

.....BLACKFALDS IS HOME TO ICE.....

There's always that first step in skating, from dry ground to slick ice, when it just seems impossible. Impossible that two, thin blades of metal will support you, impossible that because its molecules have begun to dance a little slower, water will hold you up. - Carl Goodman

When Fall is over, many of us begin to feel a sense of dread because winter is right around the corner along with the snow, cold and ice.

Yet as Canadians and particularly Albertans, there are those who embrace the cold, the snow and the ice by way of winter sports and activities.

In Blackfalds, residents adhere to all active lifestyles, including the winter ones, which is why the Town actively provides places that are unique, natural and fun for the whole family.

As soon as the temperatures drop consistently cold enough for water to freeze, our Parks Division gets busy creating outdoor rinks. There are rinks in

the community that are man-made, like at Pine Crescent and the Multi-Plex. But there are those rinks that cannot be created by man alone.

Riser Pond is a community green space where you will find a naturally made ice rink.

The only help the rink needs is some flooding and maintenance from Town Staff to give our residents a safe and fun environment for skating.

Jeff Heindel, Community

Services Parks and Facilities Manager says that the Parks Division uses a process to make sure that the ice is safe and secure for public use.

"[The] Parks Division monitors water levels to ensure a space can be maintained. Sometimes water levels are too low

and we are unable to safely clear off and maintain the space." He adds, "Once the ice is more than 10" thick, we can take machinery and hose flood [it] with our water truck."

In a natural setting, things are quieter and less busy – individuals can reflect on the day, decompress, and enjoy the serenity of the space.
~Jeff Heindel, Parks and Facilities Manager

(grass, asphalt or concrete) are not fully covered, the space will be closed until the ice can be built back to a safe thickness Heindel says that there are many benefits to having outdoor rinks such as these.

"These spaces are typically oriented to families with small children intended for skating and children's games rather than fast paced ice hockey."

Heindel also suggests that in a "natural setting, things are quieter and less busy where individuals can reflect on the day, decompress, and enjoy the serenity of the space."

We love bringing these natural spaces to our residents and

their families, but we do stress that with these rinks, come responsibilities:

- Obey all posted signage when using these areas.
- Stay off the ponds when they are closed, especially if there is standing water.
- Be respectful of others when using the snowbank rinks or ponds, and refrain from using poor language.

Our snowbank rink is located at Centennial Park and our pond rink is at Riser Pond.

You can also enjoy our man-made outdoor rinks next to the Multi-Plex Arena and a newly built rink at Pine Crescent.

Outdoor rink at the Multi-Plex Arena in Blackfalds. Photo Credit: Bernie Tiemstra

