

Tenders: 800 megawatts for Eastern Energy Alliance

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Alliance de l'énergie de l'Est is the big winner of the calls for tenders launched by Hydro-Québec for renewable and wind energy, generating unanimity among regional players.

The alliance, which brings together the energy authorities of the Lower Saint Lawrence and the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands, has seen three of its projects selected out of the seven accepted by the government corporation for a total of 800 megawatts of wind energy out of 1303 megawatts that it wishes to purchase.

"We were confident of winning at least one project, maybe two but, today, the news strikes the imagination with three partnerships in three farms. This is extraordinary news," exclaims the president of the Gaspé Peninsula Energy Board and mayor of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Simon Deschênes.

The alliance submitted six projects for a total of 1156 megawatts in the calls for tender launched on December 13, 2021. The first block sought by Hydro-Québec aimed to obtain 480 megawatts of energy from renewable sources and 300 megawatts from wind sources were made up the second block.

Hydro-Québec selected the Forêt Domaniale wind farm in the Montmagny region in Chaudière-Appalaches which will generate 180 megawatts in partnership with EDF in the wind component.

In calls for tenders for energy from renewable sources, the Pohénégamook-Picard-Saint-Antonin wind farm in the MRCs of Rivière-du-Loup and Témiscouata for a total of 350 megawatts with Invenergy, and Madawaska, Dégelis and Saint-Jean-de-la-Lande, in Témiscouata, in a tri-partnership with EDF and Hydro-Québec for 270 megawatts were also selected.

"By adding Hydro-Québec, it is one-third, one-third, one-third in terms of shareholding. This paves the way for other forms of partnerships with other producers and the provincial corporation. It opens doors to accelerate Quebec's energy transition. We are very proud of the results, especially this project in particular," adds Mr. Deschênes.

"This is the culmination of several years of work and representation to influence decision makers on the need and relevance of having 50% community participation. It has been said for a few years that wind power is the most productive energy to be built in Quebec today. Today is the culmination of it all. It is a source of great pride," says the president, who recalls that the best wind deposits are found in eastern Quebec.

Mr. Deschênes remains cautious about the necessary investments, which will be some \$2 billion, but the figures will have to be revised to take into account inflation and the rise in interest rates.

"The latest data seems to say it's about \$2.5 million per megawatt. We can believe that it will be an investment of more than \$2 billion. It has data that changed along the way. Everything will be done in the game of negotiations for the signing of contracts," says the mayor of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts while the contracts must be concluded by April 15.

Last year the Gaspesian energy organization handed over \$4.5 million in royalties with the approximately 350 megawatts coming from: Le Plateau 1 and 2 wind farms with a capacity of 45 megawatts and Ronceveaux (74.8 MW) on non-organized territory near the Plateaux de la Matapédia, in the Avignon MRC, Nicolas-Rioux wind farm south of Trois-Pistoles with a capacity of 224 megawatts and Dune du Nord in the Magdalen Islands with 6



Photo: Hydro-Québec

The map showing the projects selected by Hydro-Québec

megawatts of power.

Here, too, Mr. Deschênes remains cautious when he emphasizes that the "rule of three" should not be used to draw conclusions since the Alliance thus sees its production increase from 350 megawatts to some 1100 megawatts, once the three farms are commissioned by December 1, 2026, at the latest.

"If we invest major sums, there will be significant economic spinoffs. You have to be very careful. You can make a rule of three to imagine what it might look like, but be careful because it's not an exact science. Don't forget that in a park, we will only have one-third of the shareholding," warns Mr. Deschênes.

In addition to the three Eastern Alliance projects, two other projects are located in Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie.

The three Micmac Nations of the Gaspé Peninsula also obtain 102 megawatts in phase 2 of the Mesgi'g Ugju's'n wind farm in the MRC of Avignon with Innergex as a business partner. (See other article.)

The Saint-Damase II wind farm presented by the municipi-

pality of Saint-Damasse, near Matane, in partnership with Algonquin Power Trust with a capacity of 122 megawatts was selected in wind energy call for tenders.

Positive reactions

The announcement of more than 1,000 of the 1,300 megawatts in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Lower Saint Lawrence provoked a wave of positive reactions in the region.

Highlighting the 102 megawatts of phase 2 of the Mesgi'g Ugju's'n 2 park, the Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure notes that it is the only project to be built in the Gaspé Peninsula.

"I am proud to see that the Gaspé Peninsula is once again doing well with wind energy by once again establishing itself as a Quebec leader in the production of green energy. Since our Indigenous communities are at the heart of the project, there will certainly be significant socioeconomic benefits in Bonaventure (MRC), but also for the region as a whole," says Catherine Blouin.

Her colleague in Gaspé,

MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix, also speaks of good news for the region, especially for the Eastern Alliance.

In his eyes, the 4,000 megawatts of wind energy for the next few years demonstrate Quebec's commitment to electrifying the economy and decarbonizing the province.

The Eastern Alliance has other sites to develop east of Rivière-du-Loup, but the bottleneck - a limit in Hydro-Québec's transmission lines regarding its capacity to send all the energy produced in Eastern Quebec - blocks the possibilities.

The power lines are saturated, which would not allow the electricity produced to pass through.

The member wants to take quick action. "For the rest of things, this will be the top priority to include the alliance in the next calls for tenders. I am very confident about it being addressed in a rapid context and in the interest of the stakeholders to allow the rest of Quebec to benefit from this capacity. We understand that wind resources are still present and wind power is part of the

Méganne Perry Mélançon announces plans to be a Parti Québécois candidate in Gaspé in October 2026

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – Defeated in the October 3 provincial election, Méganne Perry Mélançon has already confirmed that she will run in the October 2026 election under the banner of the Parti Québécois in Gaspé.

Ms. Perry Mélançon, who has become a spokesperson of the organization led by Paul Saint-Pierre Plamondon since January, confirmed her intentions in an interview with Télégaspé.

“As of today, that is the interest, that is the objective and that is why I have agreed to continue working with the Parti Québécois and the

elected officials in place. I strongly believe in the potential of the party. I didn't want to get too far away from politics because sometimes it's hard to come back to it. To keep both feet in the political world, of course, it allows me to think about the future,” explains the former Member of the National Assembly.

She had hinted in January that she was not ruling out a possible candidacy but when she was recently asked about her presence in 2026, the answer was more specific. “I say it in a completely assumed way. My return seems to be very appreciated, to keep my voice and to still be there to represent the Gaspésie but

with other functions and another role, it seems to be really well received and it motivates me to present myself,” says Ms. Perry Mélançon.

Part of her job is to promote independence while pursuing the defence of the regions.

For the moment, she leaves it to Coalition avenir Québec Member of the National Assembly, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, to do his job and prove himself on a daily basis in the riding. “People will be the judges in four years,” she says.

According to the website quebec125.com, if elections were held on March 3, the Parti Québécois would have won Gaspé with 43% of the

votes versus 37% for the Coalition avenir Québec. The margin of error is +/- 10%.

The CAQ government received 41.4% of the votes last October.



Méganne Perry Mélançon when announcing her candidacy for the October 2022 election.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Logging truckers dismissed to represent themselves collectively

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

NEW RICHMOND - The application for accreditation by the l'Association des transporteurs forestiers de la Gaspésie has been rejected by the Québec Régie des marchés agricole et aliments.

The association wanted to bring together forestry truckers who transport wood for the Gaspé Peninsula Wood Producers Syndicate to have greater bargaining power, but it was unsuccessful.

In its decision rendered on January 30, the Régie provides a history of the process which originated in the difficult negotiations between the truckers and the union in the fall of 2021. In the spring of 2022, post-pandemic inflation and the war in Ukraine have caused significant cost increases for truckers.

In the analysis of the situation, the Régie notes that the primary objective of such a grouping, namely the possible conclusion of transport agreements for the wood, is not clearly established.

In the written decision it is noted that the objective of collectively negotiating transport agreements is not found in the regulations or in the patent letters of the association.

The Régie notes that the general criteria for such an approval is met, and that the quantitative representativeness is demonstrated and ac-



Photo: G. Gagné

The Régie des marchés financiers du Québec refuses the request made by the Forestry Truckers Association due to technicalities.

cepted by the union, but the qualitative representativeness is not sufficiently demonstrated by the association.

The Régie notes significant shortcomings in governance and they could compromise the proper functioning of the organization since the structure and operating rules are not satisfactory.

In its conclusions, the

Régie notes the efforts made by the association to improve the situation of timber carriers in the Gaspé Peninsula and that it would undoubtedly be "desirable" for the sector as a whole for such an association to exist.

Despite several strengths, the various findings do not allow the Régie to conclude that the association, in its current form, can fully fulfill its

obligations and respond adequately to the primary objective of its accreditation, namely the conclusion of transport agreements with the union.

The Régie ultimately concludes “that it is in every-

one's interest that these issues be resolved by the association before it can be certified.”

An offer for truckers

Following the decision, the union sent a proposed agreement for the year 2023 to some 40 forestry truckers. The current agreement expires on March 31. The offer was emailed to the truckers with the goal of having the agreement renewed by April 1.

The president of the union, Pierre-Luc Arsenault, mentions that due to the thaw period which will be in effect on March 20, the truckers are doing their best to get the wood out before this date, which is not conducive to negotiations.

He anticipates that discussions will begin the week of March 20. He doesn't expect a gap as big as last year "since there was a kind of catch-up compared to last year," he says.

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Power grid is reliable in the Gaspé Peninsula, says Hydro-Québec

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Hydro-Quebec says its power grid is reliable in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Several comments on social media during the wind and extreme cold temperatures of early February raised questions regarding the health of the network, as several power outages occurred on the territory, some of which affected hundreds of customers in the areas of Percé and Gaspé.

