

RAILWAY REFURBISHMENT:

A whopping additional contribution of \$517.6M by Transports Québec

Total cost to reach \$871.8M and be completed by 2026

GILLES GAGNÉ

GASPÉ – On June 27, Quebec’s Department of Transport announced that the upgrading of the Port Daniel - Gaspé portion of the regional railroad will require an investment of \$517.6 million, which will bring the total rehabilitation cost to an astounding amount of \$871.8 million.

Transports Québec indicated that the Port Daniel-Gaspé portion of the line will be fully upgraded by December 2026.

The announcement was made by Transport and Sustainable Mobility Minister Geneviève Guilbault at the Gaspé intermodal station. About 30 people, most of them advocates of a quicker upgrading of the railway, were on hand for the announcement.

Work east of Port Daniel will start this year with rockfill. Further contracts will be awarded later. The Transports Québec brass expects to launch calls for tenders that often include at least two bridges, culverts or other types of



Photos: G. Gagné

LM Wind Power plant in Gaspé could be the most likely customer to use the freight train service regularly east of Port Daniel.

structural works, which were announced at the end of 2022.

“This is another promise kept: the Gaspé Peninsula railway will be rehabilitated up to Gaspé! Today, we are taking a crucial step with the announcement of work for the third and final section, between Port Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé. Confirmed investments show that we are taking the necessary steps to get the train back

on track as soon as possible,” said Minister Geneviève Guilbault, who is also the Quebec government deputy premier.

“In addition, we reiterate our confidence in the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie to ensure the maintenance and development of the infrastructure. Together, we want to offer Gaspésians a service that meets their expectations and an additional tool to support the region’s economic growth,” she added.

Bringing the train back to Gaspé minimally means the return of freight trains, as Minister Guilbault remarked, because the Quebec government doesn’t control VIA Rail, the federal government-owned public corporation managing most of Canada’s passenger trains including, until 2013, the Montreal-Matapédia-Gaspé one, which was suspended because of the state of the railroad.

“I support the principle of saying that we wish to bring back the passenger train. We are discussing this with VIA Rail. They committed to come back once the railroad is repaired to Gaspé, which I can understand,” points out Minis-

ter Guilbault.

More than 16,000 people signed a petition between April and June to request the return of the passenger train in two phases, with the first phase having passenger trains available to New Carlisle, and the second phase to Gaspé once the Gaspé Peninsula railroad is repaired. Minister Guilbault did not comment on the petition.

“By bringing back the freight train to Gaspé, we increase our chances of bringing back the passenger train to Gaspé,” she summed up.

“Now, the portion (of the network) over which the train comes back and when are matters that will be discussed later,” she stresses.

Details about the total repair cost

Overall, the Matapédia to Caplan portion of the railroad has experienced uninterrupted freight service, mainly the Matapédia to New Richmond stretch, although with variable frequency, since VIA Rail suspended its service in 2013.

The refurbishment of that section is complete and cost \$54.5 million. Train traffic was

never suspended for more than two-and-a-half weeks on that section, with one interruption happening in December 2020 following very heavy rain that damaged the structure of the two old Cascapédia-St. Jules bridges.

During the announcement made by Geneviève Guilbault, Transports Québec revealed that the upgrading cost of the Caplan to Port Daniel part of the railroad will cost close to \$300 million, or precisely \$299.7 million, which is roughly \$200 million more than initially budgeted, admits Minister Guilbault.

The delivery of this section’s refurbishment has been delayed twice, since traffic was initially supposed to resume there in 2020. It was first delayed to 2022 and then again for December 2024.

While all the bridges along the Caplan-Port Daniel stretch will be repaired before the end of 2023, Transports Québec published at the beginning of June a call for tenders that will necessitate an investment ranging between \$40 million and \$50 million over 1.35 miles of track between New Carlisle and Paspébiac. Fourteen months of work are required and the contract will likely not be awarded before the end of the summer which means that that section will only be completed in the fall of 2024.

Saint Mary’s Cement plant is the main customer targeted in the Caplan to Port Daniel section of the railway. The plant located in Port Daniel is already an important client of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie with a volume of slightly more than 1,500 carloads annually, but the cement is currently trucked to New Richmond and transferred to railcars there. Traffic should increase significantly once the



Transports Québec Minister Geneviève Guilbault explains that the construction costs have greatly risen due to the pandemic which explains in part the final bill of the Matapédia-Gaspé railway rehabilitation.

REFURBISHMENT:

► *Cont'd from cover*

track is open to Port Daniel. Some input will also likely reach the cement plant by rail.

As for the Port Daniel to Gaspé stretch of railway, the upgrading cost of \$517.6 million comes as a surprise, since an earlier estimate issued by Transports Québec referred to a total amount ranging between \$248 million and \$355 million. A detailed breakdown was not forwarded by the ministry on June 27 in Gaspé. About 20 bridges are located along that stretch, some of them long ones.

Since 2015, the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG) has also received or will receive over the next five years a sum amounting to \$58.55 million for the operation, maintenance and development of the railway. Of that amount, \$33.5 million came under the form of five-year agreements, the first one covering the 2018-2023 period for an amount of \$12.5 million and, the most recent one, which will cover between 2023 and 2028.

Another amount of \$19 million was announced over the fall of 2022 in order to allow the SCFG to carry out some repair work that is not regulated by Transports Québec's call for tenders process.

Even if LM Wind Power, the windmill blade manufacturer based in Gaspé, will ex-

port its production by ship for at least the next three years, the company's input could come in by rail, as between 1,000 and 2,000 containers reach the plant annually.

Why did the cost increase that much?

When asked about the spectacular cost increase that has marked the last years of railway rehabilitation, Geneviève Guilbault explains that feasibility studies remained to be carried out for the east part of the network.

"Also, since the Covid crisis, we have had to adjust to much higher construction costs. It is the new reality of the market. Is it too much money for the Gaspé Peninsula? The answer is no. We have to take into account the importance of sustainable transportation means," she underlines.

Éric Dubé, the president of the SCFG, agrees with Minister Guilbault on the cost component.

"The total cost reflects the inflationary context. Realistically, it is the cost dictated by the market. I will not enter a semantic debate on the relevance of repairing the railway. We will now have our tool. It is up to us to put traffic on the line," says Mr. Dubé.

Mr. Dubé who is also the mayor of New Richmond and prefect of the MRC of Bonaventure states that the return of the VIA Rail's passenger train "is our next battle."



Photo: G. Gagné

Cement traffic is supposed to increase significantly once the train reaches Port Daniel's plant because the transfer from trucks to railcars in New Richmond has a cost that currently affects the competitiveness of rail over short to medium size distances.

Timeline of the last 12 years in the Gaspé Peninsula railway file

GILLES GAGNÉ

December 2011: VIA Rail suspends passenger train service between New Carlisle and Gaspé due to bridge repairs in Chandler.

September 2013: VIA Rail suspends service between Matapedia and New Carlisle due to the condition of other bridges.

November 2014: The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG), a municipal entity providing freight service and owning the Matapedia-Gaspé railway line, is placed under court protection due to debts of \$3.5 million.

March 2015: Transports Québec announces the acquisition of the Matapedia-Gaspé railway line for the value of the SCFG's receivables. The ministry puts the railway between Caplan and Gaspé on hold, even though a \$1.5 billion cement plant is under construction in Port-Daniel. McInnis Cement refuses to confirm that it will need rail services despite the fact that every cement plant of that size uses the railway.

December 2016: SCFG begins transporting windmill blades from New Richmond because the railroad is dormant on 60% of the network. McInnis Cement signs a contract with the SCFG to haul cement from New Richmond instead of Port Daniel.

May 2017: Transports Québec announces \$100 mil-

lion for the repair of the Matapedia-Gaspé railway. The transport of cement produced in Port-Daniel begins in July, but out of New Richmond because the line is not safe east of Caplan.

Early 2019: The first major contract is awarded to repair a railway bridge in Cascapedia-Saint Jules. In August, on the eve of the federal election, Ottawa announced \$45.8 million for repairs to the Gaspé network, money that will be used mainly to counter erosion. So far, almost \$8 million of that federal money has been used, according to Minister Geneviève Guilbault.

February 2020: Transports Québec announces an additional \$135 million for the upgrade of the Gaspé railway.

June 2020 to February 2022: Transports Québec goes 20 months without issuing a single call for tenders for the repair of railway bridges in the region. Transports Québec also announces that the reopening of the Caplan-Port-Daniel stretch, scheduled at first for 2020, then for 2022,

will not take place until 2024.

April 2022: The SCFG learns that windmill blade traffic will cease in May, six months before it was planned to cease. It is a major loss of revenue for the transporter, given that the railroad is not upgraded yet to Port Daniel. The cement plant was supposed to provide additional traffic in 2022, on the condition that the train could reach the facility.

May 2022: VIA Rail confirms once more that it will not return between Matapedia and Gaspé until the entire network has been repaired. The Coalition of Gaspésians for the return of the train asks the public carrier to return when the network will be operational to New Carlisle, therefore, in two stages. In May 2023, more than 16,000 people signed a petition supporting this coalition in its process of returning to phases. In October 2018, the former president of VIA Rail, Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, had expressed openness to a return in phases in the region but his successors changed direction to this day.

Cascapedia River bridge undergoes routine inspection

Gilles Gagné

CASCAPEDIA-ST. JULES – On June 21, an inspection crew from Transports Québec took a close look at the bridge spanning over the Grand Cascapedia River. Gaspésians undoubtedly remember that the same bridge was heavily damaged on the morning of May 2017 after two and a half days of very heavy rain. That rain caused a log jam that created a vacuum effect under one of its piles. That pile shifted and two bridge spans moved as a result. The bridge was closed minutes after the pile shift.

It took 13 months to repair the structure and it created a lot of traffic along the usually quiet McKay Road, Route 299 and part of the municipality of Cascapedia-St-Jules. Two people died in the 12-kilometre detour during the bridge repairs.

Jean-Philippe Langlais, the spokesperson of Transports Québec, explains that this June 21 inspection was on the schedule established by the Ministry and had no connection with the events of 2017. "This bridge must undergo a general inspection every two years. General inspections make it possible to examine in detail all the elements that make up the structure. In addition to these general inspections, which occur every two years, the Department also carries out safety inspections on an annual basis, as is the case for all the bridges on the network," says Mr. Langlais. The inspection report, once produced, will be posted online. No date can be confirmed at this time for the report publication.





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RAILWAY FILE: Stakeholders react

● GILLES GAGNÉ

GASPÉ – The stakeholders who have constantly put pressure on the governments to assure the resumption of railway services over the whole Matapédia-Gaspé line are happy about the June 27 announcement made by Quebec’s Transport Minister, Geneviève Guilbault, but some of them intend to keep an eye on the progress of the refurbishment.

