

## Keeping kids safe: S.P.D.S. participates in School Zone Awareness Week

HOLLY SMITH

GILLES GAGNÉ

PORT DANIEL: - On May 16, Grade 5 and 6 students from Shigawake-Port Daniel School took part in a School Zone Awareness Week activity, in hopes of deterring drivers from speeding in front of their school.

Accompanied by S.P.D.S. Principal Lori Ann Hayes, teachers Carl Garrett, Sadie Gallibois, and Bethany Paetkau, as well as school police officer Isabelle Cyr; students at S.P.D.S. had a chance to use one of five live school-zone speedometers developed by the SQ.

For this operation, the S.P.D.S. students were equipped with a 20-pound backpack that is adapted to the size of the child and has a speedometer as well as a light panel displaying the speed of passing motorists. In the consent letter received by S.P.D.S. parents, the SQ mentions "The bags will take road safety to another level."

The children took turns wearing the live speedometer, while the others held up signs



Grade 6 student, Masen Dea, wearing the live speedometer as a vehicle approaches doing 89 km/h.



Grade 5 student, Emma Skene, and Officer Isabelle Cyr smile as the approaching motorist is driving well below the speed limit.

Photos: H. Smith

created by the grade six students to increase their visibility.

Initially inspired by the Société de l'Assurance Automobile du Québec awareness campaign and further devel-

oped by the Service de Police de la Ville de Laval, the SQ proudly has five live speedometers which are unique to Quebec. The devices are shared among the SQ branches throughout the

province.

Officer Cyr hopes that the campaign will sensitize motorists that Highway 132, in front of S.P.D.S., is a school zone and there is a large presence of children. This will remind drivers that the speed limit is 50 kilometres per hour.

The awareness activity took place between 7:30 a.m. and 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. and despite the presence of over a dozen children, police, and school staff; SPEC witnessed eight motorists being stopped by Sureté du Québec officers. "Today's activity was to inform road users. Mostly warnings were given out to drivers who were caught going over the recommended speed limit. Some drivers, however, were issued infractions," states Ms Cyr.

Officer Cyr wonders if even the constant presence of police officers would deter drivers from speeding in front of S.P.D.S. "We are standing here with our protective vests, live speedometer and three police cars, and still road users pass us

doing way over the speed limit," states Officer Cyr.

The speed limit is 90 km/h. on Highway 132, leading up to the very short school zone, from both the east and west directions. When asked if this could be a factor in why so many motorists speed through the school zone, Ms. Cyr says it could very well be the reason but the Sûreté du Québec cannot change the speed limit. "Only the Ministry of Transport can. We communicate with the people working there, but we have no power. I am, nevertheless, thinking of means that could be deployed to improve the situation, long-term and short-term. I haven't reached the point of sharing them for now as I still need to reflect on the issue but it will come at one point," says Ms. Cyr adding that "The presence of a passing lane in front of the school does not help the situation."

S.P.D.S. Principal, Lori Ann Hayes, told SPEC, "The



Students Emma Burton, Abrianna McRae and Sophie Ross wave their signs and balloons to draw attention to this serious issue.

# The first deficit in the history of the RéGÎM

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS - The large increase in the cost of contracts with carriers has caused a half-million-dollar deficit on the \$3.4 million budget of the Régie intermunicipale de transport Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (RéGÎM). This deficit is a historic first for the organization, which has been in operation since May 3, 2010.

"The last year has been particular for the management. It was a year of contract renewals, human resources management, and significant inflation in operations. In 2022, contracts that had existed for seven years were renewed. There has been a major increase in operating costs related to these contract renewals," explains RéGÎM Director General,



Photo: N. Sergerie

*New contracts with carriers weighed heavily on the deficit.*

Marie-Andrée Pichette.

The organization expected contracts to rise sharply and had provisioned part of the sums in its financial planning.

"There was a problem of human resources management as everyone experiences," adds Ms Pichette.

"There are also all the pro-

visions to projects. For all the contributions for projects such as car sharing or bicycles, we make reserves with our accumulated surplus, but the provisions had not been made in 2022. This makes a big deficit but it is not necessarily related to the operation at 100% which is \$300,000 because of the renewal of

contracts and the balance is the investment of projects," she explains.

This is the first loss for the RéGÎM that has existed since its creation, which dates back to 2009, thanks to the Regional Conference of Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine elected officials (CRÉ), which was abolished following the arrival of the Liberal government of Philippe Couillard in 2014. The RéGÎM is regaining one by one the passengers that it lost as a result of the COVID pandemic. In 2021, 49,000 passengers were recorded, a figure which rose to 75,000 last year.

"And the first quarter that we have just submitted, we have about a 30% increase compared to 2022. We are still on an upward slope this year. It is really at the level of operations that we are experiencing difficulties with cost

increases everywhere like with buses, fuel and human resources," says the director. It is also difficult to predict how many passengers will be served in 2023, since a multitude of factors comes into play.

"What will the arrival of tourists look like? CEGEP registrations, we are very sensitive to that. If the cégep (de la Gaspésie) announces a record year in registrations, we feel that an increase in the student clientele is coming. It leaves us with good hope for 2023," states Ms. Pichette.

The RéGÎM tabled a balanced budget of \$3.5 million for the 2023 fiscal year.

A first service overhaul project will be held in the Magdalen Islands this summer, on the Côte-de-Gaspé this fall and in other sectors of the region thereafter. Those exercises should be completed in the fall of 2024.

## More than \$70,000 in damages to the Grande-Rivière sorting centre

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - The carelessness of some citizens when sorting materials for the blue bins will cost the Gaspé Peninsula Magdalen Islands Régie intermunicipale de traitement des matières résiduelles at least \$70,000.

The Grande-Rivière sorting centre was paralyzed for two weeks following the conveyor being damaged. That conveyor was not part of the facility's modernization plan that is currently underway.

"Brake discs, large pieces of metal, metal bars, a break like that, it stopped (production) for 10 days. It is a very expensive stoppage, for a breakage. It's directly linked to the type of material we receive, which shouldn't end up in a bin," explains the director of the Régie, Nathalie Drapeau.

On May 10, a bag full of meat was found amongst material received in a blue bin.

The prefect of the MRC of the Rocher-Percé and president of the Régie, Samuel Parisé, also noted that he has even seen an engine in a blue bin.

"It doesn't make sense. It takes a little more consideration from those who put items in the recycling bins," adds Ms. Drapeau.

The shutdown of the sort-



*A conveyor was heavily damaged because of a product put in a blue bin.*

Photo: N. Sergerie

ing centre has a direct impact on the recyclable materials collected.

The management had to turn to other sorting centres to manage the materials, which generates a large invoice. The material, which could not be managed in Grande-Rivière, resulted in an additional loss of income.

The director estimates that the cost of the 10 day stoppage of the sorting centre could reach \$100,000.

"Citizens don't want to hear about cost increases. They want to hear about tax cuts. But this is unstoppable and difficult to deal with. I would like to take this opportunity to pass on the message: ask yourself if this is the right bin to dispose

of these materials," says Ms. Drapeau.

**Large waste collection will happen this fall in the Rocher-Percé MRC**

The Régie will collect the objects this fall. Citizens will have to register to have their large items collected. Further details will be known in June.

"The company will therefore know much more about the mandate to be executed. It does not have to cover 100% of the territory. We are reducing expenses significantly (by doing it this way)," explains the director.

This model already exists in other MRCs and the management will use it as a pilot

project.

"We think that will be the scenario that may take place. It will be well documented so

that we can adjust it for the next collections that will follow in 2024 and 2025," says Ms. Drapeau.

The spring collection had been cancelled after costs exploded after obtaining bids from two contractors.

The bill was up 60% from \$83,000 to \$140,000, which exceeded the legal threshold for awarding the contract.

The Régie will proceed with a public call for tenders via the electronic system of the Government of Quebec.

The elected officials and the management found this compromise concerning the collection of large garbage in municipalities where the spring collection was cancelled.



