

OSISKI METALS:

Announcement of significant increase in Murdochville's mineral resource

GILLES GAGNÉ

MURDOCHVILLE – Osisko Metals has announced a mineral resource estimate for Murdochville's Gaspé Copper Project that would send its copper deposit reserve up to an indicated volume of 824 million tonnes, with a concentration of 0.34% in copper and copper equivalents, including molybdenum and silver.

This last mineral resource estimate (MRE) represents a 53% increase in copper-equivalent metal content over the previously indicated resource. Solely in copper, the previous estimate neared 495 million tonnes.

Moreover, based on inferred assessment, which means statistical tools, the deposit could also include 670 million tonnes grading 0.38% of copper and copper equivalents in molybdenum and silver. This is a 100-fold increase in copper equivalent metal content in inferred resources, compared to a May 6, 2024, press release also issued by Osisko Metals.

According to November 15 documents released by the



Photo: Osisko Metals

Drilling operations have been conducted by Osisko Metals in and around the Copper Mountain pit since March 2022.

company, the potential content of the Murdochville mining property could stand at 2.23 million tonnes of copper, 274 million pounds of molybdenum and 46 million ounces of silver. Molybdenum is commonly used in alloys. Osisko Metals uses metric tonnes in its evaluation. A

metric tonne weighs 2,200 pounds instead of 2,000.

Consequently, again based on an evaluation provided by the company, "the latest Gaspé Copper in-pit indicated resource hosts by far the largest undeveloped copper-molybdenum deposit in Eastern North America, exclusive of inferred resources."

In a written statement, Robert Wares, chief executive officer (CEO) and chairman of Osisko Metals, expresses satisfaction with the latest news.

"We are very proud to announce this updated resource estimate for Gaspé Copper. The overall resource has increased dramatically since last spring's MRE due to new geological modelling and extending the modelled Whittle pit boundaries towards Needle Mountain to the south," he first says.

Independent geological laboratories performed Osisko Metals' estimates. The indicated resource, which is based on drills, is mainly tied to Copper Mountain. The in-

ferred resource is based primarily on preliminary estimates of an area adjacent to Mount Copper and Needle Mountain.

Both mountains were former mines exploited under the reign of Noranda Mines, which owned Murdochville mining facilities between 1953 and 1999. Opened in 1954, the company's copper smelter was closed in April 2002, after being supplied by imported copper concentrate between October 1999 and its closure.

Additional drilling in 2025

"A minimum 70,000-metre drill program is now planned for 2025, to convert the bulk of the current inferred resource to the indicated category. There is also excellent potential for converting currently categorized in-pit waste rock to mineralized material with this drill program, which would further grow the in-pit resource while reducing the strip ratio," adds Mr. Wares.

The strip ratio refers to the quantity of sterile rock that must be removed before exploiting a deposit. So, the company now expects that some rocks initially considered sterile could contain enough copper to be exploited, hence a reduced strip ratio.

"This MRE represents a much larger resource than was estimated previously, presenting the potential for a bulk tonnage mining operation with significantly higher throughput. Given this new resource milestone, management has elected to defer the PEA (preliminary economic assessment), originally slated for release in Q1 (first quarter of) 2025, to a later date until additional new drilling is completed. Ongoing studies will focus on a larger-scale mine plan and relocation of the mill complex away from the current site," also specifies Robert Wares.

In other words, the deposit might overlap the area where Osisko Metals had planned to build its ore concentrator, which was initially slated for or very close to the spot where Noranda Mines was operating its Gaspé Copper Mine plant, which consisted of concentrators and a smelter. Robert Wares does not reveal, for now, where the plant could go if it is not where the company initially planned it, or if it will be moved away because it will be bigger than expected.

Robert Wares has indicated several times that Osisko Metals will not build a smelter in Murdochville, due to its enormous cost. Instead, copper concentrate from Murdochville would be sent to an existing smelter, such as one operated by Glencore in Rouyn-Noranda, Abitibi.

"We are proud to be leading the Gaspé Copper project, which is shaping up to be a



Photo: G. Gagné

Osisko Metals Chief Executive Officer Robert Wares says that new exploration data reveals that the mining potential could be larger than anticipated.

MURDOCHVILLE:

▶ *Cont'd from page 1*

major Canadian copper-molybdenum development project located in one of the world's safest mining jurisdictions. This important asset has the potential to become a core component of Quebec's critical mineral development strategy that aims to provide essential metals for global decarbonization initiatives," also states Robert Wares.

Osisko Metals announced a deal with Glencore Canada on March 28, 2022, which concluded with the property transfer of the Gaspé Mine location. Glencore had previously acquired Xstrata, which had taken control of Falconbridge Mines. The latter bought the shares of Noranda Mines shortly after the closure of the Murdochville complex.

The Murdochville underground mine closed in October 1999 due to profitably issues, the economic situation of that time and the lower price of copper. The diminishing copper grade in the mine was also a factor. The smelter kept operating with copper produced in South American mines. At the end of the 1990s, the price of copper was often valued at 0.80 cents per pound, close to five times lower than current prices.

On September 10, during the last public meeting held in Murdochville to update local residents on the project, Robert Wares indicated that a price of US\$4 per pound is needed for the project to receive a green light. A grade of 0.35% copper is also targeted by Osisko Metals.

It will take about five years of studies, reports and an en-

vironment assessment before mining activities can resume in Murdochville if Osisko Metals' management decides to move forward with the venture. The decision will not be made before a thorough economic study and the environmental assessment are completed in 2028.

The construction of an ore concentration facility and the facilities required to reopen the mine will likely cost \$1.5 billion. The construction phase is expected to provide work to 1,500 people, while the mining operation would employ 700 people.

With an indicated reserve of 2.23 million tonnes of copper at \$US4, the gross value of that ore could reach \$19.6 billion. As for molybdenum, whose market price hovers around US\$20 per pound, a quantity of 274 million

pounds would be worth \$5.48 billion. A quantity of 46 million ounces of silver at US\$24 per ounce, would be worth \$1.1 billion.

The production costs of those minerals and the royal-

ties paid to Glencore, which are part of the property transfer agreement officially signed in 2023, must notably be deducted from the potential revenues of the mine to determine the mine's profitability.

One for the road

Gilles Gagné

MURDOCHVILLE – The chairman of Osisko Metals likes to tell the story of how Murdochville's copper deposit was discovered while the exploration campaign was conducted in 1947, six years before the construction of the town. Noranda Mines' geologist in charge of exploring what would become Murdochville was named Fenton Scott.

Robert Wares met Mr. Scott a few decades ago at a geological convention in Toronto.

"On a Friday evening, Fenton Scott decided to go to Gaspé for drinks. He told the exploration crew to keep drilling until his return. He was supposed to come back the same night but spent the whole weekend drinking in Gaspé. The drilling crew kept working until his Sunday return and that's how they reached a sampling depth that led to the discovery of the Murdochville deposit," says Mr. Wares with a smile.

Another increase in tourism for the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula experiencing another increase in tourist traffic and economic spin-offs in the summer of 2024.

From May to September 2024, Tourisme Gaspésie estimates the number of visitors at more than 679,000, a 2% increase over 2023. Economic spin-offs amounted to \$427 million, an increase of 6% compared to last year.

"This year, it went very well. The weather was on our side. People wanted to come to the Gaspésie. We had to charm them beforehand so that they would make their reservations," notes the director of Tourisme Gaspésie, Joëlle Ross, who presented the results at the organization's annual conference on November 20 in Gaspé.

This charm was kindled by a promotional campaign launched in early spring with a budget of \$800,000 targeting both French and English-speaking customers in Quebec, including the Lower Saint Lawrence, Gaspé Peninsula and Maritime markets.

"Our primary market is Quebecers. We work with other organizations to promote Quebec abroad but we felt it was important to reach out to customers in the Maritimes. They are close to us. Now, we are doing it directly in the three provinces. It takes time. We are in our third or fourth year." We will continue to do so. If it can help at the beginning and end of the season, it will be interesting," says Ms. Ross.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Tourisme Gaspésie's general manager, Joëlle Ross.

The peak months for accommodation occupancy were June, July and August.

The variable performance of attractions, activities and the restaurant sector leads the organization to conclude that tourists have moderated their spending at the destination, reflecting the current economic situation.

"People spend less at the destination but they still come to us," notes Ms. Ross.

"People spend differently and also consume differently. Often, they settle in one place and radiate around. That, too, is a value that we must consider and it spreads out the tourist season," she believes.

According to Tourisme Québec data, overall demand for accommodations during the period from May to September increased by 5.5% compared to the same period in 2023. Commercial accommodations such

as hotels, motels, B&Bs and tourist residences grew by 2.9%; short-term accommodations such as Airbnbs grew by 9.1%; camping climbed by 9.2%; and ready-to-camp increased by 7.5%.

"With the new platform from the Ministry of Tourism, we are now able to search for all accommodation facilities. This is important because it is the entire accommodation. Each has its clientele. All these indicators are increasing," notes the director.

A survey of 160 tourism industry players reveals that 91% of accommodation establishments describe the tourist season as excellent or satisfactory; 73% of campsites and ready-to-camp sites describe the tourist season as excellent or satisfactory. The majority of tourist activities and attractions consider

their traffic to be stable or increasing compared to 2023, and 63% of them describe the tourist season as excellent or satisfactory.

The majority of food establishments consider their traffic to be stable or increasing compared to 2023, and 73% of them describe the tourist season as excellent or satisfactory.

The challenge of stretching the tourist season continues, but there are still two key periods to work on.

"The most difficult times are between the leaves and the snow and after the snow and before the leaves. These are the most difficult times but we manage to attract people 12 months a year. There have been a lot of renovations of cottages or new cottages that are very

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Canada

Gaspé Peninsula CISSS must find \$40.7M before March 31

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centres (CISSS) must find a way to recover a \$40.7 million cost overrun in a budgetary effort requested by the Quebec government on a budget of \$535 million.