Minister Guilbault failed to indicate in detail why Gaspeians should believe that the December 2026 traffic resumption target will hold after experiencing repeated delays. She simply noted that the repair studies will now allow for more precision.

Regional development consultant and former Member of the National Assembly for the riding of Gaspé, Gaétan Lelièvre, who in 2022 prepared for free a major document underlining the relevance of upgrading the line over its entire length, is reminding the public to stay vigilant in the rail file.

“It is a great announcement and it goes beyond my expectations of 2022. In my report, we mentioned that 2027 looked feasible, and we were afraid that the government would carry out the work until 2030. At one point, the government was no longer providing any deadline. The current project is ambitious, considering that there have been delays lately and we will have to keep a close eye on the calls for tenders,” says Mr. Lelièvre.

“A sum of \$7 billion to \$8 billion was invested in Montreal for the REM (Réseau express métropolitain, a light commuter train). We don’t see why \$600 million couldn’t be invested in a rural area, as the



Photo: G. Gagné

Daniel Côté mentions that business opportunities were lost since losing access to rail services.

places where the work that has to be done, bridges and culverts, is in general easily accessible physically. There are fewer obstacles than in a major urban centre,” also stresses Mr. Lelièvre.

A sum of \$600 million is effectively the value of the work that must still be handed out through calls for tenders to respect Transports Quebec December 2026 deadline.

“In Montreal, they carried out in excess of 10 times more work in three years. The governmental machine will have to work properly. We know that some of this machine’s elements were not favourable to the rehabilitation of our railway. It will take a firm hand to prevent the project from experiencing delays again. I know that governmental machine from my days in politics,” says Gaétan Lelièvre.

He praises the work of citizens like Mauril Minville for their involvement over the last year in the railway file.

“Last year, Mr. Minville was saying that the railway file was a political orphan at the government level but he told me a few hours ago that we might have found a godmother in Minister Guilbault,” concludes Mr Lelièvre.

About the cost of the line upgrade, the mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, admits, “It is enormous but we know that the investment will last for close to 100 years. If we divide \$870 million by 100, it makes a bit more than \$8 million. We missed business opportunities because we didn’t have rail service. We missed on windmill blade transport and some industrial projects didn’t come to Gaspé because we didn’t have direct access to a rail service.”



Photo: G. Gagné

Gaétan Lelièvre says that vigilance will remain important.

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Police report

The Québec Department of Public Safety will file a criminal complaint against the inmate who clogged the plumbing at New Carlisle prison by putting 60 towels in one or more toilet bowls at the detention centre on the evening of June 26. This action paralyzed the adjacent courthouse for two days. The Sûreté du Québec station, however, remained functional, even though it is part of the same complex. According to Marjolaine Gagnon, from the Ministry of Public Security, the situation was resolved by the evening of June 28. The mischief required the intervention of a sanitary cleaning firm because of the clogging of the plumbing. The complaint will be given to the Sûreté du Québec who will then transfer the file to the criminal prosecutor if it is required.

The inmate was allegedly able to get his hands on three packs of 20 towels when they returned from the launderer. Marjolaine Gagnon explains that the water supply was cut by the Société québécoise des infrastructures, who is the owner of the building, on the evening of June 26 in order to repair the damage and clear the clogged pipes.

“Measures were quickly put in place by the prison management to ensure the continuation of operations and meet the immediate needs of the occupants. Bottled water was distributed to staff and prisoners in sufficient quantity and chemical toilets were installed for staff and prisoners. Food service adjusted menus and was able to maintain meal service to inmates and staff on site. Other prison activities and operations proceeded normally,” she said.

Simon Dufort-Chouinard, 18, who is charged with two counts of dangerous driving causing death in connection with the fatal collision that occurred in the Rivière-au-Renard sector in Gaspé on May 10, will face new charges of premeditated murder in the death of Gabriel Noël and unpremeditated murder in the death of Dylan Samuel-Francoeur. The new charges were laid on June 26 at the Percé Courthouse through video-conference. The accused is in custody at the New Carlisle detention centre. Mr. Dufort-Chouinard will be back at the Percé Courthouse on August 28. His bail hearing has still not been requested.

Simon Dufort-Chouinard’s father, Marc-Jules Chouinard, also faces a charge of attempted murder that was added on June 28 at the Percé Courthouse by Annie Cyr, the criminal prosecutor in that file. The 48-year-old man appeared virtually at the Percé Courthouse. He is also remanded in custody at the New Carlisle prison. The charge for dangerous driving which had previously been laid against Marc-Jules Chouinard still stands. Relatives, family members and friends of the victims continue to attend the hearings.

On June 26, the spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec in Eastern Quebec for the last 11 years, Sergeant Claude Doiron, 60, was charged with sexual assault on a minor. Mr. Doiron was not present at the Percé Courthouse, but was instead represented by his lawyer. The events for which the police officer is accused allegedly took place between June and September 1988 in Cloridorme. Mr. Doiron is accused of sexual incitement and touching, as well as sexual assault on a minor under the age of 14. The internal affairs department of the Sûreté du Québec initially arrested Sgt. Doiron on June 15 in Quebec City. He has been suspended by the SQ and is receiving half of his pay since June 15. In a written statement, the spokesperson for the SQ in this case, Ann Mathieu, says that the situation is far from encouraging for the organization and that there is also a victim behind it. The police will let the legal procedure continue, she writes. The case of Claude Doiron will return to court on September 29 at the Percé Courthouse. He was due to retire on June 28. It is to be noted that Mr. Doiron was not yet an employee for the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) when the crime allegedly took place. Before joining the SQ, he was working for the Rimouski municipal police force.

On June 20, the Montreal Integrated Arms Trafficking Team, made up of members of the Sûreté du Québec, the Montreal Police Service, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Canada Border Services Agency Canada, coordinated a pan-Canadian strategy called Centaure on the trafficking and manufacture of firearms. More than twenty police forces came together to carry out 64 searches and 45 arrests. One of their interventions took place in New Carlisle but the exact details about the whereabouts of that operation in New Carlisle have not yet been released by the RCMP.

Since the beginning of the investigation, the searches have made it possible to seize approximately 440 firearms, including 62 handguns, 71 3D printed handguns, 2 long guns printed in 3D, 1 sub-machine gun, 52 3D printers, 32 3D printed chargers, 87 mufflers, including 63 3D printed and 176 gun frames printed in 3D.

These searches took place in several provinces in Canada including Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In the province of Quebec, 19 searches took place in Montreal, Berthierville, New Carlisle, Pont-Rouge, Repentigny, Saint-Jean-de-Matha, Sainte-Angèle-de-Monnoir, Gatineau, Saint-Calixte, Quebec and Saint-Alexandre d'Iberville.

The items seized will be used to demonstrate, in particular, the involvement of the suspects in criminal activities, including the manufacture of firearms using 3D printers and then selling the firearms. For the director of Sûreté du Québec criminal investigations, chief inspector Benoit Dubé, “this operation demonstrates how Canadian police organizations are uniting to combat the emerging phenomenon of the manufacture of homemade firearms. He adds, “The Sûreté du Québec, with its partners, in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, will continue to monitor and act against armed violence. The phenomenon is interprovincial and does not stop at borders; neither does our collaboration and our desire to ensure the safety of our populations.”

Through a press release, the Sûreté du Québec explains that the CENTAURE strategy has the mandate to ensure constant pressure on organized crime and thus actively fight against armed violence in Quebec. CENTAURE allows all partner police forces to maximize their efforts at the national, regional and local level targeting the supply, import, manufacture, distribution and illegal possession of firearms.

A large boat belonging to the Canadian Coast Guard but bearing the RCMP flag moored at the Paspebiac wharf on June 24. According to Marie-Ève Caron, spokesperson of the Canadian Coast Guard, the presence of that boat, the Caporal Kaible V.C., which measures 141 feet, was not linked to the Centaure strategy. A rigid hull inflatable boat that was part of the patrol vessel equipment was used along the Coast.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

A long battle will come to a conclusion at a heavy cost

By finally announcing on June 26 a deadline for the completion of the Matapedia-Gaspé railroad rehabilitation, the Coalition avenir Québec government fulfilled a longtime commitment. This commitment, which was first made six years ago on May 5, 2017, by former Premier Philippe Couillard of the Liberal Party, indicated that the Quebec government believed that the refurbishment of the Gaspé Peninsula railway was a must.

The humongous amount of \$872 million needed to carry out the job derives from many factors, and some of those factors could have been avoided with a bit of common sense, a connection with today's world and financial responsibility.

A bit of historical background is needed to fully understand the intricacies of the file.

When the former owner of the Matapedia-Gaspé line, Canadian National Railways (CN), started taking steps towards selling it in 1993-1994, the transporter was still a public corporation. The line was in acceptable shape but not as good as the conditions of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. The reasons behind this situation would be long to explain but let's say that a seller is not always taking perfect care of the infrastructure it intends to get rid of, especially some seemingly invisible aspects, like the state of some bridges.

CN finally sold the railway to two entities, a private one, the Quebec Railway Society, in November 1996, for the Matapedia to Chandler stretch, and a newly formed public one, the Corporation du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, founded by the municipalities of Gaspé, Percé and Grande-Rivière, for the Chandler-Gaspé section that CN had neglected and wanted to abandon since 1985. CN alleged at the time that freight traffic was going down. It must be said that CN had voluntarily gotten rid of some clients in Gaspé. It's management thought that there was not enough potential there.

In 1996, the "Big Three" (the region's three major industries), which included the Gaspesia mill, the liner board mill in New Richmond and Murdochville's mine and copper smelter, were still in operation. A concerted effort made by the Corporation du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie and Chemin de fer Baie-des-Chaleurs, a subsidiary of the Québec Railway Society, relaunched in July 1998 copper anode rail traffic between Gaspé and Montreal.

However, by August 2005, the Big Three had all closed and the future of our railway looked bleak because we had lost its main customers. At that time, however, the wind energy sector was starting to boom in the Gaspé Peninsula and both levels of government intervened in June 2007 to allow the Corporation du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie to acquire the Matapedia to Chandler portion of the railroad.

It was then unwanted by the Quebec Railway Society because only one important customer, the Nouvelle sawmill, was left. The property transfer also allowed Gaspesians to keep their passenger train, the most popular VIA Rail regional train in Canada.

Between 2007 and the beginning of 2014, the Quebec government, either run by the Liberal Party or the Parti Québécois, came up with reasonable

support to maintain the freight and passenger services.