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### PUBLIC NOTICE

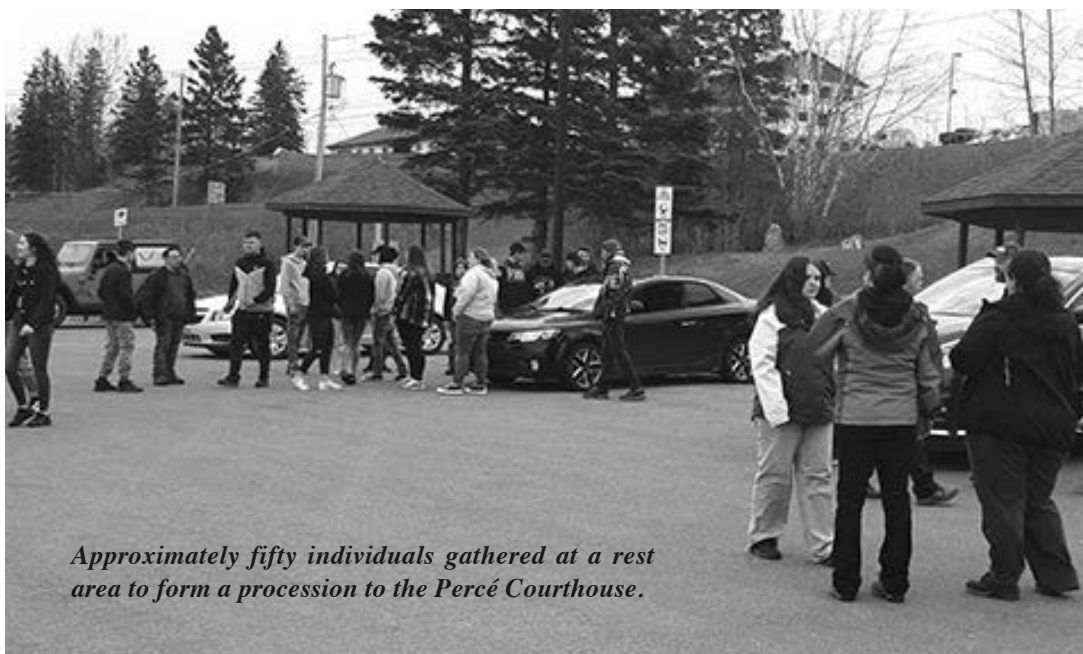
Pursuant to Section 392 of the Education Act, public notice is hereby given that the Council of Commissioners of Eastern Shores School Board intends to modify the dates and times of the Executive Committee and Council of Commissioners meetings for the 2023-2024 school year.

The new schedule will be presented for adoption at the June 20, 2023, meeting of the Council of Commissioners to be held at 9:30 a.m. at the Administrative Offices of the Board, 40 Mountsorrel Street, New Carlisle, Quebec.

Given at New Carlisle, Quebec this 10<sup>th</sup> day of May 2023.

Denis Gauthier  
Secretary General

# Police report



Approximately fifty individuals gathered at a rest area to form a procession to the Percé Courthouse.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Simon Dufort-Chouinard, 18, and his father, Marc-Jules Chouinard, 48, both from Rivière-au-Renard, will return to the Percé Courthouse for their bail hearings on May 30.

On May 11, Simon Dufort-Chouinard was charged with two counts of dangerous driving causing death while his father was charged a day later with dangerous driving. The charges are related to the May 10 road collision that claimed the lives of Gabriel Noël, 19, from Lavaltrie but originally from Gaspé, and Dylan Samuel-Francoeur, 18, from Gaspé.

On May 12, the Sûreté du Québec revealed that two subsequent collisions allegedly occurred on Boulevard Renard Est, between Rivière-au-Renard and Anse-au-Griffon on May 10 and that the vehicle in which the two victims were in was involved in both collisions.

Simon Dufort-Chouinard and Marc-Jules Chouinard's bail hearing was initially to be held on May 15 but their attorney requested a delay, which was granted. The criminal prosecutor in the file, Isabelle Gavioli, is not ruling out further charges in the file.

The Gaspé Spec learned on May 17 that the Sûreté du Québec arrested a third individual. The person was released after questioning on a promise to appear at a later date if charges are laid. Currently, no charges have yet been laid against this person, who cannot yet be identified.

On May 15, approximately fifty individuals gathered at 8 a.m. at a Gaspé rest area to form a procession to the Percé Courthouse. Four SQ vehicles followed the convoy. Participants wanted to attend the court appearance which was made by videoconference from the New Carlisle prison. They are demanding justice concerning the lost of their friends' lives. Another gathering is scheduled for the early morning of May 30 at the Gaspé rest area to again attend the appearance of the two defendants.

"They were two of our good friends and it's important that we show the family that we are behind them," says Marie-Pier Lecompte. "I am here to support the families of the young men who have lost their lives. It's a small part in solidarity," added Jean-Marc Chouinard. "It is to do justice. I think the charges at this time are not consistent with the act committed. I think it should be homicide, not driving causing death. It is important. The two deceased men deserve justice," said Annabelle Smith-Francoeur.

"I got myself a metal bench. I'm going to make a plaque in memory of Gabriel and Dylan with their photos. People and family will be able to attend the installation of the bench in memory of the young men," said Diane Hautcoeur.

A fatal crash occurred in the Magdalen Islands on May 15 around 7 a.m. at the intersection of Road 199 and the Chemin du Cap rouge in Havre-aux-Maisons. Two cars were involved in the accident, both driven by women who were alone in their vehicles. According to the first observations made by the police officers, it looks as if one of the drivers failed to stop at the intersection. The victim Savanna Taker, 37, from Grosse Ile was pronounced dead shortly after her arrival at the hospital. The other driver was also sent to the hospital as a precautionary measure. The intersection was closed for many hours to allow police officers to conduct their investigation safely. A bypass was set up by the Ministry of Transport in the meantime.

All police services in Quebec, in collaboration with the traffic controllers of the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ), conducted a concerted province-wide operation between April 28 and May 4 to raise awareness and make road network users conscious of the dangers associated with non-sharing of the road. In all, slightly more than 1,000 local operations were performed, resulting in more than 3,500 tickets to motorists, which represented 90% of the week's infractions. Nearly 400 tickets were also handed out to pedestrians and cyclists. This concerted province-wide operation was deployed under the theme On the road, we behave well.

The interventions carried out by police and patrol officers aimed to raise awareness among all road users, particularly towards the most vulnerable users. The officers underlined the importance of respecting not only the laws in force, but also adopting behaviors that promote their own safety and that of others, through showing patience and vigilance. This national operation was organized as part of a partnership between the Association of Directors of Police in Quebec, the Sûreté du Québec, the Quebec City Police Department and the SAAQ. A regional breakdown of the statistics is currently not available regarding the operation.

SPDS

Cont'd from cover

school zone in front of S.P.D.S. has been problematic for a long time. Our governing board has contacted the municipality to express concerns about the passing lane in front of S.P.D.S., which often results in excessive speeding."

At the end of April when Officer Cyr contacted the school to see if the principal and teachers would be interested in partnering with the SQ to bring awareness to the school zone, Mrs. Hayes says she "immediately jumped on board. When people get involved in an effort to bring awareness to a particular issue or concern, I believe there is always progress towards making a difference. Today the students made their presence known by not only being physically visible but by the conversations they will continue to have in their homes and in the classroom. Hopefully seeing them (the students) in the media will also have an impact on the (municipal) council and their MRC. It was so wonderful to see our students working alongside the police officers, Isabelle Cyr and her partners, in an effort to demonstrate to our students that their safety is a top priority," concluded Mrs. Hayes.

Most importantly, Mrs. Hayes would like to remind motorists that "School zones are put into place for a reason. A reduced speed limit is only effective if motorists respect and comply. Reducing speed in a school zone has been proven to protect and preserve lives." She hopes that this activity sends a message to all motorists who travel through the S.P.D.S. school zone to follow the speed limit.

Grade 6 teacher, Carl Garrett, tells SPEC that speeding in the S.P.D.S. school zone has been an ongoing issue since he started teaching at S.P.D.S. in 2013. "I was part of the governing board who sent letters to the municipal council in the fall of 2018 about the passing lane. After not hearing back, I approached the municipality who said it (the message) was

passed onto Transport Quebec. After contacting Transport Quebec, they said it was a municipal issue," states Mr. Garrett, who wonders if "a permanent digital speed sign would reduce the number of people who speed."

Participating students had mixed opinions about the day's activity. The majority of students including Grade 5 student Emma Skene were hopeful that their signs and presence helped with the speeding issue. "It was great to see a bunch of people slow down," says Miss Skene. Grade 6 student, Preston Horth, however, was less hopeful and thought "people only slowed down because the police were there." All the S.P.D.S. students who participated were unanimous in what they hoped motorists took away from the May 16 operation, wishing to tell motorists to "Slow Down and keep the speed limit around school zones." The S.P.D.S. principal says the school administration is looking forward to school zone awareness activities becoming an annual or bi-annual event.

This activity wasn't the first police intervention to take place at the S.P.D.S. school zone. A radar operation occurred between January 30 and February 10, which resulted in seventeen speeding tickets being issued, seven of those tickets were for excessive speeding with one driver being caught at a speed of 130 km/h, 80 km/h over the speed limit for this school zone. That intervention was triggered by complaints filed by citizens and parents worried about children's safety.

