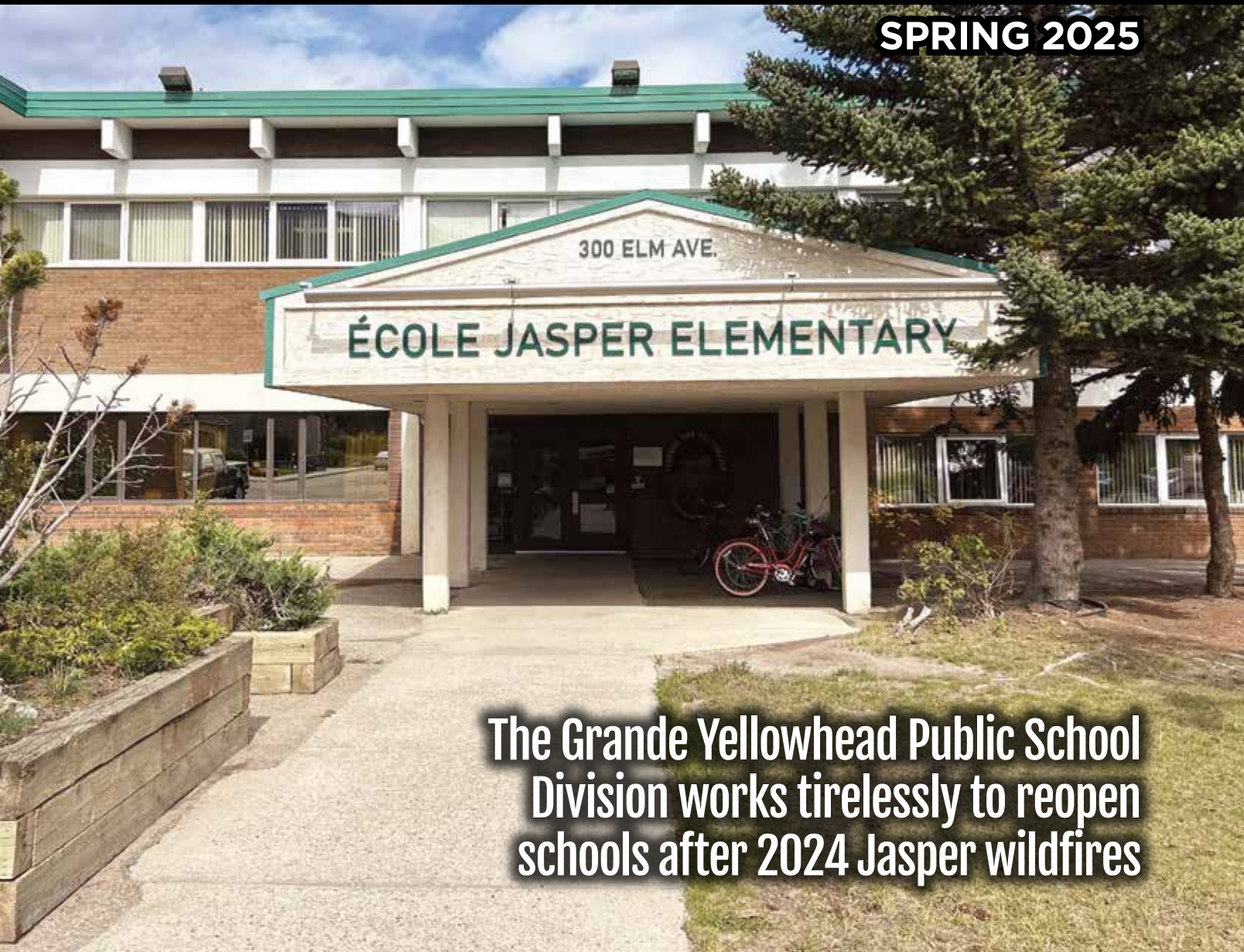


# FACILITY FOCUS

The Official Publication of the Alberta Educational Facilities Administrators' Association

SPRING 2025



**The Grande Yellowhead Public School Division works tirelessly to reopen schools after 2024 Jasper wildfires**



**\$23 million modernization merges two schools into one in Fort Vermilion**

**Embracing diversity through inclusive play**

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# AEFAA member benefits

## Membership advantages:

- AEFAA memberships can attend all AEFAA functions. Currently, AEFAA conducts a spring conference and trade show that hosts professional development sessions pertinent to the field of educational facilities and their safe operation and maintenance. The tradeshow component of this event showcases all the prominent vendors that provide our industry with the necessary and new goods and services required to properly operate and maintain these educational facilities.
- AEFAA also conducts an annual fall workshop. The primary function of this event is to

provide continuing education for its membership. The sessions are hosted by SAIT and provide the attendees with the latest in educational requirements for managers and supervisors pertinent to our industry.

- Members also receive copies of *Facility Focus* magazine, which focuses on all things related to the educational facility operational and maintenance. There are two editions: spring and fall.
- AEFAA members also gain access to the members area of our website. The members area of the website has a platform designed to promote networking

with other colleagues from similar educational jurisdictions.

- AEFAA also hosts spring workshops. These events range from facility tours to further education on current challenges.
- Members are also made aware of current and new insurance facility requirements, as well as updates from Alberta Education that are presented at both major spring and fall sessions.

## Associate membership advantages (exhibitors and vendors):

- This membership enables all vendors and exhibitors to be invited to participate in the annual spring trade show.
- It also enables those who hold this membership to possibly be invited to the fall workshop.
- Members will receive two copies, spring and fall, of *Facility Focus* magazine.
- Associate members are also able to advertise in *Facility Focus* magazine.
- Members will also receive the full AEFAA delegate membership contact list, complete with names, school jurisdiction, position, phone numbers, and email addresses. ■





# Message from the AEFAA president **Robert Krahn**

***“Navigating a changing landscape” ... if only we knew how relevant the theme for the spring conference was going to be.***

**W**e have seen a change in leadership for our federal government along with a new president of the United States in the past few months. I know a trade war with the U.S. wasn't on my radar last fall and now we are thinking about how a trade war will affect the Canadian economy, the procurement of products and services, and our cost of living. With all of this in the background, we have also dealt with the implications of numerous school divisions losing custodial, maintenance, and school support staff due to a labour strike. To say

the least, it's been a busy year, but we continue to push forward and support our schools the best we can.

