All-time heat record set in Comox, daily records smashed all weekend

Erin Haluschak and Terry Farrell
Record staff

The Comox Valley has officially broken the record for the highest-ever recorded temperature at the Comox weather station.

On Sunday (June 27), temperatures reached 38.0 C, a temperature never reached since recording began in April 1914 at the station - part of what has been "just an absurd" heatwave underway across the province, said Armel Castellan, a warning preparedness meteorologist with Environment and Climate Change Canada.

"It is completely off the charts - we've never seen this before just in June. With solstice, the sun is highest in the sky. When we have these heat waves in July or August the sun is at a slightly different angle, which does make a bit of a difference."

Daily records were broken every day from Friday to Monday. On Friday, June 25, the Comox weather station recorded 32.9 C, surpassing the record of 31.1 C from 1925. On June 26, temperatures reached 34.0 C, breaking the 2000 record of 29.9 C. On Monday, the temperature rose to 36.8 C, breaking the 2015 record of 31.2 C.

"This is so historical, we can't use enough hyperbole," added Castellan.

With overnight lows not dropping below 22 C, Castellan said the lows are higher than the normal highs for this time of year.

"It's very difficult for a huge swath of the population to recover. Pay attention to those around you because it's so dangerous, particularly for those who live alone or are elderly with heat exhaustion or heat stroke."

He added the current heat wave hitting the province "has the fingerprints of climate change all over it," and added heat events are happening more frequently and are becoming longer-lasting.

Busy weekend for emergency services

Courtenay Fire Department was kept busy with 23 calls over the weekend, the majority of them heat-related.

"Six of them were first responder, and most likely heat played a part in those calls. It's hard to determine what some of the calls are with medical issues," said Bardonnex. "But I'd be willing to say the heat played a part in them."

One of the first responder calls Courtenay Fire attended ended in a casualty.

There were a couple of fire calls - one minor call that was caused by an extension cord, and a fire at the Pay Less Laundromat on Ryan Road.

"It turned out to be a dryer fire," said Bardonnex of the laundromat call-out. "The guys had to pull the dryers apart and put it out."

North Island College had several false alarm calls, as their heat sensors kept triggering.

"They will have to get a technician out to fix that," said Bardonnex.

As the intense heatwave continues, Bardonnex offered some general advice.

"If you've got air conditioning, just stay inside. If you don't make sure you stay cool and stay hydrated. Drink lots of water. Do your best to stay out of the sun and cool yourself as much as possible. Don't over-exert yourself."

He also asked residents to make sure their neighbours are OK.

"Check on your neighbours - especially those who are elderly and what not."

• • •

Comox Fire Rescue chief Gord Schreiner said while the weekend was relatively quiet, they are expecting their call load to increase this week.

Members have set up a misting tent and small sprinkler at the Comox Community Centre field across the street from the fire hall for the public to use throughout the day.

Schreiner noted they also assisted with the vaccine clinic at Glacier Gardens Arena throughout the weekend to help cool down the space with a misting fan, however they had to ensure they were not blowing air too far due to COVID-19.

He expects there may be additional calls for service throughout the week, particularly electrical failures and equipment such as air conditioners and fans are working overtime. He suggested giving large electronics a break periodically to ensure they are not overloaded.

The *Record* has also reached out to the Cumberland Fire Department for an update.

• • •

The Village of Cumberland has extended the hours of operation of the Village Park SprayPark. In order to provide residents with relief from the extreme heat, the hours will be from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. until June 30.

Typical hours are from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. from Victoria Day to Labour Day.

Businesses close to protect staff

Several businesses including restaurants in the Valley have closed temporarily to protect their staff from the extreme heat. Some food trucks recorded temperatures near 50C near their stoves.

Some businesses that are remaining open are assisting in helping people with the weather.

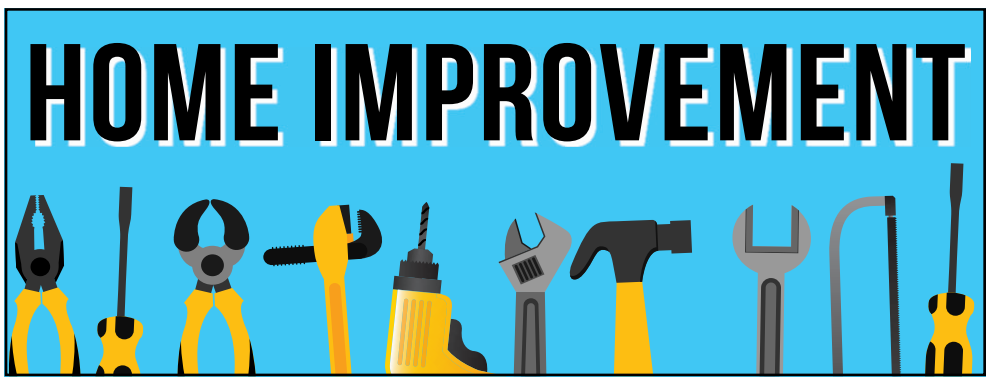
Comox Valley Cannabis Co., at 576 England Ave. in Courtenay, has had a cooler filled with bottled water sitting outside the store, offering free hydration to anyone who needs it.

"Sarah Potts deserves all the credit for this one," said operations manager Hannah . "Sarah is a shining star here. She took the initiative to bring in the bottles, the ice, the cooler. She hadn't even started her shift yet and she got that going. She's just a really helpful community person. I am sure happy I picked her to be on the team."

Hannah said the company is just trying to help out any way it can.

"It's just too hot," she said. "We are in the downtown community so we see a big movement of people that are definitely feeling challenged. This is just our way to help anyone get the resources they need."





Mike Van Holderbeke
Irrigation Services
250-334-7392
mvh.irrigation@hotmail.com
'The Irrigation Specialist'

HEATING • AIR CONDITIONING
REFRIGERATION • HRV'S
MAINTENANCE
RESIDENTIAL, INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL
FUJITSU
ThermoTec Mechanical ltd.
250-334-7782 | www.thermotec.ca

PET OF THE MONTH

EMAIL Your Favourite Photo to:
petofthemonth@woofys.ca
and be entered to win a
Woofy's $100 Gift Card from
WOOFY'S Pet Foods
Winner entry will be published in the Comox Valley Record's Animal Talk feature the following month. Be sure to include your name and contact info, pet's name and a short description for publication.
THE COMOX VALLEY Record

