

# Heritage Conservation/ Culture & Arts/ Volunteerism

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## Attachments:

- Skating map

# Heritage Conservation / Culture and Arts / Volunteerism

## Natural Heritage

### 1. Bird house project

NEW

The Heartland Beautification Committee partnered with local high school students and with the Buffalo Lake Nature Club to install 12 bird houses in the school area.

The students researched what type of bird houses would be best suited for local birds and built the boxes.

Heartland Beautification found suitable locations in the area of the school as well as in Memorial Park, and the Day Care play area.

On our "installation day", members of the Buffalo Lake Nature Club provided information on good bird house locations and helped the students install them.

Heartland Beautification Committee  
Wm. E. Hay Students  
Buffalo Lake Nature Club







### 2. Cold Lake Migratory Bird Sanctuary

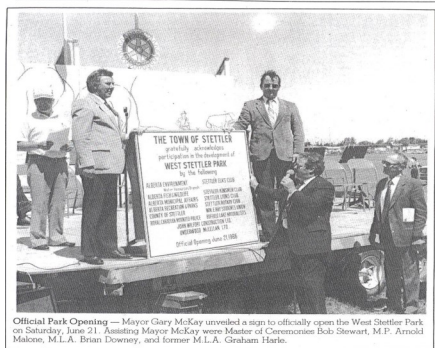
Also known as "Buttermilk Slough", this body of water is home to many species of migratory birds. Walking paths surround portions of the "lake", allowing visitors and bird watchers to get closer to the birds. The walking paths are gradually being improved and expanded, and the bird nest platforms replaced. Local businesses have added seasonal "Goose Crossing" signs, to alert motorists.



### 3. West Stettler Park

West Stettler Park was created to reduce/eliminate regular flooding of Red Willow Creek. The 80 acre park officially opened in 1986 with a total cost of \$1.5 million dollars. Contributions from many community groups is what made West Stettler Park what it is today.

<b>BLACK TERN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- robin size</li> <li>- black and gray</li> <li>- catches insects on the wing</li> </ul>	 
<p>The black tern is a small, gull-like bird with a black bill and head. It is usually seen in flight, patrolling above a shallow slough in long, sweeping passes. It nests in colonies where its kip-kep cry rallies fellow terns to rise in defence of their nests when you approach.</p>		
<p>A tern's nest is usually a floating mat of plant material or the top of an abandoned muskrat house. The nest is often hidden in a dense bed of cattails.</p>		
<p>Unlike other terns, the black tern catches insects, not fish, by swooping agilely after the mayflies and dragonflies flying over the water. Flocks of black terns often follow plows to pluck unearthed insects.</p>		
		



The park posed problems with growing due to clay, alkaline and solonetzic. The Town worked with the Buffalo Lake Naturalists to overcome soil problems by naturalizing the park. Native species were encouraged to grow and wildlife returned to the park. The Buffalo Lake Naturalists provided signs around the pathway to highlight the native species.



The pathway was installed by the Elks and in 1990 it was paved. In 1999, it was dedicated Okoppe Trail as a twinning exchange involving Stettler and Okoppe in Hokkaido, Japan.

The pond was stocked with Northern Pike and they have thrived in their new home. It has become a popular place for local fisherman.

The park is host to several summer events including Canada Day celebrations, and Music in the Park.



## 4. Buffalo Lake Nature Club

The Buffalo Lake Nature Club was officially founded on February 18, 1973. Their commitment is to increase the knowledge and appreciation of natural history and its native flora & fauna of Alberta, as well as encourage the conservation of native habitat.

The club puts on several events such as Christmas bird counts, and nature walks. Information sessions are also put on occasionally at meetings.

“Buffalo Lake Nature Club encourages people of all ages to share in the discovery and the love of this planet. Every living thing matters; from the tiniest mite to the largest of trees.” [www.buffalolakenature.com](http://www.buffalolakenature.com)

## 5. Pheasant Festival

### Stettler Pheasant Festival a ‘unique opportunity’

This year’s Festival is slated to run Oct. 18th, 19th and 20th

Sep. 6, 2019 2:00 p.m. / [COMMUNITY](#) / [LOCAL NEWS](#) / [NEWS](#)



By Jessica Jones

For the Stettler Independent

The sixth annual Stettler Pheasant Festival on Oct. 18th, 19th and 20th is more than just a bird hunt.

The large, three-day celebration of pheasant conservation, hunting, and “field to fork” culinary education brings a unique opportunity to the local area, said Donna Morris of the Stettler Regional Board of Trade and Community Development.

The Stettler Pheasant Festival began in 2013 with the partnership between the Stettler Regional Board of Trade and Community Development, the Canadian Badlands Tourism and several dedicated volunteers.

Throughout the years it has grown to offer three days of privatized half or full day hunting on private lands inside Stettler County, with the opportunity to learn alongside educators from the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors’ Association, as well as chefs who teach registrants how to prepare and cook pheasant.

Morris said there is even a beginner hunt on Friday, Oct. 18th, free of charge, with the help of Harold Fakuda of Coulee Game Birds. She added that Fakuda will help interested registrants get started, showing them how to shoot, what to look for in the bird, “the whole basics.”

Following the Festival, a release of 300 Chinese Ringneck pheasants, the most popular breed, will be performed to help improve conservation within the County of Stettler, as well as to increase the pheasant population, said Morris.

“Southern Alberta was one of the largest areas for pheasants and so we are also trying to bring the birds back,” she said.

“We track where they are and how many roosters are harvested and how many are still remaining so there are further improvements for conservation,” Morris said, adding that they’ve noted baby chicks being born in the areas that the hens were released.

To date the Festival is responsible for releasing 1,500 of the strikingly colourful birds, which are trucked in from MacFarlane Pheasants, Inc. located in Wisconsin, U.S. The idea is to try and get them, “Around the entire county,” Morris explained.

She recalls a family coming every year, making the Stettler Pheasant Festival a part of their family reunion and tradition.

“It’s more than just a hunt, with a lot to do. Some people have come back since the beginning. It’s more relaxed because you have private land and so you can hunt, enjoy each other’s company, while also enjoying a favourite pastime,” Morris said. She also mentioned that they are very grateful to the landowners who have donated their land for the hunts.

“Without them, we wouldn’t be able to do this.”



## Cultural Heritage

Much of Stettler's heritage conservation is done by many, many volunteers on various groups around the community, whether through societies (e.g. P&H Elevator Conservation Society), the museum (as associated boards) or through community groups. As such, it proceeds slowly, as funds can be accessed.

