

# The Citizen

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MARCH 2023

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### LOCAL NEWS

#### Highway 59 Twinning Still Not a Priority

■ Years have passed since the last time the issue came up, and the government still has no timeline for further work.

Details on Page 8



### LOCAL NEWS

#### The Benefits of Service Animals

■ Niverville's town council has introduced a new bylaw clarifying the policy under which service animals will be welcomed into public places. These animals provide an important service to people with special needs, and this month we look at some local examples.

Details on Pages 16-17

### SPORTS & REC

#### Niverville Declines to Host 2026 Winter Games

■ The town had the first right of refusal after the 2022 Games were cancelled due to pandemic-related reasons.

Details on Page 20

### ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

#### New Restaurant Made of Snow and Ice Turns Heads

■ The Den, a new high-end restaurant at A Maze in Corn near St. Adolphe, is giving local foodies something to talk about.

Details on Page 22

## Public Input Sought on Highway 311 Intersections

➡ READ MORE ON PAGE 4

BY BRENDA SAWATZKY

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## You are invited!

To support continued growth and prosperity in the region, the Red-Seine-Rat Wastewater Cooperative (Town of Niverville, RM of Ritchot, RM of Hanover, RM of Tache) has been formed to develop a regional solution for wastewater treatment. This work is required to increase treatment capacity and meet environmental regulations. The RSRWC is currently developing the preliminary design concepts and would like to provide a project update to local stakeholders and the public.

Please join us at the following Open House:

**Thursday, March 9, 2023, between 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm**

Location: Second Floor, Multi Purpose Room, Niverville Community Resource & Recreation Centre (501 Centre Street, Niverville, MB)

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The Citizen

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James Kennedy of Morrison Hershfield speaks with a resident.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

# Public Input Sought on Highway 311 Intersections

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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Niverville's town council is hosting a series of open houses in the hopes of gathering public feedback on the future design and buildout of intersections along Highway 311.

The first open house took place in the evening of February 21 and the second took place February 23 between 4:00–7:00 p.m. on the second floor of the Community Resource and Recreation Centre.

The section of highway under consideration is a one mile stretch between Krahn Road and Wallace Road.

Last fall, council approved a rezoning request made by Sunset Estates which would change 130 acres of land at the corner of Highway 311 and Wallace Road from Agricultural Limited to Commercial Corridor.

In anticipation of development on both sides of the highway in this area, council hopes to take a proactive approach in resolving any safety concerns posed by increases in traffic.

To do so, council has contracted the services of engineers at Morrison Hershfield, who set to the task of developing a traffic impact analysis by which important decisions will be made.

"This is a provincial highway and there are a lot of requirements for studying the traffic generated

from a development like this," says James Kennedy of Morrison Hershfield. "This development will have different types of land uses that will generate different types of traffic as well."

Based on the analysis, three concept drawings were created, each one looking at a slightly different scenario for existing and new intersections to be added along this route.

In all three options, there are two recurring features. First, there will be no service road on the south side running adjacent to the highway, such as with Drovers Run to the east.

Second, a new intersection, controlled by a roundabout or traffic circle, appears in all three sketches at the halfway point between Krahn and Wallace Roads.

As for service roads such as Drovers Run, Kennedy says they are simply a bad idea, especially when the service road is built in such close proximity to the highway.

The reason, he says, is that it creates multiple busy intersections within a small space, resulting in traffic going every which way, all the time.

Regarding the highway roundabout, Kennedy says that they are being integrated into traffic designs on a much greater scale these days.

"In the city of Winnipeg, a lot of developers are putting in roundabouts now," says Kennedy. "The province is also starting to put more

in. They are safer, overall, compared to a signalized intersection."

They are safer, he explains, because they produce far fewer traffic conflict points, or accident opportunities. According to Morrison Hershfield, a roundabout has a mere eight conflict points as opposed to a four-way signalized intersection, which can have up to 32 conflict points.

Another advantage to the roundabout along Highway 311 is that it would act as a natural speed reducer for eastbound commuters entering town limits.

"It gets people transitioning from a high-speed highway into a more urban environment, so it's kind of a nice place to put it," Kennedy says.

Option one of the conceptual drawings shows intersections at Krahn Road, Wallace Road, and the new midway intersection. The intersection at Krahn Road would allow for only right turns onto the highway from either direction.

Phase two of this scenario could include the rebuilding of Highway 311 into a four-lane motorway and installing traffic lights at both the Krahn and Wallace Road intersections.

Option two would consider the closure of the north side of Krahn Road, with only right turns being allowed where the south side of Krahn Road meets the highway.

(continued on page 4)



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## IN BRIEF

## Province Pledges New Funds for Schools

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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On Thursday, February 2, the provincial government announced some new funding for the 2023–2024 school year which will affect all schools throughout the province that provide education to students from Kindergarten and Grade 12.

A total of \$100 million will be added to existing provincial school supports, representing an increase of 6.1 percent from last year, and an overall 23 percent increase since 2016.

“Our government believes that all students must succeed regardless of where they live, their background or circumstances, and this year’s investment will provide an operating funding increase to each and every school division across the province,” says Wayne Ewasko, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Learning.

The additional \$100 million is primarily intended to help with increasing operating costs and doesn’t include capital funding or other initiatives that fall under the province’s annual budget.

While the province is giving individual school divisions relative autonomy in determining how they’ll make use of the funds, they anticipate that \$5 million will be designated specifically toward special needs support within schools.

In addition to the new funding announcement, the province also plans to match the one-time funding of \$106 million from last year and make this a permanent addition to the education base budget going forward.

(continued from page 3)

Phase two of this option, again, would consider a four-lane restructuring with eventual traffic lights at both Krahn and Wallace.

The third and final option would see the complete closure of the intersection at Wallace Road. Krahn Road would remain open from all directions and a four-way traffic signal installed.

Phase two of this scenario would look the same, apart from the inclusion of a four-lane highway.

Kennedy says that option three resonates the most, for a number of reasons. Wallace Road also acts as the town’s dike, protecting residents from potential floodwaters to the west. As a raised dike, he says, it is under provincial jurisdiction and the likelihood of it ever being paved is slim.

As well, a property allowance containing a drainage ditch runs the length of Wallace Road on the Niverville side. Finding ways to connect streets across this ditch to Wallace Road could be costly and difficult for the town to undertake.

At the close of the two open house sessions, Kennedy says that his team will compile all of the input received from residents and make a recommendation to town council regarding the preferred option.

Mayor Myron Dyck says that the timeline for highway restructuring will be dependent on the developers on either side of the highway in terms of how quickly they develop their parcels of land.

“Doing this now at least puts the concept in place so that at such a time as we get [developer build-out], the work is already done and prepared,” says Dyck.

Cornell Friesen of Fifth Avenue Estates owns the section to the north of Highway 311 and Len Peters of Sunset Estates owns the property to the south.

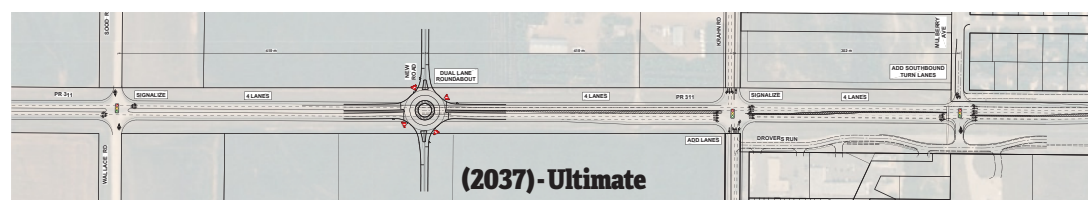
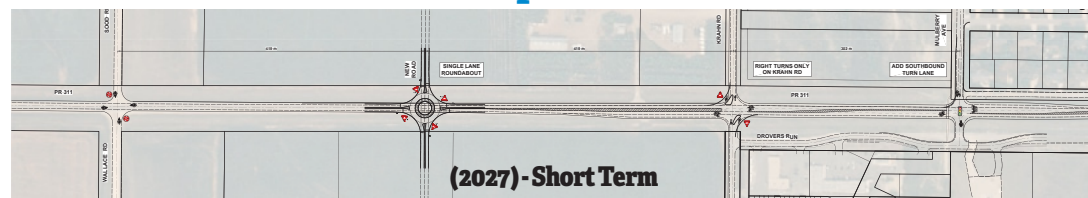
Peters is the same developer who is behind The Highlands neighbourhood to the east.

It is anticipated that lots will be developed on both sides of the highway with commercial and residential options available.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Residents wishing to provide input on Highway 311’s restructuring can email their comments to jkennedy@morrisonhershfield.com

## Option 1



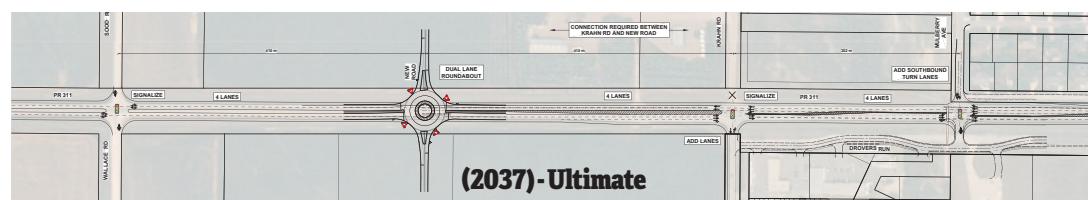
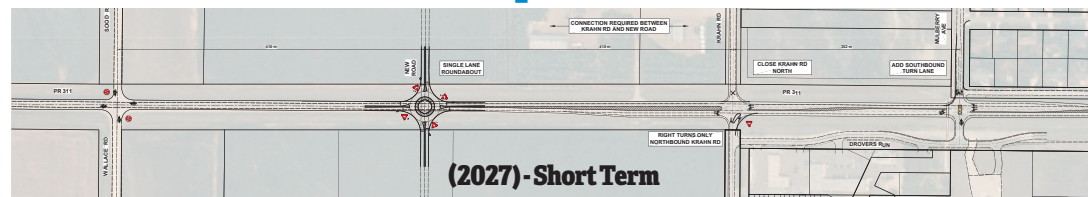
### Short Term:

- Wallace Road intersection: remains open as is.
- New Road intersection: single lane roundabout.
- Krahn Road intersection: restricted left turns out.

### Ultimate:

- Highway 311: Four-lane cross-section with raised median.
- Wallace Road intersection: signalized.
- New Road intersection: dual lane roundabout.
- Krahn Road intersection: signalized.

## Option 2



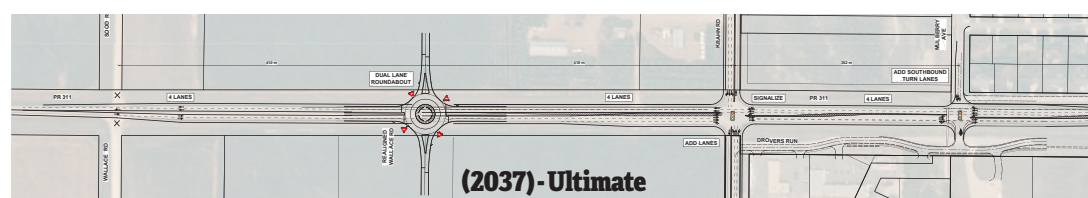
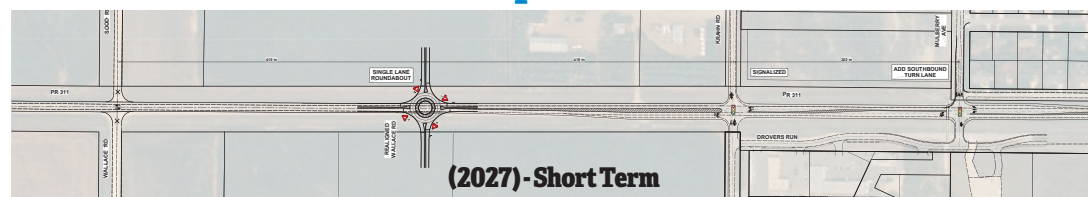
### Short Term:

- Wallace Road intersection: remains open as is.
- New Road intersection: single-lane roundabout.
- Krahn Road intersection: closed north of Highway 311 and restricted northbound left turn out.

### Ultimate:

- Highway 311: Four-lane cross-section with raised median.
- Wallace Road intersection: signalized.
- New Road intersection: dual-lane roundabout.
- Krahn Road intersection: Closed north of Highway 311 and signalized.

## Option 3



### Short Term:

- Wallace Road intersection: closed.
- New Road intersection: single-lane roundabout.
- Krahn Road intersection: signalized (all movements allowed).

