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News

4 pages this issue

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Weekend news digest
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Weekend news digest
Friday February 7, 2020
News to Monday February 10, 2020

Three young men die in Sooke River overflow

by Mary P Brooke
West Shore Voice News

Parks gate closure management is updated



Sooke River Road in heavy rain (February 6), with a view toward the Sooke Potholes. Even a few inches of pooled or running rainfall can impact a driver's control of a vehicle.

● **Most people in Sooke** were in some way impacted by news of the death of three 20-year-old local men. Either they knew Eric Blackmore, Cory Mills and A.J. Jensen -- who were somehow swept away in their truck during heavy rains on a high tide night of Friday January 31, or they know family and friends of the deceased, or the people around them where they work, study or socialize has been impacted by the tragic event.

Apparently many locals know that the Sooke Potholes fill up fast with water from the Sooke River when weather and tide conditions conspire. On the weekend in question, people's outdoor lawn chairs and even propane tanks became floating objects along with debris from the natural environment, pushed by the river beyond its banks into the adjacent forest and onto the road.

The grief of family and friends is of course incalculable. A crowd-source funding page was set up, to which the broader community has been contributing. As of February 10, \$27,000 had been raised by 329 mostly local people in seven days, toward the \$30,000 goal. The funds are for helping the three impacted families through what are likely to be difficult weeks and months ahead.

Where community leaders have focused their ability to make a difference is in examining the conditions of the potholes entry points. No one knows, but perhaps had Blackmore, Mills and Jensen not been beyond the park gate that fateful evening, perhaps this tragedy might have been prevented.

Part of the Sooke Potholes is a BC Provincial Park (lower area), and the upper area is owned and operated by the Capital Regional District (CRD). The road heading into the park is Sooke River Road, owned by the District of Sooke.

According to Juan de Fuca Electoral Area Director Mike Hicks, the gate to the lower park that is the responsibility of BC Parks was "probably by now rusted in place" and was not for years closed each night as it was supposed to be. Hicks became vocal about this in the days following the tragedy (including a widely-heard interview on local radio), and Sooke Mayor Maja Tait learned that the gate requiring provincial management was on a District of Sooke right-of-way (she told *West Shore Voice News* on Friday). In a scenario of multi-jurisdictional complexity, the District of Sooke had not communicated with BC Parks about gate-inaction for years, likely leaving it up to the provincial government in their park. Hicks got the Premier involved, and the BC Environment ministry (responsible for BC Parks) has confirmed "the gate will be closed the same hours as the CRD gate." BC Parks will contract with the same operator that CRD has on contract to close another gate. Now the park will be closed from 9 pm to 7 am as it always was supposed to be.

The CRD says on its website: "The Sooke River is an area of steep cliffs and deep fast-moving water. Please use caution and wear appropriate footwear. Stay on designated trails." As Hicks said in the media, going down to the potholes is 'just what kids do in Sooke'.

Mayor Tait says that in a current five-year District of Sooke roadworks improvement plan (now in year three), that some work has been done on drainage around Sooke River Road. The municipality's engineering department reports through District of Sooke Acting CAO Raechel Gray: "In 2018 a major drainage project was completed to address the most prominent location of flooding on the road which has significantly reduced the severity of the flooding and the time it takes for standing water to drain. There are currently no plans for any new drainage projects on Sooke River Road. At this point it would be too early to speculate what further work could be recommended until an investigation of the accident is completed." **WSV**

West Shore Voice News

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www.westshorevoicenews.com

New indoor sports complex celebrated at West Shore Parks & Recreation

by Mary P Brooke
West Shore Voice News



Students from Brookes Westshore international private school tried out the new ball court at West Shore Parks and Recreation on Friday February 7, after the official ISC opening by municipal officials and WSPR staff.

● **A wide range of sports and community activities** can now be held in the new Indoor Sports Complex (ISC) at West Shore Parks and Recreation (WSPR). That's the old curling rink space, where there is now blue sports-flooring (with painted lines for pickleball, volleyball and basketball) as well as green artificial turf that can be rolled up to allow for trade shows and indoor play. Since June 2018, the WSPR board has been reorganizing things with an eye to better financial operations, under the direction of senior staff of the five owner municipalities (Langford, Colwood, View Royal, Highlands and Metchosin). More: **WSV** <https://westshorevoicenews.com/new-indoor-sports-complex-at-west-shore-parks-and-rec/>



Langford Councillors Denise Blackwell (left) and Norma Stewart, with WSPR Manager of Operations Wade Davies, at the ISC official opening.