### 1. Memorial Tree Park

In 2008/2009 a memorial tree park was established adjacent to the Cemetery. Residents can purchase a memorial tree in memory of someone for \$400. Trees are planted in a large communal landscaped bed and a name plaque is placed on the communal granite monument. A second stone has been added and proves to be popular. A gazebo is on the site to offer visitors a sheltered spot for reflection. Trees are being maintained and expansion is being considered as the site fills up.



Memorial Tree Park – trees, plaque & gazebo

### 2. Carl Stettler Park

The monument of the founder of Stettler was located (hidden) in a small grassed park. The HBC re-evaluated the placement of this monument and its prominence in the community. In the summer of 2015, the monument was relocated to become part of the Downtown Park. The main face of the monument faces into the park. A picture of Carl was added to the reverse side (street side) of the monument, along with his name. (see Downtown Park). The original location was transformed by creating a heart shaped bed. (see Floral)



Carl Stettler Park Monument

Former location

### 3. Memorial Park

This park contains a number of our example heritage trees, as well as hosting the cenotaph (historically originally situated in the downtown core). This park was renovated, with all the shale and landscape fabric removed and replaced with bark mulch. Some of the large mugo pines were pruned to repair and prevent further breakage.



#### **4. Pioneer Park**

Has commemorative monuments to remember the settlers of Stettler. The threshing machine in Pioneer Park received a new coat of paint by the Stettler Museum within the last few years. Grain is planted around it and waves in the wind with full heads of grain at harvest. The park also has a central bed with plaques and a bed full of Stettler's official flower, the peony. It is also the first location of the Stettler Community Builders monuments.



#### **5. Lake View Cemetery**

The cemetery is maintained by town staff, with some work provided by community volunteers. In 2011, Parks staff redesigned and rebuilt the central hedge area of the cemetery, to improve the look and to reduce the difficulty of maintenance. In 2012, staff undertook the re-leveling of numerous graves in the cemetery.



## 6. Downtown Park

In Spring 2013, a downtown property was donated to the town by the owner, with instructions that it be used for a pioneer-themed space. Members of the Heritage Conservation committee, along with a few other volunteers, formed a Downtown Park Committee to work on the project. The desire of the committee was to create a space that could be used year-round, but that would celebrate and highlight the history of Stettler. After drafting early concepts, the committee received approval from Town council to remove two parking spaces to deepen the space and sought funding from the town and other sources to build the park. An architect was hired to create drawings for the park. The park concept consisted of a false front wall/mural, featuring historically significant businesses. The businesses include a hardware store, the train station and the Stettler Cigar Factory. The small stage increases the use of the site. The site is lit with overhead lights (designed to minimize light pollution) and features trees and planters, as well as picnic tables. Railway themed sidewalks were installed. The Carl Stettler Monument was added to the site to increase recognition.



*Donated lot*



A picture of Carl Stettler, along with his name, were added to the backside of the monument, as the original face is oriented towards the pedestrian-focused park. Electrical was donated, and the Town put up the cost for the main mural work to be completed. When possible, original signs and historic materials were integrated into the design (sourced from the museum). Several of the windows for Jimmy's Hardware are originals from the original building. A train schedule covers the power box that can be used for concerts. Extra features are being added over time (e.g. LED neon to replicate the distinctive Jimmy's Hardware sign – completed 2018/2019). The 4<sup>th</sup> wall component of the project features a living wall on a lattice, and was installed in 2017.




### ***7. Historic (Downtown) Walking Tour***

The HBC has worked for several years with the Board of Trade and the Museum to update the existing Historic Downtown Walking Tour. This was being done in conjunction with the Stettler Town & County Museum curator prior to her passing. It is hoped that in the near future, the markers will be replaced, likely in cooperation with businesses occupying an historic site.

### ***8. Beautification Champions***

Heartland Beautification Committee recognizes a Beautification Champion (a person or persons who go above and beyond in their beautification efforts, such as cleaning, tidying, public space maintenance, etc.) or promoting beautification as a whole within the community, during the Communities in Bloom Judges dinner. Award recipients are given a certificate.

### ***9. Stettler History Book***

 The Stettler History Book is a volunteer venture undertaken by a group of local people interested in preserving the history of Stettler and the people who made Stettler the community that all know and love. This group has gathered over 1200 files from area residents, with the history including stories from the 1890's to the present. They are estimating that publication will occur in early 2023.

### ***10. Stettler Town and Country Museum***

Stettler Town and Country Museum, the fifth largest in Alberta, details Stettler's rich history. Artifacts have been donated by residents of Stettler and area. The museum has many buildings that are organized to represent historical displays and themes (e.g. authentic classrooms, businesses and shops, homes, etc.), as well as the original courthouse and CN rail station. Antique equipment (farming, road work, trains, etc.) are also featured. The museum has a working speeder (mini-train ride). The museum is run by a combination of staff and volunteers. In 2013, it celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The curator had been present for many years, and an assistant curator (much younger) was hired in 2013 to transition into the position. Unfortunately, Wilda Gibbons passed away in May 2015, but work and activities continue on at the museum. In June 2017, a memorial gazebo was built and dedicated to the memory of Wilda. It is situated on the museum site and has a rose garden around it.

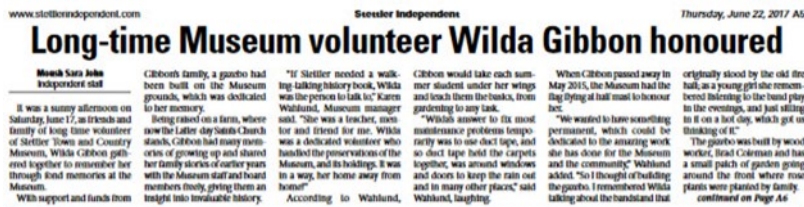


Many volunteers work at the museum regularly or on specific renovation projects (e.g. scraping the Lakeland Church prior to repainting; scraping the CN building front, repainting the trim, etc.)

### CN Rail Station – 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2012

2012 represented the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the construction of the CN rail station. The building was a 2<sup>nd</sup> class station (relating to size), built in 1911 to facilitate traffic between Edmonton and Drumheller. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor was where agents lived. The downstairs is original and hasn't been renovated (changed). The building was originally situated where the Alberta Prairie Rail Excursions sits and was moved to the Museum site in 1978. It is one of 4 stations that remain intact in Alberta.

In 2012, the south exterior was repainted to original CN colours. The roof and all windows were replaced in 2012. There is a painted rock display on the slope, which replicates the original station site.



