



# The Citizen

## Your Community Newsletter



### National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

September 30th is the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation. This day honors the children who were forced to attend residential schools, the survivors, and their families and communities. It was established in 2021 as a direct response to the **Truth & Reconciliation’s Call to Action # 80** which urged for a day to commemorate the history of residential schools. This day aligns with **Orange Shirt Day**, a grassroots movement led by Indigenous communities to raise awareness of residential schools and their ongoing impact on the lives of Indigenous people. The orange shirt symbolizes the loss of culture and freedom that was experienced by Indigenous children and based on the **Phyllis Jack Webstad** story who wore an orange shirt, a gift from her grandmother, on her first day at the St. Joseph Mission Residential School. The shirt was taken from her, symbolizing the loss of her identity and autonomy. Orange Shirt Day aligns with **“Every Child Matters”** as it serves as a reminder that every child matters and deserves to have their culture, freedom, and dignity recognized and respected, despite, in the case of Indigenous children, the systematic removal and abuse they suffered in Canada’s residential schools.



# National Day for Truth and Reconciliation - Cont'd

This year the events were held mostly at the Thompson Regional Community Centre. We sat down to discuss where things are at with the Calls to Action with **Naomi Clarke**, Path Forward Project Manager for MKO and **Rose Hart**,



Indian Residential School Program for Keewatin Tribal Council. We all agreed that this was probably the largest crowd we have seen yet for National Day for Truth & Reconciliation, but the question posed to Naomi and Rose were, 10 years later, how are we doing with addressing the **94 Calls to Action**. *“Only 13 Calls to Action has been acted on,”* said Naomi. When asked why more has not been done, she replied that, *“for me I think there must be more education on survivors as the younger generation is taking over because*



*we are still doing searches for missing children. When I hear people say, “get over it”, you can’t get over something that you have experienced like that, especially the families who have never had closure by being able to bury their children.”* When it comes to inter-generational trauma comes the real-



ity that many Indigenous people that we know would have either been a resident of a residential school, be a child of a person that went to a residential school or be the grandchild or have a family member that went to a residential school. Naomi and Rose adds, *“More action needs to happen, more education needs to happen and it has to be everyday of the year, not just on September 30th when you pull out your orange shirt and say you believe in reconciliation.”*

Discussions also occurred on the negative stereotypes that are out there when it comes to Indigenous people, *“we need to highlight the positive and look at our role models, today we have a Senator, speaking her truth, who is a survivor, we have Minister Rebecca Chartrand, who is a inter-general survivor, speaking their truth. We have lawyers and doctors, we have a lot of success stories in our communities and we need to showcase that. It is only through the strength and resilience of our people that we able to do that.”*



Naomi comments, *“if you look around at the faces today you see so many Indigenous people here, there are few people of other nationalities. We need to welcome others into the celebrations and the healing that we are doing. They need to be part of it. Bringing other community members in to stand with us is really important.”*

The **94 Calls to Action** are actionable policy recommendations from **Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission**, released in 2015, to address the legacy of residential schools and advance Canadian reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. The key goals are to **i) acknowledge the past, ii) advance reconciliation, iii) support Indigenous children, iv) protect Indigenous languages and cultures, v) improve education and vi) address systemic issues.**





# Alice Receives Key to the City of Thompson

At the City of Thompson’s Regular Council Meeting on Monday September 22nd, Alice Lavoie was presented with the **Key to the City of Thompson** in “*recognition of your decades of dedication as a resident, business owner and steadfast supporter of our community.*” Alice is most well known as the owner and operator of **Popeye’s** for the last 54 years, the beloved seasonal business across the Miles Hart bridge that serves up the famous Popeye, Olive,



Wimpy and Sweet Pea burgers along with their popular fries and the Brutus smokies. Alice has been operating Popeye’s since her and her husband, **Jean Claude**, bought it from the previous owner in 1971, up until she recently sold it in 2024.