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ANALYSIS ~ MPB



Mary P Brooke, B.Sc., Cert PR

Coronavirus stirring up public opinion & personal decisions

● If you didn't already have an opinion on world travel (cost, risk, contribution to greenhouse gas emissions), you probably do now. Governments around the world are taking different measures to restrict travel to China right now during the Coronavirus outbreak – Canada recommends not taking any unnecessary travel and the USA has banned flights from and into China entirely.

Almost everyone who has a confirmed case of Coronavirus in Canada and the USA brought it back from visiting or doing business in China. Transmission in North America has been seen in close quarters however (e.g. family or visitors in same home).

Rightly so, government leaders are chastising the idea of racial discrimination based on who you will associate with during the 2019-nCoV outbreak. However, even Asian Canadians who have friends, family or clients who have recently traveled to (back from) China are stepping back from close contact. That's common sense.

Will you socialize less in large groups for the time being? Will you stop being a handshaker or even a fist-bumper during this flu-season-on-steroids?

Obviously health officials want to be cautious and not incite fear. But overall, the general public is still a bit quizzical about the information they are getting and when they get it. A lot of moment-by-moment decision-making is being left up to individuals. People are seeking the right type and volume of information to help support them in making the best possible decisions. When so many people still feel a bit unsure, it does indicate some of communications disconnect (likely based on an abundance of caution). The media is, overall, picking up on that frustration and doing their best to inform. Most Canadians are now experiencing calm high alert. ■

Publisher's Note: branching out

● We are good at writing about political and business news and the community-shaping issues of the day. *West Shore Voice News* still continues in that vein.

Meanwhile, our new publication in 2020 is *All Things Beautiful*. The title says it all.

Sections will include art, fashion, gardens and cityscapes, health and wellness, food and cuisine, and outdoor activities for fun.

Local businesses and organizations are invited to be part of this new piece which will be distributed during the peak tourism season May to September.

Give us a call at 250-217-5821 to request the rate sheet and discuss options, or email to advertising@westshorevoicenews.com

Deadline to book your articles and ads is Friday March 6. ■

All Things Beautiful
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Published by West Shore Voice News
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Friday March 6, 2020

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ALL THINGS BEAUTIFUL
Published by West Shore Voice News
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Public Education

West Shore Voice News

● For the first time, BC's children and youth in care will be recognized through a new supplement when funding is allocated to school districts next month.

This change will also expand priority funding to more children with mental-health challenges and those living in low-income families, it was stated in a Ministry of Education news release on February 7.

"We've heard loud and clear that years of neglect have left far too many of our most vulnerable children not getting the supports they need to be engaged and successful in school," said Rob Fleming, Minister of Education. "Our government is doing things differently by putting the success and well-being of students first, while ensuring equity in the way we fund public education."

Money allocated for this new supplement will be provided to school boards to deliver services based on local needs. These funds are intended for supports like trauma counselling, school breakfast or lunch programs, additional support in the classroom, recognizing mental-health issues and early intervention, or tutoring. Recognizing these students for priority funding will ensure the more than \$6 billion in record operating funding is distributed in a way that better represents the number of vulnerable students in BC schools. The amount of money allocated for the supplement will be announced following Budget 2020 (which is on February 18).

In SD62: "At this point, we have only heard about the intended changes but have not seen how that will translate into funding dollars for the school district," says SD62 Superintendent Scott Stinson. "Given the timing in the school year, the phased-in approach makes sense to ensure that the underlying policy structures will support any additional changes to the funding model. We have been engaged with the Ministry of Education on an ongoing basis as they have been contemplating these changes."



Minister of Education Rob Fleming

WSV

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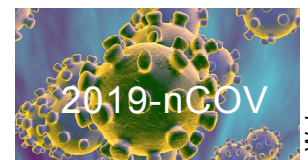
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COURTESY - WEB EDITION

Coronavirus Update

West Shore Voice News

CoronaVirus tally at February 9, 2020



● There are 37,558 confirmed cases of the 2019-nCoV Coronavirus globally (2,676 new) as for the last 24 hours (stats on February 9). Of those cases, 99.18% are in China where there are 37,251 confirmed cases (2,657 new). These are World Health Organization (WHO) statistics.

