The Alberta Industrial Heartland Association (AIHA) hosted several Conservative Members of Parliament and invited guests on a heartland tour on July 19. In this photo, the visitors are at the Northwest Refinery (NWR) Redwater Facility. AIHA held the series of visits to educate elected officials and business leaders about opportunities available in Alberta’s industrial heartland. —photo by Grant Cree

Heartland sees a real opportunity to capture the next wave of investment

by Grant Cree

The Alberta Industrial Heartland Association (AIHA) hosted several Conservative Members of Parliament and invited guests on a heartland tour on July 19. The series of visits was held to educate elected officials and business leaders about opportunities available in Alberta’s Industrial Heartland.

“We tell our story to everyone, it doesn’t matter about their politics. We want everyone to be aware of our heartland,” said Mark Plamondon, Executive Director with AIHA. “It’s important for our leaders and government officials to understand the economic opportunities out here, and what that means for Canadians.”

Plamondon explained that AIHA is a collaborative 20-year partnership of five municipalities northeast of Edmonton. They include Fort Saskatchewan, Lamont County, Strathcona County, and the City of Edmonton. Three associate members include the towns of Gibbons, Redwater and Bruderheim.

“The heartland is an economic engine for the province and for Canada. It takes our low-cost resources and adds value to them for the prosperity of all Canadians,” said Plamondon. During the tour, he emphasized that locally produced petrochemical products are used to increase fuel-efficiency in things like vehicles and home insulation.

Plamondon acted as a tour guide for his guests who travelled in a highway cruiser while visiting several facilities. They stopped at IPL’s Heartland Petrochemical Complex, Shell’s Scotford Facility, and the Northwest Refinery (NWR) Facility.

While at NWR, the visitors had lunch with local mayors and industry representatives who conducted presentations in the lunchroom. The tour continued with a visit to Pembina Pipeline’s Redwater Fractionation & Storage Facility and Propane Dehydration – Polypropylene site.

Dane Lloyd, MP for Sturgeon River-Parkland, helped to organize the tour in partnership with the AIHA team. “I wanted to bring them out here because the petrochemical industry is a high growth industry in our area,” said MP Lloyd. “It’s taking advantage of our low natural gas prices, which is a challenge for our provinces, and turning it into an advantage.”

MP Lloyd noted that people in this region know Alberta is experiencing “a really hard time” and are anxious about employment in the area. “I want to see action and jobs being created,” said Lloyd. He credited the heartland for generating approximately 6,000 jobs and providing indirect employment for more than 25,000 residents.

According to AIHA, the heartland is Canada’s largest hydrocarbon processing centre spanning about 82,4 km. with local spending of $1.5 billion annually. More than 40 companies operate in the area that produces $40 billion in existing investment.

Shannon Stubbs, MP for Lakeland, was on the tour. She’s also the Vice Chair on the Standing Committee for Natural Resources and Shadow Minister for Natural Resources. “I represent a lot of people who work in the industrial heartland whose livelihood and families and businesses depend on the facilities here,” said Stubbs, whose constituency includes the County of Lamont and the town of Bruderheim.

Plamondon spoke of emerging trends for the heartland. “We think there’s a real opportunity between now and 2030,” he said. “There’s an opportunity to capture that wave of investment. It’s important for the government and all the elected officials to work together to capture that opportunity.”

“The heartland is a bright spot in what has seen many years of damage as a consequence of anti-energy anti-resource policies and legislation,” said Stubbs. “This tour reinforces just how important it is to provide regulatory certainty and ensure Canadian competitiveness. One thing that struck me is the local employment. They all live in this region and are deeply invested in the facilities and their communities.”

Plamondon spoke of emerging trends for the heartland. “We think there’s a real opportunity between now and 2030,” he said. “There’s an opportunity to capture that wave of investment. It’s important for the government and all the elected officials to work together to capture that opportunity.”

