

Major Canada-France military deployment

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – On May 16, dozens of onlookers witnessed a joint Canada-France military operation as about 150 Canadian soldiers set sail from Gaspé Bay.

The soldiers, armed with machine guns and carrying other equipment, arrived by Hercules aircraft during the night. They then went to the Intermodal Station, from there they took a marina shuttle to the French Navy's amphibious helicopter carrier Mistral to conduct amphibious boarding maneuvers and head to Sept-Îles for operations on May 17, before continuing on to Quebec City.

"The 3rd battalion of the Royal 22e Régiment de Valcartier is in a period of high operational readiness. We must constantly train to be able to respond to the needs of the Government of Canada in the event of a global crisis, whether for humanitarian disasters or the evacuation of Canadian nationals," explains Major Mathieu Robichaud.

These events are part of Exercise LION MISTRAL, a combined exercise conducted by Canadian soldiers, supported by members of the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Naval Reserve, with the French Navy and an embarked battle group commanded by the 13th Foreign Legion Demi-Brigade (DBLE).



A group of soldiers leaves the Intermodal Station to board the amphibious shuttle to board the French ship.

Photo: N. Sergerie

After Sept-Îles, the soldiers traveled to Quebec City and a similar exercise was held in Gaspé in June 2014.

More photos on page 22.

Agreement in principle to compensate the victims of the 2010 Sunny Bank flood

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - An agreement in principle has been reached between the lawyers representing the members of the class action lawsuit following the flooding in the Sunny Bank neighbourhood of Gaspé in December 2010 and those of the Ministry of Transport (MTQ) regarding the terms and conditions for compensation claims.

The firm representing the victims, Sylvestre Painchaud and Associates, indicates that the attorneys are drafting the Claims Protocol, which will outline the rules for filing and processing claims.

Although the court has outlined the amounts that the victims can expect for moral damages, given that about 99 structures were affected, an overall amount has not been determined. However, a sum



Flood in Sunny Bank, December 15 - 16, 2010.

Photo: Andrew Patterson

of approximately \$3 million was mentioned at the beginning of the proceedings for flood victims.

In accordance with a nearly three-year old court ruling, flow and water level measur-

ing stations have been installed on the York River. However, discussions continue over timelines for infrastructure work on the highway bridge intended to improve river flow.

In June 2022, the Sunny

Bank Flood Committee won a class action against the MTQ. The court ordered the ministry to implement corrective measures to maintain an adequate service level for a flow of 600 cubic metres per second over

the next six years.

During the case, the MTQ had already made a commitment during the case to carry out approximately \$8 million in infrastructure upgrades within six years. In a project notice, the ministry specifically targets the replacement of the bridge, which currently has an 11-metre opening, with a 60-metre opening, as well as the excavation and widening of a secondary branch of the York River, 200 metres long and 54 metres wide, upstream of the proposed bridge.

In addition, the widening of the road embankments over 300 metres in the water environment is also planned due to the 0.5 metre raising of the road, and the reshaping of a 400-metre ditch along the east side of the Sunny Bank Street intersection.

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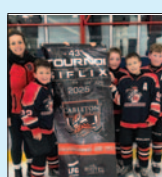
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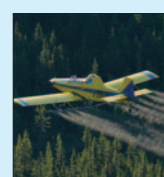
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The actions of three Gesgapegiag police officers honoured by National Police Academy

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

NICOLET - Three Gesgapegiag police officers were honoured on May 12 at the Quebec National Police Academy in Nicolet for their courage during a police intervention on November 18, 2024.

Constable Dominic Jalbert-Bossé, Sergeant Dave Loisel, and Police Chief Marven Condo of the Gesgapegiag Police Service intervened with an armed man who was trying to end his life by provoking a confrontation with law enforcement. The police officers were able to calm the man in distress and save one or more lives, in circumstances that were both unpredictable and risky.

"I would like to highlight the actions of Marven Condo, Dave Loisel, and Dominic Jal-



Constable Jalbert-Bossé, Sergeant Loisel, and Police Chief Condo during the ceremony in Nicolet.

Photo: Daniel Jalbert, photographer

bert-Bossé. Thanks to the team's strategic thinking and composure, no one was injured during this intervention.

The three men were able to adapt their tactical positions throughout this dangerous operation. I also want to take this

opportunity to express how proud I am of our police officers, who courageously chose to serve and protect the people

of Quebec," said Public Security Minister François Bonnardel.

The officers' achievements were recognized on Police Appreciation Day, which allows the Ministry of Public Security to concretely express its gratitude and pride in Quebec police officers who assume significant risks in the performance of their duties, as well as in individuals or organizations who have distinguished themselves during a police intervention. Seventeen Medals for Meritorious Action and two Citations of Honour were awarded during this year's ceremony.

Since 1972, 170 Crosses of Bravery, 461 Medals for Meritorious Action, 35 Medals of Devotion, and 239 Citations of Honour have been awarded by the Government of Quebec to police officers and citizens.

An operating surplus in New Richmond

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

NEW RICHMOND - The Town of New Richmond posted an operating surplus of \$160,622 for the 2024 fiscal year. However, when municipal organizations are taken into account, there's a loss of \$1 million.

The accumulated surplus increases to \$1.1 million at the end of the 2024 fiscal year. "We've had good wealth creation. We've been on a roll since the pandemic. We're exceeding estimates for transfer taxes and land

sales," says Mayor Éric Dubé.

Despite inflation, the mayor says he's maintaining tight financial management. "We've also had two milder winters in the last two years, which were welcome," notes the elected official. The municipality's net debt decreased by \$1 million to \$21,895,400 as of December 31, 2024.

"We're in a phase where major investments in our buildings, or over the past ten years, have been completed. We're very pleased about that," says the mayor.

In the coming years, the

town will focus on water and sewerage infrastructure, depending on financial assistance from both the federal and Quebec governments. "We can't afford to pay for infrastructure on our own. Every time we have an opportunity, we'll seize it," said

Mr. Dubé.

Pin Rouge's debt will be reflected in debt servicing in 2026 and 2027.


Municipal organizations are generating losses. "We're carrying debts related to the regional park, the economic development corporation, and

the summer festival. These are things that no longer cause a deficit, but that leave a deficit in our financial statements. 2024 is the last year that the regional park's operations appear in our consolidated financial statements," Mr. Dubé explains.



Photo: G. Gagné

In the coming years, the Town of New Richmond plans to focus on water and sewerage infrastructure.




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Police Report

Deadly motorcycle accident in Pointe-à-la-Croix

A 71-year-old motorcyclist died following a collision on May 14 in Pointe-à-la-Croix. The accident occurred around 2:30 p.m. on Perron boulevard East. A motorcycle struck the rear of a car that was stopped behind a truck, then veered into the oncoming lane. The victim, also riding a motorcycle, had no chance of avoiding the out-of-control vehicle and collided with it. He was taken to hospital with serious injuries and died at 10 p.m. The other motorcyclist was also hospitalized, but his injuries are not considered life threatening. A Sûreté du Québec reconstructionist was on site to determine the cause of the accident.

Amqui tragedy: murder trial of Steeve Gagnon now underway

The murder trial of Steeve Gagnon, 40, charged in the March 13, 2023 vehicular attack in Amqui, began on May 15, at the Rimouski Courthouse. The tragedy claimed three lives and ten people were injured when a Ford F-150 pickup truck struck pedestrians walking along Saint-Benoit boulevard, which is Highway 132 in Amqui. All of them were pedestrians walking on the sidewalk situated on the east side of the road. Steeve Gagnon faces five charges in this case: three counts of first degree murder and two counts of attempted murder using a motor vehicle. Until recently, he was facing 14 charges but some of them were dropped a few days before the selection of 14 jurors.

The victims were Gérald Charest, Jean Lafrenière and Simon-Guillaume Bourget, all from Amqui. Mr. Bourget was a native of Gaspé. Criminal prosecutors could call up to 50 witnesses during the trial, which could last nearly eight weeks. The Superior Court trial is presided over by Judge Louis Gagnon. The criminal prosecutor is Jérôme Simard. According to a Radio-Canada report, the accused has so far admitted that he was driving the vehicle that struck the victims around 3 p.m. that day. The admission was made during pre-trial discussions between the criminal prosecutor, the defence attorney and Steeve Gagnon, who is represented by Legal Aid lawyer Hugo Caissy.

Fraud: Holly Stanley will know the verdict of her case on September 24

Holly Stanley, 45, of Gaspé who was found guilty of forging a will, will learn the verdict of her trial on September 24 at the Percé Courthouse. The accused admitted to stealing over \$200,000 between 2017 and 2018. The criminal prosecutor is seeking 18 months in prison with three years of probation, restitution of \$40,000, and a ban on holding any financially related employment. The defence is instead suggesting 18 months to be served in the community and three years of probation. The case is presided over by Quebec Court Judge Jannick Poirier. In March 2021, the Superior Court relieved Ms. Stanley of her duties as liquidator of the estate of a man who died in an accident in 2017 and appointed a notary. A decision in the case brought by the Public Curator, which is seeking \$286,000 in reimbursement, is still pending. Ms. Stanley admitted to the facts. The court ordered the seizure of the woman's assets before judgment.

Grandparents' fraud scheme still present in the Gaspé Peninsula

The Sûreté du Québec is urging the public to be extra cautious regarding another grandparents' fraud scheme reported to the police force in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC around May 15. Fortunately, the targeted individuals did not suffer any monetary loss following that attempt.

The targeted individuals were called by phone, mentioning that a loved one, often a grandchild, was being detained by police and needed a few thousand dollars to be released, or a situation where the child was in a hospital outside the

country and needed immediate medical care.

During the phone conversation, the fraudsters sometimes staged a situation involving someone posing as a police officer or a lawyer. Fraudsters use a variety of schemes to achieve their goals and extract money from their victims.

When using these scams, the fraudsters take advantage of the vulnerability of certain individuals to put pressure on them.

There are simple rules to avoid such scams:

- Fraudsters rely on people's emotional response to trigger help that could in theory be directed towards loved ones in an emergency. They can sometimes be very insistent and make multiple calls to increase potential victims' anxiety. It is necessary to resist pressure and the urge to act quickly.
- People must avoid giving personal information to the fraudsters attempting to steal money from them.
- People receiving such calls must ask personal questions that only loved ones would be able to answer.
- It is advised to call the person's parents, another family member, or friends to verify the validity of the story fraudsters are telling.
- People receiving such calls should never send money to someone unknown and never provide a credit card number before having verified the identity of the potential fraudster.
- Police officers never contact citizens to obtain bail payments and never use a money transfer service. If in doubt and before sending any sum of money, people should contact the police service that serves one's municipality (Sûreté du Québec or local police service). If someone believes they were a victim of this type of fraud, she or he should file a complaint with the police service that serves their municipality (Sûreté du Québec or local police service) and report the case to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (1-888-495-8501).

Dangerous driving incident in Chandler area

Since May 15, the Sûreté du Québec received several reports of dangerous driving involving a side-by-side vehicle in the Chandler area. On the morning of May 21, Rocher-Percé MRC police officers were notified of an individual driving a side-by-side vehicle on private property in the Pabos Mills area. Upon arrival, the officers arrested Nick Racette, a 29-year-old man from Grande-Rivière. He appeared in court on May 22 to face one count of dangerous driving allegedly committed on May 15, 2025, in Chandler.

Banned from entering Gaspé judicial district

A man from Saint-Georges, in Beauce, was recently banned from entering the Gaspé judicial district for the next three years. Martin Lessard, 39, who has 27 prior convictions for domestic violence, pleaded guilty to charges of uttering death threats via a third party and criminal harassment. Two other charges were withdrawn by the criminal prosecution. On November 1, 2023, a passerby contacted police after seeing an individual installing a tracking device on a vehicle in Chandler. The witness had noted the registration numbers of both cars. After checking, the Sûreté du Québec determined that the two owners had previously been in a relationship. After meeting with the ex-partner and her new partner, the latter told officers that Martin Lessard had contacted a third party to threaten his life. Stopped in Matane, officers discovered binoculars, a balaclava, a rope and a canister of pepper spray in his vehicle. Mr. Lessard was sentenced to 840 days in prison. With the time served since his arrest, the individual is now free.

\$150,000 to maintain the Orléans Express service in Percé

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The MRCs of the Gaspésie will renew their agreement for a tenth consecutive year with Orléans Express to maintain additional stops in the region, including service to Percé.

In 2015, the passenger bus carrier Kéolis substantially reduced its services, serving only 13 municipalities, abandoning service to Percé, and reducing its number of departures from the Gaspésie from six to two.

In 2016, the five MRCs in the Gaspésie each contributed \$7,500, and the Quebec government contributed \$120,000, for a total of \$150,000 to restore service to Percé and add



Orléans Express will continue to serve Percé with the renewal of the agreement between Gaspésie and Kéolis.

Photo: N. Sergerie

additional stops in Cap-Chat and New Richmond, followed by Paspébiac and Bonaventure.

"This agreement allows us to maintain an essential service for our communities, particularly in terms of interregional transportation and parcels. Maintaining interregional transportation remains a prior-

ity for our MRC," says Noël Richard, acting prefect of the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC and mayor of Grande-Vallée.

When it submitted its application to the Quebec Transport Commission in 2014, Orléans justified its revised schedule by claiming losses of \$3.57 million in 2013 on the Rimouski-Gaspésie route.

Percé Turns to the UMQ for its Urban Planning Department

Nelson Sergerie

PERCÉ - The Town of Percé is ending its agreement with Atelier de Planification Urbaine Régionale (APUR) to manage its Urban Planning Department and is turning instead to the Quebec Union of Municipalities (UMQ).

The municipal council made this decision at a special meeting on May 20. Mayor Daniel Leboeuf indicated that the UMQ's Carrefour du capital humain offers urban planning services.

"They will be able to support us and also our future municipal inspector, whose application period is open," notes the mayor. Mr. Leboeuf believes this new approach will be more efficient. "(We will be able to) call on an external firm when it comes time to issue a building permit or calculate locations. We need someone on site. We will reorganize accordingly," stated Mr. Leboeuf. Recently, residents complained about the slow pace of obtaining permits for construction work.

The town has, however, successfully filled the position of Cultural Events coordinator.

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Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Another pipeline idea: really?

In an interview aired on a May 15 podcast, Quebec Premier François Legault expressed openness to pipeline projects, judging that he also perceives the same openness among Quebecers. He went on mentioning a new idea: a pipeline project that would use a northern route and end at the port of Sept-Îles, where the oil would be exported towards European markets.

He admitted in the same podcast that such a project “Would have been unthinkable before (American president Donald) Trump,” noting that Quebecers are now stating that “There’s no way Trump is going to control the oil we produce in Alberta.”

Mr. Legault opines that Canada must consider whether its oil can be exported to Europe rather than being limited to the American market. He feels that “things are shifting.”

Let’s remember that Quebec rejected the GNL Québec project in Saguenay in 2021, an initiative that would have made the port of Saguenay an export base for liquified natural gas. The federal government also rejected the project in 2022.

Another initiative, the Energy East pipeline, which targeted transporting Alberta oil to New Brunswick, was cancelled by the promoter in 2017.

Contexts change but some economic facts remain

François Legault later admitted that his idea of the northern route was not tied to a specific project, and that there is no project of that nature currently brewing in some promoters’ offices.

It is therefore important to realize that the probability of seeing a pipeline project get off the ground is very close to null, especially considering the consultations with First Nations were not mentioned by Quebec’s premier.

Donald Trump has obviously changed the game since his November 5 electoral victory. He mainly thrives on 20th century projects and we are 25 years and five months into the 21th century. Moreover, he also thrives on keeping everybody on their toes, as a way of asserting his power.

However, he is also essentially wrong on most economic decisions he makes. So, following closely his train of thought and changing drasti-

cally a country’s economic orientations are futile exercises, because Trump might change his mind in a minute, this afternoon, or tomorrow morning.

There are cold, hard facts about a new pipeline project that would venture east of Central Ontario.

Firstly, as expressed earlier, there is no project or, in other words, no serious private promoter that has expressed interest in this kind of initiative. The last pipeline project carried out in Canada was discreetly inaugurated in 2024. The Trans Mountain pipeline between Alberta’s hydrocarbon fields and Burnaby, British Columbia, had to be acquired by the Canadian government in order to assure its expansion, destined to triple its capacity.

The original cost at the onset of that expansion was supposed to be \$8 billion. The final cost amounted to \$34 million, paid by Canadian taxpayers, not by Alberta-based oil companies using it.

Secondly, the cost of a pipeline on a brand-new path, which means without following the course of an existing pipeline, over a much longer distance, close to double that of Trans Mountain if it is possible to make the connection in Ontario, will be prohibitive. Will it be twice the cost of the Trans Mountain expansion, or four times? It is hard to say, given that there is no project but guessing a prudent cost that would double that of Trans Mountain is far from a foolish suggestion.

Thirdly, the per-barrel transportation cost will likely make it unprofitable unless demand for oil increases enormously. In reality, demand for hydrocarbons, despite the Donald Trumps of this world, is slowly decreasing worldwide and that tendency will increase and last. A plummeting demand means decreasing prices.