Alice was born in Cache Bay, Ontario, about 100 km east of Sudbury. At the age of 24, she moved to Thompson on November 22, 1968. “*My husband told me at the time that for me to try it out for 3 months, if I don’t like it, he was going to fly me back,*” Alice remembered with a smile. “*We were married for about 2 years when Jean Claude got a job in Thompson in one of the camps, working for Malcolm Construction. Our son, Jacques, was 2 months old at the time when I moved to Thomson. Our daughter, Angele, was only 6 weeks old when we decided to buy Popeye’s in 1971. At that time it was operated out of a greyhound bus.*”

Aside from its famous burgers and fries, Popeye’s and Alice is well known for providing employment to the young people during the summer months. Most of her summer employees were young females but she did also hire, what she fondly refers to as her “*potato boys*”. “*We sold a lot of fries, there was always a need to have potatoes peeled, sliced and ready for frying,*” explains Alice. Alice estimates that she easily had over 500 youth employed with her over the years. Working with young people was not only during the summer months when Popeye’s was open. Alice also had a very active winter schedule. “*For 17 years I managed the operations at the ski hill. After that I worked for McDonald Youth Services (MYS) for another 17 years. I went to MYS three youth homes, two were for boys and one was for girls, ages 12 to 16. I helped to take care of the young people staying at those homes,*” Alice explains. She was also a foster parent for 4 years.

At 81 years of age, Alice still has lots of energy. Now with both her business and employment careers behind her, the question asked of her was what she plans to do with her free time. “*I would like to travel more, see more of the world. When I use to own Popeye’s I would see and talk to people from all over the world. Many of them came by as a stop off before they went to the airport or the train station, on their way to Churchill.*” Alice thank all of her customers over the years for their support. “*I would to also thank Kim Sauve who worked for me for 40 years and Merle Weenusk who worked for me for 25,*” said Alice.

After a 53 year career owing and operating a business and being employed, Alice is now starting a new chapter in her life. Getting the Key to the City of Thompson is a well deserved honour. Thank you to Alice for all she had contributed to the City and working with your young people over the years.

**Community Concerns Hotline**

**Your Voice Matters!**

At Vale’s Manitoba Operations, we are committed to being a responsible neighbor and maintaining open communication with the communities where we operate. We understand that our activities may sometimes have an impact, and we want to hear from you.

If you have any concerns related to noise, traffic, environmental effects, or any other issues stemming from our operations, please don’t hesitate to reach out.

**Call our Community Concerns Line: 204-778-2216**  
**Or Email: Vale.MB.Public@vale.com**

Your feedback helps us improve and ensures we continue to operate in a way that respects and supports our community. All reports are confidential and will be addressed promptly.

**Together, we can make a difference.**

## Public Notice

### Seeking Input from Communities of Interest

**Vale Base Metals – Community Engagement Initiative**

Vale’s Manitoba Operations is committed to responsible and sustainable mining practices. As part of our ongoing efforts to build respectful and transparent relationships, we are identifying Communities of Interest who may be affected by or have a genuine interest in our operations in Thompson, Manitoba.

We invite individuals, organizations, and communities—including Indigenous communities and organizations—to self-identify as Communities of Interest. Your voice matters in shaping how we operate and engage with the community.

**You may be a COI if you:**

- Live near or use the land around our facility or operations
- Represent an Indigenous community or organization
- Have environmental, cultural, or economic interests in the area
- Are part of a local, regional, or national organization with a stake in mining activities

**How to Participate**

To self-identify or learn more, please contact Ray Solski:

**Phone:** 204-778-2033  
**Email:** Ray.Solski@vale.com

All information shared will be treated with respect and confidentiality, as requested.

Let’s work together to ensure our operations reflect the values and concerns of the communities we serve.

Committed to Sustainable Mining and Meaningful Engagement #energytransitionmetals



## Sikh Society of Thompson Celebrates Nagar Kirtan

The Sikh Society of Thompson, a registered charity, established in 1974 has been serving the community of Thompson for the last 51 years. Thompson is home to about 200 Sikhs. The Sikh Temple on Goldeye street, referred to as a Gurdwara, was established in 2018.



“We rented for many years when we had our services but we recognized the need to have our own temple to service our fast-growing Sikh population in Thompson,” says Kalwant Singh, one of the directors of the Sikh Society.

“Our temple welcomes all. Every Sunday we have ser-

vices starting at 11:00 am followed by a community meal,” adds Kalwant. Due to the increasing amount of people that are partaking in their community meals on Sundays, the Sikh Society is currently planning an expansion to their kitchen to allow for increased space to cook and for individuals to sit down and enjoy their meal and to allow for greater socialization.



The Sikh religion is the youngest of the world’s major religions and was established around 550 years ago.

