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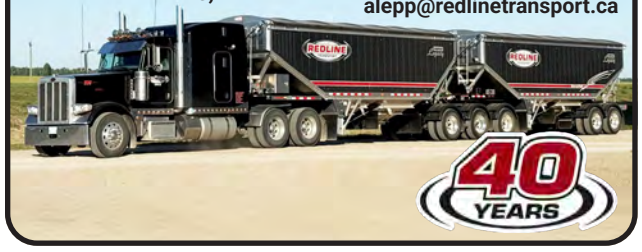
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Gazette-Reporter
Rivers Banner
Local People. Local Stories.

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Oak River student wins National poster award

PHOTOS BY CAMERON MOYER

Rachel Stahl's winning work will hang in the National War Museum.

The National winner of the Legion Poster Contest is an Oak River Colony student. Presenting the award is (L-R) Daryl Shipman - District 2 Commander, to Rachel Stahl of Oak River Colony, and Chris Flood – Legion Provincial Vice-President. Rachel receives an engraved glass tabletop plaque and the certificate that she holds as well as a prize.

By Anne Davison
Rivers Banner

A student from Oak River has been awarded the National winner of the Legion Poster Contest at the Intermediate Level (Gr. 7-9).

Rachel Stahl, a resident of Oak River Hutterite Colony and a student at Oak River Colony School. She entered her black and white charcoal/pencil work – the image of two soldiers – one, helmeted supporting a wounded fellow soldier with an overlay inscription saying: ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL.

Within the frame, a Maple leaf in the left bottom corner and poppy flowers in the upper right brought the Canadian and Veteran's Remembrance Day symbolism. The message is clear - empathy, struggle, commitment, hardship and camaraderie within the theatre of war.

Rachel has produced an evocative and impactful work showing a high level of skill.

Provincial Commander Chris Flood was thrilled to see this Manitoba artist come up a winner.

Flood said, "I can speak on behalf of the Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario Command office of the Legion. We are extremely excited."

He was impressed with the shading, the tones of this black and white piece. The subject matter - the story of bravery, heroism, and sacrifice are expressed so simply.

Tens of thousands of art pieces in the black/white category alone are filtered through local legion branches with only the winners advancing. Rachel's piece began with the Royal Canadian Legion Oak River Branch #150 and on to Zone 24, District 2 and then to Provincial competition.

Provincial winners are judged by Legion National Foundation where 10 provinces and three territories are represented with one winner being chosen in each of 14 categories.

Visiting Ottawa's National War Museum between November 11, 2026 and October 2027 you will find Rachel Stahl's pencil/charcoal artwork.

Through the annual National Youth Remembrance contests, the Legion National Foundation, with the support of The Royal Canadian Legion and schools across the country, educates Canada's youth in the history and impact of war and veterans' contributions over the decades.

All winners at the national level are awarded a cash prize for their work. First Place Senior Winners are eligible for the prestigious award – a trip to Ottawa and an opportunity to represent the youth of Canada at the National Remembrance Day Ceremony. They also receive a $1000 cheque.

Rachel, being First Place Intermediate Winner, received a $500 cheque. And importantly, her work will receive national recognition as it hangs in Ottawa's National War Museum.

At Oak River Legion she received an engraved glass tabletop plaque with her name on it and her school receives an identical plaque with Oak River Colony School's name engraved, presented by Cameron Moir, the Zone 24 Commander as an appreciation for the school's participation in the National Youth Remembrance Contest.

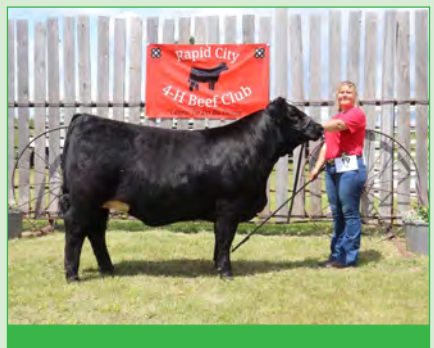
District 2 Commander Daryl Shipman presented Rachel with a $100 cheque for her win at the provincial level.

