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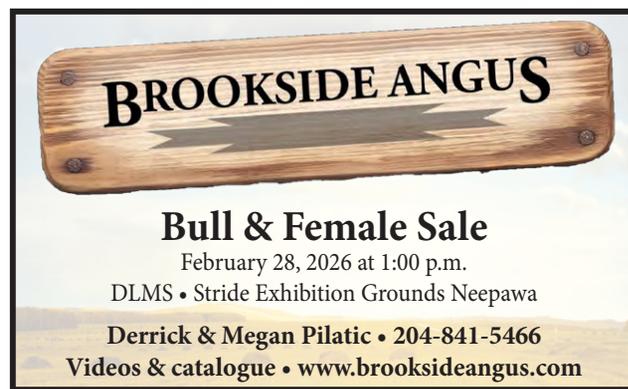


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Rivers Karate Club Shines at Provincial Championships



Ryker and Leif Beishuizen competed in Winnipeg at the Karate Provincials.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

By Carolyn Phillips
RIVERS BANNER

The Rivers Karate Club has once again made a remarkable impression at the recent provincial karate

championships, showcasing the hard work and dedication of its students under the guidance of instructor Ben Thompson.

read more about the karate provincials on page 2...

Inside...



**2026 TESA
AWARD**
P12



**HAMIOTA
JOB FAIR**
P5

Rivers Kids compete in Provincial Karate

continued from page 1

The event saw participants from across Manitoba, highlighting the vibrant karate community nurtured by Karate Manitoba. The organization's commitment to fostering karate at all levels—from recreational to elite—came to life through this competition, encouraging students to refine their skills and pursue excellence.

Competing in a sport that emphasizes discipline, respect, and perseverance, Rivers Karate Club students demonstrated their growth and skillsets in various categories. Among them, three standout students achieved an impressive feat by clinching bronze medals in their Kumite events. Kumite, which translates to “sparring,” is a critical component of karate where practitioners engage in a controlled, competitive matchup. This aspect of karate is not merely about contesting physical strength; it's an intricate dance of strategy, technique, and sportsmanship, where competitors perform a variety of offensive and defensive maneuvers, including punches, kicks, and takedowns.

Winning a medal at the provincial level is no small accomplishment, reflecting the countless hours spent training and preparing for this momentous event. Each participant worked diligently to hone their techniques, with their commitment evident in every match. The bronze medalists exemplified the spirit of karate, courageously facing their opponents while adhering to the principles of respect and honor that the martial art embodies.

In addition to the medals earned, many students had the opportunity to grade for their next belt level. Grad-

ing is an essential part of a karate student's journey, marking significant milestones in their martial arts education. Each belt signifies not only a new level of skill but also the dedication and discipline required to progress. This opportunity allows students to receive valuable feedback from experienced judges, further motivating them to enhance their techniques and knowledge.

The success of the Rivers Karate Club at these provincial championships serves as an inspiration for the entire karate community in Manitoba. It reiterates the importance of a supportive environment where students feel encouraged to push their limits and achieve their personal best. Instructor Ben Thompson has played an instrumental role in fostering this environment, nurturing young talent while instilling core values crucial to martial arts practice.

The profound sense of camaraderie within the club is evident, with members celebrating each other's successes and supporting one another in their individual journeys. In doing so, they embody the collective spirit of karate, where personal achievement is often combined with a strong sense of belonging to a larger community.

As the club looks forward to future competitions and continued training, the achievements of these students serve as a reminder of the power of perseverance, dedication, and teamwork. Congratulations to all participants of the Rivers Karate Club—your hard work has not gone unnoticed! Let's continue to strive for excellence and uphold the traditions of karate as we pave the way for future generations of martial artists in Manitoba.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Roman Budiwiski competed in Winnipeg at the Karate Provincials.

BROCCOLI CHEDDAR SOUP

Ingredients

- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 large head broccoli, finely chopped
- 1 large carrot, grated
- 2 cups whole milk
- 3 cups shredded cheddar, plus more for serving

Directions

1. In a large pot over medium heat, melt butter. Add onion and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 7 to 9 minutes.
2. Whisk in flour and cook, stirring, until vegetables are coated, about 1 minute. Slowly pour in broth; season with salt and pepper.
3. Stir in broccoli and carrots. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender, 8 to 12 minutes.
4. Slowly add milk and bring to a simmer. Stir in cheddar until melted and smooth; season with salt and pepper.
5. Divide soup among bowls. Top with more cheddar.



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Manitoba Government launches grocery study, targets predatory pricing

Study will help identify ways to lower grocery costs for Manitobans: Kinew, Sala

Submitted
By MB GOVERNMENT

The Manitoba government is launching a provincial grocery study to identify new ways to reduce food costs and improve affordability for Manitobans, Premier Wab Kinew and Finance Minister Adrien Sala announced today.

“Manitobans are feeling the cost of groceries every week,” said Kinew. “As a government, we have a responsibility to make sure life is affordable for families. This study is about going after the practices that are driving up prices and making sure grocery prices work for people, not against them.”

As part of the study, the Manitoba government will examine predatory or differential pricing practices, including cases where companies use consumer data or purchasing patterns to raise prices. These practices can result in some consumers paying more than others for the same groceries.

Consumers often cannot see or understand these pricing practices at the checkout, the premier noted, and this study will assess how pricing practices affect affordability in Manitoba and identify options to improve transparency, fairness and consumer protection.

