

# Market Watch

<b>S&amp;P/TSX</b> 20,937.55 +66.20	<b>S&amp;P 500</b> 4,697.24 +8.56	<b>DOW</b> 37,466.11 +25.77	<b>NASDAQ</b> 14,524.07 +13.77	<b>DOLLAR</b> 74.92¢US +0.04¢	<b>OIL per barrel</b> US\$73.81 +\$1.62	<b>Nat. Gas/mmBTU</b> US\$2.89 +\$0.07	<b>GOLD</b> US\$2,049.80 -\$0.20
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## Red Sea attacks could have ripple effect on shippers – and consumers – in Canada

**CHRISTOPHER REYNOLDS**  
The Canadian Press

Canadian shippers and consumers could soon be feeling the ripple effect of attacks on cargo vessels in the Red Sea, as freight rates rise and delivery times lengthen.

Shipping firms across the globe are turning away from the key trade corridor after Houthi militants in Yemen stepped up attacks on commercial boats in the region to protest against Israel's military campaign in the Gaza Strip.

Shipping giant Maersk said Friday it plans to continue rerouting all vessels bound for the Suez Canal

around Africa's Cape of Good Hope "for the foreseeable future," following an earlier pause through the waterway linking Asia and Europe.

Other shipping companies, including MSC — the world's biggest container shipper — Hapag-Lloyd and Evergreen, have also suspended passage through the Red Sea's Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the focal point of dozens of attempted missile and drone strikes against cargo boats.

The route change adds one to three weeks and hundreds of thousands of dollars in extra fuel and labour costs per trip, resulting in potential price increases for wholesale and retail products. A voyage

from Singapore to Rotterdam in the Netherlands would take 26 days, while going around the southern tip of Africa would tack on 10 more, according to Werner Antweiler, chair in international trade policy at the University of British Columbia's Sauder School of Business.

Europe will feel the impact most directly, says Universite Laval business professor Yan Cimon. But consumer goods and some manufacturing parts destined for Canada also come via the canal, which carries roughly a third of global container traffic.

"Obviously we do significant trade with Europe, and we also import some commodities from Asia that may go through Suez," Cimon said.

"The shippers themselves will see also a big strain on their shipping capacity, because as ships are tied up through longer routes, they cannot be used on other routes."

Global container shipping rates surged 61 per cent in the past week alone, with hikes on service between Asia and North America as well, according to data from Drewry, a maritime industry research firm. Since Nov. 30, global rates have surged 93 per cent to US\$2,670 per 40-foot container from US\$1,382.

A severe drought in Panama has amplified the impact of the Red Sea no-go zone.

Many shipping services between Asia and North America's east coast had recently switched to the Suez Canal, instead of travelling the usual route across the Pacific Ocean and through the Panama Canal. The drought has sapped the canal of water, which is used to raise and lower ships at a dozen locks, prompting officials to cut the number of boats they let through the Central American waterway. The slashed slots have boosted fees and bottlenecks at the critical trade conduit between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and pushed some oil tankers and container ships to steer clear of the back-up by taking longer routes — typically via the Suez Canal.

Now, the Red Sea crisis is further affecting shipping costs. Since the beginning of December, rates rose 86 per cent for freight shipped from Southeast Asia to U.S. East Coast ports, and two-thirds from North Asia, according to data provider S&P Global Platts.

Even for cargo bound for the U.S. West Coast, rates jumped 81 per cent from Southeast Asia and 78 per cent from North Asia, illustrating the knock-on effects across the shipping world.

"Canada is, you could say, somewhat lucky that it's geographically dependent on North American and other global supply chains. Yet that doesn't mean we're not at risk," Cimon said.

## Precision Drilling meets debt reduction goal, on track to repay \$500 million by 2025

The Canadian Press

CALGARY  
Precision Drilling Corp. says its long-term debt reduction target is on track and it met its 2023 goal by shedding \$152 million of debt.

The Calgary-based energy services company ended the year with a cash balance of approximately \$55 million and total liquidity of around \$615 million.

In an update posted Friday, Precision says it is exceeding pace on its long-term debt reduction goal of repaying \$500 million between 2022 and 2025.

It says it also returned \$30 million to shareholders through share repurchases last year and plans to improve capital returns to shareholders in 2024 by increasing debt reduction and share buybacks.

The company says there is strong demand for its drilling services in Canada, with an average active rig count of 63 during the fourth quarter and 74 rigs currently active. It expects its rig count to peak in the low to mid-80s during the winter drilling season.

In the U.S., the company's average active rig count was 42 in the fourth quarter and has 43 rigs currently operating.

## Consumer and business insolvencies continued to rise in November

The Canadian Press

Insolvencies in November were 5.1 per cent higher than in October, and 24.4 per cent higher than a year earlier.

The Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy says consumer insolvencies were up 24 per cent in November compared with a year ago, while business insolvencies rose 36.8 per cent.

The data, which takes into account proposals and bankruptcies, shows insolvencies for both consumers and businesses continued to rise from pandemic lows.

Business insolvencies rose 41.8 per cent year-over-year in the third quarter of 2023, surpassing pre-pandemic levels.

