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**Memorial airshow success keeps
Medicine Hat aviation fans' spirits aloft**

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The 40-Mile County Commentator



ISN'T IT ALREADY CLEAN?: (Left) The Seven Persons community gathers to wipe down the new Wildland Seven emergency vehicle, as a tradition and promise to take care of the lifesaving equipment. **THE PUSH IN:** (Right) Seven Persons volunteer firefighters push the thankfully empty vehicle into the station, the start of a new tradition to welcome the equipment home.



COMMENTATOR/COURIER PHOTOS BY ANNA SMITH

Seven Persons fire welcomes wildland truck with new tradition

**By Anna Smith
Commentator/Courier**

Volunteers past and present, as well as the residents, gathered at the Seven Persons Fire Station to celebrate the newest, shiniest member of the team.

The new Wildland fire truck was officially welcomed on Aug. 3 with cake, coffee, and a brand new tradition for Cypress County, a "push-in" ceremony that harkens back to old, horse-drawn fire equipment.

"In the volunteer fire service, we're very proud to call ourselves professional firefighters. In fact, there's no difference in our train-

ing or abilities. When compared to a career department," said Seven Persons Fire Chief Justin Derzaph.

"Although we are an ever-changing world with policies and technology advancing every day, the fire service is still based on tradition," said Durzaph. "Today we are starting a new tradition like counting the time-honoured event and proudly welcoming a new apparatus to our fire stations."

The truck was given a traditional wet-down by both the department and participating attendees, as a promise to take care of the new equipment they had been given, followed by a blessing by Pastor Maury McNeil of the Sev-

en Person's Community Church.

In addition to the reading of the Firefighter's Prayer, McNeil spoke about the importance of firefighting within communities and beyond, and the difference they can make to those in need of their help.

"It's a real personal honour for me to be asked to do this for a few specific reasons. I've been a burn victim myself and ended up in a hospital for a month at Saskatoon in the burn unit, so I understand what firefighters can get themselves into," said McNeil, as he shared a story from his youth regarding a controlled burn turned grass fire that got away from him in his youth.

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NEW TRUCK SHEEN: (Top) A closer look at the new Wildland seven firetruck. The truck will find its new home at the Seven Persons station. **THE WHOLE FIRE-FIGHTING FAMILY:** (Above) The Seven Persons volunteer firefighting department poses for a picture outside of their station alongside their brand new truck at their push-in ceremony and celebration.

People's Choice for Children in Visual Arts to Alec Hargrave

**By Samantha Johnson
Commentator/Courier**

Eight-year-old Alec Hargrave took home the People's Choice Award for the Children's Visual Arts show. It wasn't the first ribbon the entry took home, getting second place in the Grade 1-3 category, where the judges' comments were, "You gave the cow personality!"

Although excited about his win, Hargrave was a little shy at first when it came to being interviewed.

"I made it one day when we were doing art," explained Hargrave about making his picture, "but there was no art project, so my helper teacher, Mrs. Grimm, she drew a cow, and we followed the steps and coloured it with oil pastels. I put the brand and tag on it."

Alec helps with the brandings at home and has done various jobs, such as castration and vaccination.



AWARD: Alec Hargrave won the People's Choice award in the Medicine Hat Stampede Children's Visual Arts competition.

"I also did the tip-table brandings. The calf goes on the tip-table, you tip it over, they open a special thing and put a tiny brand on. It's electric, not the one where you heat it up by fire."

He likes the ranching life and rides horses.

"For my little sisters, we made a step where they just step up instead of putting their foot in the stirrup, but I can do it," said Hargrave.

This past week was a busy one for Hargrave, other than coming into Medicine Hat to attend the award ceremony on Monday night and back again on Saturday to collect the People's Choice award, he was helping the hired man do the baling at home.

"I know how to swath, bale and rake right now," stated Hargrave. "When you swath, you cut it down into a row. The rake takes two rows and puts it into one big one. Then you take the baler, and it picks up the hay. When it beeps, you stop, let it wrap, it will beep again, and you open the gate, and the bale is made. They are heavy because so much hay is packed into it."

Despite his wins, Hargrave's favourite subject at Irvine School is gym rather than art. Getting the cheque at the awards ceremony was good, but he liked it even more that his art was chosen for the People's Choice Award.

Foremost graduate thrilled to be racing on to college rodeo

**By Anna Smith
Commentator/Courier**

Foremost's own Brynne Ellert and her horse, Dolly, are chomping at the bit to take their skills out of high school rodeo and to the next level, having been accepted into the Olds College Broncos Rodeo Team.

Ellert started her rodeo journey in Grade 10 when she first entered high school rodeo.

"I was just on a little horse that I started on and kind of worked out from there. I've ridden, I think, four horses throughout my high school career. And now I'm on my little mare that I got last winter for college because I wanted to train on myself," said Ellert.

The mare, Dolly, has been both a delight and a unique challenge to train, said Ellert, with a strong spirit and a lack of prior training, something that all of her previous horses had already been given.

"It's been a challenge. The first time I got on her and I was riding her through the field, she flat out bucked me off and left me stranded in the middle of the field during the winter and ran home. In her first rodeo, she smashed her head open on the trailer and was bleeding out of her forehead," said Ellert. "She bucked a lot. She's flipped over backwards before, it's very intense."

Still, through the frustration, Ellert relishes the challenge that comes with training her own horse.

"Now that we got to know each other, she's actually a sweetheart, but she does still have an attitude," said Ellert.

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