“As finance minister, my job is to focus on two budgets, the province’s budget and your household budget,” said Sala. “This work will help identify real, workable steps to bring grocery costs down and make life more affordable for Manitobans.”

Governments across Canada have taken steps to address grocery affordability, Manitoba is taking a leadership role

by launching one of the first comprehensive, province-led studies focused on understanding grocery pricing practices and identifying concrete actions to lower costs for consumers.

“It’s great to see Manitoba leading the way on ensuring a more free and fair market for its citizens,” said Vass Bednar, managing director, Canadian Shield Institute and co-author of The Big Fix. “This study comes at a critical time, as these kinds of exploitative pricing tactics risk the fundamentals of a free market. The focus needs to be on ensuring a competitive market, grounded in privacy legislation that doesn’t allow anyone to use citizen’s data to exploit them.”

The grocery study delivers on a commitment made in the 2025 throne speech, the minister noted, and will take a comprehensive look at food prices and affordability provincewide, including access, availability, market concentration and pricing practices that contribute to higher grocery costs.

The study will build on recent Manitoba government measures, including freezing the price of a one-litre jug of milk through 2026, reducing restrictive covenants in the grocery sector to increase competition, expanding the universal school nutrition program to ensure children have access to food at school and doubling the prenatal benefit to help expectant parents manage food costs.

The Manitoba government will share updates as the study progresses and will continue working to address the rising cost of living across the province, the minister added.

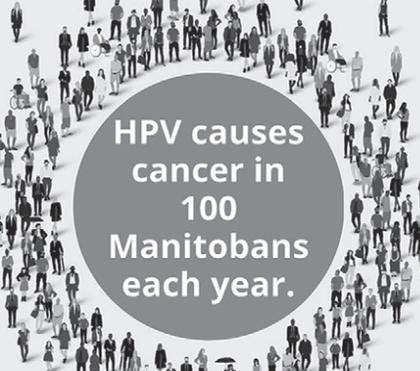
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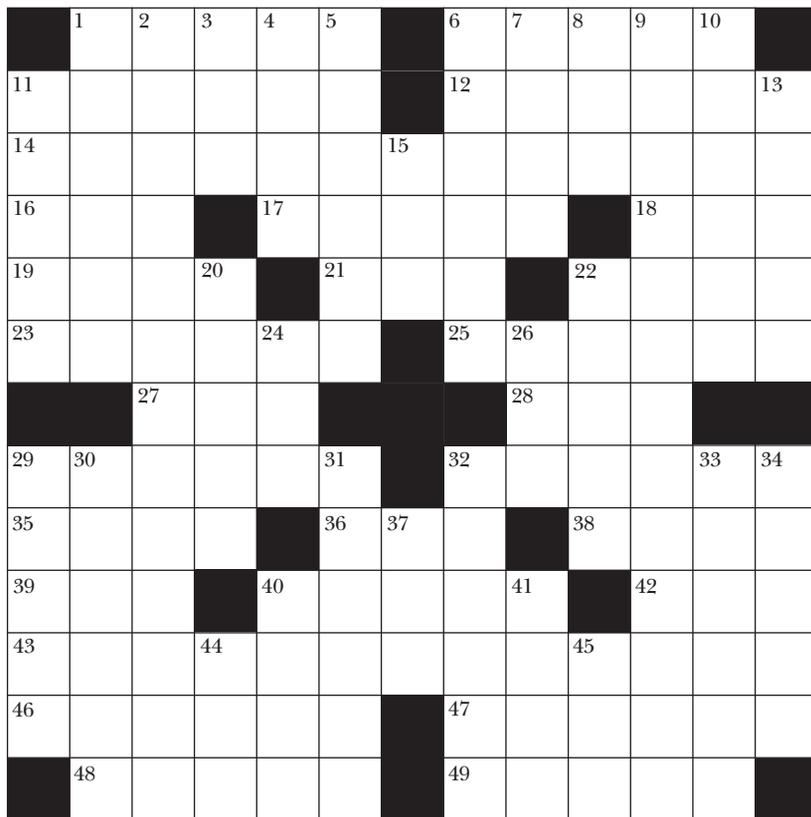
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DEADLINE: MARCH 31, 2026



Locally created crossword

- Across**
- Muscle tie
 - 1701 in Rome
 - Virginal
 - Decorates
 - Commanding
 - Course abbr.
 - Has verbal humour
 - Cut the grass
 - Former Italian money
 - Tsx formerly
 - Boxer Tyson
 - Invalidates, voids
 - Lent
 - Consumed
 - John Lennon’s wife
 - Clumsy oaf
 - Homophone of jewels
 - Elevator inventor
 - Canada’s U.N. ambassador (2020-2025)
 - Chickenpox scar
 - Exclamation of surprise
 - Carried on a war
 - An alphabet run
 - Became progressively worse
 - Sniffle in a fretful way
 - Deletes
 - Reads a bar code
 - Inward depressions caused by blows
- Down**
- A person physically confined to home
 - Fatherly control
 - Fire remains
 - Load a ship’s cargo
 - Good points
 - Hot wheels maker
 - June 6, 1944
 - Small bed
 - Person who studies crime
 - Bring into effect (as constitutional right)
 - “Cheers” waitress
 - Stitched up
 - It is contraction
 - Cars
 - Be brave enough to deal with a difficult situation (2wds)
 - MGM’s lion
 - A win in tic-tac-toe
 - Merchandise
 - Capital of Greece
 - Paths through the woods
 - Made mocking remarks, taunted
 - Sound reverberations
 - Pelts, hides
 - In the past
 - Small song bird
 - Challenge to a task
 - Gabor of “Green Acres”
 - Colour in the sun



Answers on page 10

Created by David Harris of Oak River, MB



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Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



Some things that need to be said

In the midst of terror, turmoil and trouble in our world, I feel there are some things that need to be said and passed on.

