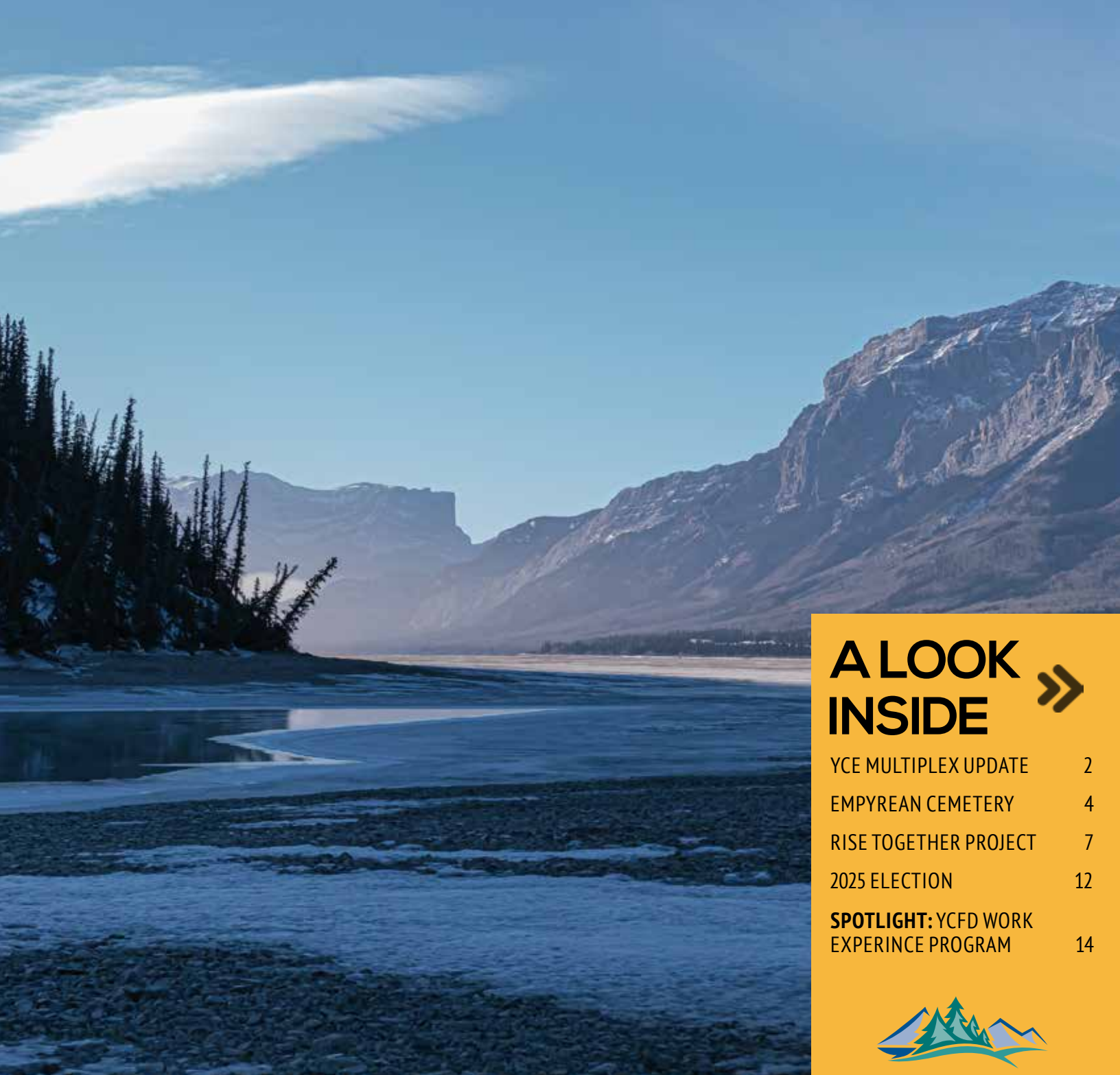


Yellowhead County Fall/Winter 2024 Newsletter

*Yellowhead County's*

# Yellowheadlines

A newsletter for Yellowhead County residents, visitors, property-owners, and other stakeholders that highlights municipal news, projects, and County services.



## A LOOK INSIDE »

YCE MULTIPLEX UPDATE	2
EMPYREAN CEMETERY	4
RISE TOGETHER PROJECT	7
2025 ELECTION	12
<b>SPOTLIGHT: YCFD WORK EXPERINCE PROGRAM</b>	14



# YCE Multiplex:

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Yellowhead County - Edson Multiplex

#### WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR THE NEW FACILITY?

Construction is scheduled to start in the spring of 2025 with the new aquatic area, as well as pre-work required prior to the arena addition. Once the pre-work is completed and a temporary access to the facility is created, the new arena will be constructed.

Renovations throughout the existing facility will be planned strategically to limit impacts to the existing facility operations.

Completion of the new aquatics and arena is anticipated to be completed for December 2026 with the remaining scheduled to be complete in the fall of 2027.

