



Are you ready for winter?

# SQ cuts raise concerns in the region

## Minister Lafrenière requests SQ to rethink plan

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – The Sûreté du Québec (SQ) cost-cutting plan, revealed on October 28, was almost immediately quashed by Public Security Minister Ian Lafrenière. In the initial plan, three of the 12 police stations targeted for closure were located in the Gaspé Peninsula: New Carlisle, Matapedia, and Grande-Vallée.

First reported by the TVA network, the plan sparked concern throughout the region. However, comments from Minister Lafrenière helped calm tensions.

As presented by TVA, the plan aims to cut \$120 million across Quebec. However, minister Lafrenière, who admitted that he asked the SQ to cut some costs, quickly stated that the plan would have to avoid police detachment closures and concentrate on administrative cuts.

Each proposed closure would have left stretches of 100 to 210 kilometres without an SQ detachment, areas with winding roads, scattered villages, and sometimes no cell phone coverage.

Upon learning of the plan, Daniel Côté, prefect of the Côte-de-Gaspé Regional County Municipality (MRC), did everything he could to find out more, trying to contact "the highest authorities possible," he said, before finally speaking with Minister Ian Lafrenière.

"He tried to be reassuring (...) There is a cost-cutting plan, but it wasn't supposed to be at the expense of services. The premier (François Legault) denied this in the National Assembly. We will do everything we can to maintain services, but now is not the time to take to the barricades," said Daniel Côté on October 28.

In his MRC, the closure of the SQ auxiliary detachment in Grande-Vallée would leave a vast territory, stretching from Sainte-Anne-des-Monts to Gaspé—a distance of 210 kilometres via Murdochville, and even further along the coast—



In the Gaspé Peninsula, the distance between police stations is already significant. Closures would increase response times in isolated areas.

Photos: G. Gagné

without a police station. Grande-Vallée currently serves Murdochville.

"It's insane that Grande-Vallée would be losing its police station. We're not talking about pizza delivery, but a situation where rapid response can mean the difference between life and death. (...) We're talking about emergency services. Grande-Vallée is located 100 kilometres from the other stations. If we close it, we're cutting off service. If we maintain a service (with officers deployed far from the stations), is it really a cost saving if we have to cover travel time? No!" asserts Daniel Côté.

### On the south side, the same concerns

On the southern side of the Gaspé Peninsula, the prefect of the Bonaventure MRC, Éric Dubé, believes the publication of the SQ's plan is no coincidence.

"I understand that this is a publicity stunt by the SQ, designed to attract media attention. The SQ has prepared a plan aimed at cutting back where it will make the government look bad, to force them to change their minds," he analyzes.

The Bonaventure and Avignon MRCs have three SQ detachments within their territory, due to the size of the sector. One detachment is located in New Carlisle, in the same

building as the courthouse and the jail; a second is located in New Richmond, near the border of the two MRCs; while the Matapedia detachment is located close to the west extremity of Avignon. It is the only detachment in this MRC.

"This plan doesn't make sense. I also understand that if we eliminated all of these locations (the current SQ detachments in the two MRCs), we wouldn't have stations where they are now. We have a new station in Matapedia, we just invested in New Carlisle one and the New Richmond detachment needs some love. Where are the savings? The New Richmond station can't accommodate everyone if we close New Carlisle and Matapedia. Would we build a new station? At \$10 million or \$15 million? We wouldn't save a cent!" concludes Éric Dubé.

Closing the New Carlisle station would leave a 125-kilometre stretch, the distance between New Richmond and Chandler, without a police base of operations.

The prefect of the Avignon MRC and president of the Gaspé Peninsula Table of Prefects, Mathieu Lapointe, also believes that the SQ budget cuts, as currently drafted, make no sense.

"There is a logic to the current deployment. The plan unveiled today (October 28) follows a directive to reduce these budgets. They've arrived

at an easy solution: Let's eliminate police positions and detachments. Cutting three detachments in the Gaspé Peninsula would be catastrophic. There would be security issues, the risk of leaving certain areas uncovered, and job losses. It's a quick fix, not a well-thought-out one. They wanted to use sensational elements to provoke a reaction," explains Mr. Lapointe.

