

REGIONAL PRESS NEWS

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English class goes beyond the classroom for a night at the Citadel

Students from Swan Hills School's high school English classes recently had the opportunity to travel to Edmonton to see a performance of *Murder on the Orient Express* at the Citadel Theatre.

The trip provided a valuable extension of the students' classroom learning, allowing them to see the play brought to life on stage and make connections between what they had studied in class and a live theatrical

production.

Both the students and their supervisors thoroughly enjoyed the experience and appreciated the opportunity to take their learning beyond the classroom.



Swan Hills School photo

Valleyview students receive agricultural society scholarships

Valleyview Agricultural Society photos



Valleyview & Districts Agricultural Society scholarship recipient Angelina Huggard will attend the University of Alberta this fall to study criminology.



Valleyview & Districts Agricultural Society scholarship recipient Tristan Davis will attend the University of Alberta this fall to study engineering.



By Shelley Winger

Two Valleyview students are being recognized for their academic achievements, leadership and commitment to their community after receiving \$500 scholarships from the Valleyview & Districts Agricultural Society. Angelina Huggard and Tristan Davis are the recipients of the society's 2026 scholarships, which are intended to support local students as they pursue post-secondary education.

Huggard is attending the University of Alberta in the Bachelor of Arts in Criminology program. She hopes to develop a

strong understanding of legal frameworks, victimology and the criminal justice system, with the goal of using that knowledge to help address the causes of crime and improve community safety.

Her community involvement began at a young age.

Huggard served as a 4-H club president at age 13 and has coached U9 softball since Grade 10.

Her references describe her as a hardworking honours student and dedicated leader who encourages younger athletes, builds their confidence and leads by example.

Davis is also attending the University of Alberta, where he is studying in the Bachelor of Science in Engineering program

with plans to pursue mechanical engineering.

His goal is to design machinery that solves practical problems and potentially start his own business.

He also plans to maintain his agricultural roots by eventually owning a small farm with horses and cattle while continuing to participate in team penning.

Davis is president of the Wildrose 4-H Multi Club, where he mentors younger members and helps organize club activities and Achievement Day.

He has also volunteered at the local rodeo, assisted with team penning events and helped at junior high basketball

CONTINUED PAGE 5

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Greenview Council builds skills through professional development



By Haylee Dianne

Greenview Council and senior Administration recently spent two days taking part in professional development focused on municipal leadership, long-term planning and working together effectively.

The sessions gave elected officials and senior staff an opportunity to discuss issues related

to planning for the future, supporting community groups and making decisions that consider the needs of the Municipal District of Greenview as a whole. Participants also had time to share perspectives, work through practical questions and strengthen their working relationships outside regular Council meetings.

The training was closely aligned with Council’s Strategic Plan and provided an opportunity for elected officials and

Administration to reflect on how they work together to serve the municipality’s communities and residents.

Corinne Middleton and Todd Sharpe of TMS Group led the two days of professional development, guiding participants through the sessions.

The training reflects Council’s commitment to continued learning and building the skills needed to make informed decisions and serve Greenview residents.



Municipal District of Greenview No. 16 photos



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Town of Valleyview proposes ATCO Electric franchise fee increase

By Valerie Winger

The Town of Valleyview is proposing to raise the municipal franchise fee charged to ATCO Electric from 7 per cent to 8 per cent. The change would take effect January 1, 2027, if approved by the Alberta Utilities Commission.

ATCO Electric collects the franchise fee from customers in Valleyview and remits it to the town under the existing municipal franchise agreement.

ATCO Electric estimates the impact on an

average residential customer using about 625 kWh of electricity per month would be an increase from \$9.58 to \$10.94. That works out to roughly \$1.37 more per month, or about \$16.44 over a year.

Residents can submit written concerns during a 14-day notice period that runs from October 7 to October 21, 2026. Concerns can be emailed to info@valleyview.ca or sent by mail or delivery to:

Town of Valleyview

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Valleyview, Alberta
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The town will review and respond to any concerns received. Those concerns and the town's responses will be passed to ATCO Electric for inclusion in its application to the Alberta Utilities Commission.