Commander Flood noted that he has seen many wonderful works presented by students from Hutterian Colony schools. For the Manitoba and Northwest Ontario Command (MBNWO), he notes, "In the last several years, we have had some second and third place winners at the national level."

This year, MBNWO had four other winners in second and third place, "Rachel was the only first place winner," Flood said.

Inside...

HAMIOTA GRADS
P4

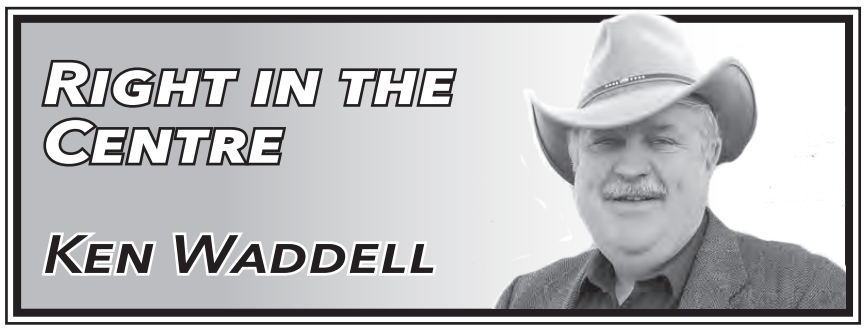


RAPID CITY 4-H ACHIEVEMENTS
P5

Tundra

By Chad Carpenter

CMHC Exec bonuses are shameful



This week I want to present a few different annoying points, the kind that should make it no surprise to governments that the public doesn't trust them very much.

Canadian Taxpayers Association reports the following"

"The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is the federal housing agency that has repeatedly claimed its goal is "housing affordability for all."

Despite its CEO admitting housing supply and affordability "remained one of Canada's greatest challenges," the CMHC handed out $31.7 million in taxpayer-funded bonuses last year.

> **"The [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation] handed out $31.7 million in taxpayer-funded bonuses last year."**

CMHC executives took $3.5 million in bonuses in 2025-26. That works out to an average bonus of $44,800 for each executive. Non-executive staff collected another $28.2 million in bonuses. Even the CMHC's own data shows its failing on housing affordability. The average Canadian spends more than half of their income on housing – up from 39 per cent in 2019, according to CMHC data."

Government wasting taxpayers money is not a new problem but for that very reason, we should not have to still tolerate such waste. The level of entitlement is unbelievable and should not be encouraged or even tolerated.

CTF also points out that Rideau Hall *(The governor general's residence)* finally recognizing your concerns about the governor general's lavish clothing allowance.

Government policy allows governors general to expense up to $130,000 in clothing purchases over their five-year mandate.

Newly appointed Governor General Louise Arbour notified MPs that her office "revised its guidelines for clothing," according to Blacklock's Reporter. Arbour didn't specify how much that will save taxpayers.

It's good to see the new governor general won't be wasting as much money on clothes.

But small tweaks to the governor general's wardrobe budget barely scratches the surface and taxpayers need the government to drastically shrink the platinum pay and perks at Rideau Hall.

The governor general still takes automatic pay raises every year. The governor general's current salary is $393,800.

Last week I noted that the Federal and B.C. governments plan to use up to $3 billion to buy vacant condo units and turn them into affordable housing and that there were 4,376 completed condos sitting empty in Metro Vancouver, a 76 per cent increase from the year before. This past week, Prime Minister Carney said the Feds and BC will split the down payment costs and encourage financial institutions to step in with money to make the deals happen.

In my experience, if something isn't selling, you drop the price.

Apparently that doesn't apply to Vancouver developers.

• And readers may remember that a few weeks ago, I strongly suggested (asked) that Premier Wab Kinew and Opposition leader Obby Khan meet with me as they certainly need to smarten up as to how they treat each other. There is way too little respect being shown to each other and in turn to Manitobans of all political beliefs. I am saddened, but not surprised to report that except for the usual automatic "thank you for your email", I have had no response from either man. I wasn't asking for much and I got less. Maybe this time they will respond.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this column are the writer's personal views and are not to be taken as being the view of the Banner & Press staff.

Kitchen stuff...