Between May 15 and 19, several other police operations took place at problematic school zones in the region as part of the School Zone Awareness Week. Three operations were conducted by the Rocher Percé branch of the Sûreté du Québec around three schools which they classify as problematic in their district, École Saint-Bernard in Gascon, École St. Joseph/St-Patrick's School in Chandler and Shigawake Port-Daniel School in Port-Daniel.



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Gilles Gagné

## Commentary

### Pin rouge is an advantage for the Baie des Chaleurs and the Gaspé Peninsula

The mayor of New Richmond, Éric Dubé, informed the public in December 2022 that the status quo regarding the support the Parc régional Petite-Cascapédia receives from the town has reached a turning point, considering that the municipality of 3,800 inhabitants is too small to fund the Pin rouge ski centre alone.

He reiterated that statement on May 15 when he presented the 2022 financial results of the municipality.

#### Historical Background

In the summer of 1990 the Pin rouge ski centre was created. The late Raymond Malenfant, a businessman who was then the proud owner of many motels including two famous hotels, the Manoir Richelieu in the Charlevoix region and Fort Garry Hotel in Winnipeg, had decided to invest in a ski centre in the Bonaventure riding.

His interest in the ski centre was nothing more than a barter agreement, a way to get a casino permit for his Manoir Charlevoix in Charlevoix. Mr. Malenfant was ready to invest in the Bay of Chaleur ski centre, a project that had been simmering for years but that was slow in getting off the ground because there was no private promoter interested in it.

In 1988, during the socio-economic summit in Carleton, then Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure, Gérard-D. Levesque, announced that his government was ready to match \$3 million, if a promoter also invested \$3 million to create a \$6 million ski centre in the Bay of Chaleur area.

The name of Raymond Malenfant started circulating officially in 1989 but rumours had spread the previous year. He was highly regarded, and feared, in the Quebec business sector. He was rough-mannered, less than eloquent verbally and he was seen as someone who could turn a money-losing business into a profitable venture. Moreover, he bragged about that money-making capacity way beyond his ability to deliver.

The recession that started in 1990 eventually brought Raymond Malenfant to bankruptcy. It became evident through the Pin rouge case that the Liberal Party government of Robert Bourassa had played a risky game in the Bay of Chaleur ski centre initiative.

Mr. Malenfant was supposed to get a grant equivalent to what he was “coughing up” for the Pin rouge project, whose location he had chosen despite a study revealing that Carleton’s Mount Saint Joseph had more potential. Mr. Malenfant admitted in 1994, the year of his bankruptcy, that politics played a role in his decision and that he was pressured to pick New Richmond over Carleton. At that time New Richmond was a Liberal stronghold and the majority of Carleton’s citizens voted for the Parti Québécois.

In June 1991, various media reports revealed that the Quebec government invested \$2 million in the Pin rouge ski centre, and that Raymond Malenfant had not paid one penny in the construction of the ski centre. About \$3 million was invested, including \$1 million ordered by Mr. Malenfant to contractors who remained to be paid. Some of those contractors were admirers of the businessman who never thought that

he would fool them but in fact he did just that.

An appointed financial receiver managed Raymond Malenfant’s businesses between the summer of 1991 and his official bankruptcy in 1994.

The Pin rouge ski centre opened in December 1990. At this time the facility did not yet cater to families, as an easier run had not yet been created. The centre was already bearing the marks of a quickly-built ski centre. Fallen trees could be seen everywhere along the runs and from the chairlift. In fact, too many trees had been cut and some locations lost snow as soon as the wind started to blow.

In addition to those realities, Pin rouge remained an unfinished project. So, planning began for a family ski run. After Raymond Malenfant’s bankruptcy and departure from the venture, a cooperative was formed to own and manage the ski centre. That cooperative managed the ski centre until the exhaustion of its members, who sold it to a New Brunswick group, consisting of two couples with a passion for skiing and who often skied at the Pin rouge ski centre.

In the mid-2000s those same New-Brunswickers started looking for a buyer for the Pin rouge ski centre. Facing the possibility of losing its ski centre, the Town of New Richmond and mayor at the time, Nicole Appleby, came to the rescue.

Ms. Appleby was basically saving a project she had been closely involved in, as she had been identified in 1994 by Raymond Malenfant as a key player to explain his presence as an investor in Pin rouge. In 1991, when Mr. Gérard D. Levesque was Quebec’s Finance Minister, she was Mr. Levesque’s chief of staff. Ms. Appleby recruited Mr. Malenfant and facilitated his access to a casino permit in Charlevoix.

Between 2006 and 2008, Ms. Appleby once again used her political contacts to secure the construction of 32 cottages at the foot of the Pin rouge ski runs. On the one hand, the chalets propelled the ski centre’s capacity to draw visitors from outside the region, mainly from the Maritimes, where the lack of mountains and mild winters make skiing difficult for avid skiers.

On the second hand, the cottages also left the Town of New Richmond with a long-term debt, as they were not entirely funded by the Quebec government.

Currently, that long-term debt is stuck at \$2.8 million. The increase in the interest rates between January 2022 and March 2023 has left the municipal administration with the obligation of paying \$204,000 in interest fees in 2023. Prior to 2022, the Town of New Richmond had earmarked \$150,000 annually for Pin rouge, with a sizable portion of the amount used to lower the capital debt of \$2.8 million. This year, the capital debt will not go down.

In addition to that, the operations of the Parc régional Petite-Cascapédia, which includes Pin rouge, its cottages and the Taylor’s Point campground was characterized by a deficit of \$172,000 in 2022. When that amount is analyzed separately, the ski centre’s operations lose between \$200,000 and \$250,000 annually while the cottage and the campground are profitable.

For years, the attempts made by former mayor of New Richmond, Jean-Marie Jobin, to open a dialogue on the possibility to see New Richmond’s neighbouring towns contribute to the ski operations hit a wall, especially in Carleton. The choice of Pin rouge was imposed on the population 34 years ago, to the detriment of another option or discussion. Carleton had scored much better in the assessment of a consultant, 80.5% compared to 59.5% for New Richmond.

However, if we fast-forward to 2023, Pin rouge has become a prime attraction for outdoor enthusiasts. Snowmobilers, cross-country skiers, mountain bike enthusiasts and hikers also use it. The tensions of the 1990s and 2000s are all but forgotten. Users, as well as tourists, appreciate the facility.

It is a major drawing card when Bay of Chaleur organizations recruit newcomers, whether they are doctors, engineers, welders, computer technicians, teachers or entrepreneurs, to name a few. It is an asset for the whole area and, at times, for the whole Gaspé Peninsula.

The Town of New Richmond is ready to keep contributing \$150,000 annually for the capital needs of Pin rouge, possibly more, considering it will take at least a year before witnessing a significant interest rate drop. The municipal administration is probably ready to take part in the annual operating deficit of the ski centre as well. Therefore, about \$200,000 yearly, maybe a bit less, must be found somewhere. A close look at the sums allowed annually by the towns of New Richmond, Caplan, Bonaventure, New Carlisle and Paspébiac shows that their compounded contributions to erase the deficit of their arenas amount to about \$2 million per year.

Can New Richmond’s municipal neighbours come to the rescue of Pin rouge? It must, at least, be considered along with the impact that closing the ski centre would have on their ability to attract newcomers. Pin rouge’s users are not just from New Richmond. They mainly come from a stretch located between Nouvelle and Port Daniel.

To a certain extent, the same could be said about the role of Bonaventure’s Bioparc in the Bay of Chaleur area. The Town of Bonaventure is paying for an attraction that is popular way outside its municipal limits.

The governments will also have to intervene at some point. There are 73 ski centres in Quebec and most of them are losing money. It will be impossible to save all of them. They represent, however, a popular way to cope with winter, even if climate change sometimes makes it difficult to maintain skiing. The Caisses Desjardins deals with a lot of Quebec’s ski centres and only three of its customers are profitable. They receive community support under various forms, like from MRCs.

Global warming is complicating the management of ski centres, however, over recent years, milder weather has translated into larger snowfalls, albeit unpredictable at times.

There must be a way to find about \$200,000 annually in the whole Bay of Chaleur area to save an attraction that should no longer be marred by yesterday controversies.

#### Correction

In the May 17 issue, the article *Gaspesian fly fishers win gold and silver at competition*, on page 16 is missing the final paragraph. It should have read as follows: Lyne also thanks her family and fiancé Blake who have been behind her with all her decisions, including leaving teaching to step into the family business. Sarah also thanks her partner Andrew Murphy “who always supports me 100% and has made me a better angler from the day we met.”

**The Gaspé Spec**

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CMC AUDITE

# An environmental coalition calls for the abolition of regulations harmful to Gaspé Peninsula caribou

GILLES GAGNÉ

NOUVELLE – A coalition of five environmental groups, including two pan-Quebec movements, is calling for the abolition of the “regime of exception” conferring privileges to mining companies that go against the protection of mountain caribou in the Gaspé Peninsula.