#### HOW MUCH WILL THIS FACILITY COST?

The YCE Multiplex comes at an estimated cost of \$80.2 million, including \$20 million provided through the federal Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program grant. More detailed costing will be done once the detailed design work is complete this fall.

Town of Edson	30.12 M
Yellowhead County	30.12 M
Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP)	20.00 M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>80.24 M</b>

#### HOW CAN I ADD MY COMPANY TO THE LIST FOR FUTURE BIDDING OPPORTUNITIES ON THIS PROJECT?

Contractors interested in being considered for future bidding opportunities can submit their company name, contact information, and relevant qualifications to [YCEMultiplex@clarkbuilders.com](mailto:YCEMultiplex@clarkbuilders.com). Please ensure your information is up to date and keep an eye on our website for upcoming opportunities.

#### WHAT AMENITIES WILL THE NEW FACILITY HAVE?

The facility is planned to include a new pool, new arena, new gymnasium, renovations to Centennial Arena, repurposing Memorial Arena to a curling facility, and inclusion of an elevated walking track in the gymnasium.

#### WILL ANY CURRENT PROGRAMMING BE INTERRUPTED?

The YCE Multiplex construction is expected to take place in multiple phases to reduce impact to programming.

## YOUR COUNCIL



Mayor Wade Williams  
Yellowhead County



Councillor Patrick Soroka  
Division 1  
Evansburg & Area



Councillor Anthony Giezen  
Division 2  
Wildwood & Area



Councillor Penny Lowe  
Division 3  
Niton/Carrot Creek Area



Councillor David Russell  
Division 4  
Shiningbank, Peers, Rosevear Area



Councillor Shawn Berry  
Division 5  
Pinedale/Wolf Creek Area



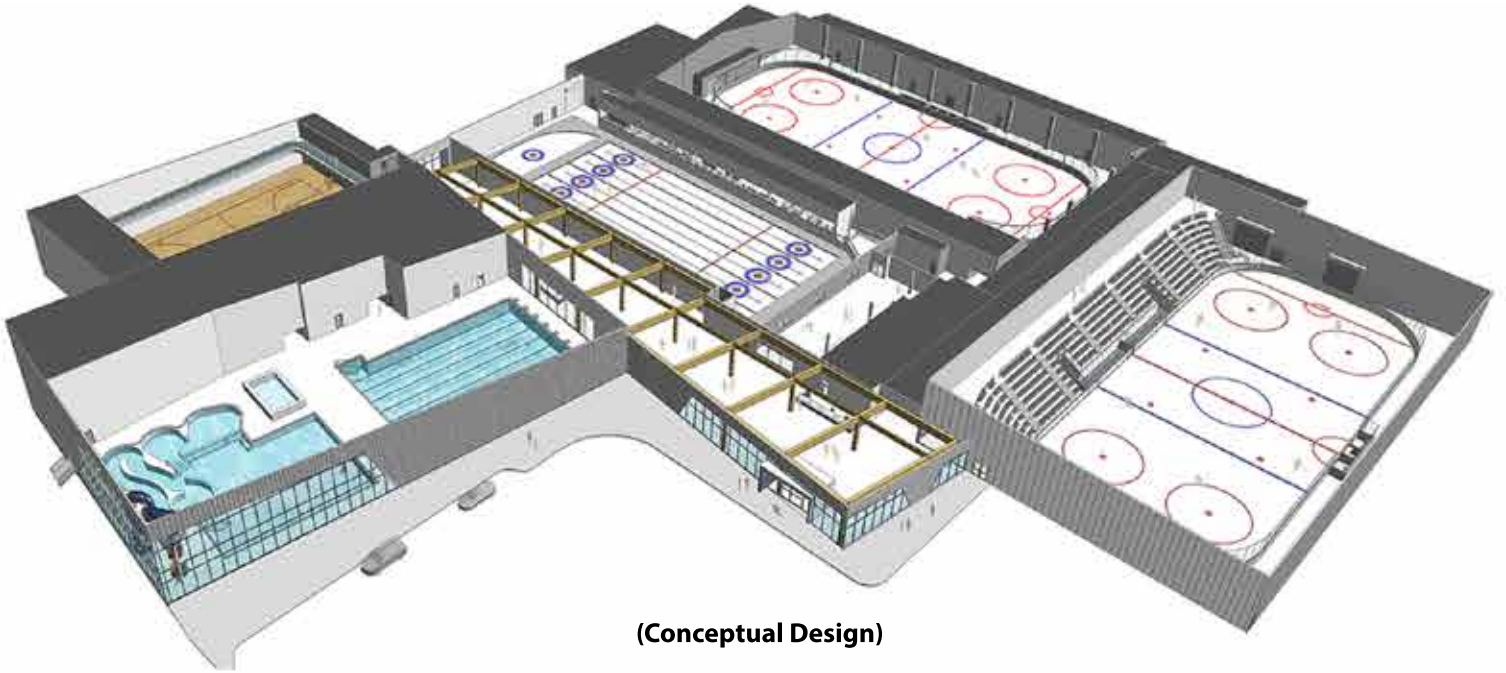
Councillor Brigitte Lemieux  
Division 6  
Edson & Area



Councillor Dawn Mitchell  
Division 7  
Edson West Area



Councillor Ken Groat  
Division 8  
Robb, Cadomin, Brule & Hinton Area



(Conceptual Design)

**YCE Multiplex continued:**

**Phase 1** of construction will include the construction of a new ice arena and aquatics area, scheduled for completion in 2026.