This represents 8% of its \$535 million budget and must be achieved by March 31 which will be a major challenge, a goal that the Union of Nurses, Auxiliary Nurses and Respiratory Therapists of Eastern Quebec calls unrealistic.

"That's the target. As a manager and government employee, that's the target. I have to implement the mechanisms to achieve it. Afterwards, I will be judged on the achievement of results. This is a big chunk to take on for the few months I'm given. The message is very clear: the budget must stop swelling. The idea is to respect the budgets we're going to be given," explains President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Martin Pelletier.

The requested amount represents approximately 1.5 months of CISSS' operating costs.

In a situation where the costs of supplies, medications and the application of the latest collective agreements have a direct impact on the budget, the order looks set to be even more difficult for the future.

"These are elements that add pressure to the system. Normally, these costs related to inflation are subsidized. This year, as such, it's not. Not up to the cost increases. From there, it's a pressure that follows us," mentions Mr. Pelletier.

Four main areas have been identified to achieve the objective: rigour and management rights over staff in order to recover everything that could be done and over supplies; a freeze to increase or develop services; optimizing operations and reviewing the service offering to see if it is adapted to needs.

Considering the Gaspé Peninsula has one of the oldest populations in Quebec and given the distances to travel to receive care, the CISSS plans to highlight these unique challenges to the Quebec government.

"Certainly, this must be taken into account. We have small teams in large territories that we must keep in place to



Photo: N. Sergerie

Gaspé Peninsula CISSS CEO Martin Pelletier.

ensure continuity of services. These are assets that we want to keep. On this, there are no major compromises. This is well understood by Santé-Québec. We will see if there are adjustments that will be granted," hopes the President and CEO.

Despite this budgetary reshuffle, Mr. Pelletier affirms that care for the population will not be affected.

"There will be things that will be transformed. We look first at where we have room in the activities we do that do not affect services. When we get there, it will be a review that will take into account the needs of the population. A review that is necessary given the province's ability to pay," says Mr. Pelletier.

The use of independent labour accounts for \$25 to \$30 million of the \$40.7 million to be recovered. "This must be taken into account. It is not a simple formula to say that we stop using independent labour. The consequences are harmful. We use it because we have needs to fill teams, to maintain services. The withdrawal of independent labour would mean that we would have to close services," he says. The CISSS must free itself from independent labour on October 18, 2026.

"Our budget balance plan was initially over three years because it gave us time to recruit and transform things to be able to eliminate it as much as possible," says Mr. Pelletier.

In terms of infrastructure, projects to modernize care units are suspended for the moment.

"We see ourselves having to endure obsolescence for longer in certain sectors. I'm thinking of the Youth Centre in

Gaspé that was in the pipeline. It's unfortunate to see that it will be on hold longer than expected. For the next year and a half, there will be a slowdown in this area," he says.

The union believes that it is unrealistic to compress the budget so quickly, citing as an example what will happen during the holiday season.

"We are on the eve of a difficult period. The holiday season creates a lot of difficulties with replacements, a colossal force to keep services open 24/7. There is a lot of overtime and mandatory overtime. It is a period that costs a lot of money to provide service to the population. It is completely disconnected that Santé-Québec gives the CISSS and CIUSSS a goal of recovering significant amounts in three and a half months," notes the union president, Pier-Luc Bujold.

Senior management met with the union to inform it that no compensation reduction will affect staff directly. However, the union fears that management will apply new provisions of the new collective agreement to achieve financial goals.

The coming years will not be rosy as Quebec must review its expenses following an \$11 billion deficit.

"The Santé-Québec megastucture will not be a measure to really save costs," says Mr. Bujold, who invites the CISSS to review the use of independent labour.

"There is still unjustified use (of independent labour) on our territory. For several months, we have been asking the CISSS de la Gaspésie to save money without affecting the members we represent," says the union representative.

Police report

Marcel English, 60, from Gaspé, notably charged with uttering death threats following an incident in the woods earlier this year, was released from prison following a November 18 appearance at the Percé Courthouse. He had been incarcerated at the New Carlisle prison since mid-October. Until further notice, he must respect a curfew, cannot go hunting or carry a firearm and he must refrain from contacting the people who were also involved in the incident in the woods. He also faces charges of harassment, arson and mischief.

His brother Benoit, 59, also from Gaspé, is facing several charges including harassment, assault, mischief and arson. He was not imprisoned following his October court appearance but was imposed several conditions. The incident took place in the Rocher-Percé MRC over recent months. The two brothers are suspected of having burned a hunting stand. In June 2021, Marcel English was sentenced to four years in prison after pleading guilty to several charges including assault with a weapon, causing bodily harm and possession of a restricted firearm. At the time of his October arrest, he was still under parole conditions, as he had been released before completing his full sentence.

One of the four suspects allegedly involved in a violent break-in in Percé on December 18, 2023, recently admitted to his role in the crime. Tommy Albert-Lantin, 26, from Chandler, also admitted to misdeeds and assault in connection with this event. A pre-sentence report was requested for the sentencing representations in March at the Percé Courthouse. One of his accomplices, Pierre-André Roussy, 38, was sentenced earlier this year to 33 months in prison. The two other suspects, Jonathan Racette, 28, and Michael Bourque, 29, are set to appear in court soon. The four men reportedly broke into a residence on Baril Street attacking the occupant, a man in his twenties. The victim sustained minor injuries. Jonathan Racette and Michael Bourque were arrested weeks after warrants were issued for their involvement.

Nick Huard, 52, from the Pabos Mills sector of Chandler, recently pleaded guilty to several charges stemming from a police intervention in March 2022 in a park. Previously, Mr. Huard was sentenced to two years in prison in 2020, also at the Percé Courthouse, for a computer luring case and was subject to numerous conditions upon his release from prison. According to CHNC, the police discovered, among other things, an electric masturbator, a knife, a rope, plastic ties, a polyester tarpaulin, pornographic magazines, a machete, women's underwear and binoculars. After examining his cell phone, the police discovered that the suspect had also used social networks and communicated with three minors, which was also prohibited for him. In October 2023, the criminal prosecutor, who wanted to have him declared a long-term offender, was able to convince the court to send Nick Huard to the Louis-Philippe-Pinel Institute in Montreal for an evaluation. The result of this assessment will be presented to the court on March 13 and 14, 2025, at the same time as the sentencing representations.

Bona Anglehart, 67, from Chandler, will receive his sentencing in March at the Percé Courthouse, after pleading guilty on November 15 to charges of trafficking and possession of 2,650 methamphetamine pills. A pre-sentence report was requested and should be submitted at the March hearing. In April 2023, police conducted searches at Mr. Anglehart's home on Commerciale Street West in Chandler and in three of his vehicles. He was arrested on-site and has remained in custody since his arrest.

A 40-year-old individual was arrested following at least one reported break-in at a chalet in Hope. The suspect, who is not from the region, was released after being questioned on November 18. He is subject to various conditions before his court appearance, of which the date is not yet determined. He allegedly left the place in a deplorable state. Other chalets in the area have also been targeted by unauthorized visitors, and the Sûreté du Québec is investigating these incidents. At this time, no connection has been made between the arrested suspect and the other cases.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Will Santé Québec really improve health care for Quebecers?

On December 1, Santé Québec, the new corporation created by the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) government to manage the province's health system, will officially be up and running, in an attempt to increase people's access to health services and provide it at a cheaper cost.

Those two objectives were and are still expressed at length by Health Minister Christian Dubé and the chief executive officer of the new agency, Geneviève Biron, who comes from the private sector.

With a tad over 300,000 employees, Santé Québec becomes "Canada's largest employer", a rather twisted way to describe a public corporation that becomes somewhat detached artificially from the government. The employees will nevertheless be paid by the government.

Such a move to create an "independent" public corporation raised some cynicism when it was announced in 2023 because it was and still is seen as a way for politicians to wash their hands with some of their responsibilities related to health system management.

Minister Dubé has taken a lot of heat for the questionable performance of Quebec's health system, marred by rising costs and a problem of access for the public, notably illustrated by waiting time in emergencies and a backlog of 10,000 people waiting for surgeries across the province.

A new vision, really?

Over the weeks before the official launch of Santé Québec's activities, Geneviève Biron, the "top gun" selected by Minister Dubé, who used those exact words when he went on recruiting, toured the province in order to have a glimpse of what is coming ahead and, surely, to pass on her message.

She gave several interviews to voice her goals and concerns, and some of the solutions she intends to apply in order to fix the system.

She repeatedly put emphasis on four objectives, the first one being to give Quebecers better access to care. Secondly, she wants to "improve the relations human relationships, on the one hand, the health staff, and on the other hand, the users, so that the latter can feel it." Thirdly, she wants the system to be more efficient and fourthly, "We must give ourselves time to work on the causes of the situation: why we are here?"

Well, "here" is a system that has been hit by several experiments over the last quarter of a century or so.

At the end of the 1990s, then Premier Lucien Bouchard, obsessed with the notion of zero deficit, implemented budget cuts that sent thousands of nurses and hundreds of doctors into retirement, a decision that generated increased waiting time in hospital emergencies, gaps in overall prevention measures and general mistrust between the health system employees and the government.

In 2014, a radiologist who had "given hell" to the government as president of the Federation of Medical Specialists, where he was negotiating the working conditions of his members, became Quebec's Health

and Social Services Minister. Gaétan Barrette decided to merge hundreds of structures across the province and centralize most of the power in Quebec City. Officially, regional structures like the CISSS, the Health and Social Service Integrated Centres, would have some power, but they were tightly supervised in the capital and micro-management carried out by Gaétan Barrette himself became the norm.

Through the abolition of thousands of managerial positions and the threat of receiving a call from the minister, the system became, at times, paralyzed by non-decisions and, once again, mistrust, which led thousands of nurses and a fair number of doctors to opt for the private system or retirement. Doctor Barrette failed to understand that in order to lead such a vast system towards improvements, you must make as many allies as possible in that system. He mainly functioned through hammering his fist on the table. Fear is rarely the way to get the maximum out of your teams.