Last spring, we celebrated AEFAA's 50th anniversary, and last summer, we lost a friend and past president of AEFAA, Rod Swartzenberger. The goals Rod and I have for AEFAA were and remain the same: to see the association grow and provide value to our membership. Rod and I spoke often, and although Rod is no longer with us, I do my best to carry on our shared vision. Over the last year, I have been working with the executive to think of additional ways we can support our membership and provide more value to our vendors. We have started to hold

virtual round table meetings and plan to continue this long term, and I believe this is a great way to stay connected throughout the year. This fall, we will be rolling out a vendor presentation platform where our associate members have the opportunity to present to our membership in a virtual environment hosted by AEFAA. We are also looking to provide additional technical professional development options for our tradesmen. In part, this will happen through our virtual round table discussions, where we plan to discuss trade-related topics. It will also be good to be back in Red Deer this spring for our annual conference, in which we will provide relevant, practical sessions focusing on our facilities, as well as a mental health session from SAIT.

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*Because of AEFAA, and specifically my time spent on the executive, I've grown in my leadership skills and have built relationships throughout Alberta and British Columbia.*

We had an excellent fall workshop with the highest delegate attendance we have seen in recent history. Our focus for this workshop was on industry-related sessions. While we all need to continue our personal growth as leaders, it's also nice to get back to basics. The plan was to be in Jasper last fall, but due to the fires, we had to pivot and change the destination. We were fortunate to be able to hold the conference at Lake Louise, which worked out great in the end. We are looking forward to being back in Jasper this upcoming fall. Whatever the destination,

the fall conference is a great opportunity to build relationships with colleagues, get to know your vendors, and continue our pursuit of excellence with our informative professional development sessions.

This spring I will be joining EFMA BC at their spring conference as we continue to build our strong relationship. AEFAA and EFMA have a long-standing history and we are very appreciative of their support and ongoing friendship.

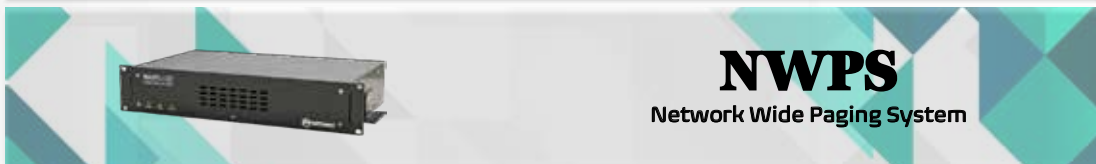
In closing, I want to say how much AEFAA has meant to me in my

journey as an educational facilities manager. Ten years ago was my first conference, and honestly, it was a little intimidating. Somehow, 10 years later, I'm writing a message to my fellow colleagues as the president. Because of AEFAA, and specifically my time spent on the executive, I've grown in my leadership skills and have built relationships throughout Alberta and British Columbia.

Thank you to all of the executive members I have had the privilege to work with over the past few years; I appreciate each one of you. I would highly recommend joining the executive as it is a great opportunity to network and develop your skills as a leader in this industry. I am truly thankful for the opportunity to serve AEFAA in this role and am excited for the year to come. ■



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# **Paul Feledichuk**



## **A passion for facilities, community, and development**

**By Shayna Wiwierski**

**P**aul Feledichuk, manager of facilities and operations at Aspen View Public Schools, is celebrating nearly 18 years in the education facilities industry. A passionate advocate for his community and the province's educational system, Feledichuk has made significant strides since he first started as a young apprentice in plumbing and gas fitting.

Born and raised in Thorhild, Alta., Feledichuk's ties to his community are strong. His career with the school division began at a young age when, as a high school student, he joined as a summer worker. The opportunity to apprentice within his school division came shortly after graduation, setting him on the path toward a lifelong career in school facilities management.

"I knew early on that I wanted to pursue a career in the trades," says Feledichuk. "I was fortunate to be chosen for an apprenticeship

opportunity with the school division, and after spending many years working for the maintenance department, I knew that I wanted my chance to help make positive change as a leader. I continued my education to become a strong candidate for a management position and was grateful to be selected for the job."

Feledichuk ended up completing his journeyman certificate and gaining experience in the field. He then pursued further education at NAIT in project management to prepare for his future leadership role.

This May will mark his third year as manager of facilities and operations at Aspen View Public Schools. Responsible for overseeing custodial and maintenance crews across the district, Feledichuk manages a wide range of tasks, from maintaining 10 K-12 schools to ensuring efficient building

operations. As the district spans a vast rural area north of Edmonton, with schools located up to three-and-a-half hours apart, the challenges are as diverse as they are extensive.

Feledichuk's approach to leadership centres around finding efficiencies without sacrificing quality. He credits his comfort with technology as a key asset in driving innovations to reduce costs.

"Growing up with technology as an accessible tool, I look for areas that technology can assist and benefit our work."

Since taking the role, Feledichuk has championed energy-saving initiatives, including converting all lighting across the district to LED bulbs. In addition to this, his focus has also been on building management systems to further improve energy efficiency.