Delegates from the Lions Club of Legal listen to Jessica Martel Memorial Foundation Executive Director Janice Isberg (right) during a July 16 tour of Jessie’s House in Morinville. The 9,000 sq. ft. safe house will provide a safe home for those fleeing domestic violence, and in need of shelter from their abuser. Story Page A4. —photo by Grant Cree

To our valued patients and their families,
We are sorry to announce that after 46 years of serving the Town of Morinville the Associate Medical Clinic will be consolidating the clinics, and therefore closing the doors of the Morinville office on September 30, 2019. Several physicians have retired, and we have been unable to replace them. We are unable to keep 2 offices open and staffed with physicians.

We want to make sure all of our patients from the Morinville office know we are still able to care for all of our patients in St. Albert, located at 101, 23 St. Michael Street. The phone number to contact the office is 780-458-1234. Thank you for allowing us to be part of the community.
New Blooms has greenhouse industry from across the continent here

Debbie Foisy, owner of Debs Greenhouse hosted the second annual New Blooms gathering for Canadian nurseries and retailers on July 18. Debs Greenhouse, located west of Morinville on Highway 642, was selected to host the international event. --photo by Grant Cree

by Grant Cree
Debbie Foisy, owner of Debs Greenhouse hosted the second annual New Blooms gathering for Canadian nurseries and retailers. The international event took place on July 18 at Debs Greenhouse, located west of Morinville on Highway 642.

New Blooms was attended by 75 industry professionals from across North America. The gathering included independent growers, retailers and Canadian broker representatives. Attendees had a chance to network with their industry peers while sharing ideas and successes.

“This event is unique to Western Canadian horticulture. It’s the only event of its kind available to us in this region,” said Foisy. “I was chosen to host because of our social media reach to the industry and consumers. This type of event was missing in Western Canada, we needed this.” She noted the only other similar gathering in Canada is held every summer in Ontario.

One highlight of New Blooms was educational seminars on new plant varieties, market trends and growing culture. Michiel Verheul of High Q Greenhouses was one of several industry leaders who spoke to his peers about what the future holds.

“I’m talking today about trends, and succulents are a huge trend,” said Verheul. “I don’t think we’ve reached our max potential for what people can do with succulents. This morning we heard some statistics about what millennials are buying. We learned that millennials call themselves plant parents, so sometimes they’ll use plants as a substitute for pets or kids.”

In Foisy’s spacious greenhouse, attendees admired more than 300 plants grown locally by Verheul. He described tropical foliage plants as being the next “new craze,” adding that trend is a return to what was popular in the 1970s. “Succulents are very low maintenance plants that don’t need much water,” he said. “They don’t grow very fast and they can be used in any kind of combinations.”

Diane Blazek is the Executive Director of All-America Selections National Garden Bureau based near Chicago. The non-profit organization tests and rates plants across North America, and Blazek showcased the process of how retailers can profit from this program.

“We really try to connect our industry to consumers,” said Blazek. “I enjoy talking to retailers and growers and explaining what our organizations do. Presenting and answering questions is the key, because we hear back on things we are not doing and what we can do.”

The New Blooms event was organized by Chris Berg, President of Blue Sky Creative, based in San Diego. Blue Sky is North America’s number one marketing agency for the ornamental horticultural industry.

“When we started New Blooms two years ago, it was to bring breeders from all around the world who would present their products here,” said Berg. “It’s something unique to this area because so many other places have giant trade shows but they don’t get as intimate as this is.”

Berg spoke to industry peers about current and emerging trends where retailers can open new markets for emerging consumers. “It’s really fun. The independent garden centres are the ones who get most passionate about the new varieties. This event gives them a sneak peek so they can get their consumers excited.”

Foisy is looking forward to hosting the New Blooms event next year, and thrives on bringing in new plants for her customers to enjoy. “For today, the most important thing is getting to see the new plants in front of us a year before they’re released.”
I recently had the time to clean out the garage, and headed off to the landfill. I found it an easy experience, well marked for my paint drop off, etc.

While at the main unload area, I was surprised by the number of black bags. I spoke to the gentleman unloading beside me, (he had some bags as well). He said he had five kids, and the rule in pickup is that the lid must be closed or the contracted company can refuse the pickup.

I contacted the city (town of Morinville), even though I have not had this issue ... although probably close last Christmas! I was informed that this was indeed the rule, but that residents can get an extra bin, for just over $7 per month. (It cannot be for a month here and there, you take it for a year). The same is true for the yard refuse (just over $6 per month). I was told the information would be more up front on the next City Website update. I just thought it would be a good update before the summer is over to pass on to readers.