Geneviève Biron sees the coming of Santé Québec as "a huge opportunity", thanks to "a lever that we didn't have in the past (...). It's time to give a new model a chance. People want a chance to do things differently."

She wants "responsible management" and work with "local plan managers" and, therefore, understands "that the reality of the Magdalen Islands is not that of the CHUM," referring to the Université de Montréal hospital.

She also insists repeatedly on the following sentence: "Health must do its part for the sound management of the government."

Besides the politicians' desire to install some distance between the health system and them, money put into that network, or ways to save money, might be a key reason behind the creation of Santé Québec.

The current picture is a cause for worry. In 2004, the health system was costing \$22 billion annually. Now, it is a tad over \$60 billion. Inflation likely justified 50% of that hike but, still, it is a bit scary.

Put differently and using another image, over the last decade, the cost of the health system has risen by 50% while the population has grown by 10%. The population is aging and the proportion of workers – read taxpayers – over the whole population is diminishing.

Where is the word "prevention"?

Geneviève Biron has used lately other expressions that Quebecers have heard repeatedly over the last decades. "We have no choice but to do more with

less," which sends a clear message about her prime role, given that the CAQ government tabled last spring a budget characterized by a deficit of \$11 billion, all that following handing out cheques worth billions of dollars to people who didn't need it.

Ms. Biron uttered other empty sentences over recent weeks. "There are too many captains on the ship. We need to have a chain of command. The vision needs to be clearer and there is confusion in the system."

Not once has she stated that efficient health systems are based on prevention, on the quality of the first line of services, like CLSCs, or nurses and doctors visiting patients at home in certain circumstances.

When he created the CISSS, Gaétan Barrette cut between 30 and 40% of the Public Health Directorates, the place charged with informing citizens about reliable prevention policies and sane life habits. Now, the revamping job should start there and it is forgotten.

Without an inspired prevention strategy and emphasis on the first line of services, it looks impossible to cut a billion dollars and maintain current services, which are already insufficient.

Suppose that Santé Québec cuts managerial positions. Who will fill some necessary reports informing the network about performance norms and problems slowing down the delivery of healthcare? Doctors have no time to do this.

Currently, about 50% of people go to the emergency room for "nothing". Parents go to the emergency room because they don't know where to go when their kids are sick, as most CLSCs are closed after business hours. Going to the hospital often looks like the only solution but it is also a costly one. We haven't heard anything from Ms. Biron in that regard.

Our health system, which remains fair and sometimes excellent, we must admit, has unfortunately moved away from proximity services. Some retired citizens could spend 20 more years in their house but are forced to move to seniors' residences because of insufficient home services or municipal designs that do not take into account basic services like food, a place to walk and a place to socialize.

We waste specialized competencies, like nurse practitioners, because they are often not welcomed into working groups and because they are not directed toward preventive care.

If, as a society, we do not increase the community availability of care, we will not succeed with Santé Québec.

Maybe Geneviève Biron knows all this and she hasn't had enough time to express it. Let's hope that this is the case.



ESTABLISHED • MAY 1975



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(Taxes included)
1-year (paper or digital): \$50
6-months (paper or digital): \$29
Outside Canada:
1-year paper to United States
\$175, International \$370

Published every **Wednesday** by:
Les Publications de la Côte Inc.
(Sea-Coast Publications Inc.)

JOURNALISTS: Nelson Sergerie and Cynthia Dow

SPEC welcomes letters to the editor on subjects relevant to topics covered by the paper. Letters must be kept within 300 words or less and may be edited for clarity or to remove any slanderous, sexist, racist or homophobic statements. We reserve the right to reject any letters. Opinions or letters published do not necessarily reflect the editorial policies or beliefs of this newspaper. All letters must bear the handwritten signature of the writer and include the address and number(s) for verification purposes (address & phone number will not be printed). The Publisher shall not be liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. The Publisher's liability for other errors or omissions in connection with any advertisement is strictly limited to publication of the advertisement in any subsequent issue or the refund of any monies paid for the advertisement.

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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada.
We acknowledge special funding from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.

Baie des Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce members support abolishing time change

Gilles Gagné

BONAVENTURE – A recent survey conducted by the Baie des Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce reveals that 79% of its members would abolish the November and March time changes if they could.

The subject has gained traction this fall as the Quebec government launched an online, province-wide survey at the end of October regarding the time change.

Of the 388 members of the Baie des Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce, 101 participated in the survey, responding to the question: Should we stop changing the time and keep the same time throughout the year? Eighty members voted to abolish the time change, while 13 preferred to maintain it. Eight members did not express an opinion about the topic.

The Chamber of Commerce consultation did not go as far as asking its members whether they would prefer to remain on daylight saving time year-round or on Eastern Standard Time permanently.



Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles honours Jules Bélanger

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - On November 16, Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles honoured the memory of Jules Bélanger by naming a study room on the Gaspé campus in his honour.

The citizens group Solidarité Gaspésie submitted this proposal because of his achievements, the many distinctions awarded, the extent of his influence in the region and his involvement in the start-up of several organizations and bodies were taken into account. Mr. Bélanger an author and professor, taught at both the Séminaire de Gaspé and the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles where he fought for the creation of this institution.

A man of culture and communications, he was instrumental in the creation of the Magazine Gaspésie and the Musée de la Gaspésie and co-author of the document Histoire de la Gaspésie, first published in 1981.

Throughout his life, Jules Bélanger received numerous awards and distinctions, including two honorary doctorates and the blessing of Pope Francis. He passed away on February 5, 2021.



Photo: Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles

The study room was named on November 16.

Quebec government contributes \$3.4 million to Bioparc's \$8 million improvement project

GILLES GAGNÉ

BONAVENTURE – The Bioparc de la Gaspésie in Bonaventure recently received a \$3.4 million grant from the Quebec government, which is part of an \$8 million project to improve and expand aspects of the tourist and scientific facility.

The Quebec government contribution comes from the Ministry of Tourism and was announced on November 14. At that time, the project had been underway for a few weeks.

“The project is part of our 2022-2026 development plan. We are a little late starting it this year. Phase 1 consists of expanding the building where we care for the animals. During the spring, we will work on the otters and raccoon habitat and erect a new building for the temporary and travelling exhibits. There will be a construction work hiatus over the summer, as we greet visitors,” explains Marie-Josée Bernard, director general of the Bioparc.

Work will resume over the fall in the caribou habitat. “We will also build a new habitat for the arctic wolf. Improvements will also be added to the picnic table area, rest-rooms and the restaurant area, which is no longer a restaurant. It will be turned into a room for the employees,” points out Marie-Josée Bernard.

That first phase of the Bioparc development plan was initially estimated to cost

\$7,045,000, but when the tenders were received, inflation caused costs to soar to \$9 million.

“We simplified some aspects of the project to come up with \$8 million,” says Ms. Bernard.

Bioparc president Serge Arsenault explains that the organization will contribute \$1 million to Phase 1 of the project.

“We had a difficult period at one point during which we lost some money in our operations but the last years have been good. We are able to contribute \$1 million to the project because we have made money over the last four or five years,” he explains, adding that he is very proud of the Bioparc’s scientific animation and research efforts.

Marie-Josée Bernard expects an announcement from the federal government regarding its share of the project’s funding. The Canada Economic Development Agency, along with a few other ministries, are expected to make the announcement relatively soon since construction work is well underway.

The phase 1 additions should lengthen the duration of the visits, says Marie-Josée Bernard.

“We would like to keep our clientele for five or six hours per visit, from the three to four hours as it is now. We would also like to increase our annual number of visitors from 31,000 to 32,000, the current attendance, to 40,000,” she underlines.



Front row: Serge Arsenault, Bioparc president; Marie-Josée Bernard, Bioparc Director General; Catherine Blouin, Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure. Back row: Gaston Arsenault, Bonaventure councillor; Éric Dubé, Bonaventure MRC prefect; Jean-Philippe Chartrand, Tourisme Gaspésie development agent; and Valessa Leblanc, Constituency Manager MP Diane Lebouthillier’s office, were on hand for the official launch of the Bioparc’s Phase 1 upgrading work.



The building where animals receive care is currently being expanded.

Photos: G. Gagné

The Bioparc administration is already planning a phase 2 upgrading operation, which could necessitate an investment hovering near \$7 million, for a total of \$15 million for the two phases.

Catherine Blouin, the Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure, was

on hand to make the Quebec government announcement on behalf of Tourism Minister, Caroline Proulx.

“People from the Baie des Chaleurs area have a special attachment to the Bioparc. I am bringing my kids here. The schools are using the Bioparc as a pedagogical tool. We al-

ways learn something when we come here. I didn’t know, for example, that otters and raccoons could share the same habitat and that caribou and foxes could do the same. Yes, the project is a little late in reaching fruition but the original draft needed optimization,” explains Ms. Blouin.

The Gaspé Peninsula wants to assert itself in electoral map legal process

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CARLETON-SUR-MER - The Gaspé Peninsula wants to intervene in the debate surrounding the legal challenge to the law that paused the process of revising the electoral map for the 2026 election.

Elected municipal officials from the Laurentides and Centre-du-Québec regions have filed a legal action against the Chief Electoral Officer of Quebec and the Attorney General of Quebec to have this law revoked and to resume the process of revising the electoral map.

The Regroupement des MRC de la Gaspésie has served legal proceedings on the parties in the case. "The message we want to convey is that it is not unanimous among municipal elected officials who want to cancel the law that was made. On the contrary, we are an entity similar to that of the Laurentians and we have a completely divergent point of view on the situation," explains the Regroupement president, Mathieu Lapointe.

On May 2, 2024, Quebec's National Assembly unanimously passed the Act to interrupt the process of delimitation

of electoral districts.

