports disrupts domestic price signals, discouraging ranchers from reinvesting in their herds. Protecting those price signals is essential to maintaining Canada's long-term food sovereignty, ensuring a self-sustaining agricultural sector, and keeping the next generation of ranchers on the land.

Ultimately, the choice at the meat counter carries weight far beyond a single grocery bill. Buying "beef with the leaf" supports Canadian producers, workers and the economy.

"We owe the consumer a debt of gratitude," says Lee. "They continue to support us and choose Canadian beef, even when budgets are tight. When consumers buy Canadian, they aren't just supporting current food production—they're helping secure the next generation that will feed the next generation of Canadians."

Grande Prairie winter clothing drive helps families prepare for cold weather





By Sam William

In a warm and reassuring atmosphere, a major winter clothing distribution event was held on Thursday, October 15, 2026, at the headquarters of the Grande Prairie and Area Family Resource Network. Organized as part of the community warm clothing drive, the initiative drew numerous families looking to gear up for the cold season.

On-site, parents who came to collect coats, toque hats, and gloves for their children had high praise for this wave of generosity, calling the event a true relief. The sentiment was echoed by adults, who were also able to find winter clothing in their sizes.

This support proves especially valuable for newcomers and refugees settled in Canada. Lacking sufficient financial means to invest in often costly winter gear, many are experiencing the harshness of Alberta's climate for the first time. Thanks to the mobilization of local partners and community donations, families and individuals left the event better equipped to face the winter with peace of mind.

Council to hear proposal for six-storey hotel

By Grande Prairie Press staff

Grande Prairie city council will hold a public hearing November 2 on a proposal that would allow a hotel to rise two storeys higher than current rules permit.

The City has received an application to amend the Direct Control DC-12 District in the Land Use Bylaw, raising the maximum building height for a hotel from four storeys to six. The City describes it as a text-only amendment. If approved, it would clear the way for a six-storey hotel on the property legally described as Lot 2, Block 4, Plan 1722018.

The hearing begins at 6 p.m. Monday, Nov. 2, in City Council Chambers at 10205 98 Street. It will also be livestreamed on the City's website at cityofgp.com. Anyone who feels affected by the proposal, or who wants to weigh in, can present at the hearing in person or by Zoom. To attend remotely or submit a presentation in advance, contact Legislative Services at AgendaAdmin@cityofgp.com or 780-357-8747 to receive a Zoom link. Written submissions become part of the public record.

The draft bylaw, C-1260-216, is linked in the City's notice. Copies can also be viewed at the Planning and Development Department in the City Service Centre, 9505 112 Street, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Questions about the proposal can go to City planner Zeel Patel at 780-882-7811 or zpatel@cityofgp.com.



On the road to better dental access





Photos: Shine Dental



By Haylee Winger

For Marilyn Alexander, a dental hygiene appointment can happen just about anywhere there is room to park her van.

Alexander, a registered dental hygienist and owner of Shine Dental Hygiene, has taken her practice on the road, travelling from her Grande Prairie base to provide dental hygiene services in communities throughout the surrounding area.

Her mobile clinic is housed inside a fully equipped van, allowing patients to receive care without making the trip to a conventional dental office.

Alexander said the idea developed after years of working in traditional dental settings. She wanted to create an option that would give patients more flexibility while still providing professional dental hygiene care.

"I wanted to do things a little differently — more personal, more flexible and a whole lot calmer," Alexander said.

The service can be particularly useful for people whose schedules or locations make regular dental appointments more difficult. Alexander said she works with rural residents as well as busy families, new parents and people whose jobs involve shift work or camps.

The van can travel to homes, workplaces and community locations, bringing the appointment to the patient rather than the other way around.

That approach has led to some unusual encounters.

Alexander recalled one patient asking whether he could bring his donkeys along to his appointment.

She initially thought he was talking about stuffed animals.

"He meant his actual donkeys," Alexander said.

The animals came along, turning an otherwise ordinary dental hygiene appointment into one Alexander is unlikely to forget.

For her, the story also illustrates the flexibility she hopes to offer through Shine Dental Hygiene.

"I created Shine to make dental hygiene easier," she said.

Alexander provides mobile dental hygiene services in Grande Prairie, Sexsmith, Wembley, Clairmont, Beaverlodge and Grovedale.

Appointments are offered Thursday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m., giving patients the option of evening and weekend appointments.

Shine Dental Hygiene also offers direct billing and accepts insurance coverage, including the Canadian Dental Care Plan and Non-Insured Health Benefits.

A 2026 profile by the Rural Health Professions Action Plan highlighted Alexander's mobile approach to providing dental hygiene care to rural residents and the access challenges faced by people living outside larger centres. The profile noted that Alexander takes her dental van to rural residents within about an hour of Grande Prairie and occasionally travels as far as Grande Cache. Alexander said seasonal work can create another barrier for people in agricultural communities, where finding time for appointments can be difficult.

"Farming and rural settings have their own unique set of challenges with access to dental care," she said.

By taking the equipment and clinic to patients, Alexander said she hopes to remove some of the time and travel involved in maintaining regular dental hygiene appointments.

"It's convenient, private and makes appointments easier to keep," she said.

Shine Dental Hygiene does not charge travel fees in the areas it serves.

For information or appointments, Alexander can be reached at (204) 470-6678. Visit our website at www.shinedentalhygiene.ca.

For Alexander, the mobile model is ultimately about meeting people where they are — even if, on occasion, that means sharing the appointment with a couple of donkeys.