The impact of austerity measures

The Liberal Party government of Philippe Couillard entered and was obsessed with austerity measures. Then Transport Minister Robert Poëti took his budget-slashing task seriously and failed to properly support the regional entity now called Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie. The former management of that regional transporter also failed on a couple of points, notably through putting too much emphasis on the Amiral tourist train and not enough on freight traffic, which brings in more money, and because of a decision to use saltwater as a defoliant.

Transports Québec and VIA Rail were waiting for such a mistake to either limit their support or suspend the passenger train service, and they did. VIA Rail stopped its trains in Matapedia between the beginning of August and the end of September 2013, while Transports Québec did not extend funding to the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG) once Philippe Couillard was elected in April 2014.

Stranded by financial obligations, the SCFG filed for the protection of the court in November 2014. In March 2015, Minister Poëti presented himself as a saviour by announcing the acquisition by Transports Québec of the Matapedia-Gaspé railway, however, following the recommendations of his civil servants, he also announced that the Caplan to Percé stretch and later the same year, that the Percé to Gaspé line portion would be mothballed.

It has to rank amongst the most visionless decisions made by Transports Québec in history, since a \$1.5 billion cement plant was under construction in Port Daniel since May 2014. Huge cement plants all need the railway. Truth be told, the former management of McInnis Cement, which was mostly fired in 2016, didn't help the railway file by never affirming they would use trains to deliver some of the plant's production.

By the fall of 2016, the McInnis Cement brass was scrambling to get railway services, months from its production start. It was too late to get it at the plant though, courtesy of bad management of the company and Mr. Poëti's team. Cement has been loaded at a terminal built in New Richmond since July 2017, where a fraction of the potential traffic is handled because transshipment always comes with a cost.

At about the same time, in December 2016, windmill blades were also being sent to New Richmond by truck, at a heavy cost, and transferred to railcars for their delivery to Texas. There again, the SCFG lost tens of millions of dollars in revenues be-

cause the blades were not loaded at the point of origin.

No wonder Philippe Couillard changed his mind in May 2017. The management of General Electric, a firm that had acquired LM Wind Power in 2016, had repeatedly asked the Quebec government officials questions, wondering why they couldn't use the track in Gaspé to ship out their blades! That greatly explains why the railway is upgraded now.

The impact of the Lac-Mégantic tragedy

The May 2017 decision announced by Philippe Couillard in New Carlisle followed almost four years after the July 2013 Lac-Mégantic tragedy, where 47 people died because a delinquent company managed a railway after the federal regulatory authorities had abandoned it.

How did Transports Québec management staff react to Lac-Mégantic? They tried to close a large part of the railway acquired by the ministry in 2010-2011 in Beauce. They succeeded.

In 2015, they tried the same manoeuvre in the Gaspé Peninsula, by offering \$36 million to the mayors east of Caplan in order to turn the railway into a bicycle trail. It failed because, here, the regional solidarity was stronger than in Beauce. People from all different backgrounds understand the value of a railway as an economic and social tool.

Some Transports Québec civil servants and decision makers are not happy with the decision to repair the Gaspé Peninsula railway. We can bet that it explains why the repairs have been so slow between 2017 and now. Until recently, the investment pace was \$20 million yearly, compared to \$2.6 billion annually over the last three years for the Réseau express métropolitain (REM) in Montreal. It is not true that Montreal, a city already richly endowed in urban transit, deserves 130 times more money yearly on a single project than our region. The population standard doesn't justify it either, as there are not 130 times more people in Montreal than here.

This frustration from Transports Québec decision makers might also explain why the cost of upgrading the Gaspé Peninsula railway has skyrocketed from \$100 million in 2017 to \$872 million in 2023. Public decision makers are protecting their back through overregulating repair norms, and hold grudges because their initial choice, a Matapedia to Caplan railroad refurbishment, was refused.

By doing so, they affect the delivery time of the project. It is not the only railway file characterized by ill decision making. The REM in Montreal, the recent Lac-Mégantic railway detour and the way VIA Rail is managed come to mind as evidence of poor management. It is sad to see the land transportation means of the future get such poor consideration.

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New foundation aims to protect Bonaventure River

GILLES GAGNÉ

BONAVENTURE – The Fondation Rivière Bonaventure formed by a group of citizens and representatives from various organizations aims to create and support initiatives which will safeguard and protect the river and the species that occupy it.

The foundation is currently governed by a provisional board of directors consisting of five people. Those five people consist of representatives from the Town of Bonaventure, Mission Rivière and the Association des pêcheurs sportifs de la rivière Bonaventure, the sports fishermen association that founded the ZEC, which is managing salmon fishing on the river.

Eventually, nine people will compose the permanent board. Five of the nine positions will be reserved for people involved in the environmental aspect, civic associations, recreational tourism, sports fishing and the municipality of Bonaventure.

According to the current president of the foundation, Sylvain Arbour, the foundation wants to highlight four objectives: water quality, fauna and flora, awareness, and safety. Mr.

Arbour, who is a retired game warden, defines himself as a canoeist and not as a salmon fisherman.

The foundation was created due to the high traffic on the Bonaventure River which has caused many conflicts, says Sylvain Arbour.

“There is a bit too much of everything on the river,” he sums up, taking care not to target a particular category of users. “The foundation will not take a position. (...) The foundation will be there for the long term and gradually arrive at an improvement in the situation,” insists Mr. Arbour.

Tensions are sometimes high on the Bonaventure River for users

In 2022, the Malin rapids were closed following a court dispute that pitted Camp Bonaventure and the enterprise Le Malin, which operated a parking lot providing access to the rapids.

Cime Aventures, an excursion outfitter, has initiated legal action to invalidate the power that the Quebec Ministry of Forests, Wildlife and Parks took on in 2021 in an attempt to limit the number of people accessing the Bonaventure River daily.



Photo: G. Gagné

Foundation spokesperson Sylvain Arbour affirms that there is a bit too much of everything on the Bonaventure River.

On April 6, the court case concluded, however, Judge Alexander Pless of the Superior Court has not yet rendered the verdict.

Mr. Arbour also adds that it

is a bit too early to determine a financial goal for the foundation.

Another foundation, the Lower Saint Lawrence-Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands Community Foundation, will manage the endowment fund created to protect and enhance the Bonaventure River. This Community Foundation manages nearly 130 endowment funds in the two administrative regions where it operates.

“We will hand out the interest money made from the capital amassed by the foundation,” points out the director general of the Community Foundation, Ronald Arsenault.

The 130 endowment funds vary but the money is managed globally and the benefits are handed out according to the proportional size of each fund.



SCHOOL ELECTIONS PROPOSED ELECTORAL DIVISIONS

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that the Council of Commissioners of Eastern Shores School Board has adopted the draft division of the board territory into electoral divisions for the purpose of school board elections to be held on Sunday, November 3, 2024.

Any persons wishing to examine the electoral divisions may do so by presenting themselves at the Administrative Office of the Board situated at 40 Mountsorrel, New Carlisle (Québec), between the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday until July 14, 2023 \ or on the corporate website at www.essb.qc.ca. Note: cet avis est aussi disponible en français sur le site internet et au centre administratif.

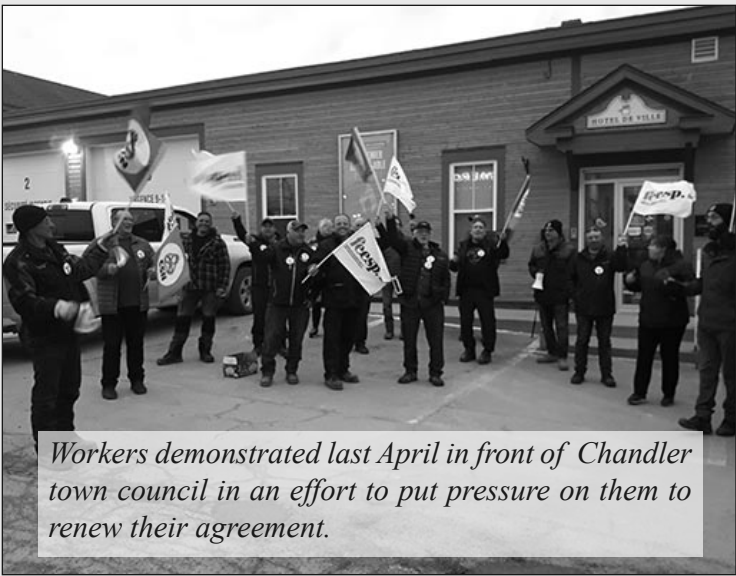
The proposed electoral division are as follows:

Electoral Division	Description	Number of Electors
1	Includes the following regional municipal counties: MRCs of La Haute-Côte-Nord, Manicouagan and Caniapiscau, as well as the city of Port-Cartier and the non-organized territory of Lac-Walker. Equally included, a part of Sept-Îles with the following boundaries: A point situated on the north border of the municipality and the extension of Boulevard des Montagnais, this extension, the extension of the back line of Georges-Ernest (North West side), this back line and its extension the municipal limit to the South in the Bay of Sept-Îles and the municipal limit to the West and North to the starting point.	374
2	Includes the following regional municipal counties: MRCs Minganie and the non-organized territories of Petit-Mécatina and Rivière-Nipissis. Equally including part of the town of Sept-Îles with the following boundaries: a point situated on the extension of Boulevard des Montagnais and the municipal limit North, this limit, the municipal limit East and South to the Baie of Sept-Îles, the extension of the back line of rue George-Ernest (North-West side) this back line and its extension, and the extension of Boulevard des Montagnais to the starting point. Includes equally the Indian Reserves of Maliotenam, Uashat.	404
3	Includes the following regional municipal counties: MRCs of Kamouraska, Rivière-du-Loup, Témiscouata, Les Basques, Rimouski-Neigette, la Métis, La Matanie, La Matapédia et Avignon (Excluding the Indian Reserve of Gesgapegiag)	477
4	Includes the municipalities of Cascapédia-Saint-Jules, Caplan, Saint- Alphonse, New Richmond and, the non-organized territory of Rivière-Bonaventure Includes equally the Indian Reserve of Gesgapegiag.	461
5	Includes the municipalities of Saint-Elzéar, Bonaventure, New Carlisle and the Parish of Saint-Siméon.	453
6	Includes the municipalities of Paspébiac, Hope Town, Shigawake, Port-Daniel-Gascons, the Cantons of Hope and Saint-Godefroi.	465
7	Includes the municipalities of Chandler, Grand-River, Percé, Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé and the unorganized territory of Mont-Alexandre.	495
8	Includes part of the Town of Gaspé situated South of the basin of the York River and that river.	462
9	Includes the following regional municipal counties: MRCs of La Haute-Gaspésie, and La Côte de Gaspé (Excluding the part of the Town of Gaspé situated South of the basin of the York River and that river.)	393
10	Includes the municipalities of Grosse-Ile and Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine	316

If any elector has an objection to the proposed electoral divisions, this objection must be received in writing within 15 days of the publication of this notice. Should 100 or more electors register their objection to the proposal; the Council of Commissioners will hold a public meeting to hear the persons present in respect of the division proposal. This objection is to be addressed in writing to:

Director General
C/O Eastern Shores School Board, 40 Mountsorrel, New Carlisle (Québec) G0C 1Z0

Given at New Carlisle (Québec)
June 29, 2023
Denis Gauthier, Secretary General



Workers demonstrated last April in front of Chandler town council in an effort to put pressure on them to renew their agreement.