WHO reports that of the known cases in China, 6,188 are severe (87 new), and there have been 812 deaths (89 new).

Outside China there are now 307 confirmed cases (19 new) in 24 countries (the number of countries has remained stable for days), and 1 death (in the Philippines).

One newborn infant in China was diagnosed as having the Coronavirus just 30 hours after birth. The medical assessment is broad: the virus could have been transmitted in utero, or during childbirth, or after birth.

The WHO risk assessment for China is Very High, while the Global level is called High. WHO has repeatedly stated that they don't want to set off an economic crisis, but the various restrictions on travel to China (e.g. by the USA) are already contributing to economic concerns, as reflected in the stock market to some degree.

In Canada there are seven confirmed cases, with four of those in BC.

On the Diamond Princess cruise ship, harboured at Yokohama, Japan, all crew and 3,700 passengers are being quarantined for 14 days (to February 19). Passengers are asked to stay in their cabins and to wear a mask when leaving their cabin. Meals are brought to their cabin door. Of the 285 Canadian passengers, eight are infected with Coronavirus (as of February 10).

By comparison, there is a bit more flexibility for the Canadians and permanent residents who arrived back from China and are quarantined at CFB Trenton in Ontario. They can go outside for moderate exercise but must stay two to three feet away from others. Laundry is available but must be scheduled for non-contact with others. Meals are brought to the rooms. That 14-day quarantine in the 290-room Yukon Lodge on the base lasts until February 22. Another plane (which Canadian officials expect to be full) will arrive at CFB Trenton this week, carrying 236 more evacuees.

The WHO updates are provided daily to media, and to the public on their website at <https://www.who.int/>

Federal Minister of Health Patty Hajdu, Federal Foreign Affairs Minister François-Philippe Champagne, BC's Health Minister Adrian Dix and BC Public Health Officer Dr Bonnie Henry are providing updates in news conferences as warranted.

The message is repeated as to prevention: regular handwashing, doing proper cough/sneeze etiquette, staying home if you are ill, and phoning ahead to your doctor or health care facility if you plan to arrive with active symptoms. WSV

Updates about the Coronavirus are summarized by West Shore Voice News at www.westshorevoicenews.com

BC Center for Disease Control: <http://www.bccdc.ca>

West Shore Voice News

The Sooke Voice News

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News updates any time: www.WestShoreVoiceNews.com

New SEAPARC fitness facility is now open

by Mary P Brooke, West Shore Voice News

● The long-awaited expansion of the SEAPARC Leisure Complex in Sooke is complete! The fitness and weight room space opened at 6 am on Friday February 7. An official opening will be held in March.

The new 5,150 sq ft additional footprint to the SEAPARC building is comprised of the new 3,600 sq ft fitness gym and a 1,500 sq ft multi-purpose room. The two areas can be combined for various uses. There is also now a 383 sq ft child minding room.

The expansion by about 5,150 sq ft has increased the 51,020 sq ft footprint of the complex by 10%.

The bright open-space fitness area with high-impact durable Mondo Ramflex interlocking flooring includes lots of workout equipment such as exercise bikes and treadmills for cardio, as well as bench press and weights for muscle strengthening. And there's free wi-fi!

A wall of mirrors facilitates use of the room for dance or fitness. A bank of lockers and water fountain top off the many interior improvements. Overhead LED lighting complements the big-window natural light. There is a handy storage area for sports equipment. And there's a sound system.

The parking lot was adjusted during the 10-month construction period (April 2019 through January 2020), now including five handicapped spots near the front door, with more parking spots likely to come at the far end of the building after some draining and lighting improvements. Two electric charging stations in the main parking lot will be moved a little closer to the front door. Bicycle racks are already in place at the front of the building, under a covered area to protect bicycles from the rain. The #61 bus now arrives right up to the front of the SEAPARC building.

It's been an exciting project that moved along, phase by phase. Outdoors a few finishes touches will still be done to the front patio area where there will be a landscaped seating area.

Constructed with pre-fabricated mass timber components, the wood structure (with steel supports) came together relatively quickly. The open space is supported by an HVAC system for heating and cooling, designed and set up for a fitness space where a lot of body heat is generated.

For a few years the SEAPARC Commission saved up funds from the annual levy (paid by taxpayers in Sooke and Juan de Fuca) to help fund this renovation and building improvement, without having to increase the levy. There was also a \$1.4 million grant from the Strategic Priorities Federal Gas Tax Fund (through the Union of BC Municipalities) to help the total project cost of \$3.4 million.