Your community, your paper

By Valerie Winger

Who should we be writing about?

The Grande Prairie Press wants to hear from you!

We're looking to highlight the people, groups, and stories that make Grande Prairie a great place to live.

Do you know a dedicated volunteer, a coach making a difference, a community group doing good work, or someone with a story worth sharing? We'd love to hear about them.

Readers are also welcome to submit community photographs, school, and sports achievements, local events and story suggestions.

Help us celebrate the people and activities that make Grande Prairie unique.

Send your suggestions and photos to admin@grandeprairiepress.ca. Please include names, relevant details and photo credit where applicable.



Talk To Me Society raises awareness of mental health support for first responders









Representatives of local mental health programs and organizations receive cheques from Talk To Me Society. The funds were raised through the society's annual fun run and golf tournament. **Photos: Talk To Me Society**

By Valerie Winger

For Belinda Sieker and her daughters, the work of supporting first responders through mental health challenges is deeply personal.

Eight years ago, they lost a son and brother, Dustin, to suicide. The loss inspired Belinda to push for greater awareness and better access to mental health support for those who dedicate their careers to helping others.

Dustin worked for Alberta Health Services for 15 years as a first responder. According to Belinda, he did not have access to the mental health support he needed.

Following his death, she recognized a need for greater awareness and more accessible support for people working in emergency services.

In 2019, Belinda helped establish Talk To Me Society, with a focus on mental health awareness, particularly among men and first responders who may struggle to reach out for help.

First responders, including paramedics, police, frontline workers and firefighters, can be exposed to traumatic situations through their work. Belinda believes stronger mental health programs and supports are needed within emergency services.

Belinda would like to see mandatory mental health programs and greater access to resources for first responders. Support can differ between professions, and she believes paramedics in particular need more attention when it comes to mental health services.

The society also recognizes the importance of mental health education in schools and encouraging young people to speak up and seek help when they are struggling.

Fundraising allows Talk To Me Society to support programs working in the mental health field. Its annual events include a fun run held during the first weekend in May and a golf tournament during the second week of September, both supported by volunteers.

At its peak, the fun run attracted about 600 registered participants. Participation declined during the COVID-19 pandemic and was later affected when a forest fire impacted trails at the Nordic Ski Hill where the event was held. The society hopes to build participation back up for its 2027 events.



Last week, Talk To Me Society distributed the remaining proceeds raised through its fun run and golf tournament, donating $23,000 to local mental health programs and initiatives.

Recipients included the EMS Foundation, Suicide Prevention's Tough Enough to Talk About It, The Men's Shed, You Be Youth and youth mental health with Alberta Health Services. Funding also went toward scholarships the society holds with the Northwestern Alberta Foundation.

The society's work with the Northwestern Alberta Foundation also includes the Talk to Me First Responder Fund, which supports mental health initiatives, training and professional development for first responders across Northwestern Alberta. Those eligible include police, EMS, firefighters and search and rescue personnel, both volunteer and professional.

The society also supports the Dustin Sieker Legacy Fund, which provides a scholarship for advanced paramedics.

The First Responder Fund has supported Camp F.I.R.E., which stands for Fostering Independence, Resilience and Empowerment. The three-day program introduces young women between the ages of 16 and 20 to careers in the fire service at no cost to participants.

Since it was established, Talk To Me Society has donated $130,000 to mental health programs and organizations.

The society credits the community's support and generosity with making those contributions possible and hopes to continue increasing the amount it can give back.

For Belinda, the work is a way to turn a devastating personal loss into an opportunity to help others. Through awareness, fundraising and support for mental health programs, she hopes more people will feel comfortable speaking up when they need help.

For more information about Talk To Me Society, email talktomesociety@gmail.com or visit the Talk To Me Society page on Facebook.

Anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide can call or text 9-8-8, Canada's Suicide Crisis Helpline, 24 hours a day.

Albertans looking for mental health and other community supports can also call 2-1-1, a free and confidential service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to connect people with programs and resources in their community.



PUZZLES & FUN

See Solutions page 15

SUDOKU

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

Level: Beginner

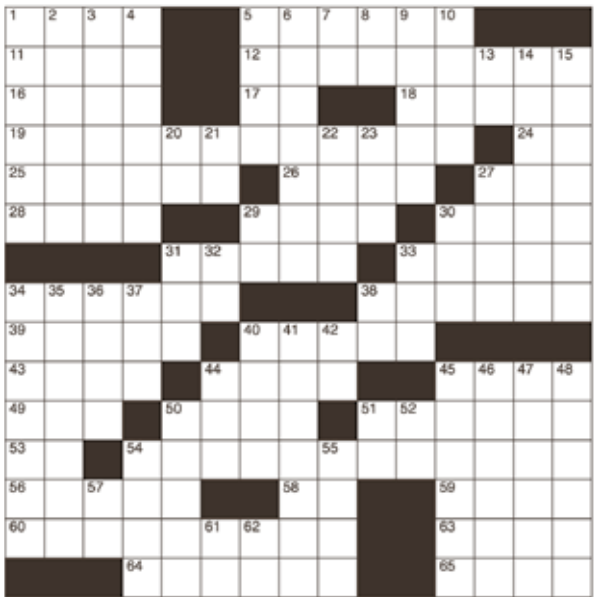
Fun By The Numbers

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!

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!