Just because I (or anybody else) says things doesn't mean you have to agree. But just because we don't agree, also doesn't mean different ideas shouldn't be spoken.

I believe that the English language has always been evolving but I also believe that our language has not been improving. There are words and phrases being tossed around today that have abandoned any relation to root meanings. Our language is being used both carelessly and maliciously in attempts to re-shape our concepts of human endeavour, health and culture.

I also believe we are being flooded with information from both mainstream media and social media that is mostly used to distract us from important issues of family and community. I am mostly beyond caring what politicians say about the United States or any other parts of the world except Canada, more specifically, I care about Manitoba and even more precisely western Manitoba.

It's important to know about other areas of the world but no matter how much we care, no matter how much we worry or despair, it isn't going to change much. At the very least, we should swap despair for prayer as our prayers will do more good than worry or despair.

Events at Tumbler Ridge last week were very disturbing but they weren't surprising. Mass killings are becoming commonplace even in Canada. Perpetrators of such crimes are very sick people and they no doubt need help long before they act out their horrid fantasies. Regardless of where the mental illness comes from, would be harm-doers need help, quickly and firmly.



- I am very disappointed that we only take relatively shallow attempts to protect people from harmful actions to themselves and others. I have little or no patience with safe drug centres. Hard drug addicts are breaking the law, are a danger to themselves and to others. They need to be held in a safe environment until they have recovered. That would be costly but it would save policing and healthcare costs and be more beneficial to hard drug addicts. The same applies to homeless (unhoused) people. We aren't actually short of housing in Canada when we consider how many people own multiple homes. That situation has existed for centuries in Western culture and it's not likely to change unless we switch to communism and that hasn't worked out all that well.

- Some people will be upset by this next statement but humans and animals are born male or female. There are rare intersex exceptions in the human population but it's less than .02 per cent. In cattle, there can be an intersex or hermaphroditic specimens. I have actually only seen that situation once. It is very rare.

I have always felt that all children should be encouraged by loving par-

ents or guardians to become whatever they want to become. In today's world almost every occupation under the sun is available and attemptable for anyone. I don't buy into the idea that you can become whatever you want to be as there are some realistic limits. In my own case, growing up to be all of five foot nine and weighing over 200 pounds, there was scant chance that I could make it to the university pole vaulting team.

My message is don't let anyone tell you (including yourself) that you can't achieve realistic goals and you will be successful and content.

And I carefully use the word content, not happy. In between my second and third year university, I decided I was going to quit, drop out. I went to the Student Advisor, Doctor Anna Storgaard and said I wasn't happy. She asked, "Whoever promised you would always be happy"? I realized nobody had promised me happiness. Looking back not only did I know what Dr. S was telling me but after almost 60 years later, I have almost always been content. Content to finish university, I have also been very content to be a politician at all three levels of government, a husband for 57 years, a father, grandfather and great grandfather. And yes, content with many friends and customers.

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 newspaper staff.



Four score...

Eighty. At one time the age of eighty was indicative of an old person. Truthfully, I recall thinking my grandparents were ancient when they were in their sixties. Now I am eighty years old. I don't know exactly what I think of that because I've never been this age before. I recall a rather unique individual that asked me 'how old would you be if you didn't know how old you were?' Good question, cause I am having difficulty seeing myself as four score.

There has been a great deal of reflection and introspection this month. First I looked at the decades. One to ten. Lived with my parents, an older sister and a younger sister in the Kane District before moving to Graysville. Hated the move, walked home from school one day.

Ten to twenty. Got to love school, it was a safe place. Excelled in sports, volleyball team, curling and track and field. Was selected to attend the United Nations Seminar in Winnipeg - first time I attended Rainbow Stage- was the class valedictorian, and enjoyed school so much I attended an extra year and still didn't master. European History for the 1500's!

Now twenty to thirty was a gong show! I married, bore two children, divorced (I realized quite quickly that God had not created me to be a human punching bag!), settled into being a single parent, remarried, gaining two bonus children. There were a number of moves in that decade. Was blessed with a stable home, another child, another move - this time into the Riding Mountain area - with new adventures.

By the time I was forty the older children were marrying and leaving home and life was full and rich. Fifty to sixty sped by. Grandchildren filled our home and our hearts. One more major move, off the farm and onto the acreage. Challenges and adventures there!

Sixty to seventy. Accepted the loss of my partner, support and cheerleader after forty years and one day of marriage. Experienced much joy and deep sorrow in that decade. The grandchildren were marrying and gifting me with great grandchildren. I was gaining training for the work I so enjoy.

Seventy to eighty. I was blessed with a relationship with a man of honour and integrity, humour and wisdom. Six years of loving and living together, another deep grief. I purchased a home. The first time I was the only one in one the decision making, and I still love it. Children, grandchildren and great grandchildren still fill my life with love and laughter.

Four score. And in all those years I have been privileged to travel: on family camping trips, visiting family all over the world, trips with friends and family. From coast to coast to coast, driving. Major flights to Australia, Malaysia and Thailand, Moscow, Paris (x2), Great Britain (x2), Iceland, Iona (x2), Holland, Poland, Ireland and who knows where next!