The cookware set that I use— the only set I own— is the old Queen Anne waterless cookware set. It came into my world way back in 1974 when Ed and I married. I think it might have been quite new then; sold door to door by industrious folks. The term waterless doesn't mean no water; it means just a little bit and in the cooking process the lid and pot form a seal so no additional moisture is usually needed. It was a lovely complete set with a lifetime guarantee.

A number of years ago I found an outlet in Winnipeg and was able to have several handles replaced. The set included an electric fry pan, a six quart pot with an egg poachers accessory, and then three, two and one quart pots. I think there may have been a juicer, and a set of utensils- lifter, masher, long fork, spatula and soup ladle that I still use as well. Unfortunately in the fifty plus years use there have been two injuries — I overheated the six quart and the two quart and they warped so that they wobble when in on a hot element. I think that's not bad for a door to door purchase from half a century ago!

Those who know me well know that the kitchen is not my very favourite room in the house. Many years ago, in a conversation with a grandson, I mentioned that my ideal retirement home would even have a kitchen. Josh was quiet for just a second and then in a hushed voice ' that's an old folks home'. That being said I took the care and feeding of the first five seriously. It was my job to give them proper nutritious meals, albeit plain and boring. I did/do cook and bake. Homemade buns are one food I prepare well, and pies. I learned early that any meal was a hit with those two items on the menu. And some cookies —date filled oatmeal rounds, chocolate chip and raisin oatmeal drop cookies. The cookie pans are also part of my inheritance. The two most used certainly look the most used! Twelve by eighteen inches, they are discolored, scared, still showing the label ' Bake King, King of Bakeware'. One has a slight break on two sides, not endangering the user, just a testament to heavy usage.

The loaf pans and the pie plates are PYREX, yup, old enough that they are all upper case letters. Even have a Pyrex casserole dish whose cover serves as a small pie plate. And all inherited as well! When you have a good thing, why mess with it? The fine china/everyday dishes are so old they have become collectable. The set started as gifts back in 1974, and has had some add ons. It's the white Corelle with the little green flowers all around the edges. Big plates, little plates, cups and saucers, mugs, cereal/soup bowls and fruit bowls, the serving bowl and platter, the gravy boat set….The replacement cereal bowls are mostly all white, it's rare to find a patterned one in good condition.

These well loved items are all old, vintage. But then — so am I!

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SPORTS

SWBL: Wright, Comets shut out Rockets

By Robin Wark
Rivers Banner

Neither rain nor the Reston Rockets could stop Nolan Wright and the Rivers Comets last week.

In a wet June 23 game, the Comets beat their South West Baseball League foe 6-0. On the mound, Wright struck out eight and allowed only four hits in a complete-game shutout. He also led the team with two runs batted in.

"Nolan came out and threw lots of strikes," Rivers player-organizer Scott Beever said. "He battled some weather, but didn't let it bother him. The guys played well, manufactured runs and played solid defence. Really impressed by the way we came out and played on a bit of a drizzly night and managed to pull out a win."

The victory improved the Comets' record to 8-4-0. Entering this week, the team sat second in the SWBL North Division. The top four teams make the playoffs.

The Comets wrap up their regular season this week. They played at the Oak River Dodgers on June 30 after the Banner deadline. Rivers hosts the Hamiota Red Sox on July 3 and the Virden Oilers on July 5.

Oak River Dodgers

With two victories last week, the Dodgers topped the SWBL North Division with a 10-3-0 record. After the Comets contest on June 30, Oak River hosts the Brandon Young Guns on July 3 to finish the regular season.

On June 25 in Reston, the Dodgers scored three runs in the third inning and two in the fourth on the way to a 5-2 victory over the Rockets. Mitch Battersby batted in two runs for the Dodgers, while Ty Paddock went three-for-four. Pitcher Dylan Schroeder struck out nine and allowed six hits over seven innings.

Veteran hurler Anthony Friesen and the Dodgers' defence shut out the Brandon Young Guns on June 26. Friesen struck out four and allowed only two hits. Battersby drove in two runs.

Hamiota Red Sox

The Hamiota Red Sox are battling for an SWBL postseason berth. As of June 28, the team sat fifth in the North Division with a 5-8-0 record. Reston was one spot ahead at 6-8-0.