The company has a tool called "continuity index", which is an indicator that calculates the number of hours of outages per customer and the data in the Gaspé Peninsula is better than many regions of Quebec.

"What has greatly impacted the number of hours of outages per customer in the region in the past year are large-scale weather events of which there are more than in other years," says Hydro-Quebec spokesperson Stéphane Dumaresq.

Most of the outages were caused by tree branches falling on wires. "There have been several storms with strong temperature variations that have brought rain and sleet and, immediately afterwards, freezing causes ice buildup on the electrical wires. This could have caused outages during windy episodes in the following days," adds Dumaresq, who also mentions that the North Shore also experienced the same phenomenon.

The salty air also has some impact on Hydro-Québec's equipment. The public corporation has adopted a plan to make its network more resistant and robust.

"The new transformers are made of stainless steel, which are much more resistant to salt air than the usual transformers used in other regions," says the spokesperson.

The energy producer and distributor is working on research and development to reduce the impacts of climate change. A plan has been adopted to this effect.

"Our analysis and planning of our electrical equipment will lead us to install more and more adapted equipment - bigger and stronger - to resist stronger winds," says Mr. Dumaresq.



Photo: Facebook

This line was broken by strong winds during the February 3 and 4 wind storm.

In February, several poles in a row broke due to the force of the winds. "We're starting to put in bigger poles more and more often. In some areas, we put composite poles

that are more resistant, depending on the impact of the winds. There is ongoing research for more resistant products," explains the spokesperson.



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Police report

Steeve Gagnon, 38, from Saint-Léon-le-Grand in the Matapédia Valley, faces two charges of dangerous driving causing death following the March 13 tragedy that killed Gérald Charest and Jean Lafrenière and injured nine others. The accident took place shortly after 3 p.m. in downtown Amqui, on a sunny and mild afternoon that had prompted people to go out for a walk.

Steeve Gagnon allegedly used his pickup truck to randomly hit pedestrians walking along Saint-Benoit Road, which is also Highway 132. He turned himself in to the Sûreté du Québec a few minutes after the tragedy. He is a transport truck driver, who has been on sick leave since last summer. The accused appeared at the Amqui courthouse the following day.

As of March 17, three of the four victims who were transported from Mont-Joli by a Quebec plane remain in critical condition in a Quebec City hospital. Two young children, including an infant, were among the injured but they were released from the hospital days later.

In the meantime, the Sûreté du Québec is conducting a thorough investigation that will likely lead to the laying of additional charges against Steeve Gagnon, notably of hit and run. He is remanded in custody until his next court appearance in April.

On March 15, the police asked the public to come forward with any information, photos or videos that were taken along the 500-metre crime scene that could be used as evidence.

"There are people who have answered our call. People have called us so far. Is it video footage? We don't know yet and we won't be able to say because it is part of the investigation. Investigators have asked for it because they don't want to neglect any clues. Some people might have images of the incident. There are cameras everywhere nowadays. We want to avoid people posting those images on social media. We want to be the first people to see those images. Getting those images represents a way to make a complete investigation. We don't want to leave anything to chance. Some witnesses also called us a couple of days after the accident," explains Sgt. Claude Doiron, spokesperson of the Sûreté du Québec.

The incident was broadcast nationally on several media platforms. Many citizens throughout Canada have expressed on social media their support for Amqui following the March 13 tragedy. In addition, Quebec Premier François Legault and opposition leaders Marc Tanguay, Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois and Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon travelled to Amqui on March 16 to offer their support to the population.

The March 16 court appearance of James Brière, 18, from New Carlisle was charged with assault with a weapon. The case was postponed until March 28 after a brief meeting between Quebec Court Judge Janick Poirier, criminal prosecutor Maxime Rocheville Paradis and defence attorney Caroline Bérubé. "We will submit a common proposal to the judge that day (March 28)," says prosecutor Rocheville Paradis. James Brière is also charged with uttering death threats, having pointed a firearm at another man, having used a firearm dangerously, having used a firearm while perpetrating a crime and extortion while using a firearm. Defence attorney Caroline Bérubé is based in Rimouski. James Brière has chosen a trial by judge if the procedure reaches that stage. Such will be the case if the agreement planned to be presented to Judge Poirier doesn't yield results. The charges he faces allegedly took place in New Carlisle on October 27. He was arrested on November 3.

A company and an individual were recently sentenced to pay fines for violating the Environmental Quality Act in the Gaspé Peninsula. Entreprises G. Couture et Fils of New Richmond had to pay a total of \$38,067 because, between November 9, 2018, and November 4, 2020, the company failed to take the necessary measures to protect the environment in the storage of construction materials at a waste location. In addition, the company did not comply with the conditions of a license to operate a sand pit on May 24, 2013, by running it outside the planned area and failing to close trenches.

In another file, Jean-Pierre Beaudin, from Grande-Rivière, pleaded guilty to having carried out earthworks on a road between July 22 and August 24, 2019, in Mont-Alexandre, in the Grande-Rivière River's ecological reserve. The individual was fined \$2,500 because he had proceeded without the authorization of the ministry, as prescribed by law.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Capitalism under its worst forms

Since March 9, the collapse of a single bank in California has triggered worldwide repercussions, as nervous account holders are lining up, physically and virtually, to get their deposited money from the Silicon Valley Bank, the one that technically went bankrupt, and at other California banks that are now in trouble, although clearly not to the same extent, for now at least.

Welcome to the worst side of the capitalist world. Bank representatives typically criticize the imposition of government-propelled regulatory measures on the economy, wishing that rules should be obliterated to comply with the market law, a world as free as possible. That position is especially valid for the United States but it also represents a strong current in about all conservative political parties.

That position has backfired in their face. The irony of it is that other banks are relieved to witness a strong intervention by the United States regulatory authorities, which worked from March 9 and on to find a buyer for Silicon Valley Bank, in an attempt to avoid a major upheaval.

Silicon Valley Bank had assets slightly surpassing \$200 billion. It dealt with technology startups, venture capital companies and the upper echelon of high-tech workers.

A wide range of neighbouring California-based banks are threatened by the collapse of Silicon Valley Banks. According to Associated Press, shares in California-based First Republic Bank, which dealt with long customer lineups over March 11 and 12, were down 66% before trading was halted on March 13. Western Alliance Bancorp was down by 77% on the same day. PacWest Bank lost half its value, while Comerica was off by 40% and Charles Schwab lost 15% of its value simultaneously.

How is it that all those banks did not promptly work together upon learning that Silicon Valley Bank was nose-diving, to avoid the nightmare they are currently experiencing? Because, in their mindset, bank administrators are not used to collaborating. How is it that they did not try to work jointly with the American authorities?

It is because in their "system", genuine collaboration is uncommon. It is every man for himself. The feminine version of the sentence is purposely lacking here because the "system" would work differently, if more women were involved in the way it functions.

In the meantime, Silicon Valley Bank account holders' money is protected by a body called the Federal Deposit Insurance Company. By law, it only covers the first chunk of \$250,000. The money will not be borne by taxpayers but the government of the United States is taking uncommon measures to prevent a worse crisis.

In fact, other governments, including Canada's and Great Britain's are also walking on eggshells. However, the Canadian banking network is much more solid than the American one, which consists of an ecosystem of thousands of usually smaller banks, all things considered. Competition is apparently better south of the border, but the banks are more vulnerable there, as the 2008-2009 economic slump proved.

Right now in Canada, as in most industrialized countries, the stock market is taking blows and, by extension, holders of funds functioning through buying

shares, which is the case for workers having invested in RRSPs, the Registered Retirement Savings Plan.

The RRSP market was already much maligned by the 2022 fall of the stock market. A blow from a distant specialized California bank was clearly unnecessary for workers making a big sacrifice to save money for their old days or for buying a house.

In the meantime, American President Joe Biden has also committed to holding a probe to shed light on the factors that triggered Silicon Valley Bank's belly-up situation.

The crisis triggered by that bank remains under relative control for now and it might not go much further. However, it might spark a much-needed debate about the rising interest rate policy of the US Federal Reserve to combat inflation, a policy followed by most industrialized countries' central banks, including Canada.

On that point, the debate must keep going. Inflation is hitting most households but the rising interest rates also affect mortgage costs, probably to a higher extent. In the end, a big cross section of the population might suffer more from the interest rate hike than from increasing grocery prices.

It is true that mortgages can be renegotiated and that payments can be spread over a longer period, which is not possible when people buy food, as that's a weekly activity. However, the Bank of Canada gave the population a break by refraining from increasing the policy interest rate at the beginning of March. Such breaks should be repeated over the spring and the summer. The inflation rate is starting to slow down and the phenomenon will likely be relatively durable.

Public money to support Glencore's mishaps in Abitibi

In a surprising move that François Legault seems to have the secret of, the Quebec government announced on March 15 that it expects to spend \$85 million to move 200 families out of their homes and away from the polluting emissions of the Rouyn-Noranda Horne copper smelter, owned by mining giant Glencore.

Those families live in about 80 buildings, some of them multi-dwellings, of course. The government money will be used to build a new neighbourhood away from the smelter, which on average emits arsenic concentrations exceeding 33 times the regulatory norms. The neighbourhood is called the Notre-Dame district and the people living in it are subjected to these emissions of arsenic, but also to other polluting chemicals, and heavy metals among other things.

As the issue is currently presented, Glencore will buy and demolish the 80 buildings. The company will therefore create a buffer zone between the smelter and the next neighbourhood.

Environment Minister of Quebec, Benoit Charette, announced a day later that the Quebec government

and the company will go ahead with a plan to reduce the air arsenic threshold to 15 nanograms per cubic metre. It remains five times the norm of 3 nanograms and it explains the fact that most residents of Rouyn-Noranda call it too high.

