

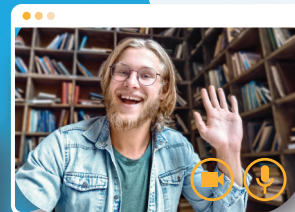
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LOCAL NEWS

Niverville Council Releases Police Study

■ Three years after it was received, the town has published a study detailing its options to improve policing.

Details on Pages 3-5



LOCAL NEWS

Family Talks Racism Incident

■ There was a much-publicized incident this past month where a substitute teacher at Niverville High School used the n-word in a classroom. The family of the student involved talks about what happened and what we can all learn from it.

Details on Pages 10-12

LOCAL NEWS

Caring for All Our Pandemic Pets

■ Are you one of the many people who got a puppy during the pandemic? We talked to the experts to get advice.

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COMMENTARY

Do You Feel Like You're Just Not Good Enough?

■ Imposter syndrome is extremely common, even when your accomplishments are well-earned. You are not alone.

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New MJHL Franchise Seeks Public's Help To Name Team

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The Citizen

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Niverville Council Releases Study that Informed Police Decision

Niverville's town council has said that their recent decision to establish a new RCMP detachment was informed by a 2018 police study. That study has now been made public.

By Jennifer Lavin

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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Two months ago, Niverville's town council announced their plan to meet the community's future policing needs.

They say that a new RCMP detachment will be created and staffed by 2023, a decision which council has indicated was made in large part based on the findings of a study they commissioned in 2018 but which until now hasn't been available to the public.

That only recently changed in late November.

Three years after the study was first presented to council by its author, and only after the town had already made their decision as to what to do with that information, the full text of the report has been released.

The 27-page study was compiled by Rick Hiebert, who previously served as the police chief for the city of Winkler.

"This study was reviewed extensively by council, weighing the pros and cons of each option," reads a statement from the town on its website. "A recent announcement informed the public of a RCMP detachment coming to Niverville, to be located in the rear of the Town's administration building. The detachment is anticipated to be approximately 3,000 square feet in size and can be easily expanded to 6,000 square feet. Council is looking forward to seeing four members of the RCMP call this detachment their place of work in 2023. Council is cognizant of Niverville's need for an increase in policing and has been working with the federal branch of the RCMP to bring this new detachment to town. Niverville council is looking forward to an increased RCMP presence in town in conjunction with the opening of the new detachment in 2023."

BACKGROUND

Manitoba communities with a population under 5,000 automatically enter into a policing contract with the RCMP.

However, once a town's population exceeds 5,000, they must choose the policing solution that suits them best.

It is anticipated that when the results of the 2021 census are released this the coming spring, Niverville will be well above the 5,000 mark.

The 2018 study was requested by council for two major reasons.

First, there was an uptick in Niverville's crime rate in 2017, including several violent incidents. This prompted local residents Lindsay Unrau and Barry Piasta to circulate a petition requesting that the town fund a policing study.

Second, council was interested in a study in order to determine how to best serve the community as it approaches and exceeds the benchmark population of 5,000 residents.

Another important detail to keep in mind is that municipalities receive grants from the province to help offset policing costs. In Manitoba, this grant is currently set at just over \$112 per resident. At the time of the study's writing, Niverville's grant amounted to approximately \$518,000.

Of that amount, \$200,000 is sent back to Manitoba Justice, as per the current policing contract for a community with a population of less than 5,000.

Since the cost of policing is set to increase significantly, the aim of Hiebert's study was to identify the town's current needs, and also determine what those needs will be in ten years' time, based on estimated population growth.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Niverville is currently policed by the RCMP detachment stationed in St-

Pierre-Jolys. Periodically there has been a satellite office in Niverville, but it's not presently in operation due in large part to the requirement for officers to be bilingual.

In 2017, the town hired a bylaw enforcement officer whose presence, Hiebert indicated in the study, was met with a positive response.

In preparing the report, Hiebert attended meetings with council and the mayor, representatives from the Niverville Elementary School and Niverville Collegiate Institute—at that time, those were the only two schools in town—as well as a representative from the local Citizens on Patrol Program and various members of the community.

Through these interactions, Hiebert found that many residents felt a lack of police presence in Niverville. According to the study, they felt that the existing police presence, and proactive policing, was nearly nonexistent within the town.

In the report, Hiebert says that he heard several comments repeatedly—and although some were positive, most were areas of concern.

Among these concerns was the feeling that emergency response times are slow, traffic is dangerous, and there is only infrequent communication between schools and the RCMP.

The study adds that another frequent comment is that social media tends to blow safety concerns out of proportion.

Yet another is that residents want more follow-up in the aftermath of crimes so they know whether those crimes have been solved or satisfactorily addressed.

THE FUTURE SITUATION

The report contains little information about Niverville's future policing needs except to point out that

(continued on page 4)

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(continued from page 3)

the needs will inevitably grow, especially if the population continues its rapid upward trajectory.

Hiebert recommends putting in place a policing plan as soon as is feasible in order to prepare for this growth.

Next, in the meatiest portion of the study, Hiebert lays out the various options that Niverville should consider as it decides how to address policing needs, as well as the pros and cons of each option.

OPTIONS #1-2: THE RCMP

The first two options pertain to the continued use of RCMP officers.

Option one involves entering into a Municipal Police Service Agreement (MPSA) with the federal government for RCMP services. With this type of agreement, the town would be responsible for 70 percent of policing costs—until the population reaches 15,000, at which time the town's portion would rise to 90 percent.

This option would require the construction of a detachment built to RCMP standards, with ongoing maintenance and utilities paid for by the town. Based on Hiebert's research, he believed this could cost around \$10 million.

The town would also be responsible for the cost of hiring support staff.

The main positive Hiebert mentions regarding this option is that officers who go on leave for 30 or more days would either be replaced or have their cost refunded. This places the responsibility for officer staffing firmly on the government's shoulders.

The second option concerns the possibility of entering into a modified MPSA contract with the RCMP. With this option, the town would be responsible to pay for the hiring of two additional police officers with the St-Pierre-Jolys detachment.

This option would be fairly low cost, since the only requirement would be making an annual financial contribution to help cover existing infrastructure.

However, these two officers would remain part of the St. Pierre-Jolys detachment and be sent wherever they were needed on a priority basis.

Hiebert points out that this would probably not much improve the police presence in Niverville, as

the officers wouldn't be dedicated solely to servicing the town.

Neither of the two RCMP options include the enforcement of local bylaws, so the cost of a bylaw enforcement officer would continue to be an extra expense.

OPTION #3: INDEPENDENT MUNICIPAL POLICE SERVICE

A third option outlined by Hiebert is for Niverville to establish its own independent municipal police service.

The province's \$112 per resident grant would continue to apply, but the town would be responsible to cover all costs above and beyond that figure.

A Niverville police force would be dedicated to the town alone—and according to the report, there would be many benefits to this option.

Firstly, a local police board would be created. A local board works to direct the police chief so the force is unique to the needs of the community it serves.

Other positives include increased police visibility and decreased response time. Officers working for local forces often stay with that force for their entire career, which Hiebert identifies as a significant benefit.

Hiebert also mentions that even if a force is small, a limited number of officers can easily provide 20 hours of coverage in the town they serve. Municipal police services also enforce local bylaws, so there would be no need to hire bylaw enforcement officers.

For Niverville, Hiebert conceptualizes an office with five officers with an annual operating budget of approximately \$575,000.

When the results of the 2021 census are released, the town is estimated to hit a population of 5,760. The province's policing grant, approximately \$645,120 in that scenario, would therefore cover the entire annual operating budget.

Hiebert addresses several other pros to having a local police force.

"Only a police service that is dedicated to just one community

can afford the time for the level of proactive work that I recommend," Hiebert writes.

There are, of course, also drawbacks to having a municipal police force.

The first is related to budget. Budget issues can become a problem in the case of unexpected equipment failure, for example. Also, the one-time startup costs of launching a new force could be prohibitive.

There is also the potential for staffing problems. If a staff member takes a leave of absence, it can be difficult to cover their absence. It can also take a long time to replace an officer who leaves unexpectedly.

OPTION #4: REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

The fourth option would involve two or more municipalities jointly

this option isn't feasible.

For one thing, Ste. Anne is a smaller community than Niverville, so servicing Niverville could end up eating up more than its fair share of that force's operations.

For another, one of the chief concerns of residents right now is the slow response time for officers coming from St. Pierre-Jolys. Ste. Anne is even further away from Niverville than St. Pierre, so at best this would seem to be a lateral move.

OPTION #6: COMMUNITY SAFETY OFFICERS

The sixth option involves the hiring of Community Safety Officers (CSOs).

CSOs are given the authority to enforce specific laws. For example, they can enforce stationary vehicular laws but not moving violations. They can also enforce local bylaws,

conduct patrols around town, and generally enhance community safety.

CSOs are contracted by Manitoba Justice but are employees of the municipalities in which they serve. The municipality pays for their services.

Hiebert points out that he believes CSOs are a better choice in general than bylaw enforcement officers, since the annual cost is similar for both but CSOs have significantly more authority.

OPTION #7: AUXILIARY VOLUNTEERS

The last option Hiebert lays out is the use of auxiliaries. These are volunteers who have no actual authority to enforce laws.

That said, Hiebert feels they can still be useful. Auxiliaries provide a visible patrol and general assistance to police officers. They can ride along with officers on patrol as well as provide added security.

However, auxiliaries cannot engage with an offender in any way.

Since auxiliaries could be mistaken for police officers, they could be at risk of injury while they are out on patrol.

Hiebert sees this as a significant issue due to the potential for liability

on the part of the municipality.

POLICE FORCE CASE STUDIES

The study then points to several communities in southeastern Manitoba that have chosen to operate their own municipal police services. Hiebert lists those communities along with their approximate operating costs.

The Town of Altona, population 4,212, employs eight police officers, one civilian support person, and three patrol cars. Their annual operating budget is \$926,000, or \$219 per person. They also have a contract with the Village of Plum Coulee to provide full policing services to their community at an annual cost of \$126,300.

The Town of Ste Anne has a population of 2,114 and a staff of five full-time officers, one part-time officer, one civilian support person, a team of up to 25 auxiliaries, and three patrol cars. They operate with an annual budget of \$567,000, or \$268 per person.

As there are no holding cells in Ste. Anne, prisoners must be taken to the Steinbach RCMP detachment. The Ste. Anne Police Department then pays for the guards needed to watch over their own prisoners.

Rivers is an unincorporated community in the RM of Riverdale. They have a combined population of 2,100 who are policed by the Rivers Police Service, which has four full-time officers, three part-time officers, seven auxiliaries, and two patrol vehicles. Their annual operating budget is \$430,000, or \$204 per person.

The Springfield Police Service is authorized by the province to conduct law enforcement within the RM of Springfield alongside the RCMP.

In this instance, the RCMP are the primary police authority and the Springfield Police Service operates as a secondary police service. The local officers are only authorized to enforce traffic laws, bylaws, and a variety of other non-criminal offences.