"I'm pleased to see that this doesn't reflect the minister's wishes. We weren't consulted. Staffing plans require a lot of preparation. Grande-Vallée is following the same logic. The stations are logically positioned to ensure rapid response across the territory. We'll have to wait and see how things develop. The deployment of police officers is the result of lengthy dis-

cussions," insists Mathieu Lapointe.

Closing the Matapedia's auxiliary station would create a 185-kilometre stretch without an Sûreté du Québec station, from Amqui to New Richmond.

"Even with a central station for the Avignon MRC in Nouvelle, it would still be 140 kilometres to get to Amqui, with issues related to cell phone coverage, fewer patrols, and a reduced police presence," notes Mathieu Lapointe, who doesn't see how this will lead to any savings.

In most MRCs, there is only one police detachment. Considering the length of the Matapedia to Shigawake stretch, it was decided decades ago to locate detachments in Matapedia, New Richmond and New Carlisle. Talks have repeatedly been initiated by the Public Security ministry to change that deployment to one detachment per MRC, but the municipalities, who are paying a high bill for the SQ services, have always mobilized against that planning.

At various times, Nouvelle and Saint-Siméon were also considered as potential locations for a new detachment, closer to the center of Avignon.

The inauguration of the new SQ building in Matapedia in December 2008 confirmed that such changes would not be implemented in the near future.



Daniel Côté, prefect of the Côte-de-Gaspé Regional County Municipality (MRC), struggles to see how service quality could be maintained in an area like Grande-Vallée.

# 100 Gaspésians demonstrate to support doctors

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – About one hundred Baie-des-Chaleurs residents, including several doctors, participated on November 1 demonstration in Carleton to denounce Law 106/L2, adopted under the gag on October 24 by the Quebec government. The law modifies the conditions under which doctors practice and their remuneration.

General practitioner Julien Lamarche, who practices at the Maria Family Medicine Unit and as an emergency physician at the adjacent hospital, indicated that Law 2 will have far-reaching consequences on “fundamental legal, social, and healthcare access issues,” he lamented.

“Law 2 is an attack on our democracy. Not only was it passed using the gag, but the government appears to have built this bill unilaterally, without considering the opinions of patients, associations, and federations who experience the system firsthand. Quebec is also the only province that did not resort to independent arbitration, despite requests from opposition parties and medical federations,” noted Dr. Lamarche.

“Law 2 also refers to a great many ‘regulations’ that will come later, regulations that will be decreed behind closed doors by the cabinet, without consultation,” he said.

Julien Lamarche, a Montreal native, chose to practice in a rural area with his partner, Catherine Lacombe, originally from Magog, a pediatrician at



Photo: G. Gagné

*Doctors Catherine Lacombe and Julien Lamarche fear the demobilizing effects of Law 2.*

the Maria Hospital, who also had much to say about the law adopted by the Coalition Avenir Québec government.

“This Law 2 also contains several elements that infringe on freedom of opinion and the freedom to bargain collectively. Going against the Canadian and Quebec Charters of Rights and Freedoms, it restricts doctors and future doctors, and prohibits them from resigning, retiring, choosing to practice their profession outside Quebec, or ceasing to teach without penalty,” said Ms. Lacombe.

She explained how Law 2 “deviates from the Constitution and restricts rights and freedoms.”

“The promise that family doctors will take over the care of the entire population by next summer is an illusion. It’s an

electioneering whim. It will far exceed the current capacity of family doctors, to the detriment of the quality of appointments, especially in a region like ours, where resources rely on only a small number of doctors. I fear for our region, where we already rely on numerous locum doctors to avoid service disruptions in our emergency rooms and in various specialties,” added Julien Lamarche.

Recalling that New Brunswick is close to the Gaspé Peninsula, notably just 55 kilometres from Carleton and much less for the doctors living between Nouvelle and Matapédia, Dr. Lamarche, who trains medical students at the Family Medicine Group (commonly designated under the acronym GMF), sees Law 2 as a hindrance to recruitment.