Eighty years old. Through it all, for all times, my anchor is my faith. "Many things about tomorrow I don't seem to understand. But I know who holds tomorrow and I know who holds my hand."

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Future focused: students discover career paths in Hamiota

By Anne Davison
RIVERS BANNER

Grades 9 to 11 students from Birtle, Shoal Lake, Strathclair and Hamiota attended Hamiota's second career fair held on Feb. 10 in Hamiota Community Hall. At Career Connection students met many local people, born and raised in the area who are now employed here.

Students arrived in groups throughout the day and circulated through 27 booths to discover careers in health, technology, education, law enforcement, agriculture, finance, insurance, emergency response, and trades. Here students met local business owners in livestock and cropping industries and in businesses such as Home Hardware where David Rawlings presented the opportunity for an appliance repair service.

Just over 40 Grades 10 and 11 students from Birtle Collegiate Institute got off the bus after lunch at Hamiota Community Hall.

A career fair helps youth to think in concrete terms about the future. Collegiate principal Stacie Stonehouse had her students filling out a survey after they circulated throughout the displays.

Asked what got her attention, a Grade 11 student, Jasmine, commented on the ACC (Assiniboine Community College) booth and Manitoba Hydro. She said, "It's very interesting to see all the different jobs here." She noted that Hydro provides good job opportunities, providing "different roads to follow."

Two Grade 10 boys were working on their surveys. Joel said, "There are a lot of businesses that I've never heard of." He cited the apprentice board. "I didn't know that there was a direct board you can go to, to look into trades. Maybe pursue a career in trades."

Kyle said, "I was surprised... there's so many opportunities right around here."

Pat and Brian Kirk were working in the hall kitchen. Pat is part of the Hamiota Alliance Committee, one of the sponsors of the fair. She explained the career fair was a pilot program that they ran last year for just Hamiota students and this year it was expanded to include three other schools "so students can see where their future could lie."

The hall board provided snacks for purchase and free coffee for the vendors. Hamiota Alliance paid for the hall rent.

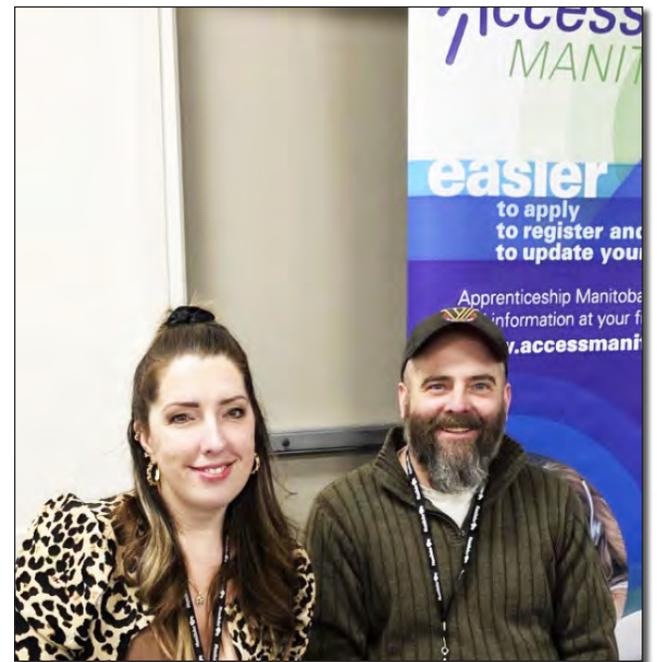


SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Students visit the EMS booth where four Primary Care Paramedics can discuss this key medical role.



Jacinta Doupe, born and raised in the Hamiota area, has returned six years later as a physiotherapist working with Dynamic Physiotherapy located in Hamiota Healing complex at 49, 3rd St. SE. She said students stopped to talk, many of them athletes who showed interest in the process of becoming a physiotherapist.



Jenna Smid and Nathan Lewis represent Apprenticeship Manitoba where students learned about a wide variety of careers in the trades where careers can be launched right out of high school.

SPORTS

JETS SET FOR QUARTERFINAL CLASH WITH OIL KINGS

By Robin Wark
RIVERS BANNER

The Rivers Jets are ready for the Tiger Hills Hockey League playoffs.

After a strong regular season, the senior team had a first-round bye and waited for their opponent. The top three teams from the THHL regular season were allowed to select their opponents from the first-round survivors. The Jets, who finished fourth, were matched up with the No. 5 Virden Oil Kings.

"We are hoping to go on a deep playoff run," Jets coach Ryan Lamb said. "Hopefully, we can get a lot of fans from town to come down and support the boys like they have been for the past four years."

Things get started for the Jets on Feb. 20 when they host the Oil Kings. Game two is in Virden on Feb. 21. The third contest is Feb. 24 in Rivers. The quarter-final is a best-of-five series. If needed, game four is in Virden on Feb. 25, while a fifth contest would be on Feb. 28 in Rivers.

The Jets are led by captain Riley Shamray. The defenceman finished 12th in the league in scoring with 31 points in 18 games. In his second season,

Luke DeCorby emerged as a prolific point producer. He was fourth in the THHL scoring race with 43 in 18 games. DeCorby led the team with 18 goals, while Kalen Huibers was second with 14.

One of the Rivers team's strengths is its goaltending. Riley Lamb had a 7-4-1 record with a 2.65 goals against average. Layne Anderson was 6-0-0 in the regular season with a 2.21 GAA. Logan Bridges also backstopped Rivers to a win.