The Springfield Police Service employs four full-time officers, one civilian support person, and three police cruisers. Their annual operating budget is \$389,000, but in this case Hiebert does not provide a per capita cost.

Looking at the operating budgets of these municipal police services, Hiebert estimates that they pay between \$97,250 and \$115,750 per officer.

"Only a police service that is dedicated to just one community can afford the time for the level of proactive work that I recommend."

Rick Hiebert | Former Police Chief of Winkler

operating a regional police service. Hiebert discards this idea early on due to its prohibitive cost.

Such a force, he establishes, would not qualify for any policing grant from the province.

Neither Niverville nor its municipal neighbours would be likely to take on the full weight of operating a regional police service.

OPTION #5: CONTRACTING ANOTHER FORCE

A fifth option would be to contract the services of another municipality's police force to work within Niverville.

The only practical opportunity to enter into such an agreement, Hiebert says, would be to cooperate with the Ste. Anne Police Department.

Logistically, Hiebert suggests that



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ONLY TWO OPTIONS

Based on all the research and statistics laid out by Hiebert's study, he indicates that there are essentially only two viable options for Niverville to consider.

"If the decision is made to stay with the RCMP, the combined cost of the next contract together with providing and maintaining accommodation will be significant," he writes. "Questions about the exact number of police officers, response times, levels of proactive policing programs, etc. would need to be clearly defined."

He adds that if Niverville chooses to go with the RCMP, he recommends that they consider employing CSOs as well.

The other viable option, Hiebert says, is for Niverville to start its own police force.

"It's no secret that a number of larger urban centres in Manitoba have actively explored going the direction of establishing their own municipal police services, but in each case it's the startup costs that are most concerning," he writes. "The larger a community gets, the more it will cost to make this move. If this is the direction that Niverville feels it needs to go, then the sooner the better."

WHAT TO CHOOSE?

For laymen reading the study, the answer to which option should be

pursued may seem fairly clear-cut. Hiebert lists multiple towns in south-eastern Manitoba of similar size that have successfully created and maintained independent police forces.

Of the various options laid out in the study, Hiebert mentions the largest number of benefits in association with an independent police force while identifying only two operational drawbacks.

The first drawback is dealing with equipment failure.

However, he also mentions that the provincial grant is likely to cover the annual budget and even allow for a small surplus. This surplus could theoretically be used to cover emergency costs.

The second drawback is the potential for dealing with staffing shortages. Although a legitimate concern, the point could turn out to be moot since the RCMP, too, are experiencing significant staffing shortages at this time.

THE DECISION

Before this report was made public, Niverville's town council had already announced their ultimate decision: they have opted to create an RCMP detachment, which will be located in the same building as the town's administrative offices.

This is the first option explored in the police study, and one which

Hiebert considers to be viable.

There are clear advantages. The RCMP is well-established and employs well-trained officers. And if an officer goes on leave for more than 30 days, the government will replace them or refund the cost of their salary.

REACTION TO THE DECISION

Hiebert does emphasize some issues with this choice.

A big issue is response time. One of the consistent complaints by Niverville residents is that the RCMP take too long to respond to calls.

Lindsay Unrau, one of the people who spearheaded the police study petition in 2017, ran for town council in 2014 on a platform that relied heavily on improving the town's police presence.

Like Hiebert, Unrau consistently hears people raise concerns about the length of time it takes RCMP officers to respond to local calls.

"This [new Niverville] station is not going to be an independently run station that will only manage Niverville's community," Unrau pointed out in an interview for another article in The Citizen last month. "It is simply an extension of the St. Pierre dispatch. Therefore, an officer working within Niverville could be as far away as St. Malo

when an urgent call comes in for Niverville, depending on the current call volume. There will be four officers stationed in Niverville, but my understanding is that that does not mean that there will be four officers in station all at once. Four officers will rotate shifts so that there will always be at least one officer working at a time. Will one officer be enough, especially if it's more than certain that they won't always be in town covering our community? Really, that's nothing more than what we have currently."

Guy LeGras, a Niverville resident who has served for 30 years as a federal peace officer, agrees with that assessment.

"In my view, neither town council or the RCMP are being completely accurate in calling the Niverville office a detachment," says LeGras. "Due to the lack of holding cells, it would be better described as a satellite office, as arrest processing would still have to take place at the St. Pierre detachment, requiring the RCMP member to leave the community rather than process on sight."

LeGras goes on to cite the example of another community that took a similar path to the one Niverville has chosen to embark on.

"As a previous long-term

resident of La Salle, the Headingly RCMP also established an office in that community but subsequently closed that office after a brief period of time," he says. "The absence of holding cells in that office made it easier to close it and convert it for other commercial purposes. I can say with some accuracy that the existence of that office in no way resulted in an increased police presence or better service delivery."

Unrau and LeGras both stress that their comments should in no way be taken as a critique of the RCMP. Rather, they only seek to encourage the town to consider all options available to them.

There can be little doubt that Niverville's town council has given a great deal of thought and study to the policing issue over the course of the three years since Hiebert delivered his report.

Whether the town's decision is the best one for Niverville, however, is an exercise left to the individual citizen.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The full text of the policing study is available to read here: <https://www.wheretheyoubelong.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Niverville-Police-Study.pdf>

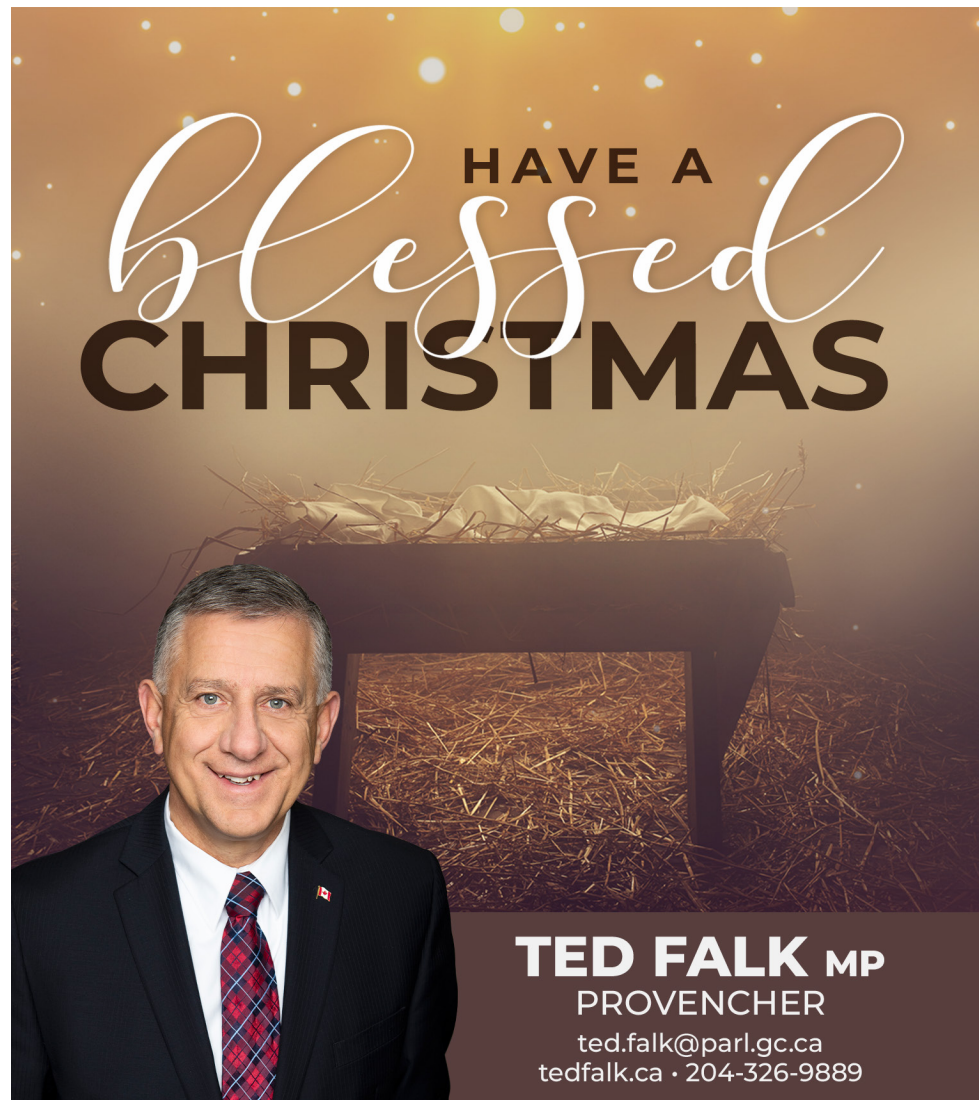


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ODR Driving Range to Be Rezoned Residential

By Jennifer Lavin

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

At a meeting of Niverville's council on November 16, it was decided that a tract of land that currently contains the Old Drovers Run driving range will be rezoned.

The proposal came from Len Peters of Sunset Estates, the property's developer, who requested that the land's zoning be changed to allow for the creation of three high-density residential lots, three parks and open space lots, and one medium-density residential lot.

One letter of objection was read into the minutes.

The writer of the letter indicated that rezoning the land in this way might be fiscally irresponsible, based on their belief that the land could be better served as commercial space.

It should be noted that the



The driving range, immediately to the east of Old Drovers Run in Niverville, is being rezoned.

GOOGLE

frontage along Old Drivers Run is still zoned commercial, and the property in question is actually located behind the commercial strip.

However, the writer of the letter pointed out that the proposed area would offer a prime location for more businesses seeking to benefit from the customer base brought in by the high school, new hotel, Community Resource

and Recreation Centre, and other established businesses in the area.

Peters was on hand to answer questions.

When asked to dispute the objection, he argued that in fact land which backs onto a golf course is usually considered to be prime residential space and highly sought-after. This property will overlook the existing golf course.

Peters also pointed to the fact

that there are multiple commercial vacancies and commercial buildings being built in the area, but there is often a lack of residential land available in town—a need which this project would help fill.

In the end, the proposal was approved and the project will proceed. There is no timeline or further details available at this time as to what sort of residential homes will be built here.

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Ritchot Council Approves St. Adolphe Commercial Development

By Sara Beth Dacombe

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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The south end of St. Adolphe may become a little busier after Ritchot's council voted in favour of rezoning two lots from Agricultural Limited to Commercial General.

The lots are located across Highway 200 from the Tourond Creek development.

Developer Luke Wiebe currently owns one of the lots, while the RM owns the other. Both lots were included in the rezoning proposal.

"Council and the administration agreed to look at the whole parcel as one," explained CAO Mitch Duval. "There is a pipeline that does run through on the north side of the two parcels, so it kind of limits the opportunities available to whoever wishes to develop that. The municipality also wants to leave the option open to sell the land if there is an interest regarding commercial property."

A few limiting factors came up at the meeting regarding how the property can be developed.