Photo: N. Sergerie

A tentative agreement between Chandler and its unionized workers

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - On June 20, an agreement in principle was reached between CSN unionized workers and the Town of Chandler. 81.4% of unionized workers accepted the proposal which was created with the help of a mediator.

The agreement includes a 16.5% increase over five years and will expire on December 31, 2026. "It's similar to the last offer. There will be a reduction in salary steps in 2025 from twelve to nine and then to six in 2026. This has no impact on the town's budget. It's mainly to make us more attractive to new employees," explains the town of Chandler Councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout who was also the town council's spokesperson on this issue.

The union members had adopted pressure tactics but no strike occurred. Stickers were placed on various municipal buildings and infrastructures. "It's in the agreement. They'll have to be removed," says the elected official.

The Town council will adopt the agreement in principle on July 10. Union president Lisa Cyr did not return our calls.

Retaining wall strengthened in Maria following December storm

GILLES GAGNÉ

MARIA – Following the December 23-24 wind and rain storm, Transports Québec inspected a number of structures facing the southeast along the south side of the Gaspé Peninsula. Some wind gusts surpassed the 100 kilometres per hour mark during the evening of December 23 and early morning of December 24.

An early 2023 inspection along Maria’s retaining wall located in the centre of the municipality revealed important

undermining along the concrete structure, which is also a boardwalk. An emergency repair contract was awarded to a local firm, Sani-Sable L.B., to carry out sizable repair work. Work started in mid-May and it reached its peak period during the third week of June.

As the SPEC was reaching its July 5 deadline, the amount of the contract was not forwarded by Transports Québec and Sani-Sable’s management is not allowed to talk to the media. However, a truck driver hauling gravel and big rocks

for Sani-Sable points out that many thousands of tons of material must be brought to the construction site in order to support the bottom part of the concrete wall. Highway 132 traffic is often reduced to one lane where trucks are working at a construction site. With the gradual arrival of tourists in the Gaspé Peninsula, traffic was slow in that area as of June 22. The contract is supposed to be completed by July 31 so a bit of patience might be required in that area over the coming weeks.



Work should be complete by July 31 in Maria.

Photo: G. Gagné

Gaspé will welcome winter cruise ships in 2025

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The town of Gaspé will greet a cruise ship in the winter of 2025. The announcement comes following a decade of hard work by the stakeholders to bring cruise ships to the St. Lawrence in the winter.

The Commandant Charcot, owned by the French company Ponant will embark on a 12-night circuit with 200 passengers from the end of January to the beginning of March 2025. Gaspé will be the only port to receive the ship five times.

“We are very happy to have been able to obtain all five stopovers. I think our offer is good and we have seen that the cruise ship company has trusted us with this new offer. I am very happy,” says the director of Destination Gaspé and manager of Escale Gaspésie, Pascale Rémillard.

The cruise line was charmed by the destination. “We bet on the outdoors, the grandeur of our landscape and the maturity of our winter businesses, which are ready to welcome the masses in winter. That's how I think we stood out. We offer a different product and added value with the Micmac Nation of Gespeg. It is still a product that is attractive to international cruise passengers,” says the director.

Known winter activities in the region will be highlighted. “Snowshoeing in the Anse-au-Griffon valley, probably a folk meal with musicians on site. We will probably offer them an excursion to Mont Béchervaise and the Percé Geopark will be one of the stops with hikes and tastings of sweets on site. I am also working on a culinary tour,” says Ms. Rémillard, who emphasizes that she is working to improve an entire program between now and the arrival of



Commandant Charcot will stop five times in the winter of 2025 in Gaspé.

the ship, which will anchor at the Sandy Beach wharf.

“It is one of the advantages of Gaspé to be able to welcome them to the port in winter,” adds Pascal Rémillard.

She has no estimates on the possible economic spinoffs from Commandant Charcot's visit.

“It is a unique ship in the world designed for polar expeditions. It is a ship that travels in Antarctica and Ponant chooses to withdraw this ship

every other year from Antarctica to send it to the St. Lawrence. You have to realize that we are in competition with the number one product of requests from cruise passengers at the moment. Antarctica is in vogue and the company has chosen to take the risk because it believes that we have such an exotic offer for a certain clientele,” says Ms. Rémillard, who believes that this type of cruise is destined to develop here.

“Since this announcement, it has been the main subject on everyone's lips and I am convinced that there are others who will follow suit, otherwise the shipowners will miss something. We could hope that Ponant will come back every year if 2025 is a success but for the moment, it is planned for every two years,” she says.

The Commandant Charcot is a hybrid boat powered by electricity and natural gas and has a front and rear icebreaker system, which minimizes the risk of getting stuck in the ice on the St. Lawrence, which is known for difficult navigation in winter.

In addition to Gaspé, Ponant has planned for Commandant Charcot to stop in the Magdalen Islands, Sept-Îles, Saguenay and Quebec City.

Embarking and disembarking operations will be shared between Quebec City and the French islands of Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon.

In order for passengers to fully immerse themselves in

the region at this time of the year, these cruises will be marked by the length of the stopovers which may include at least one night on site, which is infrequent.

The Ponant teams were in Quebec this winter to scout.

On June 19, during the presentation of this “world premier” in Quebec City, the president of Ponant, Hervé Gastinel, stated that “At Ponant, we feel a deep loyalty to the St. Lawrence region that our ships have visited for many years in the summer. Our winter cruises, of a completely new nature, open the doors to a new experience, unique in the world. The Commandant Charcot will allow us to navigate safely in the heart of the ice, thus offering our passengers exceptional moments. By collaborating with the authorities of the St. Lawrence, we have together created an extraordinary itinerary. It is with enthusiasm that we look forward to sharing this adventure with our passengers,”



ADOPTION DES RÈGLEMENTS / ADOPTION OF BY-LAWS AVIS PUBLIC / PUBLIC NOTICE

AVIS PUBLIC est par les présentes donné que la Commission scolaire Eastern Shores a adopté les modifications suivantes au règlement 8 en vue de fixer l'heure, la date et le lieu des réunions du Conseil des commissaires et du Comité exécutif pour l'année scolaire 2023-2024.

Date	Exécutif	Conseil	Lieu
Le 22 août 2024	18h15	18h30	En ligne
Le 3 octobre 2023	9h00	9h15	Chandler
Le 14 novembre 2023	18h15	18h30	En Ligne
Le 12 décembre 2023	9h00	9h15	New Carlisle
Le 13 février 2024	18h15	18h30	En Ligne
Le 26 mars 2024	9h00	9h15	New Richmond
Le 7 mai 2024	18h15	18h30	En Ligne
Le 18 juin 2024	9h00	9h15	New Carlisle

Donné à New Carlisle, Québec ce 21^e jour de juin 2023

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that the Eastern Shores School Board adopted the following amendments to By-Law 8: to set the time, date and location of the Council of Commissioners and Executive Committee meetings for the 2023-2024 school year.

Dates	Executive	Council	Location
August 22, 2023	6:15 p.m.	6:30 p.m.	On-line
October 3, 2023	9:00 a.m.	9:15 a.m.	Chandler
November 14, 2023	6:15 p.m.	6:30 p.m.	On-Line
December 12, 2023	9:00 a.m.	9:15 a.m.	New Carlisle
February 13, 2024	6:15 p.m.	6:30 p.m.	On-line
March 26, 2024	9: 00 a.m.	9:15 a.m.	New Richmond
May 7, 2024	6:15 p.m.	6:30 p.m.	On-line
June 18 2024	9: 00 a.m.	9:15 a.m.	New Carlisle

Given at New Carlisle, Quebec this 21st day of June 2023.

Denis Gauthier
Secrétaire général / Secretary General

Coalition asking for caribou protection wants action now

NELSON SERGERIE
GILLES GAGNÉ

NOUVELLE - A Quebec-wide coalition that defends caribou is calling for a strategic plan to protect the caribou species as the Quebec government is delaying its plan for "a few weeks or some months. "

This coalition which is comprised of several groups, including Environnement Vert Plus and the Société de conservation ZICO of the Bay of Gaspé, are making this request because the Quebec government announced during private meetings that the strategic plan which was tabled in June is currently only at the project stage.

"It's a strategy project. There would be no measures taken immediately when the strategy is disclosed. There would only be announced intentions," comments the Environnement Vert Plus spokesperson, Pascal Bergeron.

"The contacts we have with the ministry cabinet let us know that the government wants to settle the file honestly, but the postponement of the strategy at this time still worries us because while we are



Photo: G. Gagné

Pascal Bergeron can hardly conceive that the caribou protection strategy will be delayed once more.

postponing, there are no interim measures so that logging and interventions of an industrial nature cease in areas that are key to maintaining the endangered caribou population," says Mr. Bergeron.

He has no idea when the plan will be unveiled, which worries the coalition.

"Why don't they give a deadline? We do not understand if the intention is to arrive with a strategy within a reasonable period of time," questions Mr. Bergeron.

The coalition also asks the Legault government not to use the situation of the forest fires

as a pretext to once again delay the unveiling of the caribou protection strategy.

"We've seen them (the fires) break out on the west coast for years. We know it takes a particularly dry spring and conditions for major fires to break out. In the east, does the presence (of fires) mean that what we were supposed to be offered as a strategy no longer holds?" suggests the environmentalist. He insists that forest fires should not slow down the protection of targeted sectors.

"Logging roads in caribou habitat are more damaging than wildfires. The idea that we could harvest trees in our territory because they have burned down is a very bad idea. We are adamant that there will be no harvest in the strategic areas," claims Pascal Bergeron.

"We must also put the issue in the context that 30% of each ecosystem must be protected by 2030. That's a lot of territory, and it can't be just tundra up north that will make up for the fraction that will not be protected in the southern part of the province. We can't afford to fool around with commas anymore. We are at a tad over 7% of the protected area in the Gaspé Peninsula at the present time. We consequently have to

protect a bit more than 22% over less than seven years. Protecting a little more in the Chic-Chocs right now is no big deal," analyzes Mr. Bergeron.