However, consumer insolvencies in the third quarter were still below pre-pandemic levels.

In November, that trend continued — business insolvencies were higher than in November 2019, while consumer insolvencies were a little lower.

# PUBLIC NOTICES



### DEVELOPMENT PERMITS APPROVED DECEMBER 29, 2023 TO JANUARY 4, 2024 PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

#### COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL/INSTITUTIONAL

- 2360 DIVISION AVENUE NW** (Lot 1, Block 21, Plan 0110766) PLDP20230697. Two Fascia Signs.
- 76 2410 DIVISION AVENUE NW** (Lot 1, Block 21, Plan 0110766) PLDP20230924. Change Of Use (Offices).
- 110 3 STREET NE** (Lot 12, Block D, Plan 3921JK) PLDP20230931. Change Of Use (Offices).
- 962 19 STREET SW** (Lot 35 & 36, Block 21, Plan 3420AH) PLDP20230948. Change Of Use (Industrial Support Services).

#### HOME BUSINESS

- 40 COCKS WAY SE** (Lot 27, Block 8, Plan 1171LK) PLDP20230832. Home Business Minor. Janitorial Service.
- 402 194 SUNRISE CIRCLE SW** (Block 106, Plan 0712094) PLDP20230918. Home Business Minor. Consultant (Online Car Sales).
- 20 VISTA PLACE SE** (Lot 17, Block 8, Plan 0312916) PLDP20230932. Home Business Minor. Online Sales (Freeze-Dried Food/Crafts).
- 165 VISTA ROAD SE** (Lot 34, Block 7, Plan 0413377) PLDP20230934. Home Business Minor. Service (Mobile Dog Training).
- 177 7 STREET SE** (Lot 19, 20, Block 8, Plan 1132M) PLDP20230937. Home Business Minor. Sales/Distribution.

A person claiming to be affected by a decision of the Development Officer or the Municipal Planning Commission may appeal to the Medicine Hat Subdivision and Development Appeal Board by completing and submitting to the City Clerk Department, the required Notice of Appeal form within twenty one (21) days of this publication. Notice of Appeal forms are available from the City Clerk Department, Third Floor, City Hall or on the City's website at [www.medicinehat.ca](http://www.medicinehat.ca).

All Development Permits listed are subject to conditions. Further information on any Development Permit may be obtained from the Planning & Development Services Department, Second Floor, City Hall during normal business hours (Telephone 403.529.8374).

### REAL CHRISTMAS TREE RECYCLING

Recycle your real Christmas Tree anytime between December 27, 2023 – January 31, 2024 by dropping it off at one of the following convenient drop off locations:

- 20 Northlands Way NE – Northlands Co-op Recycling Depot
- 240 Kipling Street SE - Kipling Street Recycling Depot
- 3292 Dunmore Rd SE - Southwest corner of the Medicine Hat Mall parking lot

Prior to drop off, please remove all plastic bags, stands, tinsel and decorations.

Please note that artificial trees cannot be recycled in this program nor in the blue recycling cart program. Artificial trees that can no longer be used or donated should be discarded in the garbage. Refer to [www.medicinehat.ca/recycle](http://www.medicinehat.ca/recycle) for more information.

Alternatively, you can take your real Christmas Tree to the Compost Facility, or your artificial tree to the Landfill; both located within the Waste Management Facility.

The Waste Management Facility hours of operation are as follows:  
• Monday through Saturday  
o 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
• Closed on Sundays and all Statutory Holidays

Download the Recycle Coach App, refer to [www.medicinehat.ca/](http://www.medicinehat.ca/) landfill, or contact Environmental Utilities at 403-529-8176 for more information.

### PROTECT WATER LINES FROM FREEZING

The following actions should be considered to protect your water lines during the cold weather months:

- Repair broken windows and ensure windows/vents are closed during the winter.
- Insulate water pipes in unheated areas, including crawl spaces.
- For sinks located against a non-insulated outside wall:
  - Open the vanity door to allow warm air to reach the water pipes.
  - A light bulb placed near the water pipe may generate enough heat to keep the water flowing.
  - Heat tape wrapped around the pipe may keep the pipe from freezing.
- Residents of mobile homes should check the condition of the heat tape on their water service and water meter.
- Protect an unheated indoor water meter with an insulated box and water pipes should be wrapped in insulation using heat tape.
- Outside water faucets and underground sprinkler systems should have the water supply shut off inside the house at the isolation valve for the faucet/hose bib.
- Sprinkler lines and faucets should be drained/blown out.
- A thin stream of cold-water (as thick as a pen) running continuously from at least one faucet will help prevent a frozen water service.
- If you plan to be away from home over the winter period, close the main water isolation valve located next to the water meter in your home.
  - You should leave the heat on in your home and have someone check inside your home daily while you're away.

A frozen water service or a burst water pipe is an inconvenience and expense that most people would like to avoid. Please take all possible precautions to prevent this happening in your home or business.

For more information, refer to [www.medicinehat.ca/frozenwaterlines](http://www.medicinehat.ca/frozenwaterlines) or contact Environmental Utilities at 403-529-8176.