Outside of his work, he plays a key role in the Alberta Educational

***Responsible for overseeing custodial and maintenance crews across the district, Feledichuk manages a wide range of tasks, from maintaining 10 K-12 schools to ensuring efficient building operations.***

***Outside of work, Feledichuk is an active sports enthusiast who enjoys hockey, volleyball, slow pitch, and just about any other sport you can find.***

Facilities Administrators' Association (AEFAA). He first joined the association after his predecessor suggested that it could provide valuable networking opportunities. He quickly became involved and, after a short time, was nominated for a leadership role within the AEFAA executive. His efforts have led to steady growth in his role, culminating in his current position as vice-president.

Feledichuk is committed to helping AEFAA grow its membership and advocating for increased professional development opportunities across the province, particularly for rural districts. He believes that when school divisions see the value of these offerings, they will be more likely to support the association's mission.

"Once I joined as a member of AEFAA, I quickly realized how beneficial being a part of this network is. The collaboration happening behind the scenes is invaluable, as well as the sharing of resources and expertise."

For Feledichuk, the work is personal. Having attended the same schools his children now go to, he feels a deep connection to the educational system and views his role as a way to give back.

Outside of work, Feledichuk is an active sports enthusiast who enjoys hockey, volleyball, slow pitch, and just about any other sport you can find. He balances his busy career with his family life, as he and his wife, a teacher, raise their three young children.

Looking ahead, Feledichuk is focused on continuing his work in both facilities' management and AEFAA. With a commitment to innovation, community, and professional growth, he's sure to make an even greater impact in the years to come.

"I hope to contribute to the growth and development of AEFAA," he says. "I also hope to emphasize the importance and continued delivery of professional development to add value to school divisions in our province." ■



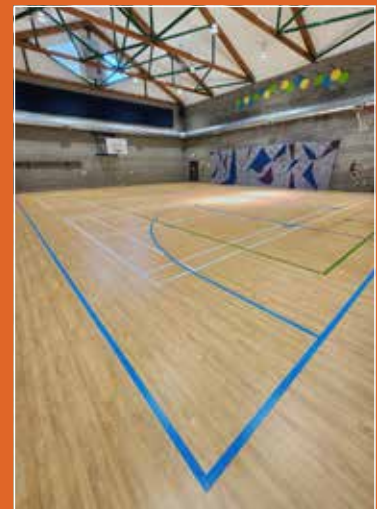
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# In loving memory of **Rod Swartzenberger**

By the AEFAA executive

This past summer, we lost a dear friend. Rod Swartzenberger's departure has left a profound void in our personal lives and as president of AEFAA. Rod was not only an exceptional leader, but also a friend to many of us. His dedication, vision, and unwavering commitment to AEFAA were truly inspiring.

Rod had a larger-than-life personality and he was someone you remembered! Whether he was dressing up as Elvis at our 50th anniversary or turning a shower curtain and bed sheet into a toga at the EFMA conference, he was always up for a good time. Rod filled the room with energy, made you laugh, and told you the way it was. Rod was authentic.

Rod had a unique ability to connect with people and he left a lasting impact on everyone he met. His passing is a painful reminder of the fragility of life and the importance of cherishing every moment. Rod would want us to live life to the fullest; he was not one to sit on the sidelines and watch life go by. He was intentional and present in his day-to-day life and always found joy in the little things.

Rod was all about networking and building relationships, being on the AEFAA executive just took this to the next level. While on the executive, he became a close friend to many of us who had the privilege to serve with him.

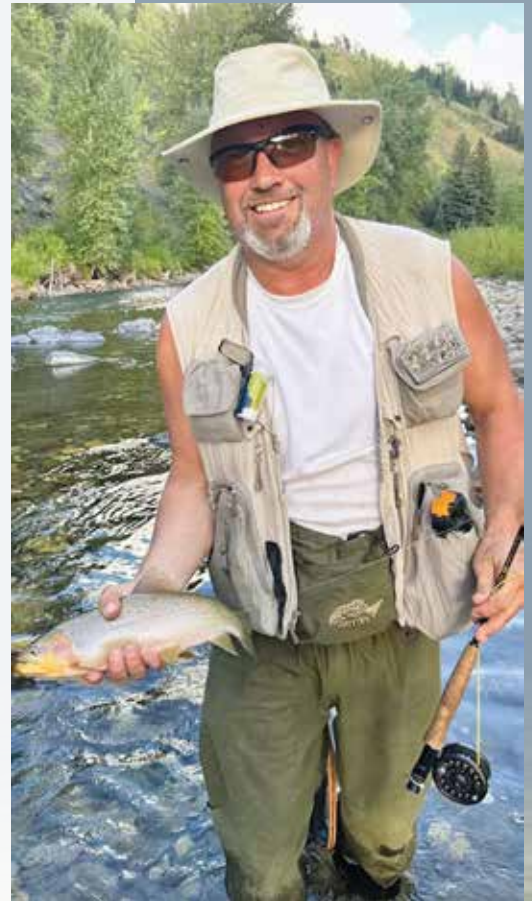
Those who knew Rod knew he had a few favourites. He loved his Weiser's old fashioned and one of his new favourites, Bumbu Rum, with a side of salt and pepper chips. Whenever we had a social event, Rod would show up with his Wisers's pre-mixed old fashioned. One night, he convinced us all to have an old fashioned sitting in the lounge at the Double Tree in Edmonton, and since then, it's been his thing.

Rod loved his family and was so proud of his girls. He and his family had just finished building their cabin in Fernie and were out there every chance they got. Rod also loved his dog, I think that might have been his best friend.

Rod was a leader to AEFAA. He was a man with grit and integrity, a kind heart, and the sensitivity to listen. He had a contagious smile and laugh, with the humour of Letterkenny and Shoresy.

Rod, we celebrate your life and the impact you had on all of us. Your legacy will live on through AEFAA in the lives you've touched and in the memories you leave behind.