The Red Sox play in Rivers on July 3 and host the Young Guns on July 5.

PHOTO BY DALE DAVISON

Rivers Comets #32 Scott Beever taking a swing.

On June 24, Hamiota fell 6-2 on the road to the Young Guns. Chael Rozdeba had two hits for Hamiota. Red Sox pitcher Carter Loewen struck out seven.

On June 25, Hamiota lost 6-4 to the visiting Brandon Cardinals.

Rapid City Community Church
Sundays 10 a.m.
Children's Church during the message
Bible Study – Thursdays 7:30 p.m.
JESUS IS LORD

Homemade Corn Dogs

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup yellow cornmeal
- 10 pop sticks
- 2/3 cup 2% milk
- 1 large egg, room temperature, lightly beaten
- 3/4 cup self-rising flour
- 10 hot dogs
- Oil for deep-fat frying

Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine cornmeal, flour and egg. Stir in milk to make a thick batter; let stand 4 minutes. Insert sticks into hot dogs; dip into batter.
2. In an electric skillet or deep-fat fryer, heat oil to 375 . Fry corn dogs, a few at a time, until golden brown, 6-8 minutes, turning occasionally. Drain on paper towels.

Canada Day Wordsearch

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

1. Maple
2. Holiday
3. Patriot
4. Flag
5. Leaf
6. Territories
7. Prairies
8. Canada
9. Celebrate
10. Fireworks
11. Moose
12. Goose

Rapid City 4-H Beef Club Achievement Day

Grand Champion Yearling Heifer – Sponsored By: Mike & Karen Bootsman - Kendra Hinsburg

Grand Champion Progeny Yearling Heifer – Sponsored By: Gord & Diane Peters - Kendra Hinsburg

Grand Champion Cow Calf Pair – Sponsored By: KCH Cattle Co - Elijah Ginter

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Grand Champion Market Steer – Sponsored By: Anchor A Farms - Ryler van Meijl

Grand Champion Progeny Market Steer – Sponsored By: Sharpe & Co Professional Accountant - Benson Bootsman

Champion Pair of Yearling Calves (from one family) – Sponsored By: Hinsburg Homestead "In Memory of Edward Hinsburg" - Kendra & Kate Hinsburg

Submitted
By Kendra Bootsman

What a fantastic day at the Rapid City 4-H Beef Club Achievement Day on Sat., June 20!

We were treated to perfect weather, a great crowd of supporters, and an outstanding display of cattle from our members. The hard work, dedication, and countless hours our members put into their projects were evident as every animal was presented to its absolute best.

Thank you to our judge, volunteers, sponsors, families, the Rapid City Ag Society and everyone who came out to support our club and make the day such a success.

Next up, our members are preparing to compete and sell nine steers at the Neepawa & Area Fat Stock Show and Sale on July 1 in Neepawa.

Rapid City 4-H Beef Club 2026 Achievement Day Results:

Cloverbud Grooming – Sponsored By: Nathan & Jenna Switzer: 1. Jessa Switzer; 2. Ensley Bootsman; 3. Elijah Ginter; 4. Taci Gilchrist; 5. Kashton van Meijl; 6. Braxtyn Usunier;

Junior Grooming – Sponsored By: Warren & Kim Speers: 1. Benson Bootsman; 2. Swayzie Bootsman; 3. Ryler van Meijl; 4. Lakelyn Brown; 5. Breelee Bootsman; 6. Jessica Robins;

Intermediate Grooming – Sponsored By: C & J van Meijl - Kaleb Bootsman.

Senior Grooming – Sponsored By: Rapid City 4-H Beef Club: 1. Kendra Hinsburg; 2. Kate Hinsburg; 3. Tristan Rea;

Cloverbud Showmanship – Sponsored By: Dirt Road Customs: 1. Elijah Ginter; 2. Ensley Bootsman; 3. Jessa Switzer; 4. Kashton van Meijl; 5. Taci Gilchrist; 6. Braxtyn Usunier;

Junior Showmanship – Sponsored By: Blaine & Joyce Axten: 1. Benson Bootsman; 2. Breelee Bootsman; 3. Ryler van Meijl; 4. Swayzie Bootsman; 5. Jessica Robins; 6. Lakelyn Brown;

Intermediate Showmanship – Sponsored By: Joey & Kendra Bootsman - Kaleb Bootsman.