**Phase 2** will see the demo of the existing Aquatics Centre.

**Phase 3** will incorporate the construction of a new lobby, and a gymnasium that includes an elevated walking track.

**Phase 4** will see project completion through renovations to the current Centennial Arena and the conversion of the Memorial Arena to a new curling facility, as well as final site servicing, scheduled for completion in 2027.

**WILL PARKING BE IMPACTED?**

Parking plans are currently in development. Further options stemming from the public engagement are being explored before site plans are finalized.

**WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS UPDATE?**

Detailed design will be complete this fall. Following that, more detailed costing analysis will be worked on and substantial construction is expected to start in the spring of 2025.

## 2024 Capital Projects

These are a few of the community capital projects that started or completed this year and their budgeted amounts in 2024. It includes a mix of community services, protective services, infrastructure services, technology, and independent external community projects.

Funding for several of these projects come from federal and provincial funding such as the LGFF (Local Government Fiscal Framework), CCBF (Canada Community Building Fund), Universal Broadband Fund as part of the federal ISED (Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada).

YCE Multiplex	\$24,368,208
Outdoor Rink Boards	\$70,000
Tipple Park Museum Renovations	\$200,000
Wildwood & Brule Rink Lights	\$65,000
Edson Public Library	\$208,178
Flood Bridge & Culvert Recovery	\$1,975,441
Bridge Replacement on RR170A	\$2,500,000
TWP RD 542 (total cost \$11,300,000)	\$5,500,000
TWP RD 544	\$2,850,000
Construction of new Landfill Cell	\$1,881,109
Marlboro Sewer Lagoon	\$8,562,422
Marlboro Water & Sewer	\$2,096,037
Niton Fire Station	\$1,930,763
Tower Build	\$2,625,681
Universal Broadband Program	\$41,113,824
Fireguard Program	\$2,449,000



# Empyrean Cemetery

Empyrean Cemetery Designation Ceremony: A Tribute to Heritage and Community



ON OCTOBER 4TH, THE EMPYREAN CEMETERY IN YELLOWHEAD COUNTY WAS OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED IN A HEARTFELT CEREMONY. THE EVENT BEGAN WITH A PRAYER LED BY A PASTOR FROM SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH IN EDMONTON.

The Empyrean Cemetery is one of Yellowhead County's historic cemeteries, having served the first African American settlers in Wildwood for nearly 50 years. Although burials ceased in the 1950s, the community has maintained this historic site. The original owner, The Imperial Baptist Church of Junkins, has been defunct for over 70 years.

In the fall of 2023, The Shiloh Centre for Multicultural Roots (SCMR), a community group in Edmonton, approached Yellowhead County to begin the process of taking ownership of the cemetery. SCMR is operated by descendants of the regional Black settlers, many of whom have family members buried within the grounds.

In December 2023, the Heritage Advisory Board recommended that Yellowhead County Council take ownership of the Empyrean Cemetery and arrange a management agreement with SCMR. Following this recommendation, the Council voted in January 2024 to pursue ownership and enter into a management agreement with SCMR, with the intent to transfer ownership after two years of operations.

Over the past several months, Yellowhead County Administration

worked with Pahl Howard LLP Barristers and Solicitors to finalize a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the operation of the cemetery. The MOA was approved at the August 27th Council meeting, marking a significant step forward.

With the MOA in place, Yellowhead County is now working with the Director of Cemeteries and Land Titles to gain ownership of the property. According to the Cemeteries Act guidelines, ownership can be transferred to SCMR after a two-year maintenance agreement.

The ceremony was attended by the Edmonton Heritage Council, which highlighted the historical significance of the cemetery. Many attendees were descendants of those buried there, adding a deeply personal touch to the event. In preparation, SCMR conducted a ground-penetrating radar survey, uncovering 48 additional gravesites beyond those previously recorded, highlighting the cemetery's historical importance.

A Golden Shovel Ceremony symbolized the transition of custodial duties from Ravine Community Association to SCMR. This act of passing the shovel signifies Shiloh's new role in maintaining and caring for the cemetery.



Following the ceremony, attendees gathered at the Ravine Community Hall for a luncheon. The event featured a singer, creating a warm and communal atmosphere. The Heritage Department also set up information panels, offering insights into the cemetery's history and the lives of those lay to rest there.

The Empyrean Cemetery Designation Ceremony was a touching reminder of the importance of preserving our heritage and honouring those who came before us.

# A Journey Through Time with Mildred Setzer

The Heritage Program recently had opportunity to tour with Mildred Setzer, a long-time resident of Yellowhead County. Born in McLeod Valley in 1935, Mildred's life is a tapestry woven with rich memories and historical significance.