Cheers to a life well lived. We will miss you dearly. ■



# AEFAA 2025 Spring Conference & Trade Show

## Navigating a Changing Landscape

Red Deer Hotel & Casino, May 12-15, 2025

### Monday, May 12

7:45 - 4:00 p.m.	Golf	Alberta Springs Golf Resort
9:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Professional Development: Mental Health and the Workplace	Monaco
5:00 - 9:00 p.m.	Conference Registration	Event Centre
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.	President's Reception	Event Centre

### Tuesday, May 13

7:30 - 9:00 a.m.	Conference Registration	Hotel Lobby
9:00- 10:15 a.m.	Opening/Keynote	Monaco
10:30 - 12:00 p.m.	ABSA	Sorrento
12:00 - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch	Monaco
2:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Trade Show (Movie Character Theme)	Event Centre
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Dinner	Event Centre
7:00 - 8:00 p.m.	Draws	Event Centre
8:00 -12:00 p.m.	Social	Event Centre

### Wednesday, May 14

7:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Monaco
8:30- 10:00 a.m.	Session: EAI Jay Manroharan	Monaco
10:15 - 12:00 p.m.	Session: Round Table Discussions	Monaco
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch	Monaco
1:00 - 2:15 p.m.	Session: Modularity - S. MacDonald	Monaco
2:30 - 4:00 p.m.	AGM	Monaco
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.	Banquet & Entertainment: Comedian - Bob Beddow	Monaco

### Thursday, May 15

7:00 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast	Monaco
8:30 - 9:45 am.	Zone Meetings: Conference & TS summary	Monaco
10:00 - 11:30 a.m.	Session: Alberta Infrastructure - Ross Newton/IMR/CMR	
10:00 - 11:30 a.m.	Session: Concrete Floors - Pros & Cons	
12:00 - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch & Closing	Monaco

# Rising from the ashes

## The Grande Yellowhead Public School Division works tirelessly to reopen schools after 2024 Jasper wildfires

By Shayna Wiwierski



*Although both of Jasper's schools - Jasper Junior/Senior High School and Ecole Jasper Elementary - were untouched by flames, smoke and soot carried through windows left ajar for summer ventilation.*

**W**hen wildfire tore through Jasper last July, reducing a third of the town to rubble and ash, the Grande Yellowhead Public School Division faced a test it hadn't fully anticipated.

Two of its schools — Jasper Junior/Senior High School and

École Jasper Elementary — stood untouched by flames, spared by a firebreak just a block and a half away. But the reprieve was deceptive. Smoke and soot, carried through windows left ajar for summer ventilation, had infiltrated the buildings, coating ceilings, pipes, and HVAC systems with a toxic residue. With the school year

looming, the division scrambled to restore safety and stability to a community reeling from loss.

"Some windows were left open because, of course, custodians open windows since we shut our ventilation off for the summer," says Brian Orge, director of facility services for the Grande Yellowhead Public School Division. "This

allowed the soot and smoke to enter the building.”

Testing by a hygienist in mid-August, after the town’s evacuation was lifted, revealed elevated concentrations of ash and smoke particulates — a health hazard that demanded swift action.

The fire, sparked by lightning strikes in early July, had escalated into a “fire tornado” by July 24, driven by high winds and ember showers. Over 25,000 people fled and 358 structures burned. For the schools, the damage was insidious rather than structural. Ceiling tiles, pipe insulation, and even fire detectors were compromised.

“We ended up replacing the fire panel at Jasper Elementary because the detectors had dirt buildup from the smoke,” Orge explained. “We couldn’t buy parts, so we had to replace the whole system.”

With students due back in early September, the division turned to Premier Fire and Flood, a restoration firm, and mobilized a small army of workers — at times, over 300 people across the two schools. T-bar ceiling tiles were discarded rather than cleaned, a cost-effective choice in the end. HVAC systems were scrubbed, insulation swapped out, and loose papers – irreparable once contaminated – were removed. The schools reopened on September 17th, just two weeks behind schedule, a feat Orge called “rather impressive.”

Dale Karpluk, the school board chair and Jasper trustee, underscored the urgency felt by parents.

“One parent said it best: ‘Give us a school to return to, and we will show you community regrowth,’” she recounted. Forty per cent of staff had lost homes, and parents, grappling with insurance claims and displacement, saw the schools as an anchor. “They needed stability for the children.”

Initial estimates suggested months of delay, an “unacceptable”

*Testing by a hygienist in mid-August, after the town’s evacuation was lifted, revealed elevated concentrations of ash and smoke particulates — a health hazard that demanded swift action.*



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*Smoke and soot had infiltrated the schools, coating ceilings, pipes, and HVAC systems with a toxic residue.*



*With students due back in early September, the division turned to Premier Fire and Flood, a restoration firm, and mobilized a small army of workers — at times, over 300 people across the two schools.*



prospect that spurred Karpluk to lobby provincial officials, including the education minister and local MLAs. The result? Double-shifted crews and extended hours slashed the timeline to mere weeks.

The division's emergency plan, while robust for evacuations and honed by prior wildfires in nearby Edson and Lobstick, hadn't accounted for this scenario — a summer disaster with no students present but facilities compromised.

"We didn't have anything in place for that," says Orge. Remote checks ensured ventilation was

*For the schools, the damage was insidious rather than structural. Ceiling tiles, pipe insulation, and even fire detectors were compromised.*

off, but open windows proved a vulnerability. Going forward, he said that they'll make sure units are shut down harder and windows closed tight.

Communication with the community was steady, with weekly updates to staff and parents once re-entry was permitted on August 16. The schools emerged not just restored, but as symbols of resilience.

"It will be a long time to recover in Jasper, but our schools are open and our children are learning. Our teachers are marvelous, still dealing with many of their own challenges, but we are getting support that is needed for trauma to our families," says Karpluk. "We are continuing to ensure we have a plan ready for emergency preparedness for this summer coming up." ■



*The schools reopened on September 17th, just two weeks behind schedule.*



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# Stronger than the storm

## \$23-million modernization merges two schools into one in Fort Vermilion

By Shayna Wiwierski



*The Fort Vermilion Public School and St. Mary's Catholic School modernization and expansion, completed in September 2024, merged two distinct institutions into a single, state-of-the-art facility.*

In the northern Alberta community of Fort Vermilion, a school construction project has redefined educational infrastructure for generations to come.