Senior Showmanship – Sponsored By: Rapid City 4-H Beef Club: 1. Kendra Hinsburg; 2. Kate Hinsburg; 3. Tristan Rea;

Beginning Beef – Sponsored By: Minnedosa Insurance - Jessa Switzer.

Yearling Heifer – Split 1: 1. Elijah Ginter; 2. Kaleb Bootsman; 3. Taci Gilchrist; 4. Braxtyn Usunier;

Yearling Heifer – Split 2: 1. Ensley Bootsman; 2. Kate Hinsburg; 3. Benson Bootsman; 4. Swayzie Bootsman; 5. Tristan Rea;

Yearling Heifer – Split 3: 1. Kendra Hinsburg; 2. Kashton van Meijl; 3. Jessa Switzer; 4. Ryler van Meijl;

Grand Champion Yearling Heifer – Sponsored By: Mike & Karen Bootsman - Kendra Hinsburg

Reserve Grand Champion Yearling Heifer – Sponsored By: Norman & Sandi Underhill - Ensley Bootsman

Progeny Yearling Heifer – Split 1: 1. Kendra Hinsburg; 2. Kate Hinsburg; 3. Breelee Bootsman;

Grand Champion Progeny Yearling Heifer – Sponsored By: Gord & Diane Peters - Kendra Hinsburg

Reserve Grand Champion Yearling Heifer – Sponsored By: Bridgeman Land & Livestock - Kate Hinsburg

Grand Champion Overall Yearling Heifer - Sponsored By: Nichola Scale "In Memory of Richard Scale" - Kendra Hinsburg (Yearling Heifer)

Best Home Raised Yearling Heifer – Sponsored By: Bos Family Farm - Kendra Hinsburg (Yearling Heifer)

Cow Calf Pair – Split 1: 1. Elijah Ginter; 2. Kate Hinsburg;

Grand Champion Cow Calf Pair – Sponsored By: KCH Cattle Co - Elijah Ginter

Reserve Grand Champion Cow Calf Pair – Sponsored By: Jim & Janet Fearnley - Kate Hinsburg

Supreme Champion Female – Sponsored By: Rapid City & Area Lions Club & RM of Oakview - Kendra Hinsburg (Yearling Heifer)

Market Steer – Split 1: 1. Tristan Rea; 2. Jessica Robins; 3. Kate Hinsburg; 4. Braxtyn Usunier;

Market Steer – Split 2: 1. Ryler van Meijl; 2. Swayzie Bootsman; 3. Kendra Hinsburg; 4. Breelee Bootsman;

Grand Champion Market Steer – Sponsored By: Anchor A Farms - Ryler van Meijl

Reserve Grand Champion Market Steer – Sponsored By: South Valley Farms - Swayzie Bootsman

Grand Champion Progeny Market Steer – Sponsored By: Sharpe & Co Professional Accountant - Benson Bootsman

Grand Champion Overall Market Steer - Sponsored By: Innovative Veterinary Service - Ryler van Meijl

Highest Average Daily Gain - Sponsored By: Terraco - Ryler van Meijl

Best Home Raised Market Steer – Sponsored By: Minnedosa Veterinary Clinic - Ryler van Meijl

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Hamiota Collegiate Graduation

Families line the gym to watch Graduates and their escorts in the Grand March.

PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

Taylor Lawn receives the General Proficiency award with a mark of 96 per cent. Presenter is teacher, Mr. Jerry Crampain. She also was presented with the Governor General of Canada award and the Academic Excellence award.

By Anne Davison
Rivers Banner

The 99th Hamiota Collegiate Institute Class of 2026 included 20 graduate students. They celebrated graduation exercises on Tuesday, June 23. Academic and citizenship accolades and thousands of dollars in bursaries were presented.

The Academic Excellence was awarded to two students with an overall average of 88 per cent or better. Alyssa Kirk and Taylor Lawn were the recipients.

Taylor was also awarded for General Proficiency with a mark of 96 per cent and she received the Governor General of Canada medal, having achieved an overall average of 95.29 per cent.

