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TUESDAY 23 JUNE 2026 VOL. 2 / ISSUE 59

# Rural Alberta Report

*— East Central Alberta and Beyond —*

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## Mutton bustin' with nuttin' busted

by DAVID NADEAU



Fast and furious left no time for anything to get busted, hurt, or wounded. Neither limbs nor pride. Nineteen Kneehill County children participated in the Trochu Ag Society's fifth annual mutton bustin' event June 20. No bruises, no tears, no prizes. Just fun.  
 Rural Alberta Report/David Nadeau

No arms, legs, necks, or pride. That's the human side and everyone's happy.

From a sheep's point of view—fairly positive: “Not one-a dem 19 kids stayed on for a hoof-full of seconds. Us didn't need ta buck, jes run. We done good. All us happy.”

June 20 was a nice day for the 19 Kneehill County boys and girls involved in the Trochu and District Ag Society's fifth annual mutton bustin' activity.

Their event was the opener for the society's annual Bull-A-Rama which welcomed more than 20 riders, mostly from Alberta and Saskatchewan. If there were prizes for

who-is-from-farthest away, it would be a tossup between two Brazilians and an Australian.

What's with the mutton busters all being ages 4 to 6, I asked society rep Lynette de Beaudrap. Easy, she smiled. Older than that is too heavy for the sheep!

Little wonder those sheep clocked in as “we done good . . . all us happy.”

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TAHOE

# Policing: two worlds, one heart

by RCMP Sr. Cst. TODD ROBERTSON with DAVID NADEAU

**K**neehill County's Todd Robertson, a healthy and vigorous 50-something, has been in a uniform of one kind or other since he was 13. After decades with the Calgary Police Service and retirement a possibility, Robertson recognized he still had enough gas in the tank to finish his law enforcement career in an RCMP tunic. The RCMP either doesn't know or won't tell how many experienced officers step into a subsequent law enforcement career, but we thought it unique enough to ask Senior Cst. Robertson to elaborate on his situation.

I live with my family on an acreage near Three Hills; we have horses, chickens, and shop cats that patrol the yard like experienced officers on night shift.

I want to continue in law enforcement until my body no longer lets me. My lifestyle keeps me active; it's a physical job. Besides keeping healthy so it can carry me through life, I'm an avid weightlifter. I wear lots of gear on a typical shift and drive around with all that weight on my waist. Without constant motion and keeping our backs and core strong, back and hip injuries can be career ending.

After starting with Calgary Police Service (CPS) in 1997, I spent my first few years on uniform patrol and advanced through several units—uniform and plainclothes—before retiring twenty-six years later. I was an acting sergeant for two years before becoming a sergeant. With CPS I worked on a joint RCMP/municipal police unit called the National Weapons Enforcement



After retiring from the Calgary Police Service, Todd Robertson was accepted as an experienced officer and became a member of the RCMP, stationed in the Three Hills detachment. Photo / David Nadeau

Support Team. I had an RCMP partner on firearms trafficking and was a firearms court expert.

Explain your statement about being in uniform for so long.

I joined Air Cadets at 13, the Army Reserve at 18, the Scottish police at 20, and then CPS. Retiring from CPS was a daunting prospect which I probably would not have done without the opportunity to trade one badge for another. I started with the Force in 2023, two weeks after leaving CPS.

Recruits face a six-month training program. Yours was different.

For experienced officers, it's two weeks, followed by field training. Those two weeks focus on policy, use of force, weapons, and expectations of life in the RCMP. We went through medical and fitness testing but had no physical training like regular recruits. Depot [RCMP national training academy, Regina] is a world class facility and I love its history and tradition. Remember, I was also in the army and had basic training three times—the army reserve, the Scottish police, and CPS, so the regimented life suits me.

Becoming a Mountie recognizes experience and a desire to serve. It's called the Reserve Program. I belong to divisional headquarters [K Division—all of Alberta] and can be moved around the province to fill scheduling gaps or assist with investigations and special projects. Depends on my experience and expertise. I'm with the Three Hills detachment, a perfect

*continue reading POLICING on page 08*

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## Hanna RCMP report highlights community work

by CHERYL BOWMAN

The Hanna RCMP Detachment reported continued enforcement efforts, community engagement and officer training during the first three months of 2026, while also preparing for upcoming changes to frontline equipment. According to the quarterly Community Policing Report presented by Sgt. Rob Welsman, the detachment conducted 74 recorded traffic stops between Jan. 1 and March 31. The total brought the yearly cumulative figure to 402 traffic stops.