“We have a university fam-

ily medicine group (GMF-U) that we’re very proud of for recruiting young family doctors. We already struggle to fill our positions every year. I admit that this week, I didn’t really know what to tell my students to encourage them to stay,” he noted.

Catherine Lacombe fears “that we’re encouraging a volume-driven medicine, where the number of appointments becomes more important than the quality of care,” as well as the “reporting mechanism within this law.”

Interviewed by SPEC shortly after his speech, Julien Lamarche returned to this “quantity-driven medicine,” which will, for example, penalize the remuneration of general practitioners and specialists who don’t see enough patients.

“We’re not taking into account the seriousness of some patients who come to us. There are complex cases that can’t be resolved in seven minutes. The working conditions also matter. In many cases, the conditions aren’t right to increase the pace. It’s far from just a question of money for us, but if doctors are penalized because they don’t see enough patients, the government will have achieved its objective, which is to cut our overall revenues,” he explains.

## Support from the Feminist Roundtable

Catherine Cyr Wright, development officer for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Feminist Roundtable, joined her organization’s

voice with that of doctors to denounce Law 2.

“This is important to us because we are concerned about the health of women in the region. Pregnancy, perinatal care, early childhood care, contraception, abortion, menopause—all these services are considered non-priority. By categorizing them this way, we diminish the critical importance of these services and devalue the work of those who provide them,” Ms. Cyr Wright stated.

This government is now on its eighth gag order, she further noted. “When the medical profession becomes more feminized, they feel entitled to use this paternalistic and anti-democratic procedure against them as well. Coincidence? We think not,” she added.

Catherine Cyr Wright suggested various solutions to the government to improve workplace efficiency. In the longer term, she believes it is necessary to “address the backlog in the system by working on the social determinants of health, such as poverty, the housing crisis, violence against women, and mobility.”

In the crowd, radiologist Marie-Claude Thériault expressed concern about the potential effects of the delays in court hearings for lawsuits filed by medical federations. “The cases are urgent, but it often takes days or weeks before they are heard. Many doctors are experiencing a shock. I would have had a lot of difficulty working at the end of last week (the day after the special law was passed). I was also in shock.”

## Quebec doctors are inquiring about New Brunswick

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPE – With the adoption of the Physician Remuneration Act on October 23 by the National Assembly, the number of Quebec doctors interested in working in New Brunswick jumped considerably in October. The debate that has raged in Quebec for the past few weeks has led many to take an interest in the neighbouring province.

“On average, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New Brunswick receives three to four licensing applications per month from Quebec doctors. The number of licensing applications we have received this month from Quebec doctors is changing daily and is now

close to 40,” explains Dr. Laurie Potter, Registrar and Executive Director of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New Brunswick.

Not all licensing applications necessarily lead to relocation to practice in New Brunswick.

“However, we encourage all eligible candidates to consider the advantages of practicing medicine in New Brunswick,” emphasizes Dr. Potter.

Obtaining a license to practice in New Brunswick does not necessarily mean that a physician will practice in the province. Once licensed, it is up to the physician to explore available practice opportunities, then relocate and begin practicing.

“As the only officially bilingual province in Canada, New Brunswick offers very attractive practice opportunities and lifestyles for Quebec physicians who wish to relocate, and we welcome their licensing applications. We firmly believe that physicians interested in practicing in New Brunswick will find the lifestyle they are looking for, as well as supportive colleagues,” Dr. Potter maintains.

However, the College did not specify the number of physicians from the Gaspé region who submitted licensing applications. The Vitality Health Network, which manages the Francophone hospital network in New Brunswick, mentions that

Quebec is among the provinces targeted in its recruitment efforts.

“Our recruitment strategy, which targets both practicing physicians and physicians in training, includes participation in several career fairs and conferences at the Canadian, American, and international levels, in partnership with the Government of New Brunswick,” the network wrote in an email response.

“We also have an advertising campaign underway in Quebec, in anticipation of our participation in the Conference of Francophone Physicians of Canada, which is taking place this week in Montreal. Throughout the year, we also conduct various visibility initiatives, notably

through specialized magazines and professional associations, to reach physicians and medical residents interested in practicing with us,” the network noted.