"In order to restore people's trust, it will take concrete and fast decisions. We have a strategy coming up but we need a project, which will also be submitted to a consultation period and we have no commitment to the effect that temporary measures will be imposed in the meantime. There are 35 caribou left. We don't even know if mining claims will be prohibited in the caribou ecosystem. Time is running out," says Pascal Bergeron.

The coalition also asks the Federal Minister of the Environment, Steven Guilbeault, to abandon the additional time granted to the government of Quebec for the disclosure of its project. A year ago, Minister Guilbeault sent a serious warning to the Quebec government because of delays in the release of a caribou protection strategy.

Plan will be delayed

Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, admits that the plan will be delayed.

"We would be considering postponing the final filing of

the caribou strategy for June, considering several factors, including forest fires. The ability of the governmental machine to be there is somewhat modified with what is happening elsewhere in terms of priorities, which is understandable," says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

Many issues must be reconsidered following consultations and elements brought to these meetings.

"We want to make sure we have a complete picture of the situation and if it takes a little more time, we will agree to this with a view to arriving with the most complete solution possible throughout Quebec," says the elected official who admits that time is running out for the fate of the caribou.

The politician adds that each gesture will have an impact on the species and the additional reflection would make it possible to improve the strategy.

"I'm not telling you we're going to wait two more years. A few weeks or perhaps a few more months might be necessary to reach a consensus at the level of communities on the measures to be put in place to ensure the sustainability of the species," says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

Energy transmission is the priority of the renewable energy industry

NELSON SERGERIE

MATANE - Stakeholders in the renewable energy industry note that Hydro-Québec's energy transmission network will have to adapt to the immense needs of the province to ensure the decarbonization of the Quebec economy.

One of the concrete actions that Quebec will have to take is to resolve the famous bottleneck which means that no new production capacity can be added east of Rivière-du-Loup.

This is one of the major findings of the 14th Conference on Renewable Energies which ended on June 15 in Matane. 180 enthusiastic participants took part on topics related to current events.

"The question of energy transport is at the heart of what we want to achieve because in Quebec we have great ambitions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and the major element is the production of green energy," states Frédéric Côté, the director of the re-



Photo: Kevin Cornec Studio

search organization Nergica.

Mr. Cote recalls the inaugural speech last fall to the National Assembly by Premier François Legault who affirmed that it was necessary to develop the equivalent of 50% of Hydro-Québec's current output to achieve the objectives.

"It takes wind farms, solar parks and maybe even new dams, but it will take transmission lines to accommodate this energy and we know that the Hydro-Québec network in terms of transmission is reach-

ing its limit," explains Frédéric Côté.

The map of current calls for tenders in wind power shows the capacity limits of the network. Future wind farms cannot be installed in specific locations in the province.

"It's a top issue not only in Quebec, but also internationally, where these infrastructures are a little disliked, because large pylons are not necessarily appreciated, but how necessary they are for the energy transition," adds Mr.

Côté.

In the East, the development of wind farms is being held back because of this bottleneck.

"It is not new. This has been a known topic for a long time. All industry players including Hydro-Québec will have discussions in the coming weeks. There is a significant wind deposit in the East. It would be appropriate to put it to work in Quebec's energy transition. That being said, it must be done at the lowest possible cost. It is in this context that the discussions will take place," says Mr. Côté.

Another element that has caught the eye is the desire of the Americans to accelerate the energy transition with hundreds of billions of dollars, which worries Canadian companies. Ottawa responded with an investment tax credit to keep Canada in the running.

"If the infrastructures are the blood vessels, the money is the blood," illustrates Mr. Côté.

The positioning of solar energy is also on the table as Quebec is an interesting place to

explore. The colder climate allows for more production with the panels.

"There are ongoing discussions on how to position solar energy in Quebec. We have sunshine that is comparable to Germany and the fact that we are in a cold climate is an advantage. The coldness increases the productivity of the panels. There is really something to explore," says Mr. Côté.

Quebec intends to order energy produced exclusively from solar energy in the near future.

"It is being considered and we will see when it will be launched. Solar energy will be part of Quebec's energy future. It's becoming more and more obvious," says Frédéric Côté.

Quebec launched a call for tenders for 1,500 megawatts of wind power last March and plans to order a total of 4,000 megawatts in the medium term.

The 15th renewable energy symposium will take place in Carleton-sur-Mer in June 2024.



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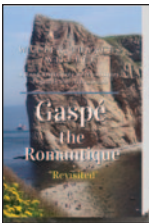
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Gaspé Municipal Update: Gaspé will be ready to submit arena project

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The Quebec government formalizes its investment of \$300 million for the year 2023-2024 in recreational and sports infrastructure, Programme d'aide financière aux infrastructures récréatives et sportives (PAFIRS).

Selected projects will be eligible for assistance for 66% of costs up to a maximum of \$20 million for the sports and recreational component and \$200,000 for outdoor infrastructure. A call for projects will be launched in September. The Quebec government has promised \$1.5 billion over 10 years.

Gaspé is pleased to see that the program is relaunched. "This help is beneficial. We are clear. We have been saying for months, not to say a few years, that the next time there is a program of this type, we will be ready to file," says the mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté.

The plans and specifications have already been ordered and they will be approximately 50% complete during the call for projects in September.

The mayor does not want to miss his shot. "I don't think there will be large infrastructure projects of this type that are going to be so advanced in terms of planning in Quebec and such precise costs. That should help us score points," says the mayor.

Mr. Côté will not accept a refusal for the arena component which should cost \$15 million. Gaspé taxpayers will be required to contribute \$5 million.

"If this continues and we don't get financial assistance this year, it could mean closing the arena because it's so outdated. We don't want to close it.

We're more than on life support. We're giving it mouth-to-mouth resuscitation," says Mr. Côté.

FAIR
Following concerns raised by the Table of Prefects, the municipalities are next in line to criticize the end of the Fonds d'aide aux initiatives régionales (FAIR) program which was exclusive to the Gaspé Peninsula. It had an envelope of \$8 million last year.

Gaspé adopted a resolution to this effect on June 19. What hurts is the end of Component 4, which supported municipalities in their infrastructure.

The Quebec government is preparing a program that would be equivalent to FAIR but at the provincial level. The mayor makes a plea for the Gaspé Peninsula. "Yes, Gaspésie has come out of its economic slump or is in the process of coming out of it, but Gaspésie remains by far the most devitalized region in Quebec. Can we still give it special attention rather than merging it into a general program that applies to all regions of Quebec," says Mr. Côté.

Asphalt
There is good news this year for paving upgrades. The only bid received by Eurovia came out at \$676,000 rather than the \$1 million for 2022. "We are at the bottom of the budget targets because we had expected that the costs would have increased again this year. It's a little cheaper. I am not necessarily surprised because the price of fuel and bitumen compared to last year has stagnated, even dropping. Somehow, that's good news. We will do as much as planned with a budget less than planned. This will give us room to maneuver for the next

few years," says the mayor.
Gaspé adopted a loan by-law of \$4 million over four years. About \$2.1 million remains for the last two years. "We should be good at doing our planning within the fixed budget target," says the mayor.

Mont-Bechervaise
The MRC de la Côte-de-Gaspé advanced \$25,000 to cover part of the budget overrun to upgrade the Mont Béchervaise ski lodge. Earlier this month, Gaspé opted to go ahead even though bids were 17% higher than estimated. The project involves repairing and adapting the ski centre chalet, particularly for people with reduced mobility. The balconies will be redone and an automatic

ticket office outside will be added. The cost is estimated at \$424,000.
"We said we'd join forces with our partners to cover the extra cost. The MRC stepped in and contributed \$25,000, and we also knocked on the federal government's door to see if it couldn't come up with a little more, given the inflation in construction. We're not a special case. We're trying," says the mayor.

More flights from Gaspé
The two air carriers will increase the frequency of their departures from Gaspé airport. Pascan has increased its offer to seven days a week and Pal Airlines will go from four to five days a week.

"We're seeing more and more Pal (airplanes) flying around with Q-400s, a bigger and more efficient aircraft. We're (moving) more and more on the right track. Everything is far from settled. I still think we should regulate the markets to optimize service. At least we're seeing some action and some progress," observes Mr. Côté, who notes that flight reliability remains a concern, but is improving all the time.
"But to say that we have absolute reliability is a 'no'. We still see sustained efforts to improve service. Once it is more reliable, I am betting that the business community will stop ignoring air transport and boarding which will stimulate supply," says the mayor.

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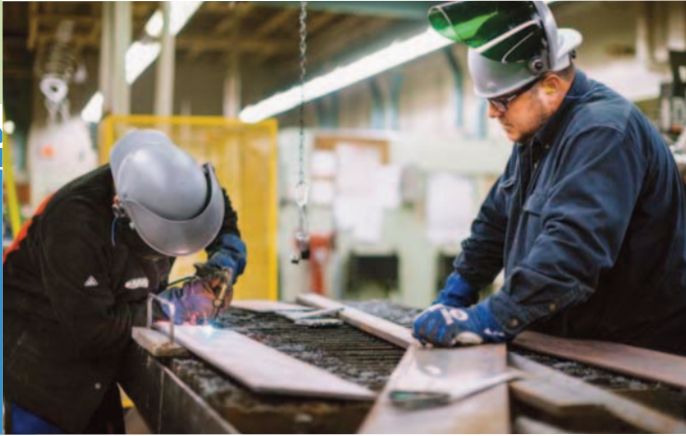


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Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles

The construction of the Fisheries Innovation Hub is underway

NELSON SERGERIE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - The government of Quebec is investing \$15.5 million over three years to support the Merinov research and innovation activities and work. This support will help in the commercial fisheries and aquaculture sector.

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of Quebec, André Lamontagne, confirmed this assistance on June 16 during the official groundbreaking of the construction work of the future Fisheries Innovation Hub and Aquaculture in Grande-Rivière.

"Quebec is recognized in Canada, per capita, as the province that does the most research but we are not the ones who are recognized as those who convert this research the most into concrete benefits for our companies. What we are looking for with the crossroads is to convert this research talent into real gains," says Minister Lamontagne, who declined to comment when asked about long-term funding.

"The Ministry has been supporting 17 research centres for years. Merinov for the fisheries sector, it is really major. The ministry's commitment has been there for several years. No agreement is signed for more than three years but the context in which Merinov operates and the support via the Ministry of the Economy is part of a perspective of sustainability and the dynamic contribution of the territory," adds Mr. Lamontagne.

The Minister took advantage of his visit to confirm ad-



Photo: N. Sergerie

The traditional groundbreaking with Minister André Lamontagne; the mayor of Grande-Rivière, Gino Cyr; the director of Merinov, David Courtemanche; and the MNA for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

ditional financial support of \$8.5 million for the completion of the hub, a sum that had been advanced by government decree on March 22 and announced in the Quebec Government Gazette officielle on April 12. This amount is in addition to the \$17.4 million envelope granted in April 2021 for the realization of the hub.