Chances are that at one point, the transportation cost will match or even surpass the price of oil using an Alberta-Sept-Îles or an Ontario-Sept-Îles pipeline. Alberta’s tar sands oil is already costly. Adding an important hauling cost will not make that oil more competitive, far from that.

Fourthly, who will buy that oil if the barrel price is subjected to a prohibitive transportation fee? Most European countries have adopted regulation forbidding in the not-so-distant future sales of gasoline-propelled vehicles, in an attempt to reduce greenhouse effect gases. Hydrocarbon consumption in Europe is dwindling and even if the war initiated by Russia in Ukraine sent oil prices soaring for a while, the situation has stabilized over the last year. Moreover, the economic downturn created by Donald Trump’s instability will not favour rising hydrocarbon prices.

In that regard, Asia offers more potential for Al-

berta oil and despite Trump’s statements to the effect that his country doesn’t need Canada’s hydrocarbons – as well as lumber, steel and aluminum – the United States remain the best market option, if one consults real experts.

Fifthly, the environmental cost of exploiting Alberta’s tar sands is becoming an increasingly big hurdle in oil companies’ capacity to sell their products. The initial price tag is high and it is somewhat worsened by the fact that some customers avoid buying it because of its ecological impact. There is already and there will be a rising “penalty” for the use of tar sands oil, as hydrocarbons are impacting people’s health and ecosystems.

Gearing up for consumption reduction, renewable sources of energy and electricity saving ventures are way more promising.

Sixthly, the time factor is forgotten in the pipeline story. It takes at least a decade before the idea and the real pipeline. It will be longer when there is no promoter to accompany the idea.

Putting on a show

Through expressing his openness to the development of a pipeline in a certain part of Quebec, François Legault probably wanted to show that he is ready to make steps in an attempt to prove to the rest of Canada that he is onboard, that his province is trying to counter the detrimental actions of Donald Trump.

It worked to a certain degree, as Alberta Premier Danielle Smith congratulated Mr. Legault after hearing about the podcast.

He also probably didn’t want to go unnoticed, when compared to Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who is seen as Captain Canada by a lot of people since the November election in the United States.

François Legault’s openness is probably nurtured by his intention to get something in a trade-off maneuver with other provinces. The Quebec premier insists on finding good economic ideas for Canada.


However, selecting a 20th century idea, à la Donald Trump, was almost certainly a bad way for Mr. Legault to gain potential electoral traction.

He is under the impression that if Quebecers give better support to pipelines now than before the second election of Trump, the social acceptability factor is also higher.

To a theoretical question about pipelines, Quebecers simply provided a theoretical answer! You don’t build pipelines on such shaky grounds, unless you are shopping for trouble, like an oil spill.



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Québec

\$561M cut for rail in the transportation program for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Quebec government has cut \$561 million from the road, airport, and rail program in the investment plan for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands spanning over the 2025-2027 period. The sum was essentially deducted from the refurbishment of the Gaspé railway network.

From \$680 million for 2024-2026, the planned spending is now only \$119 million for the next two years. The status change of the Port Daniel to Gaspé section, from an implementation mode to a planning mode, explains the discrepancy in the amounts.

"We still have major projects underway on Section 3, mainly structures—bridges and culverts—for the next construction season," said Gaspé Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Stéphane Sainte-Croix at a press conference on May 12 in Gaspé.

"We have 15 projects underway on section 3. Nine are in operation. We're on hold on six projects, trying to find solutions to complete them," added his colleague from Bonaventure, Catherine Blouin.

For Transports Québec, the ministry that has owned the Matapédia-Gaspé railroad since the spring of 2015, there are three sections along that line. Section 1 covers the Matapédia to Caplan stretch, while Section 2 goes from Caplan to Port Daniel, and Section 3 goes from Port Daniel to Gaspé.

"The money announced last year was for sections 2 and 3," explained the Gaspé MNA.

When the \$304 million investment for roads, airports, and rail was announced, elected officials explained what's happening with the rail rehabilitation project.

No date for reaching Gaspé is yet foreseeable, after having postponed the deadline several times since 2018.

"All sorts of things are being studied. The ultimate goal is to reach Gaspé, but we want to try to achieve economies of scale. Can we save money by buying in bulk? There's also a committee formed by the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie and the ministry to try to save money and optimize certain



MNAs Catherine Blouin and Stéphane Sainte-Croix on the sidelines of transportation investments on May 12, in Gaspé.

Photo: N. Sergerie

projects. For example, on certain structures, can we reduce speed or loads to save money? This type of analysis is underway," suggests the MNA for Bonaventure.

The railway company could even obtain projects to carry out in order to save money.

Change of strategy on Transports Québec's part

"In the current economic climate, it's wise to take a step back. We're in no rush to move forward with the \$150 million cost overruns. We're also trying to split some contracts to involve our local investors," notes Ms. Blouin.

This is a reversal of the situation, as Quebec had grouped contracts to create critical mass to attract major players and generate economies of scale during Premier François Legault's last visit in November 2023.

"We're working to move the projects on hold into construction mode. We're not worried about the intention to complete the rail line. Our intention is to go to Gaspé. If we have to go through different options for construction, we'll do it," emphasizes Mr. Sainte-Croix.

Potential customers

Osisko Metals, the company currently working on resuming mining activities in Murdochville, indicates that it may need the rail line to ship ore to Rouyn-Noranda.

"We have some flexibility with this client. He's (company president Robert Wares) following this closely. We'll see where Osisko will be positioned moving forward," maintains the MNA for Gaspé, as the company could

need the train in the early 2030s.

Regarding the debate surrounding the 300-metre protection zone for a railway line, which is raging particularly in the Rocher-Percé MRC, a committee including the Ministry of Transportation and Municipal Affairs is looking into the issue.

"There is a significant concern in our community. It has been addressed. We don't see any major issues to identify possible solutions," believes the MNA for Gaspé.

On the sidelines of the May 12 announcement, the president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie indicated that the Quebec government had asked him to suspend his own planning for work on section 3.

"We were asked to pause the planning of work scheduled for 2025," said Éric Dubé, following the return of Section 3 from implementation mode to analysis, or planning, mode.

The company, which is owned by the municipalities located between Matapédia and Gaspé, had been allocated \$36 million to carry out smaller projects on the final section.

"For us, it was a four-year work plan. We had planned equipment purchases last year. We had ordered them. We will receive them in the coming weeks. Had we known this a year ago, we might not have invested so much in specialized equipment to carry out this work," stated the president.

When the company pointed out to the Quebec government that funds had been committed and that suppliers would still want to be paid, negotiations took place. "The ministry is aware of the

impacts on the company," said the president.

During the press briefing for the Gaspésie MNAs, it was mentioned that the railway currently has no customers east of Port-Daniel-Gascons.

"The reality is that if we had waited to receive letters for needs, we must remember that in 2013-2014, there was no one. Today, we are at between 3,000 and 4,000 freight cars. We had no signed contracts. If the railway had been operating all the way to Gaspé for 10 years, would the tip of the Gaspésie have lost opportunities? The answer is probably yes," said Mr. Dubé, reiterating that it is a significant development tool for the region.

It's a kind of chicken-or-egg situation. "If it takes us another 10 years to get there, the chicken might never lay any eggs," he says.

If the rail line had been repaired all the way to Gaspé, the LM Wind Power blade plant in Gaspé wouldn't have trucked blades to New Richmond between November 2016 and May 2022.

Mr. Dubé doesn't want to miss another opportunity considering the possible revival of Mines Gaspé by Osisko. "There's huge volume potential. I understand that everyone can say yes, we have time because it's 2030 or 2032. But if we want to be ready, given what we've experienced in the last year, 2030 isn't too far off," comments Mr. Dubé.

Roads

Of the \$304 million allocated for the next two years, \$185 million is earmarked for paving and bridges.

Thus, \$48,837,000 is earmarked to improve roadway conditions, \$59,871,000 to improve structural conditions, \$71,432,000 to make the network efficient and safe, including to follow up on recommendations from the Coroner's Office, and \$4,780,000 to implement airport projects. "That's over \$4 million more for the road network alone," notes Ms. Blouin.

As for criticisms of the state of the paving on highway 132 in Baie-des-Chaleurs, the MNA for Bonaventure assures that efforts will be made.

(With the collaboration of Gilles Gagné)

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Little Campers (B)	7 - 9 yrs	July 13-18
Boys Camp	10 - 12 yrs	July 20-25
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Framework agreement between Quebec and Listuguj

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

LISTUGUJ - A framework agreement has been reached between the Government of Quebec and the Listuguj First Nation to create a space for negotiations on issues of common interest.

The Minister responsible for First Nations and Inuit Relations, Ian Lafrenière, spent May 13 and 14 in the Gaspé Peninsula to meet with the Mi'gmaq communities of Gesgapegiag and Listuguj to discuss various Indigenous issues. "My visit has three goals: to see what has been done, and to sign an agreement in principle with the community of Listuguj and the people who travel to the region to hunt, a practice not supported by Indigenous communities," says Mr. Lafrenière.

Regarding the framework agreement with Listuguj, signed on May 14, the idea had been in the works for a long time.

"Since the Band Council's return, we have made it a priority. We made a sprint and were able to sign. We have seven (priorities), including economic development, on which we want to achieve results. What this agreement represents is a framework for negotiations to ensure a win-win situation. This is the beginning of negotiations because both sides want to achieve results," explains Mr. Lafrenière.

"Signing the agreement is a step in the right direction," says Chief Scott Martin.

"Our relationship with Quebec hasn't always been easy. There hasn't always been respect for our rights, our laws, our treaties, or our territory. With this new negotiation process, that's starting to change," says Mr. Martin.

"We want to improve the lives of our community members by exercising our self-determination. We want to increase our presence on the territory. We want our Mi'gmaq laws to be recognized," states the Chief.

The new 10-year framework agreement does not define or limit Listuguj's ancestral rights or treaty issues in any way.

The Minister also visited several recently completed infrastructure projects in the community, such as the seniors' home and the new police station.

The latter was made possible thanks to over \$2 million in support from the Government of Quebec. On May 13, the Minister first stopped in the Matane region and then at the Relais de La Cache on Route 299, purchased by the Gesgapegiag community a few years ago.

Major upgrades, modernizations, and expansions were carried out there, with financial support of more than \$1.6 million from Quebec through the Indigenous Initiatives Fund.

The revival of this local service was a desire of the community, which wants to develop this popular outdoor activity area.

This infrastructure, in addition



Back row: Wendell Metallic, Councillor; Catherine Blouin, Bonaventure MNA; Councillors Tanner Isaac, Macy Metallic, Sky Metallic, and George Martin. Front row: Ian Lafrenière, Minister Responsible for First Nations and Inuit Relations, and Scott Martin, Chief of the Listuguj First Nation.

Photo: Minister Ian Lafrenière's Office

tion to being important for the region, also represents a tourist showcase and an opportunity for economic development. The Minister, along with Bonaventure Member of the National Assembly Catherine Blouin, met with Chief Roderick Larocque to discuss community issues and economic development before visiting the Snawei maple grove, which also received nearly \$200,000 in financial support to continue its expansion and increase its production capacity.

During the minister's tour, hunting attracted attention as members of Indigenous communities in the Montreal area hunt moose and deer, particularly in the Matane Wildlife Reserve, transporting the game by refrigerated truck, and reselling the meat to non-Indigenous people.

"We're talking about criminalized people taking advantage of the opportunity to sell meat in the Montreal area. This

is something that concerns me in terms of living together, and it's the same for the leaders of both communities, who don't view it favourably. The Grand Chief of the Wolastoquey Nation gave the same response, saying it was neither permitted nor tolerated," says the minister, who has received several briefings on the matter.

"We're starting to work on a plan to send a very clear message. People are not happy about this," adds the minister.

Regarding salmon net fishing on the Cascapedia River, a one-year agreement was reached last year with Gesgapegiag.

"We're in negotiations to settle it over a longer period, and things are going very well. Those who know the region well know that in Listuguj, there are rangers in place to safeguard the resource. It's a program he welcomes. I wouldn't rule out expanding it to have an Indigenous presence

on the territory. They know the terrain and the members of the First Nations very well. It's an interesting approach," suggests Mr. Lafrenière.

Since his appointment to this position in October 2020, tensions seem to have diminished in relations between the Quebec government and the First Nations.

"I think the key to success is being present on the ground. There are issues on which we don't have the same vision, but this hands-on approach helps avoid communication problems. Do we always agree? The answer is no. But do we prioritize the issues we can work on? Yes, and that produces good results," maintains the Minister.

It is with this in mind that he came to the Gaspé to discuss the issue of hunting with the communities. The minister did not have the opportunity to visit Gespeg, but met with leader Céline Cassivi twice since her election last fall.

Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles cuts \$650,000 cut from its budget

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles must now cope with a \$650,000 cut in its budget, a consequence of the Quebec government's \$151 million in cuts to the collegial system.

"For us, this is the equivalent of the salary increases granted to non-teaching staff during the last negotiations with the government, for which the ministry did not plan to add to the CEGEP's operating budget," explains Director General Yolaine Arseneau. This new request from Quebec comes on top of those for a hiring freeze, an investment cap, limits to paid hours, and quotas for foreign students in the final year.

For the 2025-2026 academic

year, the CEGEP is working with a \$43 million budget, including only \$21 million for payroll. The new budget is expected to be adopted in June and, despite the cuts, is projected to remain balanced.

The director, however, affirms that the cuts are not over. "For the coming year, we're breathing a sigh of relief. But we're extremely worried about what comes next because the government has already announced that there will be cuts until 2028-2029 in order to achieve a zero deficit," says Ms. Arseneau.

"It's extremely worrisome because I believe it's impossible to further reduce our room for maneuver. It's reduced to zero. We don't even have the luxury of choosing which staff member we could replace.

We're being cut off from all our flexibility because we're being subjected to too many constraints," states the director.

In recent months, the college had been forced to conduct a complete audit of its expenses with the goal of not affecting student services.

"This will remain our priority, but we already know that absences occurring during the year won't be replaced. It will require agility in work teams to review the distribution of tasks within teams and, above all, avoid service disruptions," says the director, citing as an example a reduction in library hours if staff were to be lacking.

The cap on investment limits had not yet been felt because projects such as the Carleton-sur-Mer residence or



Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles will have to tighten its belt again.

Photo: N. Sergerie

the renovation of the one in Gaspé were already underway. "We're going to see more of this in the coming years because, for example, the budget for materials and tools has been significantly cut, and this has a direct impact on equipment purchases for our study programs, which represents

hundreds of thousands of dollars," says Ms. Arseneau.

"This leaves us no room to maneuver if a piece of equipment breaks," she explains.

The CEGEP had an accumulated surplus of \$2 million at the end of the last fiscal year, which ended on June 30, 2024.

Water and sewer project set to begin in Gascons

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PORT-DANIEL-GASCONS - After more than two decades of waiting, the long anticipated construction of the water and sewer system in the Gascons sector of Port-Daniel-Gascons will finally get underway in August, at a cost of \$50.5 million.

Residents were invited to attend an information session on May 8. "More than 100 people attended, and during the question period, there were no negative comments, and they are happy that the project is finally completed," says the Mayor of Port-Daniel-Gascons, Henri Grenier.

The government of Quebec has allocated \$40 million, including plans and specifications, for the project, and the municipality will absorb the

difference, which will be slightly higher than expected, as the project was estimated at a total cost of \$40 million during the evaluation. "What we're calculating is that the people who will receive drinking water will pay a little over \$500 per year, including financing and operating costs, and for both services, it's about \$1,300," the mayor estimates.

"We're solving a major problem with non-potable water and wastewater discharge into the environment. That's still 15 kilometres of pipes, pumping stations, aerated ponds, etc.," Mr. Grenier says.

The final loan settlement will be activated in two years, and the bill will be sent to taxpayers at that time.

If interest rates continue their downward trend, the bill



Photo: N. Sergerie

Mayor Henri Grenier.

could be slightly lower for taxpayers.

Construction is set to begin in August and is expected to take two years.

"The easements are 80% settled. I still have 20% of the

people to meet. I had put this on hold, and in the next few days, I'll be meeting with people," says the elected official.

Confirmation of the government's financial assistance will be sent by the end of May, which will allow contracts to be awarded.

"I've been working on this file for a little over 15 years, and I'm very happy that it's being resolved to the benefit of the citizens of Gascons," says Mr. Grenier proudly, who will seek a new mandate in November.

"The legacy I want to leave is that people can hope that the municipality will be developed, and right now, we're providing services to the population: water and sewer infrastructure, sports facilities, and things to attract people to settle here," he notes, adding that if 300 more citizens were to settle, the taxpayers' bill would be lower. The water supply to the system will come from the Newport sector of Chandler through an inter-municipal agreement, as all water searches in the Gascons sector have proved unsuccessful.

The water source identified in 2009 would not be sufficient to supply the approximately 400 homes, 80% of which have non-potable water. The 2018 agreement with the province provides for a water supply source, the water and sewer systems, and two wastewater treatment systems.

At that time, Quebec had agreed to increase the subsidy for the water and sewer work to \$26 million.

Before this agreement, the province was only providing \$11 million for the then \$28.5 million project.