Shortly after her birth, Mildred moved to the Hattonford area, where she attended the All-Saints Anglican Church. This church, built in 1926 on land donated by A.O. Ford, stands as a testament to the community's spirit and dedication. Constructed mainly through volunteer labour under the guidance of Edward Strudwick, the church has been a cornerstone of the community for nearly a century.

During Mildred's time in Hattonford, Sunday School was held in a small, uninsulated back addition of the church. The harsh winters often forced cancellations, and the joyous hymns sung by the congregation would sometimes drown out the lessons, creating a unique and memorable atmosphere for the children.

East of the church lies the Hattonford Cemetery, established in 1925. This sacred ground holds the memories of many of Mildred's friends and family, including her parents and her young brother, who tragically passed away from diphtheria at the age of ten. It has been many years since Mildred last visited her family there, and even longer since she stepped inside the church.

Tours like this one with Mildred are invaluable for recording and preserving our collective past. Her stories bring to life the history of Hattonford and Niton, offering a personal glimpse into the area's heritage.

The All-Saints Anglican Church is one of four municipally designated heritage buildings in Yellowhead County. Thanks to the efforts of the Beaver Meadow and District Agricultural Society, this beautiful building has been maintained, ensuring that future generations can appreciate and enjoy its historical significance.

Mildred's journey through her past is a touching reminder of the importance of preserving our history, not just in buildings and monuments, but in the stories and memories of those who lived it.



## Matthew's Church Designation Ceremony

In 2017 Matthew's Church in Peers was designated a heritage site, but the Peers Historical Society chose to delay the official designation until necessary renovations were completed. After extensive work, including moving the church and laying a new foundation, the church was ready for its official recognition.

The designation ceremony was held on October 6th, celebrating both the Municipal Heritage Status and the incredible restoration efforts of the building by Louis and Gaileen Roersm. A plaque was placed on the church, commemorating its new status as a heritage site. The event also featured a luncheon, with five dishes prepared from a cookbook created a few years back to celebrate the church's 50th anniversary.

Built in 1927 the Mathews church was originally an Anglican Church ministered by Rev. Tim Mathews Sr. In 1963, the building was purchased by the United Church and named Mathews United Church in honor of Reverend Tim Mathews Sr. and his son Reverend Tim Mathews Jr. At the time of the United Church buying the building, Peers was in a Mission Field and student ministers held services in the church every Sunday from the middle of May until early

September when the students returned to college. During the winter months, a minister from Edson held services once a month.

Matthew's Church is no longer in use, but it holds significant historical value for the community. During the ceremony, speeches

were given by representatives from the Historical Department and the Peers and District Cultural and Agricultural Society, who now own the church.

The ceremony was a heartfelt event, celebrating the preservation of a key piece of Peers' history and the community's dedication to maintaining its heritage.

Below is a recipe from the cookbook for you to try at home. Recipe from Tena Dunseith.



### PUMPKIN BARS

WITH CREAMY CHEESE FROSTING:

First mix these ingredients:

2 c. white sugar	2 tsp. cinnamon
1 c. oil	2 c. pumpkin
4 eggs	

And then add:

2 c. flour	1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking powder	1 c. walnuts
1 tsp. soda	

Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes.  
Let cool.

Frosting ingredients:

3 oz. cream cheese	1 tsp. vanilla
3/4 stick margerine	1 3/4 c. icing sugar
1 Tbsp. milk	

Mix cream cheese, margerine, and milk and then add vanilla and icing sugar before icing the bars with the frosting.



# Celebrating 50 Years of Community Spirit: FCSS Milestone Anniversary



**Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) recently celebrated** a remarkable milestone—its 50th anniversary. To mark this special occasion, an open house party was held at the Evansburg Legion on October 11<sup>th</sup>. The event was a heartwarming gathering where old and new board members, along with community members, mingled and shared memories.



FCSS in Yellowhead County has a rich history that dates back to 1974 when it was known as Wolf Creek-Pembina Preventative Social Services

Over the decades, the organization has been a pillar of support, offering preventative social services such as Home Support, child and youth programs in schools and community, grants to community based non-profits such as the Wildwood Grandparents Program, and information and supports to



community groups. This funding focuses on building resiliency in individuals and groups to prevent crisis situations. In 1982, the organization underwent a name change, reflecting its evolving mission and expanding services.

*“Fifty years of FCSS in our communities, made possible through the support and efforts of all the volunteers, board members, staff, community members and agencies in the area, and provincial and municipal levels of government. It is our honour to highlight these efforts and take time to recognize everything that has led up to today.”*

**Wendy Robinson,**  
Yellowhead County FCSS Supervisor

Looking ahead, FCSS is working on an ambitious new business plan. This plan is based on a recent social needs assessment and aims to enhance future services with a strong focus on preventative social measures. The goal is to continue adapting to the community's needs and providing effective support.

FCSS is currently running several innovative programs designed to foster

community engagement. One such initiative is the Neighbourhood Link grant, which helps individuals offset the costs of hosting county block parties. These gatherings are a fantastic way for neighbors to connect and interact. Since the pandemic, these block parties have gained popularity, with 5-6 events hosted the first year after the pandemic and involved about 10% of the county's population.