### Ultimate:

- Highway 311: Four-lane cross-section with raised median.
- Wallace Road intersection: closed.
- New Road intersection: dual-lane roundabout.
- Krahn Road intersection: signalized (all movements allowed).



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# Community General Store Gets New Owners, New Products

By Jennifer Lavin

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The Community General Store (TCGS) in Niverville is under new ownership. Chuck and Amy Allen hope to keep the vibe of TCGS the same while also adding a new layer to the store.

One of the more noticeable changes to the store will be the addition of Chuck's wares.

Chuck is the craftsman behind Earth and Hide, which sells handmade, high-end leather goods. He has already moved the production of Earth and Hide to the back room of TCGS and will sell its products in the store as well.

The Allens decided to buy TCGS to both complement and extend Earth and Hide.

Chuck explains that his leather goods are so durable that they will last a lifetime. He feels the degree of quality is great for his customers, but of course it also means he is always looking for new people to buy his products.

"I knew I couldn't support a storefront with just the leather goods," says Chuck. "I needed some consumables to keep people coming back."

TCGS was already known for its flowers and bath and body products, so the Allens will continue to sell these popular items.

Chuck explains that having a brick-and-mortar store also allows him to better serve and get to know his customers.

"Until buying the store, [I had] been operating Earth and Hide from my home and



Chuck and Amy Allen, new owners of the Community General Store in Niverville.

NOELLA ANDRES

by going to popup markets across Canada," he explains. "That creates a barrier to interacting with customers. I wanted a place where people can come whenever the doors are open and be involved with what's going on in the shop. With Earth and Hide, my life's work is to inspire hope through the therapeutic benefit of craftwork. The store will allow a space for that."

The former owner of The Community General Store, Noella Andres, created a business that Chuck says he wants to honour.

He explains that Andres's vision for the store was to give it a feminine atmosphere and use it to support

female-owned businesses.

"That's also one of the reasons I wanted to make sure Amy had controlling ownership of the store," says Chuck. "Whereas Earth and Hide is mostly my thing, I wanted something that Amy could literally take ownership in."

The Allens moved to Canada in 2013 from the Washington D.C. area where Chuck worked as a video producer for the Department of the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery.

Before his civilian Department of Defence job, Chuck was a combat cameraman in the U.S. Marines for four years. Amy has been working from home for a financial

technology company based out of Minnesota.

The Allens moved to Niverville in July 2021 from Winnipeg. The pair both grew up in the United States but Chuck has many family members in southern Manitoba, as his mother grew up on a farm near Gretna.

Chuck and Amy have three children together, and four in total, ranging in ages from 11 to 21.

Chuck says that the vision he and Amy have for TCGS is to make the store more experiential than transactional.

"We want it to be a place for people to spend time without feeling like we're trying to withdraw money from them like a walking ATM," he says. "We'll have some seats for people to chill, we'll have a puzzle for people to work on, we'll have places for people to work on their craft. We plan to host a variety of workshops and craft-based clubs year-round. We hope this will be a place where people can connect and be in community together... Where Earth and Hide works to inspire hope through the therapeutic benefit of craft work, we want to use the store to inspire hope through being in community together."

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about Earth and Hide or The Community General Store, visit [www.communitygeneralstore.com](http://www.communitygeneralstore.com) or drop in at 10 Cedar Drive Unit B in Niverville.



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## IN BRIEF

## Schuler Appointed to New PC Caucus Role

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Last month, the Manitoba Progressive Conservative party announced the appointment of MLA Ron Schuler to the position of caucus chair.

The appointment comes just better than one year after Schuler was removed from his position in cabinet as Minister of Infrastructure on account of declining to disclose his COVID-19 vaccination status.

"I'm excited to help lead our PC caucus team as we gear up for the upcoming spring session," says Schuler. "Manitobans don't want to go back to the dark days of the NDP, and we have a great PC team that Manitobans have trust in. I will do my part to ensure we continue listening and engaging with Manitobans, and acting on their priorities."

Schuler first entered provincial politics in 1999 and has been re-elected as MLA for his riding in all five consecutive elections since. He recently announced his intention to run again in this year's fall election.

Schuler replaces Blaine Pedersen as caucus chair.

Shannon Martin, who used to represent the Morris riding, which included Niverville, and now represents McPhillips, has been named caucus whip.

"As the caucus whip, I'm excited to do my part to help our PC team continue addressing the priorities of Manitobans," said Martin. "While Wab Kinew's NDP will surely try to play political games and stall important legislation, I will work to get the necessary legislation passed to better our province."

# Municipalities Receive Extra Funding from Province

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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On February 24, Manitoba Premier Heather Stefanson and Municipal Relations Minister Andrew Smith announced the roll-out of an additional 28 percent, or \$47 million, in municipal funding this year.

This new funding is over and above the provincial allotments budgeted for municipalities in 2023. The province is putting no conditions on its use except to say that it can be used as operating funds to help address inflationary impacts.

"We recognize municipalities and communities across our province are facing significant pressures that impact the ability to deliver important projects and services Manitobans rely and depend on," Stefanson says. "This additional \$47 million in unconditional funding will support municipal budgets for the 2023 fiscal year and beyond, and we are pleased to provide this much-needed certainty now."

According to the province, this means that the Town of Niverville will receive a total of almost \$635,000 in provincial funding this year, up from \$367,000 in 2022.

Similarly, the RM of Ritchot will receive a total of \$859,000, up from just over \$522,000 last year.

"Ritchot is happy to see the increase in funding," says Mayor Chris Ewen. "This will be added to our budget and used for improving our communities in many ways."

Niverville Mayor Myron Dyck agrees, suggesting that it's a welcome change after many years of zero increases from the provincial coffers.

"I am very happy about it," says Dyck. "Municipal funding had been frozen as of 2016, and obviously... the [same] money doesn't go as far in 2023. So to now see that that has changed to allot for the inflationary pressures we've faced in the last seven years, it's now current dollars for current expenses."

According to Niverville CAO Eric King, the Association of

Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) has been lobbying for this over the course of many years.

"The AMM applauds the Manitoba government for ending the seven-year freeze on municipal operating basket funding," said Kam Blight, AMM president. "As inflation has significantly impacted municipal budgets and municipalities are not permitted to run deficits, this historic municipal funding announcement will help local councils respond to current financial pressures, build stronger communities, and finalize local budgets with certainty."

Justin Johnson, CEO for the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities (AMBM), recognizes the relevance of this move for the province.

"[Municipal] capacity will be strengthened in many ways and they will have greater latitude to implement their priorities," Johnson says. "More than ever, the AMBM and its members are ready to continue the partnership with the Manitoba government to improve municipal services in both official languages."

Smith says that this funding announcement will be a permanent part of the unconditional operating funding base going forward.

As well, his department hopes to modernize the formula they use to support municipalities and make it more transparent. The formula will include a revised per capita calculation that aligns with 2021's census data as well as a needs-based calculation that will be regularly reviewed.

Finally, Smith's department will explore the possibility of a funding escalator to assist municipalities in their long-term financial planning.

Along with the financial boost for municipalities, the province is also funding the city of Winnipeg to the tune of an extra \$16.7 million this year, and another \$13 million in extra transit funding.

Elsewhere in the province, Brandon will receive more than \$2.3 million in new funds.

A guaranteed base grant of \$25,000 will also be provided to smaller rural and northern municipalities.

## Niverville Aims to Help Unserved Properties Hook Up to Town Water

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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With a growing community comes growing costs, and one task of a town council is to continually address how these costs will best be managed.

On February 21, Niverville's council addressed the issue of bringing town water to properties that still operate with wells.

Importantly, they have agreed to appeal to the province for

financial assistance to jumpstart the hook-up of these unserved properties to the new water treatment plant.

As the water treatment plant gets run through the rigors of final testing, council says it's time to nail down the cost to provide an opportunity for the balance of the community to get connected.

On the recommendation of CAO Eric King, council will move forward on a detailed design to incorporate water main lines and hydrants throughout the older

developments in town.

At the same time, a request will be submitted to the Manitoba Water Services Board for a 50/50 cost share of this project which could begin as early as January 2024, with the province's approval.

King says that the request will be for \$3 million in provincial funding, matched by the town for a total of \$6 million.

According to King, the ask comes at the high end of what he believes the total cost could be.

"There are approximately 730

properties in Niverville that are not serviced by water," King says. "This would provide about 700 of them the opportunity to [hook up] should they choose."

Mayor Myron Dyck says that it's premature to talk about what costs will look like for residents to hook up to the main lines.

He anticipates, though, that residents can expect options in terms of keeping their well functional for outdoor use even if they connect to the treatment plant for household water.



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What does it mean that God loves the world? It is important to see that God does not love the world as it is. The world is marred by sin under the curse. That is clear from the scriptures, for we are taught that God is coming to judge the world, and in his judgment, the wicked man will be punished. The wicked man, too, is part of the world.

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# Highway 59 Twinning Still Not a Priority

By Brenda Sawatzky

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It's been 17 years since Highway 59 was twinned between Winnipeg and Île-des-Chênes (IDC), and communities to the south still have no further assurance that the province intends to expand the highway anytime soon.

In the span of those two decades, Niverville's population has exploded, virtually tripling in size. Commuter traffic between the Highway 311 turnoff and Winnipeg has undoubtedly experienced a similar upsurge.

But while traffic volume studies continue to be performed by the province along this stretch of road, the Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI) project map provides no indication that further twinning is on their radar.

However, a response from the media spokesperson at MTI suggests otherwise.

The Highway 59 twinning project, says the spokesman, is still under consideration as part of the 2022 Multi-Year Highways Investment Strategy.

At this stage, the government hopes to perform a functional design study on the stretch of highway running from Île-des-Chênes to Highway 52 somewhere between 2025 and 2026.

## HIGHWAY 59 TWINNING HISTORY

After the completion of the initial \$41 million twinning project in 2006, the province was quick to acknowledge the importance of initiatives like this one.

"The growing traffic volumes between Winnipeg and communities in the southeast region reflect the booming local economy," stated a government news release of the day. "This expanded corridor will enhance capacity, promote tourism, and increase safety at the same time."

Almost ten years later, with no further promise of a phase two operation, an action committee was formed by leaders from five different communities. They called themselves Highway 59 Partners.

In 2016, this group met with the province to plead their case to resume the twinning project. Committee spokesperson Mona Fallis, mayor of St. Pierre-Jolys at the time, believed things looked optimistic.

"The discussions have started," Fallis told *The Citizen* in 2016. "We've never had that before. So once there's dialogue, we can



Highway 59 south of Île-des-Chênes.

JOEY VILLANUEVA

progress."

At the same time, MTI's executive director of construction and maintenance, Larry Halayko, told *The Citizen* that a functional design study for the stretch of highway from IDC to Highway 52 was scheduled to take place sometime in 2017.

Fast forward to 2019 and a study had yet to be performed.

Former Hanover Reeve Stan Toews then sent a formal letter to Ron Schuler, Minister for Transportation and Infrastructure at the time, to make a motion for the provincial government to include the cost of a functional study in their 2019 budget.

"We're just asking that they set aside money to start the process of twinning 59 Highway," Toews told *The Citizen* in 2019. "They first have to do a study before they'll do the twinning and, at this point, they haven't set money aside to do the study. We have to keep asking. Hopefully they'll do that study one of these years."

Another four years has since passed and optimism is waning. Toews has stepped down from his position as reeve and Fallis is no longer mayor of St. Pierre-Jolys.

Members of the Highway 59 Partners no longer formally meet. But thanks to Ray Maynard, the current mayor of St. Pierre-Jolys, the province hasn't heard the last of this matter.

Maynard has picked up where Fallis left off.

"I always try and bring [the Highway 59 twinning] up at the annual Association of Manitoba Municipalities convention," Maynard says. "I try to also meet with the Minister of Transportation at that time, and throughout the year I'll send emails."

His last meeting with provincial cabinet minister Doyle Piwniuk happened just a few months ago, accompanied by letters of support from Hanover, Niverville, and Ritchot.

According to Maynard, Piwniuk was quick to lend a listening ear, but so far no commitments are on the table.

Maynard won't give up, though, saying that his next move is to get the letter of support promised to him by Winnipeg mayor Scott Gillingham. Gillingham, too, recognizes the significant impact commuters from south of Winnipeg make on the city's economy.

Maynard adds that when locals first started advocating for the highway's twinning in 2009, the traffic count near Highway 311 showed approximately 6,000 vehicles per year.

"Then it was at 7,500 in 2016," he says. "Fifteen hundred vehicle growth in that amount of time is a lot."

According to a report from MTI, Maynard says, the annual growth since that time has averaged 210 additional vehicles every year. The last traffic volume study was performed in 2019.