The report noted that Hanna RCMP members also partnered with Alberta Sheriffs during a traffic initiative on March 19. During the operation, sheriffs focused on vehicle inspections while RCMP officers conducted highway traffic enforcement. Statistics from that operation were not included in the quarterly target totals.

Community engagement remained a priority for the detachment during the reporting period. Members coached youth sports, participated in a charity basketball game in Youngstown, made presentations to local governments on policing matters and spoke with students at J.C. Charyk School about common legal issues involving youth. The detachment also increased activity on its Facebook page to strengthen communication with residents.

Offender management efforts continued through enforcement of court-imposed conditions. During the quarter, two offenders were subject to curfew conditions. One individual breached those conditions, resulting in police seeking a warrant and temporarily suspending curfew checks for that person. The report stated the overall objective was met, with multiple breach charges approved against several offenders.

Police training activities included a range day focused on pistol and carbine proficiency, as well as a defensive tactics session involving handcuffing and takedown procedures. Members also completed two tours of the Sheerness power plant to improve their understanding of the facility's layout, hazards and emergency response considerations.

Welsman also highlighted a national RCMP initiative that will affect frontline operations over the next several years. The RCMP has awarded a contract for a new general duty service pistol, selecting the Glock 45 MOS 7 Duty Pistol as its modernized sidearm.

The pistol package will include an Aimpoint Acro P-2 red dot sight, a Streamlight TLR-7X weapon-mounted light, three magazines, interchangeable grip components, a lanyard loop attachment, a Safariland duty holster and a secure carrying case.

The rollout will occur in phases, with frontline officers receiving priority. Distribution among RCMP divisions will be based on operational requirements, with full deployment expected by the summer of 2028.

A national training program has also been developed to support the transition. Instructor training is scheduled to begin this summer, followed by a mandatory four-day training program for frontline officers in late summer and fall. The process will conclude with annual firearms qualification requirements.

According to the report, training schedules are being developed to ensure frontline service levels are maintained throughout the transition as the

RCMP updates equipment intended to support officers and public safety while responding to evolving policing demands.

During discussion following the report, Mayor Danny Povaschuk asked about a known repeat offender in the community and an incident from the previous evening.

Sgt. Rob Welsman said the individual involved was known to police and had been arrested but had not yet been charged. He referred to a public release issued the previous day seeking witnesses or video footage related to incidents involving an individual reportedly carrying a hammer.

Welsman said he did not believe there was a risk to the general public at that time.

Council members also asked what rights homeowners have if confronted by an intruder or suspicious person on their property.

Welsman said homeowners have the right to protect themselves and their property and may, in certain circumstances, make a citizen's arrest. However, he recommended that residents call police and avoid taking actions that could increase the risk to their own safety by confronting an individual.

The mayor noted it was disheartening that a small number of repeat offenders can have a significant impact on a community, commenting that a large proportion of crime is often committed by a relatively small number of people.


Welsman thanked residents for their assistance and willingness to provide information to police, noting that public participation is critical in helping identify and apprehend offenders.

The mayor also encouraged residents not to hesitate to report suspicious activity to police, emphasizing that community reporting plays an important role in public safety.

Council received the report as information.

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## Celebrating dads who shaped Canada

by CHERYL BOWMAN

We celebrate Father's Day by honouring generations of dads who built communities, industries and families across Canada.

We at the Rural Alberta Report recognize the fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers whose labour and leadership helped shape rural communities and family traditions throughout this country.

From the earliest homesteads to modern industry, generations of fathers are remembered for breaking sod on the Prairies and turning raw land into productive agricultural ground that continues to feed communities across Canada and beyond.

Today, fathers and grandfathers remain central to farm operations, where calving season means sleepless nights and harvest stretches late into the evening. Their work continues to sustain Canada's agricultural output while passing down knowledge, skills and values to the next generation.