—Alan Otway

Resident offers tip for those fighting with bin overage of garbage or yard clippings

8 year old Beau Scolamiero took the liberty of enjoying the entire Morinville skateboard /bike park just before the thunderstorm rolled into town on the evening of July 17th. With lightning in the distance, he continued riding his scooter up and down all of the park fixtures.

—photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscock

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**Legal Lions support Jessie’s House**

by Grant Cree

Several delegates from the Lions Club of Legal donated $7,050 to the Jessie Martel Memorial Foundation (JMMF) in Morinville on July 16. The evening presentation took place at Jessie’s House, a safe home for those fleeing domestic violence and in need of shelter from their abuser.

“Our main goal as the Lions Club of Legal is to contribute to local charities and groups,” said Heather Hartling. “We’re extremely thrilled and proud to contribute to the Jessie Martel Memorial Foundation. We all know somebody, or has somebody close to us, that has unfortunately been in a position where they could have really used some help.”

JMMF Executive Director Janice Iseberg accepted the cheque before hosting the Lions members on a tour of the 9,000 sq. ft. safe house. “I shouldn’t be amazed but I always am when a community comes together,” said Iseberg. “The Legal Lions Club really shows how committed the community and the region is to providing support for victims of domestic violence. I’m overwhelmed by their generosity.”

Jessie’s House is named after Morinville resident Jessica Martel, who at the age of 26, was murdered by her common-law husband on April 29, 2009. Jessica had no safe place to go to protect herself and her three young children from her abusive partner. The creation of Jessie’s House, ten years in the making, is the response from her family and the community.

As Iseberg conducted the tour for Lions Club members, she explained Jessie’s House is unique in its design, and will serve up to 35 individuals with their children. The house will include three family suites and one self-contained suite; it’s scheduled to open in the spring of 2020.

The JMMF was established on Jan. 15, 2012. Jessie’s House will be one of three shelters in Alberta that will serve individuals who need support. It’s the first such facility to serve Sturgeon County, Alexander First Nation, Edmonton Garrison and the City of St. Albert.

Weekly bonus days on July 18 at Cardiff Park.

**Park. Summer bonus days on July 18 at Cardiff Sturgeon County’s Summer Program free for the Kids at the Hammer station at one of the Anthony Bourgue, of Project Play observing legal Lions support Jessie’s House --photo by Grant Cree

** HOW DO I GET NEWS ABOUT OUR GROUP IN THE NEWSPAPER?**

Community groups, councils, boards, local elected officials, and the general public are welcome to submit articles or photos for consideration in the newspaper. There is no charge for publishing news articles. All submissions are edited for length, relevance, as well as grammar, libel, and community standards. There is no guarantee that an article or photo will appear in print. However few submissions containing material about local people or groups fail to get published. Thank you lists are not news articles (they are paid ads) and opinion pieces should be submitted as letters to the editor.

Photos should name people in the picture by row, left to right, and a photo credit (‘photo by John Doe’) will be printed if the photographer’s name is submitted with the picture caption. All submissions, whether news articles, photos, or letters to the editor, should contain your name, address, and a phone contact number (the address and phone number are only to verify the sender and will not go into print).

Submit stories or photos to:

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**Regina Free Press**

July 23, 2019

**THE FREE PRESS, Morinville/Gibbons, Alberta, 780-939-3309, email: morinville@shaw.ca, www.cowleynewspapers.com, Tuesday, July 23, 2019**
Hitting and fielding ... until the lightning arrives

Jarrett Landry made a hit after passing on several pitches during a mixed slow pitch game at skyline diamonds in Moniville on July 17th. —photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscocck

And you’re out! ... Players on Morinville’s “Where’s my pants?” mixed slow pitch team were surprised when teammate Tyson Nadeau jumped up and caught a big hit from the opposing team during their game at skyline diamonds on Sunday, July 17th. —photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscocck
The town of Morinville has earned a reputation for secrecy in the handling of public issues — and is taking that to extreme levels now by keeping an agreement with a service club regarding a public monument payment secret from taxpayers and residents.