Despite our repeated requests, the network did not specify the number of physicians from the Gaspé Peninsula who work within its organization, referring us instead to the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

The SPEC contacted the Gaspé Peninsula Association of General Practitioners to find out how many doctors from the Gaspé Peninsula have sought information on practice opportunities in New Brunswick, but the email has remained unanswered so far.

# Protests against Bill 2 in the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – Like other regions of Quebec, doctors and citizens of the Gaspé Peninsula participated in a province-wide movement on November 1 to denounce Bill 2, which reforms the way doctors are paid. Anger remains palpable after the special law was passed under closure on October 21.

In Gaspé, about forty people, including some twenty doctors from the Gaspé and Chandler regions, gathered at the office of the Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

“We are demonstrating for patients’ rights. What horrifies us about Bill 2 is everything patients will lose. Seeing patients in 10 minutes is impossible. I want to take my time with my patients. I want at least half an hour to get to know them, to get to know their families. That helps me with subsequent appointments,” says Dr. Marie-Viktore Saint-Yves Cotton, a physician at the Gaspé Family Medicine Group who also works in the emergency department at the Gaspé Hospital.

The lack of resources, such as social workers, nurses, secretaries, and other healthcare professionals, is also being denounced.

“We need more resources,



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

*Participants, including several doctors, remain angry with Quebec after the adoption of Bill 2 on their remuneration.*

more support. Not more patients,” she says. The colour-coded classification system—green, yellow, orange, red—is also problematic.

“If a young person arrives with depressive symptoms or someone with a specific problem, they need time. We can’t categorize them using a colour code that doesn’t take into account all the diverse issues within the healthcare system,” the doctor exclaimed.

She added that those who designed the code have no medical knowledge whatsoever.

“They’ve put seizures and carpal tunnel syndrome, two completely different emergency situations, into the or-

ange category. They’re lumped together. Carpal tunnel syndrome will be prioritized over pregnant women with complications and newborns. They’re categorized as green. What this takes away from the obstetrics department is horrific,” the doctor fumed.

A patient categorized as green who doesn’t yet have a family doctor could face significant difficulties getting care.

“In Gaspé, the system is working well. Elsewhere, they’ll never be able to get the care they need. If they’re green, they’ll never get any follow-up,” she said, noting that the number of doctors is declining in the Upper Gaspé Peninsula,

the Baie-des-Chaleurs region, and Rocher-Percé, according to recent reports from the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS).

She couldn’t say whether any doctors would leave the Gaspé Peninsula to practice in New Brunswick. However, some are reportedly considering it.

“Everyone I’ve spoken to has plans in mind. No one will maintain the status quo. Everyone will try to change something in their practice. Try to increase wait times a little. Maybe leave the region. We’re going to lose a lot of people if the bill is implemented as it currently stands,” Dr. Saint-Yves Cotton stated.

By chance, the Member of National Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, happened to be there, as he was on his way to the inauguration of the Demeure-Toi organization’s building nearby. “We told him we were very disappointed to find his name on the list of those who voted for the bill. We are a region that currently has excellent medical care, with few patients on waiting lists and well-established access mechanisms. We found it obscene that he voted for this bill, which puts everyone in the same boat. We told him we were very disappointed by his participation. He didn’t address

any of our concerns,” the doctor declared.

## The Member of National Assembly understands

When asked to comment on the gathering of doctors and citizens, Stéphane Sainte-Croix indicated that he had taken the time to listen to them.

“We understand that some people are dissatisfied. Our Minister (of Health, Christian Dubé) is listening. He is meeting with the associations. We are working to make the public understand the implications of the bill. The dialogue will continue, and we will reach a better understanding on both sides to facilitate access to the healthcare system for Quebecers,” commented the elected official.

He expressed some concerns about seeing doctors from the Gaspé Peninsula crossing the J.C. Van Horne Bridge, which connects the Gaspé Peninsula to New Brunswick, at Pointe-à-la-Croix.

“It’s something that could happen. That said, I remain convinced that our doctors will support Bill 2. I remain convinced that practicing medicine in Quebec is worthwhile. We are counting on our doctors in our communities to get through this and move forward,” commented Mr. Sainte-Croix.