[www.medicinehat.ca](http://www.medicinehat.ca)

### 8AM - 4PM SPECIAL SERVICES

Electric Outages.....	403.529.8260
Gas Emergency.....	403.529.8191
Water & Sewer Emergency.....	403.502.8042
After Hours Special Services.....	403.526.2828

### GAS, ELECTRIC, WIND ENERGY RATES SET FOR JANUARY

**Medicine Hat - The City of Medicine Hat has set its January energy commodity rates.**

#### Natural Gas – all customers

The January natural gas default rate is \$1.9506 per gigajoule (GJ), down from the previous month of \$2.827 per GJ. On Nov. 20, 2023, City Council passed bylaw 4798 that amends the gas utility bylaw in order to provide consumers with a single natural gas rate starting Jan. 1, 2024. The rate is based on the weighted average cost of the City's natural gas purchases for the month of consumption, plus \$0.07/GJ to recover transactional costs and a small rate of return.

The variable rate for December 2023 is \$2.783 per GJ (including the \$1.00 premium), calculated based on the AECO (Alberta Energy Company) average market reference price plus \$1.00 per GJ.

Fixed and Variable natural gas contracts are no longer offered, and all customers have been transferred to the default rate effective Jan. 1, 2024. However, customers who have a pre-existing Fixed or Variable natural gas contract before Jan. 1, 2024 and wish to remain on contract have one month to reinstate their contract for the remainder of their existing term by contacting customer\_accounts@medicinehat.ca by the end of day on Jan. 31, 2024.

#### Electricity – Residential, Farm, Small and Medium Commercial, Unmetered Services and Rental Lighting

On Oct. 16, 2023, City Council passed an amendment to the Electric Utility Bylaw 2244 to establish a single best-of-market electricity rate for Residential, Farm, Small and Medium Commercial, Unmetered Services and Rental Lighting customers, not to exceed a maximum of 11 cents per kWh or go below a minimum rate of seven cents per kWh. The rate is based on a twelve-month, volume weighted forecast as per the ICE-NGX wholesale electricity energy market and will be recalculated on the first business day of January, April, July, and October.

Under the new formula, the January electricity default rate for Residential, Farm, Small and Medium Commercial, Unmetered Services and Rental Lighting customers is \$0.09232 per kilowatt hour (kWh), down from the previous month of \$0.10875/kWh for December.

On December 15, 2022, the Government of Alberta passed The Regulated Rate Option Stability Act through Bill 2: Inflation Relief Statutes Amendment Act which placed a temporary price ceiling of \$0.13500 per kilowatt hour in January, February and March 2023 for Albertans who purchase power on the Regulated Rate Option (RRO). As of April 1, 2023, the cost difference between the RRO electricity rate from January – March 2023 and the temporary price ceiling will be added to the current default rate to recover costs until December 2024. The January recovery rate of \$0.00812 per kWh will be added to the current default rate of \$0.0842 per kWh for a total billable rate of \$0.09232. For more details about the recovery rate, visit [medicinehat.ca/EnergyPlans](http://medicinehat.ca/EnergyPlans).

January 2024 (per kilowatt hour)	Rate per kWh
Default City of Medicine Hat electricity rate	\$0.0842
+ City of Medicine Hat recovery rate	+ \$0.00812
<b>City of Medicine Hat billed rate</b>	<b>\$0.09232</b>

#### Electricity - Large Commercial, Industrial and Street Lighting Customers

The January default electricity rate for Large Commercial, Industrial and Street Lighting customers is \$0.16897 per kilowatt hour. The rate is based on the average of the rates for owners whose regulated rate tariffs are approved by the Alberta Utilities Commission under section 103(2) of the Electric Utilities Act for that calendar month as posted by the Alberta Utilities Commission on its internet page under Regulated Rate Option Regulation.

January 2024 (per kilowatt hour)	Rate per kWh
Direct Energy Regulated Services	\$0.17350
ENMAX Energy Corporation	\$0.16311
EPCOR Energy Alberta GP (Edmonton)	\$0.17010
EPCOR Energy Alberta GP (outside Edmonton)	\$0.16917
<b>City of Medicine Hat Rate (based on the average)</b>	<b>\$0.16897</b>

The January variable contract electricity rate for Large Commercial, Industrial and Street Lighting customers is based on the monthly average Alberta Power Pool price as established and published by the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) plus \$0.02 per kilowatt hour. The rate for December 2023 is \$0.07205 per kWh.

#### Going Green Charge

Customers also have a "Going Green" surcharge on their bill. This surcharge is for renewable energy purchased for residential, farm, small and medium commercial customers.

The Going Green surcharge is calculated monthly to recover costs incurred to purchase renewable energy.

The Going Green surcharge for January is \$0.002 per kilowatt hour. For further information, please contact: [media@medicinehat.ca](mailto:media@medicinehat.ca)

1:45 PM  
**Your throat's constricting.**  
MedicAlert  
Speaks For You.  
[www.medicalert.ca](http://www.medicalert.ca) • 1-800-668-1507