On July 9, administration advised council the Light Armored Vehicle (LAV III) monument project being planned by the Rotary actually would interfere with the planned adjacent soccer field if positioned as approved by council June 11 when it returned the project to its original concept. Director of Community and Protective Services David Schaeffer told council there was about one half acre available in the circle south and east of the soccer field, however in discussion with the Rotary it was agreed the monument itself could be located in that primary location and then another half acre in a more linear format could be used as a secondary site containing things as landscaping and signage (there will be an education component to the monument). This configuration will not overlap the soccer field activity.

Even though no private ownership of the property or monument is involved, the town is keeping the agreement between itself and the Rotary secret, citing numerous sections of Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation which have little or no relevance to this situation, including the town’s favorite loophole — Section 24 “Advice from officials.” Council routinely receives advice from officials during open session — including the LA V III project report. The town uses Section 24 to discuss anything and everything, including the town’s maintenance of the 77 acre recreation grounds property, however the secret agreement outlines the town’s responsibilities such as grass cutting and snow removal which will be done as part of its routine maintenance of the 77 acre recreation grounds property.

The town was asked for an explanation of the secrecy surrounding the agreement since no private ownership of the property or monument is involved. There was no response after 10 days.
"Look, there’s another big one!"... Karter and Brooke Mackey were counting lightning in the sky while they were watching their dad and his team play baseball on July 17th at the Morinville skyline ball diamonds. The two youngsters were keeping a close eye on the sky as the dark clouds loomed and thunder was getting louder and louder.—photo by Amy Hibbard-Hiscock

It is going on three months since the town of Morinville passed its taxation bylaw which applied a 15.5% increase in the mill rate to the commercial property in town which also had a 15% average increase in assessment — resulting in an over 30% municipal tax increase on commercial property.

The Mayor and several councillors denied the size of the increase — going with 22% as their interpretation of the result of the assessment and mill rate combined increases.

While the town of Morinville had a strange inability to do the simple math of a $1,440 increase in the average 2018 municipal tax of $4,705 paid by commercial property, the tax notices have gone to businesses and in most cases been paid — the increases were, as expected, over 30%. As well municipal officials throughout the region have confirmed that the double whammy of the two elements increasing by 15% each will create a tax hike of 30% — it’s simple logic.

However, months after posting the false information on the town Facebook page, neither the Mayor nor town administration have issued a statement correcting the claim of a 22% hike. The actual tax increase collected as a result of the discrepancy between what the town is telling people it increased commercial taxes and what it is actually collecting amounts to about $100,000.

Just days before voting in favor of the second and third reading of the taxation bylaw on April 23, coun. Stephen Dafoe went on social media to deny the Free Press headline of April 16 announcing the 30% property tax increase. He was joined on social media by coun. Rebecca Balanko who called the news story a “very ill-informed and misleading headline shared ... is fearmongering and propaganda but lacking substance”. They were joined on social media by coun. Sarah Hall who referred to the Free Press story as “its all been a singular, hatred driven, insensitive perspective.”

Balanko also voiced support for the increase calling it “very gradual and in my opinion, long overdue.”

Mayor Barry Turner and CAO Stephane Labonne have been asked to explain why the town officials distributed the false information on the town Facebook page and why a correcting statement has not been released. The Mayor says he doesn’t want to talk about it further, and the CAO didn’t respond.

Neither of the two, nor the three other councillors who addressed the issue of the taxation bylaw on social media, have issued a statement correcting the false 22% claim and confirming the 30% hike.

Does it really matter that the town has put inaccurate information out to the general public? It only matters to those who want to be able to believe future statements by the town. For example, the town has stated that the $30.5 million rec centre project was on budget. Does that statement contain a plus /minus 8% factor, as per the difference between the town Facebook statement on commercial taxes and the reality of the increase, or is the $30.5 million a firm figure? There has been no public accounting released of the spending on the rec centre project.

Does it matter that the town continues to low-ball 30% hike in commercial tax?
Excellent pastures are made; they don’t just happen.