The full notice is available on the town's website at valleyview.ca.

Holy Family Catholic Regional Division release

Holy Family Catholic Regional Division (HFCRD) is pleased to announce the appointment of Benoit Kudinga as Secretary-Treasurer, effective October 1st, 2026.

Kudinga brings extensive experience in public education finance to the role.

He most recently served as Assistant Secretary-Treasurer with Grande Yellowhead Public School Division.

Prior to that, Kudinga spent over five years with Alberta Education, first as a Budget Analyst and later as Acting Senior Budget Analyst, including a period serving as Acting Director during the Director's absence.

His work at the provincial level gave him a thorough understanding of school funding, budgeting, and financial accountability across Alberta's education system.

Kudinga holds two Master's degrees in economics, one from



Southern Illinois University and another from the University of Alberta. He is fluently bilingual, with French as his first language.

Superintendent Victoria Cornick says, "Benoit's depth of experience in school division finance and his knowledge of provincial funding make him an excellent fit for our division. We are confident he will provide strong, thoughtful stewardship of our resources as we continue

our commitment to Catholic education."

"I am honoured to join Holy Family Catholic Regional Division and to support the important work happening in our schools," says Kudinga.

"I look forward to working alongside the Board, staff, and families to ensure our resources continue to serve students well." Outside of work, Benoit is a bass guitarist who loves to travel and spend time with his family.

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You have three ways to vote:

- Vote during Advance Voting** from October 13 to 17, 2026, at an advance voting place in your electoral division.
- Vote on Election Day, October 19, 2026** at your designated voting place.
- If you've already requested a special ballot**, it must be received by mail at Elections Alberta by 5:00pm on October 16. Canada Post recommends you mail it no later than October 9.

Scan to find your voting place

Find everything you need to be referendum ready at elections.ab.ca



Valleyview neighbours come together to lend a helping hand



By Shelley Winger

A Valleyview Facebook group is bringing neighbours together to help residents who are facing difficult circumstances. Chris Henderson and Danni Denene administer Valleyview Neighbours Helping Neighbours, a community Facebook group that has grown to 443 members since it was created in December 2025. The group was originally started by

Samantha Proctor, who later moved away. Henderson said the administrators saw a need for a local place where residents could reach out when they needed help. “We thought this was a great way,” said Henderson. Since then, residents have stepped up to help their neighbours through donations of food, clothing and everyday essentials. Food has been the most requested item since the group was created. Members have responded

by donating what they can, helping ensure residents who are struggling have access to something as basic as a meal. Clothing has also been donated through the group, with members giving away items they no longer need to people who can use them. The need isn't limited to one particular circumstance. Henderson said the group has helped people in a variety of difficult situations. “We have helped people running from abuse, fire victims and just down

on their luck,” she said. In some situations, reaching out publicly for help isn't an option. The administrators can post on a person's behalf when privacy is important, including in situations involving abuse. The group also recognizes that asking for help can be difficult. Its purpose is to provide a place where residents can support one another without judgment, while encouraging people to access established community resources when they are available.

Members are asked to check resources such as the food bank and Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) before turning to the group, allowing the Facebook community to complement the services already available in Valleyview. As the colder months approach, Henderson expects the need for assistance to increase. The group hopes to continue connecting residents with food, clothing and everyday necessities throughout the winter, while giving people an

opportunity to help their neighbours in a meaningful way. It is not a sales or advertising page, and requests for money are not permitted. Instead, the focus remains on community, kindness and lending a hand when someone needs it. With hundreds of residents now part of the group, Henderson hopes Valleyview Neighbours Helping Neighbours will continue to grow as a resource for people who need support – and for those willing to provide it.