According to a survey carried out in 2022, 57% of the population opposes Minister Charette's and Glencore's plan. In the Notre-Dame district, 70% of people reject the plan, which was presented last year before being made official on March 16.

The situation is unacceptable. It is another sign of capitalism at its worst. Glencore is one of the richest companies in the world. The Legault regime looks like a subservient government here.

How can the move of 200 families be decreed without public meetings? How can a government accept a plan that will still keep the arsenic threshold five times that of the norm? How long will it take before the smelter reaches the norm? How can the Coalition avenir Québec government accept to foot a bill that derives from a company currently emitting at least 33 times the level of arsenic acceptable according to the regulation?

The move of the 200 families is far from a done deal as a citizens' committee is already involved in fighting it. The Legault government stated that people not wanting to leave will be allowed to stay in Notre-Dame. The government, therefore, creates two classes of citizens, the ones that will be relocated to a new neighbourhood, and the ones staying in a district where polluting standards are not respected and likely to stay that way.

It looks like the worst episodes of the Forillon Park expropriation, or the closure of villages. It is the equivalent of dividing to rule. People accepting the deal will put pressure on people wanting to stay because the new neighbourhood will be better equipped if more people adopt it.

The announcement was not made after genuine public meetings pertaining to the closure of the Notre-Dame district. It is based on the assumption that Glencore and the Quebec government agree that reaching the 3 nanograms per cubic metre standard remains out of reach in the short term.

How about moving the smelter, which has been producing for close to 100 years? Of course, Glencore would threaten to close it and Rouyn-Noranda doesn't need to lose 600 jobs. However, better solutions and a better consultation process must be put up. It is pos-

Correction

The first paragraph of the Shigawake Carnival article in last week's SPEC should have read as follows: On the cold but sunny weekend of February 18 to 20, the First Annual Shigawake Winter Carnival took place. The carnival was organized the Shigawake Family Committee and members of the Shigawake Agricultural Society. These two organizations came together to provide activities for people of all ages.



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Demonstrators demand Employment Insurance reform

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE – A demonstration was held on March 10 at the office of the Member of Parliament for the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands to demand a reform of employment insurance. Pabok Unemployment Action Movement, CSN and Unifor came to Grande-Rivière as part of the concerted action of the Interprovincial Alliance for Employment Insurance.

About 30 people attempted to meet with Diane Lebouthillier, but she was not at her constituency office. Five demonstrators were still able to chat with the Minister by telephone for about fifteen minutes.

“When we went to Ottawa, Minister (of Employment, Workforce Development and

Disability Inclusion, Carla) Qualtrough told us that there was a blockage at the Council of Ministers for the reform of employment insurance,” affirms the coordinator of the movement, Nadia Mongeon.

“We made a concerted action to clearly demonstrate to the ministers that we will not give up, that we are here to change things, and move this reform forward,” adds Ms. Mongeon.

“Ms. Lebouthillier always tells us that Minister Qualtrough should announce a reform this year, without fail. When we went to Ottawa, there was no agenda. Will it be at the end of 2023? Will it be 2023 when we can't even obtain an idea of the agenda?” questions the coordinator.

Diane Lebouthillier was not available for an interview. However, her office mentioned

that the demonstrators questioned the MP on the state of the situation, also mentioning specific cases experienced by certain recipients.

Diane Lebouthillier reminded them of having shared all the issues in the region in Ottawa, having heard their demands and understanding the black hole issue.

Three of the protesters were without income due to the black hole, the period during which workers have exhausted their unemployment benefits and before their job resumes..

The employment rate increased in February in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands.

According to Statistics Canada, 300 jobs were created last month in the region for a total of 33,400. 400 new full-time positions were added, but 100 part-time jobs disappeared.



Photo: Pakok Unemployment Action Movement

On March 10, thirty people protested at Diane Lebouthillier's office calling for employment insurance reform.

The number of unemployed individuals also dropped by 200. The unemployment rate fell from 9.8% in January to 9.2%

in February. The unemployment rate was 16.4% a year ago. Year over year, the region has created 700 jobs.

Plant owners are happy about the state of the crab stock, but worried about the markets

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Bill Sheehan, the vice president of E. Gagnon et Fils, sees a probable increase of 7.8% of the 2023 quota in the southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence as favourable. The crab quota increase is promising for the future of the resource. He believes, however, that such abundance could create a difficult market situation for crab processing plants.

“Science ignores the market but it is reassuring for the resource! It's not the best news for processing plant operators. The situation is not yet easy. The market has suffered a good fall since last year. A quota increase is not the signal you want to send to the market, but it is good for the state of the stock,” he insists.

“There is no perfect system. We want to have a season that starts on time. It's nice to give it on paper, this crab (quota), but you have to get it out of the water. Last year was difficult. The right whales are arriving earlier and earlier. It gives fishermen less leeway and it rushes the processing plants because the crab fishermen want to catch the product as quickly as possible,” he says.

Located in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, the E. Gagnon et Fils processing plant should receive a supply of approximately 12 million pounds of crab in 2023, which would be about 2 mil-



Processing plants are happy that crab resources are in good shape but that abundance could complicate their capacity to sell it at a fair price.

Photo: G. Gagné

lion pounds more than in 2022.

“It will be 12 million, or so, depending on the discussions with the fishermen. The situation is uncertain. There may be movements (of fishermen from a plant to another one). We had our biggest year ever in 2019, at 12.9 million pounds. That's pretty much the maximum we can do, considering the dynamics of the season because, in June, there's hardly any crab left to fish. What you do in June, all month, you do in the first processing week of April,” says Mr. Sheehan.

He expects to have 650 full-time employees when harvesting begins in the southern Gulf. “It will be 400 in production, including 100 foreign workers. Each year, we increase the rate of hiring of these workers, due to retirements and competition

everywhere, because everyone is looking for staff. Some of our employees are in our satellite plants, at Poissonnerie Caron (in Cape Cove), in Shigawake and in Degustmer (also in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé), with about 15-20 people per location,” he adds.

Marketing could be difficult in 2023 but Bill Sheehan is cautious in his analysis, considering that twists can go in several directions. The price drop of 25% in 2022 after 10 days of fishing, convinces him to be cautious in making any predictions.

“Our quota will probably increase by 7.8% in the southern Gulf. It will also go up in Newfoundland but I don't know by how much. Crab from Russia ends up in Japan, where there is usually plenty of New-

foundland crab. So there will be more crab from Newfoundland on the American market, where plants in Quebec sell a lot. It is the North American industry that pays the price for Russian crab sold in Japan. It hurts. The Russians created last year's price crash. They also pay for the boycott, but their system does not work like here. The government supports the dumping of the (Russian) industry,” notes Bill Sheehan.

The firm E. Gagnon et Fils was present at the Boston Seafood Show from March 12 to 14. A few days before the exhibition, expectations were moderate as prices were still well below that of the same period in 2022, and considering the unsold inventories which at the end of January reached nearly 30% of the volume processed last spring for some plants.

“We have sold almost everything in our inventory now, but not at the price we would have liked to have. We thought it would change. There is no better strategy than another this year. In 2022, no one overpaid. We should have been more careful though. Ten days into the fishery, no one could hold out and the price went down from \$8 to \$6 a pound. I'm not making a prediction for an early season price. There is time left,” he says.

He is hesitant about whether 2023 will be a buyer's or seller's market.

“It's supply and demand. No one can give what he does not have. The crab ends up in the market. The planet is small. Increases in quotas augment the volume of product available and this can give buyers a small advantage. It (the market) will pay the right price. There is not yet a monopoly in crab, even if there are more and more big players. Last year, only a few people said that there was inventory left but some did not say it and they were sitting on a value. This value did not materialize as expected. The US market was buying for a week or a month, instead of buying for the year. Will it be the same phenomenon? Each year brings its own challenges. There were right whales, the covid pandemic, labour shortages, and the war. There will be challenges this year too,” stresses Bill Sheehan.

The Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands snow crab fishermen based in the southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence landed about 22 million pounds of shellfish in 2022. They received an average price of about \$6.75 per pound, for total landing revenues of close to \$150 million. The value of that product once it is processed remains unknown but it could be close to twice the revenues of the fishermen.

It is worth noting that some Gaspesian crab fishermen are active on the north side of the Peninsula.

Snow crab fishermen pleased with probable quota increase

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Snow crab fishermen in the southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence are reacting favourably to the likely 7.8% increase in the 2023 quota. This increase, based on a commercial biomass of 85,532 metric tonnes, somewhat surprised fishermen. This increase in quota worries processing plant management, as many of them still had large unsold inventories as of February 2023 (see other article).

If the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans chooses to apply the precautionary approach of the harvest control rule and opts for an exploitation rate of 41.79% of the commercial biomass, the 2023 quota should be around 35,744 tonnes, compared to 33,163 tonnes in 2022.

While in 2022, the individual quota rose to an interval of between 280,000 and 330,000 pounds for crab fishermen holding a basic licence in Zone 12, a 12% increase, which is expected in the area where most Gaspesian crab fishermen fish will take those permit holders beyond 315,000 pounds and up to 370,000 pounds per boat. This is not counting licence holders with an additional third or half quota.

Daniel Desbois, president of the Association des crabiers gaspésiens, is delighted with the planned increase in the quota in 2023.

“This is good news because it tells us that the resource is healthy. It's the third or fourth-largest quota since the crab fishery switched to individual quotas in 1990. I've been involved in the fishery for 44 years and I haven't seen that very often,” says Mr. Desbois.

He and his crew fish in Zone 12, one of the four zones covering the southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence. The other areas are Zones 19, 12E and 12F. In Zone 12, the quota increase will likely be 12% to reach 31,868 tonnes,



Photo: Robert Nicolas

Gaspesian crab fishermen hope for an early season, considering there isn't very much ice in the sea.

which represents 89.2% of the commercial crab biomass of the four zones. The term “commercial biomass” applies to male snow crab with a shell of 95 millimetres and more.