One of them is the question of how the properties will be accessed from the highway.

Manitoba's Department of Highways has said that any development there will need to have an egress and exit directly across from the existing intersection with Tourond Creek Drive. No second access point would be allowed.

This would effectively consolidate the amount of traffic along that part of the highway.

Tanya Waddell, from the RM's planning administration, introduced an amendment which would make council's approval of the bylaw subject to the preparation of a development agreement for the property. This way, council will have a little more oversight into what is eventually built there.



A property on the south end of St. Adolphe will be home to a new commercial development.

GOOGLE

Council tackled the question of what type of commercial development would be possible.

"With the development agreement, council has a lot of control as to what's happening," said Mayor Chris Ewen. "If someone does end up buying the [RM's] property, then there will also be a development agreement opportunity to review that as well. So there will always be an opportunity... to ensure the community and the municipality develops in the right way."

Wiebe was in attendance to speak in favour of the new arrangement. He described his plans to construct a professional centre, retail shops, and/or industrial shops.

Numerous community members were in attendance to voice their concern about the zoning change.

Many written objections were

also submitted. Each was read into the public record.

A common concern had to do with the potential for increased traffic in the area—specifically, at the Tourond Creek intersection, which would now have vehicular traffic entering the highway from both the east and west sides.

"Traffic will now turn both left and right across from Tourond Creek," said one community member. "I didn't move out here to deal with congested traffic."

Others asked council to address the amount of unused commercial space already in existence in St. Adolphe.

"At this time, St. Adolphe has a glut of empty and undeveloped commercial space," said one resident. "Do we need more?"

Still other residents said that they

would rather see taxpayer dollars spent on more green space, parks, or community programs rather than supporting additional commercial development.

A few council members expressed support for more community green space, acknowledging that the Crow Wing Trail runs through or next to the lots in question. However, they also pointed out there are other locations in the community that have been set aside for green space. This property has never been set apart for that purpose.

"My thought would be, to the residents who have objections, it probably does look like green space right now," said Councillor Curtis Claydon. "Even though it is zoned agricultural, you can see the Crow Wing Trail goes running through it. But on the other hand, we are

also seeing other new green spaces develop throughout the community, and in Tourond Creek with the park there and the play structures for the children. It is important that we manage the development agreement properly."

Councillor Janine Boulanger stood in opposition to the rezoning.

"You all know how I feel about St. Adolphe and business and commercial," she said. "I've always felt it to be a bedroom community, and it thrives in that sense. As you heard from the objection letters, that's why they moved to St. Adolphe, because it is that type of community. I'm on the fence on any of it... moving to commercial general. I think that little piece of land could be developed into something quite cute and quaint and beneficial to all the residents in that area."

Mayor Ewen acknowledged the concerns of the residents, but he made a point of saying that the location is particularly well-suited to commercial development.

"There's two points to this," Mayor Ewen said. "We do have existing commercial space in St. Adolphe. I don't disagree with that. Having said that, we have a developer here that purchased his land and is going to do something productive with the potential commercial space. I think that's why this is a bit of a tricky situation for me. I see we're actually getting some play in this community. As well as, St. Adolphe should have a Main Street with commercial opportunities and that section is right off Main Street. I think there should be commercial on both sections, specifically on the section if there is a developer wanting to do something. I see the objections, but I also think it's meant to be there."

The bylaw to rezone both lots to commercial was approved by a vote of four to one.



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Family Talks Racism Incident at Niverville High School

There was a much-publicized incident this past month where a substitute teacher used the n-word in a Niverville classroom. The family of the student involved talks about the incident and what can be learned from it.

By Sara Beth Dacombe

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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A Niverville family is taking steps to increase racism awareness after a local teacher was heard using the n-word while talking to a group of Grade Nine students in early November.

On the afternoon of Friday, November 5, the class was just getting started at Niverville High School (NHS). Isaack Dini, who is Black, was entering the classroom with a group of fellow students when he called out a greeting to one of his friends, who is white.

Isaack used the n-word to greet his friend, but he was surprised when the teacher entered their conversation and used the same word back.

The substitute teacher, whose name has not been released, has since been placed on leave by the Hanover School Division.

This was the second incident of a Manitoba teacher using the n-word in a month.

The Dini family contends that both the high school and the Hanover School Division have mishandled the situation. They say that they're still waiting for a satisfactory resolution, which for them would include an apology from the teacher, the teacher's resignation, and further steps taken within the division to address racism education for both faculty and students.

THE DINI FAMILY

When the Dini family moved from Winnipeg to Niverville in 2019, they were expecting relief from city life. Isaack's mother said they wanted



Saadiyo-Ikram Abdillahi and her nephew, Isaack Dini, outside the Dini family home in Niverville.

✉ SARA BETH DACOMBE

a quieter life away from so much traffic and noise.

They had heard that Niverville would be a great place to live—and this turned out to be true.

Their experiences with their neighbours have only been positive and the family's eight children, ranging in age from five to 22, have all had great success making friends.

Isaack's aunt, Saadiyo-Ikram Abdillahi, is especially close with the family. She still lives in Winnipeg but was instrumental in helping her sister and the family make the move and adjust to town life.

Because of a language barrier, Abdillahi is listed at the high school as an emergency contact for Isaack. She is often a spokesperson for the family when needed to help set up services and otherwise advocate on behalf of the Dinis.

"We're extremely close," says Abdillahi. "Me and my kids come out here all the time. We know the community. [My sister] moved out here last year, so it's been about a year. Moving during COVID was hard, and at first the kids didn't want to move, you know, because they had been going to the same school

for a lot of years. But she's a single mom and they needed a change. I said, 'The schools are nearby, the community is great, they have good people here.' The kids ended up loving it. They've made many, many friends. They constantly want to be out or have friends over all the time and they have great neighbours. They have never had anything like this happen to them. I've never heard of anyone making racist comments to them."

For Isaack, the move was not made enthusiastically—at least in the beginning. But he knew that the

environment in Niverville would be positive.

As is sometimes the case in smaller schools, he was concerned about making friends if there were already tight-knit cliques formed.

Thankfully, he didn't find it hard connecting with other kids.

The 15-year-old loves sports and is on the volleyball and basketball teams. His height contributes to him being a formidable player.

"I'm happy that the restrictions allow for it again," says Isaack. "I didn't get to do any of that stuff last year."

THE INCIDENT

Understanding what happened on November 5 can be difficult.

For the Dinis, the details are important in helping the community have a constructive discussion about racism education.

There is a video which shows Isaack and the teacher having an exchange in the classroom after the teacher used the racial slur. *The Citizen* has seen that video. In it, many other students are present and contribute to the interaction.

In an interview, Abdillahi describes what she saw happen in the video—and also what she has experienced with the Dini family since the incident occurred.

She says that Isaack's mother called her for help after receiving a text from Isaack informing her that he was in the principal's office.

The text also included the detail that a substitute teacher had called him the n-word.

Abdillahi says that Isaack's mother was very upset, but that no one from the school called either her or Abdillahi, who was listed as his

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"I'm pretty sure this was an important ordeal," says Abdillahi. "You need to contact the parents, but my sister had to hear about it from my nephew in a text."

When Isaack's mother got to the school, she requested that Abdillahi come as well.

"My sister can speak English, but it isn't her first language," says Abdillahi. "She speaks fluent French and there are some anxiety issues surrounding speaking English, so I often come to help her with communication when it's needed. She asked for me to come, but I work in downtown Winnipeg so it was going to take me a little while to get there."

According to Abdillahi, the principal and vice-principal offered to hold off on meeting until the following Monday.

But when that wasn't acceptable to Isaack and his mother, they say they felt pressured by the school to talk about the incident before Abdillahi arrived.

"I was on the phone with my sister right there and I could tell she felt pressured and rushed," Abdillahi says. "I advised them to start the meeting and just put me on speaker. They introduced themselves so I could know who was in the room: the principal, vice-principal, Isaack's mom, and Isaack. I went straight to the point and asked Isaack what happened."

She says that Isaack described walking into the class with his phone charger. He then saw a friend of his walk in. He said to the friend, in greeting, "What's up, my n-word?"

He said the substitute teacher then pointed at both of them and said, "Which one of you is the n-word?"

The students looked at each other, and then his friend shook his head and walked out. Isaack took his seat, not knowing how to respond.

The teacher pursued the conversation further, asking to know who was the n-word between Isaack and his friend.

IMPLYING CONTEXT

Abdillahi says that the principal and vice-principal tried to explain the teacher's actions to her, which she felt was inappropriate because they were trying to imply context that would give the teacher a proper motivation for using the n-word back at Isaack.

"Well, who did she want everybody to identify in that moment?" says Abdillahi. "She was presumably trying to teach the kids something, but it wasn't at all appropriate. And it wasn't appropriate that Isaack used that word, either. In the meeting, I told Isaack he knows he's not allowed to use that word and he said he knew. He knows he shouldn't be using that word."

Abdillahi also feels that the Friday afternoon meeting lacked

transparency because Isaack didn't even know the name of the substitute teacher and the NHS officials wouldn't tell them.

"To me, it sounded like they were defending the sub in a way," Abdillahi says. "They said she was using the word as an example to justify her reasoning as to why she had used it... I said that wasn't at all appropriate and I immediately asked for the teacher to apologize to Isaack and to be fired. This is not the first time in our province where this has happened. I said I wanted it followed up. They said it would go to the superintendent and they were going to decide."

THE AFTERMATH

She adds that school personnel didn't disclose that other teachers already knew there was a video recording of the incident, and that the video had been shared among the students as well as on social media.

In the video, Isaack identifies the exchange as racist.

After a lengthy back-and-forth involving other students in the classroom, the teacher can be seen kneeling beside Isaack, removing her mask, and putting her hand on his shoulder while continuing to talk about why she said the n-word.

Isaack says that after the interaction seemed to go nowhere, the teacher eventually walked out of the classroom and the students were left alone.

One student from the classroom then emailed the class's regular teacher, who was absent, to explain what had happened. Then this teacher got in contact with another teacher, who came in to talk to the students.

"The students had been left unattended," says Abdillahi. "But when the other teacher got a hold of another teacher to come in, that's when the students had an opportunity to tell what had happened. That teacher told the students to go tell the vice-principal what had happened. And then Isaack was summoned to the principal's office."

According to Isaack, the students who went to talk to the vice-principal were the students who had sided with the substitute teacher, saying that he was making a big deal out of nothing.

"After the meeting was over, when I got there to Isaack's house, I sat Isaack down," Abdillahi continues. "I took notes. He said he didn't know the sub's name. She was someone new and he'd never had her before. I asked him about a recording, if there was a recording of the incident.

He said there were recordings, but [they were deleted]. But Isaack asked around and found one of the recordings. In our conversation on Friday, not once did they mention there was a recording."

Abdillahi said after she viewed the video, she asked Isaack to ask his friends to remove the video if it was still posted anywhere.