Virtual Emergency Physician program now in Swan Hills

Physicians remotely support emergency department patients

AHS Release

Patients seeking care at the Swan Hills Healthcare Centre emergency department (ED) now have additional physician support through Alberta Health Services' (AHS) Virtual Emergency Physician

(VEP) program. The VEP program uses scheduled, experienced emergency department physicians to remotely support rural facilities. Nursing staff can connect with an AHS physician by telephone or videoconference to assess patients with

non-life-threatening conditions. The virtual physician can speak with patients, collaborate with local healthcare teams, order tests and medications, and determine whether a patient can be discharged or needs to be transferred to another

facility. “This service model improves access to care during temporary physician absences while supporting the dedicated healthcare teams that provide exceptional care every day,” says Dr. Jane Ojedokun, Associate Chief Medical Officer, Rural Health Sustainability, AHS.

Since launching in January 2025, the VEP program has supported more than a dozen rural EDs across Alberta. Based on the experience and feedback from rural sites, AHS is continuing to expand the program, with more sites expected to join in the coming months. “Seeing the data and

feedback from VEP support at rural sites throughout the province, we know that it is providing a reliable solution to keep rural EDs open in situations that would otherwise lead to service disruptions,” says Dr. Ojedokun. When a patient

CONTINUED PAGE 8



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Minimum wage increases can't keep pace with rising cost of living

For low-wage workers, a few extra cents an hour won't close the growing affordability gap

By Simon Enoch

On Oct. 1, five provinces will see their minimum wages increase.

Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan will all see their respective minimum wages rise from a low of \$0.25 per hour in Nova Scotia to a high of \$0.40 per hour in Manitoba.

While any increase is no doubt welcome for the well over a million workers in Canada who receive the minimum wage, the brute fact is that these incremental wage bumps simply cannot keep pace with the acute affordability crisis that disproportionately impacts low-wage working families.

With very little room to manoeuvre, cost increases in non-negotiable expenses like shelter, groceries, or transportation may require families to make the difficult choice to cut expenses in other areas.

For working families, rent is often one of the most significant monthly expenses.

We can see what kind of hourly wage is required to afford rent in Canada's cities by consulting the rental wage – the hourly wage needed to afford a one- or two-bedroom apartment while working a standard 40-hour week and spending 30 per cent of income on housing.

Despite being based on 2024 rental costs, none of the Oct. 1 minimum wage increases will come close to matching the rental wage required to afford a rental unit in the major cities of these provinces.

For example, Saskatchewan's newly minted minimum wage of \$15.70 falls almost \$7 per hour short of what is required to afford a one-bedroom in Regina or Saskatoon.

Similarly, Nova Scotia's increased minimum wage of \$17 falls almost \$10 per hour shy of what it would cost to rent in Halifax.

Of course, the gap between these minimum wages and rent for a two-bedroom apartment is even higher.

We can see the same gap between what the minimum wage delivers versus what is actually required to afford a decent living by viewing the discrepancy between the minimum wage and the living wage in these provinces.

The living wage is the hourly rate that each of two parents working full-time must earn to support a family of four in a particular town or city.

For working families in Hamilton, that hourly living wage rate is \$22.60 per hour, \$4.70 higher than Ontario's new minimum wage rate.

Unsurprisingly, the gap in Toronto is even higher, with a living wage rate of \$27.20 required – \$9.30 per hour higher than the minimum wage.

Increasing shelter costs and higher food prices have been the primary driver of higher living wage rates.

In Saskatoon, rising rents and grocery bills saw that city's living wage increase from \$18.50 per hour to \$21.50 per hour in the

space of two years.

In addition to increased expenses, reduced government transfers are also burdening working families.

In particular, the loss of the much-maligned Climate Action Incentive payment (CAIP), or carbon tax rebate, has meant the loss of over \$1,500 in annual rebates for eligible families.

As expenses grow and transfers are reduced, employment earnings become all the more important for making ends meet.

Unfortunately, the meagre increase that minimum wage earners will receive on Oct. 1 is nowhere near what is required to keep up with the accelerating cost of living.