## RURAL RESIDENT ATTESTS TO DANGERS ALONG TWO-LANE 59

For the past 17 years, Sabrina Loewen has owned a home two miles north of Highway 311 on Prefontaine Road. At the end of every workday, she makes her commute home from Otterburne at around 5:00 p.m.

At this time each day, she has to stop on the busy Highway 59, waiting to make her lefthand turn. It's steady traffic both ways at that time of day, she says.

At this same intersection, many

southbound commuters are also stopping to make their lefthand turn onto Prefontaine east, to an area heavily populated with rural properties.

Loewen says it's not uncommon for vehicles to be stopped in both the north- and southbound lanes. Even so, the wait time to make a turn is rarely more than a minute.

As hectic as Highway 59 is at this time of day, though, Loewen says it's not the high volume of high-speed traffic that scares her. It's the drivers that regularly break the law by swooping around stopped vehicles in the shoulder lane on both sides of the highway.

"I've been almost T-boned multiple times," Loewen says. "My daughter just turned 16 and I'm terrified of what could happen when she's driving."

In recent weeks, Loewen's worst fears were realized by some unwitting drivers after a major collision at this intersection left at least two vehicles destroyed and brought countless emergency responders to the scene.

Loewen isn't aware of the details but has a pretty good idea of what the circumstances likely involved.

Every day, she says, four or five vehicles zip past her on the right shoulder of the highway as she waits to turn, completely ignorant of the fact that southbound vehicles may be turning east and entering their direct path as they do so.

Loewen, too, makes her lefthand turn with a huge degree of caution as vehicles similarly cut across her path when they illegally take to the shoulder. If not for the drivers of stopped vehicles making prolific use of their horns, she believes a lot more accidents would occur at this intersection.

A few years back, Loewen's mother was injured in a similar accident when a shoulder-driver struck her vehicle while she was making a turn at an intersection a few miles north of Prefontaine.

And this scenario likely continues to occur all along the stretch of two-lane highway to IDC with the many rural homes in the area.

For Loewen, the twinning of Highway 59 south can't come quick enough. She worries that it will take a fatality for the province to finally step up.

"Please stop passing on the shoulder," Loewen pleads with commuters in the meantime. "You're going to kill one of us. We want to get home from work safely just like you do."



CITIZEN POLL

Do you think it's finally time for the province to prioritize twinning Highway 59 south of Île-des-Chênes?

- ☐ Yes. As traffic counts increase steadily every year, this has become a dangerous stretch of highway.
- ☐ No. The province has more pressing financial responsibilities to contend with right now.

Have a more nuanced opinion? Leave us a comment online.

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LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

Do you feel that a new learning modality such as PBL can be effectively used to teach all children, regardless of their learning style?

Yes. Teachers should be able to effectively make models like PBL work for a broad cross-section of learners.

5%

No. Until there is enough evidence to suggest that PBL can work for everyone, the program should be optional.

95%

YOUR COMMENTS:

I am very worried about how behind the kids will be academically. They will not be prepared for post secondary school. I hope this program is canceled before my kids get to high school. I find this issue deeply concerning and will be contacting the Hanover School Division.

I can see project based learning appropriate for certain courses. But not all. Or as an additional component to the course but not a replacement for direct education.

I feel when everything is intertwined it gets confusing as I have to focus on three different things in one subject and it gets stressful trying to focus on three different things apposed to one thing at a time.

I'm sad. We have this big, beautiful school in our town and my children won't be going there... not because they want to go somewhere else but because we feel compelled to send them somewhere else for the good of their education and their futures!

If all the smart kids jump ship to a high school for better post-second-ary prep, how are the lazy kids going to get their grades up in group projects?

The concern is for the kids who this isn't working for. As of now the only option for those kids is to move from the division. Learning should be inclusive to ALL! This program should be 100% optional.

Kids need to have a knowledge base to draw from to be able to design projects and explore ides properly. You can't do this well, without the foundation of knowledge to start from. The foundation needs to be built first, and a solid, well constructed foundation, or what follows will not stand.

Most youth are not developmentally ready for this style of learning. It was not a match for my child who actually wants to have tests/exams that measure their readiness and knowledge as they choose their career. They want to be sure that they have the prerequisite knowledge and skills for university. This style of curriculum delivery does not meet their needs.

Parents were never given a choice about PBL coming to NHS, nor has the division ever asked parents for feedback. I want my voice to be heard... I want PBL to be optional or I will be sending my kids elsewhere!

PBL can be very valuable if taught well but I feel it should be incorporated into regular learning model more than the center focus. If they are doing this model then there should be more of it in Grade Seven or Eight to ease the kids into it then the shock to the system of none, then everything, then take it away again in Grades Eleven and Twelve. Shocking kids in this way just hurts their education and doesn't lead to successful learning.

PBL is such a niche learning method, it needs to be optional like it is in the few Winnipeg schools that offer it. I personally know quite a few families who are incredibly unhappy with this teaching method. So much so that they have transferred, or are transferring their children out of the town. I also know a handful of people who are considering moving out of Niverville to avoid PBL.

PBL learning has negatively impacted my child's learning. PBL does not prepare students for university. It should be offered as an alternative for students who have learning disabilities such as dyslexia and do not excel with traditional teaching methods

PBL may be a great learning tool for many students but not all. Telling a student that being marked on projects alone to decide a grade for their learning is unreasonable. You can't judge a student's knowledge based off of a project alone. The point of going through school is to prepare you for harder things, such as university. A popular question is how does PBL prepare us for university. The simple answer that Principal Kimberly Funk said was "NHS's goal is not to prepare students for university but rather to prepare them for life." What's the point in students trying to get good grades and become smarter academically if it won't help them in university? As a graduating student from Niverville High School I did not thrive in PBL and found it extremely difficult to learn. What is supposed to prepare us for university if the point of PBL in high school is preparation for life, not university?

PBL requires a lot of pre-teaching of background information, which from my understanding is not happening. Additionally, if PBL is instructional method being taught, students at the high school should have full access to peer-reviewed, scholarly articles from which they can do their research and learn how to cite their sources. A simple Google search is not an acceptable research technique, especially when they are still developing their critical thinking skills to determine good websites from bad ones.

Teachers are trained to teach in various capacities with different teaching models. PBL is one of those models. If differentiation is being used for the diversity of learners, then all students can be successful. PBL is not a new concept. It has been used for years, and gives students more choice, more collaboration and socialization opportunities, and forces student to think, make decisions, and problem solve with greater independence. More rich text and resources need to be provided and available to students throughout our schools for this model to really flourish. Research skills and organizing of data should be taught first. They need to be taught what to do with the data they collect and how to mold into their own words. Many of these skills are lacking from struggling learners and need to be enhanced for this model to work effcently for everyone. This takes time to implement school-wide. Change is hard to swallow, but over time with teachers coaching, developing strategies, and targeting students' needs, it can be a successful teaching model.

Thanks for writing this article. Parents need to do research regarding all aspects of NHS's version of PBL. Something the article didn't mention in detail is that PBL does not cover vast amounts of curriculum, specifically science. Students are not prepared for chemistry, biology or physics even at the high school level. Who is holding the school accountable for what they are covering?

The biggest problem I have with PBL is that it doesn't prepare students for post-secondary education and that does not seem to concern the administration. They see their role as preparing students for life, not university. The reality is that as a community we need to continue to have students that go on to higher education if those professions are going to be filled in the future. This will be a part of their life!

As a parent I see no other option than to explore other schools for our children so that they have the most choice available for them in their future, whether that includes post-secondary or not.

This should be an opt-in program so that those who would benefit will and those that want university entrance preparation can follow that path.

The comment that PBL is preparing students for life but not postsec-ondary education is very concerning. Some postsecondary educa-tion is almost always needed to get a good job in order to make a liv-ing. I am concerned about the number of Niverville students who have dropped out of university in recent years and feel this needs to be looked into. Also concerning is why there are no comments from the principal and division.

It is despicable to not prepare students for university. Higher educa-tion is preparing students for life. This program should be abolished immediately.

The PBL style does not seem to mirror postsecondary academia, and I'm worried about how it prepares students for a future where individ-uals are graded solely on their own achievement.

There is no evidence to support this claim, and Niverville students are effectively test subjects for this doomed experiment. You can tailor education in different ways and still prepare students better for high-er education. Students will continue to be shell-shocked when they get to university.

There seem to be many issues with this. How is this program being evaluated? Why aren't parents being heard or even asked about their opinions? Where is the accountability to cover the content in the vari-ous grade level curriculums? Are the assessments and assessment practices in line with provincial standards? When do we get some an-swers from the school division and trustees? It is time to have some open conversations.

This method should be optional. One teaching method doesn't work for all. In order to have greater twenty-first-century competencies you also need competency in knowledge. The PBL approach at NHS does not provide deep, rich content.

This style of learning may work for some students, but I don't believe it is preparing those students who want to attend university. It seems to hurt the marks and learning of those student who strive for high marks.

We are more than likely not going to put our kids through Niverville High School if this is the teaching style and non-transparency of the principal and those supporting this type of style. If it were to change back to the traditional learning style we would more than likely keep our kids in Niverville. We are extremely dissapointed that we even have to make this decision.

We do not agree that PBL is the most effective method of teaching, especially combined with the interdisciplinary approach. It was our experience that there were major gaps in the curriculum, especial-ly science. PBL required all students to make great use of their time, which often didn't seem to be happening. We transferred our daugh-ter to the SRSS.

We moved our family to Niverville for our children, and good teachers and education was a big part of it. We want to prepare our children for university, not hinder them. This is a bad decision for the community. This form of learning may be beneficial to some learners but should not be forced on all students who are preparing for university. We will not be enrolling our kids at NHS if this program is still in place. We did not move to Niverville for this.

When taught correctly, PBL can be a very effective tool for some kids, but I believe it should be a program that has to be opted into, with the option of traditional learning styles offered as well.

While this mode of learning would, on some level, have been good for one of my children, the change from traditional learning to the new method and then back to traditional method would have been too diffi-cult. My other child would have hated it and not been motivated to learn.

I'm thankful my children are no longer in school. It would have been a difficult few years to navigate.

Yes - As a teacher, PBL can be incredibly effective for all learning styles. But the teacher needs to still facilitate learning opportunities that prompt students to discovers areas of passion. PBL is only as effective as its facilitator. When students are placed as the experts, many problems can arise.

Yes, each child is different and our current education system doesn't respect that. My son goes to a school with a traditional model but when under teachers who gave more freedom, he flourished. Under ones who go "by the book," he struggles



## IN BRIEF

## Teachers Receive Professional Learning Grant

By Brenda Sawatzky

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A group of Niverville educators are the recipients of this year's annual Teaching and Professional Learning Opportunity Grant provided by the Hanover School Division.

"This year, five teachers from Niverville High School applied for, and were awarded, grants to attend the PBL 101 Workshop [which provides an] introduction to project-based learning offered by PBLWorks," says HSD vice-superintendent Colin Campbell.

According to the PBLWorks website, "Project-based learning (PBL) is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge."

As the name suggests, PBL relies primarily on student learning through the creation of hands-on projects. Studies indicate its effectiveness as a teaching tool.

The PBL 101 workshop provides three full days of online learning for educators and educational leaders in the fundamentals of PBL in a hands-on, project-based way. This model allows workshop attendees to experience the same style of learning that they'll later be designing for their students.

PBLWorks is an initiative of the Buck Institute of Education which has provided professional development since 1999.

"At PBLWorks, our vision is for all students, especially Black and Brown students, to engage in high quality project-based learning to deepen their learning and achieve success in college, career, and life," states the PBLWorks website.

# Super Citizen: Lisa Letkeman, A Community Helper

By Jennifer Lavin

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*In this series, The Citizen profiles locals who strive to make our little corner of Manitoba a better place. Each month, we feature a person, family, or business that helps brighten the world in some way. If you have someone in mind for a future month, please nominate them: jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com.*

Children's television host Fred Rogers once said, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"

This month's Super Citizen is Lisa Letkeman of Niverville and she is truly one of those helpers.

"Growing up, I had this book to keep school memories in," says Letkeman. "For each year, there were a bunch of questions to answer, and one of them was, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' From Kindergarten right up to high school, I always wrote, 'I want to help people.' When I hear of a need, I just want to do what I can to fill it. I really love helping people. It brings me so much joy!"

As part of a church family, Letkeman says she started helping in traditional ways by providing meals, serving at funerals, working in the church kitchen, and taking on other acts of kindness.

"These are all wonderful things to do, but I always felt like I wanted to do more, or something different," she says. "Something that was more 'me.' Now that my kids are adults, I feel like I have time to do all the strange and wonderful things God asks me to."