"It's heartbreaking," she says. "In the recording, you can hear the teacher trying to justify her saying it. You can hear him trying to converse with her. He is going back and forth with her. You can hear him getting frustrated. You can hear the other students also identify to the teacher that she is being racist."

She emphasizes again that she asked Isaack to take down the video, and for his friends to do the same. She wanted to wait until Monday to see if the situation would be resolved with the school.

HANOVER SCHOOL DIVISION RESPONSE

On Monday, November 8, Abdillahi says that the school division still had not communicated with the Dini family.

"It wasn't appropriate that Isaack used that word, either. I told Isaack he knows he's not allowed to use that word and he said he knew. He knows he shouldn't be using that word."

Saadiyo-Ikram-Abdillahi | Student's Aunt

After she had reached out to the school repeatedly, getting no reply, she approached a media outlet to help publicize her situation.

The story was aired on television on November 11.

In the segment, the school division supplied the media outlet with a comment, saying that the teacher had been suspended and the incident was being investigated.

Here is the official statement from the school division.

"Hanover School Division strongly condemns all racist actions and words. Commitment to equity and respect for human diversity are fundamental values of the Hanover School Division. No one has the right to discriminate against, harass, bully, show disrespect towards anyone else, at work/school or in any related situation. Resources will be made available for anyone who feels disparaged and needs support. The school has and will continue to communicate directly with parents/caregivers.

"This matter is under investigation and is being addressed in

accordance with our divisional Respect for Human Diversity Policy and human resources protocol. The teacher in question is not eligible to work pending the investigation.

"Staff in our schools are committed to providing a safe, inviting, and inclusive learning environment that respects the human rights, diversity, and dignity of all students and their families."

Abdillahi says that this statement is how she first learned about the teacher's suspension, but she believes she should have received some direct communication from the school division.

She also says that the response didn't go far enough. She has continued to ask for the teacher's resignation, an apology, and for answers about HSD's policy surrounding racism education.

After the incident was reported in the news, HSD interim superintendent Shelley Amos did send an email to the Dinis, dated November 12.

"HSD agrees with your concerns and is taking this matter very seriously," Amos wrote. "The school division is apologetic that this happened with one of our substitute teachers and does not condone this behaviour and language in any way, shape, or form. An initial apology was provided directly from the substitute teacher to the students.

"The school will continue to work with our student services department to provide any required support to those involved. The school and the division will work together to determine how to best move forward and work with students and teachers to promote anti-racism and support anti-racist education in classrooms. As a school division, our core work is of course education, and we always have room to learn, grow, and adapt as we walk through incidents and experiences to improve anti-racism education and support for our students."

"NO ONE IS RESPONDING TO ME"

But Abdillahi says that, as far as she knows, no apology was given from the substitute teacher to the students and that the vice-principal also owes Isaack an apology after insinuating there was an alternative version of the events he heard after speaking to other students.

Abdillahi has also asked HSD to clarify what support has been offered to students, since she's not aware of any follow-up communication that was initiated with the students who were directly involved in the interaction with the substitute teacher that day.

"What's the timeline?" she asks. "No one is responding to me."

For this article, *The Citizen* requested an interview as well as additional information from HSD about the incident and Abdillahi's specific concerns.

"We will respectfully decline an interview at this time," wrote Amos in response to the interview request. "When the school became aware of the incident, immediate action was taken, and the Superintendent's Office was notified. The teacher is not eligible to work, pending the results of the investigation. The school has and will continue to communicate with the parents/caregivers of those directly involved. Specific to your question regarding support, our clinical services are available to those directly involved."

Abdillahi says that if clinical services have been offered to students, she hasn't heard about it.

She doesn't feel that any support has been offered to the Dini family at all.

"No adults from HSD have come back to speak to the students," Abdillahi says. "No one is talking to Isaack. I have emailed with the trustee as well and she had no idea what had happened. No one told her what happened in her school. She said they probably deleted the videos because they were protecting other children. I asked her for help and I don't feel she is an advocate for me because I haven't heard from her since."

ON RACISM EDUCATION AND NEXT STEPS

The use of the n-word in everyday language is one of the toughest topics to tackle in society today. Few subjects are as contentious.

An article in *The Washington Post*, published in 2014, provides a good explanation of the difficult history behind this word and its continued use.

"Though the word has long been entrenched in American vernacular," the authors of the article write, "by all accounts it is more prevalent than ever—expanding into new corners of the culture, showing up in places (college debate, Christian rap, video-game culture) where it would have been almost unimaginable a generation ago and no longer following any clear rules about who can say it and who can't."¹

Abdillahi agrees that it may seem tough to define precisely why the n-word should not be used, but the most important thing that could come out of this would be to improve the way racism is talked about in Niverville and other places like it.

"The whole mute thing is not helping anyone. It's not helping us. Let's talk about this," says Abdillahi. "We know the n-word gets used a lot in Black culture. Culturally, in music

(continued on page 11)

(continued from page 9)

and in videos, it gets used very casually and we know there are some who are okay with that or think it is artistic. That's one way to look at it. But we've always taught Isaack, we've talked about it that it is not a word we want to use. It has significant historical weight for our people, for people like us. We don't want to use that word. Isaack has apologized for using that word. At the same time, I can't educate anyone. I think it's important for you as a person to go and educate yourself, if you're willing. Read about Black history. Read about the history of the word. No one can educate you. You have to want to learn."

Abdillahi says that the substitute teacher certainly has something to learn. She thinks it is possible that the teacher's attitude could possibly be one that other people have in Niverville, but they don't talk about it openly enough to learn why it is harmful.

"In the video she's confident," says Abdillahi. "She thinks she's right... She thinks she should educate on racist language, but she herself has a miseducation there. What did she mean by what she said? She meant, one kid is Black, one is not. There's no need to call attention to that."

The Dinis want everyone to know

that they love living in Niverville. They have felt very welcome and have had only positive experiences here.

They also ask people to look more deeply into what it's like to live as a person of colour and break down walls. In other words, they want people to put themselves in the Dinis' shoes.

"Most people in Niverville probably don't think racism happens here," she says. "I would ask, how would you know? If it's not happening to you, [does that mean] it's not happening? Then I would say, if it's happening to your neighbour, it is happening to you. You don't see a lot of Black families in Niverville. Even in the city, we're teaching our kids, I'm teaching my sons, 'Don't do certain things because you're Black.' If you're a white family, you don't do that. You don't teach them these things because you don't have to."

MODELLING BETTER BEHAVIOUR

Abdillahi is asking HSD to review its policy on racism incidents and

make improvements in specific ways so that this doesn't happen to other families.

"The staff and the superintendent need to improve how this sensitive issue was handled," she says. "The timing of the communication needs to be directly improved. That quote that was made by the superintendent was first provided to the news, it was not provided to me until after it was

lead to model better behaviour for young people.

One specific thing that should be modelled, she says, is a direct apology to the family.

"An apology needs to be made to my nephew and his family, from all the staff involved," says Abdillahi. "They all individually took part in this, some who were specifically involved and now each of them by their silence. The students need to be given the opportunity to have a discussion with the adults at the school and talk about what happened. It's not hard to see how the adults could lead here. They could even tell the students, 'Look, we didn't handle this very well.' There's no shame in saying that. The students already know the adults didn't handle it well, but

now they need to be modeled true leadership and humility... The communication needs to begin again and it needs to be done well."

Abdillahi is also working with Parents Against Racism (PAR), a Manitoba group of parents who advocate for people of colour and spread racism awareness and education.

"It's not hard to see how the adults could lead here. They could even tell the students, 'Look, we didn't handle this very well.' There's no shame in saying that."

Saadiyo-Ikram Abdillahi | Student's Aunt

on the news... You need to talk to us as people."

Abdillahi says that it would be beneficial if students were offered the opportunity to discuss what happened and learn from it as a real-life example. She believes that the adults at the school, as well as parents in the community, can step up and take the

Currently, the group is working within the Franco-Manitoban School Division, but Abdillahi is hopeful that Niverville will start its own advocacy group.

"I've talked with PAR to see what else can be done," she says. "This will not be swept under the rug. There is always another step I can take and I would love to see the community step up and embrace this topic."

With PAR's help, Abdillahi is drafting a petition to send to the town of Niverville at large. She will be asking for parents to help in addressing racism in the community and possibly start a PAR committee to work with the schools.

The petition will be made available to parents of students connected to the incident that happened on November 5 as well as distributed via social media in the hopes of establishing as much community support as possible.

REFERENCES

¹ Dave Sheinin and Krissah Thompson, "Redefining the Word: Examining a Racial Slur Entrenched in American Vernacular that Is More Prevalent than Ever," The Washington Post, November 9, 2014 (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/national/2014/11/09/the-n-word-an-entrenched-racial-slur-now-more-prevalent-than-ever/>).



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Joel Lemoine (third from right) and Lesley Gaudry (second from left) at the EDAM Fall Forum in Virden. **LESLEY GAUDRY**

Local Man Wins Economic Development Award

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

The Economic Developers Association of Manitoba (EDAM) recently held their fifth annual Manitoba Economic Development Awards at the EDAM Fall Forum in Virden. At the event, Joel Lemoine of Ste. Agathe took home a major award.

EDAM is a non-profit organization formed in 1993 to provide professional development and networking opportunities, promote the profession, and influence public policy.

"These past couple years have included making adjustments and pivoting," says Tyler King, EDAM chairperson. "Economic development professionals across the province have proven to be resilient, they deserve to be recognized. Congratulations to all the nominees."

In 2017, EDAM hosted their first awards ceremony. They presented awards in two categories and were so pleased with the response

they received that they decided to add two more categories in order to honour more members who deserved recognition.

The Award of Distinction is given to an individual who has worked in the field of economic development for more than five years and whose accomplishments had made a significant contribution to the field and demonstrate exceptional best practices.

This year, Joel Lemoine of Ste. Agathe took the prize. Also nominated was Tammy Dziadek of Gimli.

Another award, the Economic Development Project of the Year, is intended to recognize a municipality, town, group, or committee that has created a project in the last 18 months that has had a significant, long-term economic impact.

The award ultimately went to the Boyne Lodge Personal Care Home in Carman, but a beloved local project was nominated: the Friendship Trail in St. Adolphe, which was represented at the event

by Lesley Gaudry.

Also nominated was the Treasures of the Dawson Trail (Richer), the RM of Pipestone Skate Park (Reston), the Uptown Emporium (Flin Flon), the Side Hustle Microgrant Program (Grandview) and the EDP Covid Support-19 Support Funding.

Awards were also given to recognize Economic Development Marketing Excellence and the year's Rising Star.

In the Rising Star category, which celebrates an individual who has worked in the field of economic development for fewer than five years and whose accomplishments have made a significant contribution to that field and demonstrated exceptional best practices, the winner was Chantelle Parrott of Beausejour.

And finally, for Economic Development Marketing Excellence, the award went to Prairie Gateway Tourism's regional brand launch, from Virden and RM of Wallace Woodworth.