With the down payment from Merinov and other partners for just over \$5 million, and the amount of \$250,000 coming from Desjardins, the total amount now invested in this project is \$31.2 million.

The additional sum of \$5.25 million was made necessary to make up for a shortfall caused by inflation, overheating of the markets and the significant increase in construction costs.

"In Canada alone, fisheries represent economic benefits of more than \$9 billion and for the

broader ocean sector, these benefits are estimated at \$40 billion. Considering that these benefits are expected to double over the next ten years, fishermen, processors and aquaculturists will have to make a major shift towards innovation and adopt new modern technologies to remain competitive. These new research infrastructures and the expertise of our teams will enable them to achieve these objectives," mentions the director general of Merinov, David Courtemanche.

This unique research site in the Quebec fisheries and aquaculture sector will ensure convergence between researchers, students, fishermen, aquaculturists, entrepreneurs and industrialists to develop more innovative technologies and new aquaculture species.

Six new technological platforms will be offered: design

workshops for sustainable fishing gear; fish breeding rooms with new effluent treatment technologies; wet and microalgae labs; pilot micro-factory to recover seaweed and marine co-products; state-of-the-art ecophysiology and biology laboratories and a marine product processing platform.

The hub will be located in the former Carrefour national de l'aquaculture et des pêches (CANAP) in Grande-Rivière and the upgrading of the Merinov pond room will connect these two buildings which will double the space.

The start of work is scheduled for the next few weeks and the site should be completed in the fall of 2024.

No announcement for the Blue Economy Zone

Minister Lamontagne did not want to confirm the concept of the Blue Economy Zone, the announcement of which is scheduled for the fall, however, in May a chief executive officer was hired for the Blue Economy Zone.

"There are two (projects) announced, and without going any further in detail, the Blue Innovation Zone project between the time the idea emerged and the time it was delivered, it's a project that has come a long way, that has a very, very favourable rating. I can't presume what will happen next, but steps are being taken that are part of an avowed objective that may materialize, but it's up to my colleague, the Minister of the Economy, to make an announcement when the analyses and the project have been completed," states

Mr. Lamontagne. A discussion forum was held following the press conference and it seems obvious that the announcement is only a formality.

Several other announcements

Minister Lamontagne took advantage of his two-day stay in the Gaspé Peninsula to make various announcements in the bio food and fisheries sector.

On the morning of June 16, André Lamontagne went to Cap-d'Espoir to announce investment of \$425,000 to various projects that will generate additional investments of more than \$1.7 million.

Cuisimer of Mont-Louis will get the biggest investment with \$180,667 to improve its infrastructure, which is estimated to be a project worth \$1.2 million.

Aquaculture Gaspésie will receive \$137,000 to boost its Arctic char growth capacity. The total investment for that venture will reach \$220,000.

Poissonnerie de Cloridorme will receive \$52,000 to stabilize its supply of imported sea cucumbers. That project is valued at nearly \$225,000.

InnoVactiv will receive \$49,000 which will be used to help assess the technical feasibility of restraining starfish to extract coelomic fluid, an innovative cosmetic ingredient. The total investment in that project is estimated at \$101,000. Finally, Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan will receive \$7,000 to identify opportunities for cost-based management improvement. That project is estimated at \$14,000.

Quebec wants to work for the future of the shrimp industry

NELSON SERGERIE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - At a meeting on June 16 in Grande-Rivière, the shrimp industry stakeholders presented their findings to André Lamontagne, the current Quebec Fisheries Minister. Mr. Lamontagne wants a clear picture of the situation before considering a possible intervention.

Warmer waters, lower quotas, a difficult catching season and redfish predation are putting pressure on shrimp.

Like last year, the minister made no concrete commitments to support the industry, but is prepared to work with



Minister André Lamontagne during his visit to Grande-Rivière on June 16.

Photo: N. Sergerie

it to help maintain the shrimp industry in the future.

"Preparing together for tomorrow, then next year and the

years to come to make the industry evolve for the benefit of the communities based on the challenges it represents. There

are no answers right now. We're asking the people who make their living from this (fishery) today, to find out what's going on with your businesses and then, if there's a need to help you, to find the best solutions," says the Minister.

The Minister wants a clear picture of the situation in order to support the industry in the short term.

The Grande-Rivière gantry crane project remains a priority for the Minister.

After confirming on June 16 additional funding for research over the next three years at the Fisheries Innovation Hub in Grande-Rivière as well as the imminent arrival of the

Zone d'économie bleue (Blue Economy Zone), the gantry crane project is practically unavoidable.

The Minister is due to speak with his federal colleague in a few weeks time. "Somewhere along the line, there's someone who needs to step in and support us. We've already invested in the crane project. We're not giving up. We want the federal government to take note of our investments for the benefit of the community, and realize that its contribution would be welcome in this project," says the Minister. When asked about financing scenarios, Mr. Lamontagne refused to comment.

Member of Parliament, Kristina Michaud, deplores the loss of a riding in Eastern Quebec

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Kristina Michaud, the Member of Parliament for the riding of Avignon-Mitis-Matane-Matapédia deplores the June 22 decision released by the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Quebec which will basically abolish her constituency.

“The Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Quebec persists. It officially maintains its decision to remove the riding of Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia. With this decision, it reduces the federal representation from four to three seats. This is a hard blow for our region, which has seen its political weight crumble considerably,” states Ms. Michaud who was initially elected in 2019 and then re-elected in 2021.

“The people of Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia deserve full and complete representation, which is why I want to reassure them. As long as this



Photo: G. Gagné

Kristina Michaud has been representing the constituency of Avignon-Mitis-Matane-Matapédia since October 2019.

44th Parliament lasts, I will be their proud representative in the House of Commons. My offices remain open and my team continues to serve the population. My Bloc Québécois colleagues and I will always continue to fight to ensure that the regions of Quebec are represented fairly and equitably. It's a matter of

democracy,” she adds. Based on the Commission's report, the Electoral Officer of Canada will prepare a representation order which should become official in September 2023. The new electoral map will be used in the first general election called approximately seven months after this date.

MRCs finally have the power to invest in housing

NELSON SERGERIE

CARLETON-SUR-MER – After months of efforts, MRCs have finally obtained the power from the Quebec government to intervene in the construction of housing.

The MRCs already had certain powers particularly in social housing or when a municipality delegated certain responsibilities. However, on June 14 with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Regroupement des MRC de la Gaspésie won its case and will now be able to intervene directly in rental housing via the Regions and Rurality Fund Component 4.

“This is a very important issue for the region. It is a priority and we have been working on it for a long time. The MRCs will be able to use part of their funding, Component 4, to support the construction of rental housing. We are very happy. We've been working on this for several months. The municipalities have had the authorization and now the MRCs will be able to do it,” explains the president of the Regroupement, Mathieu Lapointe.

In January, when elected officials first attempted to make changes, they were told

by the Quebec Government that it was necessary to go through a legislative measure. On May 31, the prefect for the MRC of Rocher-Percé, Samuel Parisé, declared that he did not understand Quebec's reluctance, maintaining that “someone, somewhere, seemed to be blocking it, preventing us from intervening in housing (issues).”

Mathieu Lapointe explains the crux of the problem. “Everyone understands the stakes and the relevance of investing in housing. It was more for technical and legal details where there were challenges to be raised, and a solution has been found that will enable us to do this through the MRCs while respecting the current legal framework,” says Mr. Lapointe.

The measure will apply to all MRCs that have a Component 4, that means MRCs that have municipalities with a low economic vitality index. This solution makes it possible to avoid going through a legislative process.

“The decision will be up to each of the MRCs to decide if they wish to embark on this. Rocher-Percé has been asking for it for several months and now it's done,” says Mr. Lapointe.

Studies have shown that the private sector invests little in rental housing because the profitability is too low. The challenge for developers was having the down payment.

“That's why we're doing all this, to help private entrepreneurs with the down payment to build housing, which they don't do under current market conditions. That's what it takes for them to move forward,” says Mathieu Lapointe.

A study on the cost of apartment units determined it costs an additional \$25,000 in construction costs per apartment unit in the Gaspé Peninsula compared to the rest of Quebec.

“With the incentive programs with regional assistance and with (additional support in) some municipalities, we're closing the gap and what we're seeing in New Richmond and Carleton-sur-Mer among others, is that we have private developers who are moving forward with these programs, which they weren't doing before. The program works. As far as we're concerned, we've found the issue, the solutions, and now the challenge is to find the funding to do it,” explains Mr. Lapointe.

Should an election occur before the spring of 2024, the current map will prevail.

The riding of Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia will be divided in two in the new map, with the Matane, Mitis and Matapédia MRCs being added to the Rimouski riding, and Matane being included in the Gaspésie-Magdalen Islands riding, which also sees the name Listuguj added to it. The Rimouski riding will have the name La Matapédia added to it.

Kristina Michaud has not announced yet if she will stay in politics, or for which riding she will choose to run in if she runs in the next election.

In the original version of the new electoral map, which was released on a Friday afternoon

during the 2022 construction holidays, the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Quebec proposed splitting some MRCs between two ridings.

Minor corrections were made during the winter but the Commission waived representations made by a wide array of Eastern Quebec groups to the effect that the number of constituencies had to remain the same. Those groups were criticizing the mathematical view of the Commission and the lack of consideration for the size of the ridings.

The amount of travel required by MPs located in Eastern Quebec to reach Ottawa or return to their constituency was also waived by the commissioners.

RAILWAY REACTIONS:

Cont'd from page 3

The importance of the train recognized

The Coalition of Gaspésians for the return of the passenger train receives the news brought by Minister Guilbault positively. The coalition keeps the target of bringing the passenger train back as soon as the line is fit between Caplan and New Carlisle.

“This progress revives the hope of the population to witness the return of the passenger train in the region in the near future. Indeed, the big question mark intended for tourists posted outside the Gaspé intermodal station represents, for a large number of Gaspésians, their questioning about the resumption of passenger rail transport, which was completely discontinued ten years ago. Also, the Coalition asks when the federal government and VIA Rail will indicate their willingness to board the train themselves. We are convinced that they could join the movement and announce very soon the service resumption between Matapédia and New Carlisle,” states the coalition members in a press release.

“Given the progress of work on section 2 (Caplan-Port Daniel- Gascons), we estimate that VIA Rail will be able to circulate safely to New Carlisle by the end of 2023, without waiting for complete rehabilitation for the railway line to Gaspé. This choice would make it possible to cover without delay the first

half of the railroad served by the SCFG (Société de chemin de fer de la Gaspésie) pending the full restoration of the service to Gaspé. A regional road carrier could also offer a shuttle service to the localities between New Carlisle and Gaspé, giving thus meaning to the word intermodality,” adds the coalition.