This coalition is made up of the following groups: Environnement vert plus, the Comité de protection des monts Chic-Chocs, the Société de conservation ZICO of the Bay of Gaspé, Nature Québec, the Coalition Québec meilleure MINE, and recently added Action boréale.

The coalition discovered that despite a settlement prohibiting mining exploration in the habitat of threatened and vulnerable species, portions of this regulation have disadvantages to the Gaspé Peninsula caribou population.

On paper, mountain caribou are protected, except that amendments made in 2001 to sections 9 and 12.1 of the Wildlife Habitat Regulations allow mining companies to drill for seven and a half months, from November 1 to the following June 15, inside the animal habitat.

“According to the law, we are not allowed to carry out activities that modify the habitat of an endangered species, except for the Gaspé Peninsula caribou! Companies do not have the right at all during these four and a half months,



Photo: G. Gagné

*Pascal Bergeron, from Environnement vert plus, is overwhelmed to see the extent of the privileges granted to mining exploration firms in caribou habitat where caribou is considered an endangered species*

from June 15 to November 1, but otherwise, they have the right,” says Pascal Bergeron, spokesperson for Environnement Vert plus, an environmental group based in the Baie des Chaleurs area.

The 2022 count made by the Ministry of Wildlife reveals that there are only 34 of these caribou left in the Gaspé Peninsula, compared to 154 in 2002.

Mr. Bergeron is amazed to see the ease with which mining company executives can take advantage of the regime of exception resulting from the 2001 regulatory amendment.

“They just need to send a written notice. They do not expect a response or written permission from the minister.

They must give 15 days notice for an intervention such as drilling for example, in the sectors of legal habitat, outside the Parc de la Gaspésie,” adds Mr. Bergeron.

The 2001 changes to Regulations 9 and 12.1 have been quite widely used by mining firms.

“There has been work, and more than once! There have been more than 20 boreholes in the Mont Albert sector, in the zone reserved for the legal caribou protection habitat, but outside the Parc de la Gaspésie, since this (2001) regulation change that created the exception,” says Pascal Bergeron.

The companies have also flouted the part of the regula-

tion stipulating that they must inform the Ministry of Natural Resources of the imminence of their exploration activities at least 15 days before undertaking them.

“I asked the ministry for a copy of any written notice and there was none! Mining companies have therefore carried out more than 20 drillings without written notice. The (2001) regulatory changes include not only drilling but also geophysical surveys,” underlines the spokesperson for Environnement Vert plus.

He notes that mining exploration campaigns even took place over the period during which the Wildlife Inhabitant Regulations prohibit any such activity in the caribou protection zone.

“In 2019, field surveys by the Gasse brothers (Yves and Guy) took place in August and September, when it was completely forbidden. It is written in documents,” underlines Pascal Bergeron.

He believes repeated drilling into caribou habitat, both protected and unprotected areas, has harmed the species.

“Since 2007, there has been a steady decline in the caribou population. The years 2011-2012 were big years of decline. We lost half of our herd at the turn of the 2010s, and this regulation is still in effect,” says a frustrated Mr. Bergeron.

He firmly believes that the regime of exceptions that disadvantages caribou “came from industry pressure. The regulations adopted in 1993

did not allow any intervention in the legal habitat of caribou. We backed off. Were there public consultations in 2001? I have doubts.”

The coalition of which he is a part is therefore demanding the abolition of regulations 9 and 12.1 as they are currently enacted in order to remove the parts harmful to caribou.

The coalition also calls for an expansion of the legal habitat of the endangered species as well as an end to the presence of the mining industry in its habitat.

This intervention comes in the middle of a Quebec-wide consultation process initiated by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests aimed at developing a “harmonious cohabitation” with the mining industry.

“It didn't start very well. There was the idea of excluding journalists and limiting access to Zoom (online) sessions to 15 people. It is a sloppy move when there is no rush to go through this process. This is what promises not to give harmonious development,” concludes Pascal Bergeron.

Most of the mining exploration companies active in the region are trying to find copper and gold in the Gaspé Peninsula. Over the last two years, the number of mining claims in the region has increased by 140%.

A lot of areas next to the Parc de la Gaspésie are claimed by mining companies, some of them highly concentrated near Mont Albert.

## The future of the caribou population is a concern throughout Quebec

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ: - It appears that the survival of the mountain caribou is not only a source of concern in the Gaspé Peninsula, but in other parts of Quebec as well. Action boréale, a new member of the Coalition working for the betterment of the caribou situation, says the herds are threatened elsewhere as well.

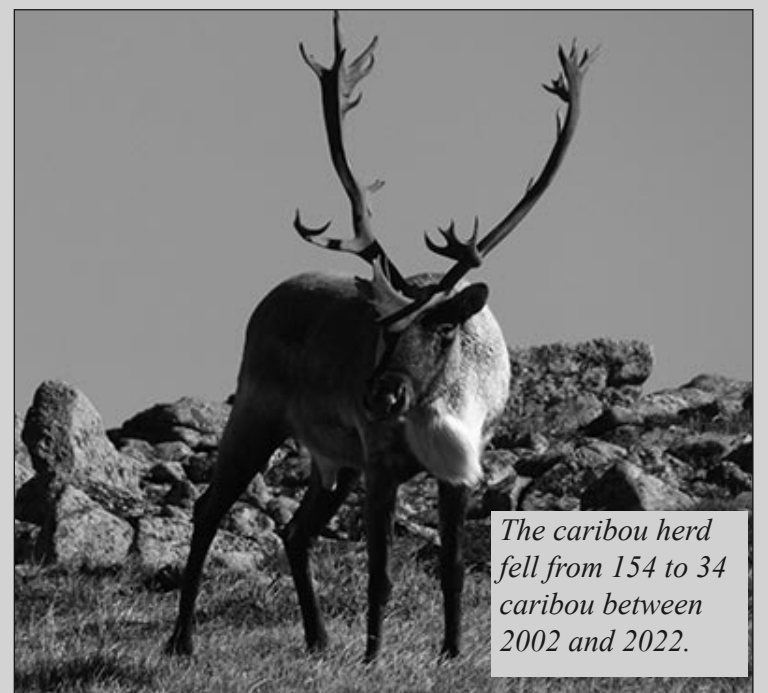
“Here (in Abitibi) we have a small herd of only nine caribou. It is as much the case of forest concessions as mining claims. This is what destroyed and caused this herd to drop from 50 to nine at

present. This is exactly what will happen to the other endangered herds in southern Quebec, including that of the Gaspé Peninsula, if we continue to explore and, if there is a mine, it is the end of the caribou herd. This is what happened for 40 years in Abitibi, despite the fact that we had all the data,” warns the president of Action boréale, Henri Jacob.

The Coalition is demanding that the Minister of Natural Resources and Forests and Minister Responsible for the Gaspé Peninsula, Maïté Blanchet-Vézina, avail herself of the power provided to her

in Section 82 of the Mining Act to order the cessation of mining works and withdraw the claims in the legal caribou habitat as well as in any additional radius deemed relevant.

Finally, the Coalition calls for transparency regarding the process that leads to the establishment of a legal habitat, in particular to ensure the protection of all caribou populations in southern Quebec threatened in the short term by mining and logging, namely caribou located in Val-d'Or, Charlevoix and the Pimouacan and Péribonka sectors in Lac Saint-Jean.



*The caribou herd fell from 154 to 34 caribou between 2002 and 2022.*

Photo: Louis Fradette

# GASPÉ MUNICIPAL UPDATE: \$4.3 million to renovate Gaspé Town Hall

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Left with no other alternatives, the Town of Gaspé has no choice but to invest \$4.3 million to protect the integrity of its town hall.

Following a lack of maintenance since its construction in the late 1970s, many issues are now visible such as: a leaky roof requiring pans to be placed everywhere, condensation and water at the bottom of the windows. Structural problems are also visible on the building.

The cost of the project is estimated at \$4.3 million. "This includes interior upgrades. As long as you have a 65% subsidy, you might as well maximize the work by doing office rearrangements that weren't planned. We have employees who work in common areas who need a private space. We are going to put up walls inside the common area as long as we have the subsidy. Otherwise, we would have had to pay for them without a subsidy," explains the mayor, Daniel Côté. "It's never been a popular idea to invest in the town hall. That's why the bill is so high. It's a safe bet that we'll have to wait several decades before we touch it again in a big way. I hope that over the next few years, every time a problem appears, it will be fixed rather than postponed," adds the mayor.