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Lifeblood of the Community: The Importance of Buying Local

As the Christmas season comes back around, local business owners are once again emphasizing the importance of supporting local, which makes a tangible difference to real people in our communities.

By Sara Beth Dacombe

✉ sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

Erily similar to the lengthy health challenges endured by COVID long-haulers, many businesses are also realizing that keeping their doors open will be... well, a long haul.

Throughout the pandemic, businesses have had to withstand lockdowns, changing restrictions, staffing issues, and supply issues, just to name a few.

While lockdowns have largely lifted and financial relief benefits and loans helped, many challenges remain.

Fresh challenges are also emerging, such as high interest rates and fresh supply challenges given the flooding disaster in British Columbia—not to mention the arrival of the new omicron variant of the disease.

SUPPORT LOCAL

Leading local businesses through the pandemic has been the Niverville Chamber of Commerce, offering a network of support.

According to executive director Brenda Desjardins, things are by no means back to normal.

"Some industries are doing well, but many industries have suffered losses that will take time to recoup," Desjardins says. "Restrictions are lighter than they have been previously, but there are still many hurdles for businesses from new protocols, to staffing issues, to supply chain delays and cost increases."

Overall, the long-term goal of businesses is to stabilize and return to growth. The Chamber of Commerce is seeking to encourage growth and recovery from the economic consequences of the pandemic.

"COVID has really emphasized the importance of business agility, the ability to adapt efficiently and effectively to changing environments, and the Chamber is working to incorporate this concept in our recovery plan," says Desjardins. "We understand that our membership



Noella Andres, owner of the Community General Store in Niverville.

NOELLA ANDRES

needs a Chamber that is continuously analyzing economic changes so that we can be prepared to support our businesses when they need us. This will be a major topic of our strategic planning session in early 2022. In the meantime, we have already started exploring events for the new year that will focus on business education and networking opportunities."

In the short-term, businesses are focusing on the now—and that means Christmas. In that regard, Desjardins has a message about what it means to support local.

"For the past 18 months, we've seen businesses exhaust every avenue available to them to try to generate business," she says. "As a Chamber, we've been trying to support these efforts through grants, programming, and connecting businesses with resources. However, at the end of the day it just comes down to where people in the community decide to spend their money. So our message this holiday season isn't really directed at businesses. They're already doing everything they can. Instead we'd like to encourage our community to support local. Think about the businesses that you appreciate having in your community and show them

some love this holiday season."

Last Christmas, the push to support local made a tangible difference to the livelihood of many local business owners. To say it helped businesses survive is no understatement.

The Community General Store at in Niverville is one business hoping to receive the same level of support as the last holiday season.

"That is the best thing that came out of COVID, the focus on buying local," says Noella Andres, owner of the Community General Store. "The bottom line is that COVID did drastically increase the need to support local. Businesses put out the ask to support local and people heard us. Then they repeated it to each other, and people responded and came out. They supported local and carried businesses like never before. The shutdowns, even as much as I hated it, went okay for us because everybody supported local."

Peggy Wiebe from the Little Flower Shop on Prefontaine Road says she received a lot of support during the worst of the COVID lockdowns.

"I have not slowed down. I have not stopped," says Wiebe. "We did see delays in that weddings, specialties, rentals, yes, had moved from

2020 to 21 or 22 or 23 and beyond. But because people couldn't have big weddings, we've done a lot of micro-weddings where people still want the flowers and a bouquet. The bride is still wearing the dress and the couple still wants some centrepieces and backdrops and all that. And this year came and now we've done some receptions. It's been hectic, with calming the brides down and letting them know we're all trying to work this out. Our floral end of it has not stopped. I'm busy."

Businesses that still need to reduce capacity continue to be hobbled, but Wiebe says that she can tell people are starting to go out more.

"People are starting to get together more—and because they can do that, they are starting to spend more again, especially in my industry," Wiebe says. "They're trying to add some brightness and cheerfulness into people's lives, and nothing says it more than flowers. They're across the board always a good gift. With celebrations, with sympathy, they're there to cheer you."

Like Andres, this Christmas Wiebe appreciates her customers immensely and is hoping for the same show of local support they had last year.

"I love this area," she says. "We noticed last Christmas we could barely keep up. The support was overwhelming. We love it. We need it. These small businesses are the lifeblood of the community."

LOCAL CHALLENGES

Andres says the local support has been revolutionary, but there are other challenges that her business is trying to overcome.

"Oh, it's not over," Andres says. "In fact, I think it's actually getting a little worse now because of supply issues. With retail, I'm ordering things and they're being put on back order and I might not get them for a year or a year and a half. Like, I'm getting things that I ordered last Christmas and we're only getting them this Christmas. Throw in a B.C. flood and we just found out a lot of our Christmas greens aren't going to make it in time. They're stuck on a semi somewhere."

Supply and demand is a real challenge that the public may not be entirely grasping yet, even as the consequences are being felt in markets all across Canada.

Buying local was the consumer's solution to supply issues for a while, but now even buying Manitoba-made or Canadian products will be more difficult.

"The media has been saying it and we've been saying it over and over, but I don't think the public understands," says Andres. "This impacts us and so it will impact you, but it's beyond our control. This Christmas, it will be more difficult than ever, even to buy local, though the local businesses and artisans really need your support. For example, getting yarn for macramé or clay for pottery, this is getting really difficult. Because my business is mostly local handmade products, we are noticing this is the situation facing a lot of our makers. Of course, I'm going to always say support local, but I don't think people understand that the demand is affecting the crafter who is selling at the markets or making in their home. They're struggling to

get the materials they need to make their product.”

Other continuing challenges include finding and keeping staff, and beginning to make loan repayments when businesses haven't yet fully recovered.

“A lot of businesses took advantage of the CEBA [Canada Emergency Business Account] loan, and it's going to come due,” Andres adds. “But COVID hasn't gone away. People intended to rebound their business, and they haven't been able to do that. If they needed that [loan] to begin with, they took it and were hoping COVID would go away, but it hasn't. So if a business took that loan and it's due, we will see more doors close.”

Wiebe from the Little Flower Shop has a similar struggle to Andres when it comes to trying to get critical supplies from British Columbia.

“I get 90 percent of my product from B.C.,” says Wiebe. “Business recovery? We'll see what recovery looks like after what's happened in B.C. Prices are going to go up and they're going to go up high.”

Wiebe also says she will need to continue to be creative. But sustaining the flow of new ideas is always a challenge.

“It's hard to know where to turn to for the next new thing to draw people in,” says Wiebe. “We were doing lots of fresh flowers and then we weren't; we were doing more plants. We were doing outdoor planters for businesses. We were doing interior décor for interior designers and showrooms for new builds. Some industries went bang-buster, and others didn't pivot fast enough, or couldn't.”

Wiebe acknowledges that many other businesses haven't been as fortunate as her flower shop, pointing out that any place you had to physically go to for services inevitably struggled more than a shop where you could still go to pick up goods.

“Who is struggling? Restaurants, gyms, for sure, any place you have to go to for service,” Wiebe says. “For me, you don't have to come here. You can book online and just pick up.”

BUSINESS STRATEGY

Andres, who also owns a marketing agency as well as the Community General Store, says that a business's ability to cultivate an online presence is key to both hanging in there and making a plan for successful recovery.

We all saw the safety and convenience of online shopping skyrocket during the pandemic.

“I have that marketing background and I deal with a lot of online business, so I knew it was important to have that going into business today,” says Andres. “That's probably what got us through COVID. I had my online store up before our physical doors open. We were doing online orders and pickup like crazy last year. If we hadn't had that, we wouldn't have survived COVID. And we are still doing online orders and pickups. Businesses need to have the online purchasing portal these days.”

E-commerce giants like Amazon exemplify how important online shopping is. Andres says that Amazon is so profitable because of both how easy it is to use and how recognizable they are.

“Online shopping has to be easy. And with Amazon, it's

so easy. Everyone knows the name Amazon and knows it is for online shopping where you can find anything,” she says. “But that same power is not afforded the small businesses, even if they are now set up with online shopping as well. For us, it's not easy if you don't have brand recognition.”

Businesses should also do everything they can to continue to encourage supporting local. While this means spreading the buy local message to your immediate community, she also says that businesses will need to continue to find new customers.

“For us, the challenge is trying to bring in new business, new customers,” says Andres. “We need to attract traffic from other small communities, and that's a big challenge. Saturdays is almost exclusively Winnipeg traffic, and I know we're bringing in new business. We'll be chatting and I'll find out they're not from in town and then we are always telling people, go check out MCC, go check out Negash Coffee, and our other great places.”

The biggest challenge comes back to the issue of brand recognition or just having people simply know you exist. Andres says out-of-towners just don't know about Niverville, and locals don't always know about the shopping opportunities here.

She says she'll be planning to offer a coupon in the Niverville Chamber's welcome package so that new residents will know about her business.

For Wiebe at the Little Flower Shop, she says that staying focused is one of the best things business owners can do right now. Even though your business must change to survive, the focus of your purpose should remain the same.

“For me, my marketing plan has always been the same: stay focused, stay on top of digital, advertise where I can,” Wiebe says. “Take care of customers, because word of mouth is most effective. I take care of 16 communities here and I've been doing it for 32 years. What comes, comes. I make honest claims. I'm not going to make claims that I have the best flowers. I sound more laidback than that on purpose. I don't push people when they're in a tight position. I'm here and I do what I do.”

Networking is another tool Wiebe hasn't been shy about.

“People, especially in southeast Manitoba, are so willing to help with what you need,” says Wiebe. “I try to donate where I can and I participate in community groups. Network with local groups, not-for-profits, where and when you can. When I need business, I try to connect where I can. I do some good and good comes back to me. I have networked with real estate agents to do show rooms, the Steinbach Arts Council, and more. I reach out.”

Wiebe also notes that the best way to network is to be honest and ask for what you need.

“We're all dealing with a lot of stuff and we forget how connected we are,” she says. “If you're talking around and saying you're doing great and you're actually not, it's not going to help anyone. Let's talk and let's be honest. Ask the right kind of questions for the right help that you need. Other businesspeople can direct you to the right suppliers, and show you a new idea or a new way to do things. That's friendly competition. We shore each other up.”

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MOTOR INN

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Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

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STAD ^{ESSO} LPHE

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

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**SERVICE
STE-AGATHE
CENTRE**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

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Affinity
INSURANCE BROKERS

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

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**ST. ADOLPHE
PHARMACY**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

In-store draw date: December 21, 2021

**ST. ADOLPHE
DRIVE-IN**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

In-store draw date: December 21, 2021

*Ile des Chênes
Country Store*

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

In-store draw date: December 21, 2021

**Pietro's
Pizza**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

In-store draw date: December 21, 2021

Thai On 59

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

In-store draw date: December 21, 2021

**ÎLE DES CHÊNES
HOTEL**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

In-store draw date: December 21, 2021

**V/B VILLAGE
INSURANCE BROKERS**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

In-store draw date: December 21, 2021

**LDN AUTO
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Name: _____

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IN BRIEF

Province Reaches Deal with Xplornet

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The provincial government has signed a contribution agreement with Xplornet Communications Inc. to provide broadband services to approximately 350 rural communities.