The Fort Vermilion Public School and St. Mary's Catholic School modernization and expansion, completed in September 2024,

merged two distinct institutions into a single, state-of-the-art facility. Spanning 3,632 square metres, this ambitious endeavour addressed urgent community needs while overcoming logistical and environmental challenges.

The need for this project traces back to May 2020, when the Peace River overflowed its banks,

devastating St. Mary's Elementary School, which served students from kindergarten to Grade 6.

"The flood destroyed the elementary school, leaving us with just the Fort Vermilion Public School, which was originally built for Grades 7 to 12," says Reuben Peters, supervisor and maintenance at Fort Vermilion

School Division (FVSD). “It wasn’t big enough to house K-12.”

With the elementary school situated in a flood zone, the community faced a stark reality: students were scattered across makeshift arrangements, including rented spaces in town for kindergarten and other campuses for high schoolers. The need for a unified, modern facility became necessary.

The Alberta government approved more than \$15 million for the modernization project which would be delivered by the FVSD. The total was boosted to \$23 million with additional funding coming from the St. Mary’s flood damage insurance payout and the FVSD.

The solution was to expand and modernize the existing Fort Vermilion Public School, located on higher ground outside the flood zone, into a shared space for both schools. Construction began in late fall 2022 and wrapped up just in time for the 2024 school year. Today, the building retains the distinct identities of St. Mary’s Elementary (K-6) and Fort Vermilion Public School (7-12), offering a blend of public and Catholic education under one roof—an arrangement that is unique, yet practical.

JEN COL Construction Ltd., the general contractors on the project – selected through a competitive tender process in October 2022 – spearheaded the project with a stipulated-sum contract. Rene Dubeau, JEN COL’s project director, outlines the two-phase strategy that allowed the school to remain operational throughout construction.



*The solution was to expand and modernize the existing Fort Vermilion Public School, located on higher ground outside the flood zone, into a shared space for both schools.*

A red promotional banner for Caster Town. At the top left is the Caster Town logo, a stylized 'C' with wings. To its right is the text "CASTER TOWN" in large white letters, with the website "www.castertown.com" below it. Below the logo and text is a row of eight white icons representing various industrial equipment: a hand truck, a wheelbarrow, a pallet jack, a wheel, a floor buffer, a floor sander, a pallet jack, and a pallet jack. Below the icons is the text "Proudly Canadian" in white, followed by "Owned &amp; Operated for 50 years" and the phone number "1-800-665-1348". At the bottom are two circular icons: a maple leaf on the left and a "50 YEARS" anniversary seal on the right. In the center, there are four bullet points: "Vancouver", "Edmonton", "Calgary", and "Saskatchewan".

A black and yellow promotional banner for Penner Doors &amp; Hardware. The top section is black with the letters "P" and "D" in white on yellow squares, followed by "PENNER" in white and "DOORS AND HARDWARE" in yellow. Below this is a yellow section with the text "For over 39 years, Penner Doors &amp; Hardware has been the trusted name in Alberta’s educational facilities." followed by a list of services: "Doors", "Frames", "Hardware", "Washroom Accessories", "Touchless Access Solutions", "Lockers", "Whiteboards", "Toilet Partitions", "Automatic Operators", and "Security Solutions &amp; More". The bottom section is black with the text "Calgary | Edmonton | Red Deer | Saskatoon | Winnipeg" in white, followed by "pennerdoors.com | 1-888-871-3667 | orders@pennerdoors.com" and a QR code.

***The revamped school is a single-storey structure for the most part, with a small mezzanine above the library and elevated mechanical rooms.***



***Today, the building retains the distinct identities of St. Mary's Elementary (K-6) and Fort Vermilion Public School (7-12), offering a blend of public and Catholic education under one roof—an arrangement that is unique, yet practical.***



***The library, an early childhood services (ECS) classroom, washrooms, and other areas underwent modernization.***

“Phase 1 involved building a new addition—six classrooms and a mechanical room—while students stayed in the existing school,” says Dubeau. Simultaneously, the library, an early childhood services (ECS) classroom, washrooms, and other areas underwent modernization. Once the addition was complete, students transitioned into the new wing, freeing up the original structure for Phase 2 – a full gut and redo of finishes, classroom layouts, and mechanical and electrical systems.

The school, originally constructed in the 1950s and '60s with subsequent additions, posed significant challenges. Dubeau says that it was a complex building that had different construction methods over the years. Hidden surprises, like structural issues with skylight relocations, required swift adaptation. Yet, the team—led by START Architecture, with MCW Hemisphere Ltd. (mechanical/electrical) and McElhanney (structural)—handled these hurdles adeptly, ensuring the project stayed on schedule and within budget.

The revamped school is a single-storey structure for the most part, with a small mezzanine above the library and elevated mechanical rooms. The expansion replaced outdated modular classrooms with 11 new classrooms, a science lab, a gymnasium, and a main library. Career and Technology Studies (CTS) spaces, including a wood shop, welding and mechanics shops, and a commercial kitchen with adjacent home-economic-style kitchens, equip students with hands-on skills. Breakout rooms and a cultural space for First Nations traditional teachings further enhance the facility's

versatility. For St. Mary's students, optional Catholic education classes remain a cornerstone, preserving the school's heritage.

The \$23 million project was built to meet LEED certification—a testament to its sustainability focus. Dubeau says they sorted demolition materials for recycling and opened up salvaging opportunities for the community.