Another standout program is Legacy Links, now in its second year. This initiative connects high school students from Grand Trunk with seniors from the Evergreen Foundation Sunshine Lodge. Through fun activities, games, and storytelling, the program bridges generational gaps and enriches the lives of both students and seniors.

As FCSS celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it continues to honor its past while looking forward to a future of innovative and responsive community support. The organization's commitment to fostering strong, connected communities remains as strong as ever. Here's to another 50 years of making a difference!



# Rise Together

## Rise Together Project: Celebrating Community Through Art

The Rise Together Project has brought vibrant murals to various communities across Yellowhead County, including Brule, Cadomin, Evansburg, Marlboro, Niton Junction, Peers, Robb, and Wildwood. These murals, painted by local residents, showcase the unique culture, history, and resilience of each hamlet.

Over 300 people participated in the paint parties, contributing their artistic talents to create these community masterpieces. Each participant's name will be included as a painter in the project, ensuring everyone receives recognition for their efforts.

To celebrate the completion of the murals, Yellowhead County held an Unveiling Open House on October 17th from 4 to 6 p.m. at Wildwood Hall. This event was the first and only time all the murals are displayed together before being mounted in their respective communities. The combined artwork spans over 230 square meters (760+ square feet), offering a stunning visual representation of the collective spirit of Yellowhead County.

In addition to the murals, a book will be created to document and celebrate the resilience of Yellowhead County residents during the fires and floods of 2023. Oral

histories will be conducted with 20-30 individuals who have unique and interesting experiences from that time. Eight artists will be commissioned to create community resilience paintings that will travel around the county, further highlighting the strength and unity of the county.

Residents are encouraged to submit their own photos from the 2023 events for a chance to have them featured in the book. The Rise Together Project is a testament to the power of art in bringing communities together and preserving their stories for future generations.



**PSSST...** Have you heard about Yellowhead County's new ONLINE registration system?!

**You can:**

- » Create an account
- » View upcoming programs/events
- » Register and pay fees online (if applicable)
- » Keep track with your own personal calendar!

Scan QR code to set up your account or visit [yhcounty.ca/registration](http://yhcounty.ca/registration)





# 2024 WINNERS!

Yellowhead County

# COUNTY PRIDE GARDEN CONTEST WINNERS

1. Vincent Property
2. Erickson Property
3. Best Property

*I love how great and supportive this community is.*

*- Gillian Vincent*



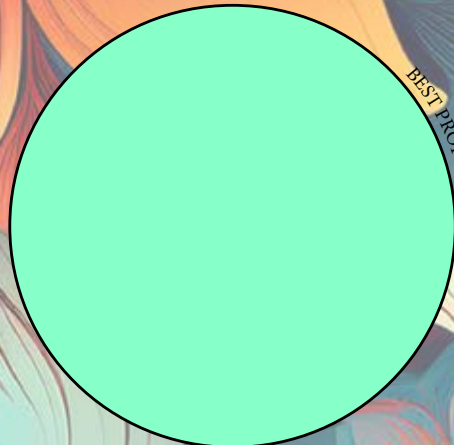
*Gardening is a hobby of mine that keeps me busy. I love to spend time out in my yard, watching everything grow. I start 90% by seed myself so gardening starts in February for me. I love to grow things you can't just go and buy at the grocery store.*

*- Destanne Erickson*



*I have lived in Yellowhead County for four years taking pride in growing my own garden and learning to can for the winter months. It has been a learning experience but enjoy my efforts and sharing with people in the community.*

*- Christina Best*







# PREPARING TREES AND SHRUBS FOR WINTER

BY TOSO BOZIC Certified Arborist and Tree Expert

Harsh winter climates in Alberta can create many damages to trees and shrubs. Some of the most common damages occur due to cold temperature and dry air, winter sun, wildlife damage, salt, deep freeze, heavy snow and ice. There are a few things you can do to reduce potential damages.

Find more information and other tree fact sheets at [yhcounty.ca/yardwhispers](http://yhcounty.ca/yardwhispers)

## Cold winter damage and prevention

Cold winter damage is a common concern, arising from factors such as a tree's inability to endure extreme cold, dry winds and insufficient snow cover in some regions of Alberta. The weight of heavy snow and ice late in the fall or early spring also cause damages. Here's how you can minimize the risk:

- **Select Hardy Species:** To safeguard trees and shrubs from the cold, choose species that can thrive in our climate.
- **Fall Watering:** Winter drought can occur when trees lose moisture through

transpiration but cannot replenish it due to frozen soil. Watering trees prior to the first soil freeze is extremely important.

- **Strategic Planting:** Consider planting your trees and shrubs in sheltered areas to help protect them from direct exposure to harsh winds.
- **Pruning:** Properly pruning your trees reduces the likelihood of branch breakage during heavy snowfall or ice storms.
- **Installing Plastic Tree Guards:** Plastic guards can protect young tree bark from winter sunscald.