On September 14, the Sikh Society celebrated Nagar Kirtan, a cherished religious procession and custom in Sikhism. “This is one of our most cherished events,” explains Kalwant. He adds, “Our main message to everyone is respect yourself, respect others and believe in yourself.” Kalwant encourages his fellow Thompsonites to contact their organization if they have any questions.



## More than mining

Since 1956, Vale’s Thompson Operation has been a cornerstone of Northern Manitoba – driving economic growth, creating thousands of jobs, and contributing billions to Canada’s economy. With over \$750,000 invested locally every year, Vale supports education, reconciliation, and community development through strong indigenous and community partnerships and employee volunteerism.

As global demand for critical minerals rises, Thompson’s Nickel Belt – the fourth largest on Earth – is poised to power clean energy and sustainable development for generations to come.

Vale is more than a business. It’s a partner, a neighbour, and a driver of opportunity – for our local communities, for Manitoba, and for the world.



We’re changing the future.  
Be a part of our journey.

#energytransitionmetals



### Automotive Technician

At Twin Motors Auto Group, one of Manitoba's largest employers, we offer unique opportunities for employees to shape their ideal career path. Join us and work in a professional, collaborative setting with a team committed to delivering the best customer experience.

#### Major responsibilities:

- Perform vehicle maintenance specified on the repair order with efficiency and in accordance with dealership
- Diagnose/root cause/repair technical and mechanical vehicle issues
- Determine if additional safety or service work is required through vehicle inspections
- Test drive vehicles, and test components to validate and confirm customer complaints and successful vehicle repair.
- Diagnose, maintain, and repair vehicle systems, using diagnostic tools and special service equipment
- Communicate directly with the Service Manager/Advisor so that customers can be informed if any additional service is needed
- Provide estimates of time needed for additional repairs
- Execute repairs under warranty to manufacturer specifications

#### Qualifications & Skills:

- Valid Driver's License
- Must have at least 5+ years of dealership experience
- Valid Automotive Service Technician Certification of Qualification Level 3 or equivalent
- Red Seal Certification is an asset
- Technicians of all levels are welcome to apply
- Experience working in an automotive repair environment is preferred
- Strong aptitude in all aspects of automotive repair and maintenance
- Effective diagnostic aptitude, with strong time management skills
- Detailed customer-centric approach and a team player
- Strong communication skills
- Fast, eager learner and team player

#### Why work for the Twin Motors Auto Group

- Competitive Compensation Package (\$30.25 - \$40.00)
- Group Health Benefits
- Training & Development Support
- EAP Online Health
- Vehicle Purchase & Service Incentives
- Opportunities for Career Advancement
- Employee events
- Employee recognition & rewards
- Fun & Supportive Culture





# Mall of the Arts Reopening

The Mall of the Arts (MOTA) recently celebrated their grand re-opening in August at the City Centre Mall, located across from the Corner Deli. If you are looking to purchase art from local and regional artist, the MOTA is the place to go to. “We have art from close to 50 local and regional artists at our store,” explains Andria Stephens of MOTA. The Mall of the Arts is a registered charity started up in 2019 by local Thompsonites, **Andrea Stephens and Don Glenn**, who everyone calls “Shorty”. Andrea and Don, along with help and support from other artists and volunteers recognized the need for a store that would display, for sale, the work of local artists and artisans. This gap has been apparent since the closing of Precambrian Art Centre in 2012. **Marcia Carroll** owned and operated the **Precambrian Art Centre** for close to 18 years which was at that time the place to go to purchase local art. The MOA, like the former Precambrian Art Centre, provides a place for local artists to sell their work , but in addition it also provides workshops and a soon to be open recording studio.

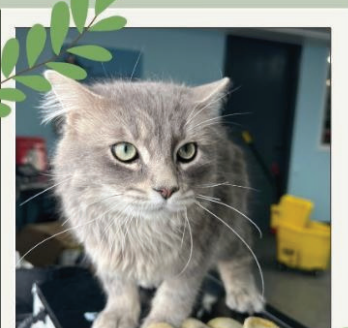
*musical instruments for sale such as guitars,” adds Adrea. The MOTA also puts on workshops for both artists and the public. “We had a Christmas Card making workshop last year as well workshops to assist our fellow artists in getting their artwork to market, or as we call Artripreneurs,” says*



Glenn.