Fort Vermilion's remote location, six hours north of Edmonton, amplified the project's complexity. JEN COL leaned heavily on local talent, bolstering the economy with subtrades like G&M Plumbing and Heating (Grande Prairie) and Jacar Electric Ltd. (local to the area). This approach not only mitigated logistical headaches, but also fostered community goodwill.

Safety was paramount, given the occupied site.

"Maintaining a safe learning environment while we worked was a big challenge," Dubeau reflects. JEN COL tailored its schedule to the school's, partnering closely with administrators to minimize disruption over the 20-month timeline.

Peters echoes this sentiment: "They took care of everything really well."

For Fort Vermilion, the project's completion marks more than just a new building—it's a lifeline after years of patchwork solutions.

"We were really needing an upgraded, expanded, modern facility," Peters emphasizes. "The result is a school that not only meets educational demands, but also reflects the community's resilience and cultural diversity." ■



*The expansion replaced outdated modular classrooms with 11 new classrooms, a science lab, a gymnasium, and a main library.*



*Habitat Systems seeks input from the inclusive play experts at Landscape Structures to create designs that include unique perspectives of people with disabilities. Seen here is the Shouldice Park, which is an inclusive playground in Calgary by Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities.*



## Embracing diversity through inclusive play

**Y**ou know the sound — the eruption of excitement as kids leap up from their desks and out the doors onto the playground at lunchtime. A school playground is a place of unscripted games, navigating intricate routes of escape from capture, and sliding, spinning, and screaming to shake off the classroom. It's where you hang out with friends and create worlds of fun.

At Habitat Systems, we want to ensure every kid can join in on that fun. That's why we've created accessible play experiences with Landscape Structures playground equipment across Western Canada for over 25 years. We seek input from the inclusive play experts at Landscape Structures to create designs that include unique perspectives of people with disabilities. At its heart, inclusivity is about belonging, and the design of a space impacts how you feel and how you can interact with others.

### **Everyone can participate when a design is inclusive**

We understand that play is essential for a child's physical, cognitive, and psychological well-being. Children discover and learn through play, and a well-designed inclusive playground can facilitate social, emotional, and physical learning. Ease of access gives children the independence to choose what play features they want to use. For example, using rubber surfacing to access all the swings (instead of just the "accessible" one) gives kids the choice to use any swing they want to try. The design itself should promote and allow for different types of engagement.

### **The seven principles of inclusive design**

**1. Inclusive** – so everyone can use it safely, easily, and with dignity.



*Children discover and learn through play, and a well-designed inclusive playground can facilitate social, emotional, and physical learning. Seen here is the Ed Thompson Inclusive Park in Pearland, Texas.*

- 2. Responsive** – taking account of what people say they need and want.
- 3. Flexible** – so different people can use it in different ways.
- 4. Convenient** – so everyone can use it without too much effort or separation.
- 5. Accommodating** for all people, regardless of age, gender, mobility, ethnicity, or circumstances.
- 6. Welcoming** – with no disabling barriers that might exclude some people.
- 7. Realistic** – offering more than one solution to help balance everyone’s needs and recognizing that one solution may not work for all.

True inclusion can be found in projects like the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Playgrounds at Shouldice Park in Calgary and Clareview Park near Edmonton. Pour-in-place rubber surfacing throughout the play space means that kids and adults who use mobility devices can access all play elements. Ramps with play panels lead to slides, climbers, and the multi-



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Day Ranch Park in Utah.

user Sway Fun, allowing children using a mobility device to be in the thick of the action. Kids can find stimulation on the spinners, We-saw, and swings, or find quiet places to self-regulate. Everyone

has different abilities and, given the right access and a non-prescriptive design, can choose anything they want to engage with.

Creating exciting and inclusive playground designs that expand

what you thought was possible is what we're all about. We are proud of our history with Landscape Structures who offer an outstanding warranty on their products. Our services continue after the playground is in the ground with our exceptional parts program. With a dedicated operations department, we ensure that warranty claims and replacement parts are handled promptly.

Inclusive play has come a long way, and there are so many more options than ramps. We can help you create a playground that's accessible for wheelchair users, sensitive to children with disorders like autism and down syndrome, engaging to children with reduced vision and hearing impairment, or all the above. We take great pride in the spaces we've created, and we'd love to create a Habitat playground with your school. ■





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# How you should actually build redundancy into large centralized equipment

**T**here is a tremendous amount of variation in what different facilities' requirements are for the "up-time" (i.e. when a piece of equipment can function and meet all system needs) of their various pieces of centralized equipment. In some cases, up-time does not have to be guaranteed at all, but in most cases there's a demand that even if things are not working correctly, the system does not get starved of capacity.

In some cases, this is even a code requirement. Hospitals in many jurisdictions are required to have double the heating plant capacity that the facility will actually require in its design load. But that begs the question, what is this redundant capacity meant to achieve? Say there are two boilers, each around 2,000 MBH, servicing a heating load they're each individually capable of satisfying. This meets the hospitals' code requirement for spare capacity, but is this delivering useful or efficient redundancy?

First, consider the question of capacity. In most cases, design heat load calculations tend to be reasonably conservative, building in some buffer into the design as a safety factor. Then the system is designed with flow rates and "heat terminal units" (i.e. the actual

heat emitters in the space, be it radiant slabs, baseboard, fan coils, etc.) that are sized appropriately to deliver the design heat load into the space, and only the design load. So, this means that it's both very unlikely you'll ever actually need anything greater than the 2,000MBH each boiler can produce, and that even if you did need capacity, you probably couldn't deliver it to the space.

So, what's the use in having redundancy if the spare capacity can't be used anyway? Well, if one of the boilers is suddenly taken out of operation by a component issue, or for general service, then the other unit jumps in to take over. But what this means is that what you really needed for your plant was not spare capacity, it was spare stages. That's where "N+1" design methodology comes into play, "N" being the number of stages required to meet load, and the "+" number referring to the number of redundant stages.