Over the course of the past several years and continuing forward, staff and volunteers have been cataloguing and conducting a complete inventory of all items in the museum collection. This includes creating an electronic record of every item, as well as digitizing all photographs. Summer staff have been going through each building, taking a digital picture of each article, ensuring there is a catalogue number and all information is entered into a database. The information is being backed up.

### Summer Student Activities

Summer students are involved in maintenance of the grounds and buildings, as well as participating in the collection digitization project. The museum typically has 2 or more summer students per year, depending on the funding program.

### Stettler Town & Country Museum Board & Activities

The board membership is made up of a town representative, a county representative and a town member-at-large, as well as any number of interested resident volunteers (from town or county). The board's role is to oversee museum operations and budget, which is carried out by the museum manager.

The Stettler Town & Country Museum hosted a "Light the Night" event in December 2014, which featured a series of light displays installed by a range of groups, businesses, etc. People drive through the museum to observe them. It now repeats annually, with even greater participation and uptake by the community. Similarly, Night of Terror at the Boo-seum, a haunted house event, is held over the Halloween period.

# Check out the 'Night of Terror at the Booseum'

Popular event runs at the Stettler Town Country Museum Oct. 24th through to the 26th

MARK WEBER / Oct. 3, 2019 1:00 p.m. / COMMUNITY / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS



For an ideal means of stirring up that spooky Halloween spirit, check out 'Night of Terror at the Booseum' Oct. 24th-26th.

Hours are from 7 to 9 on the Thursday evening, and then from 7 to 11 p.m. on the Friday and Saturday evenings. Cost is \$10 per person, said Karen Wahlund, the Museum's manager.

Get ready for a true-blue Halloween experience.

"It's really geared to the adults."

Rooms throughout the creaking, sprawling Old Court House have been decorated by various businesses and organizations. It's recommended that participants be over the age of 13, she said, adding with a laugh that she prefers to check it out in the daytime. The site will be decked out in full-out, ghostly Halloween 'charm'.

## 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dutch Canadian Friendship Tulip Garden

In 2015, HBC applied to receive tulip bulbs to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian assistance with the liberation of Holland and the special circumstances surrounding the Dutch Royal Family. We received 700 bulbs (50:50 White:Red). These were planted by elementary student in special beds at the Stettler Town and Country Museum, next to the windmill on the site. Members of the Legion were present for the planting ceremony. On May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Liberation Day (celebrated in Holland), in Stettler, a bloom ceremony was held, with the same participants present. Additionally, local Dutch residents were present to discuss the events.

The beds are maintained by museum staff and volunteers. Despite best efforts, the tulips did not survive.



Rudolph prepares to guide Santa's...tractor?!?! just one of the many impressive displays at this year's "Light the Night" event. On average, 100 vehicles are going through per night according to organizers. (Photo submitted)

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Even the County of Stettler got in on the action with this display at the 2021 edition of the Town and Country Museum "Light the Night" Event. The last two nights are Dec. 23 and 24. Be sure to check it out. (Photo submitted)

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4 THE WEEKENDER

FRIDAY, MAY 13, 2016

## SES Grade 5 students see their tulips in bloom

MOUSH SARA JOHN  
WEEKENDER REPORTER

Even though the winds picked up here and it was drizzling, SES Grade 5 students made their way to the museum on Thursday, May 5, to see the tulips they had planted last year in bloom.

The tulips were a part of the 70th anniversary celebrations of the Dutch-Canadian Friendship Tulip Garden.

Last Thursday was also the anniversary of Liberation Day in the Netherlands, so quite the appropriate occasion for a tulip blooming ceremony.

"The Town of Stettler was one of more than 400 applicants across Canada to receive 700 tulip bulbs to commemorate the long-standing friendship between the Netherlands and Canada, which began during World War II," explained Grace Fix, vice-chair of Heartland Beautification Committee. "These bulbs were planted last fall at the Museum, in front of the Dutch windmill, and Mrs. Sandra Norman's

Grade 5 students from SES being the official planters, with assistance from local Legion members, local Dutch-Canadian residents, Museum staff, Town Council, and the Heartland Beautification Committee."

During the brief ceremony, Heartland Beautification Committee member Grace Fix and students recounted the history of the enduring friendship between Canada and the Netherlands so that it may live on in the younger generation.

"It is indeed an honour to have this Friendship Tulip Garden in our community, and to be part of this heartwarming national program made possible by the Canadian Garden Council, Vesey's Bulbs and Canada Post, the main sponsors of the Friendship Tulip Gardens," added Fix.

On May 5, 1946, Canadian forces played a major role in the liberation of the Netherlands for which the Dutch people were and continue to be ever so grateful.

As well, during the war,



Moush Sara John/Heartland Reporter

SES Grade 5 students braved strong winds to reach the museum and were delighted to see their tulips in bloom. Also present in the picture are from left to right, town councillor Karen Sernecky, museum manager Karen Wahlund, museum curator Lindsay Dayman (seated in grey), Legion representatives – Greg Ford, Beryl Currie and Susan Mitchell, members of the Dutch-Canadian community of Stettler – Gerard and Corrie Fryters, Heartland Beautification Committee chair Rob Spencer and member Grace Fix.

the Dutch Royal Family born in Ottawa and was sought refuge in Ottawa. Princess Margriet was able to retain her right to the throne as a Dutch citizen because Ottawa temporarily set up a wing of the Ottawa hospital as a Dutch Embassy, therefore, Dutch soil.

As a gift of gratitude, the Dutch sent 100,000 tulip bulbs to Ottawa in 1945. Now, a gift-in-perpetuity, Canada receives 20,000 tulip bulbs every fall. Last fall, for the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands, 100,000 tulip bulbs were distributed amongst 140 communities across Canada.

Bob Halaeth \* 28 yrs. experience \*

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FRIDAY AT 5 P.M.

Stettler

## 11. Parrish & Heimbecker (P&H) Elevator

A popular landmark in town, the Parrish and Heimbecker (P&H) elevator was built in the 1920's. The P&H Elevator Preservation Society is preserving the elevator. The elevator recently opened a popular little coffee shop, and the elevator is still in working order. The society and volunteers have been working to restore the tack room on the back and complete other renovations on the elevator. It is estimated that volunteers have put in close to 40,000+ hours on the elevator. It is likely more, since they are shy. J

In 2013/2014, fundraising was done to re-side/repaint the elevator, which has now been completed. Repairs to the foundations are also complete. With restoration of the tack room, it is hoped that more visitors will tour and use the facility. Additional enhancements are underway at the P&H.



