

## New food bank open in Wilberforce



Manager of the Wilberforce Food Bank, Ken Mott has been busy stacking food on the shelves at the new food hub location in Highlands East. Located at 2249 Loop Road, the food bank has been open to the public since Jan. 6 and is already filled with jars of pasta sauce, tubs of peanut butter and frozen meals. ANGELICA INGRAM Staff

### **By Angelica Ingram**

A volunteer at the Wilberforce Food Bank pushes a red cart along two rows of shelves that stretch from floor to ceiling. The shelves are arranged with stacks of food, just like they would at a grocery store.

Down the aisle you see tubs of peanut butter, packages of rice, boxes of crackers, tea and much more.

The facility seems like a store, with bright and natural light, and a clean, friendly atmosphere.

Residents of the community come into the building, where they are met with smiles, laughter and familiar faces.

They start their shopping process and a volunteer helps them fill the cart with items they would like.

It's a comfortable environment that almost feels like a community hub.

The Wilberforce Food Bank opened its new location on Jan. 6 and the place has been buzzing ever since.

Located at 2249 Loop Rd., at the back of the Lloyd Watson Memorial Centre, the food bank moved from its previous temporary

home at the former Wilberforce library branch.

Food bank manager Ken Mott said the donations have been coming in steadily and he and the other volunteers have been busy picking up items from various locations.

?We do a fair amount of buying,? he said. ?You never know what you're going to get and when you're going to get it.?

A new, custom ordered fridge and freezer are set to arrive on Feb. 9, which Mott is looking forward to. The food bank has access to the adjoining kitchen in the Lloyd Watson Memorial Centre for programming.

A part of the Central Food Network, the food bank is run by a board of directors. The Cardiff Food Bank is also part of the CFN. The Wilberforce Food Bank has been working in conjunction with the Minden location and other provincial food banks.

Managing the Wilberforce Food Bank for the past 12 years, Mott said the usage varies, depending on the time of the month and year. The manager said in the summer the food bank can assist anywhere between 25 and 40 families. In the winter it can be upwards of 70 families.

The food bank has already been receiving frozen meals from the SIRCH Community Kitchen program, which it has distributed to the community, said Mott. A partnership with Foodland has resulted in regular bread donations that go into the freezer, ensuring longevity.

The Good Food Box program also works with the food bank, Mott said.

A garage door at the back of the building allows for trailers filled with food to back right up into the building, which allows more time for unloading and organizing.

The manager is thrilled with the accessible facility thus far, although space for food is always going to be an issue, he said.

A grand opening for the food bank is slated for the spring.

The Wilberforce Food Bank is open from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesdays and Fridays. The third Thursday of the month is the Good Food Box program from 12 to 2:30 p.m. For more information contact Mott at 705-935-1956.