In the first round of the playoffs, the Oil Kings swept the Souris Elks 2-0, earning 5-2 and 12-3 victories. Shawn Bowles led the team with five goals and 12 points in two games. Goaltenders Riley Wallace and Duncan Paddock each earned a win.

The Oil Kings feature three of the THHL's top 10 regular season scorers and three of the top 13. Brad Bowles topped the league with 75 points, 47 assists, and 28 goals in 18 games. Tanner Koroscil was second in the THHL with 50 points and 27 goals. In only eight games, Shawn Bowles racked up 33 points to finish eighth in the scoring race. Elisha Bambridge finished 13th with 30 points in 13 games.

The Jets were 14-4-1-0 in the regular season. When asked what he was most pleased with about the regu-



lar season, Ryan Lamb said, "Obviously, playing well enough to get the first round bye is an easy plus for the season, but overall I was happy with how our team competed night in and night out."

Oak River looks to attract store manager

By Anne Davison
RIVERS BANNER

Oak River needs an entrepreneur to open the town's grocery store - there's a great deal awaiting the right person.

Small towns have dwindled year by year since the 1950s, but of late, that trend is turning around as new families are locating in small towns while baby boomers are retiring within their communities. On that note, there are some services a village just has to have, as Oak River is finding out, since its grocery store fell on hard times, and closed in early 2025.

While the former grocery sits empty on main street, that could soon change if the Community Development Corporation (CDC) can find the right manager. Chairman of Oakview CDC, Bob Turnbull, is a retired Oak River businessman with an appreciation for his town and entrepreneurial optimism.

He says that for someone willing to operate the grocery store in Oak River, the CDC can provide a huge boost. "We just want to have a store in our town.... I'm trying to find a manager."

He describes the deal: "We will pay hydro, water and taxes for two years. And there will be no rent for two years."

A store manager will be responsible for running the business; for stocking the shelves, hiring staff and paying wages.

Turnbull points to the success of Friendly's Grocery Store in Inglis, Manitoba where a community effort ensured they had a grocery store. According to a story about it in The Western Producer, Sept. 4, 2015, by Karen Morrison: "Sixty-eight people pitched in \$1,000 each with no foreseeable return on their investment to



PHOTO BY KEN WADDELL

Oak River Co-op store continues to stand empty awaiting a new owner.

ensure their community had a grocery store.... They created Friendly's Grocery Co-op Inc. in Inglis after consulting with the western Manitoba community of 150 people and researching co-operatives."

There are some differences between the solid farm community of Oak River and Inglis, a tiny community located on Hwy 83 in the resort area of Lake of the Prairies.

Oak River area has a population of just over 400. With a credit union, school, daycare, repair shop, tire

shop and fuel sales, abattoir, seniors' residence and a busy rink, the grocery store is a key service. The community wants to have it back.

Turnbull says that according to the Inglis model, "If you can get 30 per cent of the people in the area buying from you, it will make money."

Speaking for his own family he says, "If we get this thing up and running, I will definitely use it more. You don't realize what you don't have until you don't have it."

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Did you Know?



PHOTO BY METRO CREATIVE

Submitted
BY METRO CREATIVE

According to the Alzheimer's Association, a certain type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) can increase a person's risk of developing Alzheimer's or another type of dementia. A TBI that results from an impact to the head disrupts normal brain function,

and that disruption can elevate the injury sufferer's risk for dementia. The Alzheimer's Association notes that further research into the link between TBIs and dementia risk is necessary, as some people experience TBIs after a blow to the head and do not develop dementia. But the Alzheimer's Association also notes that it is known

that cognitive changes after a TBI are among the most common, most disabling and longest-lasting symptoms that result from such injuries, which can affect the ability to learn and remember new information and compromise a person's ability to concentrate, organize thoughts and plan effective strategies for completing tasks.

Huskies strong competitors in provincial curling



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Earlier in February, holding the trophy as Zone 10 winners Hamiota Huskies Girls Curling also competed in the girls provincial championships: Maddison Currah (lead), Brady Gregory (skip), Shelby Nowosad (third) and Lauren Soutar (second).

By Anne Davison
RIVERS BANNER

At the Manitoba Provincial Mixed Double Curling championship held in Hamiota over the weekend the Hamiota mixed doubles team of Lucy Soutar and Matao Finnie chalked up three wins in play against the Dakota Lancers (7-6), Stonewall Rams (6-4) and Edward Schreyer Barons (8-4). A great effort from these two grade 9 students.

Congratulations are in order to Cup winners - the undefeated Morden Thunder. Ed Schreyer Barons took silver.

Hamiota's Huskies were defeated by the Swan Valley Tigers 6-4 and tournament winners, Morden Thunder 10-1.

Following round robin play the Huskies, sitting 3rd, lost to West Kildonan Wolverines 2-6. The Wolverines curled to a third-place win over Baldur Vikings.

Hamiota hosted a banquet where the 12 teams were invited for introductions on Friday, Feb. 13, in the

Hamiota & District Sports Complex. HCI teacher Chris Obach organized the tournament.

Also on this past weekend, Girls High School Curling championship was hosted by Maples Collegiate in Winnipeg. Out of 16 teams and four pools, the Hamiota Huskies team of grade 11 students was skipped by Brady Gregory, with Maddison Currah (Lead), Shelby Nowosad (Third) Lauren Soutar (Second) and Kendra Dale (spare). The team made it into playoffs sitting 2nd in their pool. They lost that game against the 1st in pool 4 to end their games.

For Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association, Chad Falk, the executive director noted that future curling champs will arise from the high school curling championships.

