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# Listowel Banner

Thursday, July 27, 2023

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Dan McNee Photo

**JUST HANGING OUT** – Harriston sisters Mya, 9, and Cara Fischer, 6, spent part of Friday afternoon just hanging out at the Listowel skatepark. It's yet to be seen how much the projected forecast of thunderstorms throughout the week will allow residents to get outside for more summer activities.

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## Regional hospitals receive \$6.6M for upgrades

Listowel Memorial awarded over one-third of total funding allocations

SPECIAL TO MIDWESTERN NEWSPAPERS

**PERTH-WELLINGTON** – On July 19 Matthew Rae, MPP for Perth-Wellington, announced hospitals throughout Perth and Wellington counties would receive over \$6.6 million in funding through the Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund (HIRF). The funding will support local hospitals as they make critical upgrades, repairs, and maintain their facilities.

“This funding is essential for our

hospitals to continue to provide the best care possible in our communities,” Rae said. “The highest quality of care requires the highest quality equipment and facilities.

“This funding demonstrates our government’s commitment to our local hospitals.”

Ontario is providing \$200 million to hospitals through the Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund and over \$8.4 million to community health service providers through the Community Infrastructure Renewal Fund. This

funding from the province allows its health-care system partners to address urgent infrastructure renewal needs such as upgrades or replacements of roofs, windows, security systems, fire alarms and back-up generators.

“Ensuring Ontario’s hospitals and community health facilities have the infrastructure in place to deliver the high-quality care patients expect and deserve is a priority for our government,” said Sylvia Jones, deputy premier and minister of health. “This year’s increased funding will help these

facilities address priority renewal needs while ensuring people can continue to receive the world-class care they need in a safe and comfortable environment.”

### Perth-Wellington HIRF funding for 2023-24

- Listowel Memorial Hospital – \$2,854,377
- Stratford General Hospital – \$2,086,448
- North Wellington Health Care Corporation – \$1,335,173
- St. Marys Memorial Hospital – \$396,461

The Canadian Mental Health Association – Waterloo-Wellington branch, and the Guelph Community Health Centre will receive \$28,454 and \$404,504, respectively, through the Community Infrastructure Renewal Fund (CIRF).

“Hospitals across Ontario rely on the Hospital Infrastructure Renewal Fund to assist with the cost of maintaining hospital buildings and infrastructure,” said Karl Ellis, president and CEO of the Listowel Wingham Hospitals Alliance.

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## Wescast issues 180 layoff notices to Wingham foundry workers

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**WINGHAM** – The familiar hum in the air at Wingham’s Wescast foundry can no longer be heard.

On July 19, Wescast Industries issued layoff notices to 180 employees at the foundry, effective July 27.

Sources say the parts made at the Wingham plant will now be made at Wescast’s plant in Wuhan, China and shipped to Wingham for machining. That facility will maintain 100 jobs.

The layoffs come 50 days after the company stated in an internal memo that it had no plans to permanently close the foundry.

On May 29, Unifor – the union representing workers at the foundry – stated they were made aware of Wescast’s plans to close the facility. On May 30, a memo was sent to foundry employees by Wescast in response to media reports of the closure, acknowledging plans to close the facility, but on a temporary basis of six to eight months so that “assessments, planning



Cory Bilyea Photo

**FUTURE UNCERTAIN** – The parking lot at Wescast Industries’ foundry in Wingham sits empty – and could be for quite some time – as the company issued layoff notices to 180 employees at the Water Street facility last week. Wescast stated in a company memo in late May that the layoffs would be temporary, but some at Wescast believe this is a permanent closure.

and requests for new investments can be made.”

“The plan for the future of WCW is not simply to permanently close the plant as of July 2023,” reads the memo. “Rather, the plan to do an extensive evaluation on the facility to determine what would be necessary to bring the Wescast Castings facilities... back to being world-class fa-

ilities. When this evaluation is complete, the information will be presented to the ownership group with the expectation that they will approve the significant investments that will be necessary to allow... WCW to be profitable again well into the future.”

On June 5, Unifor stated in a press release that those claims “are not worth the paper

they’re printed on.”

In speaking to CTV News, Joel Sutton, union plant chair at Wescast, does not believe Wescast will resume foundry operations in Wingham.

“I think they will be moving on. If they can capture this work, and make it in their plants in China, I don’t think they’re coming back,” Sutton told CTV News on July 19.

The *Wingham Advance Times* reached out to Sutton for additional comment, but did not receive a response prior to press time.

As of Monday, Unifor has yet to publicly comment on the layoffs.

Wescast has not issued any public comment at this time, and attempts by the *Advance Times* to speak to someone on the matter were unsuccessful.

### ‘Sad day’

While union and company representatives remain silent on the issue, one of the impacted employees took to social media to speak of their last day on the job.

Murray Skinn, in a post on Facebook, wrote, “It’s a sad and bit of an emotional day for me. For 32 years, I have been employed with the same employer and have

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