"Over time, when you see the pots and garbage cans collecting water coming through the roof when it rains or when the snow melts, when you see the building dripping (with condensation) every time the

temperature gets cold outside or every time we warm up the interior, at some point, you have to wonder if you can have a work environment that looks good and have a modicum of pride - a town hall that looks good when we receive visitors?" asks the mayor.

At some point can we have a work environment that looks good with a modicum of pride - a town hall that looks good when we receive visitors?" asks the mayor.

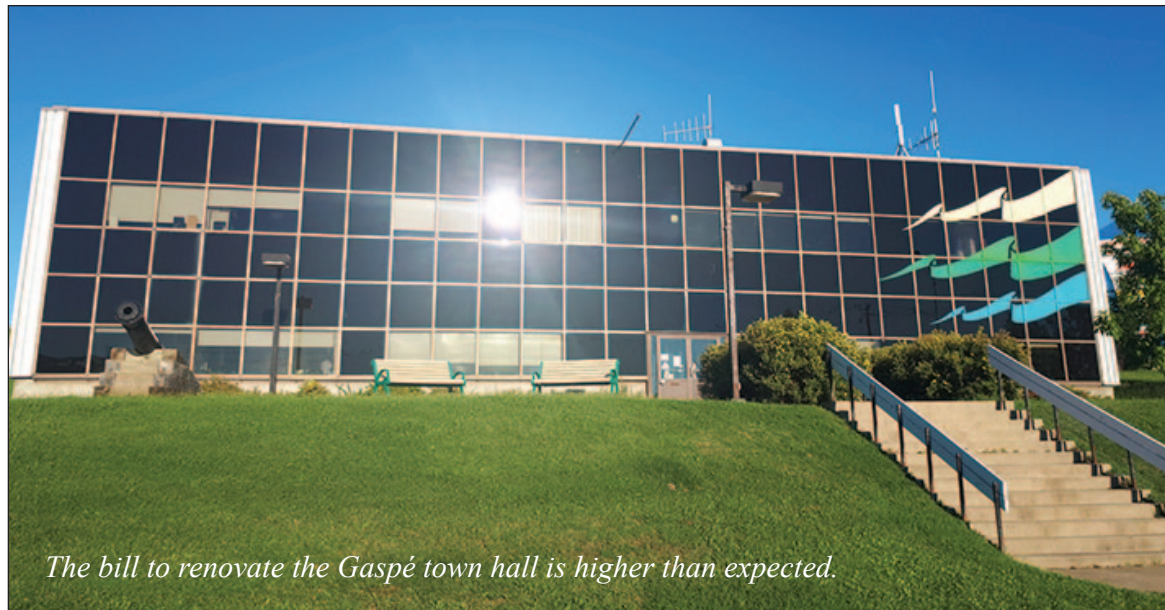
There is no indication that the structure is contaminated.

The town administration looked into getting a new building, but the decision to renovate the current building was not difficult to make. "Without going too deep into the plans, looking at the latest projects of similar buildings, like the airport terminal building, gave us some indication. The town hall is bigger. The terminal was around \$8 million, which allows us to say that for a building like the town hall, we would be around \$12 million to \$15 million for new ones. We are at \$4 million in renovations and will last 30 to 40 years with a little maintenance," calculates Mr. Côté.

Energy efficiency will also be reviewed, cladding, insulation, windows, some floors and ceilings will also be redone.

## Rivière-au-Renard Fishing Capital continues

After a period of uncertainty regarding the future of the Rivière-au-Renard fishing capital project, the town will continue the project by rein-



The bill to renovate the Gaspé town hall is higher than expected.

Photo: N. Sergerie

jecting an additional \$1.2 million.

The facilities suffered damage following the violent storm that hit the area just before Christmas.

"We did analyses. We asked lots of questions. There is a clear desire from the initial sponsors to continue the project. On our side, as long as we put in \$6 million, we said to ourselves, 'Let's finish it, but let's have a study that will show us the risks and how to guard against them,'" explains the mayor.

In the short term, the work will be completed this summer and a beach replenishment will be redone in the area near the Frontibus microbrewery which suffered damage.

"In aerial photos, we see

that the recharge has slipped towards a ditch and towards the riprap which has remained there. The ditch is filled. If we put stone back in the hole, according to specialists, the beach will erode normally," says the mayor.

For the shoreline erosion component, \$600,000 will be added to modify plans, refill, and move infrastructures such as platforms and picnic tables closer to rue du Banc.

"The water games for children were planned, but if the sea levels reach them, they will be a write-off. We won't do them there. There is too much risk of losing them. If the sea passes over it, the infrastructure could suffer from salt water and deteriorate over time," explains the mayor.

The other \$600,000 from the loan by-law will be used to cover the additional costs already planned, but which were to be drawn from the accumulated surplus.

"We will try to get help from Quebec, in particular from Civil Security, since it was Mother Nature that caused the damage. Normally, that should be eligible for help. We will push," says Mr. Côté.

With this additional injection, the Rivière-au-Renard fishing capital project will now total \$9.2 million.

"Assuming that we have no additional aid on the \$1.2 million (that must be reinvested due to the storm), the total aid would be 68%. We are going to try and get more than 68%," says Mayor Côté.

## Promising tourist season expected on the Coast

NELSON SERGERIE

MONT-JOLI - Tourisme Gaspésie remains confident that the region will experience a good tourist season, despite certain provincial indicators.

1006 people were surveyed by the Transat Tourism Chair to determine the top five Quebec destinations this summer. Despite ranking third on the list in 2022, the Gaspé Peninsula only ranked sixth in this year's survey.

60% of people surveyed plan to stay at least one night in Quebec.

"It's still positive. What should be noted from this study is that the interest of Quebecers in visiting Quebec has gone from 74% to 60% this year. But at home, when we look at our various indica-

tors with 116 respondents, more than 60% are similar or increased compared to last year," says the marketing director of Tourisme Gaspésie, Stéphanie Thibaud.

Ms. Thibaud "remains positive for the upcoming summer season," since visits to the Tourisme Gaspésie website between April 1 and May 14 have increased by 36%.

The regions of Quebec, Charlevoix, Eastern Townships, Lower Saint Lawrence and the Laurentians are preferred by Quebecers who seek swimming and the beach, visiting museums, cultural sites and gastronomy.

"80% of visitors to the Gaspé come from Quebec. It becomes problematic when Quebecers want to discover something other than Que-

bec. That's why, in our strategies, we will work on different markets such as the Maritimes, which is a substantial nearby clientele," says the marketing director.

In collaboration with Québec maritime, steps are being taken in Ontario, the United States and French-speaking Europe.

Last year, for the period from May to September, Tourisme Gaspésie estimated the number of visitors at more than 570,000 with spin-offs of \$340 million.

It is more than the summer of 2021 which was considered a record year when 523,000 people visited the peninsula with spin-offs of \$300 million, which was the best year since the organization compiled this kind of data.

## The town of Gaspé reports a net surplus of \$300,000 for 2022

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Town of Gaspé has a net surplus of \$300,000 following the filing of its 2022 financial statements.

The gross surplus is \$2,068,237, less the fiscal year surplus of \$200,000 of the Régie intermunicipale de traitement des matières résiduelles de la Gaspésie and the appropriation of \$1.5 million of the accumulated surplus from the 2022 budget.

The housing sector also contributes an unexpected revenue. "There are additional revenues generated by economic growth. We have \$1.1 million in additional tax revenues from new public and private buildings and, in terms of services, we have an additional \$300,000 in transfer taxes. This, too, is a testimony to the economic effervescence of Gaspé," says Mayor Daniel Côté.

The town's accumulated surplus is now at \$12.2 million, of which \$8.4 million is unrestricted.

The municipal share of the debt decreased by \$2.9 million in 2022, but the share attributed to the government of Quebec increased by \$7 million. The overall Town of Gaspé debt as of December 31, 2022, was \$44 million.

# Lobster fishermen received \$7.70 per pound during the first two weeks

GILLES GAGNÉ

SAINT-GODEFROI – Gaspesian lobster fishermen received \$7.70 per pound for their first two weeks of catches. This is a little less than the \$8 obtained for the first week of 2022 and 2021, specifies Bill Sheehan, who is vice president of E. Gagnon et Fils of Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, the largest lobster buyer in the region.

A majority of the 158 Gaspesian lobster fishermen set their traps on April 29, bringing in their first catches of 2023 the next day.

Bill Sheehan explains that the fishermen receive a percentage based on a formula that takes into account the price paid by the retailers

Mr. Sheehan had guessed a price of \$7.65 per pound for the first two weeks before getting the actual amount provided by the accounting firm that manages the formula.

Réal Nicolas, president of the Poisson salé gaspésien processing company in Grande-Rivière, adopted this calculation formula and a joint marketing plan a few years ago because he was tired of dealing with lobster fishermen daily who were dissatisfied with the prices paid by the region's buyers. At the time, the average price received by the Magdalen Islands fishermen was always higher than that of their Gaspesian colleagues.