Locals have eagerly awaited the project which began construction last year. The building entry access was moved several times over the last 10 months, for SEAPARC patrons to find their way into the building during various phases of construction. During all phases of construction there was a tone of "we're glad for the renovation, but we'll be glad when it's over!"

Overall, the goal was to be helping more people in the community be active by offering another fitness space in Sooke. SEAPARC has been actively recruiting fitness instructors and weight room attendants.

"A lot of people have been waiting to get in," says SEAPARC manager Steve Knoke. "The community is growing, and this is another space for physical activity and fitness training," he says.

The fitness room area is open during SEAPARC's regular hours of operation: Mon to Fri 6 am to 9 pm, Saturdays 8 to 8, and Sundays 9 to 8 (winter) and 9 to 6 (summer). The weight room is supervised on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 8 am to 11 pm, as well as on Thursday evenings (5 to 8 pm).

For general questions, and questions about the new fitness centre, the

"We're all very excited that the fitness centre is finally open," says SEAPARC manager Steve Knoke.



West Shore Voice News / M Brooke



Weight lifting equipment in the new bright open weight room space at SEAPARC.

West Shore Voice News / M PB

WEIGHT ROOM NOW OPEN



SEAPARC Leisure Complex
2168 Phillips Rd, Sooke
www.seaparc.ca
250-642-8000



SEAPARC main reception number is 250-642-8000. The Fitness Coordinator is Jerry Michael.

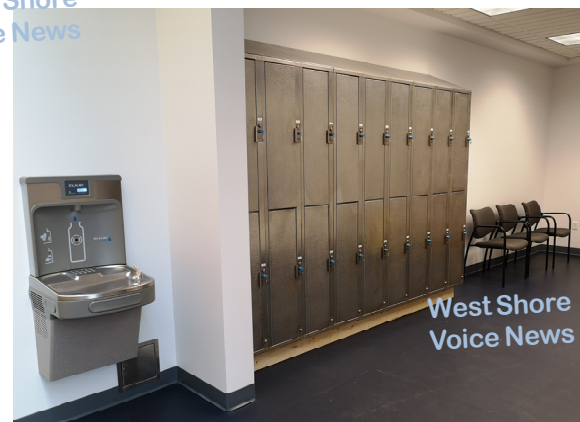
SEAPARC offers drop-in fitness classes and also personal training sessions. Patrons age 16+ are welcome at all times, teens age 13 to 15 years will require a weight room orientation.

Everyone using the fitness center and weight room is required to wear clean, appropriate athletic clothing. Shoes must have closed toes.

The new fitness area can be used as part of regular admission rates. The regular adult rate is \$6.50, with student (19+ with ID) at \$4.75, and youth (age 13 to 18) at \$3.50 per visit. Extra fee for shower and towel rental. 10-visit punch cards and membership passes also available.

The building at 2168 Phillips Road currently presently includes an ice arena (built 1976) and two pools (pool financing now paid). Prior to the upgrade, there was one multi-purpose room, and a meeting room (built 2000).

The CRD-owned SEAPARC offering also includes a bike park, skate park, baseball diamond and par-3 golf course. WSV



Water fountain, lockers and seating in the entry area of the new SEAPARC fitness facility.

West Shore Voice News



Project completion continued right through January.

West Shore Voice News

A ribbon-cutting event to officially open the expanded SEAPARC Leisure Complex will be held in March 2020 (date tba).



COURTESY - WEB EDITION

Mayor Tait: community responds with sadness over tragedy of three men loss in Sooke River

West Shore Voice News

● Hundreds in the community went searching for three 20-year-old Sooke men -- Cory Mills, Eric Blackmore and AJ Jensen -- after they were reported missing on February 1. Their bodies were found by Juan de Fuca Search and Rescue on February 2 (Mills and Blackmore) and 3 (Jensen) near the Sooke River. A piece of the truck they were driving was at first found in the river, giving a clue as to where the search should focus, said Sooke RCMP Detachment Commander S/Sgt Brett Sinden.