Return of RénoRégion

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - Following the Quebec government's budget cuts on March 25, the RénoRégion program was officially terminated on April 1. Now, after facing intense pressure from the municipal sector the Quebec government is reinstating the RénoRégion.

RénoRégion allows low-income homeowners to carry out essential renovations on their properties to maintain them in good condition.

The Quebec government quietly announced the program's return on May 8, with a budget of \$9.2 million for 2025-2026.



Photo: N. Sergerie

The prefect of the Rocher-Percé MRC, Samuel Parisé.

We are increasing the number of ways to finance new social and affordable housing, we are being more agile, we are innovating, and we are taking action to accelerate the issuance of permits," the minister's office noted.

"This is a good start. I think the work we have done to be able to claim certain amounts for our more vulnerable population has been heard. It is not enough because the needs are growing," rejoiced the prefect of the Rocher-Percé MRC, Samuel Parisé, who has been fighting for several years to obtain support for housing. In Rocher-Percé, there are 134 active housing files.

"We'll have to continue the work and ensure we have more funds for the future,"

added the prefect.

The Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Bonaventure believes the program's return is good news for the region.

Catherine Blouin indicates that in the Rocher-Percé, Bonaventure, and Avignon MRCs, 105 dwellings have benefited from the available funds.

"When we saw that there was a problem with RénoRégion following the budget, our elected officials made requests. I quickly contacted the Minister of Housing, and she got to work quickly," notes the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) MNA.

The Premier and the Minister of Finance were also sensitive to the situation, according to the elected official. The Fédération québécoise des municipalités will continue to work with Ms. Duranceau to restore the program's total budget of nearly \$20 million by the fall economic update and to further increase it in the next budget.

The Union des municipalités du Québec is pleased to see the program reactivated, even if the budget is smaller, adding that it will need to be increased quickly to meet demands.

"Everyone understands the difficult budgetary context we're facing. That's what we've been able to do for now. We'll continue the process for the next fiscal year," says Ms. Blouin.

900 more jobs in April in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands

Nelson Sergerie
GASPÉ - According to Statistics Canada, approximately 900 jobs were created in April in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands.

A total of 36,000 people were employed in April, compared with 35,100 in March. Of these, 29,200 were full-time positions, an increase of 400 from March, and 1,900 more than in April 2024. About 6,900 jobs were part-time positions.

The number of unemployed individuals declined by 300 compared to March, bringing the total to 5,100.

As a result, the unemployment rate fell from 13.3% in March to 12.4% in April. In comparison, the rate was 11% in April 2024. This difference can be explained by an increased number of people looking for work.

The labour force (the total number of people either working or looking for work) stood at 41,100 in April, up from 38,300 a year earlier.

General Annual Assembly of the Expropriated People of Forillon



The Association of the Expropriated People of Forillon and their Descendants invites you to its AGM on Tuesday, June 12, 2025 at 7 p.m. at the Auberge de La petite école in Cap-aux-os.

Please share this invitation with friends and family!

UPA launches seeding season under a beaming sun

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Some board members of the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) branch serving the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands farmers gathered in Carleton on May 15 to officially launch the 2025 seeding season. Despite the fact that the agriculture sector has been hit hard by a tough situation over the last few years, the new season still brings promises.

UPA Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine president Sylvain Arbour, a sheep farmer based in Bonaventure, easily conceded that producing costs have risen sharply over the years, and that there are sharp discrepancies in other costs, such as the 10-cent diesel fuel difference between the region and New Brunswick farmers.

“Yes, there is a lot of bad news, but we also see some beautiful initiatives. The more we buy local food, the more we reduce greenhouse gases,” he stressed, referring to the fact that the agriculture sector is trying to reduce its environmental imprint.

Denis Richard, a dairy and sheep producer based in Saint-Omer who is vice-president of UPA’s regional branch, was glad to attend the May 15 seeding season launch at La Cigale et la Fourmi organic farm.

“It is a beautiful example of how to use the land. They grow vegetables and they sell it locally,” said Mr. Richard.

La Cigale et la Fourmi own-

ers, Mélanie Rousseau and Nicolas Audet, have slowly but steadily developed their business, and they add ready-to-eat food and catering to their garden revenue. The farm employs five, sometimes six people for a period of up to 25 weeks per year, in addition to the owners.

“Springtime is always feverish. Our energy comes back with the increasing light,” mentions Nicolas Audet.

“During the winter, we do a lot of planning. We produce conservation vegetables and we sell through the Baie-des-Saveurs network,” adds Mélanie Rousseau.

During the summer and the fall, their organic farm mainly sells to Carleton and Maria customers, and to New Richmond people to a lesser extent.

“We sell baskets of vegetables to 150 households and the balance of our production to other people who show up to our kiosk, located in public places, according to a determined schedule. We never refuse to add a household interested in buying (for a season) a basket because this household might buy it for 10, 15 or 20 years. We also sell to tourists and we sell at (Saint Siméon based) Ferme Bourdages,” explains Nicolas Audet.

Their farm covers 5 acres. About half of it is in production this year, as the rest is fallow land in preparation for 2026, when this year’s land will recover, in agricultural terms, for



Regional UPA vice-president Denis Richard, who is sheep and dairy producer; Mélanie Rousseau, co-owner of La Cigale et la Fourmi organic vegetable farm; Nicolas Audet, co-owner of La Cigale et la Fourmi farm organic market gardener and a board member of UPA Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine; and Sylvain Arbour, sheep producer and president of the regional UPA, gathered on May 15 in Carleton’s second range to launch officially the 2025 seeding season.

Photo: G. Gagné

the ensuing year.

“La Cigale et la Fourmi’s team cultivates 30 varieties of vegetables, 15 types of herbs and between eight and ten varieties of fruit,” states Mélanie Rousseau.

Regional figures

After several years of decline, the number of agricultural businesses in the region increased to 242 as of April 2025, compared to 234 in 2021. For comparison, the region had 265 businesses in 2013. A breakdown by territory shows:

For the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC, there are 14 agricultural businesses, compared to 15 in 2017. The Haute-Gaspésie MRC stands out for its increase in the number of businesses,

rising from 19 to 29 between 2017 and 2025. In the Rocher-Percé MRC, there are 29 businesses in 2023, the same number as in 2021 and down from 33 in 2017.

For the two MRCs in the Bay of Chaleur area, the number of businesses has remained stable since 2017. In the Avignon MRC, there are 59 agricultural businesses. For its part, the Bonaventure MRC has the largest number of agricultural businesses in the region with 87 farms.

In the Magdalen Islands region, the number of businesses has decreased from 27 in 2017 to 24 in 2025.

Farm income and the labour market

According to the regional

profile of the bio-food industry, market revenues reached \$30 million in 2021. Milk, maple syrup production, and vegetable production accounted for 47% of market revenues in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands region.

For Quebec, the agricultural sector, which is present in all regions, generates 60,300 jobs and a \$4.5 billion annual contribution to the gross domestic product.

According to a Sanscartier study carried out in 2022, the agricultural sector has significant growth potential for the coming years, with an estimated 20% growth by 2030.

This increase, if realized, would generate additional economic benefits of \$1.6 billion to the province's gross domestic product.

Chandler: Minister Laforest cannot intervene in Councillor Godbout's case

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - Quebec’s Minister of Municipal Affairs cannot intervene to remove Chandler’s Newport Ward Councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout from his duties.

This is what Minister Andrée Laforest’s press secretary, Élodie Masson, stated following Mayor Gilles Daraïche’s request at the May public meeting, which called on the Minister to intervene to force the resignation of the councillor accused of violent crimes.

“The Minister cannot intervene. The Quebec Municipal Commission can and has already done so by having him declared provisionally incapacitated by the Superior Court in

2024,” wrote Ms. Masson. The press secretary is referring to the accusations filed following a UPAC (Permanent Anti-Corruption Unit) investigation while the councillor was pro-mayor of Chandler during the suspension of former mayor Louisette Langlois in 2021. UPAC estimated the fraud at approximately \$10,000.

By mutual agreement with the Municipal Commission, he stepped down from council a year ago with pay while the matter was being resolved in court. It was agreed that the councillor would reimburse the town for the salary he received and legal bills if he were ever found guilty.

“As for the request for removal, it can only be made if he is found guilty by the judge

during the court trial. If that is the case, the CMQ can then initiate an ineligibility action, but not before,” says Ms. Masson.

Gilles Daraïche has already publicly called for the Newport councillor’s resignation, but so far, nothing has happened.

So far, there has been no word from the councillor on his intentions, even though the mayor has asked the councillor’s lawyer for her client’s intentions.

Since the May council meeting, Mr. Godbout has not received any compensation following the adoption of a notice of motion to stop the compensation of a councillor who is absent from the town council. In Chandler, a councillor receives \$2,171 per month.

Bruno-Pierre Godbout was

arrested on April 15 by the Sûreté du Québec. The 36-year-old man faces 12 charges related to sexual assault, assault with a weapon, assault, unlawful confinement, and criminal harassment following an arrest warrant. The events allegedly occurred between 2010 and 2025 in Bonaventure, Gaspé, Newport, Saint-Nérée-de-Bellechasse and Montreal. A publication ban was issued to protect the victims’ identities. Upon his arrest, the Sûreté du Québec alleged that Mr. Godbout had used his notoriety to contact his victims.

On April 25, the court ruled that the accused would remain in custody for the duration of the proceedings. After taking the decision under advisement, Judge Denis Paradis sided with

the criminal prosecutor, finding that the accused’s release would undermine public confidence, that he faces a sentence of between five and ten years in prison, and that the evidence presented during the bail hearing appeared credible.

On May 13, Ariane Cayer confirmed that her client would opt for a trial due to the nature of the case, the number of victims, and the voluminous evidence. The trial, whose date has yet to be set, is expected to last a week before a judge alone. Mr. Godbout will return to court on June 23.

In addition to being a municipal councillor, Mr. Godbout worked at the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre as a physical rehabilitation therapist.

Eastern Energy Alliance launches solar energy

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS - The Eastern Energy Alliance, which also has solar expertise in its portfolio, will submit proposals as part of the call for tenders launched by Hydro-Québec to acquire solar energy.

The alliance is positioning itself as the government-owned company orders 300 megawatts of solar photovoltaic power over the next year.

The government-owned company held a technical conference on the subject in mid May and established a schedule for submitting proposals.

"We are closely monitoring the upcoming call for tenders for solar energy. We have already identified municipal land in Eastern Quebec suitable for solar panels." We've already targeted the former technical landfills that are closed. It's something we have in the pipeline," says Simon Deschênes, president of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Intermunicipal Energy Board, which is a member of the Alliance.

Mr. Deschênes, who also



Photo: Simon Deschênes' Facebook page

Eastern Energy Alliance is recognized by the UMQ.

serves as the mayor of Saint-Anne-des-Monts, confirmed the Alliance's intent to move forward "I can confirm that projects will be submitted by the Eastern Energy Alliance and its partners. There is work currently being developed."

According to the implementation schedule published by Hydro-Québec, after the technical conference, groups

interested in participating in a call for tenders have until July 21 to register. The submission period for a request for technical guidance will begin on June 2, 2025, and for any request submitted before October 1, Hydro-Québec guarantees that the interested party will receive a response before January 30, 2026.

The question and answer

period will end on March 17, 2026. The deadline for submitting bids is March 31, 2026.

The public opening of bids will be held on April 1, 2026.

Recognition

The 15 organizations united under the Eastern Energy Alliance, which includes the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Intermunicipal Energy Board, have just won the Consultation and Collaboration Award as part of the 20th edition of the Union of Quebec Municipalities, Municipal Ovation Award. The Union of Quebec Municipalities presented this award at the end of its annual conference on May 16 in Quebec City.

"Our movement is a testament to our extensive consultation and collaboration. Having consultation within a single MRC can sometimes be a challenge, but we are a group that brings together 15 MRCs,

including a First Nation and a maritime community. To receive this recognition from our peers makes us feel happy and successful," says Mr. Deschênes.

The Alliance already has 330 megawatts in operation, and is set to commission 1,200 megawatts won in recent calls for tenders, and a mutually agreed partnership with Hydro-Québec that will generate a total of 2,700 megawatts.

"Currently, we have begun construction on a few (wind) farms, and there are hearings being held by the Bureau d'audiences publique en environnement (BAPE). "For the moment, there aren't too many issues because we're doing things correctly, particularly to achieve local acceptance. But it's the way we operate, we're already conducting environmental impact studies and demonstrating our seriousness about making the energy transition in Quebec," says Mr. Deschênes.

Lobster price increased over weeks 2 and 3

GILLES GAGNÉ

SAINT-GODEFROI - The price of lobster paid to Gaspé Peninsula fishermen increased to \$7.24 and then \$7.42 per pound during the second and third weeks of the season. Those prices followed the initial base price of \$7 per pound paid by the processing plants for the first week of fishing.

That base price was an ap-

proximate figure that could not take into account the price paid to the Magdalen Islands fishermen because their season only kicked off on May 5, a week later than in the Gaspé Peninsula.

The Magdalen Islands price is based on an accounting equation taking into account the price paid by urban centre buyers and the price received on the market. It was adopted

by Gaspesian lobster fishermen a few years before the pandemic.

Roch Lelièvre, president of the Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan processing plant in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, points out that the demand for lobster is moderate "but products are still sent out. The catches are also down a bit because of the weather. It is harder for the fishermen based in the Percé area. It is also bad on the New Brunswick side, where two full days of fishing were cancelled," he says.

The retail price has not changed at all at his processing plant's fish market since the beginning of the season, also points out Roch Lelièvre. In addition to buying lobster from 14 Gaspé Peninsula fishermen, the company buys lobster from approximately 50 New Brunswick fishermen.

His plant employs 230 people. Currently, between 80% and 90% of the lobsters arriving at the facility are processed, rather than sold live.



Photo: G. Gagné

Lobster catches are slow in materializing so far this year because of capricious weather.



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19 cruise ships will come to Gaspé in 2025

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - According to Escale Gaspésie, the "regular season" for cruises in Gaspé, began on May 11 with the organization anticipating 19 stops over the summer season.

This means Gaspé can expect a visit from approximately 12,576 cruise ship passengers and 6,272 crew members. The ships will anchor in the waters of Gaspé Bay. Smaller ships will dock at the Sandy Beach wharf.

This is better than the 2024 season, when 8,828 passengers and 5,922 crew members visited the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula.

Escale Gaspésie believes the destination is in a trough. "We're experiencing a dip compared to 2023. We were talking about 26 ships; in 2024, we had 22. We thought we were correcting our forecast, but since the companies book three years in advance, 2025 takes us back to 2022, when Escale Gaspésie had no leads or contacts for cruise lines. This dip may be

linked to this lack of availability to respond to cruise lines and promote their services," says Escale Gaspésie's manager, Igor Urban. The year 2022 coincided with the departure of Stéphane Sainte-Croix, who became the Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé.

Two new ships will make their first stop in Gaspé this summer. On August 31, the Norwegian Cruise Line's Norwegian Jewel will anchor in Gaspé Bay with its 2,400 passengers and 1,100 crew members, and Azmara's Azmara Quest will stop on September 15 with its 710 passengers and 408 crew members.

"These are companies we love and have been working with for a long time. The Norwegian Jewel is a big ship. It cancelled last year, but we hope it will come this year," says Mr. Urban.

Another large ship is expected in the fall: the Arcadia, of P&O Cruise, with its 2,388 passengers and 869 crew members.

The season will end on Oc-

tober 27 with the Pearl Mist, which will stop four times at the Sandy Beach dock with its 206 passengers and 60 crew members. The schedule doesn't take into account the difficulties ships may encounter in the Atlantic, particularly storms or hurricanes rising from the south.

"The weather can work against us, but also in our favour. That's one of the arguments we present to cruise lines. We're a safe stopover area weather-wise. We always refer to Jacques Cartier, who came here to take refuge during a storm. The lines know this, and if there's a problem, we want to become the safe haven," says Mr. Urban.

So far, 25 stops have already been confirmed for the 2026 regular season.

Last winter, Ponant purchased dozens of pallets of food from Gaspé during the first winter stopover adventure in Gaspé. However, that won't be the case this summer, but Escale Gaspésie is working on the idea.

"We've opened up channels



Photo: N. Sergerie

of communication that we didn't have before." This is one of the projects I'm currently working on with the company that supplies the ships, which supply the vessels in the St. Lawrence. To create connections with what we can offer from Gaspé," suggests the manager. Gaspé could become a place to do "one last grocery shop" before heading south. Refueling is currently done in Montreal and Quebec City.

"The companies that supply

the ships have seized the opportunity they have to get fresh supplies from Gaspé rather than sending fresh fish or shellfish to Montreal to load onto the ship and then return here. We're working on that. These are discussions to change habits. It's a long-term project," explains Mr. Urban. The winter experience has opened doors to such ideas and if Escale Gaspésie ever succeeds in this feat, the benefits would be much greater in the region.

Cruises generate \$2M in economic spinoffs

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ: - The economic spinoffs from the cruise ship industry in Gaspé are estimated at \$2 million, according to a study conducted by Aviséo Conseil on behalf of Croisières du Saint-Laurent.

This is the first time a Quebec-based firm has examined the spinoffs, although such a study is conducted every four years by the association, which brings together nine ports of call in Quebec.