CROSSWORDS



Crossword Clues

CLUES ACROSS

1. Nocturnal rodent
5. Requesting
11. Give temporarily
12. Frivolousness
16. Military arm
17. "Westworld" actor Harris
18. Persian Gulf port city
19. Air hostesses
24. Partner to "Pa"
25. Percussion instrument
26. Raincoats
27. Lower the light
28. Asian mountain range
29. Every one of two or more
30. Lack of difficulty
31. A public announcement of a proposed marriage
33. Reduces in size
34. Make an impact
38. Serviceman
39. A French river
40. Prehistoric people
43. Messenger ribonucleic acid
44. "Layla" singer Clapton
45. Ancient Greek sophist
49. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
50. "Top Gun: Maverick" actor Powell
51. A way to disentangle
53. Atomic #93
54. Manifesting approval
56. Indigo bush
58. Larry and Curly's pal
59. Off-Broadway theater award
60. Fencers
63. Masses of fish eggs
64. Passerine birds
65. Arrange systematically

CLUES DOWN

1. Colorless part of blood
2. Of a main artery
3. Photog's tool
4. Blues Traveler hit "But __"
5. Grew older
6. Not the leader
7. __ Lang: country singer
8. A driver's license is one
9. Nests of pheasants
10. Antelopes
13. One quintillion bytes
14. Japanese lute
15. A type of cat
20. It cools your home
21. Dorm official
22. Pouches
23. German trigraph
27. Form of Persian
29. __ route
30. Upper body part
31. Bridge building degree
32. Indicates position
33. Political action committee
34. Edible nuts
35. Front part of a quadruped
36. Locate
37. Geological time
38. Of I
40. Northern Utah city
41. They work in the trenches
42. Hammer is one
44. Tall deciduous tree
45. Performers
46. Slang for mistake
47. More open
48. Most slick
50. Provokes
51. Home of the NCAA's Flyers
52. Sodium
54. Large fish of the mackerel family
55. Not one
57. __ and behold
61. Atomic #21
62. "The Great Lakes State"

SMALL BUSINESS WORD SEARCH

R	Y	T	I	U	Q	E	H	Y	T	I	L	I	B	A	L	A	C	S	G
L	M	B	V	A	H	G	I	E	U	N	E	V	E	R	P	S	P	Y	I
L	N	E	O	B	U	B	S	W	N	O	E	L	N	I	C	H	E	E	F
O	C	S	P	O	S	U	Y	R	O	T	N	E	V	N	I	S	C	C	P
R	B	F	L	I	T	G	R	P	L	N	R	Q	O	S	F	P	H	N	G
Y	D	V	E	P	V	S	C	N	U	E	N	B	C	R	R	Y	V	A	F
A	N	P	A	M	O	O	T	O	N	L	N	I	N	L	L	T	B	I	H
P	B	I	W	C	Y	O	T	R	E	E	H	N	L	R	H	I	R	L	C
Q	D	H	V	P	Q	U	V	D	A	P	U	O	U	T	S	L	L	P	A
N	Y	S	W	Q	G	U	O	P	A	P	Y	C	S	F	Q	I	M	M	P
O	C	R	B	F	G	M	I	R	E	P	P	C	F	Q	R	B	A	O	T
F	N	O	F	R	C	L	G	S	F	S	I	I	U	S	I	A	R	C	I
U	W	T	Q	P	A	O	D	Y	I	T	I	S	N	L	P	I	G	I	A
B	O	E	C	C	M	N	U	W	S	T	G	H	P	G	R	L	I	R	L
D	L	I	A	E	Q	F	D	I	R	R	I	O	C	O	P	O	N	Y	V
G	F	R	D	Q	F	N	G	O	W	P	E	O	H	N	M	E	A	D	B
C	H	P	T	L	E	O	D	N	Q	D	U	D	N	C	A	D	C	B	P
H	S	O	N	S	L	N	B	N	T	Y	F	L	G	D	H	R	S	F	L
D	A	R	A	Q	E	N	O	I	T	N	E	T	E	R	W	T	F	H	U
S	C	P	O	V	E	C	G	S	V	D	A	E	H	R	E	V	O	U	Y

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

ACQUISITION
BOOTSTRAPPING
BRAND
CAPITAL
CASHFLOW
COMPLIANCE
DEMOGRAPHICS
EQUITY
FRANCHISE
FUNNEL
INVENTORY
LIABILITY
LOGISTICS
MARGIN
MODEL
NICHE
OVERHEAD
PAYROLL
PIVOT
PROPRIETORSHIP
RETENTION
REVENUE
SCALABILITY
VENDOR

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21 - April 20)

This is a great week for you, Aries. You are empathetic and tuned into your surroundings. You might feel warm and friendly to everyone.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21)

Taurus, this is a feel-good week for you. Enjoy spending some private moments during which you reflect on the things you want to accomplish.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Gemini, sympathy toward a cause or a friend may prompt you to become involved in a charitable organization. You also are interested in learning more from others.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22)

Use the fact that others are noticing you to your advantage, Cancer. You can set good examples by being compassionate and generous to others.

LEO (July 23 - August 23)

Leo, your desire to expand your world is strong this week. You may renew an interest in travel and begin making progress on some big ideas.

VIRGO (August 24 - September 22)

You are happy to be working behind the scenes, Virgo. However, you might take on a prominent fundraising role or engage in other activities that benefit others.

LIBRA (September 23 - October 23)

This is a popular time for you to converse with others and interact with members of the general public, Libra. You might develop a strong connection to someone new.