The Gaspé Peninsula MRCs recall that the electoral map on the table was then highly detrimental to the principle of effective representation, directly affecting the representation of the Gaspésie in the democratic institutions of Quebec.

"At the heart of the debate is the principle of effective representation. This principle was established in 1991 by the Supreme Court of Canada in the Carter decision. Beyond the famous principle of "one voter, one vote", the electoral map must also include principles such as the vastness of the territory covered by an MNA (Member of the National Assembly), the boundaries of the territories, belonging to the territory, and so on. If we want the voice of the Gaspésie to be heard in Quebec City in the flood of strongly represented urban voices, it is extremely important that the Electoral Act apply this principle recognized by the Supreme Court. That is why we are going to fight. For the voice of Gaspésie, for our future," adds the mayor of Gaspé and prefect of the MRC of the Côte-de-Gaspé, Daniel Côté. The Gaspé interveners' request for a conservatory in-

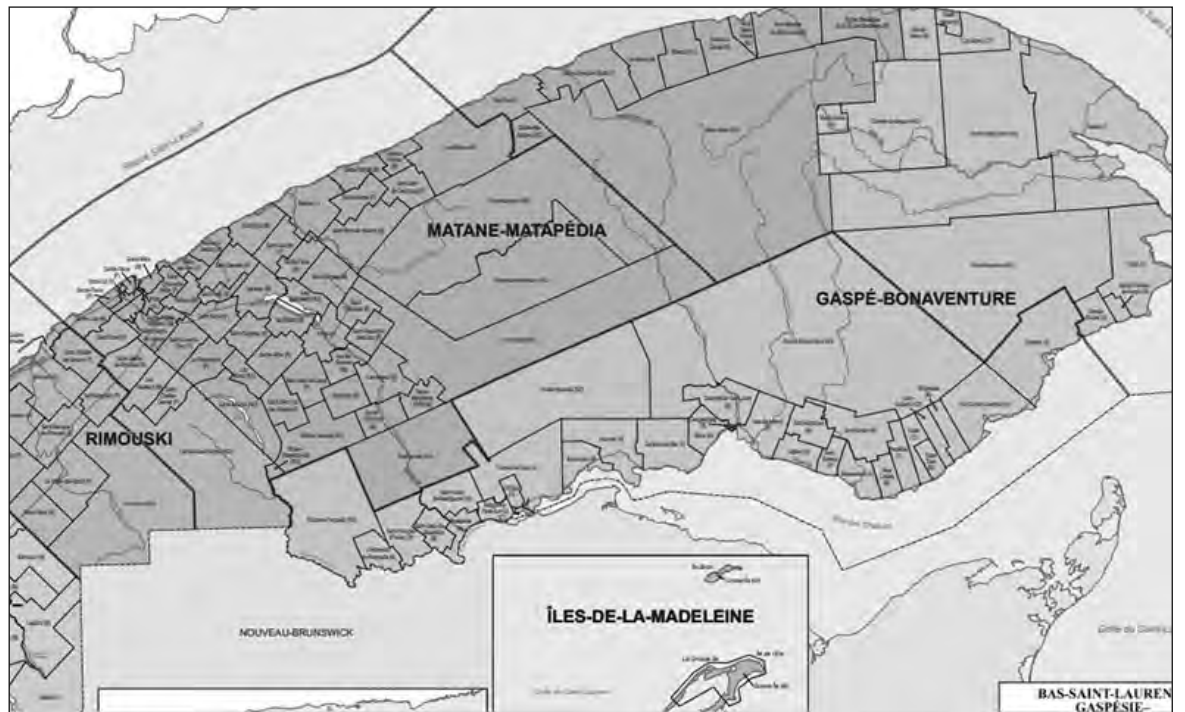


Photo: Commission de la représentation électorale du Québec

The map proposed by the Commission frozen by a Law of the National Assembly

tervention will be heard on November 27 at the Saint-Jérôme courthouse.

If the Gaspé argument resonates with the court, the region's arguments may then be heard on the merits of the case in the following months. "The process that is underway is healthy because we need to review the criteria to ensure that, ultimately, the electoral districts must ensure that each citizen is well represented in Quebec City," emphasizes Mr. Lapointe.

Recall that the commission

suggested merging the ridings of Gaspé and Bonaventure, which include the MRCs of Côte-de-Gaspé, Rocher-Percé, Bonaventure and Avignon, to create Gaspé-Bonaventure, while Haute-Gaspésie would be transferred to the Matane-Matapédia constituency, a Lower St. Lawrence riding.

As of April 30, 2023, Bonaventure had 35,898 voters and Gaspé 30,131, far from the minimum threshold. The gap was -29.2% and -40.6%, respectively. Gaspé was ranked third among the least populous ridings, behind the Magdalen Islands, which has an exceptional status, and Ungava.

According to projections of the number of voters based on

data from the Institut de la statistique du Québec, the gap with respect to the average for Gaspé should soon surpass that of Ungava.

In 2017, the commission had maintained the negative exceptional status for Gaspé and granted the same status for Bonaventure.

However, since the inequalities in representation of these ridings are increasing, the commission did not wish to renew this status.

In addition to removing a riding in the Gaspésie, the Commission suggested doing the same thing in Montreal to create a riding in the Laurentians and another in Centre-du-Québec.

Electoral map: Mayor of Gaspé involved in Gaspésie's request

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The mayor of Gaspé, who is often the face of the Gaspé Peninsula when it comes to the intervention of the region, is once again leading the charge for the region, against elected officials from the Laurentians and Central Quebec.

"The prosecutors were looking for the name of one of the electors in the Gaspé and Bonaventure riding, and since I was directly involved in the discussions with the prosecutors, being a prosecutor in another life, I got involved in the preparations for the appeal and they asked me if I wanted to be the elector," says Daniel Côté, who stresses that the name is of little importance.

The important thing for him is to assert the democratic rights of the Gaspé Peninsula that seemed to be flouted by the new proposed electoral map.

Mr. Côté illustrates the matter further.

"In reality, the new electoral map brought a third member (of the National Assembly) for the City of Drummondville and gave only one for the entire Gaspé Peninsula, except for Haute-Gaspésie, which was in the Lower Saint Lawrence. We must make ourselves heard," Mr. Côté emphasizes.

The issue must be debated on November 27, in addition to an interlocutory injunction.

"So that the effects of the Act can be suspended immediately on the grounds of urgency, the judge will also have to decide whether the Gaspé region can be included in the debate," explains the mayor.

In the legal debate contesting the disappearance of the federal riding of Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, the Federal Court refused the interlocutory injunction pending the hearing of the case on the

merits, which should normally take place in the winter of 2025.

"We are in fundamental and basic constitutional principles. In this case, the fundamental debate will come on the criteria of the Electoral Act. An elementary criterion is that of elective representativeness. This concept was invented by the Carter Decision in 1991 by the Supreme Court of Canada. It comes to define the concept: geographic criteria, belonging to the territory, administrative delimitation that must be taken into account. It is not written in black and white in the Act. The Electoral Act only talks about elective representativeness. This is what is never taken into account. It is easier to say 'one elector, one vote'. It is this accumulation (of criteria) that must give the electoral map," argues the mayor of Gaspé, if ever the region is included in the debate.

S.P.D.S 2026 Quebec City School Trip Committee

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MERRY CHRISTMAS

The draw will take place on December 13

Regional Minister makes a quick visit to New Richmond

NELSON SERGERIE

NEW RICHMOND - The battle to maintain the political weight of the Gaspé Peninsula at the National Assembly is Maïté Blanchette Vézina's highlight of the first half of her mandate as Minister Responsible for the Gaspésie.

The MNA (Member of the National Assembly) for Rimouski was in New Richmond on November 14 to discuss regional issues with elected officials from the Gaspé Peninsula.

"I am very pleased with the work of mobilization and collaboration with the two MNAs from the Gaspésie. A good example of mobilization is the electoral map issue. This voice carried by the people of the Gaspésie was carried very strongly in Quebec," says Ms. Blanchette.

This outcry led the government to review the Elections Act to take into account the representation of the regions in the National Assembly. The suspension of the future electoral map only ap-



Minister Maïté Blanchette Vézina.

plies to the 2026 election.

"Work is being done with Minister Roberge and the opposition to find a way for the voice of the regions to remain strong in the National Assembly. That's what's important. It's the fact that the Gaspésie has mobilized well. Of course, it's suspended and steps are being taken to have the criteria reviewed," she said.

Among other highlights, the Rimouski MNA notes the

railway, the announcement of the power line to avoid the bottleneck to stimulate the development of wind power, the possible revival of Mines Gaspé in Murdochville to ensure maximum economic benefits and cell phones.

"One thing that's important to note is the number of ministers' visits to the Gaspésie. The two members of the National Assembly spoke for the region and invited the premier and a dozen

ministers to travel by car to see the size of the territory and understand the reality of the Gaspé, which is different," says the elected official.

On transportation, the Minister cited the Gaspé Peninsula Magdalen Islands Intermunicipal Transport Board as an example of mobility.

The debate over funding for the service, however, sparked heated discussions.

"We know that the gas tax will decrease, at a time when there are fewer gas vehicles. The tools we have put in place, in particular the registration tax or the former fiscal pact, with the return of money, we hope that the municipalities will use the tools we have given them," says Ms. Blanchette Vézina.

The main focus for the second half of the mandate is land use planning. "The elected officials spoke to me about this important issue to ensure that the specifics of the Gaspé are taken into account. This is something that I will bring to the minister to ensure that what is deployed does not excessively slow down the re-

gion," states the Minister.

Housing remains a priority for the region, but the subject was not addressed during the meeting with the region's elected officials.

"It was not part of the discussions. I imagine that things are moving forward because when it is a problem, it is mentioned to me," she says.

Regarding the Quebec and regional content in future wind farms, the minister mentioned that a balance must be found at a time when 10,000 megawatts of wind power must be developed.

"We must ensure that Quebecers do not have too great a price increase. We want to work with Hydro to optimize the spinoffs and ensure that it benefits all Quebecers. But we are not closed to Quebec content," assures the minister.