Major corporate partners include: Dairy Farmers of Manitoba, Manitoba's Credit Unions, Boston Pizza, Luscious Orange, Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Pork, Merit, CPHR, Manitoba Turkey Producers, Bunge, Manitoba Building Trades, and Sport Manitoba.



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

In Manitoba Mixed Doubles Curling on the weekend, Lucy Soutar holds the broom as Mateo Finnie throws his red rock in the Hamiota Curling rink.

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Under The Dome

Education funding increase doesn't keep up with rising costs

By Greg Nesbitt, MLA
RIDING MOUNTAIN CONSTITUENCY

Manitoba families in the Riding Mountain Constituency may start feeling the impact of the NDP's recent school funding announcement. Last week, the NDP highlighted a 3.5 per cent increase in school funding. While this shows some investment in education, a closer look suggests that the increase may not fully keep pace with the costs schools are facing.

For the 2026-27 school year, Manitoba's school operating funding is set to increase by just \$51 million, down from \$53.1 million in 2025-26. At the same time, inflation in the province sits at 3.7 per cent, meaning the funding increase of 2.9 per cent is actually a cut in real terms. Schools in Riding Mountain Constituency are already feeling the pinch, and these figures indicate the pressure is only going to grow.

For example, Rolling River received a 1.2% increase, Park West 1.0%, and Fort La Bosse 1.5%. When these modest increases are considered alongside inflation and rising salary costs, school boards may face difficult choices in balancing their budgets. Many experts are warning that Manitoba families should brace for another round of significant school tax increases if the NDP continues down this path.

School nutrition programs and critical support for students, are also under strain. Funding remains frozen at \$30 million, despite food prices rising nearly 6 per cent across Manitoba. This means fewer resources for students who rely on school meals and even greater financial pressure on schools already struggling to meet operating costs.

The timing of these shortfalls could not be worse. School divisions are grappling with major new costs from teacher salary harmonization. Salaries and benefits are rising faster than provincial funding, leaving school boards with difficult choices: either reduce programs or pass the costs onto families through higher school property taxes.

Families deserve strong public schools without being forced to shoulder higher taxes. Properly funding schools to reflect real costs, rather than shifting the burden onto property owners, is the only sustainable way to support students and communities. Manitobans deserve funding that is fair, transparent and keeps taxes manageable while ensuring every child receives a quality education.

The challenges facing local families do not stop at education. Constituents in my riding have been contacting my office with urgent concerns about health care failures across the region. Many residents report difficulties accessing care, and there are widespread frustrations over the NDP's backtracking on agency nurse supports, leaving hospitals short-staffed. Alarming, recent news stories have highlighted increased deaths in Manitoba hospitals, underscoring the human cost of underfunded health care services.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Riding Mountain MLA Greg Nesbitt

Families in Riding Mountain Constituency are juggling multiple pressures, from school funding that may not keep pace with rising costs to healthcare services that are stretched thin. These experiences reflect a broader need for practical solutions that support communities without placing an undue burden on families.

Riding Mountain residents deserve assurance that essential services, from quality education to reliable healthcare, are available when needed. Manitobans are paying close attention and are looking for governments to follow through on their commitments with tangible support for families. They want solutions that make a real difference in daily life, rather than leaving families to manage growing pressures on their own.

Greg Nesbitt is the Member of Legislative Assembly for the Riding Mountain Constituency. He can be reached at 204-759-3313, toll-free: 1-844-877-7767 or by email at: gregnesbitmla@mymts.net. When contacting our office, please include your name, address and a daytime phone number.

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Public Utilities Board / **Régie des services publics**

PUBLIC NOTICE

Manitoba Hydro Integrated Resource Plan & Major New Facility Public Review

On February 2, 2026, the Manitoba Government referred Manitoba Hydro's 2025 Integrated Resource Plan ("IRP") to the Public Utilities Board ("PUB") for its review and recommendations.

The IRP examines how best to meet Manitoba Hydro's expected short-term (2030) and long-term (2035) growth in electricity consumption with different options to increase electricity supply. The primary objective of the IRP is to plan for safe and reliable energy that meets the evolving needs of Manitobans. The IRP includes both Manitoba Hydro's electrical system and the natural gas system operated by Manitoba Hydro's subsidiary Centra Gas Manitoba Inc.

Manitoba Hydro's IRP includes its recommended future development plan, which incorporates a major new generating facility consisting of three new simple cycle combustion turbines at the Brandon Generating Station that will provide approximately 750 MW of capacity. In addition to the IRP, the needs for and alternatives to Manitoba Hydro's proposed new natural gas generating facility will be referred to the PUB for its review and recommendations.

The PUB will be conducting a public regulatory review over the coming months into both the IRP and the proposed major new natural gas generating facility. While these reviews by the PUB will not immediately result in a change to the rates charged by Manitoba Hydro, the costs of the new generating facility and other aspects of the development plan are expected to have an impact on future electricity rates.

Further details related to the upcoming review are available at: www.pubmanitoba.ca.

You can share your views on the filing with the Public Utilities Board in three ways:

- **As a Presenter** – If you want to make a virtual or in-person formal presentation to the Public Utilities Board on this matter and are willing to respond to questions about your presentation, please submit an application to become an approved Presenter using the application form linked on the PUB website (www.pubmanitoba.ca) by June 18, 2026. Presentations are limited to a maximum of 10 minutes and presenters will be scheduled to appear during the hearing in August.
- **Written comment** – If you would like to comment in writing on this review, please go to www.pubmanitoba.ca and provide your written comment.
- **As an approved intervener** – If you want to actively participate in the public hearing as an Intervener, please go to www.pubmanitoba.ca and apply for Intervener status on or before February 24, 2026. Interveners are required to represent the interests of a significant group of customers and may be required to combine their intervention with others representing similar interests.