VOLUME 14 NUMBER 21

FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2016

# P&H Elevator keepers aim to record Stettler's past

MOUSH SARA JOHN  
WEEKENDER REPORTER

Along Stettler's skyline is the brick-red grain elevator, a bold parallel to the city's resilience as well as its past.

It would have been lost, of course, but it hasn't because of the foresight of a few Stettler residents who formed the Stettler P&H Elevator Preservation Society and have continued to uphold the town's waning structure.

Now Stan Eichhorn, president of the Stettler P&H Elevator Preservation Society, along with friend Jack Schulze, both Stettler old timers want to take on an even bigger initiative, that of documenting and recording the communities and industries of Stettler prior to the 1900s up until now in a history book of the town.

"We have been thinking of it for about seven years,"

said Eichhorn. "When Jack did the Star-Gain metal sign and it was put up, we sat and pondered and why there has been no history book on Stettler, like the other towns."

Eichhorn said the urgency has increased since then for a number of reasons. "Although we have talked about it on occasion and every now and then, we've never really made a move, but since we have lost a few critical people like Rex Schuchburgh, Wilda Gibbons, Gertie Savage, Everett Bullington, we feel we are losing history of the town and the area," explained Eichhorn. "So we would like to know if there is enough interest, you know when those people passed away a lot of history disappeared and it is sad."

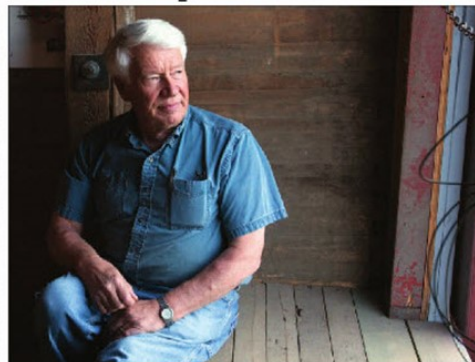
Jack Schulze said "We would like to work on a history book on Stettler and community which would

basically showcase the town's culture and heritage, and development through the years like the evolution of businesses and establishments."

According to Schulze, the endeavour is to get maiden names and married names as part of the index.

"When we tried to trace our family down in the States, it was very difficult to find out our mother's side of the family using her maiden name and that's one of the prime examples why it would be a good idea to have an index of maiden names and family names both," added Schulze. "Newer generations are moving out, settling elsewhere, so it's important that they know their roots and where they came from and this history book would help people remember and give them a basis of the town as it was."

continued on page 2



Jack Schulze at the P&H reminisces about Stettler's past and why it is important to have a history book of the town.

## 12. Stettler Ghost Walk

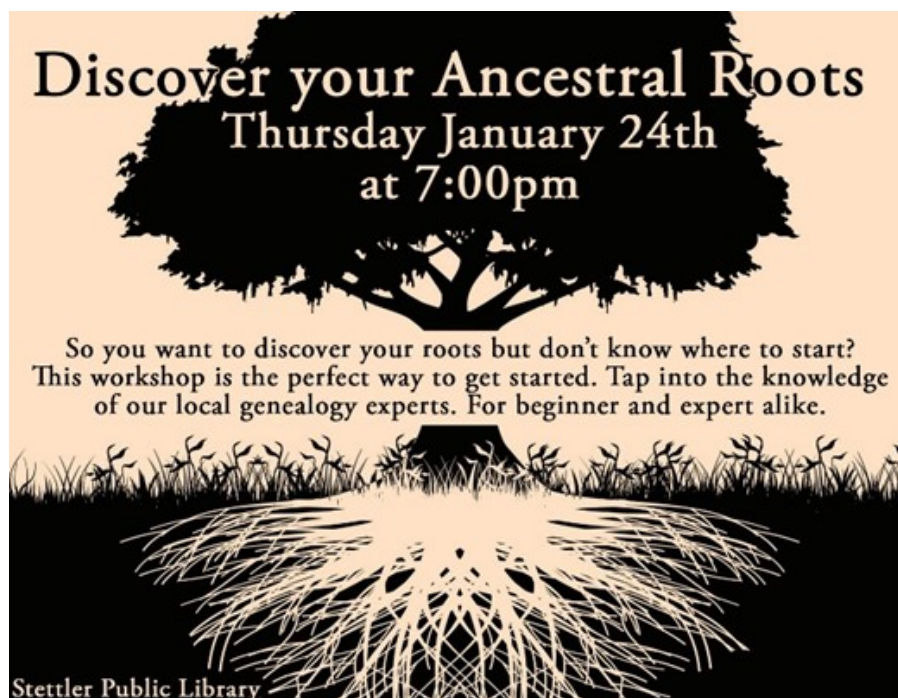
The interest in ghosts and history is combined with a series of Historic Ghost Walks. Initially organized by the Stettler Board of Trade, the walks have recently been taken over by the Friends of the Library group, and have exploded in interest. Walks are consistently sold out and tour guides are adding new elements to the walks each time. It combines the paranormal with historic buildings.



Interest in the Ghost Walks increased following an evening discussion session with the lawyer (Judge MacNaughton) of Robert Raymond Cook, the last man tried and hanged for murder in Alberta. There was a massive turnout for the evening. The evening was filmed and a DVD of the session sold afterwards.

## 13. Stettler Genealogy Club

The Stettler Genealogy Club meets monthly (1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month, except for summer) in Stettler to work on helping each other delve into their family history. Meetings are now held at the library, which provides free access to Ancestry.ca. Meetings are either exchanges and help sessions, or speakers are brought in from the community and beyond.



## 14. Utility Wraps

**NEW** The Heartland Beautification Committee decided to beautify utility pedestals in high traffic locations by wrapping them in historical photos about Stettler. For example, the pedestal by the High School is wrapped with a photo of the first high school in 1910. Near the fire station, the pedestal is wrapped with a photo of Stettler's first fire hall with horse drawn fire wagons in 1907. The project has proven popular and so far, 5 utility pedestals have been covered.



Before



After



## 15. Community Builders

**NEW** The Community Builders project aims to preserve and showcase Stettler's history by sharing the stories of those who were crucial in its development. A locally-designed and locally-crafted monument was made, featuring the "Heart of Alberta" symbol, with a plaque on top. The Community Builders Committee, made up of town councillors, town staff, Board of Trade members and volunteers, invites nominations for 2 recipients each year.

The first two monuments were unveiled in September, 2021, placed along a highly visible walking path that could become "Builders Walk".