When Hurricane Harvey hit Texas in 2017, Letkeman decided to become part of the charitable organization Samaritan's Purse. With a group of other volunteers, she went to Texas to help with the aftermath of the hurricane.

"I didn't really know what I was getting myself into, and I was scared! But knowing I was doing what God asked me to made it easy to go. I spent my time in Pearland, Texas mucking out houses. It was incredibly hot there, so the



Lisa Letkeman with her husband Henry.

C/O LISA LETKEMAN

flooded homes were covered in mould. We had to carry out all the damaged furniture and put it on the side of the street. We also pulled out floors, drywall, insulation, bathroom fixtures, kitchen cabinets—anything that was damaged by the water. Sometimes cockroaches would rain down on us as we pulled the drywall off. It was a hot, dirty job and I just loved it!"

Soon after her trip to Texas, Letkeman took on another deployment with Samaritan's Purse. She then became a member of their Site Leadership Team and kept going where help was needed.

"I knew disaster relief was what I wanted to spend the rest of my life on, even after I came face to face with a moccasin snake in Florida!" she recalls. "In the past five years, I've been to Texas, Florida, New Brunswick, Ontario, British Columbia, and Prince Edward Island."

Letkeman hasn't stopped engaging in her local acts of kindness, though. The Niverville MCC Thrift Store has been lucky

enough to have her as a volunteer for 15 years. Store manager Merris Dyck says that Letkeman is an invaluable part of their team.

Just this month, Letkeman created and hung dozens of Valentine's Day hearts on the tree outside the Niverville Post Office and posted a sign welcoming people to take one home with them.

Local mom Ruth Bergen says, "On February 14 when [my kids and I] arrived at the post office and saw a tree covered with handmade wooden valentines alongside a sign that read 'Take one,' we knew instantly who had created this beautiful gift to our town."

Bergen says that the hearts were exactly the kind of loving deed she had come to expect from Letkeman.

"Lisa has been a huge blessing in my life and in the lives of my children," Bergen says. "I'll never forget her kindness to step forward and spearhead an event, alongside her sister, to raise funds for us as we hired a lawyer to gain guardianship of our son. [Her] life has brought me so much strength

and encouragement."

Letkeman says that one of her favourite things to do is to tip the people who clean tables at the mall.

"I watch them do their job and sometimes you can see they are just having a bad day," she says. "When you pass them some money and tell them to buy themselves a coffee on their break, their faces light up! Even a simple 'Thank you for keeping the eating area so clean for us' produces a smile. I want people to know they matter. It really takes so little to put a smile on someone's face."

Letkeman's sister Bonnie Sookermany says that Letkeman is always willing to help.

"[Lisa is] always supportive and ready with encouragement and kind words," Sookermany says. "She is always thinking of ways to cheer up and send love to those in the community. Lisa is kind, loving, and thoughtful and always puts others before herself."

Letkeman's daughter Olivia echoes Sookermany's sentiments.

"My mom is one of the most caring and hard-working women I know," says Olivia. "She is constantly trying to find ways to help and bless others. A few years ago on Christmas, we went to St. Boniface Hospital and handed out flowers in the cafeteria. I've helped her pick up and drop off donations for multiple charities and families in need. Whether the action is big or small, my mom loves to help anyone who needs it, and she finds ways to bless those around her."

Letkeman says that she is honoured to be recognized as a Super Citizen. However, true to her character, she immediately pivots to the good deeds of others.

"Niverville is a community that loves to bless its neighbours in big and small ways. The town Facebook page is filled with posts with people thanking the person who paid for their Tim's order, pulled them out of the ditch, shovelled their driveway, or provided food for someone in need. I just love it! Kindness is a part of everyday life in Niverville and I'm proud to belong to such a great community."



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MAR.19 @ 3:00 P.M.  
VS. WINKLER FLYERS

THE CITIZEN | MARCH 2023

NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS | 11

# Nighthawks Red Carpet Gala a Dazzling Success

By Brenda Sawatzky

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The first annual Nighthawks Red Carpet Gala kicked off in style on February 23 at the Heritage Centre in Niverville. The fundraising event brought 270 attendees out on a bitterly cold night to meet and celebrate their MJHL home team and demonstrate support for the nascent franchise's future.

Guests were treated to a full course of appetizers, entrees, wine, and desserts, not to mention an evening chock full of entertainment. The evening's keynote speaker was Andrew Harris, four-time Grey Cup winner.

To date, \$30,000 has been raised from the event, which will provide operational funding for the team and assist with infrastructure improvements at the home rink.

Much of the night's proceeds were the result of a rousing live auction with hot ticket items. Among the auction items were a signed Andrew Harris jersey, a catered barbecue for 20, a guided Lake of the Woods fishing excursion, and a custom pair of CCM skates with an autographed Frank Mahovlich framed print.

Nighthawks president Clarence Braun was pleased to welcome attending dignitaries Ted and Irene Falk, Kelvin and Kim Goertzen, and Ron Schuler.

Vice-president Ray Dowse greeted the guests on behalf of the team's board of directors.

Looking back at the Nighthawks' inaugural year, Dowse recounted the story of a recent road trip he made to the small town of Melville, Saskatchewan. Upon arriving, he realized there was only one thing he knew about Melville—it was the name of their Junior A hockey team, the Melville Millionaires.

"It's true for so many communities across this country," Dowse said. "They are typically identified by their respective Junior hockey teams. It's very much a Canadian thing."

The Steinbach Pistons, he added, are another perfect example of what an MJHL team can do to bolster a community's national visibility and recognition.

And while Dowse recognizes that many local businesses and events have already put Niverville on the proverbial map, he believes the Nighthawks can only further

Nighthawks announcer Kevin Pauls interviews CFL great Andrew Harris, MLA Kelvin Goertzen, and MJHL Commissioner Kevin Saurette at the first annual Nighthawks Red Carpet Gala. **BRENDASAWATZKY**

the town's notoriety for being a progressive place to live.

"The Niverville Nighthawks add one more piece to the fabric of this really awesome community," Dowse said. "Being season number one, they are still very new. We are learning and we are building. And at this stage, I don't think many people realize the impact the Nighthawks will make on our town's identity into the future. And that is what is really exciting."

Dowse reminded those gathered that the team was structured as a non-profit organization in order to provide complete transparency, leaving no question about underlying motives or true ownership rights.

"The money raised by the team doesn't benefit one person, or an ownership group, or an offshore corporation in the Caymans," Dowse said. "It's for all of us. The team, the players, the residents, the region, and our community."

When Andrew Harris took to the podium, he held the audience's rapt attention. At just 35 years of age, he boasts a remarkable career with the CFL.

Harris took the crowd back in time to his career's beginnings.

The game of hockey, he admits, was his first love as a child, but he was raised on a single parent's income and money stood in the way of pursuing that dream.

Later, his family moved to Steinbach where Harris took up football with the Eastman Raiders. Eventually, he moved on to play Junior football in Winnipeg, and later in Nanaimo, British Columbia.

"Junior football changed my life," Harris told the crowd. "Some of my best friends to date are from my Junior football years... The brotherhood we had together, we really just bonded over a common cause."

In British Colombia, Harris's team went on to win three national championships, which led to his signing with the B.C. Lions. There, he quickly found his place as starting running back.

In the 2011 West Division Final, Harris was named the Canadian player of the week for his performance over the Edmonton Eskimos. A week later, he was named Most Outstanding Canadian during his team's Grey Cup win over the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

Harris's career has continued to be prolific, setting records year

after year.

In 2016, Harris came back to his roots when he signed with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers. With the home team, he continued his record-breaking streak. In 2019, the Bombers took home their first Grey Cup in nearly 30 years.

Last year, Harris signed with the Toronto Argonauts, but he continues to make Winnipeg his home during the off-season.

In front of the gala crowd, Harris openly recounted the many occasions over the years when he's felt challenged to his very core. One such occasion meant taking on the responsibility of fatherhood while he himself was only 21 years of age.

Given the choice of fight or flight, he says, and regardless the circumstances, he has always chosen to stay and fight. Today Harris is the proud father of two.

The gala continued as broadcast announcer Kevin Dunn introduced each player of the Nighthawks, all dressed in suit and tie for the occasion. Radio and TV broadcaster Kevin Pauls then invited MLA Kelvin Goertzen, Andrew Harris, and MJHL Commissioner Kevin Saurette to the stage for a hot stove panel.

## STANDINGS \*\* AS OF FEBRUARY 27\*\*

WEST DIVISION							
TEAM	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS	
1 OCN BLIZZARD	53	29	19	2	3	63	
2 SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDE	50	28	16	5	1	62	
3 VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS	51	30	20	1	0	61	
4 WAYWAYSEECAPPO WOLVERINES	50	27	18	3	2	59	
5 DAUPHIN KINGS	50	27	20	2	1	57	
6 NEEPAWA TITANS	52	20	23	8	1	49	

EAST DIVISION							
TEAM	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS	
1 X-PORTAGE TERRIERS	51	39	10	1	1	80	
2 X-STEINBACH PISTONS	50	37	13	0	0	74	
3 X-WINKLER FLYERS	50	30	13	6	1	67	
4 NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	50	23	23	1	3	50	
5 SELKIRK STEELERS	50	20	25	3	2	45	
6 WINNIPEG BLUES	51	16	28	6	1	39	
7 WINNIPEG FREEZE	52	4	45	3	0	11	

X = CLINCHED PLAYOFF POSITION

MJHL POINTS LEADERS							
GOALIE	TEAM	GP	G	A	PTS		
1 Lucas Brennan	SEL	45	39	37	76		
2 Tyson Smith	SEL	49	12	53	65		
3 Travis Hensrud	STN	47	31	32	63		
4 Jakob Jones	SVS	50	28	33	61		
5 Ryan Botterill	POR	50	35	23	58		
6 Carson Baptiste	WAY	45	30	26	56		
7 Josh Paulhus	NIV	49	26	28	54		
8 Ashton Paul	OCN	52	26	28	54		
9 Riley Zimmerman	OCN	53	24	29	53		
10 Trey Sauder	SVS	50	22	31	53		
11 Ian Amsbaugh	STN	50	19	34	53		
12 Luke Janus	WPB	51	20	32	52		
13 Austin Peters	POR	46	17	35	52		
14 Justin Keck	SVS	46	25	26	51		
15 Trent Sambrook	WNK	51	10	41	51		
16 Hayden Lacquette	POR	48	14	36	50		
17 Ty Paisley	STN	43	17	32	49		
18 Davis Fry	STN	38	16	33	49		
19 Alex Bernauer	OCN	46	20	28	48		
20 Carter Cormier	SEL	38	17	31	48		

MJHL GOALIE LEADERS							
GOALIE	TEAM	GP	GA	SV%	GAA		
1 Aidan Comeau	WNK	21	37	0.934	1.88		
2 Dominik Wasik	STN	30	66	0.924	2.23		
3 Cole Plowman	STN	21	46	0.917	2.25		
4 Malachi Klassen	WNK	33	76	0.921	2.45		
5 Chase Hamm	OCN	37	92	0.914	2.56		
6 Bailey Monteith	POR	30	73	0.903	2.65		
7 Jayden Catellier	POR	24	64	0.902	2.70		
8 Ethan Farrow	OCN	19	46	0.907	2.71		
9 Cole Sheffield	DAU	27	69	0.917	2.73		
10 Kobe Grant	SVS	39	111	0.929	2.85		
11 Tresor Wotton	WAY	37	105	0.903	2.88		
12 Eric Reid	VIR	32	91	0.898	3.01		
13 Mason Lobreau	NEE	28	83	0.905	3.03		
14 Marko Belak	DAU	17	51	0.906	3.10		
15 Owen LaRocque	VIR	23	66	0.896	3.14		
16 Chris Fines	NIV	32	103	0.900	3.44		
17 Hunter Tarves	SEL	30	99	0.899	3.57		
18 Gavin Renwick	NEE	20	74	0.872	3.73		
19 Joshua Kirtan	SEL	23	85	0.882	3.87		
20 Keegan Gordon	WPF	27	97	0.918	4.11		





UPCOMING  
HOME  
GAMES



MAR.1 @ 7:30 P.M.  
VS. NEEPAWA TITANS



MAR.5 @ 3:00 P.M.  
VS. DAUPHIN KINGS



MAR.17 @ 7:30 P.M.  
VS. WINNIPEG BLUES



MAR.19 @ 3:00 P.M.  
VS. WINKLER FLYERS



# A Month of Hope and Heartbreak

By Ty Dilello

✉ tdilello@nivervillecitizen.com

February opened and closed with important wins for the Niverville Nighthawks, but the middle portion was marked by a painful six-game losing streak that many fans of the team may be keen to forget.