We also recognize the many fathers and grandfathers who spent careers in oil fields, pipelines and related trades, contributing to the country's energy supply and supporting economic growth in Western Canada and beyond. Their work often required long shifts in remote conditions and extended time away from home.

Tradespeople, mechanics and small business owners have likewise played a vital role in building local economies. From repairing equipment that keeps farms running, to operating family-owned shops and service businesses in small towns



and cities, these fathers helped sustain the day-to-day infrastructure of Canadian life.

Fathers are the cornerstone of strong families, and strong families are the foundation of thriving communities. Their dedication to raising the next generation contributes not only to family success but also to the stability and prosperity of society as a whole.

On Father's Day, we acknowledge not only personal bonds, but also the broader generational contribution of fathers who worked, built and raised families through changing economic and social conditions.

While the day is marked with gatherings and messages of appreciation, it also serves as a reflection on the intergenerational legacy of work ethic, responsibility and community building passed down through Canadian families.



Nayvi-Raine smiles during the third annual charity garage sale held this weekend, at the Stettler Ag Center in support of the Stollery Children's Hospital. Born at just 26 weeks and weighing one pound, 11 ounces, Nayvi-Raine's journey inspired the fundraiser, which has grown into a community-wide event. Despite the rain and Fathers Day events the fundraiser was well attended. Photo: Submitted

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# Agriculture

## Canadian innovation targets chick culling

by KCJ MEDIA GROUP

A new technology developed through a Canadian partnership could soon change how egg producers manage hatcheries by identifying the sex of chicks before they hatch.

Canadian Egg Technologies, a collaboration involving Egg Farmers of Canada and Egg Farmers of Ontario, has partnered with Danish equipment manufacturer Sanovo Technology Group and Quebec-based MatrixSpec Solutions to develop an in-ovo gender detection system. The technology is expected to become commercially available in Canada and other countries later this year or early in 2027.

The system uses hyperspectral imaging to examine fertilized eggs during the early stages of incubation. Developers say it can

determine whether an embryo is male or female as early as the fourth day of development, earlier than many existing technologies currently on the market.

In commercial egg production, male chicks are generally not used because they do not lay eggs and are not bred for meat production. As a result, hatcheries have traditionally culled male chicks shortly after hatching. The new technology allows hatcheries to identify male embryos before hatching occurs, reducing the need for that practice. Research cited by developers indicates embryos are not capable of feeling pain during the earliest stages of incubation when the testing takes place.

Industry leaders say the technology could improve animal welfare while also making hatchery operations

more efficient. By identifying female embryos earlier in the incubation process, hatcheries can dedicate more space and resources to birds destined for egg production. The platform has already been tested in hatchery settings and is designed to be used in facilities of different sizes.

The scanner technology may also provide additional benefits by helping detect egg fertility during incubation. Developers believe this could further improve efficiency and reduce waste within the industry.

Interest in in-ovo sexing technology has grown internationally as governments and consumers place greater emphasis on animal welfare. Several European countries have introduced restrictions or bans on the culling of newly hatched male



chicks, encouraging hatcheries to adopt alternative approaches. Similar technologies are also being introduced in the United States and Australia as the poultry sector explores new methods to balance animal welfare, sustainability and production costs.

The Canadian-developed platform represents one of the latest efforts to modernize egg production through advanced imaging technology, offering producers another tool to improve both operational efficiency and public confidence in the industry.

## Consumers pay the price for Supply Management

by KCJ MEDIA GROUP

Canada's supply management system has once again come under scrutiny as trade experts warn it could become a major obstacle in future Canada-U.S. trade negotiations.

Supply management governs Canada's dairy, poultry and egg sectors. The system controls how much farmers can produce through quotas and limits foreign imports through tariffs and import restrictions. It was introduced in the 1970s to provide farmers with stable incomes and predictable production levels.

A recent analysis from the C.D. Howe Institute argues that the system is facing increasing pressure from the United States, which has long viewed it as a barrier

to trade. American officials have repeatedly raised concerns about Canada's restrictions on imports of dairy, poultry and egg products, particularly during discussions surrounding the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). The issue is expected to remain a source of friction during future trade talks.