## 16. Mural Contest

In late 2012, the HBC and Heritage Conservation sub-committee organized a Mural Art Contest to generate a number of local art selections to choose from to put on the back of three new information signs. The art was to be Stettler-themed and/or historic and could be on any medium. 11 pieces were submitted, from both youth and adult artists from the Stettler area. The top three murals were chosen and the top artists received cash prizes. The art was installed in the summer of 2013 in West Stettler Park, the Cemetery and the Off-leash Dog Park. To date, no vandalism has been observed on any of the murals though they are now fading.



## 17. Alberta Prairie Railway Excursions

During some excursions a “mock robbery” takes place. Various themed rides are planned such as: “Adults only” steak dinners, a “Teddy Bear Picnic,” and a “Family Special.” Every year over 15 000 people ride the train. Alberta Prairie is a very community-minded business, offering free rides at Christmas time to raise funds and food for the Food Bank.

In honour of Canada’s 150th anniversary in 2017, **Rails and Tales 2017** partnered with East Central Alberta Heritage Society and Alberta Prairie Railway to celebrate the history of steam rail transport in Canada. Bringing together two operating Canadian heritage steam locomotives, Rails and Tales 2017 invited heritage

[www.absteamtrain.com](http://www.absteamtrain.com)

## Stettler and surrounding communities celebrate Canada’s 150th with aplomb

Canada Day was celebrated with parades, fun run, wagon rides, gymkhana, live music and fireworks.

MOUSH SARA JOHN / Jul. 4, 2017 9:40 p.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS



In Stettler, as part of “Rails and Tales,” there was a train early in the morning that served passengers a champagne breakfast on its journey to Big Valley. Alberta Prairie in conjunction with East Central Alberta Heritage Society had not spared any bells and whistles to give the community an extraordinary experience. From having two RCAF CF-18 Hornet flyby on Thursday, June 29 to getting a second engine running along the tracks, they had transformed the Village of Big Valley into one of revelry.

and rail aficionados in Alberta, Canada, and around the world to this family-friendly event. Alberta Prairie Railway often hosts major events (National Girl Guides) and does a major **Polar Express** specialty train excursion in December, which includes performances by local music and dance groups.



Santa Claus greets kids on the first run of the Polar Express on Thursday, Dec. 1, Alberta Prairie Railway teamed up with Rhonda's Danceology to create a world of wonder at the North Pole for kids.

### Stettler's Alberta Prairie partners with Danceology on Polar Express

Moush Sara John Independent staff

Around 4 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 1, there was a bustle at Stettler's railway platform as the Alberta Prairie loaded the last of its passengers on its Polar Express thermal train to the North Pole. This year, the Alberta Prairie Railway teamed with local dance practice, Rhonda's Danceology to bring to the community the wonders of the season.

"We had our formal auditions way back in October towards the end, with four different dates and an amazing group of children and adults who took part," said Co-owner and Principal Choreographer Rhonda Gillie. "Performers were given five times each week to come and learn the various dances and the script used within the Polar Express."

Gillie said that this was the first year that the Alberta Prairie Steam Train (APST) has run the "Polar Express" and it was their first opportunity to participate as well.

"Both APST and myself made a very conscious decision to offer the parts to everyone in the community and not just those who have been with the train or Danceology from before," Gillie added. "We had to keep a balance."

As the train took off, the atmosphere within was one of enchantment and anticipation as the kids waddled along with the accompanying adults

### Cantus Choir and Jazz Guys enrapture audience with soulful music

Moush Sara John Independent staff



Cantus Choir performs under Gordon Morlay's direction with the Jazz Guys waiting patiently in the lobby as seen in the reflection. Stettler community packed the Alliance Church on Sunday evening, Dec. 4 to hear these two local groups take to stage.

The Stettler Alliance Church was packed to capacity this Sunday evening, Dec. 4 as Cantus Choir and Jazz Guys performed to an enthralled audience.

Under the expertise of Choir Director Gordon Mooling, the Cantus Choir with 18 members, some in conjunction with Jazz Guys.

"We used to have two annual performances before, one at springtime and one during Christmas," said Mooling. "But now with many of the members being away during winter, we only have one performance."

With six alto, five soprano, four bass and three tenors, the balance is just about right, said Mooling, although he would love to have another tenor join the choir.

"We usually start with tenor-soprano numbers and then halfway through change it up to some festive ones," Mooling added.

All the non-tenor members, however, were not singing in isolation, with a strong theme of faith and revival present.

One of the Cantus choir members, Sue Peterson who has been with the group for 24 years said, "Last night felt good singing, although a few of us were lighting

could. We always have fun in rehearsal learning the pieces. Cantus has chosen for us then look forward to sharing them with our local fans."

The Jazz Guys came to stage and their first number "All of Us" was in collaboration with the Cantus Choir, which was just the beginning of the other seven numbers they would perform that evening.

One of the band members, Eric Rubin said, "It was a great pleasure to be part of the Cantus Choir concert. Last year was the first time we tried it and it seemed to work very well. The next logical step was to do a piece together and that had actually been a long time dream of mine."

According to Rubin, Mooling did a wonderful job and they would love to continue the tradition.

"We really enjoyed 'All of Us' arranged by Rick Stittel because we actually met and worked with him a few weeks ago at a jazz band workshop," Rubin added. "Having the person who arranged the piece work and direct you in a concert of his own material is a challenging, but exciting experience. I was very proud of the group as they really showed their talents."

As the evening ended with the audience applauding the performance, taking in the world music and harmony of these two local groups, it was easy to see how all-ages Cantus Choir and Jazz Guys have been to the Stettler music landscape over the years.

**Suzanne's & Jenny's**  
Wrap up your shopping list in style!



Royal Canadian Air Force CF-18 Hornet. 164 PHOTO

### Rails and Tales to pull out all stops for Canada's 150th

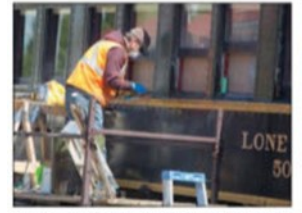
continued from Page A1

The event, which kickedstarted yesterday will be running till Monday, July 3.

"We are in charge of putting smiles on every passenger's face," Graydon commented. "As a conductor, I put our trains together, conduct safety inspections, load and unload passengers and make sure the train gets safely to its destination," Graydon added. "At the Alberta Prairie Railway we are all customer relations specialists, ensuring our passengers have a great experience, their needs are met and any issues are dealt with quickly and professionally."