Sooke Mayor Maja Tait has provided a statement about the loss of the three young men to the power of the river:

"Words cannot describe the sadness felt in our community. This is a most unfortunate tragedy. We express our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the families and friends, and hold them in our thoughts and prayers. We are very grateful for the search and rescue crew and all of the community volunteers and support for the families and friends." WSV

More: <https://westshorevoiceneews.com/three-young-sooke-men-found-dead-near-river/>



<< This cake custom was baked for Cory Mills for his 16th birthday, four years ago (photo can be viewed at Kelz Bakery in Sooke). WSV

SOOKE

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BC Legislature. Throne Speech Tues Feb 11 and Budget Day Tues Feb 18.

Awareness Film Night. Bee ecology, honey tasting. Wed Feb 12. 6:30 pm, EMCS, 6218 Sooke Rd. www.awarenessfilmmight.ca

Valentine's Day & Pro-D Day SD62. Fri Feb 14. **Drop off Branches** at Colwood Public Works Yard. Sat Feb 15. 8:30 am to 4 pm. First and third Saturday of each month. Behind Colwood City Hall, 3300 Wishart Road. www.colwood.ca

BC Family Day. Mon Feb 17. Statutory holiday. **BC Family Day Activities** at SEAPARC Leisure Complex in Sooke. www.seaparc.ca

Outdoor storytime. Sat Feb 22 by Sooke Library at Sooke Region Museum. 10:30-11 am. For up to age 5.

Wounded Warriors Run BC. Starts Sat Feb 23 in Port Hardy for over 600 km to Victoria arriving Sun Mar 1: Grand Finale at BC Legislature 4:30 pm. <https://woundedwarriors.ca/events/wounded-warrior-bc-run/>

SD62 Board Meeting. Tues Feb 25. 7 pm. www.sd62.bc.ca

Leap Year. There is Feb 29 in 2020!

Pan Am Cross Country Cup 5 km course on the Bear Mountain Valley Golf Course in Langford Sat Feb 29. Organized by Vancouver Island Runners Assoc. <https://panamxccup2020.com/news/>

Beer and Burger Night, with karaoke. 'Leap Year Fun' fundraiser for Sooke Community Choir. Sat Feb 29. 6:30pm at Sooke Legion. Tx \$20 at Shoppers Drug Mart or at the door. www.sookecommunitychoir.com

Wounded Warriors Run BC. Sun Mar 1. Grand Finale after 600 km, behind BC Legislature. 4:30 pm. www.woundedwarriors.ca/events/

New West Langford Schools information open house (designs, names, catchment areas). Thurs Mar 12. Belmont Secondary, 3041 Langford Lake Rd. 6:30 pm. www.sd62.bc.ca

Preparing Your Emergency Kit

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Monday, Feb 17

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SEAPARC Leisure Complex
2168 Phillips Road 250.642.8000

We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of BC.



Spring Break SD62. Mar 14-29. www.sd62.bc.ca

CRD Committee of the Whole. Wed Mar 18. Board will review final 2020 budget plan. www.crd.bc.ca/budget

Bear Mountain Bike Festival. March 28 & 29. <https://www.bearmountainbikefest.com/>

Lobsterfest 2020 fundraiser. Sat Apr 4 at Langford Legion. www.westshorerotary.org

COURTESY - WEB EDITION

Remaining donor bricks now in place at the Sarah Beckett Memorial Park

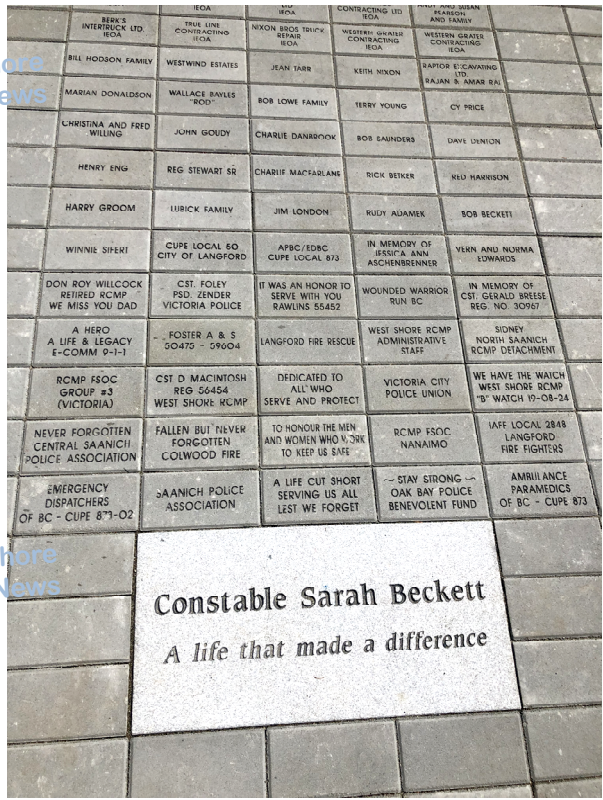
The colourful Sarah Beckett Memorial Playground officially opened on August 24, 2019 ahead of the grand expansion re-opening of the Westhills Stadium. The park is located on Glen Lake Road, behind the stadium.