Governments that are serious about addressing the crisis of affordability must confront the gap between what the current minimum wage delivers versus what families actually require.

That could include accelerating minimum wage increases, holding down shelter costs through rent regulation, improving and expanding \$10 per day child-care access and increasing the size and scope of government income transfers.

Tackling the affordability crisis will require a multi-pronged approach that increases income and stabilizes expenses. Incrementally raising the minimum wage by a few cents every year while non-negotiable expenses like rent rise unchecked will only leave working families further and further behind.

Scholarships

Continued from page 1

tournaments. His references highlight his academic ability, willingness to help classmates and leadership as a high school football captain.

The Valleyview & Districts Agricultural

Society said the scholarships are intended to recognize the dedication and community spirit local students bring to the region while helping them continue their education.

"Supporting young people is an investment

in the future of our rural communities," the society said.

For Huggard and Davis, the scholarships mark the beginning of a new chapter as they prepare to continue their education and pursue their respective career goals.

Swan Hills Fire Department honours 2025 award recipients



Clayton MacDonald received the 2025 Officer Award from the Swan Hills Fire Department in recognition of his service as an officer with the department.



Swan Hills Fire Rescue photos

Cody Alexander was recognized by the Swan Hills Fire Department as the 2025 Rookie of the Year and Firefighter of the Year. The Rookie of the Year award is presented to a firefighter with less than two years of service.



By Haylee Dianne

The Swan Hills Fire Department recognized members for their dedication and service with its 2025 annual awards, including three firefighters who were highlighted for their contributions to the department.

Emerson Lungul received the 2025 Junior Firefighter Award, recognizing his contributions as a junior member of the department.

Cody Alexander received two honours, being named both the 2025 Rookie of the Year and Firefighter of the Year. The Rookie of the Year award is presented to a firefighter with less than two years of service.

Clayton MacDonald received the 2025 Officer Award in recognition of his service as an officer with the department.

Behind each award is the time and commitment required to serve as a



Emerson Lungul received the 2025 Junior Firefighter Award from the Swan Hills Fire Department.

firefighter. Members dedicate time to training, working with their fellow firefighters and being ready to serve when their community needs them.

The 2025 awards offered an opportunity to recognize those efforts and celebrate the members who give their time to the Swan Hills community.



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Feeling the squeeze: Inside the latest quarterly Small Business Pulse

By Carol Kamel,
ATB Economics

Key points

- Despite Alberta's strong overall economic performance, small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) are facing a profitability squeeze due to shifting consumer demand, rising commercial rents, and rising raw material and input costs.

- To deal with these pressures, business owners say they are taking a number of measures, including raising prices, absorbing margin hits, slowing or halting capital expansions, and prioritizing workforce retention over headcount growth.

Alberta is outperforming the rest of the country on a number of economic indicators: population growth, employment growth, and consumer spending.

However, headline numbers often mask sentiment in the economy, including that of small businesses.

Alberta small businesses are navigating rising input costs, shifting consumer demand, and difficult hiring decisions.

Our second edition of The Quarterly Small Business Pulse aims to bridge the gap between the macro and micro by combining economic data and the on-the-ground experiences shared by the business community in Alberta.

In this edition of the Pulse, which features a client interview and a survey of 78 Alberta



business owners, we unpack how entrepreneurs are adapting to an environment where uncertainty is no longer a temporary headwind, but a baseline condition for operating.

Key themes explored in this quarter's Pulse:

- **The squeeze on profitability:** We break down the top three pressure points SMEs are facing right now: shifting consumer demand, rising and volatile upstream raw material/input costs, and higher commercial retail rents.

- **The strategic trade-off:** How are businesses adapting to these operational bottlenecks? We look at the breakdown of how Alberta SMEs are splitting the burden of rising costs – from raising end-user prices to absorbing margin hits. We also explore why some are putting capital expansions on hold, and what that cautious holding pattern means for hiring intentions over

the next six months.