To compile the data, 1,350 cruise passengers were surveyed in September and October of 2024 to produce this portrait.

"For Gaspé, we're talking about \$2.2 million in expenditures incurred by cruise lines, ports, passengers, and crew members. "The direct impact is estimated at \$2 million," says Croisières du Saint-Laurent director René Trépanier.

Per cruise passengers, the average was established at \$152 in Gaspé, compared to \$364 on average for the entire province of Quebec.

"This is a significant increase compared to 2019. For Gaspé, since the sample is a little smaller, it should be taken with a grain of salt. Economists told us this figure could be double. We think it could be double or even triple. I think Gaspé is getting closer to the provincial average. I think we could say \$300 for Gaspé," says Mr. Trépanier.

September and October are the busiest months for the cruise ship industry.

"There are quantifiable impacts. 90% of our market is outside Quebec and 67% is American." "Thousands of Americans will be disembarking, and the key is to be friendly because they represent a significant source of revenue for our regions," emphasizes the director, with a nod to the situation that has prevailed since Donald Trump's return to the White House.

Gaspé has a unique feature: the port receives smaller ships with wealthier clientele. "Half of the cruise passengers in Gaspé came from luxury ships. Nearly 3,500 passen-

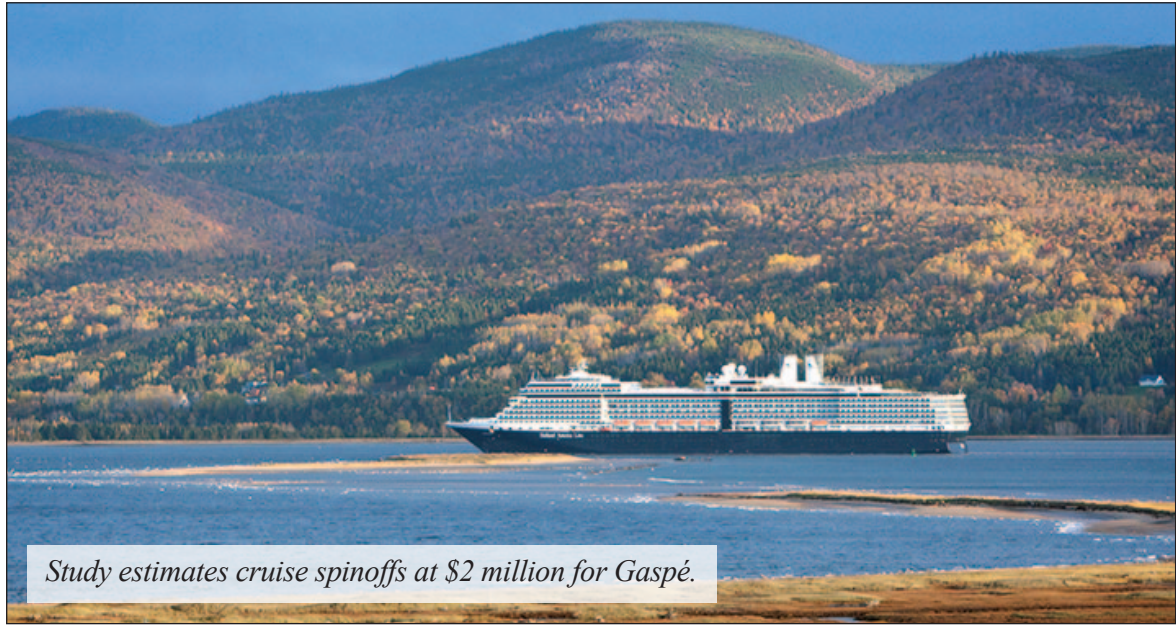


Photo: N. Sergerie

gers were in this category. The size of the wallet is inversely proportional to the size of the ship," notes Mr. Trépanier.

Cruise ships are categorized into four types: contemporary, premium, luxury, and luxury expedition.

Winter cruises could generate more economic spinoffs in the future as well.

"We've fine-tuned the offerings tailored to this clientele. The Gaspé stopover performed very well. The offerings were diversified. This

generates more spinoffs," he says. Making the destination a four-season destination is the next goal.

"I believe that ports of call like Gaspé can accommodate more ships. Twenty-two ships in Gaspé is a minimum. We could really double or triple that number in the coming years. We're developing strategies to that end. We're going to work across all four seasons and have ships even in winter," suggests Mr. Trépanier.

The region's fishing season, particularly for crab and lobster, could also be an excellent catalyst for attracting ships.

"We're going to focus on off-peak periods to attract ships and demonstrate that there's something for everyone in all seasons," suggests Mr. Trépanier.

Last year in Quebec, the cruise industry generated \$330 million in spinoffs, including \$192 million in direct revenue.

PIN ROUGE TOURIST RESORT:

Ski revenues increase by nearly 13%

Management plans for more partnerships

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – The Pin Rouge Tourist Resort ended last season with ski revenues up nearly 13%. The new management team is even reporting an increase in the year-end surplus of nearly \$200,000, although April's results have not been officially compiled.

Guy Desroches, president of the non-profit organization that is now Pin Rouge, attributes these results to the loyalty of regional customers, the resort's growing presence in the Maritime Provinces and Montreal, as well as the support of the Chaleur Bay business community over the past two years.

"The sustainability committee has worked very hard over the past two years. Our results also stem from last season's solid operational results, and from our constant pursuit of continuous improvement," says Mr. Desroches.

This sustainability committee was formed in early 2023 in response to a warning from New Richmond mayor Éric Dubé during the presentation of two consecutive municipal budgets, in December 2022 and December 2023.

He stated at the time that his municipal administration and the town's 3,800 residents could not, alone, cover the financial burden of the ski resort

whose annual fees were paid by the Town of New Richmond, at a rate of \$150,000 per year, partly shared between capital and interest.

When interest rates rose during the pandemic, the municipal administration had to gradually increase its annual contribution to \$225,000, just to cover the interest on the debt.

In 2024, following the commitment of the sustainability committee, the Town of New Richmond agreed to transfer this debt to the municipal government, under a borrowing by-law characterized by an interest rate 3% lower than that of a line of credit. This factor alone, combined with the decline in interest rates since the beginning of 2024, has contributed to increasing capital, or principal, payments to over \$100,000 per year.

Future Investments

Relieved of its debt, the sustainability committee has undertaken several steps to ensure Pin Rouge's autonomy. This autonomy aims in particular to launch a \$2.6 million investment program over three years. "We need to invest \$800,000 in developing a real family slope, \$700,000 in the chalets, especially the roofs, \$550,000 in optimizing our artificial snowmaking system, and \$230,000



Photos: G. Gagné

The number of opening days was 69 in 2024-2025, two fewer than the previous year, but still high considering the low snowfall in December and January.

financial institutions and municipal organizations contributed. Canada Economic Development contributed \$250,000 a few months ago, while Desjardins and the Bonaventure MRC recently announced contributions of \$350,000 and \$200,000 respectively. The \$220,000 generated by fall fundraising events pushes the available amount beyond \$1 million.

The search for funds will therefore continue. "We're waiting for announcements from the Quebec (the government). We'll also have to continue our fundraising activities in the community and work on the regionalization of Pin Rouge," explains Guy Desroches.

Reaching Gesgapegiag-like agreements with municipalities

This regionalization effort has taken a leap forward at the start of the 2024-2025 season thanks to the participation of the community of Gesgapegiag, in the acquisition of ski and tube tickets.

"Gesgapegiag has purchased season tickets for 200 members. In addition to promoting winter physical activity, it's a sign of the community's concrete desire to maintain the (Pin rouge) structure," says Gaëlle Gabin, director general of Pin Rouge.

Gaëlle Gabin and Guy Desroches would like to extend this commitment by the Mi-g-

maq of Gesgapegiag to municipalities in the Bonaventure MRC, a number of municipalities in the Avignon MRC and in the Rocher-Percé MRC, at least in Port-Daniel-Gascons and Chandler, where many skiers use Pin Rouge facilities.

"We believe it's possible to approach and convince other communities to get on board, as Gesgapegiag has done," says Mr. Desroches.

Some of the investments planned by the Pin Rouge Tourist Resort will be completed before the 2025-2026 season. This is particularly the case for a new layout for the family slope, the development of a training slope and a "magic carpet", a small ski lift specific to it.

"We're going to have a family slope worthy of the name. We have to give beginner skiers a chance. (...) Our family slope is narrow," notes Guy Desroches, aware that Pin Rouge sometimes loses customers to other ski centres with easier slopes.

He would like to see the snowmaking system optimized before the 2025-2026 season. "We have a Cadillac-like snowmaking system, but we need to work on the poles, the cannons. It's a \$550,000 project. We hope to complete it this year," notes Mr. Desroches.

The new poles targeted by Pin Rouge would be effective when the temperature is only -3 or -4 degrees, while the poles that have been in operation for years ideally need -10 degrees to be really effective.

Pin Rouge generates revenues of \$2.3 million to \$2.4 million annually. This figure includes revenue from the Pointe Taylor campground, located along the Chaleurs Bay. Starting in 2027, the campground will return to the Town of New Richmond, which will reduce Pin Rouge's revenue by \$200,000 to \$300,000 per year. Currently, Pin Rouge's lodging revenue reaches \$700,000 annually. Last season, 11,000 skiers hit the slopes, as well as 5,000 tube users, a record in the latter case.

"We're aiming for a 10% increase in skiing customers (within the three-year plan). The beginners' hill alone will have a huge impact," says Guy Desroches.

For practical reasons, Pin Rouge's fiscal year will now end on April 30, instead of being aligned with the calendar year, like municipalities. The main revenues will therefore be generated at the end of the fiscal year.

Guy Desroches specifies that Pin Rouge is now counting on greater borrowing capacity due to the transfer of the debt to the Town of New Richmond, a decision on paper that will be formalized in the next few weeks or months.

"That doesn't mean we want to borrow. We hope to be able to carry out investments without borrowing and limit contingencies," he assures, referring to unforeseen cost overrun, which have been common in all aspects of the construction sector in recent years.



Guy Desroches assures that Pin rouge "Is doing well and benefits from a solid organization."

serving most of the southern Gaspé Peninsula.

In 2023, Pin Rouge's long-term debt stood at \$2.9 million, dating back primarily to 2007, when 32 chalets were built at the foot of the slopes. The debt represented Pin Rouge's share of the total project, but it took the form of a line of credit

in an integrated operations management system," explains Guy Desroches.

Two fall activities, including a fundraising dinner in November 2024, brought in \$85,000 and \$135,000 respectively for the ski resort in citizen and business participation.

Then, the government, fi-

Robyn Lee Major, New Richmond's Volunteer of the Year in the 55 and under category

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – Robyn Lee Major's involvement in the Bluegrass Festival was recently recognized at the Town of New Richmond Recognition gala, held on April 28. Ms. Major received the volunteer of the year award presented to a volunteer under the age of 55.

During the presentation of the awards, it was mentioned that the winners particularly distinguished themselves within an organization or association through their commitment and community involvement.

In Robyn Lee Major's presentation, the Town of New Richmond stated that she has been a volunteer for several years with the New Richmond Bluegrass Festival, where she now serves as assistant director. She stands out for her commitment. She schedules and coordinates volunteers, manages entry, and lives on site 24/7 throughout the festival week to ensure everything runs smoothly. Her dedication and efficiency are greatly appreciated by all. She was thanked for her invaluable involvement.

Invited by SPEC to share her thoughts on the award, she promptly agreed: "I am so thankful to have been awarded the certificate for volunteer of the year under 55. I have been a part of the Bluegrass Festival in New Richmond for as long as I can remember. I



Robyn Lee Major received her volunteer of the year award from mayor Éric Dubé.

Photo: Courtesy of Nancy Cormier (Town of New Richmond)

started out very young alongside my best friend who I am proud to call my mother. Unfortunately she passed away September of 2021, which left a large hole in our bluegrass family. In my head, I wasn't sure if I could continue volunteering without my mother, but in my heart, I knew that's where she wanted me to be, and where, in spirit, she would always be. For those who know, know. Where the Bluegrass takes place is something you have to experience to understand how beautiful and magical it is. It's like time comes to a stop for a week, and you just get lost in the music and the people. It's where strangers become friends, and friends turn into family that come back year after year. I am more than honoured to be a

part of what I hope never comes to an end", she says.

The theme of the New Richmond Volunteer Recognition Gala was "On the Road to

Volunteering." More than 50 individuals and organizations were recognized for their commitment.

Several other volunteers were nominated, and their contributions to the community highlighted during the event, with ten receiving honourable mentions. Beside Robyn Lee Major, the other winners are: **Emerging Volunteer:** Léo Tirat and Malie Lapointe, for their involvement at the New Richmond Youth Centre.

Coach of the Year: Julie Boudreau, for her involvement in minor hockey and youth softball.

Event of the Year: The 50+ Games — Gaspésie — Îles-de-la-Madeleine, organized by the New Richmond 50+ Club.

Recognition Award: Solange Hébert, a volunteer who has dedicated much of her time to the 50+ Club.

Volunteer of the Year, 56 and Over: Jean-Marc Cormier, for his dedication and involvement in numerous organizations.

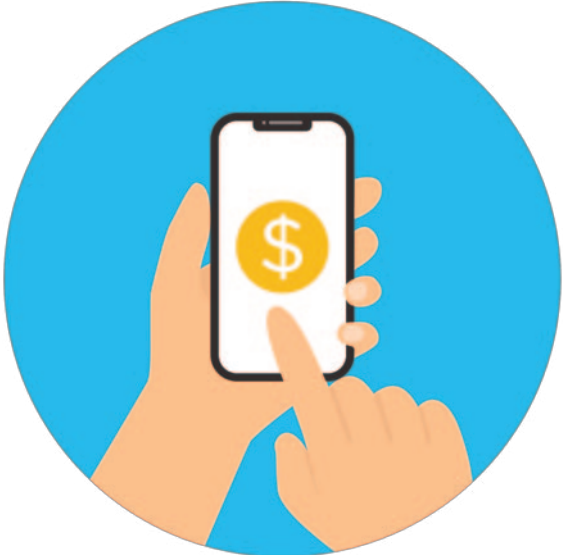
Organization of the Year Award: Ciné Bobine, the cinema club for organizing their 50th anniversary.

Regional Recognition Award: Mélissa Thibodeau, for her involvement in reviving women's softball.



Individual Recognition Award: Jackie Cyr, a volunteer who has dedicated much of her life to volunteering and has become a key player in the Town of New Richmond.

The celebration allowed the Town of New Richmond to thank its volunteers for their valuable contribution to the community and to highlight the importance of ongoing community engagement.

The Gaspé Spec can now accept payment by e-transfer



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CASA'S 50TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year marks a special milestone for CASA as we celebrate 50 years of accomplishments. Join us for a memorable Annual General Meeting, where we will highlight CASA's achievements over the years.

Date: Sunday, June 29, 2025
Time: 4:00PM-6:00PM
Location: Centre Culturel de Paspébiac,
5, Blvd Gerard D Levesque East

Please RSVP by
Friday, June 20, 2025:
Ashley Renouf
418-752-5995 Ext. 107
ashley@casa-gaspe.com

LET'S CELEBRATE CASA'S LEGACY AND
TOAST TO THE NEXT 50 YEARS!

1976-1977 period marked by broader content and the election of the Parti Québécois

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – The second year of the Gaspé SPEC, from May 1976 to May 1977, went a bit more smoothly, publication-wise. Readers have to be patient though, as the SPEC goes two-and-a-half months without issuing a paper between May 29 and August 16. From mid-August though, things start picking up.

Bernie Saint-Laurent leaves the Gaspé coast towards the end of the first year and Ann Vautier and Gérard Vallières taken on more responsibilities in writing articles and coordinating stringers and volunteers. The SPEC occasionally calls on citizens to submit volunteer write-ups, and they oblige.

The content remains thoroughly interesting for anyone curious about regional history. *Here are some examples...*

Vol. 2 No 3 September 6, 1976

- The content of that issue is remarkable. In fact, a reader sent a letter in the ensuing publication to underline the improvement in the content.
- Page 3 presents a set of shorts taken from national news, like a group of bikers from Drummondville, Sorel and Trois-Rivières is awaiting a trial; the launch of Atlantic Lottery; a swine flu case in London, Ontario; the death of Pacifique « Pax » Plante, Montreal's former crime-busting hero; Hydro Québec's rates that are supposed to go up; the ordeal of Quebec City woman Marie-Andrée Leclerc, charged with complicity in 12 murders that took place in India; and the halt in Big Ben, the huge London, England clock, for maintenance purposes after 117 years of constant ticking!
- The September 6 issue is also the scene of the first Baie des Chaleurs crossing of the 14 miles spanning between Grande-Anse, New Brunswick and Paspebiac by a swimmer. The title of the article, "some kind of a hard

swim too..." comes from a quote of Clyde, an unidentified person accompanying the just as unidentified SPEC reporter aboard Herbie Hackett's boat. That boat went to locate for reporting purposes Jon Erickson, a 22-year-old professional long-distance swimmer from Chicago. The weather was so bad that day that he was "bobbing up and down in the water" when he stopped to eat and drink. In Paspebiac, up to 10,000 people were waiting for him and Réjean Lacoursière, a Quebec legend who had to pull out of the swim after six miles because of cramps. Mr. Lacoursière, who died recently, had previously swam the 36 miles across the English Channel when he attempted the Baie des Chaleurs crossing.