The expected increase will not be official until Fisheries and Oceans Canada confirms that the recommendations are accepted, which should happen before the end of March.

Daniel Desbois considers the probable 12% quota increase to be “still surprising. We lived through larger cycles before. Recruitment (of new crab reaching commercial size) is stronger now. There was uncertainty about the accuracy of the surveys since the biologists changed scientific boats. If we couldn't find any crab, it would be worse than that,” adds Daniel Desbois.

The change of boat to which he refers occurred four years ago, when the Jean-Mathieu gave way to the Avalon Voyager II for scientific surveys. The use of the Avalon Voyager II led to an overestimation of about 20% of the snow crab stock because its trawl winch did not react as quickly as that of the Jean-Mathieu when it was time to bring it up. The Avalon Voyager II's winch

stayed on the bottom an extra minute on a trawl tow theoretically lasting five minutes, hence the 20% overvaluation.

Daniel Desbois expresses a certain confidence in thinking about the next two years regarding the stability of the stock in Zone 12.

“There should be a stock reduction for next year and the following year, but it would still be good. It's not easy to use a formula that can predict the volume of the future stock but it seems to work,” he says of the general trends.

Like all crab fishermen in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, he is concerned about the early arrival of right whales, considering the virtual absence of ice observed on the sea during the current winter.

“So we should have a much earlier start. We want it. Normally, there will be earlier interventions at the end of winter and this spring, with an icebreaker, adapted to the water depth of the Shippagan harbour. It could do a lot of the work in March. Everything is in place to start earlier, icebreaking and fishing, one going with the other,” analyzes Daniel Desbois.

The season start for

Gaspesian crab fishermen is traditionally delayed because of their New Brunswick colleagues. They are greater in number, in the Southern Gulf of Saint Lawrence and are sufficiently influential in convincing DFO to wait until one of their main landing wharves, Shippagan, is clear of ice before the season go-ahead is given.

Gaspesian fishermen have been arguing for years without success so far that the individual quota practice guarantees the catches of every fisherman, no matter the starting date.

To those who believe that the more than likely 12% increase in the total allowable catches in Zone 12 could stretch the season, Daniel Desbois replies: “not necessarily; catch rates are good in early April. If we can take advantage of this period to fish, we could make the quota in a period equal to that of last year. Fishing started on April 13 in 2022. Two years ago, it was April 4, with a very high quota and the fishing was fast,” recalls Mr. Desbois.

Crab fishermen are asking the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to start the 2023 season with 25 more traps, in order to maximize catches before the arrival of right whales.

“It happened before, in 2017, and the record quota was reached very quickly because of it. If we start in the first days of April, it would be (the 25 additional traps) for four or five weeks, until the arrival of the right whales and the first closures of the protective rectangles,” specifies Mr. Desbois, who is referring to the areas closed to fishing in the hours following a right whale sighting.

The president of the Association des crabiers gaspésiens is very cautious about the landing price that fishermen could receive in April 2023, considering that last year, the price fell sharply a few days after the season started, ending with a seasonal average hovering around \$6.75. It is still the second highest price in history and a higher price than the average that was offered to the fishermen between 2017 and 2022.

In 2022 crab fishermen received solid revenues, despite the season having many ups and downs, including a rare early season price reduction of what is usually a basic floor price.

“I still expect a good season. Trying to predict the price right now is extremely speculative. It's hard to say. The dynamic has changed a bit. It's hard to know the level of (unsold) inventories left. Last year, in March, everyone was saying that there were no more crab inventories in North America when there were! They (the wholesalers buying from the processing plants) were not supposed to buy Russian crab (due to the boycott stemming from the Russian-induced war in Ukraine). However, they bought more than ever! The Russians have been around for a long time. They are practicing an almost year-round fishery. It is very difficult to know their volumes but Alaska is no longer there. Their fishery is almost gone now,” says Daniel Desbois, illustrating the different trends likely to influence the price.

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CHANDLER TOWN COUNCIL UPDATE: On the agenda - concerns about damage to municipal roads, campground closure and nuisance birds

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - The town of Chandler is concerned about the damage traffic could possibly cause to its municipal roads when work begins on the Petit Pabos River Bridge on Route 132. This comes on the heels of concerns raised by the mayor of Grande-Rivière.

According to Chandler mayor, Gilles Daraïche, when concrete is poured on the bridge, traffic will be diverted onto municipal roads in Chandler and Grande-Rivière.

"They tell us it will be for a few days. We think that if it goes on beyond that, our road could pay the price. We want to sit down with the Ministry of Transport to make sure that if it goes on, that our citizens do not pay for the repair of this road," explains Mr. Daraïche.

A joint approach with Grande-Rivière was made to request a meeting with the ministry.

In February, Grande-Rivière Mayor Gino Cyr first brought up the issue. "If we exceed a delay of two or three days, I want to make sure that the ministry makes investments to ensure that the structure can take this traffic," explained Mr. Cyr who wants to avoid a similar situation to what occurred in Gaspé, where the Montée Pointe-Navarre suffered heavy damage during the rehabilitation of the Traverse St-Majorique in the summer of 2022.

Route 132 downtown

The section of Highway 132 that is closed downtown will be the subject of work to restore circulation safely and the time to plan a major project that will only be undertaken in 2025, according to the elected official.

"The main thing for them (the Transport Ministry) is safety right now. Afterwards,

they will do a major intervention," comments Gilles Daraïche.

"It will be major (construction) between the town hall and Jacques-Cartier (Street) and maybe a little more. We have to incorporate a water main to put in something new so that we don't have to open the road up (for repairs) every year. That's what the department asked us to do," adds Mayor Daraïche.

The road was closed in mid-January after a 14-inch pipe broke. The Ministry of Transportation has conducted various tests since then and has only allowed local traffic for businesses in the area.

The mayor explained that soil instability could be the cause of the water main break since a seven-metre backfill of forest debris from the Gaspesia River is under the road, causing it to buckle on a recurring basis.

Campground closure

Established in 2021 in the wake of the tourist overflow experienced in the Gaspé Peninsula in 2020, the town has decided to put an end to the Camping des bâtisseurs.

"The intention was very good at the time when we expected an overflow in the number of campgrounds in the Gaspé Peninsula and we did not have all the infrastructure to receive them," says the mayor.

"There are people who set up in the parking lot of the town hall with tents. Near the train station, people camped out, going to the bathroom and throwing their waste on the rocks. It (the campground) was created as a preventive measure and it wasn't profitable and it won't be profitable. The motivation to stop it is the fact that it is not used enough," explains the mayor.

The campground cost citizens about \$50,000 to set up. "In my opinion, it was not an

unnecessary expense. No, because we had to act before it happened (the overflow). We saw an overflow at the campground. Were our private campsites able to accommodate these people? We didn't know," he says.

Last summer, there were some visitors, but not enough to maintain the site.

Nuisance birds

Complaints have been received at the town about citizens feeding pigeons, which is causing problems. "The bylaw was changed to tighten up the feeding of pigeons. This species causes the most problems," says the Mayor.

"It could go as far as fines. At some point, the issue accumulates and you can't get rid of it. In the end it's the neighbours who pay for it. The town was asked to intervene as it could be considered a public health issue," says Daraïche.

Diane Perron wins a round at the Administrative Labour Tribunal against the CISSS

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Administrative Labour Tribunal concluded that there was a substantive defect in the decision rendered on August 8 against the former Director of Youth Protection for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands and revoked the complaint for employment injury.

Diane Perron had not requested a review of the psychological harassment aspect of the case.

The complaint targeted the Integrated Health and Social Services' assistant president and CEO, Connie Jacques. On December 13, 2017, Diane Perron filed a complaint of psychological harassment against the Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) for vexatious conduct on the part of her immediate superior between the fall of 2016 and October 17, 2017.

A claim was upheld by the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) on August 15, 2018. Chal-



Diane Perron wins a round at the Administrative Labour Tribunal against the CISSS.

lenged by the employer, the decision was upheld by a decision on January 23, 2019, which was again challenged by the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands Centre jeunesse.

In addition, a complaint for employment injury was also filed. The court ordered that the two cases be joined on March 6, 2019. Last fall, Diane Perron filed an application for judicial review of the

decision.

In the application, the former director of youth protection for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands mentioned that the application for review or revocation of the decision was necessary because it contained a substantive defect of such nature as to invalidate it.

According to her, the court had committed errors of law characterized by an omission to provide a distinct motivation between the harassment complaint and the employment injury claim.

She also criticized the court for not considering certain evidence in the analysis of the employment injury.

The Gaspé Peninsula CISSS, which oversees Youth Protection (DPJ), argued that the action was similar to a disguised appeal, which is not the purpose of this action.

The network submitted that Ms. Perron did not identify any substantive defect that would invalidate the decision.

The CISSS considered that the former director was seeking a new assessment of the evidence, adding that the court

sitting in review cannot substitute its own evaluation of the evidence for that retained in the first decision.

The court ruled that the decision rendered did contain a substantive defect of such a nature as to invalidate it, since the first decision did not justify the conclusion that Ms. Perron had not suffered an employment injury.

In August, Judge Christian Drolet had written that he was of the opinion that the evidence "does not allow for such a conclusion, but rather that it is a matter of the management of the CISSS and its representative and nothing allows for the detection of any intention to harm the plaintiff."

He added that "Ms. Jacques is not attacking the Plaintiff personally, but the Director of Youth Protection, who is accountable."

To overturn the CNESST's decision, the judge wrote that "the analysis of the facts put in evidence in the file concerning psychological harassment as well as the conclusions drawn from it are applicable here as well and lead to the conclusion that the Plaintiff was not the

victim of an employment injury on October 16 or 17, 2018."