Both Andrea and Glenn are themselves artist and is well experienced in the industry. Andrea is the lead singer for a local band called Northbound Revival who recently performed at the Boreal Discovery’s Fall Festival. Glenn, for many years operated Shorty’s Upcycling Studios that specialized in turning items destined for the local landfill into beautiful works of art. “All of the material we used at the store, such as our shelving and display units are recycled material, donated to us from other stores that were about to be taken to the landfill,” pointed out Glenn. The MOTA is very excited to have the first recording studio starting up in the early part of 2026. The studio is in the back part of the store with renovations currently occurring to allow local inspiring singers to record their songs. The Mall of the Arts is open Monday to Saturday from 10:00 am – 6:00 pm. They can be reached at **(204) 817-6979** or emailed at **admin@mallofthearts.com**.

The MOTA displays work of art from various genres including water and acrylic paintings, photography, fabric art such as quilts, scarfs, and crochet, and beadwork to name just a few. There is also art work in the store created by unique processes such as wood burned art pieces created with the use of hot knives as well as diamond dot art. “We also have



**OLIVER**



**AUTUMN**



**HARLOW**



The Thompson Humane Society is holding it first online 50/50. Please follow the QR code above or go to **https://www.rafflebox.ca/raffle/thompsonhumane** All proceeds go toward feeding, housing and providing care to lost, abandoned and/or abused animals in Thompson.



## 50/50 Raffle



# Boreal Discovery Centre 3rd Annual Fall Festival

The **3rd Annual Fall Festival** was another huge success for the **Boreal Discovery Centre (BDC)**. When asked what stood out this year, **Geoff Greenfield** of the BDC commented, *“the festival really grew this year. We had double the amount of participants to over 1,000, triple the amount of vendor booths from 6 to 18, and close to twice the amount of vegetable hampers given out this year, 500 from 260 in the*



*previous year.”*

Fall Festival has established itself to be one of the major events for Thompson. The Thompson Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (TNRC) is a proud sponsor of the Fall Festival as it brings low-cost recreational opportunities to local families. This year’s entertainment included the **Red Cree Drummers, Harsh Patel, Indigenous Entertainer Mike**



**Forbister, Northbound Revival, and Hoop Dancers Bella Moose and Bella Power,** that allowed for the BDC to have entertainment throughout the day.

There was also free refreshments for attendees that included moose stew and hot chocolate as well as free face painting for the children by **Mansi Patel of Goldenbird Studios** that was sponsored by the City of Thompson. *“Aside from the 2 Green Team spon-*

*sored employees, we had also 16 students from UCN’s **Food from the Land Program** that help to harvest and package the vegetables for the hampers,”* commented Geoff. A new addition this year was a car show that saw 11 antique cars on display by their proud owners.



Another new addition was traditional medicine harvesting teachings throughout the day done by **Elder Carol Sanoffsky**. Geoff wanted to specifically acknowledge and thank the BDC Facility Coordinator, **Matt Courvoisier**, who worked closely with the UCN students and the Green Team staff, teaching them harvesting techniques and ensuring the success of the event. *“I believe the Fall Festival has become a real cornerstone event for Thompson. It allows for individuals to also learn about food security, its challenges and benefits,”* commented Geoff. The TNRC would like to congratulate the Boreal Discovery Centre for all the work in putting on such an important event. Looking forward to next year’s Fall Festival.

## Royal Canadian Legion Branch # 244 Honours Years of Voluntarism by Bob Ellis with a Lifetime Membership Award



# TOWN HALL MEETING ON PUBLIC SAFETY

## TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28 6 P.M. TO 8 P.M.

### MA-MOW-WE-TAK FRIENDSHIP CENTRE



# Navratri Festival Celebrated in Thompson

Members of Thompson’s **East Indian community** recently celebrated **Navratri**, a Hindu festival. The name comes from the Sanskrit words "nava" (nine) and "ratri" (nights). The festival involves worshipping, fasting, and celebrating with traditional dances, music, and community gatherings, represent-



ing the triumph of good over evil. Navratri is a pan-Indian festival but is particularly famous in the **Gujarat area** in the western coast of India. Many Thompsonites of East Indian heritages are from this area.

The celebrations were at the Thompson Regional Community Center’s Bill Comasky Fitness area from September 26th to 28th. **All were welcome.** Attendees included children, youth, adults and elders, making it a truly family event. Attendees were greeted with traditional music with many attendees dressed in the latest in East Indian fashion. Congrat-



ulations to **Parth Patel** and the many other organizers of this well attended event. It is celebrations like this that highlight the growing multiculturalism of Thompson.