Under supply management, imports beyond designated quotas face very high tariffs. Critics argue these protections limit competition and make it more difficult for foreign products to enter the Canadian market. The United States has frequently challenged Canada's administration of dairy import quotas and continues to identify supply management as a trade concern.

The debate is not limited to trade relations. Critics also argue the system increases costs for Canadian consumers. By restricting supply and limiting foreign competition, dairy, poultry and egg prices are generally higher than they would be in a more open market. The C.D. Howe Institute describes the system as one that raises consumer prices while protecting domestic producers from outside competition.

Supporters of supply management argue the system provides stability for farmers and helps prevent the boom-and-bust cycles that can occur in agricultural markets. However, opponents contend that consumers ultimately bear the cost through higher grocery bills and fewer choices on store shelves.

The C.D. Howe Institute analysis



suggests the growing importance of Canada-U.S. trade negotiations could place additional pressure on Ottawa to revisit the system in the coming years. While all major federal parties have publicly supported supply management, trade experts continue to warn that it remains one of the most contentious agricultural issues between Canada and its largest trading partner.

# Police dog hurt during armed robbery investigation

by KCJ MEDIA GROUP

RCMP in High River are investigating an armed robbery at a local business after a masked suspect entered the store with a firearm, stole cash from the register, and fled on a bicycle.

The incident happened June 16, 2026, at about 10:20 p.m., according to a police media release. Officers responded quickly and set up a containment area as nearby resources were called in to assist.

Support was brought in from Okotoks RCMP, along with the Emergency Response Team and Police Dog Services as officers worked to track a possible suspect.

During the search, a police service dog with Royal Canadian Mounted Police Police Dog Services was seriously injured. The dog, identified as Paskal, was working alongside his handler, Cpl. Paul Cook, when the injury occurred. Cook immediately recognized the dog was hurt and rushed him to a Calgary veterinary

clinic for emergency treatment.

RCMP say Paskal is a four-year-old German Shepherd who was born Sept. 5, 2022, at the RCMP Police Dog Services training facility in Innisfail. He began working with Cpl. Cook in the fall of 2023.

Police say the dog remains an important part of the RCMP team and plays a key role in high-risk searches and suspect tracking.

“Police dogs are indispensable members of our policing teams. Their exceptional abilities help keep communities safe, assist officers in high-risk situations, and play a critical role in operational success,” the RCMP said in its release.

Police have not released details on any suspects or arrests.

The investigation into the armed robbery is ongoing.



Paskal is a 4 yrs old German Shepard. He was born on Sept. 5, 2022 at the RCMP PDS training facility in Innisfail. Cpl. Cook started working with him in the fall of 2023. Photo: Submitted

# Alberta RCMP warn public of high-risk offender

media release ALBERTA RCMP

In the interest of public safety, Alberta RCMP are issuing the following information and warning regarding the release of Terry Haskell (73) who was released on June 19, 2026, after serving a custodial sentence for a conviction of sexual interference. The Alberta RCMP has reasonable grounds to believe he will commit another act of sexual violence against a child while in community.

Haskell, who plans to reside in Red Deer, is described as:

- 168 cm (5'6") tall;
- 70 kg (155 lbs);
- Bald; and
- Blue eyes.

Haskell is subject to conditions prohibiting him from being in contact with or in places where children under the age of 16 are likely to be found. This includes prohibition from attending public parks or swimming areas, daycare centres, schoolgrounds, playgrounds, and community centres.

Upon release, Haskell is subject to a lifetime registration with the National Sex Offender Registry. He has been assessed to be well above



average risk for sexual recidivism.

The Alberta RCMP is issuing this information and warning after careful deliberation and consideration of all related issues, including privacy concerns, in the belief that it is clearly in the public interest to inform the members of the community of Haskell's release. The RCMP believes that there is a risk of significant harm to the health and safety of the public.

The intent of this process is to enable members of the public to take suitable precautionary measures and not to embark on any form of vigilante action. Anyone believing that a

crime has been or is about to be committed is encouraged to call police. If the matter is felt to be of an urgent nature, please call 911 to report the location and circumstances.