The administrative labour court, therefore, granted Diane Perron's appeal, revoked the decision issued on August 8, and will convene the parties for a hearing on the merits of the cause.

Ms. Perron is not commenting at this time as the case is still before the tribunal.

The CISSS is not commenting for the same reason.

However, by email, the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS wanted to clarify the fact "that the decision rendered by the judge concerns the judicial review of the eligibility of the employment injury." The elements related to harassment remain unfounded following the first judgment.

Diane Perron had not filed a motion for the psychological harassment component, considering that the CNESST had found all the facts in this component following an investigation, but which had been reversed in the first decision.

Calling all photographers!

DIANE SKINNER
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

BARACHOIS: The Barachois and Area Development Committee (BADC) has announced a photo contest: “Barachois, our village and its barachois.”

The contest, which closes on March 31, is part of the year-long celebrations of the establishment of the village (then a fishing post) in 1672. This makes the village the first permanent French settlement on the Gaspé.

The goal of the photo contest is to highlight the village of Barachois as well as the barachois at Malbaie during the four seasons through photos. It will also serve to highlight the talent of the photographers who have captured the essence and magic of the area.

A barachois is a coastal lagoon partially or totally separated from the ocean by a sandbar. Sometimes the bar is formed by boulders.

The barachois in the area is a saltwater lagoon protected by a six-kilometre sandbar at the western end of the bay. Four rivers feed into the lagoon. It is one of the largest bird migration wetlands in the Gaspé. Nature Conservancy Canada is currently active in purchasing the land to ensure the future of this precious area.

The photography contest focuses on three themes: the landscape, flora/fauna, and human activities.

After the conclusion of the contest on March 31, seven jurors will select the photos to be featured in an exhibition during the spring and summer of 2023 at the Thompson General Store (Robin’s) in Barachois. From these selected photos, the winners will be determined. In

addition, a Visitor’s Choice winner will be selected by visitors to the exhibition.

“It is very important that the resolution of the photos is 300 dpi, about 4800 x 3600 pixels,” says Janet Harvey, President of the BADC. Participants must complete the online registration. Only digital photos taken since 2020 will be accepted, and participants can only submit one photo per category.

The contest is open to the general public, with a special prize for those aged 12-20.

350th Anniversary celebrations

Last summer, the opening ceremonies for the 350th Anniversary of Barachois took place on July 20, under a festival tent in the centre of Barachois, with dignitaries, a BBQ and a musical evening with the Triculturals. Additional musical activities occurred over a three-week period.

The ongoing historic photo exhibit that has been on display in the Robin’s store in the centre of Barachois, will close on March 31, with a presentation by historian Jean-Marie Thibault. Future activities are also planned over the next few months, however, details are not yet available.

Additional Information

The Barachois and Area Development Committee is a nonprofit organization created in 2016 to promote community participation and to carry out projects identified in consultation with the residents of Barachois and the surrounding areas. Visit their website for more information at <https://barachois.org>.

History of Barachois

On July 20, 1672, Seigneur Pierre Denys de la Roche was granted the “râde de l’Isle Percée”, a concession by Intendant Jean Talon. De la Roche built the Petite-Rivière fishing post, a year-round settlement that eventually became Barachois. According to research, Indigenous people had been the area’s only year-round residents prior to this permanent settlement. The settlement was burned to the ground in 1690 by privateers from New England, and it was 50 years before the village was fully resettled.



Janet Harvey, President of the Barachois and Area Development Committee, tells *Spec*, “The beautiful landscape, the birds, the historical ruins of sawmills on the sandbar have drawn many photographers to capture the essence of Barachois.”

Photo: Steve Methot

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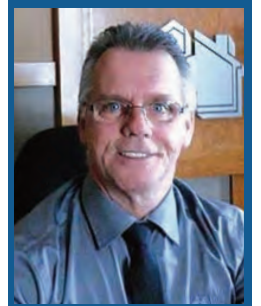
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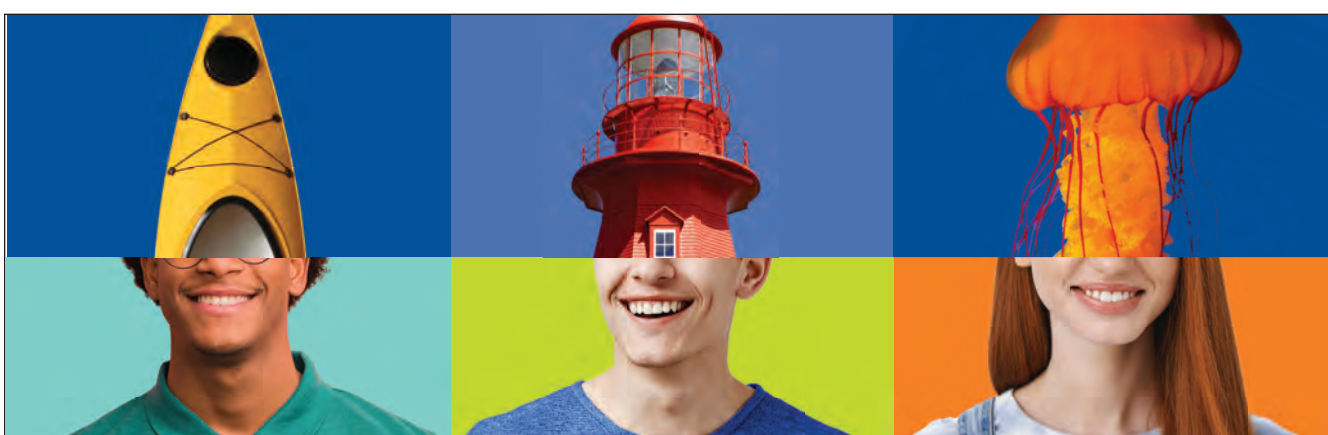
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CISSS evaluates Gaspé ambulance services

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) is considering its options regarding the possibility of converting the second shift ambulance for downtown Gaspé to an hourly schedule.

The assistant director of the professional services department, Jean-François Sénéchal, mentions that the Town of Gaspé could have two teams on an hourly schedule and one oncall.

"What we are looking at is if it would be appropriate to convert the shift team to a 10-hour schedule. We have no announcements to make. If we think it's interesting, we will proceed, but it is premature to

speak of a loss of a vehicle for Gaspé," says Mr. Sénéchal.

The issue is being looked at with the 911 emergency centre and the ambulance company to see if it will be relevant to make the conversion to an hourly schedule.

Mr. Sénéchal nevertheless admits that this conversion would result in a loss of hours of service.

"Exactly, but when we look at the situation as a whole, we realize that in the neighbouring territories, namely Rivière-au-Renard and Percé, which will be on duty no later than April 9 that will allow us to redeploy on the territory where there may be fewer vehicles available. We will make sure that everything is safe," assures Mr.

Sénéchal.

No request has been made for additional funding from Quebec to convert to a full-time hourly schedule for the second vehicle in downtown Gaspé.

The union has always maintained that on-call schedules remain an obstacle to recruiting workers.

Fears in Avignon

In Avignon, the prefect of the MRC, Mathieu Lapointe, mentions having concerns about ambulance coverage in the Pointe-à-la-Croix and Matapédia-Les Plateaux sectors.

"It's a challenge. With Campbellton as a reference hospital, when our paramedics

are called to intervene in a service gap in New Brunswick, it causes a service gap on the Quebec side," says the prefect.

"The territory is big. We have paramedics in Pointe-à-la-Croix and Saint-Alexis. When Pointe-à-la-Croix paramedics travel to New Brunswick, that forces the Saint-Alexis ambulance to get closer to cover the territory, but given its size, it will have an impact either in Pointe-à-la-Croix or in the Matapédia-Les Plateaux sector," adds Mr. Lapointe.

"There has been a slight increase in services for the people of New Brunswick over the past year. On the other hand, there is a scheduled conversion to take place in

Pointe-à-la-Croix and that will improve the situation," answers Jean-François Sénéchal who mentions that only the teams that are on-call are redeployed to ensure coverage.

"Hourly (schedule) teams allow better coverage of the territory, which gives more flexibility," he says.

Since 2018 the demands of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS have practically been settled concerning the improvement of ambulance service. All that remains is to settle the case of Gaspé and also the conversion of an on-call team to an hourly basis in the Pointe-à-la-Croix sector.

"We are making sure that everything works well for the safety of the population," concludes Mr. Sénéchal.

Union says Gaspé would lose half an ambulance

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Federation of Pre-Hospital Employees is criticizing a decision that will deprive Gaspé of the equivalent of half an ambulance if the on-call schedule in effect for one of the two vehicles is converted to an hourly schedule.

The vice-president of labour relations at the federation, Jérémie Landry, points out that on-call schedule, i.e. ambulance attendants available 24 hours a day for a period of seven days, who must change to the shift schedule on time, must be done at zero cost.

"There are concerns from the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre and the employer. For a shift ambulance that provided service 24 hours a day to the population, the Minister (of Health, Christian) Dubé, said, "We are transforming it into an hourly schedule but at zero cost for 10 hours of service per day." The problem is that the Gaspé sector will miss 14 hours of service a day," says Mr. Landry, who understands the employer and the CISSS for being reluctant to make the conversion.

"We are asking Minister Dubé to review his practice of converting schedules at zero cost. What we want is a conversion to Gaspé. The people of Gaspé deserve an hourly schedule. We want the government and the minister to inject the necessary sums

to make the hourly schedule conversion," claims Mr. Landry.

"One ambulance in Gaspé at night is not enough. If a tragedy happens, if there are two calls, the nearest ambulance is in Rivière-au-Renard. We cannot conceive of having a single ambulance in Gaspé," notes Mr. Landry.