This stretch of games was made all the more painful by the fact that almost all of it took place on home ice. Indeed, in February the Nighthawks played at the CRRC seven times and travelled only twice.

As the slump stretched on, the Nighthawks' grasp on the fourth and final playoff spot in the East Division grew tenuous.

However, they closed out the month maintaining a five-point lead on the Selkirk Steelers for the coveted spot.

It's notable to think about what could have been.

Of their six losses in February, four of them were one-game heartbreakers that were decided in the closing minutes of play. One doesn't have to squint too hard to imagine an alternate reality where, given a few

plays going a different way, instead of a losing streak the Nighthawks could have been riding high.

## FEBRUARY 3 (DAUPHIN KINGS, AWAY)

The Nighthawks started out February by travelling to the Parkland region and coming home with two points in the bank after a massive 5-2 win over the Dauphin Kings.

"Props to the guys for coming out strong tonight against a good team in a tough building to play in," said head coach Kelvin Cech.

The Nighthawks produced a solid 60 minutes right from puck drop. A pair of first period goals from Ethan Whillans and Luke Schaeffer got things going in the right direction for Niverville, and they never looked back.

Desmond Johnson added two more tallies throughout the game for Niverville, and captain Brett Tataryn scored his fifteenth goal of the season.

Chris Fines stopped 28 of 30 shots on the evening for the Nighthawks.

"Our penalty kill was good early on, and then we rolled from there,"

said Cech. "Everyone found a way to get their legs going with speed, and we were able to get a couple of goals in the first period, which got our confidence going from there. And then we felt in control the rest of the game."

Some of the Nighthawks were away that week performing in the MJHL's Showcase event, so Cech was quick to point out how important it was to get back on the right track and earn a decisive victory.

"There's always things you can improve on, but you have to enjoy the wins. It's tough to get wins in this league, especially at this time of the year."

## FEBRUARY 5 (DAUPHIN KINGS, HOME)

Two days later, the Nighthawks faced Dauphin again—this time on home ice. The score was the same, but the Kings came out on top.

"Their goalie was great, but we weren't nearly smart enough today," said Cech. "We played dumb and took too many penalties, and we were trying weird stuff that didn't work for us. So it was not nearly good

enough tonight."

The Nighthawks had lots of chances throughout the game but failed to capitalize, which let Dauphin in the door.

Dauphin scored once in the first period and three times in the second period to jump out to a 4-0 lead after 40 minutes.

In the third period, the Nighthawks found their game a bit and scored a couple of goals, but it was too little too late. Hayden Wheddon and Josh Paulhus scored for the Nighthawks.

Dane Couture stopped 27 shots in goal for the Nighthawks.

Despite the loss, Cech found some positives for the Nighthawks to build on.

"After the second period, we wanted something to build off of and something positive. A couple of the guys dropped the mitts, which gave the crowd something to cheer for. No matter what, we have to give the crowd something. It's not about fighting; it's about team toughness. And we feel a lot better after the third period, so that's something to build on."

Cech knew the next two games would be difficult contests, going up against two of the strongest teams in the league: the Winkler Flyers and Portage Terriers, respectively.

"We just need to continue on with our details and compete even if we don't have the full energy," Cech said. "So that's the biggest thing for us, and something we need to improve going forward."

## FEBRUARY 10 (WINKLER FLYERS, HOME)

The Nighthawks found themselves on the losing end of a heartbreaking 4-3 loss to the Flyers on a disappointing Friday evening.

"It wasn't good enough," said Cech. "We gave them a run for our money, but our standard is higher than that at this point in the season. We didn't play a very intelligent game and shot ourselves in the foot a lot. Full credit to them, they're a good team and capitalized on our mistakes, but those are very tough lessons for us."

The Nighthawks opened the scoring late in the first period with a goal by Wheddon. However, Niverville



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got into some trouble with sloppy play, and Winkler scored three unanswered goals to take a 3-1 lead heading into the final period.

In the third period, Niverville's Evan Bortis capitalized on the power play for a goal to cut the deficit to 3-2. And then, with under five minutes left, Brendan Bottem scored his seventeenth of the year to tie the game.

Sadly, Winkler scored the game-winning tally with just 20 seconds remaining in the contest to pull out the 4-3 victory.

"We scored one on the power play early, which was big and then to tie it up was huge," Cech said. "We were thinking that it was going to be a memorable night. And it certainly was, but for the wrong reason. So just poor judgment on the last goal. And like I've said before, it's a really tough mistake, but we will learn from it."

## FEBRUARY 12 (PORTAGE TERRIERS, HOME)

It was another heartbreaker on home ice when the Nighthawks fell in the dying minutes to the Portage Terriers.

Portage got off to a quick start with two goals early in the first period before Bottem got one back for Niverville.

However, by the midway point in the second period, the Nighthawks found themselves down 4-1.

That's when the home side woke up and mounted a spectacular comeback. Braden Panzer scored twice for the Nighthawks, and Bortis potted one home as well to tie the game at 4-4 with only a few minutes remaining in the game.

Sadly, for the second straight night there would be no happy ending for the Nighthawks. Portage scored the backbreaker goal with 1:26 remaining in the game to win 5-4.

"Take out our sloppy first period and we were able to climb back into the game and score some goals," said Cech. "But once again, we lost a game in the final minutes where it could have been a win. I haven't seen one of those games ever, let alone two in the same weekend, so you shake your head a little bit. The guys are frustrated and annoyed, and that's the tough part in all of this."

Cech noted that the team has made some mistakes that have cost them, but he firmly believes they really aren't playing all that poorly despite the recent results.

"It's all of us together," he said. "Since the start of the season, we're all on the same side and working as one. We have excellent leadership in that room. And not just the older guys that wear letters. Braden Panzer was phenomenal today and is a heart and soul guy, so we have lots of players that lead in their own way. We're going to get out of this slump together."

With a game against the OCN the

following weekend, Cech could recognize that they were in for another tough fight.

"We need to execute in games the stuff we work on in practice. I'm happy that our special teams have improved, and that's something we practice a lot. Managing the puck and our emotions are two big things we need to improve on in our next games, and hopefully get two big points in each of them."

## FEBRUARY 17 (OCN BLIZZARD, HOME)

Unfortunately, the Nighthawks lost their fourth straight against the OCN Blizzard on Friday night at the CRRC. It was another game the Nighthawks perhaps should have won.

After falling behind 1-0 after the first period, Bortis tied the game at 1-1 midway through the second period. And just a few minutes later, Paulhus scored his twenty-sixth goal of the season to give Niverville a 2-1 lead.

Things were looking great for the home side.

However, in the third period the ice tilted in OCN's favour, and the Nighthawks had no answers. The Blizzard scored twice to win 3-2 and leave the hometown heroes feeling angry and upset over the result.

"A couple of mistakes and that makes the whole difference for us tonight," said Cech. "We're frustrated and mad, but everybody cares. Things aren't going our way lately, so we need to figure things out pretty quick."

Cech struggled to come up with answers, and he said that his team would need to play with a greater sense of urgency if they wanted to qualify for the playoffs.

"There are no answers for what's going on. Everyone thinks it's easy, and everyone thinks you can say the right things, and we can come to the right conclusions. If there was an easy answer, we'd have found it by now. These guys are all smart and are doing their best. Losing streaks suck, but we're in a playoff spot still at the moment, and we're going to come back tomorrow and try again."

On a more positive note, the Nighthawks welcomed 16-year-old Nathan Brown into the fold as he played his third game with the club. Brown was a second-round pick of the Nighthawks at the 2022 MJHL Entry Draft and has committed to play college hockey in 2025-26 with the St. Cloud State Huskies.

"Brown looked great," said Cech. "It was an awesome pick by our scouts to recognize him. He's signed

to a Division 1 scholarship with St. Cloud State for when he's done high school, so we're excited to get him on the team for some games this year and into next season."

## FEBRUARY 18 (SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDE, HOME)

The Nighthawks continued their losing streak with a 5-3 loss to the Swan Valley Stampede, a result which significantly loosened their grasp on the playoffs. After this loss, they sat just one point up on the fifth-place Selkirk Steelers.

Gavin Gunderson got the Nighthawks on the board early in the contest. However, it was Swan Valley that scored four times unanswered over the first two periods to lead 4-1.

In the final frame, the Nighthawks got one back from Gunderson, who scored his second. It was too little too late once again, as the teams split goals with the Niverville net empty in the dying minutes.

The game ended 5-3 in Swan Valley's favour, with Isaac Rentmeester scoring for Niverville.

"We had a pretty good process for certain parts of the game," said Cech. "They're a desperate side, and we

*"This skid we're on, we're always tied or up a goal in every game. So we're in these games, and we just want to keep playing our best, and hopefully the results will take care of themselves."*

**Kelvin Cech** | Head Coach

are too, but they just won the little battles that add up over the course of a game. And they did that more than us."

Over the past few contests, the Nighthawks had struggled to score. They'd also had trouble creating high-quality scoring chances.

It was something that would need to improve if the team was going to climb out of this hole that seemed to get bigger with each loss.

"We've ran into some teams with very strong defensive corps that make it very tough to get through," Cech said. "It's hard to get to those difficult areas. Gunderson got a couple from the top of the crease today, which is great, but you got to play the right way all game long to get more chances like that throughout the game."

## FEBRUARY 20 (STEINBACH PISTONS, AWAY)

The Nighthawks gave it a spirited effort on Monday night, but ultimately they found a way to lose their sixth straight game in a 3-2 backbreaker against the Pistons.

Despite the losing skid, the Nighthawks were trying to stay positive and keep team morale as high as possible.

"We've tried to focus on one day at a time," Cech said. "We had a really strong effort and a couple of bad bounces. We've tried frustration, we've tried anger, and other things that aren't working. We came out and wanted to play our best and were darn close to that. So the guys are looking forward to getting back on the ice and preparing for the weekend."

For much of the game, the Nighthawks took it to the top-ranked Pistons as it was a well-played, low-scoring contest. Ben Whitford opened the scoring for Niverville just a couple of minutes into the first period.

Steinbach got one back in the second period, before Niverville went ahead 2-1 early in the third period with a goal from Ty Kennett.

Sadly, the Pistons were able to score twice late in the third period to take the 3-2 victory.

"We didn't get scored on when we were shorthanded, so that's great, and now I owe the group a Big Mac each!" said Cech. "It was a clean game and was hard-fought at five-on-five. They had no odd-man rushes all night, and both goalies were fantastic. We know we can play well against a nationally ranked team, so we're proud of that. This skid we're on, we're always tied or up a goal in every game. So we're in these games, and we just want to keep

playing our best, and hopefully the results will take care of themselves."

The next game promised to be a big one, as they faced the Selkirk Steelers, the team who had been gaining ground on them in the standings all month.

## FEBRUARY 25 (SELKIRK STEELERS, HOME)

It was billed as the biggest game of the season, and the Nighthawks delivered to a full barn at the CRRC with a massive 7-2 win.

The Nighthawks did everything better than the Steelers right from puck drop. A couple of early Nighthawks goals in the first five minutes from Gunderson and Carter Spirig set the tone for the rest of the game.

After the teams traded goals in the second period, with Whillans scoring for Niverville, the third period was all Nighthawks as they scored four times. Spirig and Whillans each scored their second goal of the game, while Bortis and Panzer scored the other tallies.

Chris Fines stopped 23 shots in goal to get the win for the

Nighthawks.

"We had a really clear game plan, and we were disciplined, which helped give us some creativity," said Cech. "Each line had a responsibility, and everyone came and played their part well. Selkirk is a good, skilled team and has some dangerous players, so it was good to shut them down. We had lost a bunch in a row, so it feels very nice to win this one. I'm really proud of the guys."

Cech noted that his club had worked on their special teams throughout the week in practice, as it was an area where the team needed to improve.

"We changed some things around, and we worked on some key individual details that we wanted to take care of, from faceoffs to forechecks, personnel, the way we wanted to play, etc. It was a good week of practice, and we were well prepared for tonight's game."

It would be a quick turnaround for the Nighthawks, as they were scheduled to get back into action the following afternoon at the CRRC for a matinee against the Winnipeg Blues.

"This group just needs to be steady at the rutter like we were today, and we'll see what happens when we play the Blues," said Cech. "It's another big two points up for grabs, and we want to take it to them and hopefully come away with the victory."

## FEBRUARY 26 (WINNIPEG BLUES, HOME)

The Nighthawks won their second in a row on Sunday afternoon at the CRRC with a massive 3-2 win over the Blues. With the win, the Nighthawks improved to 23-23-4 on the season, good for fourth place in the MJHL's East Division.