Needless to say, both Stettler and Big Valley are abuzz about the event. As the second engine was hauled into Stettler by road last Thursday, June 22 from Edmonton, area residents stopped by and photographed.

"It's been a great learning experience and I'd like to thank everyone involved for their support and hard work," Graydon said. "Special thanks to the staff at Alberta Prairie Railway who have gone above and beyond to make this happen."



A train carriage gets prepped for the Rails and Tales event this

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## 18. Local Events

**Canada Day Celebrations** – The Stettler Town & Country Museum offers free admission, games, face painting, and other activities on Canada Day. The Town of Stettler offers entertainment in the West Stettler Park, followed by a fireworks display.

**Music in the Park** – throughout the summer months (June – August), the Town of Stettler offers free entertainment in West Stettler Park each Wednesday evening. Featured are bands and performers of a range of musical styles. Anyone can come and bring a lawn chair to enjoy the show.

**Steel Wheel Stampede** – Stettler Board of Trade hosts the Stampede. There is a Parade and various events over the course of the event. The Stampede is held in June

As a part of the Steel Wheel Stampede Parade, in 2015, a new Stettler Parade Float was designed and built, featuring a range of things symbolizing Stettler.

**Moonlight Madness** – is an evening of main street business sales and activities, typically held in the fall of each year. This event also includes the lighting of the Main Street Christmas Tree by the Mayor.



**The Night before the Night Before** (Christmas) – This annual event features a wide range of activities that take place in the afternoon and evening of December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Main Street sleigh rides, business sales, hot chocolate/cider, as well as free rides (for food bank donation) on the Alberta Prairie Railway .

**Festival of Lights** – The Festival of Lights is a popular week-long tradition as a fundraiser for the Stettler Hospital. Businesses and people donate trees they have decorated to be auctioned off. Every night different themes are used for dinners. A senior's tea, cookies with Santa, and a wine and cheese night are just a few of the ideas used in the past. During its history, FOL has raised over \$1 million towards equipment for the hospital.

**Family Day Festivities** – Previously, Stettler Parks and Leisure had organized activities on Family Day in West Stettler Park. Now they are held at the Stettler Recreation Centre indoors to ensure a good turn out every year. Hot dogs are served and free skating/shinny as well as free family swim.



**Stettler Variety Showcase**– A nonprofit volunteer arts association that began in 1977 and is dedicated to bringing performances to our community. They are able to accomplish this through the Arts Touring Alliance of Alberta and with a grant from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. Shows include everything from Country music, magicians, comedians, ballet and more.

**Performing Arts Centre**– Stettler has a beautiful 260 seat Performing Arts Centre attached to the High School. It was originally built following major fundraisers and today houses theatre, music, dance and other entertainment events. Performers are always impressed that Stettler has such a great facility.

**Heartland Arts Troupe**- A local theatre group that puts on a dinner theatre once a year.

## Heartland Arts Troupe gearing up for November production of *Too Many Cooks*

The dinner theatre show will be staged at the Stettler Community Hall

MARK WEBER / Sep. 8, 2021 10:30 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS



Rehearsals are well underway for Heartland Arts Troupe's dinner theatre production of *Too Many Cooks* – set to hit the stage in November.

The popular Canadian production, penned by Marcia Kash and Douglas E. Hughes, runs at the Stettler Community Hall Nov. 10-13 with tickets available at Wells Furniture.

Tickets are \$60 a piece, and that includes a full meal, too.