SCORPIO (October 24 - November 22)

Scorpio, you might make a fabulous impression on someone this week. This might compel this person and others to get involved with a cause dear to your heart.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)

Do something different this week, Sagittarius. You are open for an adventure. Accept invitations to socialize, and use your free time to the fullest.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)

Capricorn, you are sensitive to the needs of family members right now. You might be on a mission to help someone who needs assistance by researching programs or funding.

AQUARIUS (January 21 - February 18)

Aquarius, you may have to be especially patient with a loved one who is still trying to process the news you gave them. Everyone deals with things in their own time.

PISCES (February 19 - March 20)

Pisces, if you can do something to help others, especially within your professional arena, do not hesitate to do it. Your willingness to assist others will not go unnoticed.

Reducing the mental load of household finances

(NC) Like many people, you might find yourself constantly running through your mental to-do list, and it never seems to end. This mental load can be heavy, with a significant portion of it related to financial management.

When too many of these tasks pile up, they compete for attention, leading to decision fatigue and things falling through the cracks. But there are simple steps that can help you towards reducing the weight of the mental load.

1. Stop remembering, automate instead

If you're relying on your memory to manage your finances, you're doing more work that you need to. You can set aside 10 minutes out of your day to write down all the financial to-dos that are on your mind: upcoming bills, recurring expenses and long-term priorities. A clear list can help you prioritize and stay organized.

You can also quickly set up automated actions for regular payments or set re-occurring reminders to notify you of important dates, scheduling automatic transfers for payments and savings, and setting up auto-pay on your bills.

2. Check if your money is protected

Peace of mind is a key part of reducing financial stress. When you're confident that your savings are secure, it removes a layer of worry. In Canada, the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation (CDIC) exists to protect depositors in the rare event of bank failure. This organization protects eligible deposits held at member institutions, with coverage up to $100,000 per insured category. Protection is free and automatic. You can check if you bank with a member institution by consulting the full list of members on their website and calculate how much of your money is protected by using their online deposit insurance calculator.

3. Share the responsibility

The mental load of managing household finances doesn't need to be done by one person alone. If you share a household, explore where its other members can help in managing financial tasks by splitting the responsibilities. When doing this, it's good to have regular check-ins to ensure you're on track to your shared goals. If this isn't an option, you may also want to reach out to your financial institution for advice and to explore other money management options.

By getting organized, automating tasks, sharing responsibilities and learning how you're protected, you can turn a jumbled mental list into something far more manageable. You can learn more about the ways you're protected by consulting the deposit insurance calculator at cdic.ca.



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CLASSIFIEDS

Announcements

THE MINISTER OF ASSISTED LIVING and Social Services is seeking applications from individuals interested in serving as members for the Medical Appeal Panel. Visit: https://public-agency-list.alberta.ca/ search for medical appeal panel.

Coming Events

FIREARMS WANTED FOR OUR 2026 AUCTION PROGRAM: Firearms, Ammunition, Accessories, or Militaria. Collections, Estates or single items. For Auction, or Possible Purchase: Contact us: 1-800-694-2609, Email: sales@switzersauction.com or Visit us @ www.switzersauction.com for Auction Dates & Details.

Employment Opportunities

ROCKY MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT IS HIRING: Parts Technicians, Agriculture & Heavy Equipment Techs - Journeyman, Apprentices, CVIP/Truck Techs, Shop and Field positions available. View Open Roles www.rockymtn.com/careers. Possible Relocation and Signing Bonus Offered.

Employment Wanted

BLANKET THE PROVINCE with a classified ad. Only $269/wk (based on 25 words or less). Reach 75 weekly newspapers. Call NOW for details. 1-800-282-6903; www.awna.com; email classifieds@awna.com.

Services

PRIVATE MORTGAGE LENDER. All real estate types considered. No credit checks done. Deal direct with lender and get quick approval. 403-543-0927; www.firstandsecondmortgages.ca

CANADIAN PICKERS! Downsizing? Moving? Buying Silver Flatware & Jewelry. We buy all Mint sets, Gold Jewelry, Rings, Chains, etc. Ted or Joy 825-966-4373.

Travel

OSOYOOS LAKESHORE VILLA: Executive lakeview villa in Osoyoos, BC, breathtaking lake and mountain views; just 3 minutes from town. Vacation in Canada's warmest destination. Or warmer weather, two luxurious 5-star resort units in Phoenix, Arizona. Doug 306-716-2671 or visit osoyooslakevilla.com.

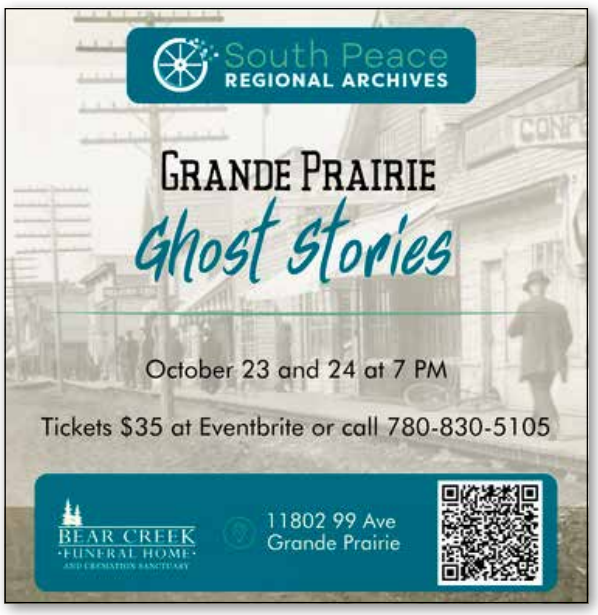
BUYING OLD JEWELRY
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Gold Coins
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Ghost Stories Returning



Press Release

We are thrilled to announce that Grande Prairie Ghost Stories is returning for its fifth annual evening of haunted history, chilling local lore, and mysterious tales drawn from our region's past. Hosted by the South Peace Regional Archives and Bear Creek Funeral Home, this unique evening will feature local history, ghostly encounters, and even the first hand experiences of the Bear Creek Funeral Home staff and strange beginnings of some modern-day funeral rites.

