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Rollovers and collision see two fatalities

Bus accident near Wolseley shuts down Highway 1

By Chris Ashfield
Grasslands News

Icy roads are being blamed for a single vehicle rollover south of Whitewood earlier this week that sent one person to hospital for examination.

At approximately 6:55 a.m. on Nov. 7, Whitewood Fire Department (WFD) was dispatched seven miles south of town on Highway #9 for a single vehicle rollover with entrapment.

Firefighters arrived on scene to find a half ton truck had rolled and came to rest on the passenger's side. The driver and lone occupant of a vehicle was able to free himself from his seatbelt but was unable to get out of the truck. As a result, firefighters had to remove the front windshield and use a battery powered ram to create an opening in the front to allow the driver to be removed. He was then checked by EMS and transported to hospital for further examination.

Traffic on Highway #9 was reduced to a single lane for approximately one hour while emergency personal were on scene.

There was also an accident earlier this week that shut down Highway 1 from Wolseley to the Manitoba border.

On Nov. 8 just after 7 a.m., Indian Head RCMP received a report of a rolled coach bus on Highway #1 east of Wolseley, SK. Thirteen people had to be freed from the bus through emergency exits and by breaking windows.

RCMP reported that several occupants were being treated at the hospital for injuries but as of press time they did not have further information on the number of injured or the extent of their injuries at this time.

The past week also saw two fatal accidents in southeast Saskatchewan.

On Nov. 3 around 12:45 p.m. Weyburn RCMP officers responded to a report of a two-vehicle collision at the intersection of Highway #33 and a grid road at Fillmore, SK. A car and semi collided in the roadway. The 21-year-old male driver of the car, from Regina, was pronounced dead at the scene. The adult male passenger was transported to hospital with serious injuries. The adult male driver of the semi was not injured.

Also, on Nov. 3 at around 10:30 p.m. Estevan and Carnduff RCMP responded to a single vehicle rollover involving a car approximately 1.6 kilometers south of Benson, SK on Highway #47. The 27-year-old male driver was transported to hospital in serious condition, where he later died.



CHRIS ASHFIELD | GRASSLANDS NEWS

No series injuries

A man escaped serious injuries when the truck he was driving rolled on Highway 9 south of Whitewood. Two other separate collisions and rollovers in southeast Saskatchewan last week resulted in the death of two people, both of which were in their twenties.

Cowessess picture project preserving history

By Sarah Pacio
Grasslands News

Pictures preserve a moment in time. Cowessess First Nation is striving to ensure that moments captured in the community's past are not lost, by creating a digitized photo library.

When the first National Day for Truth & Reconciliation gathering was held at the former site of the Marieval Residential School in 2021, Cowessess First Nation members had an opportunity to view photos of students who had attended the school. The enlarged pictures were arranged to create a visual timeline documenting the school's history and this evoked deep emotions from those attending the gathering.

The photos were just a sample of what Eleanor Agecoutay had collected for a previous project while she was teaching at the Cowessess Community Education Centre that had replaced the former residential school. In 2005, the vice-principal asked Agecoutay to compile a PowerPoint presentation of historical photos to share with students. She tracked down pictures that were stored at the band office and worked with community members to identify individuals in the snapshots.

"I was fortunate that there were people around that knew some faces, so I put masking tape under the pictures and people went to town writing names down, then I would come home and record them," the retired teacher explained to Grasslands News. "I also went and visited with some elders in the community – with the scanner and the laptop – and they were happy helping me with names and giving me some of their pictures.

The resulting collection provided the foundation for a larger project since Cowessess' leadership and members recognized that the photographical record should be preserved. After the Truth & Reconciliation Day gathering in 2021, Annette Frazer, Communications Specialist for Cowessess at that time, applied for a grant from the Listen, Hear Our Voices program at Library and Archives Canada. This program provides funding for Indigenous groups to digitize photographs, written documents, and sound or video recordings that relate to their heritage or culture.

The project proposed by Cowessess included digitizing photos and documents from the early days of Marieval Residential School, which opened in 1889, through to its closure in 1997. Family photos of Cowessess community members would also be included. Funding was approved, so Frazer invited Agecoutay to work with her on the project. Tonii Lerat, then Executive Director for Cowessess, provided valuable assistance with administrative aspects.