The fishermen contacted by the SPEC preferred to wait a bit before commenting on the price, as they want to see if the price received will remain the same until the end of May. They are satisfied with the volume of catches though. "There are lobsters," simply says Shigawake's Jeffrey Vautier, who usually prefers to wait until the end of the season before commenting.

Some other fishermen say they are having the best season start in their history, a point shared by the Gaspé Peninsula buyers and processors. Roch



Photo: G. Gagné

*During the first two weeks of the lobster fishing season catches were very good in the Gaspé Peninsula. Shigawake's Jeffrey Vautier, who fishes out of Saint-Godefroi, is satisfied with his season kickoff.*

Lelièvre, president of the Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan processing plant, says that "we are so busy that we don't have the time to calculate the increased percentage." He is, nevertheless, adamant about the abundance of the season kickoff.

Like the fishermen and Mr. Lelièvre, Bill Sheehan observed very high lobster catches during the first two weeks of the 10 week season.

"Quebec catches are on the rise. It seems that we pick up what the others no longer catch," says Mr. Sheehan of the sharply declining catches in Maine over the last few years, and more limited catches than usual in New Brunswick last year and especially this year.

"In New Brunswick, in the Acadian Peninsula, they have been really exposed to the winds of the last few days. Many fishermen did not go to sea. We had northwest and northeast winds in the Gaspé Peninsula and we were better protected along the coast, with the exception of fishermen on the north side of the region, but there are far fewer of them," says Mr. Sheehan.

Fishermen based between Brillant Cove in Gaspé and Bonaventure East began their season on April 29. Fishermen

based in the western part of the Bay of Chaleur area, between Bonaventure and Miguasha started a week later on May 6. The fishermen between Brillant Cove and Cape Gaspé finally started their season on May 11 and 12, like most of the 10 fishermen based between Cape Gaspé and Mont-Louis.

Bill Sheehan sees a few

things that could help lobster prices over the next couple of weeks. The demand was still strong after Mother's Day, the peak period for lobster sales in Quebec.

"We go back to supply and demand. Demand should still be good, but declining thereafter during the long weekend in May. There are still strong winds expected over the next

few days. Supply may decrease because some fishing days might be missed. Both, supply and demand, are therefore going to be a little down," notes Mr. Sheehan, who does not foresee a collapse in the price of lobster this year, despite the affordable snow crab prices.

The 158 Gaspé Peninsula lobster boats have quadrupled their catches since 2010, the result of sacrifices that began in 1997 and related to the reduction in catch capacity combined with the protection of spawners. At the time, the lobster fishermen had been informed for a few years that the number of permit holders was too high, at 221, to carry out a sustainable fishery.

Their best year came in 2021, with catches of 4,719 metric tons worth \$88.1 million. The average price over that season was \$8.51 per pound.

In 2022, the Gaspé Peninsula fishermen landed 4,263 metric tons of lobster, for a value of \$74.5 million, based on an average price of \$7.95 per pound.

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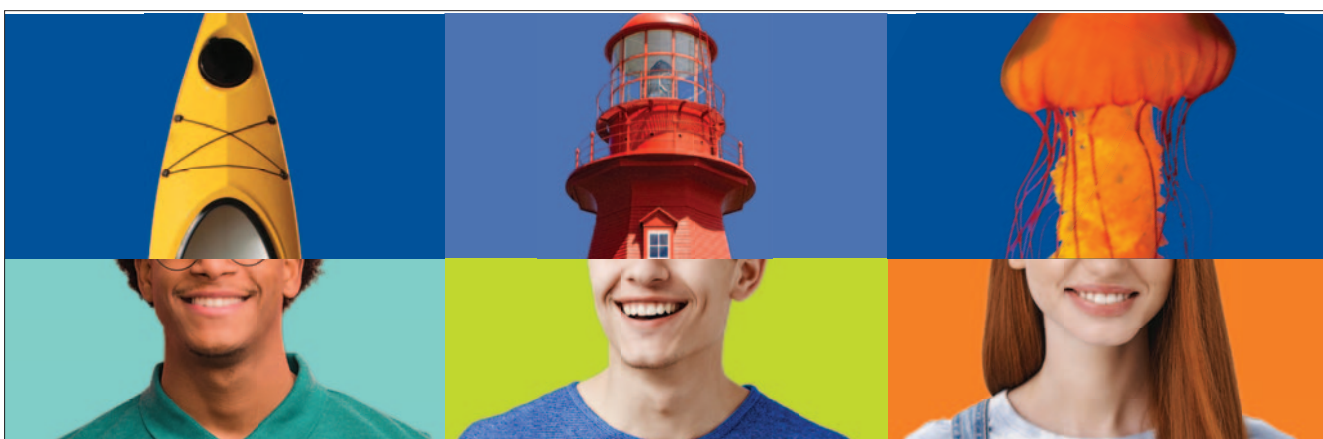
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# HERBICIDES ALONG THE TRACKS: Environmental groups demand action

NELSON SERGERIE

**GASPÉ** - The use of herbicides along the tracks is once again a hot topic as two environmental groups are demanding action from the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie.

Together for the Sustainable Future of Greater Gaspé questions the fact that the spraying plan has not been made public, which is a cause of concern for the population.

The group asked the Town of Gaspé to provide it with the herbicide spraying plan on its territory via the Access to Information Act.

"We are surprised by the response received. The town is not in possession of the spraying plan for 2022 and 2023. We consulted the Pesticides Management Code and, in the current text, we can read that the municipalities are supposed to receive this notice," explains the president of Together for the Sustainable Future of

Greater Gaspé, Lise Chartrand.

"Given that the spraying is done between April and September and the municipality should have received this notice, we are surprised," says Ms. Chartrand who intends to ask the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie how the spraying will be done and why municipalities like the Town of Gaspé did not receive any notice.

The environmental group questions the impacts on the health of people who are not informed of the spraying. "There are people who have told us that they are not aware of the spraying of herbicides. A mother told us that she was going to pick fruit there," says the president. "This is information that we are entitled to have," says Ms. Chartrand.

For its part, the Société de conservation Zico de la Baie de Gaspé is still asking for alternatives to be found instead of using herbicides along the tracks.

After submitting a 79-page brief, the organization managed to obtain a virtual meeting with the Ministry of Transport.

"We have gone through the file. We came back to the toxicity of the five herbicides used by the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie and the toxicity of creosote as well as the alternatives," mentions the president of SCZBC, Margret Grenier.

"We raised the fact that the ministry deals with the ecological management of the corridors of the road network to protect the environment. We asked for the same treatment for the railway. We asked the ministry and the railway company to do better and differently to put an end to the use of herbicides and creosote. This must be reconciled with the safety of the environment and the population," says Ms. Grenier.

"We mentioned that alternatives are common practice in North America, Europe and

elsewhere in the world," she says. The exploratory meeting made it possible to discuss the issues.

"We are waiting for news from the ministry's advisory committee," says Margret Grenier who is not optimistic about receiving a quick response.

The president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, Éric Dubé, demonstrated a bit of impatience with having to justify the use of herbicides again this year.

"I think it's unfortunate that we're still receiving malicious comments regarding the application and treatment of herbicides on the railroad tracks," says Mr. Dubé.

Responding to Together for the Sustainable Future of Greater Gaspé, the president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie indicated that he was acting according to the regulations in place.

According to regulations, Mr. Dubé states that, "What is indicated (in the regulations) is

that the information must be sent to the ministry. Municipalities do not have to have it."

"I'll just remind people that there is Section 37 of the (Transportation) Act that says no person shall operate on the track, guideway or right-of-way other than on the crossings or signalized crossings. People have no business on the track. Section 82 says you could be fined between \$200 and \$500," says Mr. Dubé.

"It gets tiring. We respect environmental criteria. We use less and less (herbicides). We are part of society. I don't want people to think we're on another planet. We have a reality. It is a security issue. I don't think people would want to see a crash because the track wasn't maintained well," he states. He adds that he does not want to relive an accident like the one that occurred in March 2022 when an 83-year-old man who was walking on the railway tracks in Nouvelle was struck and killed.

## The Town of New Richmond declares a surplus of \$79,117 for 2022

GILLES GAGNÉ

**NEW RICHMOND** - The Town of New Richmond has a \$79,117 surplus for the fiscal year that ended on December 31, 2022. The town's revenues reached \$8,880,000 for 2022, and its expenses exceeded \$8.8 million by a few hundred dollars.

The results were tabled on May 15, at a special meeting of the municipal council. The surplus was obtained despite inflation and the increase in maintenance costs, which have affected the results.