A look at some of the findings:

- Despite a 7.6% surge in year-to-date retail sales in Alberta, 30% of business owners cited weak consumer demand as a top challenge.

Rising household costs for food and energy are leaving less room for discretionary purchases.

- While U.S. tariffs make headlines, the Alberta SMEs we surveyed remain largely insulated – 82% generate zero revenue from U.S. customers and over 50% have no direct U.S.-sourced inputs.

However, businesses continue to face heightened uncertainty and indirect supply chain impacts from tariffs and other geopolitical events.

- To manage the squeeze, business owners are splitting the burden: 40% are raising end-user prices, 30% are absorbing the margin impact, and 28% are delaying or cancelling

capital expansions.

With regard to employee headcount, businesses seem to be focused on retention, with nearly 70% planning to maintain their current employee headcount over the next three to six months.

At the same time, 27% are planning to expand headcounts, a higher rate than observed in national surveys.

The bottom line

While Alberta's economy continues to prove its resilience, the cost of doing business has increased.

Alberta SMEs have also proven resilient, but the road ahead will be littered with the direct and indirect fallout of supply chain friction and uncertainty.

Looking to the future, businesses appear to be taking a disciplined approach – safeguarding profit margins, maintaining strong cash reserves, and holding onto the team that drives their operations.



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Swan Hills curbside recycling now managed by Circular Materials

By Valerie Winger

The Town of Swan Hills has shared an update on its recycling program.

As of October 1, 2026, the program is managed by Circular Materials, a national not-for-profit organization that is committed to building an efficient and effective

recycling system in Alberta.

The change is part of Alberta's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program and includes residential curbside collection.

The Town will not manage the curbside program. Residents should receive information from Circular Materials

in the mail.

The pick-up contractor, contacts, dates and accepted materials are on the Swan Hills page of the Circular Materials website, at circularmaterials.ca/resident-communities/swan-hills. The page also has sorting and set-out instructions, a recycling guide and calendar, and depot

information.

For questions about missed collections or what can be recycled, the page lists Integrity Waste Solutions Inc.

Their email is customerrequest@integritysolutions.ca.

Residents can also continue to use the recycle depot behind the Town Office.

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COMMUNITY WISDOM SERIES



PUTTING A FACE ON SUICIDE

Jessica Lynn Gladhill
Age 25

Every 40 seconds, somewhere in the world,
someone dies by suicide. Behind every number
is a name, a family, a community that felt the loss.
This week we remember one of our own.

Fire Prevention Week puts focus on battery safety



By Haylee
Dianne

Fire Prevention Week, held October 4 to 10, put a spotlight on an everyday part of modern life: charging the devices people use at home.

This year's theme, "Charge into Fire Safety: Safe Charging Is a Superpower," focused on helping people develop safer habits when using and charging devices powered by lithium-ion batteries.

These batteries are found in many of the products people use every day, from smartphones, tablets and laptops to smartwatches, gaming controllers, toys and baby monitors. They are also used in cordless vacuums, power tools, e-bikes, scooters and portable power stations.

While lithium-ion batteries are widely used, damaged batteries or improper charging can create safety risks.

Residents were encouraged to regularly check their batteries and devices for signs of damage. Batteries that were

swollen, dented, leaking or had damaged wrappers should no longer be used.

Batteries should also not be modified or tampered with and were best kept away from direct sunlight and extreme temperatures.

Where and how a device is charged can also make a difference.

Residents were encouraged to use the charger provided by the manufacturer or an approved replacement and to place devices on a hard, flat and dry surface while charging.

Beds, couches and other soft surfaces were not recommended for charging because they can trap heat. Residents were also encouraged to unplug devices once they were fully charged and keep charging areas clear of clutter and away from exits.

The National Fire Protection Association recommends keeping children and pets away from batteries and charging equipment.

It also recommends charging larger battery-powered products, including e-bikes and scooters, outside

whenever possible.

Using properly certified charging equipment is another important part of battery safety.