Other similar conversions have taken place in Chaudière-Appalaches and Mauricie and the elected officials there have objected to this type of conversion, notes the vice-president.

"I'm concerned about all of this. I am also concerned about the service disruptions that have been reported to us recently. I had not been informed beforehand. It is worrisome," comments the mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté.

As for service disruptions, the CISSS says that the situation is not worrisome.

"Since January 1, 2023, there have been two service interruptions for a total of 20 hours during the period and, of this, 60% are linked to an overflow of CNEST (accidents) and not for lack of resources. Compared to the situation last year, the situation throughout the territory has improved a lot," says the assistant director of professional services, Jean-François Sénéchal.

"Gaspé is experiencing strong growth. We cannot reduce services while the population is growing and will continue to grow over the next few years. Everyone is

mobilized around economic growth. The health sector must follow this population growth. Currently, that does not seem to be the case," adds Mr. Côté.

Last June, Quebec released \$3.5 million to convert on-call schedules to hourly schedules in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Rivière-au-Renard, Gaspé and Pointe-à-la-Croix.

The modifications were made in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and Pointe-à-la-Croix. Those in Rivière-au-Renard will be done soon.



Gaspé would lose the equivalent of half an ambulance, according to the Federation of Pre-Hospital Employees of Quebec.

Photo: N. Sergerie



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Wind energy: the Innergex and Mi'gmaq partnership will operate for a second time, for an investment of \$277M

GILLES GAGNÉ

ESCUMINAC – For the second time in 10 years, the firm Innergex and the three Mi'gmaq communities of the Gaspé Peninsula will invest in a wind farm. The Mesgi'g Ugju's'n 2 will be located in the back-country of Escuminac. It will be a project requiring an investment of \$277.4 million, with a capacity of 102.24 megawatts. Part of the Hydro-Québec call for tenders results were released on March 15.

These 102.24 megawatts will be generated by a maximum of 24 windmills, specifies Luc Leblanc, spokesperson for Innergex. The power of each turbine should be established at an interval between 4.26 and 6 megawatts, as was planned during a public meeting held in Gesgapegiag in the spring of 2022.

"The turbine manufacturer chosen by Innergex is Enercon. There are still discussions to be had about the number of windmills. The final validation will come later," says Mr. Leblanc.

Enercon is a German firm. The turbines will be imported



Photo: G. Gagné

Luc Leblanc, on the right, and other members of the project led by Innergex and the First Nations of Gaspé Peninsula, publicly presented the second phase of the Escuminac project at the end of the 2022 spring.

since there is no similar manufacturer in Quebec or Canada. The blades will probably also be imported, he points out.

"Enercon manufactures blades but the provenance is not known for Mesgi'g Ugju's'n 2. For the moment, the information we have is that there was no availability at the LM plant in Gaspé. That's what the turbine manufacturers that inquired about that possibility were told," also notes Luc Leblanc.

LM Wind Power operates the only blade manufacturing facility in Canada. The Gaspé plant will be very busy over at least the next three years because of a contract for 107 metre-long blades for offshore wind farms to be delivered to the northeastern United States. The origin of the steel towers is not known either, but in this case, the Marmen plant in Matane has been slowed down by a lack of orders for more than a year.

"It's the same thing here. Enercon has discussions with various companies in the supply chain. About Marmen, it is not excluded but these are discussions held with the turbine manufacturers," adds Mr. Leblanc.

The construction of phase 2 of the Escuminac wind farm should start at the end of summer 2025, according to him.

"It will go according to the environmental assessment process and the acquisition of permits. The commissioning is scheduled for December 2026. It's fast but there is a lot of infrastructure, such as roads, the substation building and telecommunications that are already set up on the site, due to the existing wind farm," explains Luc Leblanc.

Mesgi'g Ugju's'n means "strong winds" in Mi'gmaq. The communities of Listuguj, Gesgapegiag and Gespeg are equal partners with Innergex in the current wind farm, which has a capacity of 150 megawatts, and they will also be in the second project.

About 200 construction workers, including dozens of Mi'gmaqs, will be mobilized

by Mesgi'g Ugju's'n 2. The existing wind farm employs eight maintenance people. Five jobs will be added after the commissioning of the second phase.

The calls for tenders selected by Hydro Quebec and announced on March 15 total more than 780 Megawatts of capacity. They amount to 1303.36 megawatts because, in the case of the 480 megawatt call for tenders portion of renewable energy, the public utility wanted the amount of energy delivered to the grid to match such capacity. Since the wind is not always blowing, it was, therefore, necessary to install excess capacity to ensure an average delivery of 480 Megawatts.

The fact that other forms of energy could have qualified in this 480 megawatts energy block prompted Hydro Quebec not to opt for minimum limits of regional and Quebec content because Quebec does not have the product manufacturing range which would have led to the achievement of these thresholds if other energy sources would have qualified.

However, regional and provincial content played a significant role in the evaluation of projects in the 300 megawatt wind power call for tenders. The share of regional content had to constitute at least 35% of each project and this proportion had to be increased to a minimum of 50% by including Quebec content.

MESGI'G UGJU'S'N 2:

Determination pays off, sums up Fred Vicaire, of Mi'gmawei Mawiomi Business Corporation

GILLES GAGNÉ

GESGAPEGIAG – The selection of the Mesgi'g Ugju's'n wind farm expansion project by Hydro Québec means a lot to the Mi'gmawei Mawiomi Business Corporation (MMBC). That body which is in charge of economic development for the three Native communities in the Gaspé Peninsula, will maximize the spinoffs from the construction of the 102.24 megawatt complex.

During the construction of the Mesgi'g Ugju's'n first wind farm, between 2013 and 2016, the MMBC staff worked diligently to make sure that Mi'gmaq workers would be hired by the main contractor, Borea.

"It will be the same formula we used previously. We will soon have a meeting to identify an in-house resource, a person who will meet the contractor to maximize the



Photo: Innergex

The presence of the first wind farm in Escuminac will reduce the environmental impact of setting up phase 2.

number of Mi'gmaq workers hired on the construction site. We will hire another resource for securing the workers' CCQ (Commission de la construc-

tion du Québec) cards and make sure they have worked enough hours to qualify", explains Fred Vicaire, chief executive officer of MMBC.

The goal of MMBC will also be to see if any Native workers are interested in the wind farm maintenance jobs

Cont'd on page 11

WIND FARMS

Cont'd from cover

and wind power is part of the solution for the future. I am confident that we will tackle this as quickly as possible," says the MNA for Gaspé.

Two other renewable energy projects were selected: one for the Haute-Chaudière wind farm in the Lac-Mégantic region for 120 megawatts with EDF and Hydro-Québec production received 159 megawatts in various municipalities for its production activities.

According to Hydro-Québec, the average cost of energy retained is 6.1 cents per kilowatt hour in 2022 rates and does not include transmission and balancing costs.

The contracts will be submitted to the Energy Board for approval.

Twenty-four projects were submitted as part of these calls for tenders.

Chandler fires Dominique Giroux

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - The person in charge of aquatic services for the Town of Chandler, Dominique Giroux, has been fired.

In a resolution adopted by the council for the dismissal of an employee, the Town hall is limited to what it can say, referring to the principle of confidentiality surrounding labour relations.

On March 13, the commissioned report on the administrative audit related to Adrenaline Rescue was submitted to council.

The town is not commenting

"We are convinced that we had enough elements to move forward in this case. This is a highly confidential file that could lead to the filing of a grievance. So we cannot reveal any elements," says the mayor, Gilles Daraïche.

The mayor prefers not to comment on the content of the report either since it could also be mentioned in possible procedures.

On March 6, about forty citizens went to the town council meeting to support Do-



minique Giroux, who was suspended at the time, in the dispute between the town and Adrenaline Rescue, an organization in which she is an administrator.

The dispute concerns the freebies granted by the organization. The agreement included four activities for any Adrenaline Rescue sponsors. Adrenaline Rescue purchases equipment and provides training to Chandler's lifeguards.

The town was made aware that the freebies had been extended to the entire sports complex.

The mayor said during the council meeting that he never

questioned the work carried out by Adrenaline Rescue, but questions were being raised by certain people who led the council to look into the file.

The council suspended the principle of free admission in February, in order to shed light on this affair.

In February, Ms. Giroux claimed her suspension was retaliatory by the board following incidents that culminated in a three-day suspension last December.

Adrenaline Rescue revealed sponsorship details last month: In 2002, out of \$45,000 in sponsorships, \$12,000 were given away for free.

MESGI'G UGJU'S'N 2

▶ Cont'd from page 10

that will be created once the windmills are up and running, in December 2026. At first, the turbine builder staff will be around for the start-up and part of the warranty time. After that period, maintenance duties will mainly be carried out locally.

"At one point, we had four of the Mesgi'g Uguj's'n maintenance workers from Listuguj and Gessgapegiag. As of now, there are none. A bit of training would be needed to get a few onboard. The overall context is also one of labour shortage in all fields. The wind farm is also an hour away from either Listuguj or Gessgapegiag," points out Mr. Vicaire.

The three communities get significant benefits from the first wind farm, he adds.

"According to the contract initially signed, we were supposed to get \$220 million over 20 years. It can fluctuate, as we are dealing with the wind but, so far, the targets are met," assures Fred Vicaire.

Mesgi'g Uguj's'n 1 has a capacity of 150 megawatts,

which is higher than the 102.24 megawatts of the second wind farm. Some terms of the upcoming contract will be divulged once it is signed with Hydro Québec around mid-April.

Fred Vicaire assures that the MMBC will look for other opportunities in the near future, considering that Hydro Québec plans to add 4,000 megawatts of wind energy to its power portfolio.