On the closure of francization classes in Eastern Quebec, the minister recalls that her government asked to respect the budgets, but assured that there were still services offered by other organizations.

Photo: Facebook

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The loss of FAIR hurts the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CARLETON-SUR-MER: - The end of the Regional Initiatives Assistance Fund (FAIR) has impacted the Gaspé Peninsula, as the program's replacement, Economic Development for Assistance in the Revitalization of Territories (DÉPART), falls short of expectations.

FAIR previously provided the region with a \$6 million per year budget, which was increased to \$8 million in the last year of its existence.

By contrast, DÉPART, which includes the Gaspé Peninsula and other regions in Quebec's lowest economic quintile, offers \$75 million in total funding until March 31, 2026.

In a report, the Regroupe-

ment des MRC de la Gaspésie calculates that the region has only received \$2 million rather than the \$6 million in the past.

"What we were told was that DÉPART was going to be a copy and paste of FAIR. We see that there are organizations that were eligible but are no longer eligible. That's our first big disappointment. The second: we learned on Wednesday (November 13) that there was no more money in the envelope and only \$2 million had been invested in the region," notes the president of the group, Mathieu Lapointe.

"Gaspésie is being penalized," he notes.

However, the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) politicians in the Gaspé wanted to be reassuring at the start.

"We were told that the Gaspésie is used to the FAIR

program, that it knew the terms and conditions, that it has a head start on the other regions, but given that the criteria and organizations have changed, in the end, there is less money coming into the region," explains Mr. Lapointe.

The question was addressed to the Regional Minister, Maité Blanchette Vézina, who was in the region on November 14.

"She told us that if there was no more money, it was because the program met the needs and that the amounts were used. Our concern is that the program was used everywhere in Quebec, but less in the Gaspésie. For the more technical aspect, she told us that she had checked with the Ministry of the Economy to see if the criteria could be changed," he said.

The grouping of MRCs

(Regroupement des MRC de la Gaspésie) had already meant, several months ago, that entire sectors of the Gaspé Peninsula economy such as tourism and fisheries were absent from the new program.

"We had serious fears that the Gaspésie would not be able to get as much funding as before. We continue to be told that the money is there, but we are in competition with 20 regions in Quebec and we are penalized across the board," the president recalled.

In its first year, the program allocated \$15 million, increasing to \$30 million annually for the last two years, ending on March 31, 2026.

"We are in year two, and already, the \$30 million is exhausted. We know that there will be funds available on April 1 in year three. What we know is that it will be difficult to get \$6 million out of \$30 million. That is what we understand," he concludes.

Gaspé Member of the National Assembly (MNA), Stéphane Sainte-Croix, ac-

knowledges the concerns of the region's elected officials.

"The version of DÉPART does not satisfactorily meet the objective we had set for ourselves. We take note of this. We have already started work on the eligibility of certain sectors of the economy that we consider key in the Gaspésie: tourism, culture, and fisheries. We are working to have flexibility in the program. We're not throwing in the towel," says Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

The MNA intends to discuss it with the Minister Delegate for the Economy, Christopher Skeete.

"We're going to do what we have to do," he says.

For the third year of the program, the elected official hopes that the Gaspé Peninsula will get its share. "We want it to respond to our issues in the best possible way. We're going to work hard. We're going to pull out all the stops. We're going to do this as soon as possible," says the MNA.

\$33,800 in legal fees for a confidential agreement at the Chic-Choc School Service Centre

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The Chic-Chocs School Service Centre (CSSCC) paid \$33,780.10 in legal fees to conclude the confidential agreement involving the departure of the former Director General, Deslilas Fournier.

SPEC obtained this information following a request filed with the Commission d'accès à l'information in October 2023, after the CSSCC denied an Access to Information Act request for details of the legal fees associated with the case.

It should be noted that no documents relating to the agreement itself were included in the request made via the Access to Information Act. The CSSCC announced Ms. Fournier's departure on August 24, 2023, in a brief press release published on the CSSCC website.

The centre wrote that "Deslilas Fournier, Executive Director, has chosen to leave her position as Executive Director after reaching an agreement with the CSSCC. This is for both personal and professional reasons."

This agreement concluded legal proceedings Ms. Fournier had initiated with the CNESST and the Admin-

istrative Labour Tribunal. Ms. Fournier filed an appeal in November 2022 after being dismissed on June 6, 2022. She also submitted a complaint of psychological harassment to the CNESST in November 2021.

Brief summaries of the documents and notes are available on the Administrative Labour Tribunal's website. The former executive director alleged that she had been a victim until January 7, 2021, before departing on

sick leave in May of that year.

At that time, the school service centre was experiencing a governance crisis as several members of the board of directors had left their positions following allegations of harassment and a toxic environment. An organizational assessment was commissioned which revealed in June 2022 a lack of communication in the organization and problems in personnel management.



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We are grateful to all in the community who have supported and enriched us over the past 185 years. We exist as a result of the strenuous devotion and work of hundreds of people who attended, supported, worked, and gave gladly and without recognition for this beloved church. Some of these come from our own lifetime but many have gone nameless over the years. We would do well to offer a prayer of thanks to God, who knows their names. Of that fibre St. Andrew's was built and by its like we shall hopefully prevail.

Braving the cold

HOLLY SMITH

NEW CARLISLE: - Winter in the Gaspé Peninsula is something you can't ignore. With its snowy coastlines, cold winds, and snowstorms, winter on the coast can be tough, but it's also part of what makes this place so special. Residents know that getting ready for winter isn't just about wearing warm clothes, it's about getting everything around you ready for the cold. Whether you've lived here for a long time or you're new to the area, there are important steps to take to stay safe, warm, and comfortable during the winter months.

Weather and winter tires

Winter is unpredictable. One day, it might be calm and peaceful and, the next, a snowstorm with gusty winds and freezing temperatures can roll in. Checking the weather regularly is important, especially when snow or freezing rain is forecast. Winter tires are a must in Quebec, and the law requires that they be installed on all vehicles between December 1 and



Snow tires are obligatory in Quebec between December 1 and March 15. They must have the three peak mountain symbol with a snowflake to pass in Quebec.

March 15. They make all the difference when driving on snowy or icy roads.

Is your scraper and snowbrush already in your trunk? Now is a good time to verify, check their condition and be prepared before the first winter storm. You'll also want to equip your vehicle with winter windshield wash.

An emergency kit is also a good idea to keep in the car, including items like blankets, a flashlight, booster cables and some snacks, just in case

you get stuck or stranded during a storm.

Winterizing your home

As temperatures drop, the cold can sneak into your home. To keep your house warm, it's important to seal any drafts around windows and doors. Installing new weather stripping helps save on heating costs and keeps chilly air out. If you use a wood stove or fireplace,

make sure your chimney is clean and ready. Stocking up on firewood will keep you warm during power outages. Since the coast often experiences severe storms, having a generator is also a good idea for backup power. If you heat with oil, check your oil levels and schedule a delivery before the weather gets too cold.

If you have a heat pump, have a plan to keep it clear of snow and ice during the winter. It is also a good idea to clean/change the filter before winter arrives.

This is also a good time to hire a snow removal contractor. Don't wait until your driveway is blocked with snow.

Winter gear

Dressing for winter in the Gaspé can be tricky, but layering is key. Essential items like warm boots, gloves, hats, and scarves are a must. Investing in good quality winter gear is important, especially when the wind chill makes temperatures drop below -20°C.

Snow removal and outdoor cleaning

Snow is a guarantee in the Gaspé Peninsula, so preparing for the first big snowstorm is important. Start by putting away any outdoor items like garden tools or furniture that could get damaged by snow or cold. Make sure your snow blower is working and filled with gas. You'll also need salt and sand for walkways and driveways to prevent ice buildup and keep things safe, especially in late winter when ice is common.

Prepare for emergencies

Power outages and impassable roads are common during winter storms, so it's smart to be prepared. Keep a supply of water, canned food, and other non-perishable items in your home. Flashlights, extra batteries, and a portable phone charger are also important.

If you have an elderly neighbour or a friend who lives alone, it is a good idea to check in with them by phone during snowstorms.

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CISSS BUDGET CUTS: Maria hospital emergency department is impacted

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) will have to be patient when it comes to the modernization of the emergency department and intensive care unit at the Maria hospital.

On June 6, the Quebec government announced the launch of the tendering process for the modernization project. However, the order to find \$40.7 million to fit into the tabled \$535 million budget has had an impact on this project, which has been in the works for years. As a result, the modernization could be postponed.

Typically, projects of this magnitude are included in the Quebec Infrastructure Plan (PQI). However, the June announcement accelerated the hospital's modernization process before the project was officially registered in the PQI.

"We had authorization to conduct preliminary studies. We proceeded to select engi-



Photo: N. Sergerie

Maria Hospital is a collateral victim of the CISSS budget cuts.

neering and architectural firms and the challenge is to find a way to pay for them. In the current context, I would be lying if I said that I have the money to pay them. I don't," says CISSS President and CEO Martin Pelletier.

For now, it is a constraint that will last until the end of March 2025, the end of the fis-

cal year.

"For next year, we will be able to insert it into the Functional and Technical Plan. For this year, all the money is programmed and used. I have no room to maneuver. We are not authorized to borrow for fixed assets. That's what's blocking me," says Mr. Pelletier.

"We are looking with the

ministry directly for a way to move forward but, for now, we are on ice at that level as well," adds Mr. Pelletier.

The Eastern Quebec Nurses, Nursing Assistants and Respiratory Therapists Union fears that its members will continue to work in the dilapidated facilities for a long time.

"Quebec has never been quick to build or renovate. It is very unfortunate because the government committed to conducting and commissioning studies. It is unfortunate that we can no longer trust the government when it says something a few months before," comments union president Pier-Luc Bujold.