A Pre-Hearing Conference with prospective Interveners will be held in the Board's hearing room, at the address below, commencing at 9:00 a.m. on Monday March 2, 2026.

Manitoba Public Utilities Board
400-330 Portage Avenue
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Tender



2026 GRAVEL CRUSHING TENDER NOTICE

Hamiota Municipality is inviting tenders to crush 30,000 cubic yards of ¾ inch Traffic Gravel by September 30, 2026. Sealed tenders will be accepted until **4:00 pm on Friday, February 27, 2026**. For Tender documents and Specifications or for more information please forward inquiries to:

Lorra Eastcott CAO, Hamiota Municipality
P.O. Box 100, Hamiota MB. R0M 0T0
Tel : 204-764-3050 ext 105
Email: cao@hamiota.com



2026 ROAD GRAVELLING TENDER NOTICE

Hamiota Municipality is inviting tenders to spread 13,290 - cubic yards of Traffic Gravel on Municipal roads transported from a gravel pit located at SE ¼ 5-11-22 WPM between May and July 31, 2026.

Sealed tenders will be accepted until **4:00 pm on Friday, February 27, 2026**. For Tender documents and Specifications or for more information please forward inquiries to:

Lorra Eastcott CAO, Hamiota Municipality
P.O. Box 100, Hamiota MB. R0M 0T0
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Help Wanted

R.M. of Oakview PUBLIC WORKS EQUIPMENT AND ROAD MAINTENANCE OPERATOR- FULL TIME



The Rural Municipality of Oakview features the communities of Oak River, Cardale, Rapid City and Basswood within a total area of 1120 square km, and a population of approximately 1630 residents.

Under supervision of the Manager of Public Works the successful applicant will operate municipal equipment, perform regular maintenance on all municipal equipment and any attachments, maintain municipal roads and ditches. General duties include operating municipal equipment as and when required to maintain roads and ditches, streets, lanes, public spaces (grading in the summer and snow plowing in the winter). Check on road signs and replace any that are in disrepair or are missing, mark roads with proper signage if required, recondition machinery in off season, and all other duties as prescribed.

Although work will be primarily assigned in a designated area, either urban, utility, or rural, assistance may be required by other Public Works Departments. Assistance must be given based on qualifications, availability, ability, and need.

Applicants should have experience operating and maintaining heavy equipment including, but not limited to, graders, loaders, gravel trucks, mowers, etc. Have good mechanical aptitude. Be willing to learn and continue professional development efforts. Have a valid Class 5 Manitoba Driver's License, and Class 3 Drivers License would be an asset.

The right candidate can expect a comprehensive salary and benefits package consistent with the collective agreement to be negotiated.

Individuals interested in this position should send a resume and cover letter to CAO Mark Humphries RM of Oakview, PO Box 179, Oak River, MB, R0K 1T0, or email cao@rmofoakview.ca. The selection committee intends to review applications as early as February 18, 2026; however, applications will continue to be accepted until the right candidate is found.

We thank all who apply and advise that only those selected for further consideration will be contacted.

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Virtual Public Presentation
Rolling River School Division
2026-2027 Proposed Budget

6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Access the presentation via a link on the Rolling River School Division (RRSD) website homepage <https://www.rrsd.mb.ca/>

A summary of the proposed budget will be available on the RRSD website on February 27, 2026 links as follows

Governance – Budget/Finance- Upcoming Budget

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SPORTS

WESTMAN HIGH SCHOOL HUSKIES REPORT

By Gerry Nolan
RIVERS BANNER

After being away for a week, it's time to catch up on the Huskies. After a hard earned victory over the Virden Golden Bears, the Huskies were off to Sandy Bay to play a road game and lost a heart-breaker to the home team by a 1-0 score.

On February 13, the Huskies travelled to Birtle to face the Falcons. The Huskies came away with a 4-0 victory. Kayden Elliott earned the shutout, stopping all 13 shots. Carter Rozdeba, Sam Rivas and Aaron Roels each had a goal and assist for the winners. Mateo Finnie had 2 assists. Duncan McLean also had an assist.

In the return match on Saturday night the Huskies defeated the Falcons 6-2.

Harlen Bridges scored



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Hamiota Huskies 2025-2026 roster is as follows: #1 Kayden Elliott, #2 Corbin Munz, #4 Jayson Knight, #5 Clay Munz, #7 Aaron Rouls, #8 Sam Rivas-Banos, #9 Jesse Bourdin, #10 Chase Airey, #11 Jayson Schoonbaert, #12 Nick McMaster, #13 Kirk Bayes, #14 David Waldner, #15 Duncan McLean, #16 Mateo Finnie, #17 Hayden Bridges, #18 Carter Rozdeba, #19 Colby Burt, #20 Josh Mathison, #22 Reid Hutchins, #23 Kevin Therrien, #30 Trey Tuttle, #33 Nic McDuff.

the hat trick for the Huskies. Duncan McLean had a goal and 3 assists, with Sam Rivas also assisting on 3 goals. Jayson Schoonbaert

had a single goal and Aaron Roels scored his twentieth goal of the season to round out the Huskie goalscoring. Reid Hutchings had a pair

of assists and Revin Thierren also had an assist.