They had also climbed back up to a five-point lead on the Steelers for that final playoff spot.

Bottem scored two minutes into the game to give the Niverville crowd something to cheer for.

The Blues tied the game a few minutes later, and that's how the score stayed after the first period. In the second period, the Nighthawks took over with a pair of goals from Kennett, who now has 11 on the season.

Winnipeg got one goal back early in the final period, but that was all they were able to muster as Niverville held on for the 3-2 win.

Couture was solid in the Nighthawks net and stopped 32 shots for the win.

"We scored more goals than they did, and it's as simple as that," said captain Brett Tataryn. "That's what we've been missing this last stretch here. But I love our compete and our tenacity, and I think that learning from losing helps us a lot. So it felt really good to get back into the win column this weekend."





# UPCOMING HOME GAMES



**MAR.1 @ 7:30 P.M.**  
VS. NEEPAWA TITANS




**MAR.5 @ 3:00 P.M.**  
VS. DAUPHIN KINGS



**MAR.17 @ 7:30 P.M.**  
VS. WINNIPEG BLUES



**MAR.19 @ 3:00 P.M.**  
VS. WINKLER FLYERS



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## Annual General Meeting, Awards and Dinner

Our largest event of the year. This evening combines our Business Excellence awards, Annual General Meeting, and an evening out with businesses from the community. Come enjoy a sit down dinner while you get the inside scoop on what's going on in town. Register online at [www.niverville.com](http://www.niverville.com)

**When: Friday, April 14th**  
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**Where: Whitetail Meadow**

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Want to build your company's brand and presence, support local businesses, or position yourself as a community leader? Become an event sponsor today. Email [chamber@niverville.com](mailto:chamber@niverville.com)

### Business Award Nominations are Now Open!

Want to nominate a business you feel deserves to be recognized? Email [chamber@niverville.com](mailto:chamber@niverville.com) with your nominations!

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This business should be known for positively contributing to the employment in Niverville, has shown sustainable growth and demonstrated innovation, is actively involved in the community, and has positive employee relations.

#### OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE

This business should be known for having knowledgeable staff, going above and beyond to ensure positive customer experience, ensuring hours of operation and maintained inventory are met, and provides a clean and welcoming environment. Must be open for more than 3 years.

#### NEW BUSINESS AWARD

This business should be known for overall positive contribution in Niverville as a new business.

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# Rural Transit Survey Seeks Data from Southeast Residents

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER  
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Residents around the rural southeast are being encouraged to fill out online surveys to inform a study for the SE Manitoba Transportation Initiative (SEMTI).

The goal of the initiative is to investigate strategies for delivering shared public transit options to regions east of the Red River and south of the TransCanada Highway.

According to SEMTI, they have a particular mandate: "Having a focused regional transit strategy in place will ignite connections for residents of all ages and in particular the area's vulnerable populations in southeast Manitoba. Public transportation isn't only for people living in cities. It's a service deserving of all Manitobans, both rural and urban."

Residents can find the initial survey online (see links below).

The first survey looks for ridership data: where do people in the rural southeast need or want to go and do how they currently get there?

The SEMTI began in 2021 as a collaboration between the RM of Piney and Eco-West

Canada, a Winnipeg-based non-profit whose objective is to promote sustainable economic development in rural communities through green economy infrastructure.

Supporting partners of the initiative include TONS (Transportation Options Network for Seniors) and the University of Manitoba.

Last fall, organizers invited leaders from 17 municipalities and Indigenous communities to participate in an opening round table session in Steinbach.

As shared at the gathering, a few of the primary drivers behind the initiative include a concern for the seniors who face social isolation due to lack of transportation and who, eventually, have to move away from their home community in order to be closer to needed services.

But it's also about making rural communities more attractive to immigrants, promoting local tourism, and creating a more environmentally sound solution to the prolific use of fossil fuels in the southeast.

Niverville's town council hasn't joined the SEMTI collaborative.

Mayor Myron Dyck says this is not the first such study

to address rural transportation concerns.

The Winnipeg Metro Region (WMR) performed a similar study within the approximate dozen municipalities that surround Winnipeg's perimeter in 2016.

That study assessed the feasibility of alternate modes of regional transportation that aren't single-occupant vehicles.

"At the time we were looking at [the feasibility of creating] a loop from Niverville to St. Adolphe to the U of M and St. Vital Centre and it would come back through Île-des-Chênes," says Mayor Dyck.

All of the study findings were used to inform policy for Plan 20-50, a 30-year regional growth plan for the WMR.

In the meantime, Dyck says other conversations around the Niverville council table in recent years have taken place regarding how the town can be proactively involved in a community-based initiative.

"Basically, we said we'd leave it to private business for now, [like] taxis and other shuttles, because the cost to put in the infrastructure right now, among Niverville's other priorities, was just too great," Dyck says.

Ryan Faucher, economic

development officer for Ritchot, sees a potential benefit to investing in the study.

"With our growing populations in the southeast, it's important to understand the transportation needs of our residents," says Faucher. "This is an opportunity to look forward and design a solution to increase transportation options in the region."

At the same time, he adds, any future public transit initiatives coming through the WMR will be no less important.

"With the RM's proximity to Winnipeg, and that being the primary destination for residents for work, shopping, medical and events, it's important that WMR includes us in their plans," he says. "Any regional solutions need to integrate into the long-term plans of the city."

Regardless of community representation on the SEMTI board, residents from all over the southeast are welcome and encouraged to fill out the survey.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Survey: [www.ritchot.com/p/serti](http://www.ritchot.com/p/serti)  
Survey: [www.rmofpiney.mb.ca/transit-plan](http://www.rmofpiney.mb.ca/transit-plan)

## MORTGAGE SALE

The land and building known as 101 Saint Andrews Way, Niverville, MB, as described in Certificate of Title No. 2330412/1 will be sold at a public auction on the 22 day of March, 2023 at 9:30 A.M. The auction sale will be held by video or teleconference. There will be no in-person attendees at the auction, in order to participate you must pre-register at least 24 hours prior to the auction by contacting Jo-Anne Degagne at either 204-957-4808 or [jdegagne@mltaikins.com](mailto:jdegagne@mltaikins.com).

The Vendor is informed that the property consists of a single family bungalow, approximately 1386 sq ft, built in 2008, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, full finished basement, double attached garage, located on a 80 x 150 foot lot

Property taxes (excluding any accruing water charges) are paid in full to December 31, 2021. The property is sold subject to taxes and penalties accruing after that date. The prior encumbrances which will remain on title after the auction are: Easement No. 3318647/1, Caveat Nos. 3324542/1, 3327471/1.

TERMS: Deposit of \$29,000.00 in cash, certified cheque or bank draft payable to MLT Aikins LLP and the balance according to conditions to be announced at the sale.

Sale is subject to Reserve Bid which will be announced at the auction. If the highest bid does not meet the Reserve Bid then there is no sale. The auction sale will be conducted pursuant to an Order for Sale issued by the District Registrar. Certain parties may be prohibited from purchasing the property, including but not limited to, parties who by virtue of their employment or relationship to a person involved in the sale process would have special knowledge of the circumstances pertaining to the sale. For more information and a list of prohibited purchasers please visit: [www.teranetmanitoba.ca](http://www.teranetmanitoba.ca)

Further information may be obtained from:

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Barristers & Solicitors  
30th Floor, 360 Main Street, Winnipeg, MB  
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## IN BRIEF

## Second New Daycare Announced for Ritchot in Under Six Months

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER  
bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Residents of the RM of Ritchot will benefit for a second time from a daycare project initiative which comes as a collaborative effort between the provincial and federal governments.

Phase one of the Ready-to-Move (RTM) childcare project was announced last year. Applications from nine Manitoba municipalities, including Ritchot, were approved for more than 650 new daycare spots.

In October 2022, Ritchot's municipal council announced a new 74-spot daycare facility designated for Île-des-Chênes.

On February 16, the province announced the list of recipients for phase two of the same project. St. Adolphe was on that list for another 74 spaces.

"I am proud to support increased childcare in our constituency," says MLA Ron Schuler. "St. Adolphe is a growing, vibrant community, and I am happy to see that recognized with announcement of these new spaces."

Ritchot mayor Chris Ewen says that council has chosen a location for the new facility but not the daycare provider at this stage.

The site will be revealed to the public shortly.

"During my time as mayor, we have seen now three daycares come into Ritchot," Ewen says. "This is an indication of the many young families choosing to be a part of our municipality and it will give them an opportunity to have their children closer to home. I'm grateful for the relationships the province and the federal government have with us and look forward to many more opportunities."

The latest announcement from the province will boost the number of daycare spots in Manitoba by 1,004, which will be housed in 14 new facilities.

"The Manitoba government is making investments to ensure families in rural and First Nations communities have access to affordable childcare," says Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning Minister Wayne Ewasko. "To achieve this goal, our government is taking an innovative approach through ready-to-move construction technology to create childcare spaces more quickly."

A total of \$94 million in funding is being invested across the two phases of daycare construction.

Selected applicants are required only to provide their chosen daycare operator with a section of serviced land for use at no rent for the first 15 years.

As well, applicants must commit to providing building support services and ongoing maintenance and repairs to the facility.

It's anticipated that all 23 new daycare centres from phases one and two of the project will be built and operational by the end of this year.

The RTM daycare project is modelled after a ready-built home philosophy where every facility is constructed at a central location and built with the same materials and specifications.

From there, they are transported to the various communities and placed on a waiting permanent foundation.

The RTM project is part of the Manitoba government's greater commitment to develop 23,000 new childcare spaces for children under seven years of age by 2026.

# Service Animals Widely Recognized for Improving Quality of Life

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER  
bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

On January 17, Niverville's town council voted in favour of accepting a new bylaw pertaining to service animals, laying out the policy under which they will be welcomed into public facilities.

According to the bylaw, a service animal is described as an animal that is trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability. The disability could be visible, such as a visual impairment, and could also be invisible, such as epilepsy.

Service dogs may also accompany a peace officer in the execution of their duties.

The goal of the bylaw is to remove barriers experienced by those with physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory disabilities which may hinder that person's full and effective participation in society.

While pets are still restricted from entering local public facilities, the Town of Niverville recognizes that trained service animals are the exception to that rule since they provide important functions for the people who own them.

Service animals, most often dogs, can be trained to guide the visually-impaired and alert the hearing-impaired. They can assist those with limited mobility, protect a person during a seizure, or remind someone to take their medication.

According to federal law, certified service dogs are allowed wherever the handler goes with the exception of places where food is processed. This includes taxis and public transport vehicles, stores, malls, theatres, and essentially any place that is open to the public.

Business owners and



Randy MacDonald and his service dog, Chance.

By BRENDA SAWATZKY

service providers cannot decline access to a service dog, but they can request proof, such as a letter from a medical professional, indicating that the dog is required.

Many service dogs are easily recognizable by their vest or band, which is issued by a certified service animal trainer.

In recent years, service animals have also become much more widely recognized for the significant role they can play in improving the quality of life for someone living with debilitating mental illnesses such as autism or PTSD.

But while terms such as support, therapy, or comfort animal are becoming more broadly used, under most legislation an animal won't qualify for public access clearance unless it's been professionally trained to perform a specific task that is directly related to the disability of its handler.

### A SERVICE DOG FOR LEIA

Eleven-year-old Leia lives in St. Adolphe. She loves the same things most kids her age love: Lego, video games, crafts, and animals. Leia has been diagnosed on the

autism spectrum.

According to her mom, Nadine Huberdeau, Leia's anxiety and sensitivity to loud noises have made it difficult, but not impossible, for her to go into public spaces in the past.

During the pandemic, though, Leia's challenges intensified, like they did for many kids who struggle with mental health concerns.

For over two years now, Leia hasn't gone to school. As a matter of fact, she rarely leaves the house—and when she does, she's unable to get past the end of the driveway.

When she tries, she has panic attacks that make her feel like she's dying. Everyday noises, like the passing of a garbage truck, are enough to send her into a closet to hide.

What she wants more than anything is to be normal.

"We've noticed that having an animal with her helps comfort her and gets her to push herself a little bit," says Huberdeau. "And when we saw that happen, we thought, 'Maybe a service dog would be the right way to go.'"

According to Huberdeau, the cost to purchase a fully trained service dog, though,

comes to around \$40,000. The cost feels impossible, since Huberdeau had to quit work to be home with Leia.

According to Leia's mom, there are no available supports from Southern Health-Santé Sud or the government to provide service dogs to autistic children.

After months of conversations with service dog trainers, the next best option for the Huberdeaus felt somewhat more attainable, at \$20,000. In this case, it means finding a trainable pup and hiring a professional to teach it to respond to Leia's needs.