“It doesn’t happen by accident; we need to create it,” said Agriculture and Land Services owner Jim Gerrish during the July 11 Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA) grazing management workshop held at Doug and Barb Shapka’s farm in Smoky Lake County. Barb is a LARA director.

He began by defining excellent pasture as one with forage that is species diverse and palatable, soil mineral rich, species diverse and palatable, and is durable enough to last for many years. Some features of the best tillage equipment include patches of bare ground, plants that are grazed too short and low vigor plants.

Gerrish shared five fundamental tools for creating excellent pasture: using short grazing periods, leaving appropriate residue, giving adequate recovery time, having a broad diversity of plants and strengthening soil health.

Soil health and the importance of minerals are recent (within 20 years) research topics. Gerrish said there are many excellent soil health scientists in Canada who can provide information on those subjects:

“It’s amazing what goes on underground, in the soil,” he said.

Living soil consists of physical structure, chemical composition and biological life. Its structure determines aeration and hydrology. The way to make sand hold water is to increase its carbon content. The way to make clay more permeable is to add carbon. Carbon is increased in soil through having healthy stands of diverse plants growing in it—and growing long enough without being eaten or cut back to develop extensive root systems.

Chemical composition needs to be sufficiently level with a balance of minerals. Soil biological life includes photosynthetic organisms, a diversity of organisms and soil microbial biomass. Gerrish said that can be created by dry grazing the plants and how they are harvested on a piece of land.

“If we create living soil, how do we keep it alive?” he asked, adding that in the last century very little was done to enhance biological soil life; it was generally reduced. One of the biggest questions people ask is why that reduction was tillage to create seed beds and incorporate green manures into the soil.

“There’s some pretty easy things to do to help soil,” said Gerrish. “It’s amazing how quickly cover crops bring life back to the soil.

Combined with crop rotations, cover crops can lower nutrient needs and increase the soil’s ability to hold water. Continuous mono cropping created decreased disease resistance, increased tolerance, increased disease susceptibility and reduced nutrient content of food. Gerrish said today’s foods have only 20 to 50 percent of the nutrients in pre World War II foods. That lack of nutrition and minerals is believed to cause reduced immune function.

He also reported that it’s been known for decades that if one leguminous crop is killed by late summer and a second leguminous crop is planted, then the second leguminous crop is resistant.

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The keys to making excellent pasture explained by expert

Putting up hay does not make economic sense for every farm

Know what it costs to put up your own hay before deciding whether to make hay or buy it.

“Most ranchers have no idea what costs to make hay,” said American Grazing.Land Services owner Jim Gerrish. “Since the 1980s the economic sense of making hay has decreased. You need 300-600 cows to justify owning haying equipment.”

He reported at the July 11 Lakeland Agricultural Research Association (LARA) grazing management workshop held at Doug and Barb Shapka’s farm in Smoky Lake County. Barb is a LARA director.

Although Gerrish acknowledged that when sitting in the house in January it is more fun to look through the books than do actual work, he pointed out it is 10 times more profitable to look at farm costs.

“You can’t manage costs if you don’t know what they are,” he said.

The largest Costs items in managing a ranch are winter feed (equipment depreciation, fertilizer, irrigation, cow depreciation, and land and labor). With feed by far the greatest expense, feed costs are the greatest variable over time.

“The number of cows does not increase profit,” said Gerrish. “Making more per cow overall does.”

To make more profit per cow ranchers need to increase income or reduce overhead or operating costs.

One way to cut winter feed costs is by swath grazing, even in areas that get heavy snowfalls. “The bigger question is why are both those products and stock treatments such as Ivomec kill over 1,000 non-target organisms? Why are both those products and stock treatments such as Ivomec kill over 1,000 non-target organisms?” he asked, adding that in the last century very little was done to enhance biological soil life; it was generally reduced. One of the biggest questions people ask is why that reduction was tillage to create seed beds and incorporate green manures into the soil.

“It’s amazing how quickly cover crops bring life back to the soil,” said Gerrish. “It’s amazing how quickly cover crops bring life back to the soil.

“Most places I go around the world there’s not enough legumes in the pastures,” said Gerrish. “I like to see 30 to 40 percent legumes.”