Hudson Bond and Alyssa Kirk spoke to the parents on behalf of the graduates. Jackie Bichon and Crystal Stachan in turn addressed the grads. Brooke Facey and Adrianna Charlton thanked their many teachers over the years. Taylor Lawn and Quinn Armstrong were valedictorians.

Principal Becky Ardiel announced Andy Drake the recipient of the HCI Volunteer Award saying, "Volunteerism is a key quality that we aim to model for our students… The father of a grade 12 student who has been an asset to our athletics program, assisting with supervision, transportation, and support, notably through sports like volleyball, basketball, and baseball."

The graduates, in formal attire, joined their chosen escorts for the grand march and dance.

Early day rain threatened the about town parade but it held off and the graduates toured the town in every kind of vehicle including the Hamiota fire truck driven by father of Molly Patterson and firefighter Shawn Patterson.

Hamiota class of 2026 celebrate graduation.

HAMIOTA COLLEGIATE 2026 AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

QUINN ARMSTRONG BU Entrance Award Manitoba Nurses Union Award Hamiota District Health Centre Foundation Award Campbell's Flowers Award CUPE 3037 Award Hamiota Municipality Bursary Award

DEVON BICHON Hamiota Community Drama Award Villages United Early Learning Center Award Student Council Sunshine Award

HUDSON BOND Manitoba High School Rodeo Association Award Woodworth Legion Branch #118 Award RM of Wallace-Woodworth Award Torey Haggarty Memorial Award

ADRIANNA CHARLTON AC One to Watch Award Fusion Credit Union Award Valleyview Co-op Academic/Merit Award Scholarship Woodworth Legion Ladies Auxiliary Knight Seeds Award

ERIC CRAMPTON Rosemary Poole Award

NOLAN DRAKE Hamiota Red Sox Award PWSD Award

JORDON EDWARDS Dallas Strachan Memorial Award Adam Stevenson Memorial Award Royal Bank of Canada Award PWSD Award HCI Staff Fund Award TJ's Auto Award

BROOKE FACEY Manitoba Nurses Union Award Hamiota Minor Hockey Award Lions Club Award Carbonneau Scholarship Hamiota District Health Centre Foundation Award Fusion Credit Union Award Hamiota Red Sox Award Archie Gilchrist Award

TERRON JOHNS Woodworth Legion Branch #118 Award Woodworth Grazing Club Award

ALYSSA KIRK BU Entrance Award Hamiota Minor Hockey Award Hamiota District Health Centre Foundation Award Hamiota Municipality Volunteer Award Sandra Cochran Award Lorna Hamilton Memorial Award Hamiota Community Foundation Award Archie Gilchrist Award

TAYLOR LAWN Manitoba Canola Growers Award Fusion Credit Union Award Hamiota District Health Centre Foundation Award TJ's Convenience Award Dr. J.E. Hudson Award Charles Randall Award HCI Student Council Award Hamiota Community Foundation Award Archie Gilchrist Award

NICOLAS MCDUFF Hamiota Co-op Award Adrienne Angus Award

ALYSHIA MCKINNON Guild Insurance Award PWTA Award

MOLLY PATTERSON Mid-West Arts Council Award Hamiota Hotel Award

XAVIER SALMI Sunshine Award

ALEC STRACHAN PWSD Award PWTA Award

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Public Utilities Board

Public Notice

You're Invited

to share your views about the rate application filed by Manitoba Public Insurance

The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (MPI) has filed the 2027 General Rate Application before the Public Utilities Board (Board) for approval of Basic Autopac vehicle insurance rates and premiums effective on April 1, 2027 through March 31, 2028.

For further details, please contact MPI at **inquiries@mpi.mb.ca** or visit the Board's website at **www.pubmanitoba.ca.**

A public hearing on the proposed rate application will be held beginning:
Tuesday, October 13, 2026 at 9 a.m.
Please view the hearing via the PUB website link.

If you are interested in learning more about this rate application, you are encouraged to attend the hearing, observe the hearing via live streaming, or provide your perspectives through the Board's online comment tool.