## Parkland RCMP investigate rear end collision involving motorcycle

media release ALBERTA RCMP

On June 12, 2026, at approximately 6:44 a.m., Parkland RCMP responded to a call of a female laying on the ground by the intersection of Highway 16A and Century Road in Spruce Grove.

Upon attendance police located the female near her damaged motorcycle. Through investigation, it was determined that the female was travelling northbound on Century Road and Range Road 272 in Spruce Grove. When making a stop at the intersection with Highway 16A, she proceeded to make a right turn eastbound onto the highway when it was safe to do so.

Shortly after entering the highway, she was rear-ended by a pickup truck, causing her to be ejected from the motorcycle. The suspect vehicle is described as a white company truck. The victim was treated for non-life-threatening injuries at the scene.

# Let's Talk Alberta encourages dialog over confrontation

by DAVID NADEAU

When I stepped off the plane in Mexico, I experienced culture shock. Food, entertainment, customs, language.

Stepping into the Trochu community center June 11, I experienced another culture shock. Not customs, food, or language—I was surrounded by well over 100 Albertans who want to see Alberta step away from the Canadian federation.

Under the Let's Talk Alberta umbrella, the Trochu meeting was one of 210 scheduled from February 2026 to October's provincial referendum. Promoted as an opportunity to rationally examine and talk about Alberta's place in Canada, the clear focus in Trochu described Alberta as having been neglected, abused, misunderstood, and unappreciated long enough. "Time to leave."

After the brief opening prayer, Western Standard columnist Cory Morgan stated, "We are making history right now and for the next four months. Alberta's place in the federation is the most important question."

Aligning Alberta's place in Canada to that of a family, Morgan said, "We are not having a tantrum. We are grown up and want to move out. Why? Because no economist can honestly look at the statistics and facts and say our relationship with Canada is fair. It is not fair."

He added that in the four months to October's referendum "this campaign will only be won by respectful one-to-one conversations about how Alberta is treated in the federal system. We will not win hearts with vitriolic statements,



Ben Crane, Eckville artist and entertainer turned activist, at last week's Let's Talk Alberta meeting in Trochu. He set the meeting's tone by asking, "Can a country survive by ignoring the values that built it?" His appeal: look forward, reflect on the present, and make a sensible and sane decision. Rural Alberta Report / D. Nadeau

flyer campaigns, and glitzy advertising."

The mix of speakers and other message carriers (posters, banners, cards, T shirts, yard signs, ball caps, coffee mugs, banners, hoodies) struck an edgier tone than Morgan's measured presentation. Alberta's natural predator—the Eastern mosquito . . . Free Alberta . . . Republic of Alberta . . . From the beginning, Alberta was stolen from—to enrich the East . . . Time for Change . . . Independence is freedom from tyranny . . . make Alberta great again . . . free Alberta from Ottawa . . .

Participants in the Trochu meeting signed in as coming from Medicine Hat, Bowden, Innisfail, Trochu, Three Hills, Drumheller, Delia, and Red Deer County. Not knowing names or faces, I did not identify someone in the audience who was saluted from the platform for involvement in the United We Roll for Canada truck convoy that crippled downtown Ottawa for the better part of three weeks in 2022.

Given that the truck convoy was supposed to be protesting vaccination protocols—not Alberta leaving the Canadian union—I was puzzled that the level-headed speeches by Morgan and fellow presenter Chris Scott also rubbed shoulders with a literature table card showing a man's face. Half the face was a Nazi officer, the other half a Mountie, with an Adolf Eichmann quote, "I was just following orders."

Similarly disconnected from a separatist agenda, a literature table sign declared that if the government says you don't need a gun, you need a gun. A banner containing a quote from a 1904 federal cabinet minister features an inverted Canadian maple leaf dripping blood and then-Minister Clifford Sifton's face suspiciously doctored with a Hitler moustache.

Scott's brief time behind the podium was more balanced.

"The cause of Western alienation," he said, "is that we have not been listened to and cannot continue just listening to each other. It's time to make proper decisions. Alberta independence is not only necessary, it is inevitable. I see the October referendum as a tremendous opportunity for Albertans to make a great decision. Let's keep talking."