## Take Back the Night March Organized by the Thompson Crises Centre on Thursday September 25th



## Thompson Music Parents Association Annual General Meeting on Wednesday September 24th



## Thompson Seniors Community Resource Council Holds Elections at Annual General Meeting on Monday September 29





## Annual General Meetings in September (Cont'd)

### TNRC AGM - Volunteerism keeps communities like Thompson thriving, despite national decline

**Steven Sukkau** of the *Winnipeg Sun* wrote an article on the Thompson Neighbourhood Renewal Corp's recent AGM, the following is his article printed on Friday October 3rd in the *Winnipeg Sun*:

At first glance, the **Thompson Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation's (TNRC)** annual meeting looked like any other nonprofit gathering: reports read, financials shared, future plans discussed. But behind the numbers—\$47,000 in grants, 345 volunteers mobilized, more than 9,000 individuals served—lies a story about something far larger than one northern town. It's about the spirit of volunteerism, a force that holds not just Thompson, but communities across Manitoba and Canada, together.

**Executive Director Oswald Sawh** doesn't mince words: without volunteers, many of the programs and services residents rely on would simply not exist.

*"Volunteerism is the backbone of any healthy community," Sawh said after the AGM. "If you want a community that has arts, recreation, cultural festivals, youth programs, most of the time, those are driven by the nonprofit and volunteer sector."*

Over the past year, that spirit translated into action. Grants approved by the TNRC supported everything from homelessness symposiums to cultural festivals, while renovations on family homes on Juniper Drive created tangible improvements in local housing. Volunteers also powered the return of a local newspaper after the Thompson Citizen closed in 2024, ensuring the stories of the North still have a platform. Yet Sawh acknowledges a troubling reality: while volunteers are still stepping up, fewer people are offering their time simply for the good of the community.

*"If you look across the country, volunteerism in general has been on a decline,"* he said. *"You'll still see people pitch in when it directly aligns with their own needs, like parents volunteering for their kids' hockey team, but the broader sense of volunteering just to strengthen community? That's eroding."* This mirrors national trends. Statistics Canada reports a steady decline in volunteer hours across the country, citing busier schedules, burnout, and a growing reliance on professionals to provide services once run by community groups.

Between 2018 and 2023, total volunteer hours dropped from 5.0 billion to 4.1 billion, an 18 percent decline. Over the same period, the overall volunteer rate fell from 79 percent to 73 percent, while formal volunteering through organizations saw an even sharper decline, dropping from 41 percent of Canadians in 2018 to just 32 percent in 2023.

The loss isn't just measured in hours. It's felt in cancelled programs, shuttered charities, and a fraying sense of belonging. Still, Sawh isn't discouraged. He believes hope lies in stories like his own. A longtime provincial civil servant, he retired in 2021 and could have stepped back. Instead, he leaned in, accepting the leadership role at TNRC because he believed so strongly in its mission.

*"I've always supported nonprofits and charities. I even received the Prime Minister's Award for volunteerism years ago,"* he said. *"When I was asked to come on board, I didn't hesitate. It's about ensuring our community still has these opportunities."*

And he believes others can be inspired to do the same. *"If you want to live in a vibrant community, one with services and opportunities, you need to be part of making that happen,"* he said. *"There are always organizations needing help. When you volunteer, you don't just give, you get something back."*

The lesson extends far beyond this northern hub. In small towns and big cities alike, volunteers are the hidden scaffolding. They coach teams, run festivals, support seniors, fundraise for hospitals, and keep food banks stocked. Their work often goes unseen, but when it disappears, entire communities feel the loss.

For Thompson, the numbers tell one story: thousands helped, hundreds of volunteers, hundreds of thousands in leveraged funding. But the larger truth is that those numbers point to a fragile but still vital culture of giving.

As Sawh puts it, the future of communities depends on whether people recognize that truth and act on it. *"If you want more culture, more recreation, more support, the only way is for more people to step up. That spirit of volunteerism is still here. We just need to fan the flame."*

— **Steven Sukkau is a Local Journalism Initiative reporter who works out of the Winnipeg Sun. The Local Journalism Initiative is funded by the Government of Canada.**