The study aims to take stock of the current state of the hospital's electromechanical, structural and civil components and to determine whether they are able to assume the new loads anticipated not only by the emergency department and intensive care unit project but also by the future developments of the hospital. This process would provide better data on costs,

required work, and timelines.

The project, which has been on the table since 2018, had obtained "clinical relevance" status in the fall of 2022, meaning that the Ministry of Health recognized the need.

The Clinical and Real Estate Master Plan already showed in the spring of 2022 that the hospital built in 1952 was no longer adapted to modern practices, especially the emergency department where the last developments date back to 1972.

In June 2018, the CISSS adopted a resolution to move forward with a new construction to replace the current facility, a scenario that dates back to before the creation of the CISSS. In the meantime, the modernization of the emergency department was prioritized.

In contrast, the new emergency department and intensive care unit at the Gaspé hospital, inaugurated in 2021 in a new building adjacent to the existing facility, cost \$31.7 million.

Whooping cough cases on the rise

NELSON SERGERIE

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The number of whooping cough cases continues to increase in the region, to the point where schools have sent parents a letter to inform them of the situation.

Since the start of the school year, about a hundred new cases have been recorded by the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Public Health Department.

"Whooping cough started at the beginning of the summer. The peak has been no worse in recent weeks. The bacterium is circulating a lot in the region," explains Jean-François Lefebvre, the consulting physician, who points out that these numbers reflect only reported cases.

"The majority of people will have mild symptoms that will not necessarily require a consultation. It may not seem like a lot, 250 reported and diagnosed cases, but it's a lot because people may have had whooping cough without knowing it," the specialist explains.

It's difficult to extrapolate the data to the entire popula-



Photo: CIUSSS de l'Estrie

Whooping cough continues to spread in the Gaspé Peninsula.

tion.

"The important thing is to consider that the bacteria has been there since the beginning of summer. 2024 is a very big year. When you cough, when you blow your nose, you have to make sure you don't transmit it," he notes.

Protecting young babies is especially critical. "Under one year, under six months and three months, it can cause more serious compli-

cations. If you have the classic version, you can cough a lot and have coughing fits for a long time, but it's not dangerous. On the other hand, in babies, it can be," warns Dr. Lefebvre. Hence the importance for pregnant women to get vaccinated to ensure protection for their unborn child.

Babies receive their first vaccination against whooping cough at two months.

"Vaccinating pregnant

women and babies is the best way to protect them," says the specialist.

At first, it is difficult to tell the difference between the flu, COVID-19 and whooping cough.

"It is difficult. These are all diseases that will cause coughing and can give symptoms that resemble a cold. In its more classic phase of whooping cough, after a week, we will have big coughing fits that can last several weeks. Between the fits, we may not have symptoms and suddenly, the fit starts again. It is the classic whooping cough," explains the doctor.

Often, it is not important to know the type of disease. The important thing is to adopt appropriate hygiene

measures.

"Anyone who doesn't feel well compared to a normal cold, has difficulty breathing or has a fever, can consult a doctor. In the case of a baby, as soon as he or she seems less well, you should consult a doctor quickly," suggests Dr. Lefebvre strongly.

An antibiotic can be given at the first symptoms. "When the cough starts, the antibiotic rarely reduces the symptoms but can reduce the length of time the illness can be transmitted. In certain situations, it may be relevant to have an antibiotic," mentions the doctor.

He suggests consulting a professional when a young baby may have been in contact with the bacteria.



An update to the permanent exhibition at Le Bourg de Pabos

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER - Le Bourg de Pabos is set to renew its permanent exhibition, with the last update dating back to 2011. The original exhibition dates back to 1994.

"An exhibition of this type must be revisited every decade. We submitted a request to the Ministry of Culture last year and it was granted, which allows us to renew the permanent exhibition in 2025-2026," says director Elsa Pépin.

While museums are increasingly relying on the multimedia component to attract customers, Le Bourg wants to remain more traditional. "We are very advanced in all the interpretation activities that we do,

particularly at Fantôm or Ura, but we want our permanent exhibition to remain in a more classic approach to meet all the types of clientele that we find at the museum," explains Ms. Pépin.

The updated exhibition will explore additional aspects of the archaeological site's history. "When we did the first exhibition, 30 years ago, we talked a lot about the French Regime because it was a great distinction. But the archaeological site has experienced a very, very long occupation, from the Aboriginal occupation to the forestry industry. The forestry industry occupies a very important place for Chandler. We want to cover more of this period of history that is also much

closer to the local population, which will allow it to take greater ownership of the history of the site," says Ms. Pépin.

The firm responsible for developing the exhibition has been given creative freedom within the established criteria, with a budget of \$665,000. "It's a decent budget, but not too high for the scale of the task," notes the director.

Le Bourg anticipates completion by early summer 2025 but is prepared for a possible finish in 2026 if needed.

Last summer, Le Bourg introduced a new experience: Fantôm, la chasse. The multimedia experience was a great success in its inaugural year. "It allows us to broadcast or show the collection without altering



Photo: N. Sergerie

the site. People are surprised by the quality of the experience. Young people are easily attracted and very comfortable with the video game aspect of the experience. We've had only

good comments in general," says Ms. Pépin.

The experience will be modified for next year, moving to Beauséjour Island, and will include new ghosts and objects.

Lower wind royalties for municipalities

NELSON SERGERIE

SAINTE-ANNE-DESMONTS - The Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeline Intermunicipal Energy Board has announced a reduction in wind royalties distributed to municipalities, citing weaker wind conditions for the second consecutive year.

This is what the president of the board, Simon Deschênes, indicated on the sidelines of the tabling of the organization's 2025 budget.

"We want to be conservative. We have just had a second consecutive year with less wind, which means that distributions are a little lower than expected. The 2025 budget provides for a redistribution of \$3.5 million for 2025," ex-

plains Mr. Deschênes.

The 2024 target had been set at \$4 million in the budget.

"The answer is no (to the amount planned). We will distribute \$3 million. The lack of wind is the only reason," continues Mr. Deschênes, who points out that the other wind farms consulted in Quebec are experiencing the same problem.

"There is possibly a climate change factor. There can be strong winds and, the next day, no wind at all. We still have to be careful. Since wind power has existed for about twenty years, these are the two worst years that we have just experienced," maintains Mr. Deschênes.

While studies are investigating this trend, concrete ex-

planations remain speculative. Despite weaker winds, the board is meeting its contractual obligations to supply Hydro-Quebec with 330 megawatts. "For 2030, we will have to put more than 2,500 megawatts on the network with last week's announcement of an additional 1,000 megawatts," says Mr. Deschênes.

The Eastern Energy Alliance, a partnership that includes the Gaspé energy board, has secured 922 megawatts through calls for tenders since 2021.

"We have a first project (that was) subject to a BAPE (Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement) in Rivière-du-Loup last June. We are waiting for the minister's final response. We are continuing

the requests to meet our deadlines. The first wind farm is required to be in service by the end of December 2026," recalls Mr. Deschênes, who emphasizes that there is no issue at the moment regarding the deadlines.

The first project, the Pohénégamook-Picard-Saint-Antonin-Wolastokuk wind farm with 56 wind turbines and 350 megawatts, is located in the MRCs of Rivière-du-Loup and Témiscouata.

The alliance must also develop the following wind farms: Madawaska, in Dégelis and Saint-Jean-de-la-Lande, in Témiscouata in a tripartite partnership with EDF and Hydro-Québec for 270 megawatts; the Forêt Domaniale in the Montmagny region, with a capacity

of 180 megawatts in partnership with EDF; Saint-Damase II, near Matane, in partnership with Algonquin Power Trust with a capacity of 122 megawatts; Saint-Paul-de-Montminy with Kruger in Saint-Paul-de-Montminy, near Montmagny in Chaudière-Appalaches of 196 megawatts and must be commissioned on December 1, 2027; Pohénégamook-Picard-Saint-Antonin-Wolastokuk 2, in partnership with Invenergy in the Rivière-du-Loup region, in Bas-Saint-Laurent of 291.4 megawatts, in December 1, 2029.

These projects will complement the \$3 billion, 1,000 megawatts agreement with Hydro-Quebec in Kamouraska and Témiscouata announced on October 23.

Two infrastructure files are underway in Caplan

NELSON SERGERIE

CAPLAN - Two significant infrastructure projects, the wharf and wastewater treatment files, are progressing in Caplan.

The municipality of Caplan took ownership of Caplan Wharf from Ottawa in 2022 and is making small strides in the file. A firm was hired to do a bathymetric study to analyze the silting patterns in the harbour and its entrance with the goal of later establishing a marina.

"This soil characterization will eventually make it possible to come up with a plan to assess the costs of developing

the project. In the meantime, there are sections where we can add floating docks. We hope to present an overall concept, based on the surveys," says Mayor Lise Castilloux.

This summer, the site hosted activities, and floating docks were made available to mariners. "People were happy," she notes. However, obtaining all necessary usage certificates has proven challenging.

The wharf is not vulnerable to major storms. "Perhaps recurring dredging could be necessary every three years. I am getting ahead of myself before having the final report,

but this is perhaps where investments could be made. However, the new configuration provides some protection inside the basin," suggests the mayor.

Dredging costs are expected to be manageable, with comparisons drawn to similar operations in Bonaventure and New Richmond.

The elected official hopes that the marina will have around thirty sites.

"There is a clientele. I am not worried. It adds to the Circuit of marinas, already in existence in the Bay of Chaleur. Sometimes, we have to create an offer. We have to be proactive in our approach," main-

tains Ms. Castilloux.

Wastewater

Regarding the wastewater file, the aerated pond project is progressing slowly. Requests have been made for the location at the level of the Commission for the Protection of Agricultural Land.

"The concept has been presented and we are waiting for authorization from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for authorization to go out to tender. The project is moving forward and has taken a lot of time to set up, but it has changed in recent months. We expect answers fairly quickly

to be able to move forward," says Ms. Castilloux.