“Our government recognizes the economic and social benefits of keeping Manitobans connected,” says Central Services Minister Reg Helwer. “That is why our government has committed to ensuring that Manitobans have access to information and services no matter where they work or reside in the province.”

In May, a memorandum of understanding was established with Xplornet to connect 125,000 unserved or underserved Manitobans through broadband services.

“We as Ritchot are glad to be able to share this great opportunity with our residents,” says Mayor Chris Ewen of the RM of Ritchot, whose communities will benefit from the new agreement. “Connectivity is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity. We cannot thank the minister and the province enough for their continued work on this.”

As part of the construction of network connections, Xplornet will engage with businesses and local governments.

“Xplornet is delighted to have concluded the agreements... providing us with access to the province’s backbone fibre infrastructure and enabling us to begin the work to deliver next-generation highspeed internet services... over the next two years,” says Allison Lenehan, president and CEO of Xplornet.



© DARCY PAULS

Niverviller Launches Trailer Lending Initiative, Encourages People to Help Others

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

Darcy Pauls of Niverville has come up with a way to pay forward some of the blessings in his life.

Specifically, he has launched an initiative called AoS Trailers—AoS meaning “Acts of Service”—a platform which will allow him to lend his collection of trailers to those who need them, at no charge.

Pauls owns three trailers: a snowmobile trailer that is two sleds wide, a single-axle cargo trailer, and a dual-axle utility trailer.

But despite serving important uses, these trailers sit on his property unused for most of the year.

That’s something he would like to change.

He envisions many ways in which the trailers can be used to help others, whether it be helping someone move, cleaning up a yard, picking up firewood, or taking donations to the local food bank or homeless shelter.

“We are all short on time,” he says. “And many jobs can be done without trailers. But if having a trailer gets the job done faster... I

will have achieved my goal.”

The idea aligns well with the way Pauls says he has tried to live his life, striving to go about his days with “open hands.”

When lending one of these sleds, he has just a few common sense ground rules. Naturally, the user needs to have a valid license and an appropriate vehicle to pull the trailer. And he requires the load to be legal and properly secured.

Pauls would also like to know what the trailer will be used for and ensure that it will remain relatively local.

Of course, he hopes people won’t be offended if he doesn’t have an appropriate trailer or timeslot available for them precisely at the time of their need.

“I’m not doing this to compete with trailer rental companies,” he points out. “Renting a trailer from a trailer rental company is what I would expect if your project is for financial profit.”

This idea, Pauls hopes, is just the beginning of a great thing.

“When I was lying awake at night—that happens often when you get old—I had visions of the community of Niverville

creating a database of tools and trailers that they are willing to use to help others,” Pauls says. “There certainly is a need for storage companies and we see several of them opening up in Niverville. That’s great. They provide a valuable service. But as I drive by them, I wonder how many tools and resources are sitting in there that aren’t benefiting anyone. What if there was a complex where individuals were willing to have things available to bless others and a sign-out procedure that helped ensure they came back? But [maybe also] a heart of gratitude from those who made the items available, so they didn’t get bent out of shape if something happened.”

Pauls also envisions having a bank of trailers available in Niverville to help newcomers to the town.

He ponders, for example, having local realtors let new property owners know that a group of people is willing to welcome them and assist with their move.

Churches, too, could get on board with his project, he speculates. This initiative could be an opportunity for people to show

love to their neighbours.

“The value isn’t in the trailers,” he says. “It’s in the people who are willing to give of their time and use a trailer as a means to interact with people.”

Pauls is grateful to the people who have helped him with this concept.

He first ran the idea of AoS Trailers by people he trusts and respects. One of the people with whom Pauls shared his concept then passed the idea on to a friend of his in Minnesota, who then launched a trailer-lending program of his own.

Knowing that his idea is already in action somewhere else has only confirmed for Pauls that the plan is viable.

Pauls wants to make certain that people understand this isn’t about him.

“This is about how God has blessed us,” he adds. “And it’s about how as a community we can use what we have to show love to others.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Darcy Pauls can be reached by or email at darcyjp@mymts.net.



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The Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to announce the launching of a new website and promotional video to encourage visitors to check out places to shop, eat, see, and do in Niverville!

We will be holding a contest from December 6 -13, with \$1,500 in Niverville merchant gift cards to be awarded!

Visit tourismniverville.com or our Chamber Instagram page for contest details.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the development of the video and website, and the Mb Chambers of Commerce for their generous financial support.

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Dear Niverville neighbours and friends,

2021 is drawing to a close, and it has included many challenges for us all. In the midst of a world that is polarized and fractured, we need peace. We need peace that can be experienced. We need peace that makes a difference both in our hearts and in our relationships. As we enter into this Christmas season, we invite you to experience this peace as we celebrate one who came to bring peace and hope to all of us; Jesus Christ. We, the churches of Niverville, are available to offer you hope and connection as best as we can. If you would like prayer or would like to talk with someone, please give us a call. We would love to connect with you. Or join us online for Sunday and Christmas worship services.

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**“Glory to God in
the highest, and on
earth peace, good
will to all people.”**

Making Pandemic Pets Part of the Family

By Sara Beth Dacombe

✉ sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

Pet adoptions increased during the pandemic because a lot of people were home more than usual. Many people felt the time was right to adopt or foster for the first time.

But first-time pet owners may in some cases have gotten more than they bargained for, especially as the pandemic risk lessened and it came time to go back to work.

So how are all those pandemic pets doing? After the honeymoon phase—if you can call it that—pet owners are learning a lot about the ups and downs of taking care of their new charges.

PET BENEFITS

Holly Maynard from Niverville got a puppy during the pandemic because the timing felt very practical.

“Getting a dog during COVID seemed like the right time to do it,” Maynard says. “I was always at home and not working at the time, so I could be at home for the potty training stage, etc.”

While pet ownership has definitely brought a lot of fun to her life, it’s also come with a few unexpected challenges.

“Having my dog, Gus, has been fun and challenging all at the same time,” she says. “But trying to do university classes at home with a puppy is hard and is a huge distraction.”

Meghan Funk from RuffMutts in Niverville also got a new dog back in February 2021. She says pet ownership has been an amazing experience and there are a lot of reasons why people opted to add pets to their homes during the pandemic.

“Pet ownership benefits us in many ways,” says Funk. “Owning a pet is great for children, as it can help teach them compassion and responsibility. As for us adults, it can be a great way to make us more in



Brie Bourcier and her dog Rocky.

✉ BRIE BOURCIER

tune with what’s happening around us. Pets are a good reminder for us who live busy lives to live in the moment, and enjoy what’s happening right now instead of worrying about tomorrow.”

The pandemic brought a lot of insecurity, and having a pet is a great way to put a little structure back into our day-to-day lives.

“Having to clean up, feed, and exercise our pets helps break up the day, especially when you have been working from home,” Funk points out. “Pets help keep us active as well as allow us to be social. Working from home, it has given us companionship and will continue to do so even if we head back into the office.”

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

The benefits of having a pet are considerable, but when the new-and-cute factor wears off, reality sinks in.

“I think it overall helped me because it was a companion at all times, no matter what day it was or what the restrictions were,” says Maynard. “But a COVID puppy has challenges because people were never coming over. Now when people do, my dog is just so excited to see new people!”

Brie Bourcier from Positive Canine, a dog trainer from Niverville who focuses on taking a positive approach to behavioural problems in dogs, worked with Maynard and her dog. She also saw a huge increase in the number of people adopting new pets during the pandemic.

“I personally think that it was with the uncertainty with what’s going on around the world that made everybody want to try something new,” says Bourcier. “Everyone’s routines became different. A lot of the time, if you get a puppy, you need to put life

on hold in order to potty train and make the effort to be home. People can’t always find that time because life is so hectic. It’s hard to be, like, ‘I’m going to be home all the time and not go out on the weekends.’ And COVID made us do that. So COVID hit and it was, ‘Why don’t we get that puppy the family has always wanted?’ And we know, mentally, that it has really helped people.”

Along with Maynard, Bourcier says she is seeing the flipside of that decision, and many people are asking for help with dog training issues now that people’s lives are going back to normal.

“The issue is, now your dog is used to being with you 24/7,” Bourcier continues. “That is the routine you set up for them from day one. That can cause problems because they think they go everywhere with you. With going back to work, there is

separation anxiety. The puppy hasn’t had time to adjust.”

It’s not just puppies. Pet problem behaviours can arise during any change in routine. Separation anxiety takes on many forms, like digestive issues, obsessive behaviour, chewing, and destructive behaviours. Bourcier says this is because pets don’t know what to do with themselves.

“You feel like you’re doing the right thing and it’s the right timing when COVID hit and you’re home all the time,” she says. “But now you have this dog that’s, like, ‘What the heck is going on in my world?’ It’s a lot going on. We need to be patient with them.”

Demonstrating empathy for a pet tends to create a more positive view of the animal. It’s a healthier situation overall when people reach out to try to help their dog.

“One thing people tend to forget,” says Bourcier, “is that dogs aren’t one-size-fits-all. They are individuals just like us. They have their own personality and particularities. We expect all dogs to be family dogs. We expect dogs to be nice and friendly and say hi to absolutely every person. And even for well-behaved dogs, we can’t expect them to not have a bad day.”

One problem Bourcier has seen a lot has to do with socialization. Because of the pandemic, many dogs haven’t had the opportunity to learn how to behave properly around other dogs and humans.

“Being at home has set us up for this unique problem,” she says. “It set dogs up for improper socialization... so a lot of my clients right now are dealing with the dog growling and snapping at guests when they come to the house. This is simply because they didn’t get the opportunity to go to the parks, meet other people,

(continued on page 26)



MERRY CHRISTMAS



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When we become sick we often feel the need to do less and rely more on those around us. What happens though, when even after we're told that we have recovered from an illness we still do not feel like we've returned to our normal?

Many people are experiencing this issue after being infected with the COVID-19 virus. This condition, often called "Long COVID", does not just affect those who were severely ill from the illness but can also affect people whose symptoms were very mild.

It is estimated that after a COVID-19 infection 1 in 4 people will have continuing symptoms for at least four weeks and 1 in 10 for longer than twelve weeks. Some have reported cases lasting longer than six months.

The most common symptoms for people experiencing Long COVID are: extreme exhaustion, a worsening of symptoms after exertion, and issues with concentration or memory ("brain fog"). Other common symptoms include: shortness of breath, depression/anxiety, chest pain/tightness, difficulty sleeping, earaches, nausea, loss of appetite, diarrhea, heart palpitations, dizziness, muscle/joint pain, rashes, fever, changes of taste or smell, and sore throat.