At the end of the 2022 fiscal year, the accumulated surplus of the Town of New Richmond amounted to \$788,093, thus falling within the parameters desired by the ministerial authorities.

"The operating surplus is attributable to two main factors. The first factor is an exceptional year in terms of property transfer rights, the result of a crazy year in the real estate market. The second factor is land-related wealth creation, which has also increased over the past year, generating nearly \$100,000 in additional revenue," explains New Rich-

mond mayor, Éric Dubé.

"The transfer tax brought in between \$50,000 and \$60,000. As for the real estate value, there weren't very many new constructions in housing in 2022 but we issued 180 renovation permits, which is good. It was different on the commercial side, with the new construction of the Ford car dealership, Location Moreau and Eurovia. Moreover, most of that added value will have a greater impact in 2023, with a new assessment roll adjustment," adds Mr. Dubé.

The construction of new apartment buildings in 2023 should add to the town's wealth and, by extension, add to municipal tax revenues.

"We are pleased to see that the Town has maintained its good financial health again this year thanks to responsible management and increased revenues, however, we remain vigilant in the face of the economic challenges ahead, in particular, due to the uncertainty surrounding interest rates and market fluctuations. We will continue to act with caution and follow responsible financial practices to ensure the long-term economic stability of

our town and also to respect the citizen's capacity to pay," mentions the mayor.

### The Pin rouge situation

When he made his presentation about the 2023 municipal budget in December, Éric Dubé stressed his preoccupation regarding the financial burden tied to the Parc régional Petite Cascapédia, which manages the Pin rouge ski centre, 32 cottages built at the foot of the ski runs as well as the Taylor Point campground.

Mayor Dubé mentions that the Parc régional Petite Cascapédia is unquestionably an essential element of the tourism industry in the Bay of Chaleur area. However, its 2022 results show a deficit of \$172,340 before amortization. "This negative result is mainly due to the increase in mountain operating costs at the Pin Rouge tourist resort, insurance costs and interest on the debt. Despite the Town's continuous efforts for nearly 20 years to keep the ski centre operational, it has become clear that the Town is no longer in a position to provide exclusive financial support, but remains deter-

mined to support the Pin Rouge ski centre. A reflection has begun with the members of the Parc régional Petite Cascapédia's board of directors in order to find sustainable solutions, in particular with other partners. One thing is certain, the status quo is no longer possible," repeats Mr. Dubé.

The Town of New Richmond earmarks \$150,000 annually in its regular budget to pay for the Parc régional Petite Cascapédia's debt reimbursement. That debt amounts to \$2.8 million and mainly stems from the 2006-2008 building of the 32 cottages. That debt is supposed to be paid by 2050. However, the rising interest rates of 2022 and the first quarter of 2023 nullified the capital payment.

"In the 2023 budget, we increased our yearly payment to \$175,000 by adding \$25,000, just to pay interest fees and even that is not enough, as our interest will amount to \$205,000 this year," he underlines.

Technically, an amortization amount of \$204,000 should be added to this year's sum that the Town of New Richmond should earmark for

the Parc régional Petite Cascapédia but a lot of organizations don't make amortization provisions. Those provisions extend to the Taylor Point's campground.

"The profit of the campground reaches \$150,000 annually. The Pin rouge cottages are also profitable on a year-around basis, to the tune of \$100,000. That said, the administration and personnel fees of the whole Parc régional Petite Cascapédia amount to \$500,000 annually and they include the management of the ski centre, cottages and the campground. When taken separately and by adding the administrative fees attached to them, the campground declared a net surplus of \$62,000 and cottages also declared a net surplus of \$62,000. We see that the operations of the ski centre need to be supported to the amount of \$200,000 to \$250,000 annually," says Mayor Dubé.

That sum, averaging between \$200,000 and \$250,000, doesn't include the \$150,000 capital payment, which is a \$205,000 interest expenditure in 2023, that the Town of New

Cont'd on page 12



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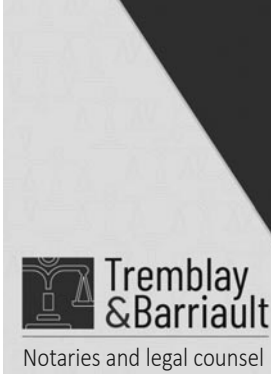
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# Announcements



## Obituaries



### GEDEON: Gloria

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Gloria Gédéon on May 2, 2023, in Maria, at the age of 90. She was the wife of the late Clément Paré. She went to join her sons, Rémi and Marc as well as her parents, Stephen Gideon and Annette Leblanc.

She is survived by her daughters: Line (Henry) and Marie-Josée (Andrew); grandchildren: Guillaume, Cynthia, Patrick, Isabelle, William and Nicolas; great-granddaughter: Victoria; brothers and sisters: Raynold (Karin), Harold (Lilianne), Marthe (late Jean-Louis) and Françoise; as well as several nephews and nieces, other relatives and friends. She was the sister of the late James Gedeon (Laura).

The family will receive condolences at Ste-Elisabeth de Cantley Church located at 47 chemin Ste-Elisabeth, on Saturday, June 3, 2023, beginning at 10 a.m. The religious service will follow at 11 a.m. in said church. She will be taken to her final resting place in the parish cemetery following the service.



### LEQUESNE: Nancy

November 7, 1961 – April 29, 2023

Nancy passed away at Wellington House, Prescott, Ontario, at the age of 61.

She was predeceased by her father, Rupert Lequesne, and sister, Susan.

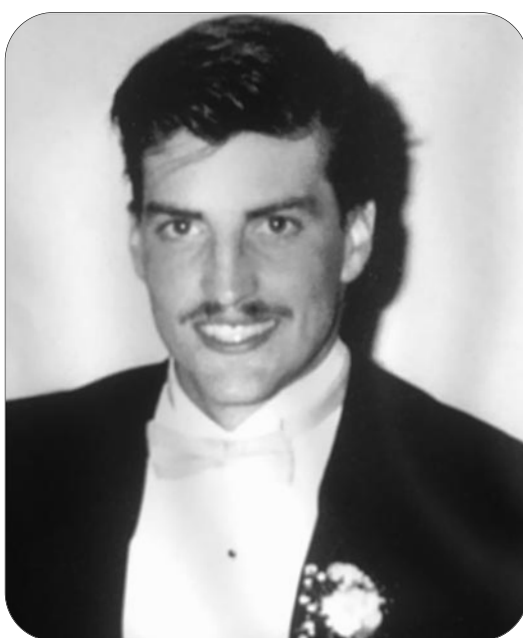
She leaves to mourn, her children Jamie, Andrew (Ashley), Kathryn (Travis) and granddaughter Bailee.

She is survived by her mother, Joan, sister Donna (Francis), brother Brian (France), as well as four nieces and nephews.

The funeral service will be held at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Gaspé on July 10 at 2 p.m., followed by the burial in St. James' Cemetery in Wakeham.



## In Memory



### JOURNEAU: Christopher

In loving memory of Christopher Journeau, who passed away one year ago on May 19.

*May the winds of Heaven blow softly*

*And whisper in your ear.*

*How much we love and miss you*

*And wish that you were here.*

*Gone from our sight*

*But never from our hearts.*

Sadly missed and forever loved by Mom and Dad, sister Tania Lee, brother Jonathan and their families.

**DEADLINE FOR THIS PAGE:  
WEDNESDAY AT 4 P.M.**

## Lessons learned in life

Just because she's your mom and she's going to love you forever, doesn't mean you can treat her just any old way and think it doesn't matter.

Don't treat the person who loves you the most, the worst. Don't take her for granted. She may not let you see it, but your shortness, impatience and harsh words make her steal away to a quiet place and cry.

Her heart hurts to understand why you seem angry with her. She will not always agree with you, but she will always love you.

And it doesn't matter how old you are or how old she is, treasure your mom, you'll never have another one.

*Joyce Brash*



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*Covering Port Daniel to New Richmond*

## The Gaspé Spec - Obituary Guide

*(Please note that paragraphs can be added or removed as needed.)*

**Paragraph 1:** In this paragraph you should list the full name, date and place of your loved one's birth and death, cause of death (optional), as well as the name of parents.

**Paragraph 2:** In this paragraph you can give a brief biography of the deceased, including if desired the schools that they attended.

**Paragraph 3:** In this paragraph you can list employment history, any special awards received and notable accomplishments.

**Paragraph 4:** In this paragraph you can list information about church or religious affiliations, any organizations or clubs, as well as any hobbies or interests that the deceased was a part of or enjoyed.

**Paragraph 5:** This paragraph can be used to give any information about your loved ones personality, their quirks or funny stories.