The mayor remains very cautious about the upcoming costs for this project, but an amount of \$8 million has been mentioned.

"This is an improvised figure and the percentage of government subsidy has increased. It is too early to confirm the burden on citizens, but compared to the initial plan, there will not be such a substantial increase," calculates the elected official, noting that government aid from Quebec could cover up to 90% of the project. The plans, specifications, and calls for tenders are expected in 2025.

Enjoyable Annual Craft Fair for Gaspé County W.I.

DEBBIE PHILLIPS
PUBLICITY CONVENOR

GASPÉ: - Another successful Gaspé County Annual Fair was held at York Hall on Saturday, September 7, 2024. A variety of exhibits were on display, with a few new public exhibitors participating this year.

The event went smoothly, with volunteers beginning the judging at around 10 a.m. Although there were fewer exhibits, numbers remained somewhat stable in comparison with last year. This year there were 262 exhibits from 13 exhibitors, compared to 317 exhibits from 14 exhibitors last year.

Organizers are very happy to have had several public exhibitors this year and congratulate them on their creative handiwork. The fair featured a wide range of beautiful handicraft items, delicious baking and creative displays, includ-

ing the always interesting and original branch efforts that this year featured a Thanksgiving celebration theme which included a tablecloth, wreath, centerpiece, crocheted coasters, place cards, aster plant, and pumpkin pie.

The day ended with a deli-

cious salad supper hosted by all Gaspé County WI Members. There was a great variety of salads, cold turkey and ham, yummy homemade rolls and a choice of pies and Queen Elizabeth cake for dessert. It was fantastic to see a large number of community members come

out and enjoy the supper, which was not only delicious but also served as a wonderful social event.

York Branch will host next year's Fair, and the 2025 Fair list is already in the final planning stages. It will soon be

available for both members and the public. Let's get the creative juices flowing and motivate each other to have even more entries next year. Have fun! Check the Gaspé County W.I. facebook page for updated information.



The fair featured a wide range of handicraft items.

The winners of each category are as follows:

Sewing and Embroidery, Linda Patterson

Knitting and Crochet, Wanda Stewart

Assorted, Linda Patterson

Cooking, Wanda Stewart

Flowers, Tony C. Patterson

Literature, Darlene Williams

Vegetables, Tony C. Patterson

Cup for Most Entries, Doreen Saja

Proficiency Cup (Most Prizes), Wanda Stewart

Girard Cup (Most 1st Prizes),

Wanda Stewart tied with Linda Patterson

Branch Proficiency (most prizes by branch members),

Dartmouth River Branch

Branch Effort (Thanksgiving Celebration theme),

Dartmouth River Branch

Clark Cup (Highest average entries per member),

Dartmouth River Branch

Julien Barriault wins the Wade Gifford Invitational

PRESS RELEASE

BONAVENTURE: - Julien Barriault was the overall champion of 18th Edition of the Wade Gifford Invitational, which was held on Saturday, September 14, at the Fauvel Golf Club in Bonaventure.

More than 84 players, of which 18 were women, participated in the tournament. Julien Barriault, who participated in the Championship category, scored a 78, followed by Dany Sweeney, Gérald Maltais, Pascal Lebrasseur, Guy Desroches, Yves Arsenault and Dave Douesnard. The Competition category winner was Sylvain Barriault, the father of the overall champion with a score of 81. The Texas Scramble category winners, 14 and 20 handicap, favoured Samuel Whitton and Sébastien Denis with a score of 70. The Texas Scramble category, 21 and plus handicap, favoured the duo Alyson

Castilloux and Conrad Langlois with a score of 77. The winner of the Shootout competition was Guy Desroches.

Denise Simoneau, Director General of the Eastern Shores School Board presented the overall winner Julien Barriault with the trophy that was commissioned by the School Board Trustees to honour the founder and host of the Wade Gifford Invitational. Mrs. Simoneau gave a vibrant homage to Wade for his fifty years of volunteer dedication by naming one of their holes in his honour and erecting a large bronze plaque as a memento. She also mentioned Wade's dedication as being impressive and how it had contributed to the social and economic development of the Gaspésie. She was proud to say why and how the School Board assigned Wade in 1974 to follow the progress of the course construction and bring Wade to study at Harvard University in



Photo: Courtesy of Medor Doiron

From left to right, Denise Simoneau, Julien Barriault and Wade Gifford.

a program pertaining to Golf Course architecture and management.

Wade said he was honoured and gave praise to the employees and volunteers that he holds so dearly to his mind

and heart. He also thanked the School Board for helping him realize his dream and for the School Board's endorsement of his participation in the golf enterprise. He thanked the players for participating in

today's tournament and invited them to come back on Labour Day in 2025.

As always, the Fauvel Golf course was at its best, and the playing conditions were perfect for this time of the season.

During the postal strike...

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The Gaspé **Spec**



S.P.D.S Halloween Traditions



LUCY
COUTURE



MCKENNA
FLOWERS



KAYLIEY
WHALEN

PORT DANIEL: Wilma, the Witch, was back at Shigawake Port Daniel School for the month of October. Wilma is the famous witch who comes back to our school every year. She and her friends challenge each class to design and create a bulletin board. They judge the teamwork and creativity of the bulletin boards and, on Halloween, the winning class is announced. The goal is to make Wilma and her friends Myra McVampire and Jack O' Spooky cackle!

On Halloween, groups of students go into different classrooms and do spooky-themed

centres and activities. After lunch, the annual Halloween masquerade is held. Students dress up and walk around the gym while the teachers judge for the funniest, most creative and most realistic costumes.

This year the bulletin board contest was won by the kindergarten class! The theme was The Monster Mash (based on a movie) and they even had an orange button that played the song Monster Mash. They won a Golden Skeleton trophy and a pizza party.

Aubree Ross, a Grade 5 student, shared, "My favourite thing is trick or treating be-

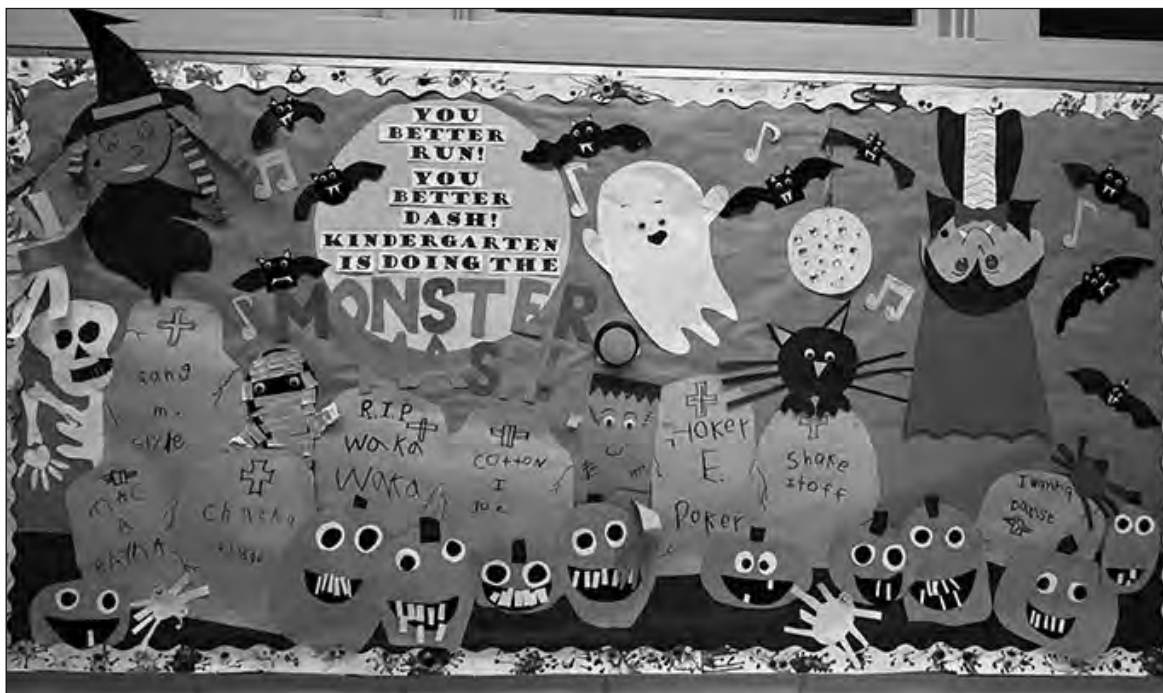


Photo: Liam Hottot and Jasmine Officer

SPDS Kindergarten class were this year's winners.

cause we get to go to each classroom, do spooky activities and, at the end of each ac-

tivity, we get surprises."

Lily Major, also in Grade 5, added, "My favourite part is

the activities that we do while wearing our costumes with the SPDS family."

Remembrance day poems

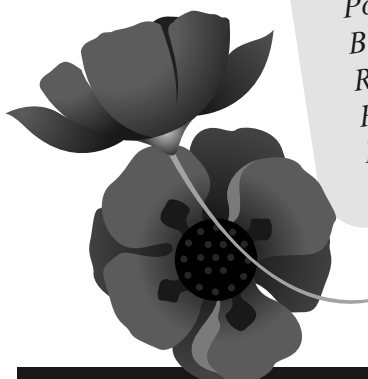
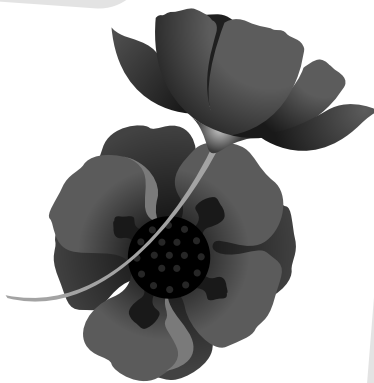
For Remembrance Day, Shigawake Port Daniel School (SPDS) Grade 5/6 students joined the students at New Carlisle High School (NCHS) to attend the Remembrance Day ceremonies at the cenotaph in New Carlisle. The other grades attended a small ceremony and observed a minute of silence in the SPDS gymnasium. Students from Grades 3 to 6 wrote poems during their English Language Arts class to submit to a contest. Here are a few poems written by SPDS students that we wanted to share with you.