*Proper pruning allows the tree to heal a wound.*



*Mulching is the most important activity that you can do to prevent root damages from winter freezing.*

## Root injuries and protection

Root injuries caused by cold conditions are among the most significant threats. Freezing, heaving, and cracking of winter soils can physically harm roots. Protecting the roots is of utmost importance.

- **Deep Watering:** Ensure your trees have enough water for winter before the freeze sets in by providing deep watering. Frozen water acts as an excellent insulator and properly moist soil retains more heat energy, making it harder for frost to penetrate deeply and harm the roots.
- **Snowfall Benefits:** Early snowfall helps keep the soil from freezing, even during brutally cold air temperatures. Additionally, if snow arrives after the soil has already frozen, it acts as a protective blanket.

- **Mulching Magic:** Mulching is a key practice to protect roots. It prevents weed growth, shields roots from extreme heat, and retains moisture.
- **Inspect and Fill Cracks:** For newly planted trees, check for cracks in the soil due to planting or dry fall conditions. Filling these cracks prevents cold air from entering the soil.
- **Fertilization:** On sandy soils, consider fertilization in the spring or fall. For heavy clay soils, opt for fertilization after the leaves have dropped.
- **Leave Leaves:** Leave leaves on the ground, mulch them, or blend them into the soil. This retention helps preserve nutrients.



# SQUEAL ON PIGS!

Did you know that wild boar at large are one of the most damaging invasive species in North America?

**FOR EVERY VERIFIED\* WILD BOAR SIGHTING, YOUR NAME WILL BE ENTERED TO WIN A CABELA'S GIFT CARD!**

The MD of Greenview, Saddle Hills County, Woodlands County and Yellowhead County want you to Squeal on Pigs! For every verified\* sighting, your name will be entered to win a Cabela's gift card! You can report sightings through the EDDMaps App or by emailing [wildboar@gov.ab.ca](mailto:wildboar@gov.ab.ca).

**\*To be eligible for the draw, reported sightings need to be geotagged for confirmation. To learn more about the reporting process, please visit [www.mdgreenview.ab.ca/squeal-on-pigs/](http://www.mdgreenview.ab.ca/squeal-on-pigs/)**

For more information, please contact Greenview Agricultural Services at 780.524.7621.

Scan the QR Code to learn more!

## Grizzly Bear Research Active in Yellowhead County

fRI Research is working with Mountain View BearSmart Society to monitor grizzly bear populations in this area



To do this, we would like to set up sites with a scent lure surrounded by barbed wire.



Curious bears leave tufts of hair that we collect for analysis.



DNA in the hair lets us identify bears and understand how the population in the area is changing. We also extract hormones for indications of the bear's health and reproductive status.

The scent lures contain no food reward, so after investigating the site, bears move on and generally do not return once the lure is removed. The scents travel a few hundred meters at most, only drawing bears that are already nearby.



A site can yield hair samples from just 1 or 2 grizzly bears over the entire summer. While many sites don't yield any grizzly bear hair, this is also important information.

For more information, contact Paul Fraser  
 (403) 638-6406  
 info@mountainviewbearsmart.com



# 5 YEARS OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT STATISTICS

\*AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

Development Permit Applications	2024 (Value of Developments)	2023	2022
Agricultural	2 (\$180,000)	/	1
Institutional	1	5 (\$36,920,000)	/
Commercial	29 (\$2,290,500)	19 (\$791,100)	48 (\$22,865,841)
Industrial	4 (\$460,000)	16 (\$10,564,272)	20 (\$316,825,000)
Residential	98 (\$15,451,863)	111 (\$16,096,258)	129 (\$18,673,510)
Closed/Refused	1	8	/
<b>Total</b>	<b>135 (\$18,382,363)*</b>	<b>159 (\$64,371,630)</b>	<b>198 (\$355,014,431)</b>
Subdivision Applications	20	9	198



# FIRESMART BEGINS AT HOME



Help protect our backyards



Reduce your risk of wildfire.

## FIRESMART YOUR HOME TODAY!

Preparing for the threat of wildfire is a shared responsibility. From homeowners to industry and government, we all have a responsibility to lessen the effects of wildfire. Creating a non-combustible perimeter can protect your home.

These 5 easy steps will help to protect your home from wildfires.

- Remove mulch.
- Removing deadfall and pine needles also reduces available fuel.
- Move firewood 10-30 metres away from your home.
- Place propane tanks 10 metres away from your house.
- Keep grass cut to less than 10 centimetres.

Find dozens of more tips and resources to help reduce the risks of wildfires for your home and property.

Visit the FireSmart Canada website at [www.firesmartcanada.ca](http://www.firesmartcanada.ca) for more information and to view their FireSmart Guides as well as their Home Assessment Checklist.



Development Permit Applications	2021	2020
<b>Agricultural</b>	2 (\$100,000)	/
<b>Institutional</b>	/	/
<b>Commercial</b>	26 (\$5,560,000)	27 (\$1,501,678,500*)
<b>Industrial</b>	17 (\$7,400,000)	27 (\$17,170,025)
<b>Residential</b>	130 (\$15,987,940)	129 (\$18,384,956)
<b>Closed/Refused</b>	/	/
<b>Total</b>	<b>175 (\$28,787,940)</b>	<b>183 (\$1,537,233,481)</b>
Subdivision Applications	29	16

\* Please note that in 2020, Yellowhead County approved the development permit for Cascade Power which included a construction cost of 1.5 billion dollars.