**POLICING** continued from page 02

fit, to work in the community I live in.

Filling scheduling gaps has already seen me assist five detachments with front-line patrol and occasional plainclothes investigations.

Yes, I'm content with the rank assigned me: senior constable. After being a sergeant for many years, I enjoy being front-line again. Leaving boardrooms and budget sheets to focus on calls for service, investigations, and putting my experience to work on the front-line is a unique experience.

Did you join the Force with a years-of-service target?

As a CPS sergeant, much of my work was supervision and administration. We learn incident command and leadership rather than patrol-specific functions. The last chunk of my service was as an investigator, where I honed my interviewing, court, and case management skills. CPS was always good to me and I have nothing negative to say. I weathered 30 years without any major injuries or PTSD, so I can keep going for a while. Joining another police agency with different computer systems and vehicle technology was like being a rookie. With this like a new career, combined with the added excitement of rural policing, I don't see me retiring anytime soon.

Being a Mountie fits what I expected and I enjoy it. Before leaving Calgary Police Service (CPS), I lived in the country but worked in the city. How small towns work is not foreign and I have nothing but respect for those I work with. I may be the oldest in my detachment and have the longest service record, but I make it clear I still need to learn from them. In the city, there are specialists for everything; out here, for day-to-day responsibilities, I've had to be coached by my colleagues.

My new career is what I anticipated, especially the individuals I work with. In rural detachments, they need to be resourceful, jack-of-all trade investigators, and are often called back to work for incidents that require additional members.

You described law enforcement as a front row

seat to the best show in the world.

There's truth in that. I like being the one who shows up when you are having the worst day of your life. My job is to handle chaos and make it better. The vast majority will have no police interaction other than a traffic stop. Their impression of us may be forever impacted by that one interaction. I want them to have encountered a professional, courteous officer.

The vast majority of my schedule is general duties, or patrol. And yes, there's travel, helping other detachments as an investigator, a small reminder of my plainclothes days. All that travelling lets me cram as much experience—working in different parts of the province—into the few years I'll be a member, compared to someone who serves for 25 years.

When I talk about the job, I mean CPS and the RCMP. Both have been good to me and my family, and I would be proud for any of my children to enter this career. It is meaningful work, has strong camaraderie, and good opportunities for growth and advancement. They have shaped who and what I am.

I see significant differences between urban and rural policing. The calls for service and the profession of policing are the same, demanding strong judgment and commitment. But there are differences from day to day due to population density and availability of resources (such as other officers). The driving time out here from one call to the next may be long; in the city we had a relatively small area. Out here we operate with greater independence and self-reliance. I like having a greater connection with the public; we often know individuals and they know us. There's no anonymity in a small town.

I police the community I live in and take pride knowing I'm one of the people who contributes to the public safety and quality of life right outside my doorstep.



## Community Rallies Behind Stollery Fundraiser

by CHERYL BOWMAN

Community support was on full display during the third annual Charity Garage Sale in support of the Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation, as local businesses and residents came together to help raise funds for the Edmonton-based hospital.

Organizer Keith McMann said the fundraiser was inspired by his family's experience with the Stollery after his granddaughter, Nayvi-Raine, was born prematurely and received specialized care.

Despite rainy weather, community members continued to support the event through donations, raffle prizes and family activities.

Several local businesses contributed to the fundraiser, including Stettler Tool & Hardware, Cuttin' Corners Hair Studio, Woodcraft by Dave, Fresh Wife, Admiral Welding, Resurrected Powersports and Pump It Up Rentals.

Donations helped create a raffle table featuring multiple prize packages, while family attractions included bouncy houses, food concessions and children's activities.

One of the event's major fundraising features was a Kawasaki Bayou ATV, refurbished with support from Resurrected Powersports and auctioned to benefit the fundraiser.

Over \$6,000 was raised over the two day event.

What began as a small garage sale in the McMann family garage has grown into a true community-wide event. The event continues to grow and even more exciting developments are on the horizon.

The Stollery Children's Hospital Foundation will be helping to promote next year's fundraiser, with new attractions and activities already being planned. Stay tuned as this remarkable community effort continues to make a difference for children and families.

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