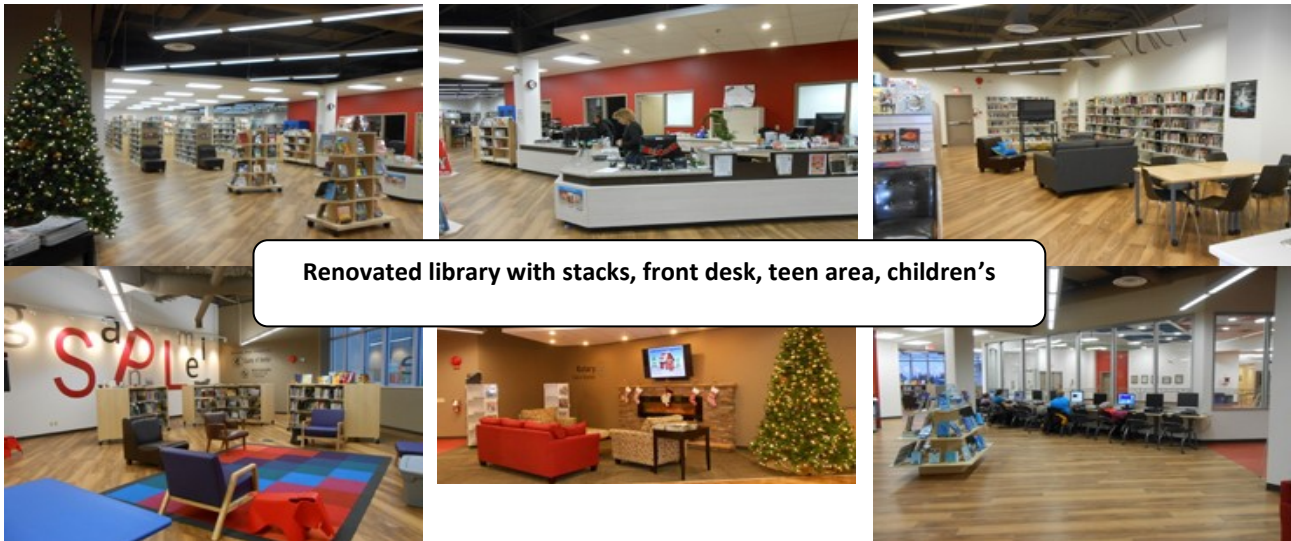




## 19. Stettler Public Library

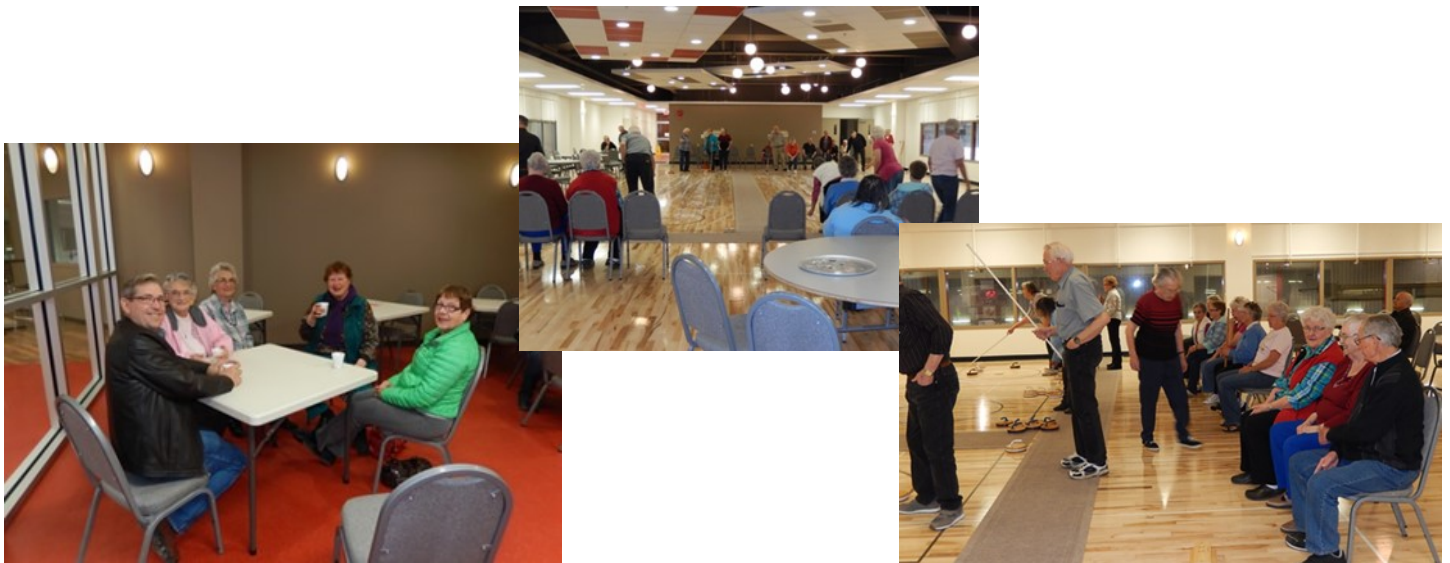
Many programs are run through the library throughout the year for infants through to seniors. Programs include topic-specific sessions, as well as regular, general sessions. Most programs are run by volunteers or youth volunteers/staff and programs are usually free to the public (sometimes a \$1 fee for food or drink is asked). The cumulative hours that the volunteers provide are enough to constitute at least one full time staff member. Volunteers are thanked at an informal tea and are given a coffee mug as a small thank you.

In 2013/2014, the library underwent a major renovation with the upgrade of the Stettler Recreation Centre. They received a \$250,000 federal grant to assist with this and saw their space increase significantly and were able to modernize many things. The library always has something going on. In 2015 and going forward, they added a Maker Space program, which is being expanded with all sorts of technical equipment and programs. The library has a Virtual Reality system, offers 3D printing, technology training/helps for seniors, free access to [www.Ancestry.ca](http://www.Ancestry.ca), etc.



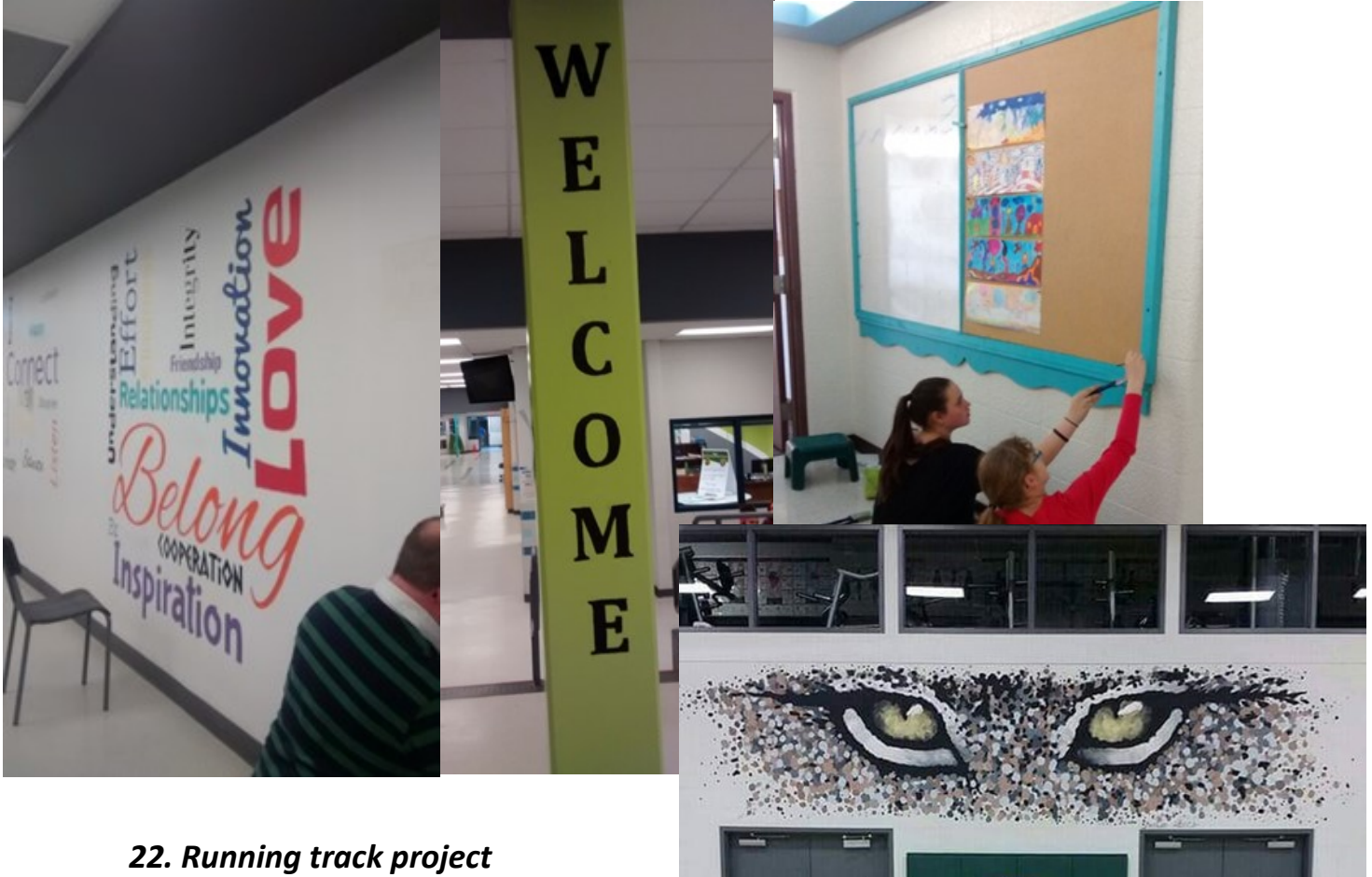
## 20. "The HuB" Seniors Centre

Along with renovations to the entrance of the Stettler Recreation Centre, as well as the Public Library, a large conference room area was redesigned into a Seniors Centre. It features dance/shuffleboard floor, concert stage, kitchen, etc. A wide range of activities are planned for the facility every week.