# How?

Municipalities such as Yellowhead County are created by the Province and follow the provisions of the Municipal Government Act (MGA).



## Thinking of running for council?

### What are your responsibilities?

The municipal Council is the governing body of the municipality (Yellowhead County). The Council reflects the diversity of views and opinions that naturally reside within the municipality. As a member of Council you have a chance to be a leader in your community.



For more information, please contact:

**Yellowhead County**  
**info@yhcounty.ca**  
**(780) 728-4800 | 1-800-665-6030**  
**Mailing Address: 2716 1 Avenue,**  
**Edson AB, T7E 1N9**

# Election 2025

**Municipal elections occur every four years. The next municipal election will be held October 20, 2025.**

## Thinking of running in the upcoming Municipal Election?

Here are some things to consider:

### Under the MGA, elected officials have the duty to:

- Consider the welfare and interests of the municipality as a whole and, to bring to council's attention anything that would promote the welfare or interests of the municipality
- Participate in developing and evaluating the policies and programs of the municipality
- Participate in council meetings and council committee meetings and meetings of other bodies they are appointed to by the council
- Obtain information about the operation or administration of the municipality from the chief administrative officer
- Keep in confidence matters discussed in private at a council meeting until discussed at a meeting held in public
- Perform any other duty or function imposed on councillors by this or any other enactment or by the council.

### Qualifications:

- Must be at least 18 years of age on nomination day.
- Must be a Canadian citizen.
- For position of Mayor, you must have been a resident of Yellowhead County for the six months preceding nomination day,
- and for the position of Councillor, you must have been a resident of the electoral division of Yellowhead County for which you intend to run for the six months preceding nomination day.
- and are not otherwise ineligible.



## Important Election Dates.



Nominations to run as a candidate in the election open on January 1, 2025.



Advance votes will take place in Edson, Hinton, and Wildwood prior to the final election date.



Yellowhead County municipal elections take place on October 20, 2025.



# 2024 YC PARKS & RECREATION EVENTS



## Bear Chase Triathlon Summer 2024

Photos: Sandra Schwitz and Rachele Roberto

The Bear Lake Triathlon started 8 years ago in 2017.

Over 90 registered kids in 2024!

Thank you to Trail Tire Edson for providing the barbecue for all the participants and their families!



Kids Can Catch at Millers Lake



Cadomin Pump Track Grand Opening







# YCFD WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

New firefighters from across  
Canada make their way to  
Yellowhead County to take gain  
experience in the broad spectrum of  
everything it means to be a firefighter.

**Pictured left to right are WEP firefighters: Jacob Zazelenchuck from Edmonotn; Gavin Flewelling from Leduc; Amanda Arnold from Orillia, Ontario; and Joren David from Markham, Ontario.**

The Yellowhead County Fire Department Firefighter (YCFD) Work Experience Program (WEP) has been designed to give graduates, from an accredited fire school within the last 24 months, the opportunity to gain firefighting experience that will help move them toward a career firefighting position.

## **From Construction to Firefighting: Amanda Arnold's Inspiring Journey**

Amanda Arnold, originally from Orillia, Ontario, has embarked on a remarkable journey over the past six months in Alberta. After over a decade in construction management, Amanda decided to pursue her long-held interest in firefighting. She saw an ad for a firefighting program online and felt compelled to apply, driven by her respect for the profession and a desire to make a significant career change.

Amanda's move to Alberta marked her first time in Western Canada. She has embraced this new chapter wholeheartedly, finding joy not only in her new career but also in exploring the region. "I felt that this was an opportunity that I had to go for in my lifetime. I wanted to put everything I had into this new career to make the best possible future for myself," she shared.

This summer, Amanda was part of the crew deployed to help with the devastating fires in Jasper. She expressed confidence in the training she received from Yellowhead County,

emphasizing the continuous learning aspect of firefighting. "Firefighting is one of those things where you will never know everything; there is always room for training and learning. It is a complete revolving door of education," she explained.

Amanda's experience in Jasper was a defining moment. She felt assured by the expertise of her colleagues and the comprehensive training she had undergone. "It was a call of a lifetime," she said, reflecting on the experience. She also highlighted the importance of learning from past events, particularly the 2023 fires and evacuations, which she researched extensively before accepting her contract.

Despite the challenges, Amanda finds immense satisfaction in her new role. She recently completed pump training and evaluations, which she particularly enjoyed due to her interest in fire trucks and operating them. "One of the most exciting things about the job is the trucks and operating them. I find it's not

easy; there is some complication," she noted.

Amanda also values the community engagement aspect of firefighting, especially during events like Fire Prevention Week. She loves interacting with the public and seeing the excitement on children's faces when they get to try on gear or explore fire trucks.

As the first female firefighter hired for the Work Experience Program at Yellowhead County Fire Department, Amanda feels honoured and encourages other women to consider firefighting as a career. "I always love seeing other females in the fire service. It's not an easy job but an exciting career to have," she said.

