



—SP Photo by Peter Wilson

Cliff Speer looks over the Cairn and burial site near where the Battle of Tourond's Coulee-Fish Creek took place April 24, 1885

Battle still reverberates

By Peter Wilson
of The StarPhoenix

FISH CREEK — There's a distant roll of thunder coming out of the southwest as Cliff Speer looks out over the narrow but swift running waters of Fish Creek, near Batoche. The muffled sounds of the impending storm seem an appropriate backdrop to the Tourond's Coulee/Fish Creek Battlefield that Speer is visiting today. It was 125 years ago that General Middleton's government forces took 55 casualties here, including 10 fatalities, when they were ambushed by about 125 of Gabriel Dumont's fighters hiding in the coulee. The Metis evacuated the battlefield and returned to Batoche, suffering four dead and 11 wounded. "It was the first battle of the only civil conflict to ever occur on Canadian soil and Riel's fighters' use of unconventional, guerilla-style action won out across this kind of terrain," Speer says. This now tranquil spot in the Saskatchewan countryside will be one of the highlights of canoe trips Speer's company, CanoeSki, will be conducting this summer. Navigating the South Saskatchewan River in the area, the tours are designed to explore the region's historical significance as well as its impressive landscape. To commemorate the 125th anniversary of the North West Resistance,

CanoeSki has scheduled a series of tours over the summer season, including day trips and two-day overnight trips. Speer, who has conducted two-day and three-day trips on this section of river in previous years, will include hiking at both the Fish Creek and Batoche sites to provide some variety to the canoeing activity. "That will give participants some sense of the land where the conflicts at Fish Creek and Batoche took place. The river portion of the trip will follow the path of the steamboat sternwheeler Northcote as it travelled down to Batoche," he says. Speer is hoping to put a Metis historian on board to provide some authenticity to the interpretive activities participants will enjoy on the tour. Speer's paddlers will hike the trail from the river to Middleton's camp where the general retired his troops and awaited reinforcements after the battle at Tourond's Coulee. Named after a local Metis farmer living on the creek, Tourond's Coulee was the location for the first engagement of the North West Field Force with "the rebels." After this clash, General Middleton retired his force and established a camp for his 800 men on the riverbank to the west of the battlefield, which is now marked with a cairn and designated a National Historic Site by Parks Canada. Alongside the stone cairn, a monument identifies three

militia gunners who were buried here after the skirmish. The battle camp was where militia forces buried their dead, evacuated their wounded and settled in for a two-week stay at the camp before marching out towards the Metis village of Batoche, headquarters of Louis Riel's provisional government. The ensuing fight would provide the bloody and decisive conclusion to the 1885 uprising. There are other historical features along the way. Just eight kilometres downstream from Middleton's camp is the abandoned town of Fish Creek with its old weather-beaten church. About 2.5 km from there is the overnight camping spot at Petite Ville, an 1870s-era archaeological site once occupied by migrant Metis hunters and their families who wintered over while following the plains buffalo herds. A veteran leader of numerous expeditions and adventure tours in the province, Speer's company provides paddlers return transportation by passenger van from Saskatoon, along with all the necessary gear and supplies for the trip, including nutritious meals prepared over an open fire. The paddlers will experience all the thrills of wilderness canoe camping, says Speer. Being self-sufficient, cooking over an open fire, sleeping on the ground in tents and having no support facilities will add to the flavours of the past, he adds. For more information on these tours, visit www.canoeski.com.

Province lagging on privacy: report

By Angela Hall
Saskatchewan News Network

REGINA — Saskatchewan has outdated access-to-information and privacy legislation and is out of step with neighbouring provinces, says a new report. The situation is contributing to a growing "access and privacy deficit" that can lead to a loss of confidence in public institutions, said Information and Privacy Commissioner Gary Dickson with the release of his 2009-10 annual report. Dickson likened the province's Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (FOIP) to an old make of automobile, saying the law — which addresses both the public's right to access information held by public bodies and the need to protect the privacy of individuals — has not been significantly amended since its creation more than 17 years ago. "If we were to see an Edsel on Regina Avenue this afternoon we'd stop and stare and say, 'Isn't it strange

that something that old is still on the road,'" Dickson said. "The reason our legislation is now an oddity is every other jurisdiction in Canada — even those that brought in their law more recently than 17 years ago — have been back and re-tooling it and revising it so that those statutes provide the tools and the remedies to meet privacy challenges in the 21st century," said Dickson, whose report indicates his office has 99 privacy breach investigations underway, the highest amount ever. Justice Minister Don Morgan said a formal review of the information and access regime isn't planned at this point, but added work is being done to build "more of a culture of respect for privacy." A government-wide seminar this fall will be held to improve training and reinforce the importance of the legislation, he said. "If that (seminar) goes as well as we want, then we're going to start looking at do we want to do a legislative update," Morgan said. (REGINA LEADER-POST)

HIROC The Board of Directors of Healthcare Insurance Reciprocal of Canada (HIROC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Bryan T. Leter as Chair and Elizabeth Barton as Vice-Chair.



Mr. Leter has served on the Board of Directors since May 2008. As the Chair, he serves as a member on all of the Committees of the HIROC Board, and was the Chair of the Finance Committee. A small business owner for over twenty-six years, working alongside the auto insurance industry, Mr. Leter is currently a manager of a large auto dealership in Regina. He has been active in municipal government for over twenty-four years, and is currently the Mayor of Bentley, Saskatchewan. Mr. Leter has served on several community boards and committees, and presently serves on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Mental Health Association (Saskatchewan Division) and is a member of their Finance and Audit Committee. His interests include politics, business and finance, organizational theory, disability living, art and metal sculpture.



Ms. Barton was elected to the Board of Directors in 2005. She is a member of the senior leadership team at Hotel Dieu Hospital in Kingston, Ontario. Ms. Barton is a Certified Health Executive (through the Canadian College of Health Services Executives) who holds a Health Services Management certificate from the Canadian Healthcare Association and a Master of Arts Degree from the University of Guelph. In 2008, she completed the Advanced Health Leadership Program through the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. Ms. Barton also serves on the Board of Directors for the Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington United Way.

House fire kills one

A Canada Day house fire appears to have claimed one life in the northern village of Michel. Dillon RCMP and local firefighters were called to the home around 12:50 p.m. Thursday, according to an RCMP news release issued Friday. They found the remains of the deceased inside once the fire was extinguished. An autopsy will be necessary to identify the person, who is believed to have been the home's resident, the release states. The provincial fire commissioner's office and the RCMP are investigating to determine the cause and origin of the fire.

One dead, one injured in collision

One teen is deceased and another injured after being struck by a truck on a grid road near Ahtahkakoop First Nation Thursday night. The teens, a 16-year-old female and 17-year-old male, were walking on the road when they were struck just before 11 p.m. Thursday. The female died at the scene and the male was brought to the hospital in critical condition. RCMP are not releasing the name of the deceased, pending notification of next of kin. A 19-year-old male is in custody, and charges are pending. The Ahtahkakoop First Nation is approximately 240 kilometres northwest of Saskatoon.

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