The crossing was made in November-like weather, through high winds and waves of up to 10 feet. Instead of landing at the 14-mile beach in Paspebiac, Jon Erickson reached the shore line at New Carlisle's Green, "doing what old-salt fishermen from St. Godefroi to Caplan have sworn for years could never be done."

- Harold G. Ascah, former secretary of the Gaspé South Telecasting Syndicate, a cooperative, tells the story of setting up antennas so that the Gaspé town and part of the Percé population could get a decent television signal from the ATV channel, all the way from Upsalquitch Lake, New Brunswick, near the Restigouche River. Mr. Ascah's story starts in April 1962. His group received a hand from Yvan Fortier (misspelled Yvon in the article) an engineer from the CKBL radio and tel-



Winning horse, Shedy Direct with owner-jockey Regis Soucy, of Chandler.

Vol. 2, No. 4

evision station in Matane.

Mr. Fortier gave some technical support to the Gaspé group, notably by climbing Mount Bechervaise with members of Mr. Ascah's cooperative and used his technical tools to give them some advice.

As of September 1976, the cooperative was still active in making the appropriate steps to improve the English television signal.

- The same Gaspé town based reporter attended the coroner hearing about the Percé tragedy, which claimed 12 lives on August 16, 1976. One of the victims was René Méthot, a local resident who had organized a sea outing for ten tourists from France in a 14-foot that was built for six people at most. The excursion was organized quickly. A witness at the coroner Stanislas Déry's hearings couldn't believe that the group was really going at sea with the intent of reaching Bonaventure Island.

The other local victim was "Ti-Blanc" Charles-Eugène Langlois, who, according to witness Alain Archambault, "asked if there was anybody

onboard who knew how to swim and they all had a good laugh over that." He said that the boat's freeboard was just ten inches above the water. As the small boat passed along a dragger, a crew member of the fishing boat offered a life jacket to the tourists and they refused them. The waves reached 12 and 15 feet that afternoon between the Percé wharf and Bonaventure Island.

- Matapedia's Gordon Adams took care of the history side of that issue by submitting an article called «the meeting of the waters». It is about the history of the Matapedia stretches covering 150 years.

Vol. 2 No 4 October 1, 1976

- Road accidents and fires keep claiming lives in the Gaspé Peninsula, and four anglophones of the Gaspé town area were killed in such tragedies in September.
- The SPEC starts publishing in this issue a series of articles written by local teachers who had participated the previous summer in a course offered by

Concordia University and held at the Gaspé CEGEP. Elaine Jones starts the series with a long three-page article featuring the history of L'Anse-aux-Cousins. Some details about the Coffin, Davis, Patterson and Annett families of Gaspé are presented in the write-up.

- Mary Vautier, with the text, and Lloyd Burrows, with the photos, present a two-and-a-half-page article on the Shigawake Fair.

It is interesting to note that Camille Huard, a Saint-François-de-Pabos boxer who represented Canada at the Montreal Summer Olympics two months before the release of the paper, started a "news from Chandler" sports column. Mr. Huard, who has been living in Gaspé for decades, was featured in the May 28, 1976 (Volume 2, number 1) issue of the SPEC, prior to the Olympic Games.

- There is still a horse race track in Gaspé in 1976! The Gaspé Trotting Association finished off its season with record attendance at the race.

Next page



Vol. 2, No. 3

Volume 2, Number 3 excerpt

u.i.c. for fishermen

Starting this year, fishermen will be eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits a month earlier than usual. That is, starting the first week of November rather than December.

Fishermen will now be eligible to receive the maximum number of weeks of unemployment insurance - up to 24 weeks rather than 10 or 12 weeks that they were eligible to receive in the past.

1976-1977...

Vol. 2 No 5
October 25, 1976

- There are titles on the front page of SPEC instead of a just a big photo with no hint of the content. The titles are: "everybody's moving to the city – but some are coming back", then "karate on the coast" and "the C.B.C. in trouble over the Coffin affair."

- The "coming home" series is about a sociology research study conducted by Steve Tribble.

- The C.B.C. article reports on the coverage given by the Radio-Canada station in Matane to a rumour stating that the Jeep mentioned by Gaspé-based prospector Wilbert Coffin during his 1954 trial had recently been found about 20 miles from Murdochville. Wilbert Coffin was hanged on February 10, 1956, for the murder of three American hunters. The evidence presented at trial was circumstantial. Mr. Coffin mentioned at his trial that the American hunters had introduced him to two men also from the United States, who drove a Jeep. Those men and the Jeep were never seen between the 1953 discovery of the American hunters' bodies and the prospector's trial. It must also be mentioned that the Quebec Provincial Police never investigated the murders in depth and limited its work to the clues linking Mr. Coffin to the victims. In SPEC's report, the Quebec Police Force is considering laying criminal charges against Radio-Canada, which never happened. That coverage, also picked up by nationally known newspapers and electronic media, provided a new generation with information about the Coffin Affair.
- Brenda Lemieux publishes a interesting feature of Nelson Vardon, a boat builder born in 1899 in Malbay.

Vol. 2 No 6
November 19, 1976

- This issue was released four days after the election of the Parti Québécois, a cause of anxiety for the English-Speaking population. However, the issue presents the platform of



Top photo: Ann and Mike O'Neil of Sandy Beach doing their civic duty. Left photo: Carol and Bert Laugh of Shigawake. Right top to bottom: Members of the Hottot family from Shigawake. Henry Wright discusses the situation with Eddie Vautier. Gloria Hayes with a lunch for her husband. The young lad can't vote but he can see what's going on.

the parties, even though the election is over, and some results.

- The Quebec Association of Protestant Teachers Don Peacock, while not sharing the new government language policy, was looking for a "more just" government "conscious of the rights of all workers." The SPEC ran many pictures of voting day, taken by Carol Streigan and Beverly Vibert. Today's readers might recognize Henry "Ted" Wright and Gloria Hayes among the citizens shown in the paper.

- Gérard Vallières wrote an editorial trying to calm down the context triggered by the election of a Parti Québécois government. Meanwhile, Bill 22, adopted by the previous Liberal Party government of Robert Bourassa, keeps raising the ire of Quebec anglophones.
- Brenda Lemieux runs another human-interest story about people living in Barachois, entitled "back home in barachois."

Vol. 2 No 7
December 21, 1976

- The SPEC runs a long feature of Lorna Clark Miller about "the history of lumbering in wakeham." The news-

Vol. 2, No.6

Miller in Murdochville, June M. McColm in Black Cape and long-time SPEC proof-reader Irene Dallain, in New Carlisle. Paul Campbell runs cartoons in the paper.

- An in-depth feature shows how "Canadian finance companies with branch offices on the Gaspé Coast are lending money to people who do not have the ability to pay it back."

Vol. 2 No 9
February 10, 1977

- An article reports that CN experienced four derailments between Chandler and Gaspé in January. There is a feature on minor hockey and winter carnivals' duchesses. Brenda Lemieux runs an article about the English section of the Gaspé CEGEP. Brad Syvret runs three full pages on the Syvret family and Malbay. There are basketball results presented by Pat Drohan, who became a stellar coach in the ensuing years. The brand new Mount Bechervaise ski centre takes a full-page ad in the SPEC!

Vol. 2 No 10
February 10, 1977

- This issue features a Salmon Association Conference, a student residence issue at the Gaspé CEGEP, Member of Parliament Alexandre Cyr's opposition to CN's intention to

concentrate its freight services in Campbellton and reduce those in Gaspé, and a Gaspé gymnast's win in a Rimouski meet.

- The newspaper's social notes can now count on three regular contributors, E.G. Watt in Port Daniel, Eleanor Sauson in Shigawake and Ruth Patterson in Wakeham.

Vol. 2 No 11
March 28, 1977

- There is report on an initiative intended to send Chandler English high school students to Gaspé, and an article entitled "How you gonna keep'em down on the farm" about the hardship of agriculture.

Vol. 2 No 12
February 10, 1977

- An article entitled "A mine in Port Daniel" presents Imperial Oil's exploration campaign to find minerals. There is very little reference to hydrocarbons, the main sector of the firm's activities. Another article reports that school enrollment is down in the region.
- SPEC's social notes now include contributions from St. Catharines' Dorothy Clark and Welland's Vera Ollson. A Tuna festival is organized in Port Daniel and former train station Lionel J. Boudreau presents all the characteristics of the Gaspé Peninsula stations.

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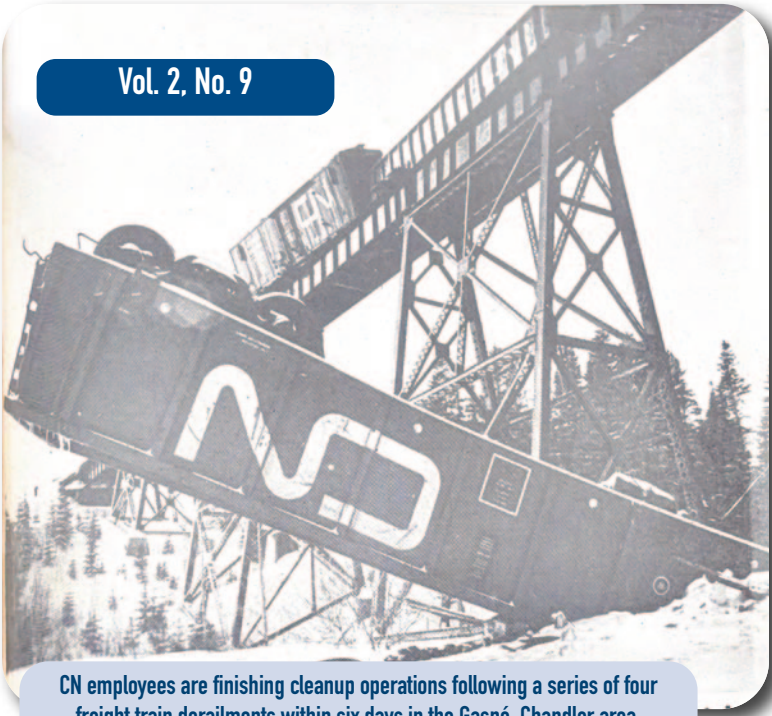
● Gilles Gagné

NEW CARLISLE – The 1976 election of the Parti Québécois became for years a source of debate in Quebec, and Premier René Lévesque fulfilled a commitment made before and repeated following his first electoral win by holding a referendum on sovereignty on May 20, 1980, so 45 years and a few days ago. The “Yes” side lost by a clear margin, as it collected a tad under 41% of the votes, compared to 59% for the “No” side.

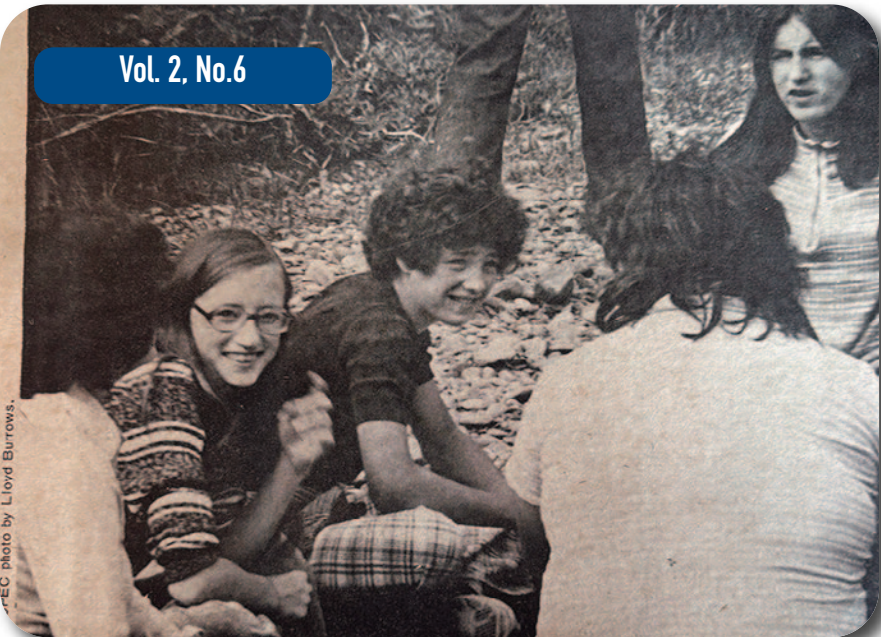
A second referendum was organized on October 30, 1995, and the score was much closer, as only 50,000 votes, for a 1% difference, separated the two options.

Despite its first referendum failure in May 1980, the Parti Québécois was nevertheless re-elected with a majority in April 1981, but that second term was much harder, as it started in a context of world-wide recession. The Parti Québécois held power until 1985, and came back between September 1994 and April 2003, and again between September 2012 and April 2014.

As of May 2025, the party is leading in surveys. However, the next Quebec election is only scheduled for October 2026. Recently, the sovereignty option was favoured by about 33 to 35% of Quebecers.



CN employees are finishing cleanup operations following a series of four freight train derailments within six days in the Gaspé-Chandler area.



Do you remember the annual B.P.S walk at the beginning of the school year? Here's a photo and caption from the 1976 outing.

The new school year began for the English students at the Bonaventure Polyvalent with the traditional outing. This year, about 225 students hiked through the woods along the Bonaventure River. Photographed above from left to right are Francis Main; Pat Belisle; Marielle Desbiens; Elizabeth Walker (back to camera) and Ila Main.



Dean Anez, Nevin Gilker and Darin Prentice.

1976 TV GUIDE

ROBIN

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SUNDAY OCTOBER 10	MONDAY OCTOBER 11	TUESDAY OCTOBER 12	WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 12	THURSDAY OCTOBER 14	FRIDAY OCTOBER 15	SATURDAY OCTOBER 16
8:30 Univ. of the Air	7:00 Univ. of the Air	8:30 Headline Hunters	7:00 Univ. of the Air	7:00 Univ. of the Air	7:00 Univ. of the Air	12:00 Tree House
9:30 Children's Special	7:30 Pats and Pans	8:00 Police Woman	7:30 Pats and Pans	7:30 Pats and Pans	7:30 Pats and Pans	12:30 Wonders of the Wild
10:30 Our Canada	8:00 Canada AM	10:30 One Day At A Time	8:00 Canada AM	8:00 Canada AM	8:00 Canada AM	1:00 Funtown
11:30 Horst Koehler	10:00 Romper Room	11:30 As It Is	10:00 Romper Room	10:00 Romper Room	10:00 Romper Room	2:00 It's Your Move
12:00 Rex Humbard	11:00 Kreskin	12:00 CTV News	11:00 First Impressions	11:00 First Impressions	11:00 First Impressions	2:30 Red Fisher
1:00 Agape	12:00 Bobby Vinton	12:20 ATV Nightline	12:00 Leave it to Beaver	12:00 Leave it to Beaver	12:00 Leave it to Beaver	3:00 CFL Football
2:00 Faith and Music	1:00 Six Million \$ Man	12:30 Joyce Davidson	12:30 Spiderman	12:30 Spiderman	12:30 Spiderman	
2:30 Garner Ted Armstrong	2:00 Sonny and Cher	1:00 Definition	1:00 Midday Matinee	1:00 Midday Matinee	1:00 Midday Matinee	
3:00 Travel Is	3:00 Kojak	1:30 The Practice	1:30 Women's Show	1:30 Women's Show	1:30 Women's Show	
3:30 Sunday Movie	4:00 W-5	2:00 The Practice	2:30 Alan Hamel Show	2:30 Alan Hamel Show	2:30 Alan Hamel Show	
4:00 Lawrence Welk	4:00 CTV News	2:30 The Practice	3:00 Another World	3:00 Another World	3:00 Another World	
4:30 Last of the Wild	4:30 ATV Nightline	3:00 The Practice	4:00 Flintstones	4:00 Flintstones	4:00 Flintstones	
5:00 Question Period	5:00 Joyce Davidson	3:30 The Practice	5:00 I.D.	5:00 I.D.	5:00 I.D.	
5:30 Kreskin	5:30 Holiday Fare	4:00 The Practice	5:30 News/Weather/Sports	5:30 News/Weather/Sports	5:30 News/Weather/Sports	
6:00 Bobby Vinton	6:00 Univ. of the Air	4:30 The Practice	6:00 News/Weather/Sports	6:00 News/Weather/Sports	6:00 News/Weather/Sports	
6:30 Six Million \$ Man	6:30 Pats and Pans	5:00 The Practice	6:30 Price is Right	6:30 Price is Right	6:30 Price is Right	
7:00 Sonny and Cher	7:00 Canada AM	5:30 The Practice	7:00 Bionic Woman	7:00 Bionic Woman	7:00 Bionic Woman	
7:30 Kojak	7:30 Romper Room	6:00 The Practice	7:30 Grand Old Country	7:30 Grand Old Country	7:30 Grand Old Country	
8:00 W-5	8:00 Yoga	6:30 The Practice	8:00 Grand Old Country	8:00 Grand Old Country	8:00 Grand Old Country	
8:30 CTV News	8:30 First Impressions	7:00 The Practice	8:30 Counterpoint	8:30 Counterpoint	8:30 Counterpoint	
9:00 ATV Nightline	9:00 Leave it to Beaver	7:30 The Practice	9:00 Wed. Night Movie	9:00 Wed. Night Movie	9:00 Wed. Night Movie	
9:30 Joyce Davidson	9:30 Spiderman	8:00 The Practice	9:30 Liam Clancy	9:30 Liam Clancy	9:30 Liam Clancy	
1:00 Holiday Fare	10:00 W-5	8:30 The Practice	10:00 McGowan and Company	10:00 McGowan and Company	10:00 McGowan and Company	
	10:30 CTV News	9:00 The Practice	10:30 CTV News	10:30 CTV News	10:30 CTV News	
	11:00 Women's Show	9:30 The Practice	11:00 CTV Nightline	11:00 CTV Nightline	11:00 CTV Nightline	
	11:30 Alan Hamel Show	10:00 The Practice	11:30 Joyce Davidson	11:30 Joyce Davidson	11:30 Joyce Davidson	
	12:00 Another World	10:30 The Practice				
	12:30 Flintstones	11:00 The Practice				
	1:00 CFL Football (Van. - Edm.)	11:30 The Practice				
	1:30 Good Times	12:00 The Practice				
		12:30 The Practice				

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the budworm

Spruce budworm epidemics have been around for centuries, occurring every 30 years in areas prone to being attacked.