Amanda's dedication and passion for her new career are evident, and she highly recommends the program to anyone interested in firefighting. "In this role, you are able to focus on your firefighting skills and future on a full-time basis and get a full career firefighting experience," she concluded.



## From Fire Academy to the Front Lines: Gavin Flewelling's Journey

For 23-year-old Gavin Flewelling, firefighting isn't just a career—it's a legacy. Inspired by his father, who served in fire prevention for the City of Edmonton, Gavin always knew he wanted to follow in his footsteps.

"My dad was a firefighter, so I grew up around that atmosphere in the fire stations, around the fire trucks. I really looked up to my dad, so I kind of followed in his footsteps," Gavin shared.

Determined to turn his dream into reality, Gavin enrolled in the Emergency Services Academy (ESA) in Sherwood Park. The academy's rigorous three-month program was no walk in the park, involving extensive bookwork, studying, and testing. "It's not difficult to get in. I'd say it's more difficult going through with it. There's a lot of bookwork, a lot of studying, a lot of testing, very extensive," he explained.

The hands-on training and real-life calls were crucial in honing his skills. "Doing more training and being hands-on really helps with that kind of stuff, really reinvigorates the skills, and you always learn more stuff too," Gavin noted.

One of the most defining moments of his budding career came when he was called to assist with the Jasper fires. "Basically, the day we got called out, I was on shift in Edson. We did a full 12-hour shift and heard that the fire was going to hit the town that day. By 7 PM, we heard that it hit the town, and then we were

requested to stay back. We all went in a big convoy to Jasper and were there till 6 AM that morning. It was a pretty surreal experience seeing that amount of fire and the amount of people that came out to help was pretty crazy," he recalled.

The experience was both challenging and emotional. "The tough thing was seeing all the destruction around you, really not being able to do more than your tasked with. We were flowing so much water onto buildings that had already been torn down and seeing all these houses and stuff going up and not being able to do anything about it was tough. There were entire blocks of houses completely destroyed and then there's one that's untouched. That's tough for them."

Despite the intensity of the situation, Gavin remained calm and focused. "For me, I feel I deal with stress pretty well. I'm not, I don't get to wound up or too worked up with things."

With just two weeks left in his program, Gavin is eager to complete his training and continue his firefighting career, driven by his passion for helping others. "You learn a lot in school, but then you fine-tune new skills and knowledge once you get onto the job. I like interacting with people, especially at collisions. If someone's injured, I like to be there for them and support them doing patient care. That's what I enjoy."

He highly recommends the program to anyone interested in firefighting. "It's

a good program, especially for people straight out of school to get experience in. You definitely get good calls here and get the good experience that you're looking for out of fire school. I would definitely recommend it."

As for his future, Gavin has exciting prospects ahead. "I applied to Jasper; they're opening up for firefighters now. I got a job offer there, and I'm in the process with Kamloops right now for a full-time permanent position. So if I don't get Kamloops, then I'm going to Jasper."

Throughout the year, he and his peers have been applying for different positions, navigating the challenging application processes. "All of us are always applying for different positions and trying to get in. A lot of the time you don't get in, or you get in and then you have to go through several stages of applications. It's a pain, but one day we'll get it."

Reflecting on his time in the program, Gavin emphasized the value of the hands-on experience. "The program itself is one of the better work experience programs. The fact that we get to work full-time and experience the day-to-day calls as basically full-time firefighters is really nice. It makes you feel like part of the team."

With his training nearly complete, Gavin is ready to embark on his firefighting career, equipped with the skills, experience, and determination to make a difference.



# GOOD NEIGHBOUR Snow Shoveling Program



**Do you know someone that could use your help to clear their sidewalks? Help them out and you could be nominated as a **good neighbour!****

Have someone helping you out with snow removal?  
Nominate them and enter them into April's **volunteer prize draw!**

Nomination forms and recognition signs are available at the Yellowhead County Wildwood and Edson Offices, or contact Karen at 780-325-3782 or [kschatz@yhcounty.ca](mailto:kschatz@yhcounty.ca)



Feel free to contact Yellowhead County's Chief Administrative Officer or General Managers with questions, concerns, or comments.

Luc Mercier  
– Chief Administrative Officer

Albert Bahri  
– General Manager of Protective Services

Jeffrey Morrison  
– General Manager of Corporate Services

Crystal McNernie  
– General Manager of Community Services

Cory Armfelt  
– General Manager of Infrastructure & Planning Services

**Yellowhead County**  
780-723-4800  
1-800-665-6030  
Fax: 780-723-5066

**Office Locations**  
**Edson Office (Main)**  
2716 - 1st Avenue  
Edson, AB T7E 1N9

**Hours of Operation**  
Monday to Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Wildwood Office**  
53404 Rge Rd 92A  
Wildwood, AB

**After-Hours Emergency**  
**Utilities, Bylaw, Transportation: 780-723-3221**

Visit the Yellowhead County website at [www.yhcounty.ca](http://www.yhcounty.ca)