Workshop participant Andre Menard asked if that high a percentage of legumes increased the risk of bloat in cattle. Gerrish said bloat from ingesting legumes is a genetic trait that can be culled out of a herd. It can also be prevented by providing dry grass feed or a treatment such as paloxalene.

He advocated broadcast seeding a mixture of four clovers onto a grass pasture and maintaining it through grazing management even in areas that get heavy snowfalls.

Excellent pastures are made; they don’t just happen.”
Duo try to steal ATM while clerk on duty

The Morinville RCMP are investigating an attempted ATM theft which occurred early July 18. Public assistance is being sought to help identify the two male suspects involved.

At approximately 3:00 a.m, the RCMP responded to a theft in progress at the Circle K store in Gibbons. A clerk from the store was at the location throughout the attempted theft, but was not injured and did not interact with the culprits. Police determined that two male suspects entered the business wearing gloves and face coverings and attempted to pull the ATM from the floor using a tow rope attached to a Silver Dodge Mega cab truck. The suspects fled without obtaining the ATM.

The suspects are described as: Suspect #1 (driver) is described as: approximately 6’2” tall; slim build; grey pants; dark coloured shoes. Suspect two (passenger) is described as: male suspects entered the business wearing a dark coloured hoodie with Crooks and Castles design on it; approximately 5’5” tall; medium build; dark coloured pants; grey pants; dark coloured shoes. Suspect two is described as: caucasian; approximately 5’5” tall; medium build; dark coloured pants; dark coloured hoodie. The vehicle is a 2010 to 2018 Silver /Grey Dodge 3/4 ton or 1 ton, mega cab truck with fender flares and a receiver (hitch). RCMP are asking anyone with information about this incident to call the Morinville RCMP at 780-939-4520. If you wish to remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS), online at www.P3Tips.com or by using the “P3 Tips” app.
Friends Austin Hennie (centre) and Remy Horiachka (left), holding up Austin’s Super Sonic Plasma Ray as Colton Hennie looks on during one of the Sturgeon County’s Summer Program free summer bonus days on July 18 at Cardiff Park.

Sturgeon County’s Summer Program staff hosted a unique and amazing morning on July 18 at Cardiff Hall. The first of two Free Summer Bonus Days planned for this summer, “A Fun Foray with Project Play,” was open to children of all ages and encouraged parent participation.

Over 50 participants took part in the “Risky Play” fully child-directed workshop. For two and a half hours kids were free to explore and use their imaginations to create and fully engineer their own play experience.

Project Play is owned and operated by Meghan Klettke and Anthony Bourque, two University of Alberta students, who provided three unique play stations: The Box Building Station, the Pallet and Hammer Station and the Sensory Station.

The next Free Summer Bonus Day is scheduled for Aug. 8 in Calahoo.

Jackson Taylor and sister Natalie Taylor get some assistance as they play with tire ramp at one of the Sturgeon County’s Summer Program free summer bonus days at Cardiff Park.

Brothers Grady (left) and Harlan Spooner hold up a card they built for their family at one of the Sturgeon County’s Summer Program free summer bonus days on July 18 at Cardiff Park.

Kandis, Abby and Isabelle Boddez enjoy the Sensory tent at Sturgeon County’s Summer Program free summer bonus day on July 18 at Cardiff Park.

Mya Legue, Othelia and Grace Radbourne, and friends exploring the Sensory Station at one of the Sturgeon County’s Summer Program free summer bonus days on July 18 at Cardiff Park.
On July 16th, Morinville RCMP were granted a search warrant for a property in Sturgeon County and as a result of the search warrant two motor vehicles, three trail-ers, and two skid steers were recov-ered and seized from the property.

The value of the recovered property exceeds $100,000.

The investigation is ongoing and police are asking anyone with information on this or any other crime to call the Morinville RCMP at 780-939-4520 or call your local police. To remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS), online at www.P3Tips.com or by using the “P3 Tips” app.

Three roaming musicians with the AC-Dixie Band entertained visitors during the Gibbons Pioneer Days festivities on July 13 at the museum grounds. (L-R): Matt Michelin (trumpet), Remi Noel (Sousaphone) and Don Berner (clarinet). –photo by Grant Cree