Globally there have been over 200 symptoms reported, so if you have any combination of the symptoms listed above or any other changes in your general health since a COVID infection it may be worthwhile to get some professional help.

Physiotherapy can fit well into the treatment of Long COVID as physiotherapists are experts in the rehabilitation of every part of the body. They can create a rehab program to help you achieve your goals, reduce your symptoms, and get back to doing what you want to be doing.

Your physiotherapist will begin by performing some physical testing to determine where they can best help you improve. The primary goal of the physiotherapist is to provide you with the tools and resources to self-manage your condition while guiding you through a progressive return to your normal.

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms of Long COVID contact Niverville Physiotherapy and Sports Injury Clinic at 204-388-5217. We can help get you back to yourself.



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61 Main Street, Niverville

(continued from page 25)

or have lots of people come to the door or come into the home. They weren't able to do it in the 'I'm a puppy, I love everybody' phase. So now there are signs of anxiety or aggression when meeting people. So that's a big issue."

When a dog's behavioural problems become a problem, it's not just stressful for the dog; it's stressful for the whole family.

Bourcier also says that there are situations where the home and the dog may not be compatible.

"Rehoming gets a bad rap, but sometimes it is in the best interest of both the family and the dog, if you can't give it the life it needs," says Bourcier. "One situation I was aware of, the dog was so stressed. Dog medication does exist and is an option to deal with the stress, but the truth is it just wasn't a good fit. Now she's at home with a couple who is retired and can be home to love her in the way she needs. And she's living her best life."

Despite wanting to remove any negativity or social stigma surrounding rehoming a pet, Bourcier also wants dog owners to know that there are many proven techniques to improve pet behaviour and quality of life for both the dog and the entire family.

"A very, very easy resource to turn to is YouTube," Bourcier says. "It's free. It's at our fingertips. Why not use it?"

There are really lots of good videos on how to mentally stimulate a dog. Just be careful with the type of training you do watch. Science-based or positive training is best."

Making sure your resources are positive and not based on punishment is important, she advises—and so is remembering that basic exercise is one of the best training tools out there.

"Now that it's colder and it's harder to exercise the dog, we can all tend to get a little lazy," she adds. "But there are lots of inside exercises you can do, too. And don't forget that, for your dog, mental exercise is physical exercise."

Utilizing a trainer is another way to increase both the mental and physical exercise you give your dog, and Bourcier says that sometimes just a small amount of training can make a big difference. Increasing their stimulation can help owners get ahead of unwanted behaviours.

TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME PET OWNERS

Did you just get a new pet or are you considering getting one for Christmas? The old saying is true: an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

This is especially true when it comes to preparing for a new pet to enter your home.

RuffMutts' number one tip includes important information about potty training.

"The most common item that new puppy owners reach for are pee pads," says Funk. "When potty training a new puppy, we want to encourage them to eliminate outside as much as possible. Having pee pads in the house do just the opposite. Instead, purchase an enzymatic cleaner to help remove the smell of accidents in the house. If they can't smell it in the house, the more likely they will go outside."

Bourcier adds that Positive Canine has four key tips to help you through the transition of getting a new puppy.

1. Play or train outside. Not all dogs do well in a closed environment. As to indoor obedience classes, group classes aren't for everyone, since some dogs are already overwhelmed, under-stimulated, and aggressive.

"I like being outside," says Bourcier. "So we can build distance if a dog is having a hard time or having a lack of confidence."

2. Be intentional. Spending one-on-one time with your dog is important. Dedicating some time every day to exercise and positive mental training should be a priority.

3. Talk to a trainer. Bringing in a trainer at the beginning gets you a lot of return on your investment, which sets people up for success.

"Talk about how and where to feed, which eliminates food aggression issues," she says. "When integrating the puppy into a family with children, it's

so important that it goes well. I've had clients where, within a week of getting their puppy, the puppy is so well-behaved. The people know how to read the puppy. The bond between them is flourishing because they understand each other, what's expected, and how to communicate."

4. Be aware of puppy blues. Many times, people get the blues—and so do puppies.

"That's a real thing," Bourcier says. "It's like a newborn baby stage. It's a constant thing that needs your attention and responsibility."

Both RuffMutts and Positive Canine recommend that anyone giving a pet for Christmas might also consider giving a gift card along with the animal.

"Don't be afraid to give a new pet owner a gift card as well," says Funk. "It can help new pet owners purchase basics, or they can put it towards a big ticket item, like a new cat tree or kennel for that rapidly growing kitten or puppy."

And Bourcier has one final piece of advice: "Yes, you've spent money on the dog, but also, maybe give a gift certificate for a first training session. Any lessons on how to incorporate puppy into their environment, how to treat the food delivery, and how to help younger family members adjust to the dog will help everyone to transition smoothly from having a new pet to having a forever pet."

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New Health Orders Target Southern Churchgoers and Indoor Sports

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

With COVID-19 case numbers again reaching concerning levels in Manitoba, particularly in the Southern Health region, and hospitalizations creeping upward, the provincial government announced some public health measures in mid-November.

And even more recently there is also the new threat of the omicron variant of the virus.

The changes primarily targeted religious gatherings in Southern Health and children who are involved in indoor sports.

Religious gatherings throughout Southern Health are limited in cases where there is no requirement in place to prove attendees' vaccination status.

Capacity for these services is limited to 25 people.

However, if a venue is large enough to split congregants into cohorts, then multiple groups of 25



Dr. Brent Roussin.

GOVERNMENT OF MANITOBA

can gather as long as they remain isolated from each other in separate rooms. The maximum number is 250 people, or 10 cohorts.

Religious gatherings which require proof of vaccination may continue to meet without capacity limits.

Also exempt from this order is the town of Niverville along with the

RMs of Ritchot, Tache, Cartier, Head-iungly, Macdonald, and St. Francois Xavier.

These high-vaccination areas are deemed to be part of the Winnipeg capital region, despite being part of Southern Health geographically.

These communities are also exempt from the existing retail capacity restrictions, which are

otherwise at 50 percent in Southern Health.

According to Audrey Gordon, Manitoba's Minister of Health, the new order is being enforced through the use of unannounced inspectors checking in on churches to ensure that the rules are being followed.

Another new rule—this one, provincewide—is that young people

between the ages of 12 and 17 need to be vaccinated or show a recent negative test in order to participate in indoor sports. The negative test must have been taken within 72 hours of the event, and it must have been taken at a private pharmacy—not at one of the province's free public testing sites, which are intended to be accessed only by people who are symptomatic.

This rule also applies to kids who are participating in overnight camps.

These new public health measures took effect at midnight on November 13.

Additionally, a range of surgeries have had to be cancelled in Winnipeg in order to free up space in the province's ICUs, which are once again seeing a surge in COVID-19 admissions.

So far, the affected patients are those with scheduled procedures in the Pan Am Clinic, Misericordia Health Centre, Victoria Hospital, and Seven Oaks General Hospital.

May you experience
**joy, peace, and
the warmth
of kindness**

during this
holiday season.



The Board of Trustees and Staff of the Hanover School Division wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



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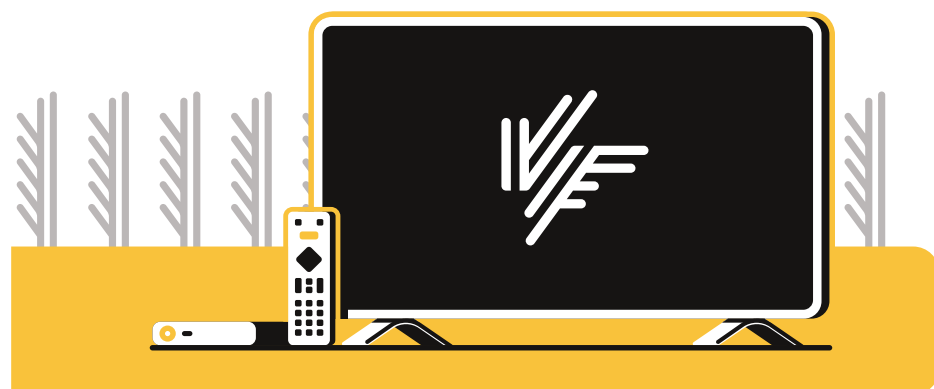
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Small Gathering Marks Remembrance Day

By Sara Beth Dacombe

sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

On November 11, a small number of Niverville residents gathered to mark Remembrance Day with a ceremony at the cenotaph on Main Street.

The ceremony wasn't widely publicized in order to keep the crowd small with respect to the ongoing pandemic and the uncertainty surrounding allowable group sizes with the current restrictions.

The organizers said it was a challenge to plan the event without knowing if the public health orders

would change in the weeks and days leading up to Remembrance Day.

"Last year we had to cancel the public gathering and this year we weren't sure what would happen, or if we would plan something and then that would change," says Lora Wachtendorf, a member of the local Remembrance Day committee. "We decided to go ahead with the ceremony, but we really did not publicize it. We still wanted to do the ceremony because it is important to make sure we remember."

Niverville has often seen large numbers of people come out to

attend Remembrance Day ceremonies—and in recent years, those ceremonies have been held at the Niverville Heritage Centre.

The reason for moving it to the Heritage Centre was that the number of people showing up at the cenotaph on Main Street had gotten to be unmanageable—and even dangerous.

Keeping publicity to a minimum allowed group organizers to expect a smaller turnout, and so it was decided to hold the ceremony at the cenotaph once again this year.

"In that way, the pandemic

brought us a way to get back to the cenotaph as our ceremony site, which felt really meaningful," says Wachtendorf. "Of course it would have been nice to see the whole community and gather together, but it was good that we were able to at least to something. We needed to do something."

The ceremony featured Master Warrant Officer Wes Bonkowski as Master of Ceremonies, presenters Corporal Raymond Erickson and Major Michael Garrett, as well as local singer Melanie Bergen.

Remembrance Day is observed

on November 11 to remember the end of the First World War and all who sacrificed their lives in the pursuit of peace.

The First World War lasted more than four years and ended in 1918—at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month—when Germany signed an armistice agreement with the coalition of countries called the Allies led by Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Japan, and the United States.

It is hoped that next year the event will go back to normal.



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IN BRIEF

Niverville Town Council to Protest Controversial Land Use Act

By Jennifer Lavin

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At a meeting of Niverville's town council on November 2, discussion turned to the Planning Amendment and City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act.

This controversial act would see a capital planning committee granted the authority to hear appeals of land-use decisions made by municipal governments.

Essentially this would mean that land developers could go over the heads of local municipalities if they dislike the decision given to them.

Several of the municipalities affected by this change have planned to band together and hire a communications consultant to express their concern to the provincial government.

A motion was made to officially declare Niverville council's support in adding their voice to those expressing concern. The town will grant up to \$5,000 towards to help cover costs associated with this initiative.

That motion was unanimously approved and carried.

Winterfest 2021 Is On

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

After taking a year off due to the pandemic, Niverville's annual Winterfest event is a go for this year.