"Ghost stories is such a fun night," shared one previous participant, "Local and regional stories that you may never have even known existed. Eunice uses humor and compassion to tell the stories and her own experiences for an entertaining evening. Can't wait for this year!"

"I'm especially excited to hear the true Peace Country story that Ellyn from the Archives will be sharing this year," says Friesen. "Many people have heard bits and pieces of it over the years, but the full story is quite a wild ride — with a very satisfying ending. I'll still be sharing the crowd favourites that are sure to make your spine tingle, but I've also added something new this year. Let's just say some of the stories we grew up with were much darker than we realized." With refreshments inspired by the stories, the evening promises to be a spine chilling good time.

Not only will attendees get to enjoy spooky stories, they will help to ensure that more of our regional stories are preserved for future generations, as all proceeds from the event go to support the South Peace Regional Archives. "We are thrilled to collaborate with Bear Creek Funeral Home again be able to share some of the colourful characters from the Peace Region's History," says South Peace Regional Archives Society President Duff Crerar. "After all, all the most interesting people to know – are dead."

Grande Prairie Ghost Stories will be October 23 and 24, starting at 7 pm at Bear Creek Funeral Home. Anyone interested in taking part can purchase tickets at https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/grande-prairie-ghost-stories-2026-tickets-2003087728317, and any groups of six to eight can contact the South Peace Regional Archives to reserve a table. Organizers recommend attendees bring cash for snacks and raffles, and costumes are welcome. Most of all, we invite our community to join us for an evening of spooky stories you will be sure to remember long after the lights come back on.

About the South Peace Regional Archives

The goal of the South Peace Regional Archives is to gather, preserve, and share records of Alberta's South Peace River region. These records come in various forms, including textual records, paper artifacts, photographs, maps, sound recordings, and film. The Archives processes and preserves historical records that have been donated to prolong their lifespan. We provide reference services and access to the records in the Archives' collections through our public reading room and website.

We provide outreach events and services, including a quarterly magazine, guided tours, and archival exhibits shared throughout the community. Finally, through our Indigenous History Committee, we support Reconciliation work and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The Archives is the only public access archives within the South Peace River Country in Alberta, which includes the City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, MD of Greenview, MD of Spirit River, County of Birch Hills and County of Saddle Hills. We are located within the ancestral and traditional lands of many Indigenous Peoples, and within Treaty 8 territory.


Photo: Submitted



Grande Prairie researchers publish book on Maya archaeology in Belize



Photos: Submitted



By Haylee Winger

The history of an ancient Maya town in Belize might seem a world away from Grande Prairie, but two local researchers see a connection between the settlement and the region's own boomtown past.

Dr. Meaghan Peuramaki-Brown and Dr. Shawn Morton have spent more than a decade studying the Alabama Townsite in Belize as part of the Stann Creek Regional Archaeology Project. Their work, along with that of co-author Dr. Jill Jordan, is now the subject of a new book, From House to Home: Small-Town Maya Archaeology in Belize, published by the University of Toronto Press.

Peuramaki-Brown is an associate professor of archaeology and anthropology at Athabasca University, while Morton teaches anthropology at Northwestern Polytechnic. Both are Grande Prairie residents. Jordan is an independent scholar based in New Orleans.

The book examines the researchers' work at Alabama, an Ancestral Maya settlement that had about 1,000 residents at its peak around AD 800. It also explores the practical side of archaeology, including how researchers establish long-term projects, make decisions and build relationships with local communities.

In an interview with the Grande Prairie Press, the authors said the idea grew from their own experiences. While plenty of resources explain archaeological methods, theories and discoveries, they found less guidance on the challenges of establishing and sustaining a research project after completing a PhD.

They were invited to write the book by Bob Muckle, editor of the University of Toronto Press's Teaching Archaeology series.

Research at Alabama has also changed the team's understanding of the settlement's history. Earlier archaeological work from the late 1980s and early 1990s suggested the town developed quickly and was occupied for only a few hundred years near the end of the Classic period. The team's more recent work has identified earlier and later periods of habitation, separated by distinct periods of abandonment, adding new detail to the history of the settlement and its development.

While Alabama was a relatively modest Maya settlement, the researchers said studying communities like it helps build a better understanding of how ordinary people lived in the ancient world.

"To truly understand a culture, we can't just focus on the most famous sites or the wealthiest individuals," the authors said. "It's crucial to explore how everyday life was for the majority."

The researchers said their work in Belize has continued to raise new questions as they uncover more about the settlement.

"It's a great reminder that in archaeology, our questions often change and grow as we discover more," the authors said. "Archaeology is the ultimate example of a (re) discovery science!"