Why not put five 500MBH boilers into the same system (code notwithstanding)? If only one boiler can go out of operation and still leave capacity for the design load, that's still N+1 redundancy. But we've taken 1,500MBH off the gas piping requirements, resulting in downsized lines and metres. We've probably shrunk the pumping power requirements,

header sizes, vent costs, part costs, and much more. On top of that, according to ASHRAE, for about 80 per cent of the heating season a facility operates at 50 per cent of design heat load or less, so for 80 per cent of the heating season, the five-boiler system operates at N+3 redundancy, while the traditional two-boiler system never exceeds N+1.

There are other benefits as well, such as that the equipment is far more likely to be able to modulate well to avoid shoulder season cycling issues, and the service requirements for each piece of equipment are easier to meet as all the hardware will be lighter and less difficult to work on. You could also take this further and put six 399MBH boilers into the plant, still achieving only N+1 on the design load, but even higher plant turndown, and now the individual units are under the CSD-1 code threshold and more technicians will meet the licensing requirements to start up and service the equipment.

What's true for boilers in this example is also true for other centralized equipment, though the specific advantages may vary by application. As long as redundancy is thought of in terms of stages, however, tighter and lower cost designs that lose none of their true redundancy will follow. ■

# Preventative maintenance and inspection programs

By Tyler Cudmore, Service Manager – Royal Stewart Ltd.

**W**hether a piece of equipment within your facility is a complex custom form-folding curtain which matches ceiling slopes and peaks, a straight-forward and common wall-mounted side-folding basketball backstop, or a simple bronze floor ring with drop-in cap covering a steel floor socket grouted into the slab of your gymnasium floor, issues can arise that can endanger users and students, damage equipment, or even both. Indoor equipment inspections which entail preventive maintenance can ensure the longevity of equipment, eliminate costly emergency repairs and keep users and personnel out of harm's way.



*Indoor equipment inspections which entail preventive maintenance can ensure the longevity of equipment, eliminate costly emergency repairs and keep users and personnel out of harm's way.*

Although all equipment should be regularly inspected, there are obviously some items within your gymnasium which would present a more significant hazard should a failure occur. Ceiling-mounted basketball backstops can weigh well over a thousand pounds plus live loads when being operated and are trusted to be held up with little more than quarter-inch aircraft cable, and associated frame and hinge hardware. Seized pulleys and cable misalignment are common culprits in failures which can be catastrophic. Preventative maintenance measures for backstops can include scheduled inspections, lubrication where required, and the addition of safety straps.

Hazards should not always keep you looking up, waiting for the sky to fall. They can also be at the tip of your toes. Floor sockets, rings, and drop-in caps also require regular examination and maintenance. Buildup of floor finish, dirt, and debris can cause a cap to sit unlevel and present a trip hazard to athletes, users, or even passersby. Regular checks and cleaning of the rings, caps, and steel sleeves can easily be completed at a custodial level and at more common intervals.

Anchoring of wall-mounted equipment is always of concern and should be routinely checked as well. The majority of older equipment is typically anchored

using expansion anchors or some sort of shield anchor into cinderblock or concrete gymnasium walls. Vibrations from normal gameplay can loosen this hardware and is not uncommon to occur over time. Anything with a bolt head or through bolt nut should have a wrench put on it to ensure anchoring is tight and secure. This is not limited to backstops, but also chin-up bars, peg boards, climbing frames, and even white boards, panel covers, and anything which may experience impacts.

Many issues are not real safety concerns but rather, equipment operation issues. Like a daily driver/passenger vehicle, equipment in your facility is subject to standard wear and tear as well. Walk-draw divider curtains that once pulled easily along their tracks will always become more and more difficult to operate when the rollers and tracking collect dust, develop flat or uneven spots, and end up disconnecting chains and S-hooks. These components should be cleaned and lubricated to keep those curtains moving freely and smoothly. Older scoreboards are another good example. Protective cages can help prevent dented panels, broken bulbs, and controller-to-board communication issues due to loose or faulty connections caused by impacts of volleyballs, basketballs, or other equipment.


With the growing size of many divisions and often shrinking budgets allocated to maintenance, upkeep, and repairs, the thought of implementing an inspection and preventative maintenance program can be quite discouraging. However, it does not need to break the budget. It is very common to develop a rotation that spans three, four, or even five years. With only a portion of the schools being inspected, it allows for those smaller preventive issues to be addressed, as well as some, if not the majority of more serious findings to be rectified within the same budget year.

There are many benefits in developing and implementing an inspection program such as this. First and foremost is the safety of students and users in the space. Peace of mind knowing trained professionals have ensured equipment is in safe operating condition, and severe issues, if present, have been discovered; as they can often go unnoticed from ground level. It also addresses the maintenance issues which are not directly associated with safety as noted above. A key factor for the maintenance team is planning for future budgetary considerations and capital requests. It allows for more accurate long-term planning on the replacement of larger ticket items such as electric curtains, basketball backstops, and bleachers. Lastly, it helps us, your gymnasium equipment specialists. We are able to maintain a plethora of information on all your facilities, which helps us accurately identify equipment when work is required and enables us to efficiently plan and action repairs.


Royal Stewart Ltd. has been performing these services for numerous divisions and facilities for years and pride ourselves in assisting with the upkeep through a thorough inspection and onsite preventative maintenance program. Additional information, examples of our completed inspection forms, and pricing for the service is only a phone call away. ■



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# How WANDA technology can help Alberta schools stay clean, compliant, and stress-free



WANDA's IoT sensors can track exactly when and where a cleaning is needed.



WANDA's AI analyzes data to help schools make better decisions about cleaning schedules, supply orders, and maintenance planning.

Let's face it—schools are busy places. Between students dashing between classes, teachers juggling lesson plans, and custodians working tirelessly to keep everything clean, it can feel like a never-ending cycle of organized chaos. But what if there was a way to make things a little easier? Enter WANDA technology, the superhero of school cleanliness, here to save the day with IoT and AI-powered solutions.