The moth emerges in July, mates and lays her eggs on the underside of the fir and spruce needles. The larva remain on the branches until the following spring and then begin feeding on the new growth at the tips of the branches. The worms feed for three to five week going from branch to branch, killing the new foliage. If a three is attached four years in a row it dies.

In a way, the insect's work is nature's way of getting rid of the old trees and cleaning out the forest, so new threes can grow.

However, forestry companies can no longer afford to wait 40 to 50 years for young trees to mature, so to try to combat the problem, insecticide spraying is being done.

Quebec forests are now being attacked by the budworm and to save the 120 million cords of wood the government started spraying in 1972.

Lands and forests conservation director, Guy Boissinot, has stated that 7.2 million acres will have to be sprayed this year and 10 million next year if the forests are going to be preserved for the industry of the 1980s and 90s.

This year over 1,100,000 acres of private and public woodlots of the Gaspé have been sprayed. (The only previous spraying was in 1973 in the area of Cascapedia to Chandler).

Con Air, an aerial spraying company from B.C. sprayed here May 19 to June 20, with D-C 6 aircraft. Two different types of chemicals were used. These were mixed with large quantities of oil so the product would fall to the trees instead of being blown away. Only 12 ounces of the chemical is sprayed per acre according to norms established to prevent pollution of the environment.

Lands and Forests insect specialists have been working at the forestry station in Paspebiac telling the pilots where to spray.

They have also been collecting branch samples and

examining them to determine the extent of the damage and what effect the spraying has had on the trees.

The Gaspé area has had one bad year of attack, but some areas have only been affected lightly," says Louis Dorias, an entomologist working at Paspebiac.

"Many factors affect the spraying. We can't spray near houses or cars because the insecticides leave spots. The planes can't go up when the wind is stronger than 12mph and the temperature can't be more than 70F. The altitude of the planes must be between 400-600 feet and if it rains soon after the spraying the poison is washed off the trees."

"We have determined that 85 per cent of the larvae are killed by the spraying and 50 per cent of the growth of the trees is saved," he said.

Biologists of Fish and Game and Environment Canada made a preliminary study on the effects of the in-



secticide on wildlife. Their report states that birds did not appear to have been hurt and only certain winter insects were killed.

SPEC has been receiving reports from our readers that they have found dead birds in regions sprayed. Lands and Forests officials say they have not received similar reports and they would need to examine the dead birds.

Letter to the Editor

Dear sirs:

The spraying of Forests has been suspected of killing many land birds.

After the recent spraying of our forests a great many land birds were found dead all over the countryside, and more people believe that this is one unfortunate result of using insecticides on a large scale.

Most to suffer from the effects were warblers. I personally examined the dead bodies of 2 Tennessee; 1 magnolia; 1 Cape May; 1 black-throated green and 1 yellow throat. These are some of our prettiest land birds. Kinglets and some sparrows were also among the dead birds. Kinglets is a specie that destroys the spruce bud worm, and though they are very small they are hardy birds. It is regrettable that to save an important resource we find that another must suffer severely.

Yours truly,
Whitmore J. Chicoyne

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Vol. 2, No.6



All private woodlot owners who would like to obtain small spruce and pine trees for the purpose of re-forestation, should rush their applications to Lucien Cauchon, Lands and Forests New Carlisle, because applications are supposed to be made by October 1.

White, Norwegian, Red and Black spruce and two types of pine will be available free of charge to owners who meet these requirements:

- 1) The owners property must be more than three acres and one acre must be made available for this re-forestation.
- 2) The owner must plant the trees for purposes other than producing ornamental trees.
- 3) The application letter should your name, address, and telephone number as well as the lot number, the name of the parish, range and township.

If your proposal meets these requirements a Lands and Forests specialist will visit you to discuss the details.

It is sometimes possible to obtain the use of a mechanical planter free of charge from the government, but the owner must supply the tractor and the men to do the work.



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Providing trees for the Gaspé Peninsula’s forestry industry

● PENNY MACWHIRTER
● EMILY HOCQUARD

PASPEBIAC - The Pépinière Baie-des-Chaleurs, a tree farm located in Paspebiac plays an essential role in ensuring there are trees ready for the Gaspé Peninsula’s forestry operations. The facility is owned by SARGIM, a New Richmond-based company that also operates a tree farm in that town, although they operate as two separate businesses.

Historical
The Pépinière Baie-des-Chaleurs was built by the Quebec government in 1945-1946 after the Second World War. The tree farm eventually closed for a number of years, and then was reopened in 1988 by a local business person. At that time the Quebec government wanted to produce 300,000,000 trees in Quebec for the forestry industry. The facility was then purchased by SARGIM in 2006.

Current situation
Currently the Pépinière Baie-des-Chaleurs employs approximately 35 people. An interesting statistic about the tree farm is that their workforce is almost 50/50 anglophone/franophone. “There’s no rivalry with English and French here... It’s good for everyone, there’s a lot of diversity,” says Production Manager Marc-Olivier Labrecque. His colleague, director general Denis Bujold feels the same way “...I’m not afraid to try to speak English and our workers they’re not afraid to try and speak French. There’s like an

unheard of deal, the English workers talk to me in English and I answer them in French.”
The 35 employees work a season that lasts approximately 22 weeks, from the end of April until August. There’s a short period when they are off work, but then they return to close the facility for the winter.
Types of positions at the tree farm include:

Tree labourers: They work in the field, it’s very physical.

Gardeners: They have a bit more responsibility. They execute the tasks assigned by the crop manager. They must have a green thumb, be observant and careful. Gardeners come on the weekend to take care of the trees, especially in hotter weather.

Crop managers: They are supervisors, they’re job involves more strategy and less physical labour, they do the planning for the season, manage the gardeners and they sometimes have special projects to help improve the quality of the trees (office and outdoor work).

Lastly, there is the administration, which includes the manager and director general.

The jobs at the tree farm are very physical and employees are exposed to the elements. It makes recruiting youth a bit of a challenge. When it comes to recruitment and retention the management of the facility say they are trying to integrate the youth. Retention is an issue for the facility, one that the management says needs attending to. The biggest challenge is making sure the workers have enough hours for an Employ-



Photo: Emily Hocquard

Workers at the Pépinière Baie-des-Chaleurs facility in Paspebiac.

ment Insurance claim, that they won’t be exposed to a “black hole”. That is a period between when an EI claim ends and before a seasonal job begins again. “Every year it is a new challenge because of changes to the EI. And it goes with what we must do in the field, sometimes we have more work to do and sometimes less work,” explains Mr. Labrecque.

As for a typical day, “You’re played out at the end of the day physically, but you sleep well because it’s a healthy fatigue, it’s not mental fatigue,” says Mr. Labrecque.

The company is prioritizing retention in order to keep their trained and dedicated staff. “Our older workers have a lot to offer and are very loyal,” says Mr. Labrecque. “We have some workers, they’re so quiet and you never hear from them, but boy they work hard, they’re like tanks,” notes Marc-Olivier Labrecque.

Management tries to accentuate the cooperative spirit, “We put value in that and having a healthy work environment and implicate the most people as possible, we have committees, and we try to give back to our employees however possible. We are like a family, so we must take care of the family,” says Mr. Labrecque. An example is when they had some new young people working at the company, “There were flats (tires) twice, they didn’t know what to do, so we taught them how to do it,” says Mr. Labrecque reiterating the sense of family at the facility.

SARGIM in New Richmond has several foreign workers from Mexico, but the Paspebiac facility doesn’t have any. “We are trying to rely on local people. I must say the English community is very good at applying to the facility. There is a lot of word of mouth

and with less of an exodus (among anglophones), there is a greater amount of people from that community looking for employment. I think they feel comfortable here because they know we are bilingual and can communicate with them,” explains Marc-Olivier Labrecque.

The company really puts an effort into making all their employees feel comfortable, their Annual General Meetings are translated to English and to Spanish to accommodate the foreign workers in New Richmond.

In addition, in New Richmond the company took advantage of the francisation courses available for the foreign workers and included some of the anglophone workers as well. Management in Paspebiac is hoping to soon be able to offer their anglophone workers

Cont'd on page 21 ➔

An aerial view of the Pépinière Baie-des-Chaleurs facility, showing rows of large greenhouses and fields. The facility is located near a body of water, and the surrounding area is lush with greenery.

PÉPINIÈRE
BAIE-DES-CHALEURS

Wishing all our employees a great season!

Spruce budworm: 107,000 hectares sprayed in the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Spraying to combat the spruce budworm will be reduced this year in the Gaspé Peninsula, even though the number of infected hectares is increasing.

The Société de protection des forêts contre les insectes et les maladies (SOPFIM) plans to protect 107,000 hectares this summer, compared to 197,000 hectares in 2024, marking the sixteenth year of spraying.

The budworm continues to advance westward, having crossed the Route 299 line between Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and New Richmond last year. According to SOPFIM, 1.6 million hectares are infected in the region, an additional 200,000 hectares compared to last year.

"We have noticed during our monitoring of the epi-



Spraying to combat the spruce budworm will be reduced this year.

Photo: SOPFIM

demic's progression that it has moved to the southwest, even though hot spots remain in the Bay of Chaleur area and the tip of Gaspé," notes SOPFIM spokesperson Amélie

Labonté. Avignon has been particularly affected since the westward spread. The infestation is more concentrated, which allows for a reduction in

spraying areas. The spread of the disease is leading to a re-deployment of forces, abandoning the Rocher-Percé airport site in Grande-Rivière, where the disease is less severe.

Ten aircraft will be based in Charlo, New Brunswick, to serve Avignon, eight aircraft in Bonaventure and Gaspé, and nine in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

"We have several employees who will be deployed to fight the disease. There will be about fifty of us with about thirty devices," says Ms. Labonté.

A biological insecticide is used in controlling the budworm. "It's a natural bacterium found in the soil. It's an insecticide that will be administered by injection, not by contact, and will be ingested by insect larvae. It's approved by Health Canada and is recognized for its safety and is

ISO14001 certified. We are required to comply with strict environmental standards and manage our activities responsibly," says Ms. Labonté.

The spraying season is expected to begin on June 3, if Mother Nature cooperates.

In Quebec, an additional \$17.8 million has been allocated to the effort, for a total budget of \$60.2 million this year.

Across Quebec, the epidemic is still active. Aerial surveys conducted in 2024 mapped damage of over 14.3 million hectares, representing the largest total area since the beginning of this epidemic.

Due to the increasing damage, the Mauricie and Lanaudière regions will be subject to aerial spraying for the first time this year.

In other affected regions, existing measures will be maintained or adjusted as necessary.

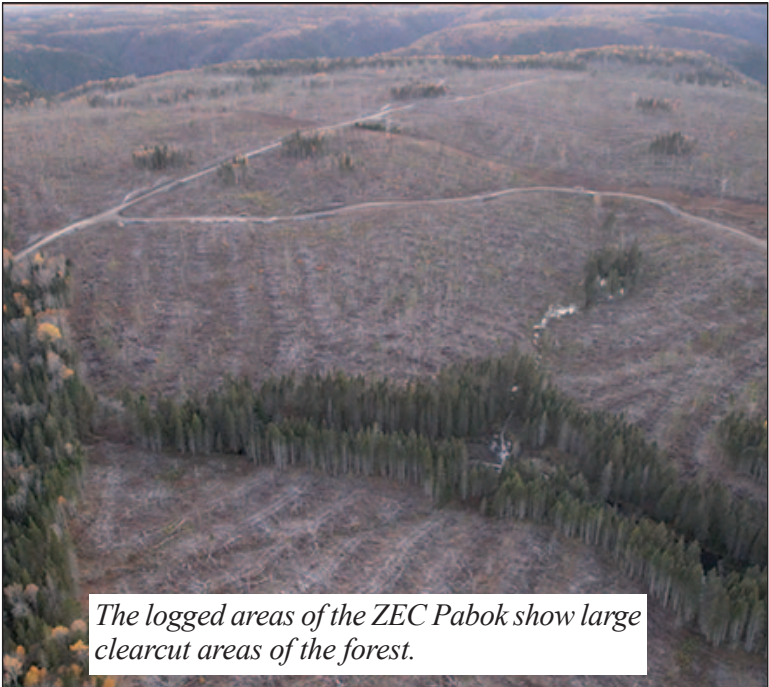
Time is running out for a moratorium on logging in the ZEC Pabok, says Solidarité Gaspésie

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – The citizens group Solidarité Gaspésie is calling on the Quebec government to declare a moratorium on logging in the Petit-Pabos River watershed, in the Chandler backcountry, since a protected area project is currently being developed in this sector. Members of Solidarité Gaspésie fear that there will be virtually nothing left to protect in this area once the logging is completed. They even fear that logging will accelerate, since the industry may want to avoid losing timber volume in the event of a moratorium on this portion of the ZEC Pabok.

Suzanne Bourget, spokesperson for Solidarité Gaspésie on this issue, deplores the contradictions between the intentions expressed by the Quebec government regarding the need to protect ecosystems and the timeframes required to meet this need. The case of the ZEC Pabok is typical of this double standard, she says.

"The entire project came about following the call for projects aimed at identifying areas for protection, in June 2024. (...) In 2022, during COP 15, Quebec committed to in-



The logged areas of the ZEC Pabok show large clearcut areas of the forest.

creasing its proportion of protected areas to 30% by 2030. When the call for projects arrived in June 2024, organizations, municipalities, and the MRC took advantage of it and identified nine projects, including the one for the Petit-Pabos River watershed. The ZEC Pabok boasts exceptional biodiversity, but we're still waiting! The process leading to the creation of a protected area is long and tedious," explains Suzanne Bourget.

Of the nine projects submitted in 2024 in the Rocher-Percé MRC, five were selected, in-

cluding the protected area project for the ZEC Pabok. The Town of Chandler strongly supports this project.

A familiar issue

This is the second mobilization in five years for Solidarité Gaspésie in the Rocher-Percé MRC. In 2020, the organization, citizens from various backgrounds and municipal elected officials initiated a movement to protect 63 square kilometres in the ZEC des Anses, a little west of the ZEC Pabok.



Some clearcut areas are very close to the Petit-Pabos River.

Photos: Pierre-Luc Arsenault

At the time, the ZEC des Anses had not yet been biologically and environmentally characterized, although, after a few field visits by its advocates, it was proven to contain some rare species of plants and amphibians. This protection initiative resulted in a moratorium and the setting aside of the ZEC des Anses in 2022. A logging project of 30,000 cubic metres of timber was cancelled, representing approximately 1.3% of the public forestry capacity in the Gaspé region.

Suzanne Bourget was also part of the 2020 movement.

When asked to identify the main differences between the approach of the ZEC des Anses and those of the ZEC Pabok, she doesn't hesitate.

"For the ZEC des Anses, I felt there was openness. In this case, there's a kind of disturbing silence. There's an (official) approach, and we have to stick to it. We're told about upcoming consultations. Meanwhile, the wood is being cut. We're being taken back to the administrative process and fed with fine phrases, such as 'Focusing

Cont'd on page 21

Quebec government refuses Jean Lapointe's petition for a nephrologist

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The National Assembly's Health and Social Services Committee is refusing to consider the petition with about 10,000 signatures that Jean Lapointe submitted to the Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé last November, calling for a nephrologist in the Gaspé Peninsula.

The region, along with northern Quebec, are the only regions in Quebec without a kidney specialist.

"They sent me a letter, and I would have to take more steps. The MNA for Gaspé wrote to them, and it would be up to the CISSS de la Gaspésie to request a nephrologist. I spoke to the CISSS, and they need to set up a team in Gaspésie," explains Jean Lapointe.



Photo: N. Sergerie

MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix and Jean Lapointe, during the presentation of the petition to the elected official last November.