For Peuramaki-Brown and Morton, the research also connects to their work closer to home at the Old Bezanson Townsite, east of Grande Prairie.

The Belize settlement and Old Bezanson represent very different cultures and periods, but the researchers compare both to boomtowns. Their work examines how communities develop and the circumstances that shape their histories.

Lessons from the Belize project have also influenced the team's approach in Alberta, where public volunteers and local interest groups play an important role in the research.

"Our research at Bezanson only functions with the assistance, support, and input of a whole host of public volunteers and interest groups," the authors said.

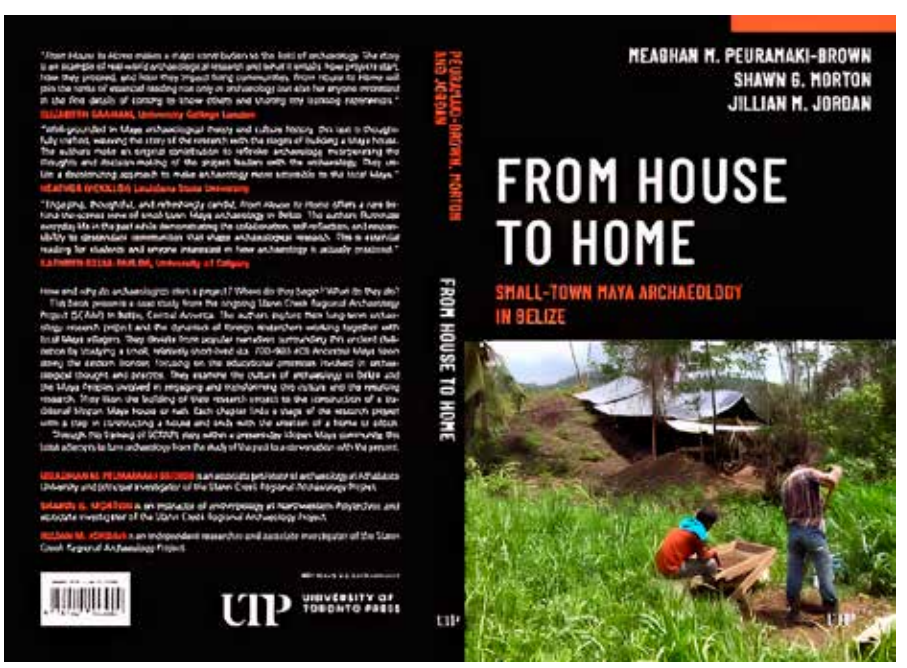
They also credited the County of Grande Prairie No. 1, Athabasca University and Northwestern Polytechnic for supporting the Alberta project.

Community involvement has been central to the team's work in Belize as well. The authors said archaeology has historically been criticized for allowing outside researchers to excavate sites and leave without providing lasting benefits to local or descendant communities.

They believe local communities should have a meaningful role in archaeological research, from planning projects to sharing the results. Building that involvement takes time and trust, and the book examines the team's experiences, including the challenges and unexpected developments along the way.

Although the book was written with archaeology students in mind, the authors hope it will also interest readers curious about the past and how researchers study it.

The publication marks an important milestone for the team, but the research continues. The authors plan to return to the field in Belize in the summer of 2027 while working to complete several outstanding studies.



City of Grande Prairie Council highlights

Information from the City of Grande Prairie Press

Delegations

Shirley Hok spoke to Council about Access GP. Council received the report for information.

Other Business

Public Member Appointment Resignation

Council accepted the resignation of one public member from the Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee.

2026 Canadian Wrestling Championships

Council endorsed a contribution of $40,000 from the Grande Prairie Sport Hosting Society to the Grande Prairie Wrestling Club, representing a legacy investment from the 2026 Canadian Wrestling Championships.

One of the objectives of hosting the Canadian Wrestling Championships was to create a legacy for the local wrestling community. The $40K will support the purchase of wrestling mats and strengthen the Club's capacity to deliver programming, athlete development opportunities, and future events in Grande Prairie. This investment aligns with one of the key legacy objectives and ensures that a substantial portion of the benefits generated through hosting the Championships remain within the local sport community.

Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta Non-Vegetative Grant Approval - Update Wildfire Mitigation Strategy

Council supported the FRIAA (Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta) grant application to update the 2019 Wildfire Mitigation Strategy. The FRIAA-funded grant application represents a significant expansion of previous wildfire mitigation work by completing a city-wide Wildfire Hazard and Risk Assessment and Wildfire Mitigation Strategy across the entire municipal boundary. Building on lessons learned from the 2019 strategy, subsequent vegetation management initiatives, fireguard construction, and home assessment programs, the project will establish a sustainable 10-year wildfire risk reduction and vegetation management framework.

Policy 606 – Snow and Ice Control Amendments

Council approved amendments to Policy 606 - Snow and Ice Control. Council referred the rear laneway service level increase to the 2027 budget deliberations. The amendments include updates to revise snow-storage practices in dual-sidewalk areas, rebalance the Week A/Week B residential schedule, and update the applicable schedules, while retaining the current service level for downtown disabled parking, and housekeeping measures that address administrative language changes within Policy 606.

The amendments to Policy 606 reflect operational experience and are intended to improve the efficiency, reliability and clarity of the City's snow and ice control program.

Oil Wives Club builds friendship and community in Grande Prairie



By Haylee Winger





Photos: Submitted

For more than six decades, the Oil Wives Club of Grande Prairie has been bringing women together through friendship, support and community involvement.