"The service dog is not a cure," Huberdeau clarifies. "It's a tool."

For Leia, it will be complemented by sessions with a therapist who makes house calls, an out-of-pocket cost also not covered by the healthcare system.

Since that time, a young Golden Retriever pup has been selected based on its temperament, which will make its training as a service dog easier. The process will take between 12 to 18 months as the trainer visits Leia's home to help her bond with the new pup and then takes the dog away for intensive instruction.

"It will be slow," Huberdeau says of her expectations. "Even if it's just getting into town or getting to the mailbox at first."

To help cover the costs, Huberdeau and friends are planning an online silent auction which will run from February 8 to March 10. As well, a GoFundMe page has been set up in Leia's honour.

### A PTSD SUFFERER AND HIS SERVICE DOG

Randy MacDonald lives in Niverville with his wife, kids, and his best pal Chance.

Chance, an Australian



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Shepard, came into his life in 2018 and MacDonald describes that moment as completely life-altering.

Since the early 1990s, MacDonald has suffered with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Before meeting Chance, MacDonald says that he was virtually incapacitated by anxiety to the point where he, too, rarely left his home.

He relied heavily on alcohol in order to sleep and was known to his family and friends for his angry outbursts.

The first symptoms of PTSD began to show themselves after his Canadian military tour of duty in Croatia in 1993.

Fresh out of high school, MacDonald joined the military and trained as a combat fighter. Once deployed, he had the expertise to go into areas of conflict and take out the enemy, using whatever force was needed.

For seven months, MacDonald experienced the ravages of war in Croatia and the human toll exacted in that country's war for independence from Serbia.

Despite his training, MacDonald and his company arrived in Croatia to discover that the war was governed by a United Nations rule which prevented the Canadian ground crew from taking aim at the enemy unless they, or the thing they were protecting, had been hit by enemy fire.

For MacDonald, this made him little more than a bystander, witnessing the carnage as innocent civilians were annihilated in front of his eyes. The Canadian team was rendered virtually powerless to protect them.

To make matters worse, he says, the enemy was very much aware of the restrictions imposed on the Canadian ground crew, and they took full advantage by shooting at military vehicles or blowing

off explosives in close proximity, keeping MacDonald's crew constantly vigilant.

Without an offensive option, MacDonald turned to humanitarian efforts within the local Croatian communities. He spent time in rebuilding efforts and making friends with the children.

But all too often when his company returned to the community weeks later, it had been flattened by the enemy with people lying dead in the streets.

"[The military] doesn't prepare you for the human aspects of going to war," MacDonald says. "When I was younger, I was full of piss and vinegar. But when I got there, it was nothing like what I'd trained for... It's like seeing a car wreck for the first time when you're a young kid and no one telling you what's happening. And you walk away and are left to [try making sense of it]."

MacDonald went on two more brief tours in the years that followed, including time spent clearing minefields.

Eventually, however, as his PTSD symptoms worsened, he was moved to office and teaching jobs.

At the time, he says, the Canadian military offered no trauma resources for soldiers returning home from war.

"I used to go into a store and within 15 to 20 seconds I could tell you who looks sketchy, where the exits are, how big the aisles are, and, if anything happens, where I could go to hide," he says. "I wouldn't even go into a store if a guy had a backpack on because I didn't know what was in their backpack."

In 2001, MacDonald finally sought counselling on his own at the prompting of his wife, who worried for his well-being.

The military finally retired him with a small pension a few years later.

Still, it took years for MacDonald to learn about the power of a support dog for those suffering with mental illness. It took him longer still to get over the stigma he felt was attached to people with mental illness and their service dogs.

Thanks to a friend, MacDonald discovered an organization in Ottawa that provides service dogs to military veterans and public service professionals who suffer with PTSD.

Funded through grants and fundraising initiatives, they are able to provide trained dogs, valued at \$35,000, to qualifying recipients at no charge.

MacDonald applied and qualified.

Chance, still a puppy in 2018, was professionally trained to respond to MacDonald's specific PTSD symptoms and came to live with him and his family later that year.

Being a highly sensitive service dog, Chance can sense when MacDonald's heart rate increases and leans deeply into his side to reassure him and distract him from the source of his anxiety.

Because he's deeply sensitive, he also shrinks when MacDonald succumbs to an episode of anger, teaching MacDonald to catch himself in advance and control his temper for the sake of his canine pal.

One month after receiving Chance, MacDonald accompanied his wife on his first Christmas shopping excursion in 23 years.

Today, MacDonald has kicked his addictions to alcohol and cigarettes. He's taken up golf, joined a bicycle club, and has successfully attended heavily populated events like Jets and Nighthawks games.

#### STILL WORK TO DO

While most people are becoming acclimatized to service

dogs in public places, MacDonald says there's still some work to do to educate people on how to respond to a service dog.

First and foremost, people must understand that the dog, while in public with his handler, is on duty. In order to perform his job to the best of his ability, the service dog must stay highly focused and vigilant at all times.

Reaching out to pet a service dog, talking to it, or even making eye contact with it serves as a distraction. Service dog owners ask that people, to the best of their ability, ignore the service dog altogether.

As well, many dog owners don't understand the importance of keeping their leashed or off-leash pets at a substantial distance from a service dog at all times.

Handlers are not trying to be unfriendly when they allow a wide berth when walking around someone's pet. But any sniff or nose nuzzle is a distraction.

In MacDonald's case, as the handler of a very sensitive dog, he adds that other dogs pose risk in terms of friendly or unfriendly nips with the teeth. Any trauma caused to Chance by another dog could result in all his training being lost and his effectiveness as a service dog destroyed.

Five years in, MacDonald says that he can't imagine his life without Chance in it. He's grateful for the opportunity that his service pal has given him to experience life again.

"I want to make my family proud that I can come through a major conflict, [rise above] all the demons I face, and find my way."

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you'd like to contribute to the fundraiser to get a service dog for Leia, you can get more information on Facebook, GalaBid, or GoFundMe.



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## Ten Ritchot Facilities Chosen for Municipal Funding

**By Brenda Sawatzky**

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Ritchot has named ten local facilities that will be eligible for municipal funding in 2023. A total of \$357,000 will be distributed this year to a variety of recreation initiatives.

"We are thrilled to be able to support these important community facilities," says Mayor Chris Ewen. "These spaces and places are vital to the well-being of our residents and contribute to the strong sense of community that we have in Ritchot."

The Ritchot Lifecycle Grant program is behind about \$200,000 of the funding. The program was created to assist in the upgrade or replacement of the many components within recreational facilities which are nearing the end, or have reached the end, of their lifecycle.

A total of \$70,000 is designated for Île-des-Chênes for the purchase of a new tractor for Optimist Park and a retrofit of the main hall lighting at the TC Energy Centre.

Residents will benefit from the installation of an outdoor rink at the local arena.

The Grande Pointe Park outdoor rink will see safety mesh around its perimeter at a cost of \$17,000. Another \$17,000 is designated for the Howden Community Centre to install air conditioning.

Upgrades in St. Adolphe will encompass \$55,000 of the funding, which includes painting the ice shed in the sports centre and improvements to the sound system.

The final \$45,000 is designated for a ramp replacement and automatic door at the Ste. Agathe Community Centre as well as washrooms and showers at Cheyenne Park.

Each year, various committee organizers, along with the RM's Director of Facilities, identify areas of need. Project proposals are submitted for review, and recommendations are then made to council for funding approval.

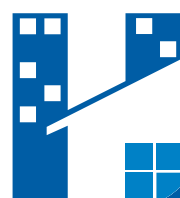
Residents of Ste. Agathe will also be the first recipients to benefit from the municipality's Capital Grant program, which supports the

development of new facilities or capital improvements to existing ones.

In 2023, plans for the replacement of the 30-year-old ice plant will get underway at the Ste. Agathe arena. A sum of \$150,000 has been awarded to this major project.

"The ice plant is original to the facility, and it has reached the end of its lifespan resulting in the need for replacement," says Josh Pawluk, arena president. "We anticipate this project will cost approximately \$750,000 and the municipality's support will go a long way in supporting our fundraising goals. This project will ensure the arena can operate reliably for the community and region as it has for the past 45 years and for many more years to come."

Where municipal grants are not enough to cover the full cost of upgrades or replacements, Ritchot Recreation Director Shane Ray says that committees can reach out to him for assistance in locating and applying for provincial or federal grant monies which may be available.



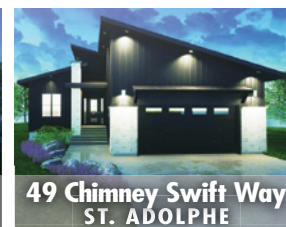
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# Commentary

## Getting Extreme: Why Our Brains (Sometimes) Love to Be Scared

By Daniel Dacombe

If you've spent any significant length of time on Planet Earth, you know that human beings have a strong survival instinct. It has kept the modern human race safe for hundreds of thousands of years, warning us of danger and preventing us from falling from high places, drowning in deep waters, and getting eaten by creatures who perceive us to be a slow, tasty source of nutrients.

We are all familiar with the feelings this instinct gives us: our hearts speed up, our stomachs clench, and our thoughts race. We feel fear... and a strong urge to get away from the cause of the fear.

So why is it that some of us don't run from fear but instead embrace it, seek it out, even intentionally put ourselves in dangerous situations?

These activities come in many forms. Milder forms might include bungee jumping, ziplining, and so-called "extreme" motor sports such as dirt bike racing.

At the other end of the spectrum, the more extreme end, there is base jumping, skydiving, rope-free solo climbing, and Wingsuit flying, all activities that carry more than a small chance of injury and death.

We call the people who engage in these activities many things: thrill-seekers, risk-takers, daredevils.

Some of us might call them less kind names.

No matter what we call them, there is no denying that some among us seem to lack the same fears the rest of us do—at least, in certain situations.

While this isn't a new phenomenon, scientists have only recently come to an understanding of what attracts people to these activities.

When we're afraid, our brains



release chemicals to motivate us to take action. These chemicals include epinephrine (also called adrenaline), which galvanizes us to action and makes our hearts race.

We also get a flood of endorphin and dopamine, which help us in other ways such as pain relief and motivation. Essentially, our bodies are getting ready for action.

Those chemicals aren't just kept for emergencies. Epinephrine, endorphin, and dopamine are also released during pleasurable activities, such as exercise or sex.

When this rush of chemicals prepares us for action, we rely on environmental cues, on context, to determine whether a particular experience is a "good" one or a "dangerous" one.

And sometimes we like using a bit of fear to give us those rushes of feeling. That's why most of us enjoy a rollercoaster or scary movie from time to time. There's no real danger

in it, after all, and we can enjoy our brain chemical wash in relative safety.

But watching *The Ring* in a dark room is a far cry from leaping out of a plane strapped to a tightly packed square of polyester and nylon!

So why do some people take it to a level that puts them in very real danger?

Canadian researcher and kin-esiologist Dr. Cynthia Thomson was interested in the answer to this question. She discovered that a specific gene (called DRD4), related to how dopamine functions in the brain, showed signs of existing at different levels in individuals who participated in extreme sports when compared to the general population.

The theory about this gene's expression is that it creates a higher threshold for experiencing sensations of pleasure from our activities—that is, they would need to undertake more intense activities

to experience the same amount of pleasure as other people.

This is consistent with the self-reports of individuals who engage in activities like skydiving, which is that they aren't trying to scare themselves; they're just seeking out new sensations.

There can be a downside to these activities beyond the expected risk to life and limb.

Earlier we mentioned the release of endorphin and dopamine during experiences of fear. These chemicals are also closely associated with addiction and compulsive behaviour, and rushes of those chemicals can be triggered by many different substances.

Extreme sports may provide a similar, if smaller, effect.

In addition, research has shown that the DRD4 gene difference has also been found in some individuals who struggle with substance use or excessive gambling.

A biological, genetic reason to push the envelope may exist for some people who engage in extreme sports, and this may make them less likely to self-regulate these behaviours in a healthy way. If they aren't careful, they may find themselves pursuing ever more dangerous activities in a quest to continually chase the high they're generating in their own brains.

That isn't to say that everyone who jumps out of a plane (with a parachute) is addicted to adrenaline. Most people who engage in these activities manage to live healthy and balanced lives.

What they're seeking from these experiences then is not a chemical rush but instead new and unique experiences. Engaging in activities that are literally death-defying present a novel way to be life-affirming—to face real risks and triumph, to take part in something far outside ordinary experience.

These experiences, as dangerous as they are, help people learn about themselves and enhance the meaning of their lives.