# Demeure-Toi for autistic people finally inaugurated

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Demeure-Toi project finally became a reality on November 1 with the traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony officially opening the building, which was attended by dozens of people during an open house event.

The 12-unit building, designed to house 11 adults living with autism spectrum disorder, will welcome its first residents in the coming days.

“It’s truly surreal. It’s really a new life. The construction is now behind us. Now we can focus on the people behind this,” commented Claudine Dupuis, president of the organization.

Ten of the 11 adults slated to move in have been selected, and recruitment for the final resident is ongoing.

When one visits the premises, the fully furnished three-and-a-half-room apartments look vast. The personal spaces and hallways are spacious, and each unit is air-condi-



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

*Gaspé MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix, Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté, and Demeure-Toi President Claudine Dupuis, surrounded by other members of the organization, performed the traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony to launch activities on Saturday.*

tioned and has a balcony overlooking the courtyard or the Gaspé Cathedral. The colours and lighting have been carefully selected to create a calm and welcoming atmosphere.

A large room is available for activities, notably for the Knights of Columbus, who donated the land to the organization for the building.

“The environment has

been physically adapted to create a sense of calm, and we can see that the community has also noticed its positive effect. There’s a feeling of peace,” observed Ms. Dupuis.

“People will feel comfortable and at home,” the president emphasized. The goal of this unique residence is to help residents achieve greater independence.

“We could be a stepping stone for some to integrate into the community,” adds Ms. Dupuis. All the staff—caregivers, educators, night supervisors, and resident support workers—have been hired.

“We had a very easy time recruiting. People are very interested in our mission. They want to get involved and

make a difference in the lives of these individuals,” emphasized Ms. Dupuis, who was visibly moved during the interview and is the mother of a child with autism. The Federal and Provincial Government contributed \$9 million, with support from the Town of Gaspé. The Provincial Government provides \$275,000 in annual operating funding. The Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, made a point of attending the inauguration.

“This is the beginning of a wonderful adventure. It’s a unique project in Quebec. We are very proud to be here today and to support our community in this incredible project,” commented the Member of the National Assembly.

The former Minister responsible for Social Services, Lionel Carmant, visited Gaspé in August to mark the launch of this new service, unique in the region and rare in Quebec in its developed form.



Gilles Gagné

## Commentary

### Let's worsen the environmental context

Canada is already a dunce in environmental matters, whether we are talking about policy planning, regulation enactment, or rule management and enforcement. Most provinces, with the occasional exceptions of British Columbia and Quebec, are just as bad.

So, the November 4 budget tabled by Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne, heavily influenced by Prime Minister Mark Carney, represents a sure shot at keeping our dunce status, considering the setbacks announced on the environmental front.

If the budget is adopted at the House of Commons, which was not occurred yet but is highly probable, as the SPEC reached its November 7 deadline, the federal government could abolish the obligation to cap emissions for the oil and gas sector, which will remove subsidies for electric vehicles and increase subsidies for the hydrocarbon sector. The measure announced years ago to plant two billion trees in the country is also axed.

All of this will assure Canada to miss its Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) target for 2030, and will pass on the task of meeting the 2050 targets to the next generation, as if the challenge was not already huge, given the negligence of the past decades in that regard. Hours after the tabling of the Liberal Party government budget, Jerry Demarco, Canada's Environment Commissioner, commented on the budget by saying that so far, less than five years from 2030, the country has only achieved 8% of its 40% GHG reduction and that it is not time to slow down.

In 2024, Mr. Demarco had also remarked that "it's not time to give up" on reaching climate targets, that the federal government's "painfully slow" progress in reaching its climate targets is "not a reason to just throw up our hands and say that we won't make it. We owe it to our children and grandchildren."

#### Backwards move?

Once more, Mark Carney "stole" ideas from the Conservative Party. However, he didn't go as far as Pierre Poilievre would have gone, which would have been a complete, constraint-less greenlight to fossil fuel development, but what Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne announced on November 4 remains far from the policies found in countries evolving to improve their environmental record.