"It is certainly one of our niche fields. We are starting to develop a very good expertise. We are involved in negotiations for further development. Not all projects will be developed according to calls for tenders. We have to keep in mind that MU1 (the first Mesgi'g Uguj's'n wind farm) was negotiated through a purchase power agreement, a mutual venture. We are involved with Innergex in Escuminac but other developers are interested in working with us. The Gessgawagi (the Native name for the traditional land base) territory is large. There are other areas offering good wind potential and already coveted by

other developers," he remarks.

Sooner than later, he points out, Hydro Québec will have to bolster the capacity of its power transmission lines.

"Transmission lines have reached a saturation point in Eastern Quebec and the area presents the best wind energy potential in Quebec. We might look at a way to get involved in the betterment of that aspect. There is a wealth of territory here where you can install windmills that are not in sight. There might be good potential in or around Montreal and Quebec City but the people living there don't want windmills in their backyard," concludes Fred Vicaire.

In the meantime, the management of MMBC's business partner in the Escuminac project, Innergex, is excited about landing the venture.

"We are thrilled to continue our partnership with MMBC on this second wind project as we work very well together and have excellent relationships with the local communities," said Michel Letellier, president and chief executive officer of Innergex.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Sharing heritage through food

It might be too late but, if you have the opportunity, get your mother or grandmother's recipes soon, maybe even today! Otherwise, you may miss out and regret it later. How many times has someone in my family wished they had my grandmother's recipe for crispy ginger snaps? Over the years we have tried a variety of recipes but none came close to the goodness of the blend of molasses, ginger and cinnamon that she served in her kitchen so many years ago.

If you have already preserved those traditional recipes from your ancestors, congratulations. You have a treasure there because it is your heritage which you can now pass on to your children and grandchildren.

Many of my grandmother's recipes were never written down at all. She just knew how to make gumdrop cake, the world's best lemon meringue pie, salt cod suppers, fluffy tea biscuits, wild strawberry jam, johnnycake and more. Sadly, the recipes we did not ask her for are gone.

These recipes are more than food. They show a way of life, one where root vegetables were an important staple, for example. Beets, potatoes, carrots, turnips and, to a lesser extent, parsnips were served at just about every hot meal. Heritage cooking is, of course, about more than desserts. Why were root vegetables such a big part of our grandparents' diets? They could be grown in the Gaspé, were essentially cheap and abundant, and most of all they would keep all winter in a cold cellar.

Fish played a large role in my grandmother's suppers for obvious reasons. At one time, cod was plentiful and cheap but those days are over because historical events destroyed our cod stocks.

Years ago, we ate well, we ate plain, good food and much of what we ate was locally sourced. These are important lessons which are starting to be addressed more frequently. Gardening has increased in popularity and there is a strong push to eat locally. Our ancestors ate for the most part, "better, cheaper and greener."

Preserving and using the recipes from your ancestors honours your family. It acknowledges them and their contributions. It also honours the region in which you live. Fish and potatoes, beef stew with dumplings or as we called them, doughboys, and bread pudding were common foods made in homes in the Gaspé region a hundred and more years ago.

Passing material items, such as jewellery, money and furniture on to the next generation is of course appreciated.

Recipes made through the years in your family can be cherished by the next generation but in a different way. It shows our shared customs and stirs memories. It is not just food; it is your heritage.



"This project is a good example of Innergex's responsible growth that balances people, our planet and shared prosperity. The partnership will bring direct social and economic benefits to the region, a feature which resulted in very positive reactions dur-

ing public information meetings held last year. In addition, since the project plans to maximize the use of existing roads, facilities and interconnections of Mesgi'g Uguj's'n, we expect the environmental impact to be minimized," adds Mr. Letellier.

Business & Professional DIRECTORY

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Announcements



Obituaries



ALMOND: Emily Ann (Gray)

It is with heavy hearts that we share the news of our unexpected and sudden loss. Emily Ann Almond (Gray) passed away on Friday morning March 10 at Maria Hospital with her family at her side. An energetic, joyful hard worker and a young 85 years old, our wife and mom left us far too soon.

Emily leaves behind her husband of 65 years, Peter Almond and her five children: Debbie (Barry), Judy (Peter), Sandra (Rob), David (Gina), Tanya (Charlie), grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She will be sorely missed by all including her surviving siblings: Verna, Betty, Eleanor and John and her many nieces and nephews who loved their Auntie Em.

Mom was born in Bathurst, New Brunswick, the youngest daughter in a big family of eleven children, growing up on a family farm. At the tender age of 15 and with one small suitcase she boarded a train to Montreal to build her future. She initially stayed with her sister Marg, took a typing course and found various jobs eventually working at Northern Electric where she met Dad. And the rest is history. They raised their five children in Chateaugay, Quebec. Always happiest in the country, Mom and Dad finally settled in their Almond family heritage home in Shigawake in later years.

We share this ode to our Mom, written by one of Emily's daughters:

Mom in Motion

Rushing to and fro.

Lots to do and places to go.

Beds to make and bread to bake.

House to clean and children to wean.

Flowers to seed and garden to weed.

Up at dawn - power switch on.

My mother seemed to be in perpetual motion. She spent her days in service to her family. She was a giver, completely selfless, dedicated, devoted and she loved us all with great abundance. She taught us to care for each other and because of that I'm fortunate to have a steadfast loving bond with my sisters and brother. She would be pleased to know that we are leaning on each other now during this incredibly sad time.

My mom was creative, she liked to draw and paint. She sketched a picture of me, using charcoal and lead pencil. It was very good, I often thought how far she could have gone had she had the opportunity to pursue that passion. The framed sketch hangs in my room, and I treasure it now more than ever.

She was a great conversationalist. Growing up my friends enjoyed coming to our place and talking to my mom. I always heard – man, your mom's great! As an adult I enjoyed our evening and weekend chats. I will miss them. Favourite topics being next year's flower garden, new recipes or decorating ideas. The best times were giggle fests when we laughed at silly things, my mom had a great sense of humour, and she was fun to be around.

She loved music and dancing. Often heard singing along to CCR or The Band while working in the kitchen. Feet tapping in beat while peeling, hips swinging while chopping and sashaying between stove and fridge. Maybe that passion was the secret spice that made every meal delicious.

She loved wearing the colour red and sparkly jewelry; we often teased her saying she must be part crow.

She was not only kind to people but furry and feathered friends too. Leftovers always brought to the hill by the dining room window, bird feeders kept full. Morning coffee watching her "hummers" fly by was a favourite pastime.

Mom loved us deeply. Never did a call or text end without an I love you or telling us we were special, or beautiful, or smart. I mourn this future without having her in it. I'll miss her encouragement and companionship.

I see you mom; I see you in the siblings and myself left behind. I will remember and celebrate you always and every day because you were simply put - lovely.



FOLEY: Mary Anne (McDonald) 1922 - 2023

Passed away peacefully at the Mgr Ross Home Care Centre in Gaspé on March 10, 2023.

She was a kind, caring lady with a loving heart and a warm smile. Her strong Faith and daily prayers were appreciated by all who knew and loved her. Her love of music and cooking were a great part of her life.

She was predeceased by her husband Earle L Foley and her dear granddaughter Tiffany Ann Foley. She leaves to mourn: daughter Leah (Raymond Heath); sons Kerry (Louise Rooney), Arnott and Allan (Edith Girard); beloved grandmother to Ryan, Mila, Marita and Sydney; great-grandmother to Emily, Audrey, Benjamin, Everly and Clara; brother-in-law, James Foster (Montreal); and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral Mass and burial will be held on August 2, 2023, at St Patrick's Church in Douglastown. The time of the funeral will be announced later. There will be no wake or condolences as per her wishes.

In lieu of flowers a kind donation to the Foundation CISSS Sante Côte-de-Gaspé would be greatly appreciated.



MCCOLM: Muriel June

July 29, 1929 - March 5, 2023

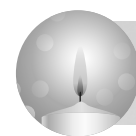
It is with great sadness we announce the passing of June McCOLM at the age of 93.

Predeceased by her parents Benjamin and Annabelle McCOLM, siblings Raymond, Hayward, Myrtle, Winnifred, Eric and Greta.

She's leaves behind her beloved son Kevin (Linda); grandchildren Joey (Leigh-Ann) Cindy (Kyle); great-grandchildren Myles, Marlowe, Morgan; sister-in-law Norma McCOLM; many nieces; nephews and friends.

Relatives and friends were invited to attend the funeral service on Saturday, March 11, 2023, at the Newcastle Funeral Home, 386 Mill St. South Newcastle, Ontario. The visitation was from 11 a.m. and service at 12 p.m. A light reception followed the service. Interment will take at the Black Cape Cemetery in New Richmond, Quebec at a later date.

Donations can be made in memory of June McCOLM to The Life Association 131, boul. Gérard-D.-Levesque New Carlisle, QC G0C 1Z0 or your local food bank.



In Memory

DAWSON: Emma

November 3 1919 - April 3 2017

They tell me life's a journey,

That will take me many years.

Some days are filled with laughter,

And some days are filled with tears.

Some days I think my heart will break,

That I can't persevere.

Some days I have to don a mask,

And hide beneath its veneer.

Some days I struggle to go on

Just wishing you were near.

Most days I spend in gratitude

That you were ever here.

Some days I struggle with my selfish thoughts,

For I wanted you to stay.

So we could walk and talk again,

Like we did just yesterday.

You are missed each and everyday, for you were someone special who meant more than words can say. Love Barbara Ann.

Deadline

Wednesday at 4 p.m. to appear in the following week's issue.

COAST ROUND-UP

GASPÉ:

Royal Canadian Legion
Please be advised that Legion memberships are available for \$50. Returning and new members welcome.