**Paragraph 6:** Paragraph 6 is where you will list surviving family, friends and other relatives as well as any predeceased family. It is important to note that regardless of family situations or relationships with other family members, the obituary should include accurate information for historical purposes, as once it is published it can be used as a reference for future generations. It should not exclude anyone for personal reasons.

**Paragraph 7:** The last paragraph is usually reserved to let friends and family know about funeral arrangements such as visitation date, time and location it is also where you can indicate where family and friends can make donations in memory of your deceased loved one. Example: In lieu of flowers a donation in their memory can be made to .....

*\*Please note that there are many ways to write an obituary. There are no set rules that must be followed. It is recommended to view samples of obituaries online or in your local paper. Find a style that would fit your loved one and make them proud.*

## COAST ROUND-UP

### GASPÉ:

#### Cancer Foundation

All new membership and renewals, \$15 per person or \$25 per couple, can be sent to Gaspé Cancer Foundation, P.O. Box 6078, Gaspé, Quebec G4X 2M6, or 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.

### YORK:

#### York River Community Hall

The Annual General Meeting for the York River Community Hall will be held on **May 30** beginning at 7 p.m. at the hall. It is important for the public to

attend and help support our beautiful hall. Two members from those attending will be chosen at this meeting to sit on the committee and represent the public. We hope to see you there.

### 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.

**May 27:** Military Whist beginning at 8 p.m.

### HOPE:

#### Hope Baptist Church

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

### NEW CARLISLE:

#### Funeral Association

**June 18:** The New Carlisle Funeral Association will be having a Fa-

ther's Day Brunch at the New Carlisle Chalet from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Adults \$15, children ten and under \$10. Hope to see you all there.

### NEW CARLISLE:

#### Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

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

**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!

**June 6:** 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.

### NEW RICHMOND:

#### La Boutique

New Richmond Cultural Association (La Boutique), dates to remember:

**May 26 - 27:** Garage Sale and Bake Sale, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Saint Andrew's United Church Hall, 215 Perron Ouest, New Richmond. Accepting donations for this sale May 24 and 25 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the church hall. For more information, call Deb at 418-392-4508 or Sharon at 418-392-5771.

**June 5 to 9:** Artisans will bring in their items by appointment, 210 Boul. Perron Ouest, New Richmond.

**June 12:** La Boutique will open for the season.

### 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, May 28

10 a.m. Service

### UNITED CHURCH

#### HOPE TOWN

#### Sunday, May 28

10 a.m. Service

### ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

#### Sunday, May 28

#### NEW CARLISLE

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

#### HOPE TOWN

10 a.m. Holy Eucharist

#### SHIGAWAKE

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist



**ARIES** – Mar 21/Apr 20  
Aries, try to rectify an imbalance in a relationship with another person close to you this week. It's never too late to make amends, and the rewards are fully worth it.

**TAURUS** – Apr 21/May 21  
Taurus, friction can be overcome with patience and perseverance. Take an even-keeled approach and give things time to simmer. Change will come.

**GEMINI** – May 22/June 21  
The brighter you shine, the more things will come your way this week, Gemini. Wear a big smile on your

face and get out into the thick of things.

**CANCER** – Jun 22/July 22  
Cancer, you may have to change your way of thinking to get on the same wavelength as some others this week. Be open-minded to new experiences.

**LEO** – Jul 23/Aug 23  
Important lessons about balance could come your way soon, Leo. You need to find that happy medium between work and home responsibilities.

**VIRGO** – Aug 24/Sept 22  
Events this week could leave you a little dazed and bewildered, Virgo. Nothing seems to be going to plan and that could get on your nerves. Figure out a way to de-stress.

**LIBRA** – Sept 23/Oct 23  
Libra, your urge to take action comes on strong this week. Figure out a project you can put your efforts behind as soon as possible and then dive in with maximum effort.

**SCORPIO** – Oct 24/Nov 22  
Use this week as an opportunity to tend to your own needs, Scorpio. Indulge in a spa treatment or play hooky and go on a road trip all by yourself.

**SAGITTARIUS** – Nov 23/Dec 21  
Sagittarius, your desire to get ahead is very strong over the course of the next few days. Now you only need to figure out the venture that you will take on.

**CAPRICORN** – Dec 22/Jan 20  
Others may be begging for your attention, Capricorn. But this week is all about self-healing for you. Focus inward to bring about any personal change you desire.

**AQUARIUS** – Jan 21/Feb 18  
You can accomplish a great deal when you happen to get moving, Aquarius. This week the struggle may be finding the motivation to take the first step.

**PISCES** – Feb 19/Mar 20  
Pisces, take a break from reality by reading a good fantasy book, watching a movie or enjoying a stage show. You can use the respite.

### FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

**MAY 14**  
Miranda Cosgrove, Actress (30)

**MAY 15**  
Andy Murray, Athlete (36)

**MAY 16**  
Janet Jackson, Singer (57)

**MAY 17**  
Nikki Reed, Actress (35)

**MAY 18**  
George Strait, Singer (71)

**MAY 19**  
Eleanor Tomlinson, Actress (31)

**MAY 20**  
Busta Rhymes, Rapper (51)

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# An international career for Pamela Rooney

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Pamela Rooney continues to enjoy international success after winning two awards at the Texas Sounds International Country Music Awards last October.

"The career has exploded quite a bit, but I like it. I am very busy. I have a lot of contracts this year. I'm going back to Texas Sounds International (Country Music Awards) this year where I'm nominated. I even have contracts in Ireland next year," says the artist from Douglas-town proudly.

Her name appears in four categories: Artist of the Year, Song of the Year, Heritage and Spirit. I have my "Fingers crossed," says Ms. Rooney.

After winning the Heritage award given for singing in the Texas traditional style and the Spirit award for representing the spirit of Texas music, Pamela Rooney hoped that these awards would open the door to the American mar-

ket.

"Since I won this (heritage and spirit awards), I've had calls from all over the world, even places I didn't know. On platforms like Spotify and iTunes, it exploded. The people are so nice, too. I travel a lot. I have no choice. It's a lot of travel, but I like it. I will continue until the end," says the singer.

Ms. Rooney mentioned last fall the possibility of producing a new album, which would be her fourth, but her plans have since changed.

"The albums are selling much less than before. Now it's USB sticks. I thought I'd do a single. I'm in the studio in New Brunswick recording 'Country and Country Any-more'. Country music isn't like it used to be. It's a song with a fast beat. This is not a song to fall asleep on your chairs. It should be out in a month," she says.

Making an album is very expensive, but she has not put this option aside. "Maybe for the holidays," she adds.

Her summer schedule is very full, but there are still some openings.

She will perform at a few places in the Gaspé Peninsula this summer including at the Bleubleu Festival in Carleton-sur-Mer, Shigawake Agricultural Fair and Music Festival, Festival musique du bout du monde in Gaspé and at an event in Grande-Rivière.

"After that, it will be Texas, New Brunswick, Ontario, Quebec and Montreal, but I have a few places left for the Gaspé Peninsula," explains the singer.

Despite a very busy schedule, the artist has not given up her career as a beneficiary attendant in a seniors' centre in the Quebec City area.

"I love my 'old people' too much. It's like my grandparents. I work seven days a week. It feels good to be out. During COVID, it was a long time at home doing nothing for two and a half years but I work a lot," concludes Pamela Rooney.



Photo: Courtesy of Pamela Rooney

Pamela Rooney won two awards last October in Texas.

## NEW RICHMOND:

Cont'd from page 8

Richmond is still ready to pay yearly.

"Our revenue figures haven't changed. We are declaring ski revenues of \$606,000 for 2022, \$1,000 more than in 2021. However, we are hit hard by inflation stemming from the effects of

the pandemic. In 2022, the insurance cost rose by \$60,000, while the maintenance and salary cost item rose by \$300,000. The fuel bill was \$20,000 higher, and the electricity bill cost \$25,000 more," says Éric Dubé.

"We need help to pay for all of this (Pin rouge ski centre) and the business model must change. The Town of New

Richmond cannot stay alone in paying this. Since 2006, we have added the chalets. We have already repaired the roof of one of them because it was leaking and we will eventually have to repair the 31 others. Some models exist. I don't want to force anyone. I don't have the solution right now. We have created a working committee and its members are al-

ready active in finding solutions," he also stresses.

Will the Pin rouge ski centre open at the end of December?

"We are wondering if we will. However, if we look at the territory served by Pin rouge, we sure have the means to save it, collectively," concludes Éric Dubé.

In the region, the majority of the Pin rouge ski centre's

clientele come from the area between Nouvelle and Port Daniel.

There are 73 ski centres in Quebec and the majority of them lose money. Climate change has caused an increase in operating costs. The season starts later and closes earlier if ski centres are not able to produce snow in order to maintain the number of operating days.

# Business & Professional Directory



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