Carol Saucier, representative of the citizen movement Solidarité Gaspésie, says that, “We welcome this announcement. This return of the train will also contribute to the implementation of a desirable innovative socio-ecological transition. We will also continue to demonstrate vigilance to ensure that the various stages of future rail repairs are carried out as planned,”

Marie-Claude Brière, director of the Côte-de-Gaspé Chamber of Commerce, stresses that “this mode of transport could once again become a strategic vector for socio-economic development for the Gaspé territory and allow the development and retention of businesses. The business community also wants to quickly revive the Amiral tourist train in order to pursue the development associated with international cruises,”

As for Mauril Minville, spokesperson for the Citizens' Committee of Gaspé and Percé, he points out that “we are very pleased to see this important commitment which will allow, after so many years of waiting, the population to reuse this essential and affordable transportation mode, especially for seniors.”

CYRUS JOURNEAU:

A life of service

Mayor, educator, lay reader, family man

DIANE SKINNER

NEW CARLISLE: The community of New Carlisle and beyond is mourning the loss of a devoted family man. On June 4 at the age of 83, Mr. Cyrus Journeau passed away. Mr. Journeau was well-known for his service in his community, his roles within the Eastern Shores School Board (ESSB) and volunteer work at his local Anglican church. He will be remembered as a compassionate and empathetic man who would never refuse to help someone in need. Cyrus's wife, Iva, recounts, "We had many knocks at the door at all hours of the day or night from people in need of advice, comfort, money for food or a place to sleep. No one was turned away."

Cyrus Journeau was born in Port Daniel East (Marcil) in 1939 and attended elementary school there. He also attended schools in Shigawake-Port Daniel and, ultimately, graduated from New Carlisle High School. Mr. Journeau went on to attend MacDonald Teachers' College, Bishop's University and the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

His professional life was exemplary and his accomplishments were many. Mr. Journeau held his very first teaching job at New Carlisle High School teaching grades 6 to 11. He then became a Guidance Counsellor, Union Representative, Vice Principal at New Carlisle High School, Principal at Shigawake Port Daniel School, New Carlisle High School and Bonaventure Polyvalent.

Former teacher Bertha Campbell-Hayes, reflects that "Mr. Journeau was fantastic, I can tell you that. He was a hard worker and was such an understanding person. He was interested in everyone in the community."

He was promoted to the role of Director General of Eastern Shores School Board. He also served his community as a New Carlisle town councillor for over 40 years and as mayor for several terms.

Although he retired as Director General from the ESSB in 2002, he continued his commitment to education by becoming a commissioner on the school board. He also remained actively involved as a volunteer member of the Board of Directors for the Gilker Res-

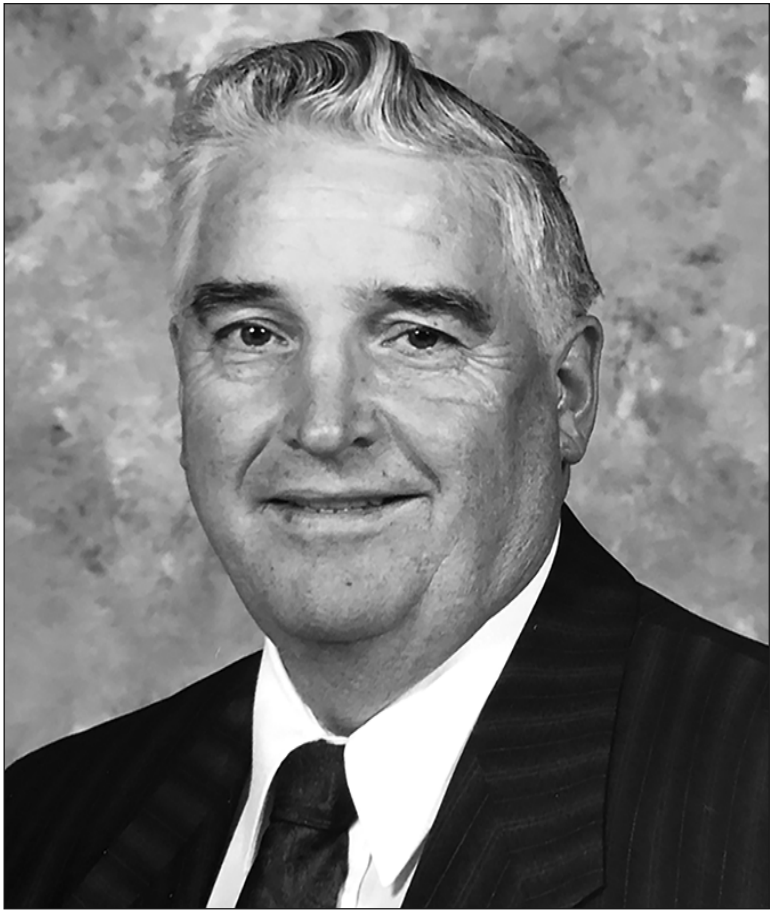


Photo: Journeau family

Cyrus Journeau served his community in so many ways. He was an educator, councillor and mayor, lay reader and above all else, a family man.

idence, in New Carlisle and recently became President of the Board of Directors for Heritage New Carlisle.

Past president of Heritage New Carlisle, Betty Anne Smollett, recalls that Mr. Journeau was a "staunch believer in preserving heritage, a man who was a 'book of knowledge and who always showed up when needed.'" She recalled that one time Mr. Journeau asked her for ten membership applications. Then he and his wife, Iva Journeau asked every member of their family to become members of Heritage New Carlisle. His actions demonstrated his values.

Mr. Journeau was also lay reader for the Anglican Church for approximately 60 years, where he led services in communities from New Richmond to Port Daniel. His family reflects that the church and his faith brought him great comfort, particularly when his son Christopher had a devastating accident.

Cyrus was a devoted family man, and he married his high school sweetheart, Iva May Munro, on August 12, 1961. They were married for close to 62 years. They had three children, Tania Lee (Richard), Christopher and Jonathan (Nadine). He was also blessed with two grandchildren, Jhordan (son of Tania Lee) and Timothy (son of Christopher) as well as a great-grandson,

Sunny, who is the son of Timothy.

Above all else, he valued his family. Tania Lee proudly states, "As children, we could always depend on Dad to be supportive in good times and bad. While he may have been disappointed in some of our choices as children and as adults, we always knew that, if need be, he was there to help us navigate our way through our difficulties, his love unwavering."

Tragedy struck the family in September of 1997 when Christopher was involved in an accident leaving him with severe brain trauma. With the help of two auxiliary nurses, Claude Denis and Wynita Wylie, Cy as he was known by many, and Iva took care of Christopher at home for the next 24 years. Christopher passed away at home in May of 2022. Despite the 24-hour commitment that Christopher's care required, with Iva's unwavering support and encouragement, Cyrus continued to work and volunteer in his community and church.

The family and community have lost a man who served others throughout his days, with good humour and kindness. His legacy is that he served as a model for others about how to live a full and meaningful life. Winston Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



The hubris of the ultra-rich

As the recent tragedy in the Atlantic Ocean just southeast of St. John's Newfoundland unfolded, the world experienced a collective anxiety for the five humans stuck below the Atlantic Ocean in a submarine. The notion that they were trapped in a disabled vessel, unable to communicate with the above-water world and running out of oxygen, was horrifying. After five days of hopes and prayers, the final news was released. The submersible had likely imploded just around the time communication was lost, probably in the first hour or two after launching the craft into the depths to search for the wreckage of the Titanic. Death of the occupants was instant and the blessing is that it was without much notice, and they likely did not suffer. The end came quickly and with no warning. A tragedy.

Now the aftermath of the horrible accident has led us to more than a few questions about marine safety and whether the rules and laws apply to the ultra-rich, including the entrepreneur who designed and built the submersible. There are so many questions, and the sad conclusion might just be that the very rich live by different rules and laws or by none at all. We have laws and standards for planes and vehicles but apparently not for some of these privately owned crafts like the Titan submersible.

Each of the four passengers paid \$250,000 for what was planned to be an eight-hour descent to view the wreck of the Titanic. There was no shortage of people lining up to take this underwater trip. Why? Was it the thrill of exploration, the experience or the bragging rights that would come after? Likely a bit of all that. The wealthy who travel to space via Elon Musk have had the same experience. They pay a huge amount of money to brag that they have been to space.

The young son of one passenger (both father and son perished on the Titan) was planning to break a record for solving a Rubik's cube while underwater and had contacted the team at Guinness World Records. Does it seem like a trivial pursuit now? Do the very rich know that there is no shortage of needy people right here on land? Why do they spend their money on something so vain as this new and expensive tourism? It used to be that the rich went to Africa and shot helpless, endangered animals, though that still goes on. I imagine that thrill was not adequate for those who climb into a spaceship or submersible. There are children with life-threatening illnesses, single parents who cannot afford to feed their families, people experiencing homelessness, hospices that need funding for end-of-life care, patients who cannot afford their prescriptions and, well, you know that the world is full of despair, and nobody is coming to rescue them.

No, money could not solve all these issues – but money can help, at least somewhat. Isn't it selfish to spend all that money, you billionaires, on thrill-seeking adventure? Not actually a question. More like a rhetorical statement. Ultimately that trip in the Titan for the owner/designer, and fabricator was to make money and gain fame and accolades.

Let's also consider the cost and the risks of the attempted rescue of the five men in that submersible. Planes and boats funded by Canadian and American taxpayers spent days, at a cost of millions of dollars and at some risk to their safety, to locate the five men. Billionaires do not repay that money to the government who searched for them around the clock and in rough seas.

A lot of money was certainly spent on that attempted rescue but when there are boats full of desperate migrants trying to reach ports in Germany or France, for example, the same extreme measures just do not happen. There are no photos of the individuals with their life stories as we saw and heard for days about the wealthy thrill seekers. Governments do not put a lot of money into those rescues and the media hardly covers their often doomed voyages. At times the tone of the rescuers is one of anger. It seems that the lives of the poor and wretched do not warrant the same caring as those of the rich.

The hubris, the pride, of the ultra-rich is not to be envied.



Photo: Anonymous

Chandler's Petit Pabos River bridge is to be completely re-built starting next year.

Chandler's Petit Pabos River bridge to be refurbished

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - The Quebec government has issued another call for tenders to rebuild Chandler's Petit Pabos River bridge. The first call for tender was cancelled this spring, after the project, estimated at between \$10 and \$15 million, came back with bids at \$22 million. The work, scheduled for this year, was postponed until next year.

This time, the Ministère des Transports estimates the contract at between \$15 and \$20 million. The deck, beams, slabs and even an abutment will undergo work over two years to refurbish the bridge that was built in 1965.