Health Canada recommends using chargers with recognized Canadian certification marks and following the manufacturer's instructions.

Proper disposal was also part of the safety message. Lithium-ion batteries should not be placed in household garbage or curbside recycling.

Fox Creek residents could bring batteries to the Town's Domestic Waste Transfer Station for proper disposal.

Although Fire Prevention Week has come to an end, the safety reminders can be used year-round.

Taking a few extra precautions when charging, using and disposing of battery-powered devices can help keep homes and families safer.

Residents looking for more information about fire prevention and battery safety can visit the National Fire Protection Association and Government of Canada safety resources.

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AGES 7-14

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Screen Test celebrates 35 years of mobile mammography

Primary Care Alberta's (PCA) Screen Test program celebrates a significant milestone this fall. The popular mobile mammography program has been travelling to rural and remote communities for 35 years, improving access to routine breast cancer screening for thousands of Albertans.

Screen Test began in 1990 with two offices in Calgary and Edmonton.

The mobile mammography program launched the following year with the very

first community visit in Hinton on September 18, 1991.

In its first year, the program visited 26 different communities across the province. Screen Test now has two mobile mammography trailers travelling to 120 Alberta communities, seeing up to 15,000 clients each year.

"Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Alberta, which is why making screening easier to access matters. For women in rural communities,

mobile mammography means less time traveling, fewer added costs and better access to important screening closer to home. I want to thank the dedicated staff who keep this program running and help Albertans get the care they need." - **Justin Wright, Minister of Primary and Preventative Health Services**

Between October 1990 and January 2025, Screen Test completed over 575,000 mammograms. Of these, 28,068 abnormalities were detected

with additional testing recommended. Screen Test mammograms also identified more than 3,100 breast cancers in that time.

"I've been involved with the mobile mammography program on both sides. Coming from rural Alberta, I know firsthand the impact this program has had over the years. I am so grateful – for myself, my family, my community, and many other women just like me who have had their lives touched by the mobile mammography

program." - **Colleen Waters, three-time breast cancer survivor and retired Screen Test staff member**

A mammogram captures diagnostic images of the breasts, similar to an x-ray. It is estimated that about one in seven Alberta women will have breast cancer during their lifetime. Regular screening mammograms are the best way to find breast cancer early when treatment may be most effective.

"Getting screened for breast cancer saves lives. Over the last 35 years, many of our mobile mammography clients have said they would not receive regular screening if not for the mobile units. It's an honour to be helping to improve access to this life saving service." - **Kimberley Simmonds, CEO of Primary Care Alberta**

New and returning clients can book mobile mammography appointments by calling 1-800-667-0604. Returning clients are notified six weeks beforehand with the dates and location of the mobile unit in their community. Screen Test schedules visits for when returning clients are typically due for their next mammogram.

Individuals between 40 and 74 years of age are encouraged to discuss their breast cancer risk with a healthcare provider to determine whether screening is right for them. If you notice any breast changes or have concerns about your breast health, please see a doctor right away. Do not wait for your routine mammogram.

Screening results are available online by signing up for MyHealth Records or the MyChart app on your mobile device. For more information about Screen Test mobile mammography and other screening programs provided by Primary Care Alberta, visit screeningforlife.ca.

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



Participants worked on a variety of crafts during the Fox Creek Library's Make and Mingle event, where attendees gathered for an evening of creativity and conversation. *Fox Creek Library photo*

Virtual Emergency Physician

Continued from page 4

requires in-person emergency physician care, Emergency Health Services remains available to transfer them to a facility with on-site physician support, as needed.

AHS continues to recruit physicians to provide in-person emergency department support across the province.

VEP is one of several tools AHS uses to support rural emergency

departments and maintain access to care.

Alberta Health Services provides acute care services for more than five million Albertans at hospitals, urgent care centres and health centres across the province.

Our mission is to provide excellent and accessible patient-focused healthcare for all Albertans. Our current focus is on reducing emergency department wait times, increasing access to surgeries and improving patient flow.

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