## Keeping custodial teams one step ahead

Gone are the days of cleaning schedules based on best guesses. WANDA's IoT sensors can track exactly when and where a cleaning is needed. Think of it as a crystal ball for custodians—except way

more practical and way less mystical. Here's what it does:

- Tracks usage data: Instead of cleaning every classroom and washroom on a strict schedule, WANDA detects high-traffic areas and sends alerts when a touch-up is actually needed.
- Saves time and effort: Why clean an already spotless washroom when you could focus on the one that looks like it hosted a mud-wrestling match at lunch?
- Keeps supplies stocked: No more surprise “there’s no toilet paper!” emergencies—WANDA keeps tabs on inventory and lets custodians know when refills are needed.

With WANDA, custodial staff can work smarter, not harder. Less

running around, more targeted cleaning—what's not to love?

## AI-powered decision-making (without the sci-fi drama)

AI can sometimes sound intimidating—like it's going to take over the world. But don't worry, WANDA's AI is here for good, not evil. Instead of plotting world domination, it analyzes data to help schools make better decisions about cleaning schedules, supply orders, and maintenance planning.

- Predicts cleaning needs: Based on past trends, WANDA can predict when areas will need attention before they become disasters.
- Spots trouble areas: Maybe that one hallway always gets

*Gone are the days of cleaning schedules based on best guesses. WANDA's IoT sensors can track exactly when and where a cleaning is needed. Think of it as a crystal ball for custodians—except way more practical and way less mystical.*

mysteriously sticky—WANDA can pinpoint problem zones so staff can take action.

- Cuts down on waste: No more over-cleaning or over-ordering supplies—just efficient, cost-effective operations.

It's like having a super-intelligent assistant who never takes a coffee break (but if it did, it would probably prefer a double-double).

### Healthier schools, happier people

Clean schools aren't just about looking nice (though that's a bonus). They help keep students and staff healthy by reducing the spread of germs. WANDA helps:

- Minimize absenteeism: Fewer germs mean fewer sick days for students and teachers.
- Increase accountability: Everyone can see what's been cleaned and when—so no more guessing games.
- Reassure parents and staff: A school that's visibly clean (and actually clean) builds trust with parents, teachers, and students.

In short, WANDA helps make schools the best version of themselves—clean, compliant, and full of happy, healthy learners.

### Easy to use, easy to love

The best part? WANDA isn't some complicated tech that requires an IT degree to operate. It's user-friendly, seamlessly integrates with existing custodial teams, and can be used across multiple schools.

- Works with current staff: No need for extra hires—just smarter workflows.

- Minimal training needed: If you can use a smartphone, you can use WANDA.
- Scalable for any school: Whether it's a small elementary school or a massive high school, WANDA can handle it.

### The bottom line

WANDA technology is here to take the hassle out of school cleanliness. With smart IoT

solutions, AI-powered insights, and stress-free compliance tracking, it helps Alberta schools run more efficiently, stay healthier, and save money.

So, if your school wants to cut down on cleaning chaos and step into the future of facility management, it's time to give WANDA a call (well, not literally—it's a system, not a person. But you get the idea!). ■



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**B**ased in Edmonton, Alta., Harding Technologies was founded by a team of University of Alberta professors in response to requests for the development of high-technology electronic products. For over five decades, this privately owned Canadian company specializes in the design and manufacture of sophisticated communication systems, advanced technology electronic products, and life safety systems. Harding Technologies has been at the forefront of electronic innovation, providing cutting-edge solutions, and has grown to include products and services

for both OEM customers and for its own corporate lines. Their engineering, manufacturing, and marketing teams service worldwide customers with a variety of solutions to meet the requirements of vastly different markets and applications.

## **Excellence in communication technology**

Harding Technologies is a leader in the design and manufacturing of robust intercom systems, particularly for high-security environments and industrial applications. Their systems ensure clear, reliable

communication in the most demanding settings, enhancing security and operational efficiency.

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Harding Technologies' MicroComm intercom systems are designed with advanced technology to meet the needs of modern facilities, offering:

- Multi-zone paging and intercom functions – Allows targeted or facility-wide announcements with high-quality audio.

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- Scalable and customizable solutions – Tailored configurations to fit the needs of small offices, large industrial plants, education facilities, and high-security institutions.
- User-friendly interfaces – Intuitive software and controls for easy operation and monitoring.
- High-durability hardware – Built for reliable performance in demanding environments.

### Introducing the Network-Wide Paging System

Harding Technologies is proud to introduce the newest addition to their product line up, the Network-Wide Paging System. Designed for large-scale facilities, industrial complexes, corporate environments, and educational institutions, this system provides:


- Crystal-clear voice paging over IP networks - Eliminating the need for dedicated wiring.
- Seamless integration with existing network infrastructure - Ensuring efficient deployment.
- Scalable and flexible configurations – Able to accommodate facilities of any size.
- High-reliability, durable components - Ensuring long-term performance.

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*Harding Technologies is a leader in the design and manufacturing of robust intercom systems, particularly for high-security environments and industrial applications.*



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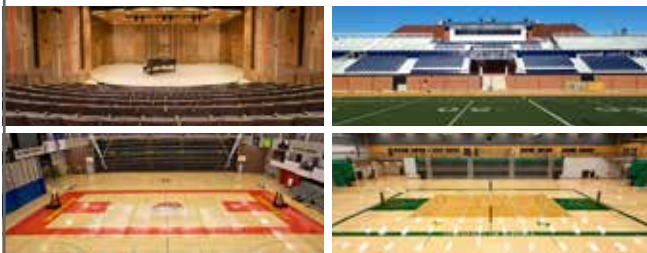

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## Commitment to quality and innovation

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