GASPÉ:

Cancer Foundation
New memberships and renewals are being accepted. \$15 per person or \$25 per couple. All new membership and renewals can be sent to Gaspé Cancer Foundation, P.O. Box 6078, Gaspé, Quebec G4X 2M6. Payment can also be made by e-transfer to gaspe45@hotmail.com. Please include your name, address, phone number and email address. For more information, please contact Tony Patterson at

418-368-3276; Beatrice Coffin at 418-368-1566 or Patricia Ste. Croix at 418-649-3779.

April 23: The Gaspé Cancer Foundation AGM will be held at the Gaspé Legion beginning at 1:30 p.m. . A light lunch will be served.

PORT DANIEL: Three Star Golden Age Club

Tuesdays: Pétanque from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. every Tuesday evening to have fun and learn a new game. Cost is \$3.

April 28: Gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m. \$10 a strip and \$20 a series.

May 13: Mother's Day tea from noon to 2 p.m. \$10 per person.

SHIGAWAKE: Community Centre

April 10: Gift bingo - Details to follow.

HOPE:

Hope Baptist Church

Sundays: Sunday School starting at 10 a.m. Worship service beginning at 11 a.m.

NEW CARLISLE: Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

Please be advised that Legion memberships are available for \$45. Returning and new members welcome.

Wednesdays: Line dancing every Wednesday in March at 7:30 p.m. \$7 per person.

Thursdays: Open from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Fridays: Darts beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Saturdays: Open at 2 p.m. Everyone welcome!

April 4: General meeting at 7 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle.

NEW CARLISLE:

Bible Chapel Meetings
Sundays: 9:30 a.m. Breaking of Bread for believers. 2 p.m. Gospel meeting and Sunday School.

Thursdays: 7 p.m. Prayer Meeting and Bible Study. Everyone welcome! For more information: 418-752-3372 or 418-752-6011.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: Book Room

The book room is now open. Anyone who needs assistance can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

UNITED CHURCH

NEW RICHMOND Sunday, March 26

10 a.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH

HOPE TOWN

Sunday, March 26

10 a.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, March 26

NEW CARLISLE

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PORT DANIEL

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, March 26

No Service



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

It is very important that you do not count your chickens before they hatch, Aries. Something you suspected was a sure thing may not pan out this week.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
You have a secret desire that you want to let out, Taurus. But you're not sure of the timing. Stop letting your head dictate your heart and put plans into action.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21
Friendships could falter due to your insecurities, Gemini. Others want to be around you for good reason. Try to see the value in

relationships and make the effort to socialize.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, you could be defeating your own efforts this week. There may be something telling you that you're not good enough to go for your goals. A pep talk can put you back on course.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

There's a fresh development in your love life coming down the pike, Leo. Romantic feelings solidify and you might be in for some exciting adventures in the weeks to come.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, the crowd around you may not be the support system you need right now. Making new friends can be

tough, but it's worthy pursuit at this point.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, no matter how much you want to spend time with family or friends right now, work seems to draw you away. Focus on finding more balance.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

You might be feeling fed up with the pace of lessons being taught to you, Scorpio. If the teacher or mentor simply isn't effective, then you might need to find a new educator.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, it might seem like having the utmost control sets you up for security, but that's not always the

case. Being too controlling may push others away.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

This may be an emotional week for you, Capricorn. Your relationship will have to weather a few storms before things right themselves again.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Poor habits can keep you from getting where you want to go, Aquarius. A friend or family member may need to step in to show you where you could be going wrong.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Help a partner heal by being sensitive to his or her suffering. You may not

know all the ins and outs, but being supportive can help greatly.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MARCH 19

Neil LaBute,
Director (60)

MARCH 20

Spike Lee,
Director (66)

MARCH 21

Jace Norman,
Actor (23)

MARCH 22

J.J. Watt, Athlete (34)

MARCH 23

Victoria Pedretti,
Actress (28)

MARCH 24

Jim Parsons, Actor (50)

MARCH 25

Elton John, Singer (76)

ANNOUNCE ALL YOUR UPCOMING EVENTS!

Does your organization have a Coast Round-Up plan? If so, don't forget to send SPEC information about your upcoming activities.

Be sure to include:

- location
- date
- time
- cost



HELP KEEP YOUR COMMUNITY INFORMED

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The Gaspé Spec
12th ANNUAL - MAR 2023

Disco skating evening in Cascapedia-St-Jules

A night to remember

DIANE SKINNER

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: - On the evening of Saturday, March 4, from 6 until 8 p.m., the ice rink in Cascapedia-St-Jules was a “happening” place! Disco music, colourful lights and, of course, a shiny disco ball created the perfect party atmosphere for the end of the skating season. This all-ages event was a huge success with about 50 skaters enjoying their time on the ice.

The community skated around the outdoor rink while listening to the best of the 80s music. Dancing LED lights along with some Christmas lights created the mood and glow sticks were given to every skater. Skaters were invited to wear their best 80s-

inspired outfits.

This free event was made more special with the canteen serving hot chocolate with marshmallows, a crowd favourite!

Recreation director Miranda Willett planned the event with the help of Logan Gallan, as well as a couple of young people from the community, who were attending the event and decided to lend a helping hand including Percy Fitzgerald and Bridget Fitzgerald who assisted with decorations. Every event is better when people come together!

Miranda states, “With the warmer weather that came, our skating season is over but we were happy to have one big event to end our season. It was a night to remember.”



Photo: Courtesy of Miranda Willett

Lyndsey Willett happily displaying one of the shiny disco balls.

Spring has sprung. Time to refresh and renew. The weather will catch up later.

DIANE SKINNER

According to the calendar, spring has arrived, but there is a little bit of a lag in the weather. It is a time of rebirth: baby animals, grass, dandelions and buds on the trees. It is a time of renewal and most of us love new beginnings? Spring provides an opportunity to do things in a new way and a wee bit better.

10 ways to renew you and your home in spring

1. The most obvious way to welcome the new season is with a deep spring cleaning.
2. Clutter is everywhere, stuff and more stuff. Clean up and sort through clothes, toys, papers and books. It will feel so great. Donate what can be reused. Someone, somewhere will be grateful.
3. Go through storage bins. Just because it is out of sight, it is still there crowding your space.
4. Clean all your windows, inside and out.
5. Give a room a fresh, new coat of paint.
6. Clean the yard. After the winter you will find branches and other items that blew around in one of the very

windy days we experienced in the past few months. Wash your outdoor furniture.

7. Renew you! Get a new haircut or colour, a pedicure or a massage. You are worth it.

8. Start a new hobby or pastime.

9. It's the time to buy seeds and plan your garden for 2023.

10. Buy some new books and put them on your bedside table. They are your reading goals for this spring and summer.

A “deep cleaning” list

Every room:

- Wash all baseboards.
- Vacuum and wash vents.
- Wash all curtains and pillow covers.
- Clean all floors.

Kitchen:

- Clean out the fridge and wash shelves.
- Clean the freezer and all cupboards of “old” food. Admittedly food is expensive but soup cans that are four years old are past being safe to consume.
- Clean your oven. Also, clean around all the appliances. Pull out the stove and fridge where you may be surprised to find various bits of food from meals



A little spring cleaning today will make the winter blues go away.

served long ago. If you have a cat you will find their hiding place for all sorts of small items.

- Clean the microwave by squeezing lemon juice into a cup of water. Microwave on high for a minute. Any food debris should just be wiped away.

- Wash all nooks and crannies.

- Wash fronts of all cupboards.

Living room:

- Clean all carpets, rugs, run-

ners and upholstered furniture.

- Dust all surfaces. Polish wood furniture items.

Bedrooms:

- Wash all bedding.

- Flip and rotate the mattress.

- Purge all unwanted items.

Bathroom:

- Clean and disinfect tub and shower.

- Wash bath mat.

- Wash shower curtain and liner.

Other:

- Change batteries in smoke alarms.

- Check the expiry date on the fire extinguisher.

- Disinfect computer keyboards and mouse. Use a dampened microfiber cloth or disinfectant wipes to clean keys.

- Discard old makeup. Wash makeup brushes using dish soap.

Spring cleaning is a chance to hit the reset button on your life.

Do you have a great hunting or fishing story?

DAVED FELKER
COMM. CORRESPONDENT

Hunting and fishing are integral to the way of life on the Gaspé Coast and an important part of the heritage of the English-speaking community.

Many community members describe hunting and fishing as a “passion”, with whole families either participating together or organizing their lives around specific seasons. Whether fishing for salmon or trout in the rivers, mackerel or bass in the bay; hunting moose or deer in the woods or going after small game through trapping; hunting and fishing are an intrinsic way of life for many on the coast.

Other activities such as community events, family celebrations, holidays and even work schedules are planned around these seasons to ensure that people are available.

In recognition of the importance of these pursuits to the local English-speaking community, Family Ties created *Back to Nature: Hunting and Fishing in the Gaspé Through Stories, Arts and Crafts*; a cultural project funded by Canadian Heritage.

Family Ties is encouraging community members to tell their hunting and fishing stories which will be used as a reference point for the creation of artwork. Several activities are being offered, led by local artists who specialize in a wide range of arts. Workshops include: beach art; fly tying; leatherwork; wildlife photography; song writing; working with clay; painting and mixed media as well as woodworking.

To find out more and to sign up for workshops, please follow the Family Ties Facebook page. Workshops will continue until the end of May and some of the artwork will be chosen to appear in an exhibition to be held at the Kempffer Cultural and Interpretation Centre in New Carlisle over the summer months. As well as showcasing community members artwork, the hunting and fishing stories collected as part of the project will also be presented.

If you have a hunting or fishing story to tell, email it to Dave Felker at david@projetrural.com

David Felker is the Cultural showcase coordinator for CASA.



Participants took part in a wide variety of artistic workshops.



Photos: D. Felker

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