The man met with the regional health network and was told that telemedicine services are available and that a nephrologist travels as needed. "My goal is to have a specialist for the four hospitals in

the Gaspésie," he says, explaining that he has to travel to Rimouski twice a year to see this specialist, a meeting that lasts only five minutes. In the letter sent to Mr. Lapointe from Health Minister

Christian Dubé to Government House Leader Simon Jolin-Barrette, it is stated that "The CISSS de la Gaspésie has not made any request to add a nephrologist to the Medical Staffing Plan (PEM) for the period 2021-2025 to cover needs."

"As part of this consultation, the Integrated Health and Social Services Centre of Gaspésie (CISSS) will be able to submit a request to Santé Québec for the creation of a PEM in nephrology," maintains Minister Dubé.

"I don't know what he's waiting for to make the request. Let Mr. Pelletier (Martin, President and CEO of the CISSS de la Gaspésie) submit the request for the years 2026-2028," demands Mr. Lapointe.

Over the past year, Mr. Pelletier has mentioned that the

needs in the region do not require the presence of a full-time nephrologist in the Gaspésie without closing the door on the future.

"We are not capable of conducting tests in the Gaspésie. I find that the CISSS is not strong on this issue," comments Mr. Lapointe with his usual frankness.

"I won't give up," concludes the man who has led a relentless fight for the establishment of hemodialysis services in the region for the past 10 years.

Some 40 hemodialysis treatment seats are available in the Gaspé Peninsula. The Gaspé Peninsula relies on the Rimouski Hospital Centre for the medical care associated with hemodialysis.

Quebec currently has 211 nephrology positions, of which about fifteen are vacant.

CISSS will not request a nephrologist for the Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) will not make any requests for a nephrologist as part of its 2026-2028 Medical Staffing Plan (PEM), despite the fight led by Jean Lapointe of Gaspé, who collected some 10,000 signatures last fall in the hopes of getting a nephrologist in the region. CISSS President and CEO Martin Pelletier was very clear on May 16 during a press briefing to inaugurate the newly built unit in the former emergency room of the Gaspé Hospital.

The pressure is strong to increase the supply in the Gaspésie since there are more people with needs and fewer and fewer patients who can travel to Rimouski to access services since they are provided from the Lower Saint Lawrence CISSS.

"We are working with them to improve the presence of nephrologists in the region. We are hearing the message, but we will not be making any requests for the next three years. The reason is simple: the supply in Quebec is insufficient, but we believe it is better to devote our energies to asking nephrolo-

gists in the Lower Saint Lawrence to provide better coverage," says Mr. Pelletier, adding that the service currently offered is very good. "We're working to improve treatment quality and to develop telemedicine to connect the remote expert with the local client," comments the CEO.

Currently, 225 nephrology positions are available for the next three years in Quebec in the provincial PEM. Ten positions remain unfilled, and 19 retirements have been announced. There will only be 27 graduates next year, points out the President and CEO.

"Adding requests only widens the gap. There's actually a nephrologist missing in the Lower Saint Lawrence," notes Mr. Pelletier.

"I think it's pretty silly. If he doesn't apply, we'll never get him. If he applies, at least in three years, if there's a position, we'll get it. If he doesn't apply, when will he apply? In five years! A lot of things can happen," Mr. Lapointe responded after hearing Mr. Pelletier outline the situation.

The Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, is aware of the needs in the Gaspé region. He notes that it's not just a question of money,



A section of the new hemodialysis unit facilities at the Gaspé hospital.

Photo: N. Sergerie

given the province's difficult financial climate. "It's more a question of the resources available for specialized services. Mr. Pelletier presented it well. We're working together to improve coverage. We'll see how the situation for graduates evolves and support the needs in the Gaspé region at the budget level," says Stéphane Sainte-Croix, who will monitor the situation before exerting political pressure on the government.

The renovated hemodialysis unit in Gaspé was inaugurated on May 16. The project involved moving the department to the former emergency room, vacated in July 2021, and redesigning it to increase the number of beds from three to

four, with space to accommodate six. The unit's surface area has increased from 65 square metres to 584 square metres.

The goal is to ensure better functionality and greater confidentiality for patients, as well as offer the possibility of expanding service for future needs. A dedicated washroom and a fixed water treatment room are also required for treatments.

The construction required an investment of \$5.7 million, \$300,000 less than the planned \$6 million, a situation that comes as no surprise given that the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS is recognized within the health-care network for delivering its projects under budget.

"It's especially important to

deliver quality physical developments. This is the third department to be updated out of four in the Gaspé," emphasizes Mr. Pelletier. "This is a project that was both anticipated and necessary in the region," the MNA maintains.

"From the outset, the project was carefully developed with partners, including Mr. Lapointe, who helped develop the concept," comments Mr. Pelletier.

With the upgrade in Gaspé, the CISSS de la Gaspésie now offers hemodialysis in four locations in Gaspé, three in Maria, six in Chandler, and six in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts. This network serves approximately 40 patients across the region.

Maria Hospital: Avignon Prefect remains hopeful

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CARLETON-SUR-MER - The prefect of the Avignon MRC, Mathieu Lapointe remains hopeful that the redevelopment of the emergency and intensive care departments at Maria Hospital will continue, despite the crisis at the Maisonneuve-Rosemont hospital in Montreal.

Quebec is struggling to find the funds to begin the Montreal facility's reconstruction, which is necessary given the dilapidated condition of the facility.

Mr. Lapointe points out that the Maria hospital file has been on the table for a long time. Its registration to the Quebec Infrastructure Plan

(PQI) in March is expected to bring additional funding to prepare for the work.

Despite the situation in Montreal, the prefect is not overly concerned. "Before we get to the construction phase, there's still a lot of design work to be done. That's not what's costing a lot. The challenge, in my opinion, will be when the time comes to schedule the work; we will have to raise awareness with the Quebec government to ensure that the funds are available," explains the prefect.

The initial studies for the possible construction of the new emergency and intensive care units are progressing. The analysis of the electromechanical, structural, and civil components is 75% complete,



Maria Hospital

Photo: G. Gagné

according to the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS).

The objective of the study conducted by CIMA+ is to gain a thorough understanding of the current state of the in-

frastructure and determine whether it can accommodate the anticipated costs associated not only with the emergency and intensive care department projects, but also with the hospital's future de-

velopments.

The 75% progress report is expected by mid-May for review and comment, while the final report is scheduled for completion by the end of June.

Quebec government will not provide additional funding for Gaspé Town Hall

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Town of Gaspé's efforts to secure the initial financial assistance promised by the Quebec government for the renovation of its municipal town hall have proven unsuccessful, following an unforeseen \$700,000 increase in project costs.

"It's negative. The program criteria are standardized. They pre-authorize a certain amount at the outset. After a call for tenders, if there's an increase in costs, they don't increase the pre-authorized amounts. If there's a decrease in costs, they decrease the authorized amounts, and then there's no way to adjust based on actual costs. It's a waste of time," notes the Mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté. Last December, the town asked the province to bring its subsidy to its initial amount due to the additional costs incurred by the work.

The project was initially estimated at \$4.3 million, but following the calls for tenders, the cost of the work was just over \$3 million. The 65% government assistance was reduced accordingly. In the meantime, an unforeseen \$700,000 cost arose due to a design error in the plans and specifications.

"We are still facing legal action to claim compensation



Quebec government will not provide additional assistance to renovate Gaspé Town Hall.

Photo: N. Sergerie

for errors that appear to have been made in the initial plans. Perhaps we will find some form of compensation," states the mayor.

A New Website

The Town of Gaspé will update its website to bring it up to date and will include an interactive approach to communications with residents.

A \$34,000 contract has been awarded for this purpose. "Our website has been outdated for a while. We awarded a contract to recreate a website with more interactive platforms, what we call a citizens portal, which will allow people to better communicate with us," says the mayor.

The concept will allow for the addition of artificial intelligence to communicate real information on general issues. "It allows us to better

align people with automated responses, not just between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.," notes Mr. Côté. He adds that although this component is included in the contract, the town might want to take it even further."

Furthermore, software will be purchased to manage the approximately 70 action plans to be established following the 2024-2034 Strategic Plan, tabled earlier this year. "There are computer tools that can help develop action plans, and they can also help with interactive tracking rather than using plain old Excel spreadsheets that we have to fill out by hand. We're going to purchase a system like this to help us for the next 10 years," explains the mayor.

The initial investment is approximately \$15,000, plus an annual investment for updates. "It's a financial invest-

ment, of course, but we're saving a lot of labour and valuable time. It's going to make our employees' jobs easier," continues Mr. Côté.

Parking Meters at Haldimand Beach

The Town of Gaspé will purchase parking meters for Haldimand Beach and the arenas. Although these tools can be used to charge for parking, this parking meter

will be used by employees to record hours worked rather than doing it the "old-fashioned way" with punch cards.

"Where there may be confusion is that there are other parking meters that will be installed on Rue de la Reine. They're parking meters, meters, because we're going to modernize our system, and that's already been announced. But for the beach and the arenas, it's like a "punch card," the elected official explains.

As for whether one day there will be parking fees at Haldimand Beach, like there is near Anse du Sud in Percé, the mayor says for now, they aren't going in that direction.

"We have no intention of going that route." But if one day we need new revenue, is it unrealistic to think about parking lots that can bring in money? That will be something to consider. But for now, we're not there yet," clarifies the mayor.





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ZEC:

Cont'd from Page 18

on the regional recreational and tourism potential and natural attractions.' and 'Contributing to the harmonious coexistence of uses on public land and the development of state-owned lands.' What is the ministry doing? We hope they're attentive, but they're passive, and time is running out! This is a perfect example of rhetoric and administrative action on the one hand, and reality on the other: logging companies cutting timber," analyzes Ms. Bourget.

In its correspondence, Solidarité Gaspésie calls on the Ministry of the Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks, as well as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, to halt current logging and establish a moratorium on logging in the area defined by the Petit-Pabos River watershed.

A necessary characterization

Suzanne Bourget fails to understand why it is taking the two ministries so long to respond to the request to protect the watershed of this river.

"This sector has not been characterized at all. We have indications that this area has

exceptional value, signs that while waiting, we are making the river, the salmon, the water quality, the flora, and the fauna vulnerable," says Ms. Bourget.

She notes that sedimentation resulting from logging is harming the reproductive capacity of Atlantic salmon, a species that has been going through a difficult period in recent years. Biological characterization of the river's watershed would also provide insight into the habitat status of rare and endangered flora, such as the Anticosti Aster, whose presence has been observed in the Pabok ZEC.

"When Quebec wants to protect 30% of its territory by 2030, that means we have to define how we exploit our natural resources. This affects our economy. Here, the trees are standing! I'm not talking about other MRCs. We want to exploit our wonderful landscape. We're not unaware that the forestry industry has its place. But we have to decide what its share is, and what we protect," emphasizes Suzanne Bourget.

Technically, a ZEC, a controlled exploitation zone, is first and foremost designated for fishing and hunting. However, logging is allowed on such territories, as well as mining exploration and, eventually, exploitation.

She points out that three

salmon rivers flow within Chandler's municipal boundaries, waterways that must be protected against resource exploitation that would weaken them, such as intensive logging.

"We have every right to fear that logging will accelerate while the government drags out deadlines. And as if that wasn't a problem, there are mining claims! The area is covered in mining claims, even though it would qualify as a TIAM, a territory incompatible with mining activity. We fear that we'll destroy the economic potential and damage this ecosystem," says Suzanne Bourget.

She and the members of Solidarité Gaspésie point out that the Quebec government should take citizen engagement into account, since it solicits it through calls for projects.

"I'm discovering the importance of citizen involvement. We know the territory, but mobilization is certainly difficult, because it's volunteers who have to defend these causes. We want to make the territory accessible to us, to visitors, in an intelligent way and by highlighting its attractions," concludes Ms. Bourget.

The Gaspé SPEC contacted the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, but as of May 20, it was not prepared to answer questions on this issue.

TREE FARM:

Cont'd from page 17

French courses as well.

On site there's 7 to 8 million trees on the ground at all times, ranging from seedlings to third year growth, which is when the trees are shipped out.

The third year, the growth must be managed, the crop manager plays a vital role in this and dealing with external factors. There is a three or four week grace period, but weather affects the goal. "We can't just follow the recipe, it's like at home, if your oven runs hotter, you need to compensate. It's living things, and with the weather, we have to be vigilant, prepared and ready to adapt. We're good, not because we can follow a recipe, but because we can adapt," explains Marc-Olivier Labrecque, about the success and quality of their trees.

The Pépinière Baie-des-Chaleurs grow two species of spruce, white and black. White spruce makes 80% of their product. It is more adapted to the region. Black spruce is for the more northern, rocky areas such as mountain tops. It also grows well in swamps and very wet areas.

The trees from the Pépinière Baie-des-Chaleurs go to both private and public forests. For the time being management says that their contracts remain stable at about 3.4 million trees per year. That number is based on a 5-year performance calculation.

Spruce budworm.

The facility doesn't have many issues with the spruce budworm. There are sometimes some on second season trees, but it's manageable. They spray with a biological element if needed.



Guylaine Plusquellec uses a watering robot to water the trees in the Paspebiac tunnels.

Saint Mary's Cement quarry and plant workers vote in favour of strike mandate

GILLES GAGNÉ

PORT DANIEL - Approximately 125 workers at the McInnis Cement plant in Port Daniel have recently voted in favour of a strike mandate. The plant is owned by Saint Mary's Cement, a subsidiary of Votorantim Cimentos, a Brazilian company.

The employees, who work in both the plant and quarry, are members of the Steelworkers union, affiliated with the Quebec Federation of Labour, often referred to as the FTQ. The two Steelworkers union accreditation units each voted 93% in favour of an unlimited general strike mandate, the union announced on May 16.

In fact, they both rejected the settlement proposal submitted by the conciliator and voted in favour of the unlimited general strike mandate.

"We sometimes get the impression that the company, which profits from the exploitation of the region's re-

sources, takes relations with its unionized employees lightly. It is absolutely essential that the company not think it can grant worse working conditions because it is located in the Gaspé Peninsula," said Steelworkers union representative Marc Duchaine after the vote.

When asked to comment, Saint Mary's management, through a public relations firm, said it was ready to continue negotiations.

"At Saint Mary's Cement, we are committed to managing our operations in a safe, responsible, and transparent manner for our employees, our communities, our customers, and the general public. We are listening to our employees' demands and determined to continue negotiating in good faith to reach an agreement that is fair and respectful of the needs of the company and our workforce," the company stated.

It is not the first time that a strong strike mandate is ex-



Saint Mary's Cement workers and management are trying to sign a third collective agreement.

Photo: G. Gagné

pressed in the history of the Port Daniel cement plant, which was opened in 2017.

In May 2022, the quarry and plant workers had issued a strike mandate in respective proportions of 100% and 98.6%. However, the Steelworkers' union and the management were later able to reach an agreement without strike.

Back in 2022, the company

had nevertheless offered a "final and comprehensive" package to the workers a week prior to the strike vote.

As in 2022, current negotiations are stumbling over wages, the pension plan, and some regulatory provisions of the collective agreement.

Three years ago, the union was also denouncing the "inferior offer" made by the company to the quarry and cement

plant workers.

The first negotiations conducted to reach a collective agreement took place in 2018. A first deal was concluded the same year.

In addition to Saint Mary's Cement, there are three other major cement plants in Quebec, Lafarge in Saint-Constant, Béton Provincial in Joliette and Ciment Québec in Saint-Basile-de-Portneuf.



Knitting and crocheting enthusiasts gathered for an event at the Coin du Banc base camp.

Photo: Courtesy of Martine Beaudin

Knitting enthusiasts purl a good time

PENNY MACWHIRTER

CHANDLER: - On Saturday, May 3, Chandler's Café-Tricot-Jasette chez Mich and the Douglastown-Gaspé needlework group joined forces at the Coin du Banc base camp for a knitting activity.

The event was organized by Martine Beaudin and Stella Briand-Kennedy in hopes of bringing together needlework enthusiasts to share their knowledge of knitting, crochet and embroidery.

"The participants, aged between 25 and 84, were able to experience the physical, cognitive and social benefits of these arts and crafts," says Martine Beaudin.

The event also benefited from several sponsorships

from Quebec wool boutiques including Go Tricot, La Vie Laine and Cœur de Mailles.

"We hope to repeat the experience, considering that event enriched their lives with new friendships," says Ms. Beaudin.

Many of the participants will meet again on June 3 to celebrate World Knitting Day in Chandler. This second edition of event will take place on June 7, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the Atelier D'art. The activity is supported by the Cercle de Fermières de Chandler and the Town of Chandler.

"The knitting will take place outside, of course, if the weather is nice. Otherwise, it will be inside. The goal of this day is to bring together all the

knitters in our greater region. All ages are welcome. Parents can bring their children; they are welcome as well," says organizer Karen Parisé.

Participants can expect to knit, socialize, and meet new people who share the same passion: knitting or crocheting. Those in attendance can also look forward to raffles throughout the day.

Participants can bring their lunch, camping chairs, and good humor. Since the event is taking place at a site near the Bay, it's a very pretty setting.

At around 2 p.m., there will be a fashion show featuring handmade creations.