Winterfest is a craft sale and market that takes place every year, and it is held at the Niverville Heritage Centre.

This year's market will take place on Saturday, December 4 from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

The price of admission? It will come in the form of a donation to Niverville Helping Hands, either a non-perishable food item or unwrapped toy.

Last year's Winterfest was cancelled, like so many other gatherings, due to COVID-19.

The organizers initially did have some concern this year that the event would have to be cancelled again, but provincial health orders will allow it to go forward safely.

In accordance with the current orders, all participants and



A photo from Winterfest 2018.

■ NIVERVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

attendees of Winterfest must be fully vaccinated and present their vaccination card/QR code—along with a valid photo ID—before being admitted.

Masks will also be mandatory for everyone in attendance.

In the past, the event has

been organized by the Niverville Chamber of Commerce, but this year that structure has changed somewhat.

Winterfest is now being run by the Niverville Heritage Centre, with sponsorship by the Chamber of Commerce.

Chelsea Gauthier, the Heritage Centre's events manager, says that she has been absolutely thrilled with the amount of interest in Winterfest.

Gauthier has a background in event-staging but has only worked at the facility for six months.

She's been excited to take on this huge undertaking, both as an opportunity to utilize her expertise and also to better get to know members of the Niverville community.

Gauthier has received more than 125 inquiries about vendor booths so far and says that Winterfest 2021 will have approximately 80 vendors.

The event will continue to follow the successful formula that it has used in the past, but Gauthier says there may be some small changes to the overall look.

"The layout might be tweaked because of COVID-19 and maintaining social distancing," Gauthier says. "But ultimately it will be the same exciting event!"

Wishing you
Peace and Blessings
in this Christmas Season



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Commentary

“They’re On to Me”: Dealing with Imposter Syndrome

By Daniel Dacombe

Perhaps you’ve felt it—an overwhelming feeling of dread, doubt, and fear that strikes without warning and leaves you uncertain and shaken. Most often it comes upon us at times when we should be feeling at our best, when we’re excelling personally or professionally. We may receive compliments and encouragement, but that just makes us feel worse.

This feeling, often called imposter syndrome, can be best summed up by four little words: “I’m not good enough.”

While not an official diagnosis, imposter syndrome has been extensively studied and widely discussed in the behavioural sciences. We may feel it when we’re at work, at school, or with our friends and families. It usually includes beliefs that we aren’t as intelligent or skillful as those around us, and a certainty that if everyone understood how little we really knew, we would be in serious trouble.

“I’m in over my head,” we think, unable to shake the feeling. Often we feel like frauds, even when our accomplishments and accolades are well earned.

Despite seeming so personal and unique to us, imposter syndrome is incredibly common.

Dr. Gail Matthews, professor of psychology at Dominican University of California, has conducted research on the prevalence of imposter syndrome—with startling results.



Roughly 70 percent of us report feeling the effects of imposter syndrome at one time or another.

Researchers have also described imposter syndrome as being a contradictory experience—that is, we feel it in spite of all evidence to the contrary. Doctors, lawyers, and professionals of all kinds who have earned their place in society report feeling like they’re undeserving of their positions, unworthy of their successes, and secretly scamming everyone around them.

This phenomenon has fascinated psychologists for years, and not just because it’s such a prevalent experience. Imposter syndrome is in some ways the opposite of other, more negative cognitive biases.

One example would be self-serving bias, which is our tendency to give ourselves and our skill too much credit when we succeed at something, but then blame our luck or other external causes when we fail.

By contrast, imposter syndrome tells us that others succeed due to their talent, skills, and abilities, whereas when we experience success it is due to luck or other external forces.

So if imposter syndrome is such a universal human experience, why should we pay any attention to it?

One reason to be mindful is the fact that when it persists without being addressed in a healthy way, it is often accompanied by other mental health issues. Feeling inadequate

can lead to anxiety and depression, two disorders that have been associated with imposter syndrome.

In addition, giving in to the effects of imposter syndrome can cause burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and create actual problems with your performance. Feeling like you’re secretly a fraud is incredibly isolating, and as a result people stuck in this mindset tend to avoid asking for help when doing complex tasks. This increases the likelihood that they will eventually fail, allowing the imposter syndrome to become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

While most people who experience this get over their feelings—or learn to live with a nagging sensation that they’re luckier than

they deserve—some will see these feelings go on to become a genuine mental health concern.

What can be done to help people deal with this issue?

One of the most important pieces of advice is to talk about it. Imposter syndrome only has power when it’s kept a secret fear that whispers to you in the dark. When you share your fears of inadequacy—with coworkers, friends, or a loved one—they tend to lose their power. This may even open the door for genuine growth as you share, test, and revise your self-image based on the input of people you trust.

If you think you may need to improve yourself or your skills, you can always seek out a qualified mentor, someone who may be able to more accurately assess your skills and give you feedback on how well you’re doing.

And if necessary, talk to a therapist about the feelings you’re experiencing to help guide you through the process of reframing your thoughts to better line up with reality.

Finally, if you’re experiencing imposter syndrome and reading this article is making you painfully aware of this fact, please don’t take your feelings of inadequacy to be a sign that you aren’t smart enough, skilled enough, or good enough to be where you are. If anything, take it as a sign that you’re treating your accomplishments with the respect and gravity they deserve.

No imposter would do that.

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Sports & Recreation



New MJHL Franchise Seeks Public's Help to Name Team

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

A few months have passed since the initial announcement that a new Manitoba Junior Hockey League franchise is coming to Niverville, and news has been quiet ever since. But the board of directors has been hard at work behind the scenes, getting a significant amount of work done in preparation for the team's first season next fall.

One of the first priorities has been to negotiate a facilities agreement with the Town of Niverville, allowing the franchise to operate and play their home games from the CRRC.

"Those conversations did result in an agreement and the organization is pleased to announce that the CRRC will be the official home to the newest Junior A franchise in the MJHL," says Ray Dowse on behalf of the board.

The rest of the elected board consists of Carl Fast, Bryan Trotter, Jeremy Braun, Tom Kleysen, Dylan Wiens, Scott Wallace, Kevin Lansard, and Clarence Braun.

Next up, the board has

launched the search for a general manager and coach. These jobs were first posted at the beginning of November and the board is now in the process of evaluating applications.

"There are many exceptional candidates," says Dowse. "We anticipate a hiring announcement prior to year-end."

On the marketing side of things, the next order of business will be to establish a name for the franchise.

"As a community-owned non-profit organization, the board of directors felt it would only be right to engage our region to help our board of directors with the selection process," Dowse adds. "Ultimately, we respect that it is our community that will be the backbone of this organization as volunteers, sponsors, owners, supporters, and fans in general. So we want them to have the opportunity to be part of this!"

The name selection process will be completed in multiple steps over the coming months. Step one is gathering as many ideas from the public as possible.

"We want the public to provide

us with their team name idea—and if there is a specific meaning or reason why they selected that name, we would like them to share with us what it is. Here are some things to consider when thinking of a name. Does it have ties to the region or its history or culture? Does it have a nice ring to it? Does it have the potential to feature a great logo and come with a mascot? This is an important step and we want to make sure the final name is one that the community can get behind, and that the players can feel a sense of pride about when they wear our jersey."

To submit a name for the board's consideration, you can take part in our current Citizen poll.

The board will be receiving name pitches until Monday, December 13. After that, they will launch step two: evaluating the suggestions and developing a short list.

"When we have a short list of names, we will move on to the next stage—public voting," says Dowse. "Those selected names will be identified in an online poll, and the public will be given

the opportunity to vote for their favourite."

Although the final decision will rest with the board, Dowse says that they plan to give heavy consideration to this public feedback.

"We are really looking forward to the ideas and feedback we get from this process," he says. "As well, everyone who provides a submission or votes in the poll will have their name entered for random prize draws, including game-day tickets."

Dowse confirms that the organization plans to have a team name in place by the end of January.

Once that detail is settled, they will move on to develop the team's colours, logos, jersey, etc.

"There's still a lot to do, and it all needs to be completed by this coming spring and summer so that we're ready for the start of the 2022–2023 season," says Dowse.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To submit a name for the board's consideration, visit the Citizen's latest poll: www.nivervillecitizen.com/citizen-poll

CITIZEN POLL

Thank you for participating in the Name Your Team initiative for Niverville's new community-owned MJHL hockey franchise, set to begin play from the CRRC Arena in the 2022-2023 season!



Enter to Win

Those who enter will be eligible for prizes, including game-day tickets. We appreciate your entry! Note: if there is a specific meaning or reason for suggesting this name, please share it in the comments box online.

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Congratulations to last month's winner:
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LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

Do you think the federal and provincial governments have done enough to support small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes. Various forms of adequate financial assistance have been provided to the businesses that need them most.

32%

No. Some businesses have fallen through the cracks and are still in need of support in order to stay afloat while restrictions remain.

68%



KELLI LAPOINTE

Connors Lead Jets to Victory, Break Winless Streak

By Dan Hoepfner

The Winnipeg Jets gutted out a victory on Saturday, November 27, beating the Calgary Flames 4-2 to snap a five-game winless streak.

The start was disastrous for the Jets, as the Flames found the back of the net twice to jump out to an early two-goal lead in the first period.

From that point, with the Jets looking fragile and lacking confidence, both of the team's Connors took over the game.

Kyle Connor scored twice after being reunited with linemates Scheifele and Wheeler. He one-timed a beautiful cross-ice pass from Wheeler early in the third period to tie the game at 2-2.

"I don't think it really mattered who the lines were tonight," said Connor after the game. "It's just one of those games where we needed everybody, and you could see it from our bench. Every little play, every blocked shot, right play, we were cheering them on. That's what we needed to come out of this."

Paul Stastny scored the go-ahead goal and Andrew Copp provided some insurance scoring into the empty net after Calgary pulled their goalie in leu of an extra skater.

The other Connor—namely, goaltender Connor Hellebuyck—shut the door on the other end of the ice.

He turned aside 34 of 36 shots,

including 16 shots in the third period.

Hellebuyck was seemingly under siege for long stretches of time, including a third-period penalty kill that saw the Flames generate several grade-A scoring chances as defenceman Brenden Dillon sat in the penalty box for tripping.

"Yeah, he's our backbone here," Scheifele said when asked about Hellebuyck. "He stands on his head pretty much every game and he makes some big saves. That was one of those gutsy efforts. He made a lot of gutsy saves, especially toward the end of that game. It was a big one."

This was a huge win for the Jets, and an all-important rebound

performance for Hellebuyck after he was pulled from the crease Friday afternoon in Minnesota where he surrendered four goals on only 14 shots.

The win doesn't erase all the bad hockey over the past 11 days, but it does temporarily quiet down the Negative Nellys and self-proclaimed social media armchair coaches.

It also moved the team back into third place in the Central Division with a record of 10-7-4 for 24 points.

Historically, the teams sitting above the playoff line by American Thanksgiving have a statistical advantage in terms of making the playoffs.

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