*There are poppies in Flanders Field.
The soldiers held a shield.
Animals fought like dogs and horses.
The soldiers fought with all their forces.
They stood very tall,
For the light of all.
By: Alexandra Sarah Carter Evans*

*I wear a poppy red as can be
Like the soldiers who fought for me.
The birds fly high up in the sky
Like the soldiers who feared to say goodbye.
In a soldier's face, they have their sorrow.
They fought for me and I remember like tomorrow.
By: Jasmine Caliah Officer-Perreault*

*In Flanders Field where the poppies bloom,
Soldiers start to face their doom
For the soldiers who fought for our peace,
They battled until their guns ceased. Many
families sent mail and letters of love.
They prayed to who they believed above.
Then Flanders Fields turned to where they lie.
Forever the world will always cry.
By: Lily Anna Page Major*

*Walking through the poppies and crosses,
I remember the losses.
Poppies bloom when the bomb goes boom.
Birds cry when you say bye.
Roses are red, violets are blue,
Remember the ones that fought for you.
By: Liam Robbie Hottot*



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S.P.D.S.



Announcements



Obituary



JONES: Conrad

In loving memory of our dear father Conrad Jones who passed away peacefully at Chandler hospital on November 12, 2024.

He was a resident of Port-Daniel for 91 years and 8 months and would gladly give his age to anyone who would inquire. He graduated from the seminary in Gaspé (now CEGEP) at the age of 16 in business administration. He worked at Nadeau's mill in the 50s, and then opened a building materials business with his brother Jerry in 1964, he later opened his own plumbing and heating enterprise for 20 years and afterwards worked as secretary-treasurer at the municipality of Port-Daniel for another 20 years.

He loved helping people. He was the "ambulance driver" at the pee-wee hockey tournaments, provided the girl scouts with a "rest stop" with his camping trailer during their walks and was the master chef during the corn boils at the Camping in Bonaventure. He was also a great singer in his church choir for 38 years as well as other choirs from Carleton to Chandler. He was awarded the Commemorative Medal of Canada in 1993 for significant contribution rendered to his community. He was a living encyclopedia. He remembered anything he heard, saw or read with details that would surprise anyone of us. He read the complete French newspaper each day and the SPEC every week since 1975. He did not complain and his smile is what people will remember most of all.

He joined his wife of 60 years, Jane Skene Jones, his brother Jerry and wife Josette, as well as, his sister Irene. He leaves behind six children, ten grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, his sister Rita and many friends and relatives.

For all of us you gave your best... the time has come for you to rest. Until we meet again.

*Deadline for this page is
Wednesday at 4 p.m.*



In Memory

ANNETT: Kevin

In memory of a dear son, brother, and uncle who passed away November 27, 2020.

*Our lives go on without you but,
Nothing is the same.*

*We have to hide the heartache,
When someone speaks your name.*

Sad are the hearts that loves you.

Silent are the tears that fall.

Living our lives without you,

Is the hardest part of all.

Always remembered and sadly missed by Mum, Dad, Chrissie, Sarah (Ryan), Emily (Allen) and nephews Henry, Charlie and Ethan.



HOWATSON: Ferne Fairservice

June 30, 1931 - November 26, 2022.

In loving memory of our mother, Ferne Fairservice Howatson.

I thought of you today,

But that is nothing new.

I thought of you yesterday,

And will tomorrow too.

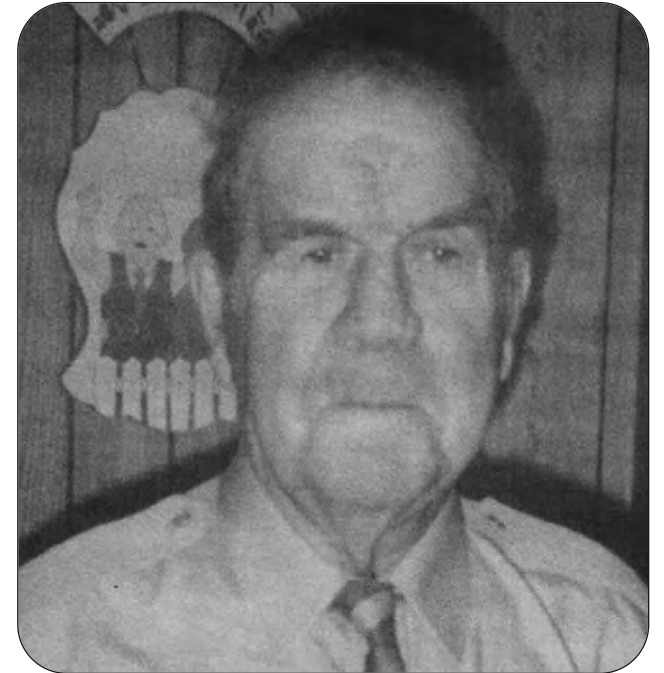
I think of you in silence,

Lordy, Lordy, Look Who's 40 + 7



*And make no outward show.
For what it meant to lose you,
Only those who love you know.
Remembering you is easy,
I do it every day.
It's the heartache of losing you,
That will never go away.*

Dearly missed by Joanne and Janet.



RENOUF: Hughie

In loving memory of a dear father, father-in-law, and grandfather who passed away 20 years ago on, December 3, 2004.

*Dear Lord, please take a message,
To our dear father up above.*

*Tell him how much we miss him,
And give him all our love.*

*You were a dad who was so special,
You brought so much happiness,
To the many hearts you touched.*

*It broke our hearts to lose you,
But you did not go alone.*

*Because papa part of us went with you,
The day God called you home.*

Sadly, missed and never forgotten by son Robert, daughter-in-law Glenna, grandsons Troy (Sheryl) and Trevor (Jessica) and great-grandchildren Hayden, Joseph, Mariah and Olivia.

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**BARACHOIS:
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November 30: The 9th annual Christmas Market will be from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Belle Anse School, 1298 Route 132 East, in the basement. There will be over 20 tables of local crafts, baking, knitting, jams, Christmas gifts and decorations, and more. To reserve a table (\$10) contact Sandy Coombs at (581) 887-1417.

**HOPE TOWN:
Sports Club**

November 30: A Christmas gift bingo will be held at the Hope Town Community Centre starting at 7 p.m.

**HOPE:
Hope Baptist Church**

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

**NEW CARLISLE:
New Carlisle Legion**

Mondays: Mini bingo beginning at 7 p.m.

Wednesdays: Line Dancing beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Every Friday: Open at 7:30 p.m. drop in to play pool, shuffleboard, etc.

**NEW CARLISLE:
Bible Chapel Meetings**

Sundays: Breaking of Bread for believers - 9:30 a.m., Gospel meeting and Sunday School - 2 p.m.

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

**NEW RICHMOND:
St. Andrew's
United Church**

November 28: Do you have any artifacts, memora-

bilia, or anything that can be showcased at the November 30, church celebration? Please contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

November 30: Come join us between 2 and 4 p.m. in our Coffee shop with music and storytelling. Coffee, tea and sweets will be provided, as we listen to music and share stories of our memories of St. Andrew's throughout the years.

December 1: A celebration with Holy Communion will take place. All partners who helped us throughout the years are invited to the service, which will be followed by a luncheon in the hall.

**CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:
Book Room**

Please be advised that the book room is open. Anyone who needs assistance can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

**CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:
50+ Club**

December 18: The annual AGM meeting for the 50+ club will be held at 1 p.m. followed by the general meeting at 1:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

Tuesdays: Grocery bingo every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. \$10 for three cards. Extra cards are \$1 each.

**UNITED CHURCH
HOPE TOWN
December 1
No Service**

**UNITED CHURCH
NEW RICHMOND
December 1
10 a.m. Service**

**ANGLICAN
CHURCH
OF CANADA**

**Sunday, December 1
New Carlisle**

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Shigawake
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**PARISH OF
GASPÉ**

**Sunday, December 1
St. Andrew's - York**
10 a.m. Holy Communion

Worship Wednesday
10 a.m. St Paul's



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TOURISM:

▶ *Cont'd from page 2*

popular with the public," analyzes Ms. Ross.

Tourisme Gaspésie is already preparing for the winter season.

"A good winter tourist season means \$40 million in spinoffs and around 30,000 visitors. It's important to keep businesses open year-round. It's important for the corner store, for the small grocery

store on the corner. They're going to consume accommodations," recalls Ms. Ross.

"Last year, it was extremely difficult. It's a 12-week season. Last year, it was only five weeks. We hope for lots of snow. If we have lots of snow in January, February, and March, that would be perfect," she hopes.

Infrastructure, particularly for trail systems, will require ongoing support. "People are working hard to resolve situa-

tions before the winter season. It will still be possible to tour the Gaspé Peninsula, perhaps differently," says Ms. Ross.

The closure of a footbridge in Sainte-Madeleine-de-la-rivière-Madeleine this winter once again raises the question of infrastructure.

Recent bridge closures over the Saint-Jean River in Gaspé and Pointe-à-la-Croix, as well as ongoing issues with the trail between Murdochville and the Relais de la

Cache, are prompting the community to consider the state of its infrastructure.

Snowmobiling and all-terrain vehicles remain regional priorities.

"Everything was built with volunteers. It's extraordinary. We've prioritized this issue at the Table des préfets for a few years now. We've sought out an envelope of \$10 million. We're investing gradually, but the needs are enormous." When there is an infrastruc-

ture that costs \$1 million, a bridge to be redone, we cannot put the burden of an entire industry on the backs of volunteers," says the mayor of Gaspé and prefect of the MRC of Côte-de-Gaspé, Daniel Côté.

"If we want to develop winter tourism in Quebec, stop talking about it and do it for real. It will take additional resources for those who take care of the roads," says Mr. Côté.


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