Last year, about 70 people were in attendance at the event.

SUNNY BANK:

Cont'd from cover

A 70-metre-long canal outside the 0-2 year limit and the construction of a new six-metre-opening culvert are also planned, in addition to the replacement of four other culverts.

In its notice, the MTQ also proposes three other solutions as part of the impact study. The first is the complete removal of all road embankments and relocation of the road four kilometers further upstream to a less dynamic part of the York River.

The second is the complete removal of all road embankments and construction of a multi-span bridge. It is the latter scenario that could have a significant impact: the expropriation of all residents in the flood zone.

The preliminary timeline for the project includes the completion of the environmental impact study, a BAPE (Environmental Impact Assessment), and obtaining the environmental decree by fall 2027.

The environmental impact study is the first milestone in the process. However, in a letter sent last month, the Ministry of the Environment invited the MTQ to consider upcoming changes to the methodology for assessing and addressing climate change-related risks when conducting impact studies.

For the time being, no delay is being considered in response to this new directive. Subsequently, the preliminary

design study, concurrent with the environmental impact assessment, should be ready in spring 2028.

The final preliminary design study should be delivered in spring 2029. This will be followed by plans and specifications to clear the rights-of-way between spring 2029 and spring 2032, with final authorizations being obtained in spring 2033.

The tendering and contract award process would take place in spring 2033, with construction scheduled to begin between summer 2033 and fall 2034. The ministry isn't ruling out completing the project in 2035 within this timeline.

If that timeline holds, at least 12 years will have elapsed between the judgment rendered in June 2022 and the final construction schedule.

Between December 13 to 15, 2010, Gaspé received 246 millimetres of rainfall. The road, rebuilt in 1977, connecting the Sunny Bank and Wakeham sectors, slows the flow of the York River. Previously, it was a water-level road, and during flooding, the river would overflow onto the roadway.

Raised by 1.5 metres in 1952, it was recognized that the road was partially blocking the flow of the river. In 1977, the road was raised again by two metres, making water assessment even more difficult. The 2010 flood was the final straw for residents, whose homes had flooded several times over the years.

Major Canada-France military deployment

Additional photos, article on front cover.



Photos: N. Sergerie

Soldiers, machine guns in hand, await the signal to proceed to the boarding dock.



The French Navy helicopter carrier Mistral was part of the military operation that took place in Gaspé.

Announcements



Obituaries



BISSON: Sandra

It is with a heavy heart that we announce that Sandra Bisson passed away on December 31, 2024. She was an incredible mother to Kim and wife to Earl McGee and shared her love and joy for the world with everyone. She will definitely be missed.

I'd like to thank all of our family, friends and the healthcare workers for being there and supporting us throughout this difficult time. It means a lot to me.

Her funeral service will be held on June 14, in Shigawake at the Anglican church. Condolences will be received starting at 1 p.m., followed by the service and burial at 3 p.m. All are welcome.

I love and miss you, mom. - Kim



LEBLANC: Mona

Family and friends of Mona LeBlanc Parker are saddened to hear of her quiet and sudden passing on April 27, 2025, in Burlington, Vermont. She was the last of her family. She will be interred beside her husband Norman Parker, who died in 2004, in the St. Jules cemetery in Cascapedia-St. Jules. The interment will take place sometime this summer, and the date will be published in the Spec for those who wish to pay their respects. Always remembered.



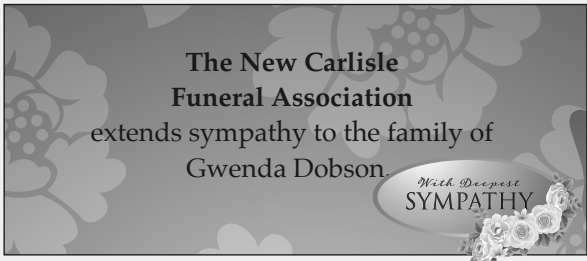
In Memory

MAJOR: William (Billy)

In loving memory of a dear husband and father who passed away May 28, 1995.
*All we have are memories,
Your picture on the wall.*

*And that day we'll always remember,
How you suddenly left us all.
God gave us the strength to fight it,
The courage to face the blow.
No one will ever know,
If we had the world to give,
We'd give it, yes and more.
To hear your voice and see your smile,
And greet you at the door.
Friends may think we have forgotten,
When at times they see us smile.
But little they know the heartaches,
Our smiles hide all the while.*

Sadly missed by your loving family: Wife Kay and children Peggy, Sherry, Donna, Billie-Jo, Chris and Amie.



Announcement Deadlines:

June 4 for the June 11 issue
June 18 for the June 25 issue
July 3 for the July 9 issue

Send your announcements to:
holly.smith@globetrotter.net

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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

Special days in June

15 - Fathers Day
20 - First day of summer
21 - National Indigenous Peoples Day
24 - Fête nationale du Québec

7:30 p.m. for \$7.
Thursdays: Darts beginning at 7 p.m. for \$10.
Saturdays: Pool beginning at 8 p.m. \$1 per game.
September 2: General meeting at 6 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle

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 CARLISLE:
St. Andrew's Anglican Church
St. Andrews church Spring potluck supper has been postponed until July 19.

NEW RICHMOND:
La Boutique
May 30 and 31: Huge garage sale and bake sale from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., St. Andrews United Church,

215 Perron Ouest. For information or donations contact Deb at 418-392-4508 or Sharon at 418-392-5771.
June 4, 5 and 6: La Boutique will receive artisan's items by appointment at 210 Boul. Perron Ouest. Please call Deb at 418-392-4508 or Sharon at 418-392-5771 if you are interested and have not yet used our services.
June 9: La Boutique will be open for the season.

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

PARISH OF GASPÉ
Thursday, May 29
St. Pauls - Gaspé
7 p.m. Holy Eucharist
Sunday, June 1
St. Philip - St. John Sandy Beach
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Sunday, June 8
St. James - Wakeham
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

June: No meeting.
June 15: A Father's Day brunch will be held from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Cost: 13+ \$16, 7-12 \$10, and 0-6 is free.
July: No meeting.
September 20: A Harvest Bingo will begin at 1 p.m. - until finished, doors open at 12 p.m.
September 21: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.
October 19: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.
November 16: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.
December 21: Annual General Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, June 1
10 a.m. Service
Sunday, June 8
10 a.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
Sunday, June 1
New Carlisle
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Shigawake
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Sunday, June 8
New Carlisle
10 a.m. Confirmation with luncheon to follow

YORK:
York River Community Hall Committee
June 9: The Annual General Meeting of the York River Community hall committee will begin at 7 p.m., 702 York West Boulevard. It is important for the public to attend and help support this committee. Note that at this meeting two members of the audience will be chosen to sit on the committee to be representatives of the public. We hope to see many of our community members at this meeting.

SHIGAWAKE:
Shigawake Music Festival and Agricultural Fair
June 7: Pub night and trivia.
June 14: Father's Day lobster supper, sitting one will

begin at 5 p.m. and sitting two will begin at 6:30 p.m. with music following at 8:30 p.m.

HOPE TOWN:
Hope Town Sports Club
June 20: Gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m. at the Hope Town Community Centre.

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. for the months of April and May.
Wednesdays: Shuffle board beginning at 4 p.m. Line Dancing beginning at

Important dates for the Coast Round-up page

Announcement Deadlines:

June 4 for the June 11 issue

June 18 for the June 25 issue

July 3 for the July 9 issue

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On the Lighter Side...

POEMS

CREATIVE WRITING

PUZZLES

WHAT'S THIS CHALLENGE

SPEC GETS AROUND

RECIPES

Capelin's In

*'Tis that time of year, when the capelin appear
And the gannets arrive, en masse
The blue of the bay is quite splendid I'd say
As thousands of birds quickly pass.*

*They cackle and grunt, as the capelin they hunt
And they plunge like the fall of a stone
You can hear that loud splash, as they dive with a crash
And they utter that unique squawking tone.*

*The silver fish school from thin line to pool
And as quick as they come, they are gone
To another place, to keep up the pace
In their annual obsession to spawn.*

*What a sight for the eye as they fall from the sky,
And compete for a space in the flurry
The Bay is just littered, and the beach is a-glittered
And the scene sure can change in a hurry.*

*So we don our long boots and with hollers and hoots
We all head for the sandy sea-shore
To dip our round net, never mind if we're wet,
We'll have capelin for supper once more.*

*So this annual event, which costs not a cent
Is a 'show' everyone can envision
Put the worries aside, and follow the tide
It's more fun than that old television.*

—A. MacPherson

Fun Facts: Capelin is a small forage fish of the smelt family that is found in the North Atlantic, North Pacific and Arctic oceans. Whales, seals, cod, mackerel and seabirds prey on capelin. During spawning season the capelin migrate south and spawn on sandy and gravel beaches. During spawning male capelin have a mortality rate of almost 100%, with females having a slightly higher chance of survival.



May 28 - June 3

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

You may have a chance to get to know someone better this week, Aries. Trust your instincts rather than listening to what is running through the rumor mill.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, you may be ready to shake things up in regard to your social life or even with a professional pursuit. Work out the path you want to take.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Following your curiosity may lead you down some interesting paths, Gemini. Things can change on a

moment's notice, so be prepared to respond.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

An intellectual debate could grow somewhat tiresome this week, Cancer. You need to know when to pull out of the conversation to help maintain your mental well-being.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Have an important conversation with a loved one, Leo. You need to clear up a misunderstanding that has been growing more significant. Once you take care of this, smooth sailing awaits.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

You may want to rely on someone else to bring some stability and comfort to your life, Virgo. Now may be the time to seek out a new relationship.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, have a good time over the next couple of weeks. You deserve it. Recognize that fun interactions do not necessarily have to be shallow experiences. You can learn something new even while being entertained.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

It might feel like your peer group has shifted in a

way that no longer gels with you, Scorpio. It may be time to find some new friends who share your current interests.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

You may seek validation from peers or even people on social media if you feel like you are being inhibited by current insecurities, Sagittarius. Others can corroborate your value.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Proactive changes you make this week may improve your love life, Capricorn. That can be a good thing if you have encountered relationship issues lately.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, setting out on an impulsive adventure could be worth the effort right now. It can be refreshing to spend time outside your usual surroundings.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Putting up a tough front may be a protection strategy right now, Pisces. Over time, you may need to let your guard down and ask for some help if the situation is chronic.

June 4 - June 10

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Family obligations are swimming through your mind, Aries. It is time to sit down and hammer out a resolution that will appeal to everyone and lighten your load.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

A special person in your life is getting closer and closer to you every day, Taurus. This may be the companion that you have been hoping for. Continue to take things slowly.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, sometimes you have a tendency to make things more difficult than they need to be. Stop obsessing over every little detail this week. Things have a way of working out.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, if someone accuses you of being too emotional this week, do not take it personally.

This person may be projecting his or her experiences on you. Continue what you're doing.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, could you be holding yourself to unreasonably high standards? If you're getting frustrated by not meeting your goals, ease up on yourself for the time being.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, it is your mission to change the minds of some people at work this week, as it will bode well for you down the road. Just don't make too many extravagant requests.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Recently people have been directing accolades in your direction, Libra. This is the boost you have needed to propel yourself to do more of the things that have been your goals.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, someone simply isn't bringing his or her A-game to a work project, and it shows. It's frustrating and you want to take over, but this is sup-

posed to be a team effort.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Simple things used to bring you pleasure and now it seems a bit of a gray cloud has descended. Don't start to fret you're getting jaded, Sagittarius. This is just a little rough patch.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, as a finish line approaches, it can be tempting to get very excited. Hold off on that elation until everything is done. You never know what can crop up in between.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

It doesn't need to be New Year's to make a resolution, Aquarius. You can aspire to change an aspect of your life anytime you want. Perhaps this is the week to embrace change?

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Have you been putting all of your focus on only one part of your life, Pisces? Take a more balanced approach; otherwise, burnout may soon set in.

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SCAN ME



SPORTS SECTION - Youth Hockey

Here's To Our Youth!

ELAINE SEXTON
SPEC PRES. & CORRESPONDENT

SPEC is pleased to now have a sports section in our new format of the paper.

Now that the regular hockey season is over, we will be highlighting the teams who have been in tournaments in our area and we encourage our readers to send us in your child, teams, accomplishments whether it be a school event or a leisure activity as everyone enjoys seeing our youth shine in their passions.

Baie-des-Chaleurs Gladiators Win Back-to-Back Tournaments

The Champions in the 43rd annual Atom tournament in Carleton were the Gladiators of Baie-des-Chaleurs, in the BB category. The team consists of players from Nouvelle to Paspébiac.

The following weekend in Matane the team won the Tournoi de Hockey Denis Labrie M11BB. Congratulations to the players and their families. Special acknowledgements to their coaches Kevin Belanger, Michel Fallu, Steve LeClair, and Ghislaine Matte.

The Gladiators also played in a large tournament in the Magdalen Islands.

Congratulations to the Legionnaires 1, winners of the Final A, Category Atom M11 in Gaspé

The players are from New Richmond, Cascapedia-St-Jules and Caplan. Special acknowledgement to the coaches, Benoit Audet, Stephane Leblanc and Alexandre Babin, all the players, and of course the parents and families of all the team. Well done.



Gladiators in Carleton-sur-mer.

Photo: Tournoi ATOME Siflix Carleton sur Mer



Gladiators in Matane.

Photo: Pierre Mark Lavoie



The banner from Carleton was given to Captain William Matte. Assistant Captains in the front, Samuel Leclair, back left Felix Bujold and to the right Liam Boudreau.

Photo: Tournoi ATOME Siflix Carleton sur Mer



Legionnaires in Gaspé.

Photo: Minor Hockey Association of New Richmond

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SPORTS SECTION - Dance

Making a career doing what you love to do

EMILY HOCQUARD

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PORT DANIEL - The rhythm of footsteps is moving to the sound of music throughout local schools and establishments along the coast. Leading the way is Jessie Walker, a young entrepreneur, who is using her passion for dance to bring people of all ages together.

Born and raised in Saint-Godefroi, Ms. Walker began dancing at the age of seven and entered the world of competitive dance by age eight. With years of performance experience under her belt, she is establishing a career in the industry with great aspirations to serve her English roots. Ms. Walker has competed across the region and beyond—from Ottawa to New Brunswick—at major events including Lime-light and Hit the Floor.

Now based in Hope Town, Jessie Walker brings the studio to her students through Fly Movement Dance Company—a fully mobile dance school she founded in March 2024. Equipped with portable mir-



Led by Jessie Walker, these tiny dancers are full of energy and excitement as they move to the music, learning new steps and having a blast along the way.

Photos: Courtesy of Jessie Walker

rors, sound systems, and infectious energy, she transforms any space into a vibrant dance floor.

Since its launch, Fly Movement has gained momentum through partnerships with municipalities, schools and community centres in our area. Ms. Walker works tirelessly to gain visibility and form strategic connections. “Fly movement

has partnered with schools to offer dance workshops and complete dance sessions for free to the students. This allows the dance classes to be accessible to everyone, especially the most vulnerable in our communities,” says Ms. Walker.

With over 60 students currently enrolled in the after-school program, her biggest reward is creating a safe, wel-

coming space where children can build confidence, judgement free, through dance.

“There is funding out there for activities and my goal is to ask the right questions, set meetings, network, and do the work that needs to be done to find these grants” says Ms. Walker. “Sometimes it takes months to set up, but it's worth it! This is how my company stands out from the other dancing companies in the area,” she continues.

Not only does Fly Movement Dance Company serve our youth in schools and private courses—Ms. Walker has worked with our elderly community in senior residences. She is continuously developing programs and activities to bring energy and creativity to these institutions. “I wanted to focus my attention on doing everything I could to give back to our community and create opportunities in ways that haven't been done before.” Ms. Walker states. She strives to bring the members of our communities together through movement, music and laughter! Dance is much more than following a

routine and sticking to a count; it encompasses physical, emotional and mental health. “Dance means family to me; it's the people I share my time with, the bonds and friendships between dancers that are created, the love and support shared,” says Jessie.

What can be expected from the Fly Movement Dance Company in the future? It is clear that Ms. Walker has high aspirations for the company. Her goals include “Breaking isolation, language barriers and creating a safe space for people to have fun and express themselves,” she explains. Jessie aspires to host two competitions per year. A local competition for her students as well as a showcase competition. This type of event would bring competitors from dance schools all over Canada, putting our area on the map for the dance industry! This could bring great revenue to our community and give an opportunity for local businesses to exhibit their products to the many contestants and attendees.

Bringing her students to external competitions is also one of her goals. In the long term, Ms. Walker anticipates growing her team by hiring dance teachers to offer a broader selection of dance styles such as jazz, contemporary and even break-dancing. For now, Jessie promises to keep expanding her territory and working on new moves, workshops and activities for citizens.

A new hip-hop session has recently commenced in Gascons at the Arena Marco Sébastien Cyr, marking the second MRC where the Fly Movement Dance Company is present. Applications and information for all available sessions and other offerings are available on the Fly Movement Dance Company - Jessie Walker Facebook page!



Happy faces and joyful energy filled the room as these young dancers wrapped up another great class with their dance teacher, Jessie Walker.

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