## 21. Wm E Hay Stettler Secondary Campus– School Culture Enhancement Project

In March 2016, a staff member and student decided that the walls of the school were bare and uninspiring to the students. Pulling together a group of students, parent volunteers and others in the community, they undertook to add colour and inspiring words and images to the school facility. Over the course of several months, a number of murals were added to different areas of the school, as well as several “Word Walls”, plus bulletin board borders and pillars were coloured. Students from across Junior and Senior High School classes assisted with tracing, painting words, borders and pillars, as well as designing and painting unique murals.



## 22. Running track project

Multiple levels of government and various partnerships have come together to resurface the running track at the school complex, which was built decades ago for the Alberta Summer Games.



## Ethel Williams gifted a donation for the Community Recreation Track resurfacing

The running track in Stettler is a legacy from the 1991 Alberta Summer Games

Jul. 18, 2019 1:30 p.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS

Well-known local community supporter Ethel Williams gifted a donation for the Stettler Community Recreation Track resurfacing to celebrate her 99th birthday.

Her \$500 contribution will go directly to supporting the project, ensuring community members and students continue to enjoy this great feature in our communities, noted a release.

A former track star herself, Williams proudly shared with Board Chair Greg Hayden her provincial championship ribbons and certificates from 1937 (along with the track shoes) when she won the 50 and 100 yard sprints and placed in high jump and long jump events.

## **23. Volunteerism**

**Stettler Volunteer Centre** has been running for over 23 years. They have 2 key areas of service:

1. Match volunteers with volunteer opportunities
2. Advertise and promote volunteer opportunities via website -[www.stettlerconnects.com](http://www.stettlerconnects.com) and on Facebook

National Volunteer Week is held annually in April. Its purpose is to celebrate and encourage volunteerism in Canada. A local recognition event is held in Stettler during the week. The Volunteer Centre partners with the Town and County of Stettler and other organizations that are interested in sponsoring such an event.

We also host the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program – having between 5-6 volunteers assist to complete over 500 income tax returns for low-income families during the months of March and April. This service is also available all year long.

Stettler Volunteer Centre has taken over a website called Stettler Connect

([www.stettlerconnects.com](http://www.stettlerconnects.com)) where they have added a whole volunteer component for organizations to register their opportunities and for individuals to register to volunteer, also a volunteer recognition component as well. They are on Facebook (Stettler Connects).

**The schools** have been teaching youth about the importance of volunteering and was a requirement in Phys. Ed for Stettler Middle School (Gr. 6-8) to each complete 10 hours of community or volunteer service, as a part of their Phys Ed marks. With the amalgamation of the Jr/Sr High into one campus, this requirement was lost. After requests by parents and staff, it was reinstated for Grades 7-12.

Since 2010, students from almost every grade in the three public schools have assisted in some way with projects related to the Community Gardens. They've helped to build strawberry planters, spread mulch on pathways and borders, planted fruit bushes, built & repaired fences, edged the borders, watered, weeded, etc. Students at the schools also clean their playgrounds regularly. High school students helped to remove shale and landscape fabric over 6 weeks as a part of the Memorial Park revitalization.

**Stettler Learning Centre** (SLC) offers FREE learner advising and adult literacy programming including: adult foundational learning, Pre-GED and GED, basic digital skills, employment workshops, ELL (English Language Learner) support, adult tutoring and community interest programs. SLC is proud to be one of 100+ CALP (Community Adult Learning Program) organizations in Alberta. Many instructors and tutors are volunteers.

We are also one of four Campus Alberta Central sites. Through our joint venture with Olds College and Red Deer Polytechnic, we are able to provide post-secondary learning opportunities to rural learners in our own community.

**Heartland Beautification Committee** has reached out to all public schools to create a dialogue and feedback mechanism between youth and the committee and various sub-committees. Student councils, student groups and clubs have responded by contributing ideas. In 2015 & 2016, Tidiness sub-committee members connected with students in a range of ways to engage them in tidiness/beautification activities. In early winter 2015, HBC gave a presentation to Grade 7-9 students about Youth Involvement, in part for education, in part as thanks and recognition for their efforts in the Middle School Revitalization Project.

**Alberta Health Services (Stettler Hospital) Volunteer Resources Program** has 130 registered volunteers. The Stettler Hospital and Care Centre utilizes volunteers in approximately 20 different areas/programs, such as maintenance of hospital atrium and flower beds, patient support programs, etc.

### *Volunteer Appreciation / Recognition*

[Stettler Board of Trade](#) organizes an annual **Business and Citizenship Awards** ceremony, recognizing nominated recipients (businesses) in a range of categories, including Male and Female Citizen of the Year, etc.

### *HBC Beautification Champion*

Heartland Beautification Committee recognizes a **Beautification Champion** (a person or persons who go above and beyond in their beautification efforts, such as cleaning, tidying, public space maintenance, etc.) or promoting beautification as a whole within the community, during the Communities in Bloom Judges dinner. Award recipients are given a certificate.

## PHOTO: Celebrating volunteers! Local officials sign National Volunteer Week proclamation

National Volunteer Week runs from April 18th to 24th

Apr. 18, 2021 7:30 p.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS



From left, Larry Clarke, reeve of the County of Stettler and Sean Nolls, mayor of Stettler, sign a special proclamation for National Volunteer Week (April 18th to 24th) while Lorraine Hankins of the Stettler Information and Referral Centre looks on. photo submitted

National Volunteer Week runs from April 18th to 24th



From left, Larry Clarke, reeve of the County of Stettler and Sean Nolls, mayor of Stettler, sign a special proclamation for National Volunteer Week (April 18th to 24th) while Lorraine Hankins of the Stettler Information and Referral Centre looks on. photo submitted

**Recognizing Garbage Pickers** – there are many people that voluntarily pick up garbage ahead of TOS mowers, as well as around town as they walk. (See Community Appearance)