Some of the memorial bricks were ready and in place for the ceremony last summer. The final set of bricks was installed with less fanfare on February 5, 2020.

"Thank you to all who donated and purchased bricks for the walkway or plaques for the donors' wall," it was stated in a bulletin from Rotary this past week.

The Rotary Club of West Shore surpassed their \$250,000 goal for building the playground (collecting \$263,493.77 which was issued in repayment to the City of Langford at the municipality's council meeting on January 6).

"We are proud of the community for coming together to create this space." The rotary's next fundraising event is Lobsterfest 2020, coming up on April 4 at the Langford Legion. www.westshorerotary.org WSV



First installment of donor bricks at the Sarah Beckett Memorial Playground on August 24, 2019 [WSV photo]

Chelsea Kirkpatrick

West Shore Voice News

Rural communities to benefit from tourism investments

Rural communities affected by mill closures throughout BC will benefit from \$1 million in funding to develop tourism opportunities, creating new jobs for people.

"British Columbia is an amazing place with unparalleled natural beauty that we are proud to invite the world to come explore," said Premier John Horgan. "This tourism investment will help bring new visitors to rural communities throughout the province, while also helping diversify and boost local economies."

- Tourism contributes significantly to the economies of many BC communities. This new provincial funding will be provided through Destination BC to the five regional destination marketing organizations (RDMOs).
- Cariboo Chilcotin Coast
 - Kootenay Rockies
 - Northern BC
 - Thompson Okanagan
 - Vancouver Island

Two west shore pedestrians injured at intersections Drivers reminded to obey posted speed limits

WEST SHORE RCMP FILE: 2020-2054

On February 5, 2020 at 6:15 pm West Shore RCMP, View Royal Fire and BC Ambulance responded to a report of a possible vehicle collision with an 90-year-old female pedestrian on Island Hwy at Wilfert Road in View Royal. The weather was poor with heavy rain and the area was lit only by street lights. The elderly female was transported to Victoria General Hospital and sadly died of her injuries the following day. Investigators determined the elderly female's injuries were as a result of her falling and no collision occurred. An alert driver on scene had swerved to avoid any collision with the elderly female after her fall.

WEST SHORE RCMP FILE: 2020-2157

On February 7, 2020 at 9:54 am West Shore RCMP and emergency crews responded to Jenkins Avenue and Merchant Way in Langford where a pedestrian was struck by a vehicle in a marked cross walk. The pedestrian suffered injuries, however is expected to make a full recovery. This collision is under investigation for potential charges under the BC Motor Vehicle Act.

Police are requesting anyone with dash cam video at the time of these occurrences to contact the Municipal Traffic Section of the West Shore RCMP.



Marked crosswalk across Jacklin Road toward Terlane Place (connects to Merchant Way) at Belmont Market. [File photo]

WEST SHORE RCMP COMMENT:

"With the recent inclement weather we would like to remind motorists to obey posted speed limits and take extra precautions when approaching and travelling through any intersection. A yellow light should indicate to drivers that a stop should be made unless it is unsafe to do so. Look for and make eye contact with pedestrians at cross walks and intersections," says Constable Jonathan McKinney of the West Shore RCMP Municipal Traffic Section. WSV

Each RDMO will receive \$200,000 in catalyst funding to support strategic planning and destination development in rural communities impacted by mill closures.

Government and Destination BC have led destination development planning for the last three years. This work is the first of its kind in BC and focuses on the supply side of tourism, rather than demand: www.destinationbc.ca/what-we-do/destination-management/destination-development/

Over 70% of Destination BC's program support is directed towards tourism marketing and destination management programs in small and rural communities throughout BC.

BC welcomed 6.1 million international visitors in 2018.

Tourism employs over 137,000 people and generated \$18.4 billion in revenue for BC in 2017. WSV

Hon. John Horgan, Premier MLA, LANGFORD-JUAN DE FUCA



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