The Huskies improve to 13 wins and 12 losses and sit in ninth place in league

standings.

Next for the Huskies is game action against Sandy Bay on February 18 at 4 P.M. and then February 19 at

8 P.M. when the Vincent Massey Vikings will pay a visit. Come out and support the High School Hockey Team!

REF MEMORIES

REF TO
WRITER

GERRY
NOLAN



February means playoff hockey. It is an exciting time of the year as teams compete in playoff series with the winner advancing and losers going home for the remainder of the season. The longer you are in the playoffs, the better the hockey. It's also a time when spectators follow their local team, home and away, which means the local rink is full of spectators.

Most of the series years ago were a best of 3, be it league or MAHA playoffs. Each game seemed like a do or die affair. As an official we had the best seat in the house, being out there on the ice.

The referee who did the first game of a series, he usually would set the tone for the series. There

was a particular referee who pretty much none of us liked to follow to work the second game. It was because he never called many penalties and many of his games got out of control and a lot of silly stuff took place. I liked following Frank Taylor and Randy Kalynuk, because they set a high standard of officiating in playoff games. We all knew you had to let the teams play but not cross over the line of fairness.

One game I was the head referee in I had followed the Referee who did not call many penalties, if any, and it was a tough game. The teams had played 2 nights earlier, so the memory was still fresh from what had happened in the previous

game. I knew this going into the game, so I had my standard set before hitting the ice and I knew I could not back down in any situation.

I talked with both team captains before the drop of the puck and told them that I knew the game before this one had gotten out of hand, but that I would not be letting that happen. Expect I would be calling it tight to start with, so you adapt to what I am doing.

The first period, I was tested many times but stayed true to my word on what I was calling and the 2 teams changed their way of playing. It turned into a barn burner of a game, with the game being decided in overtime.

After the game, both coaches came to the dressing room to thank the officiating crew for a job well done. We were all really high from doing a real good job. I know it took me several hours to come down from that game. It also served as a reminder that in the toughest of situations you could get through a game, no matter what had gone on in previous matches.

Until next time!



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MANITOBA

2026 TESA Award- Manitoba Beef Producers

By Carolyn Phillips
RIVERS BANNER

The Manitoba Beef Producers (MBP) Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Brandon marked a significant occasion in the beef industry, spotlighting the recipients of the 2026 Manitoba Environmental Stewardship Award (TESA). This prestigious honour, bestowed annually, recognizes beef producers across the province for their unwavering dedication to environmental stewardship and sustainable agricultural practices.

This year, the TESA award was presented to Connor and Kyla English, who operate a multigenerational family farm near Rivers, Manitoba. The English family's commitment to eco-friendly farming and innovative practices has garnered them regional recognition and set a benchmark for environmental stewardship within the province.

MBP President Matthew Atkinson expressed his pride in the TESA award, emphasizing its importance among the numerous accolades presented by the organization. "We're really, really proud of the TESA award in general. It's great to see folks showcasing the great environmental benefits and good stewardship and innovation practices in our cattle industry," he stated. This recognition is not merely a badge of honour; it highlights the influential role that farming practices play in promoting ecological well-being, cattle welfare, and community sustainability.

One of the standout features of the English family's farming operation is their use of polycropping and intercropping systems. By cultivating multiple crops simultaneously, they enhance soil health, reduce pest outbreaks, and increase biodiversity, which ultimately contributes to a more resilient agricultural environment. Additionally, their creative grazing rotations allow the land to rest and recover, supporting the natural reclamation of ecosystems while also providing nutritious forage for their cattle.

The English family's longstanding commitment to



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Award given on February 12 at the Vic Inn. L to R: Brian English, Leanne English, Colleen Robbins, Kyla and Connor English.

good land stewardship and sustainable agriculture practices demonstrates a forward-thinking approach essential in today's climate-conscious world. Their practices not only yield immediate benefits but also establish a sustainable agricultural legacy for future generations. Atkinson noted that the diversity of the English family's practices and their tangible environmental impact truly distinguished them from other nominees this year.

As the recipients of the provincial TESA award, the English family will proudly represent Manitoba as nominees in the Canadian Cattle Association's National TESA Award competition later this year. This national recognition offers an opportunity for the English family to share their successful stewardship journey on a broader platform and inspire other producers to adopt innovative practices.

In an industry increasingly challenged by climate

change and pressure on natural resources, the agricultural community must come together to champion sustainable practices that protect the environment while ensuring the viability of the beef industry. The MBP AGM highlighted not just the achievements of one family but the collective efforts of all producers committed to ensuring a sustainable future for farming in Manitoba.

As attendees reflect on this year's recognition, the focus remains on the path ahead—encouraging collaboration, innovation, and environmental responsibility among all stakeholders in the beef industry. The English family has set an inspiring example, proving that dedication to stewardship can result in meaningful change both within their own community and beyond. As they head to the national stage, they carry with them the hopes and aspirations of Manitoba's agricultural community, paving the way for a sustainable future.

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| Mar 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Rivers Legion Bingo 11:30am | 50 + Card Games 1pm | 50 + Club Pool 1pm | 50 + Club Cribbage 1pm Darts Rivers Legion 7pm | Rivers Legion Cribbage 7pm 50+ Floor Games 1pm | Prairie Crocus Library Storytime in Rivers 10am Chase the Ace Rivers Legion 7pm Kenton Legion 7pm | Rivers 17th Annual Northern Pike Classic 10am - 2pm |