The local chapter of the Association of Oil Wives Clubs has been operating for 61 years, offering a place for women whose husbands work in the oilfield industry to connect with others who understand the challenges that can come with the lifestyle. The club also welcomes associate members who do not have a connection to the oil industry.

With 24 members ranging in age from 35 to 85, the group continues to provide opportunities for women to build friendships, take part in activities and give back to the community.

For Lorraine Millions, the friendships formed through the club have been especially meaningful. With her husband working in the oilfield, her family moved frequently to follow employment opportunities, making it difficult to settle into unfamiliar communities.

"With my husband working in the oilfield, we moved often to follow the work, so it was scary starting over in a strange place," Millions said. She said the club brings together women who understand what it is like to have a partner away for weeks at a time while managing a household, raising children and handling everyday responsibilities.

Members meet on the second Monday of each month from September through June at the Golden Star Restaurant, gathering for a meal and a monthly meeting. The membership fee is $30.

Beyond its regular meetings, the club organizes Thursday lunches and attends events at the local Legion, giving members additional opportunities to spend time together.

Community involvement is also an important part of the group's activities. Members volunteer with initiatives such as Coats for Kids, Grande Prairie Live Theatre and the Rotary food bank drive. The club also makes donations to organizations in need.

The Association of Oil Wives Clubs holds an annual convention at locations throughout Alberta and Saskatchewan, bringing members together from different chapters. Grande Prairie members recently attended the Oil Wives Club of Fort St. John's gathering, which attracted more than 200 attendees. The local chapter operates under the association's constitution and has a long history of dedicated membership, including a lifetime member who has served on both the association's board and the Grande Prairie club's executive board.

Women interested in learning more about the Oil Wives Club of Grande Prairie can contact Lorraine Millions by text at 587-297-4777 or by email at grandeprairieoilwives@gmail.com.

Alberta is betting billions on an unpredictable AI future

The province is making a multibillion-dollar wager that demand for massive AI data centres will keep growing

By Doug Firby

We're all familiar with it: that quiet little voice that whispers an offer is too good to be true. Our Spidey sense tells us that there has to be a catch, even if we don't yet know what it is.

I had that feeling when I learned of plans to build several power-gobbling data centres in Alberta. Proponents promise prosperity, jobs and an unprecedented economic boost to regions hungry for investment. It's the sort of boosterism that has brought huge smiles to Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, whose government envisions turning the province into an artificial intelligence and data hub.

But there is good reason to question not only whether these promises will be fulfilled, but also at what cost. Before we rush headlong into the AI data-centre business, we need a much clearer idea of what we're getting into.

Consider the scale of what is being proposed.

The Mihta Askiy Data Center Project, about 40 kilometres northeast of Peace River, would include a 650-megawatt natural gas-fired power plant.

Then there's the Wonder Valley project in the Municipal District of Greenview, south of Grande Prairie. Promoted by "Mr. Wonderful" Kevin O'Leary through O'Leary Ventures, the proposed AI data centre campus could, at full buildout, reach 7.5 gigawatts and span thousands of acres, relying on natural gas and geothermal infrastructure.

Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, meanwhile, is investing more than $13 billion in an AI data centre north of Edmonton. The company says the project will support more than 3,000 construction jobs, but about 300 permanent positions once it is operating. The facility is expected to consume about one gigawatt of electricity.

And in Olds, the proposed $10-billion Synapse AI data centre and gas-fired power plant has generated extraordinary opposition, with more than 1,100 statements of intent to participate filed in the regulatory process.

These are enormous projects, amounting to a multibillion-dollar wager that demand for AI computing will keep growing for years. Maybe that will prove to be a very good bet. But Alberta seems awfully eager to push all its chips onto the table before some pretty basic questions have been answered.

These facilities can consume staggering amounts of electricity, and some require significant amounts of water. Residents worry about industrial noise and development.

And there is another question that deserves more attention: what happens to electricity and natural gas prices when enormous new industrial users start competing for energy?

It also strikes me as more than a little ironic that Alberta has restricted the development of solar projects, in part because of concerns about taking agricultural land out of production, while welcoming data centres that could occupy thousands of acres.

Apparently, acres are not all created equal. None of those concerns alone is necessarily a reason to reject a data centre. Taken together, though, they deserve a lot more scrutiny than they appear to be getting.

Maybe those concerns would be easier to swallow if the economic promise of these projects were as certain as their promoters suggest.

But there's another reason my Spidey sense is tingling: what if Alberta is making this enormous bet just as the technology begins to change?

Robert Diab, a Thompson Rivers University law professor who writes about technology, recently argued in The Globe and Mail that AI data centres could be overbuilt or even obsolete by the time some are completed.

That's because some AI processing is moving away from giant cloud-based centres and onto the devices sitting on our desks and in our pockets. A friend recently showed me an app called ChatJimmy, which uses a specialized computer chip designed specifically to run an AI model. Apple and other technology companies are also moving more AI processing directly onto phones and computers.

No one can say with certainty where that technological shift will lead. Training massive AI models and handling complex applications still require enormous computing resources.

But when companies are proposing facilities costing many billions of dollars, the possibility that computing needs could change dramatically deserves more than a shrug.

I'm also not convinced the province is taking the potential environmental consequences seriously enough.

I recently received a form letter from Environment and Protected Areas Minister Grant Hunter explaining when Alberta requires an environmental impact assessment.