- SEE COWESSESS PICTURE, 17



Grenfell council discusses GRPA concerns

By Sarah Pacio
Grasslands News

Grenfell town council held a regular meeting on November 1 at 7:00 p.m.

Councillor Murray Richter, who was absent from the previous council meeting, inquired about the town's role in The Leaf Boutique owners' proposal to develop a Leafy Greens Trading Post. Mayor Rod Wolfe explained that council addressed the proposal at its October 18 meeting and made a motion to discuss the project further with The Leaf Boutique owners. Town council has not committed any funding to the proposed project.

In July, council approved recommendations from PS Engineering for installing a stainless-steel kitchen canopy ventilator system, along with a fire suppression system, at the Curling Rink. Progress on the renovation has stalled and further construction would be inconvenient for facility patrons since curling season will commence soon. Council discussed the situation and agreed that steps should be taken to ensure that basic equipment is provided so that the kitchen is operational for the Curling Club.

Councillors relayed concerns from residents regarding delayed installation of a boiler system at the Grenfell Recreational Park Arena. Administration explained some of the challenges encountered for obtaining and installing the equipment. The group echoed community members' hope that the new boiler would be operational very soon, so that there would be no further negative impacts on the hockey season.

Councillor Dwayne Stone reported on a Southeast Transportation Planning Committee meeting that he attended on Oct. 27. He said there are plans to resurface approximately 32 km of Highway #1, east of Grenfell, next year. Councillor Stone raised concerns about the condition of Highway #47, south of Highway #1, at the committee meeting. He noted the potholes were such a problem that the fire department could only proceed at 30 km/hour on route to a fire call. Councillor Richter asked whether the committee has discussed adding acceleration lanes on Highway #1 near Grenfell. Councillor Stone and Mayor Wolfe replied that the issue has been raised but they were told it would not be considered until a later time.





PHOTO SOURCE: LISTEN HEAR OUR VOICES VIRTUAL DOCUMENT LIBRARY

Preserving the past

Cowessess First Nation is preserving photos from the Marieval Residential School through a digital library project. The archives that have been developed also include community events from past decades.

Cowessess picture project preserving history

- continued from front page

The grant from Library and Archives Canada stipulated that the project should be completed within one year, so the Cowessess team worked diligently to compile a database. Each photo was scanned, assigned a number, and the picture's source was noted. If available, the date and subject of the photo were also recorded. Agecoutay appreciates the community members' assistance in properly documenting the photos.

"I'm very thankful for my husband's family and other people I know in the community because they lived those pictures," she said. "It's like getting all the pieces to a big puzzle to form Cowessess' history."

In addition to Agecoutay's collection, other community members willingly shared photos and documents to be scanned. The team also accessed relevant resources like the St. Boniface Ar-chives. More than 2,000 photos and documents were compiled to provide a glimpse into the last century. Some photos show groups of school children with nuns and priests outside Marieval School or the church. Other pictures show the interior of the church, or layout of the school grounds. There are also pictures of weddings, hockey teams, powwow activities, and ice fishing.

"Several past chiefs' pictures have showed up; I'd only seen them in their senior years, seeing their pictures when they were younger and their families, that's pretty cool," Agecoutay said. "There's pictures of families from long ago, the long-ago matriarchs and patriarchs of families three generations back. You can see the family links there; that's amazing."

The database also includes documentation of Cowessess members like Theresa Stevenson who developed a Chili for Children program, and Mary Ann Lavallee who advocated for Indigenous farming rights.

The project team partnered with StratLab Marketing to create an online platform where community members could access the digitized photos. The website was launched in October and can be viewed at https://library.cowessessfn.com/

The response to the project has been positive, with many people expressing their appreciation for the improved access to their history.

Agecoutay noted that individuals in some of the photos have not yet been identified and she welcomes corrections or additional information from the community. She also said that there are still more photos available that did not meet the 12-month deadline and is hopeful that another grant might be obtained to enable further expansion of the digital collection.

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