This is one reason why sub-cultures dedicated to extreme sports have sprung up all over the world. These groups help people engage with these adventurous activities in relative safety, allowing members to support each other and seek new and exciting sensations without the long-term consequences of substance use.

So rest assured: if you're someone who enjoys the rush, the fear, and the life-affirming feelings you get from extreme sports, you aren't crazy. From a biological and psychological perspective, you make sense. And if you're interested in trying an escape from real life, all you might need to do is try jumping out of a plane.

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# Sports & Recreation

## Niverville Declines to Host 2026 Winter Games

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

In a somewhat unexpected turn of events, Niverville's town council recently declined the opportunity to play host to the next Manitoba Winter Games, which are to be held in 2026.

This decision comes exactly one year after the 2022 Winter Games would have taken place in Niverville, had they not been cancelled for pandemic-related reasons.

In consolation, Niverville was given first right of refusal for the 2026 Games.

"When we were discussing whether or not to do this, it's one of those things where you think that it would be so great for Niverville," says Councillor Meghan Beasant. "But if you look at all the factors that need to come together perfectly for Niverville to look impressive, for me, it just looked more like we might come off looking poor for not being [adequately] organized."

For Beasant and the rest of council, it wasn't for lack of trying. First and foremost, concerns quickly developed this year over finding the needed committee heads and the many volunteers who would be willing to give their time to an event of this magnitude.

Five years prior, when council accepted the challenge of hosting the 2022 Winter Games, two residents



The CRRC in Niverville will not, after all, be home to 2026 Winter Games events, as many had expected.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

had stepped forward to act as chairpersons for a planning committee.

Today, those same people have moved on to other endeavours and were unwilling to make the same commitment.

According to council, other candidates were approached, without success.

But council believes that several developments over the subsequent years have reduced the pool of volunteers available for an event as demanding as the Winter Games.

One of these is the arrival of an MJHL team in Niverville.

"We have tremendous volunteers in this community," says Mayor Myron Dyck. "Between our Niverville fair and now the Nighthawks, it's fantastic to see. But we're hearing

from their boards, who are cognizant of not burning out their volunteers. And now we want to do another significant event? There's a lot of people that would normally step up, but now they're saying, 'I'm maxed.'"

Logistically, council also needed buy-in from the Hanover School Division (HSD) for the use of buses and the local schools for athlete transport and accommodation, as well as volunteers from the teaching staff and high school student body.

"We had a very good relationship with Randy Dueck, former superintendent of the Hanover School Division," Mayor Dyck says. "The relationship with the current superintendent is still in its infancy."

The current superintendent, Shelley Amos, was appointed to

replace Dueck in 2020.

In fairness, Dyck adds, in order to comfortably accommodate council's requests, HSD would have needed to consider bumping back their spring break by approximately three weeks in 2026, moving it from the last week of March to early March, the time during which the Games are typically held.

Synchronizing these two events would have freed up much-needed buses, school space, and student volunteers.

According to King, HSD determined in the end that, since many of their teachers live outside the division and are themselves parents, they appreciate having a spring break that coincides with that of the schools their children attend.

So instead of one school division being asked to make a switch, King suggests that it might be time for the province to mandate a Manitoba-wide shift so that school spring break events always coincide with the Manitoba Winter Games week.

"Why [is the province] not changing it if we're pulling from every school division for kids to participate in [the Winter Games]?" King queries. "Why are [students expected] to miss a week worth of school for this event?"

Now, without the Games to plan for in three years' time, Dyck says that council will be open to considering a variety of other popular events that are always looking for host communities.

"Once we are a little more established, it will allow us to focus on other events that would put Niverville on the map," says Dyck, referring to the establishment of the much-anticipated hotel which is soon to begin construction in Niverville.

As well, it means that Niverville won't need to raise \$650,000 in funds to host one single event, which is the going cost for a community to run one week of the Manitoba Winter Games.

At the end of the day, Dyck feels confident that they've made the right decision.

"If we can't do 100 percent, we don't want to do 50," says Dyck. "We don't want to go halfway."

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# IDC Sisters Earn Bronze Medal at Lacrosse Winter Nationals

By Sara Beth Dacombe

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Emma and Sidney Green, sisters from Île-des-Chênes, helped Team Manitoba win the bronze medal at the U.S. Box Lacrosse Winter Nationals in Phoenix, Arizona in early February.

The two sisters joined the provincial team just one year ago and played in the Canada Games in August 2022.

While box lacrosse is developing in popularity in Manitoba, the American tournament draws the top club teams in both the U.S. and Canada. In 2022, the event sold out at 50 teams, making it the second largest box lacrosse event in the U.S.

In 2023, the event sold out at 70 teams.

"One personal highlight from the Phoenix trip was winning the bronze medal with my Canada Games team," says Emma, who is also the team captain. "I couldn't be more proud of my teammates. These girls have come so far and improved so much from August until now and just winning that medal with them was a huge accomplishment for all of us."

The team was working on integrating three new players for the Arizona tournament and Emma says that she saw their skills improve.

"Just seeing them pick up the stick and take on the challenge brought back memories of when I started in July 2021, and they did absolutely amazing," Emma says. "I was so proud of them all and look forward to the future of female box lacrosse in Manitoba."

Sidney, who is aggressive on the field and sees herself as a strong defensive player, says that the experience taught her a lot. She scored three goals in the first game and showcased quite a few assists, but it was her defensive play and penalties that gave her the most satisfaction.

"My personal highlights would be all my amazing nine penalties over the five games I played. I received all of them for defending our goalie and teammates," says Sidney. "My one challenge from this tournament was playing against



Sidney and Emma Green from Île-des-Chênes.

by KRISTY GREEN

the two best teams in the U.S., who have played together a lot longer than us. It was hard to get past them at times. But I loved the challenge. It made it a lot of fun and I learned a lot from getting to go and experience it. I can't wait until the next one."

Team Manitoba competed against strong teams from California and Toronto, and enjoyed defeating their rivals from Team Saskatchewan.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

The Greens will next be traveling with Team Manitoba to the North American Indigenous Games in Halifax in July and preparing for the upcoming Canada Summer Games.

These will be some of the last opportunities Emma has to compete. She says that she's looking forward to transitioning from captain to coaching as she ages out of eligibility.

Girls box lacrosse is a relatively new venture for the Manitoba Lacrosse Association and the developing program is looking for more team members, coaches, and volunteers to get involved.

Emma is excited to

continue to help grow the sport she loves.

"It's been super exciting to see the sport grow in the past year," says Emma. "The friends I have made on this journey are the friends I am going to have for a long time. I consider them all my LAX family... I am most looking forward to coaching the next Canada Summer Games team, as well as coaching the future girls for nationals. I also hope to continue to get chances to play box lacrosse, whether it's with a Junior women's team or even just for recreational fun."

Sidney is excited to remain on the team and give it her all. "I'm most looking forward to having a blast like I did in Niagara and Arizona and also getting to meet other LAX girls from different provinces and countries."

The community within the sport is a big benefit for a highly competitive athlete, Sidney adds, which helps to make the experience so fulfilling.

"I have kept in contact with some from different provinces and always look forward to playing against them at these tournaments," says Sidney.

"It's also being able to play with all these amazing, talented girls from Manitoba, who I call family now, and having my sister on my team was just an added bonus which I love. We have some really awesome teammates! They are all rough and tough girls and work hard every time they step out on the turf."

Aside from Team Manitoba, Sidney will be participating in a box lacrosse league in Winnipeg that's looking for more players. She invites everyone who may be interested to come out and give the sport a try.

"It's a mixed league, but we're trying to get more girls involved so we can create a female league," she says. "We need girls to register at Manitoba Lacrosse Association online and come give it a chance. It's such an exhilarating, fun experience. It's been great from when we started until now, so I know it can only get better."

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more, visit the Manitoba Lacrosse Association's website at [www.manitobalacrosse.com](http://www.manitobalacrosse.com).

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# Arts & Entertainment



Angie Masse, co-owner of A Maze in Corn, at The Den restaurant.

by SARA BETH DACOMBE

## Welcome to The Den, a Restaurant Made of Snow and Ice

By Sara Beth Dacombe

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A restaurant carved out of snow has opened at A Maze in Corn just north of St. Adolphe. Carved out of over 500,000 pounds of snow and ice, The Den is a dining experience like no other.

The stark exterior is simply marked with the word “Manitoba” over the entrance, but the interior is softly lit and moody, featuring floor-to-ceiling sculpted walls.

Chiselled ice is backlit in reds and yellows to look like flames are alive in a giant snow fireplace.

A bar counter, fully made of ice, resembles crystal.

The dining area is rustic, featuring snow tables set with raw wooden discs and tree stumps for chairs covered in soft furs.

The restaurant was dreamt up by Clint and Angie Masse, owners of A Maze in Corn, at the site of their annual world-record-holding snow maze.

With creative input from Ian Krahm at Mast Creative and a team of incredibly talented artists and snow carvers, the restaurant was inspired by the beauty of the Manitoba prairie wilderness and contrasts comfort amidst a harsh landscape.

“Clint was the ‘architect’ of the snow building. He came up with the basic design, layout, and construction method and hired a team of snow carvers to finish out the interior,” explains Dave Neufeld, event coordinator for The Den. “The building itself is entirely made of snow. Clint

uses large forms that he piles the snow onto, and when it sets up, he removes the form and moves it to the next position. The building is made in sections.”

The unique setting is intended to draw adventurous eaters who may be looking for a very different—and very unique—experience compared to those offered by any competitor.

“The tables are made out of slabs of ice and we will use wood plate chargers so the hot plates of food don’t melt through,” says Neufeld. “About the only thing that is not made of ice or snow is the seating. We are using large tree stumps covered in faux fur.”

Neufeld also works with his wife Jenn at the Whitetail Meadow event venue near Niverville, so they know what it takes to create a fine dining experience.

They decided to partner with WOW Catering to secure an inspiring chef and kitchen team that is equipped to handle a work environment made out of snow.

“Jenn and I have worked alongside the WOW team many times with our day job at Whitetail Meadow, so we knew they would be able to execute an amazing meal under really unique circumstances,” says Neufeld.

The executive chef is Luc Jean, who is also the host of La Main à la Pate on ICI Radio-Canada.

“When we approached Chef Luc with this idea, he absolutely jumped at the challenge,” says Neufeld. “He is really innovative and a master at incorporating local ingredients into his dishes.

One thing that was really important to us about the cuisine is that it had to be truly Manitoban, and the menu he came up with really blew us away.”

So what type of person will really enjoy this combination of Manitoba’s best food, art, and chilly winter ambience?

“The Den experience is for adventurous spirits, to put it bluntly,” says Neufeld. “We knew going into this that this dining experience was not going to be for everyone, but honestly this is as much about having a perhaps once-in-a-lifetime dining experience than it is simply about the food. We also know that the price point is generally not going to appeal to a broader audience, but the hope was that people would look at this as being a part of a living art installation. So far, the uptake has really surpassed our expectations. This tells us that Manitobans really are the adventurous spirits we thought they were!”

The snow maze at A Maze in Corn is different every year. The Masses keep reenvisioning it, and adding to it, to ensure that they continue to hold the title as world’s largest snow maze.

And they are excited to showcase the new restaurant.

“The snow maze restaurant is definitely about the experience,” says Angie Masse. “The opportunity to try Chef Luc’s gourmet food is amazing, but then it’s combined with the experience of eating in a restaurant made of snow and ice. So it’s about the environment

and the memorability of a unique world-class experience you can have right here in Manitoba. We hope people will find it fun!”

Masse encourages diners to be open to the new experience and aware of what challenges come with the experience of eating in a building made of snow.

“Dress in full winter gear including ski pants, winter boots, toque, and lots of cozy layers. Yes, you are out of the wind, but there are no heaters as everything is made out of snow! So dress appropriately as if you’ll be spending some time in the snow—of course, for anyone interested in accessing the snow maze while they’re on-site, they can do that beforehand too! So dress warmly.”

The Den opened in mid-February as is open for Friday and Saturday night seatings.

The set menu includes a Friday night feature with a Tapas theme while Saturdays will offer a four-course meal with dessert.

More information on the menu and pricing is available on the restaurant’s website (see below).

“Your ticket price for either option includes a complimentary cocktail, and all tips/gratuities are included,” says Neufeld. “And of course, guests are welcome to come early and enjoy the world’s largest snow maze at no extra charge. And of course, dress warm!”

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

More information on menu and pricing can be found at [www.thedenrestaurant.ca](http://www.thedenrestaurant.ca).

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**ANY PERSON MAY** comment by close of business day on April 10, 2023 with respect to this matter.

**BELL MTS CONTACT:**  
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