Hunter said an assessment is required where potential environmental effects are uncertain, unproven technologies are involved or cumulative effects may significantly affect the environment. He added that data centres use established technologies for power generation and water infrastructure that are already understood and regulated in Alberta.

If I'm reading that correctly, the argument is that because we understand the technologies involved, a data centre doesn't necessarily require an environmental impact assessment.

I'm pretty sure that response won't satisfy many of the people who will have to live beside these projects. And it doesn't really answer the bigger question.

The concern isn't whether Alberta understands how a natural gas power plant works. It is whether anyone is stepping back and considering what happens when numerous massive data centres, power plants and water users begin operating across the province.

To be fair, Alberta has some obvious advantages in attracting data centres: abundant natural gas, available land, engineering expertise and communities hungry for investment. There may well be a significant economic opportunity here.

It's too soon to declare that Alberta's proposed data centres will become a collection of white elephants. But there is good reason to wonder whether some will live up to promises of massive economic benefits and long-term job creation.

That's why some basic questions still need answers. What will these projects do to energy prices? How many permanent jobs will they actually create? And what happens if technological change makes today's extraordinary demand forecasts look wildly optimistic? Maybe there are convincing answers to those questions. If so, Albertans deserve to hear them. There is widely accepted wisdom that if your friend at the coffee shop gives you a hot tip on a stock, it's probably already too late to buy. Alberta should keep that in mind.

Because that little voice is still whispering: if something sounds too good to be true, there is usually a catch.

The data-centre boom may turn out to be every bit as transformative as its promoters claim. Or Alberta may be arriving at the party just as everyone else starts looking for their coats.

Either way, the government needs to smarten up and slow down.

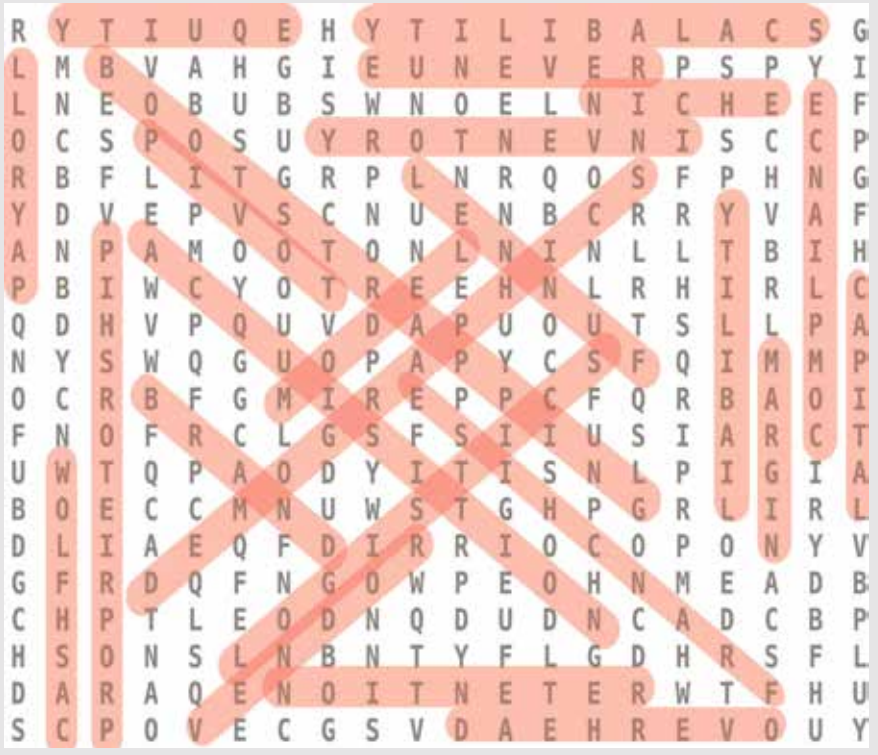
Doug Firby is an award-winning editorial writer with more than 40 years of experience in journalism. He previously served as Editorial Page Editor of the Calgary Herald.

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Grande Prairie peace officers issue 223 tickets during national traffic safety campaign



By Haylee Winger

A four-day traffic enforcement campaign in Grande Prairie resulted in 223 tickets being handed out by peace officers with Grande Prairie Enforcement Services.

Grande Prairie Enforcement Services participated in Operation Impact from October 9 to 12, a national traffic safety campaign aimed at reducing injuries and fatalities on Canadian roads by targeting high-risk driving behaviours.

Speeding made up the majority of the tickets issued, with 137 speeding offences recorded during the campaign. According to Grande Prairie Enforcement Services, 80 of those tickets were issued in school zones on October 9.

Officers also issued tickets for distracted driving, seatbelt violations and other traffic safety offences.

Grande Prairie Enforcement Services also worked with the Grande Prairie Police Service during the campaign, resulting in two impaired driving charges. Two suspended drivers and one uninsured vehicle were also removed from the road. During a traffic stop, officers discovered a driver was wanted on unrelated matters and executed two outstanding arrest warrants.

In a GPPS release, Peace Officer Sgt. Ryan Hoffman said the choices motorists make behind the wheel can have consequences for everyone using the road.

"Road safety is a shared responsibility. Decisions made behind the wheel have the potential to save lives and make our roads safer for everyone," Hoffman said. "Whether it's speeding, driving distracted, failing to wear a seatbelt, or driving while impaired, choosing to take unnecessary risks can have serious and lasting consequences."

Hoffman said making safe and responsible choices behind the wheel helps protect everyone using the roads.



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