In the meantime, work to secure the infrastructure pending refurbishment has doubled from \$125,000 to \$250,000. The ministry indicated that, after the repair work had been started on the bridge slab, it was discovered that the worksite was larger than anticipated. The work will take an extra month to complete.

This new intervention comes in the wake of damage which occurred in March. The span was opened to carry out the work. Last September, a 30-centimetre hole had formed in the roadway. This is the second 30-centimetre hole that was created, the first one in 2019 resulted in an accident.

Port Daniel's only grocery store closes

Gilles Gagné

PORT DANIEL – The Marché Richelieu grocery store in Port Daniel, the only grocery store in the town, closed its doors on June 30 due to the health condition of its main owner, Marie-Luce Legault. The closure, however, could be short-lived, as Ms. Legault and her daughter Geneviève, who is part-owner, will weigh acquisition proposals over the next days or weeks.

“We will probably get offers from two potential buyers. My supply contract with Metro was coming to an end on June 30. I couldn't sell before (June 30) and the potential buyers will want to be in a position to choose their supplier, which could be Metro, Sobey's or another one,” says Marie-Luce Legault.

“I am suffering from incurable cancer, which has metastasized. I will not live to be 100 years old. Running a store is tough. It is a seven days a week job and I want to take advantage of life. My daughter tried to run it alone and it was too much. You need to be two people,” says Ms. Legault, who had purchased the store 11 years ago.

She and her daughter held a clearance sale on June 29-30. “It was very popular. The parking lot was jammed and cars were parked on both sides of Highway 132. We ran out of carts. We are losing money in that kind of sale but it is better than closing with a big inventory,” she concludes.

Six people were working at the grocery store. The second-floor apartments will stay occupied by tenants. The two nearest grocery stores are located in Gascons.

Méganne Perry Mélançon criticizes the CAQ's lack of action

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The former Parti Québécois Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé who became the national spokesperson for the Parti Québécois highlights the Coalition avenir Québec's lack of presence in the Gaspé Peninsula since the October election.

Méganne Perry Mélançon says that when she sat in the National Assembly, the housing crisis was already established in the constituency. “I travelled all over the riding to document the housing file. This is another file that they treat with very little interest on the side of the CAQ. We still see students who are going to our CEGEPs and do not yet have a room to stay in. I saw messages (on social media) and it is quite shocking,” she says.

The inflation that is hitting everyone has no impact on the government. “The families of the Gaspé, the seniors, and many other people who are struggling to make ends meet. We made several proposals to work on the increase in the cost of living. It happens in several ways,” she says.

Ms. Perry Mélançon also brings up the issue of the price of gasoline and food.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Méganne Perry Mélançon is unimpressed by the CAQ in Gaspésie.

“There is a monopoly that hurts the wallets of Quebecers. We can also freeze the tariffs on state corporations. All measures are not being addressed,” adds Ms. Perry Mélançon.

She endorses the comments of municipal politicians in the region regarding the end of the Regional Initiatives Assistance Fund, better known under its French acronym, FAIR. “I am very disappointed. It is a program that the Marois government had set up to revive the Gaspésie and it was an impor-

tant economic lever that was dedicated specifically to the region. We are told that this will be a program extended to all of Quebec. It is sure that we are losing ground,” she says.

The program, which had an envelope of \$8 million last year, ended on March 31. “Much remains to be done to counter the major crises that we are experiencing in the region and throughout Quebec,” concludes the PQ spokesperson, who has already indicated her intention to run in the 2026 election in Gaspé.

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ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
This week you are surrounded by a heightened sense of romance. It could be from reading a favorite book or watching a beloved movie, Aries. Use it to spice up your love life.
TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Taurus, something you desperately need seems to be missing from your life right now. It's more than a misplaced item. Focus your attention this week on figuring out what it is.
GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21
Try not to listen to any gossip this week, Gemini. It will only frustrate you and could put you further out of sorts. Avoid people who love to talk about others for the time being.
CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22
Is there a luxury you have been craving lately, Cancer? You could be very tempted to give in and make a purchase this week, even if your finances may not be on solid ground. Be careful.
LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23
Leo, your emotions will be all over the place the next couple of days. This turmoil may compromise your usual objectivity as well as your good sense. Try to talk your feelings through.



VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, your imagination knows no bounds this week. If you're ready to delve into a creative project, do so now when you have a lot of ideas and outside inspiration.
LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
You could have doubts about a friend you thought was close to you. Has this person promised to do you a favor and didn't deliver, Libra? Be patient before you draw conclusions.
SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
Feelings of confusion may get in the way of your ability to make sound decisions this week, Scorpio. You might need to lighten your load, since you often take on too much.
SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, do not get into an argument with someone who has a different opinion from your own. Ask to get more information about why he or she sees things in a particular way.


CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
A bothersome feeling may persist for much of the week, Capricorn. It's almost as if you've forgotten to do something but do not know what. All will be revealed in due time.
AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
Aquarius, be prepared to be a listening ear to a friend or loved one who needs to work through a few issues. You are able to give trusted advice in this matter.
PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Listen carefully and take notes when someone at work provides directions for an upcoming task, Pisces. You don't want to make any mistakes as it could delay the project.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- JULY 2: Margot Robbie, Actress (33)
- JULY 3: Tom Cruise, Actor (61)
- JULY 4: Post Malone, Rapper (28)
- JULY 5: Megan Rapinoe, Athlete (38)
- JULY 6: Sylvester Stallone, Actor (77)
- JULY 7: Jack Whitehall, Actor (35)
- JULY 8: Maya Hawke, Actress (25)

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Announcements



In Memory



FOURNIER: Flora Mullin

In loving memory of Flora Mullin Fournier who passed away on July 5, 2013.
*We're missing you a little more
Each time we say your name,
We've cried so many tears
Yet our hearts are broken just the same.
We miss our times together,
Things in common we could share,
But nothing fills the emptiness
Now you're no longer here.
We've so many precious memories
To last our whole life through,
Each of them reminders
Of how much we're missing you.
In tears, we saw you sinking,
We watched you fade away,
You faced your task with courage,
Your spirit did not bend,
And you still kept on fighting until the very end.
Then He put his arms around you
And whispered "Come to me"
So when we saw you sleeping,
So peaceful and free from pain
We could not wish you back again,*

*To suffer that again.
Although your soul is at rest
And your body free from pain.
The world would be like heaven
If we could have you back again.
Your loss has taught us many things
And now we face each day with hope
And happy memories to help us on our way.
And though we're full of sadness
That you're no longer here,
Your influence still guides us
And we still feel you near.
Although you can't be with us,
We're truly not apart.
Until the final breath we take,
You'll be living in our hearts.
Missed by Sonney and all the family.*



HOCQUARD: Charles W.

August 19, 1931 - June 28, 2018

In loving memory of Charles W. Hocquard. Always remembered and forever missed by his wife Sheila, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Until we meet again.

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Funeral and Burial

PYE-AHERN: Marilyn

The funeral and burial for Marilyn Pye-Ahern will be held on Tuesday, August 8, 2023 at 11 a.m. at St. John's - St. Philips Church in Sandy Beach. A lunch will follow in the hall downstairs. All are welcome.

Card of Thanks

The members of the Hope Town UCW would like to thank everyone who gave donations, their time and brought food for our bake table.

The winners of the Fathers' Day raffle were: Cathy Grenier, Hope, Quebec - 55" 4K Roku TV. Dora Robinson, Shigawake, Quebec - Ninja Double Air Fryer and Dena Main, Port Daniel, Quebec - Mastercraft Grinder.

Your support was very much appreciated.

Ruth Watt-Lyall
President



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COAST ROUND-UP

CORNER OF THE BEACH: Historical Society

The Corner of the Beach Historical Society is pleased to present a series of eight concerts every Wednesday of July and August at the Corner of the Beach Cultural Museum (former St. Luke Anglican Church). The church will be entirely lit with more than 200 candles for the occasion. The full schedule is available on the Musée culturel de Coin-du-Banc Facebook page.

July 12: Julien Lebreux in concert beginning at 9 p.m.

July 19: Pierre Michaud in concert beginning at 9 p.m.

July 26: Yvette Thériault, Carmen Léger and Monique Allen in concert beginning at 9 p.m.

August 2: Claude Hurtubise trio in concert beginning at 9 p.m.

August 9: Flore Laurentienne solo in concert beginning at 9 p.m.

August 16: Char in concert beginning at 9 p.m.

August 23: Ibal Zadok on sitar and Shawn Mativetsy on tabla in concert beginning at 9 p.m.

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.

HOPE:

Hope Baptist Church

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

NEW CARLISLE:

Spec AGM

September 12: Save the date! Spec AGM, more details to follow.

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 CARLISLE:

Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

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

September 5: General meeting at 7 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: Book Room

The book room is now

open. Anyone who needs assistance can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

HEMA QUEBEC : Blood Drive

July 31: Bonaventure from 1:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

August 1: New Richmond from 1:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

August 2: Grande-Rivière from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

August 3: Gaspé from 1 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

For more information about objectives and locations please visit: hema-quebec.qc.ca

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HOPE TOWN

Sunday, July 9

2 p.m. Service

Mayor of Pointe-à-la-Croix wants to improve unsafe intersection

NELSON SERGERIE

POINTE-À-LA-CROIX - The Mayor of Pointe-à-la-Croix, Pascal Bujold, continues to request a roundabout at the intersection of Highway 132 and Interprovincial Boulevard while the Department of Transportation is making changes to the intersection.

The markings on the ground are modified on the three lanes that approach the intersection. This will allow motorists to better define the traffic and turning lanes.

Completion of the work will provide a reserved lane for a left turn on Highway 132 when users wish to take the Interprovincial Boulevard.

The speed limit for Highway 132 will also be reduced from 90 to 70 km/h as you approach the intersection.

Closures of the north access to a commercial parking lot as well as that of the rest

area via Interprovincial Boulevard are also planned for the next few weeks.

"It won't change much," says Mayor Pascal Bujold. The geometry of the intersection will remain the same. Blind spots and spots where you can't see anything will remain the same. The problem will still be there."

The elected representative still welcomes the reduction in speed limits in this sector.

Asked what would be the solution to secure the intersection, the mayor put forward his side "A roundabout would provide security. What matters is people's safety. We understand that there is a part of the year when there is less traffic in Pointe-à-la-Croix, but in the summer season, it is still the most used artery in Gaspésie since it is the entry point to New Brunswick. Installing a roundabout would probably be the best thing. Studies prove it," says Mr.

Bujold.

The Sûreté du Québec

notes that the intersection mentioned does not generate

more accidents than elsewhere in the region.



Photo: Google Maps

A roundabout should be set up at this intersection, according to Mayor Pascal Bujold.

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