If you wish to speak at the hearing or make a written submission, please contact the Associate Secretary, Ms. Jennifer Dubois at 204-945-2638 or toll free 1-866-854-3698, no later than **September 1, 2026.**

For more information, visit **www.pubmanitoba.ca.**

Manitoba Public Utilities Board
400-330 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0C4
Phone: 204-945-2638
Email: publicutilities@gov.mb.ca

Rivers Home Hardware under construction

PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WADDELL

Looking to the future- investing in their town. Locally owned Rivers Home Hardware has a major project with a new warehouse and more investment in the works.

CLASSIFIEDS

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Rolling River School Division

Rolling River School Division invites applications for

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Start Date - September 1, 2026

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- Must have reliable transportation
- Punctual and dependable
- Able to work efficiently in a time-sensitive environment
- Strong attention to detail and willingness to learn

Training will be provided.

Interested applicants are invited to submit their resume to:

Dave Hayden
Email: dave@theboarstation.ca

We thank all applicants for their interest; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

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Apples – Part I

Submitted
By Patricia Hanbidge

Did you know that right here on the prairies we can grow apples that are as good as those that are grown anywhere in the world? Believe it or not, but we can compare our quality of apples to those grown in the Okanagan, the Annapolis Valley and other places around the world.

In order to appreciate what it takes to grow delicious apples it is important to realize that all of the cultivars of apples that we see in the grocery store are not grown from seed but instead are propagated asexually or also commonly called produced by clones. The reason this is necessary is that in order for an apple tree to produce apples it needs to be cross-pollinated with another apple tree. What this means from a genetics perspective is that there is huge diversity contained within that apple seed and each seed will grow into something that is unique from every other seed within that apple. It may produce fruit that is completely unique or it may not produce any fruit at all.

To grow quality apple trees on the prairies, it is required to first and foremost, choose apples that can survive our extreme winters. Cultivars that are rated to survive in zones 2 and even zone 3 are the best choices as the last thing we would wish to experience is having to plant a new tree a few years into the growth. Think about what you want to do with the apples – eat them fresh, or use them for baking. There are many types of apples and knowing what you wish to have as a product is important.

Spring is always the best time to plant. Apples should be planted in full sun and as early as possible once we get our true spring. They prefer a well-drained, loamy soil and for the best apples, they should receive water throughout the growing season. Avoid low-lying "frost pockets" to ensure your blossoms are not susceptible to a late spring frost.

Apples are grafted trees. The top part of the tree is the important part for the apply type, and the rootstock or bottom part is important for cold hardiness, so your apple tree can survive our cold winters. Identify the "graft union" which will appear as a bump at the bottom of the trunk where the apple variety is joined to the rootstock. The graft union should be planted two to four inches above the soil line. Ensure you do not overfill the planting hole as there should be a slight depression over the root zone to help with watering.

Young trees will need significant amounts of water. Provide at least an inch of water each week, by deep-soaking the base. Cover the base of the tree in a one-meter diameter with organic mulch but ensure you do not put the mulch right up against the trunk. Pest damage or rot could become a problem if the mulch sits up against the trunk of the tree.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Apple pie, apple butter, apple juice, and apple sauce are apple-solutely the best.

Apples require a different variety of apple that is blooming at the same time to get good cross-pollination. Plant two compatible varieties within fifty feet of each other. It is also possible to buy trees that have more than one variety of apple grafted together which negates the need for other trees nearby for cross pollination as long as the blossoms are blooming at the same time.

Prairie wildlife love to munch on young apple bark. Wrapping the lower trunks with plastic tree guards or wire in late fall will help ensure your tree survives the winter in good shape. Rabbits, voles and other little critters love to gnaw on the apples in winter and if we have significant snowfall, they can reach up the trunk to areas that may not be protected by the tree guard, so keep vigilant.

Apple trees require annual pruning. The absolute best time to prune is late spring before the buds break. At this time, the tree is growing rapidly, so pruning wounds will heal quickly. Watch for an upcoming article on pruning best practice.

Hanbidge is the Lead Horticulturist with Orchid Horticulture. Find us at www.orchidhort.com; by email at growyourfuture@gmail.com on facebook @orchidhort and on instagram at #orchidhort.

Tune into GROW Live on our Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/orchidhort