However, we cannot say for now that the federal

government will axe the carbon emission cap, because some conditions will probably be imposed before that abolition, which for now looks more like an intention. Nowhere in the budget is that abolition mentioned, but it does outline specific conditions for its removal.

The budget document mentions "effective" carbon pricing, enhanced methane regulations and the deployment of carbon capture and storage at scale "would create the circumstances whereby the oil and gas emissions cap would no longer be required as it would have marginal value in reducing emissions."

Such is the nuance. "There are a number of steps that need to happen. And when conditions are met, we won't need the cap anymore. But the conditions will have to be met," explains finance minister Champagne.

Oddly, November 4 marked a year since the previous Trudeau government announced it was publishing draft regulations requiring the oil and gas sector to cut emissions 35% below 2019 levels. Those final regulations for the emissions cap were never implemented though.

#### Far from what Mr. Carney advocated previously?

Prior to his political career, Mark Carney had regularly advocated for environmental sustainability. He was notably appointed as a United Nations special envoy on climate change in 2019. In March 2021, he declared that Canada has a "huge economic opportunity" in the transition to a sustainable economy with reduced carbon emissions.

He added that it is time to listen to scientists that have long been warning about the risks posed by climate change. Initially, he supported the consumer carbon tax as it was implemented in 2019, but stated in a Senate committee hearing held in May 2024 that the tax had "served a purpose up until now."

In 2020, he called the green transition "the greatest commercial opportunity of our time".

Once it became clear that he was interested in succeeding Justin Trudeau as leader of the Liberal Party, he somewhat modified his positions. In January 2025, Mark Carney attributed much of Canada's emissions to the oil and gas industry, pinpointing this economic sector must become cleaner rather than ordinary Canadians changing their lifestyles.

During his Liberal leadership campaign, Mr. Carney suggested the replacement of the existing consumer carbon tax with an incentive program to reward green choices, while keeping tax on large industrial emitters. He also promised to implement a carbon border-adjustment to penalize high-polluting foreign imports. At the time, he supported Justin Trudeau's

government electrical vehicle objective, requiring hybrids and electric vehicles to make up 20% of sales by 2026 and 100% by 2035.

Now, the government wants to make changes to the tax system in order to support what it calls "low-carbon liquefied natural gas facilities." The budget mentions this is aimed to increase Canada's competitiveness with the United States.

Those changes offer tax write-offs for liquified natural gas (LNG) facilities "for expenses incurred for manufacturing and processing buildings before 2030 and reinstating accelerated capital cost allowances for equipment."

However, liquified natural gas, is and has been, considered by a growing number of experts, not only environmentalists, as a wrong way of insuring a green transition towards less polluting sources of energy. The current budget, if adopted, seems to reinforce natural gas as an economic anchor, instead of favouring cleaner energy sources.

#### Getting a majority

While opposition parties are denouncing Mark Carney and François-Philippe Champagne's setbacks, environmentally speaking, the Liberal party has made strides over the first week of November in order to run a majority government.

The day following the budget, Chris d'Entremont, a Member of Parliament representing a Nova Scotia riding, crossed the floor and joined the Liberal Party, leaving Pierre Poilievre's Conservatives over leadership issues. There is too much aggressiveness in the leader's manners and not enough emphasis on solutions, pointed out Mr. d'Entremont. His decision brings the Liberal Party just two seats away from a majority at the House of Commons.

A day later, Edmonton Riverbend Member of Parliament Matt Jeneroux announced he would soon quit politics for personal reasons. In this case, a by-election will be held to replace him. It doesn't bring the Liberal Party closer to a majority and although Edmonton has elected liberal candidates in the past, nothing guarantees that will happen again in early 2026.

However, it is clear now that the Liberal Party is sweet-talking a certain number of conservative Members of Parliament disgruntled with Pierre Poilievre's leadership. It is just as clear that one of the means adopted by Mark Carney to reach that goal is to opt for a softer approach on environmental issues.

Time will tell if this proves politically profitable. Ecologically speaking, however, time is running out to implement a truly modern approach that could ease the challenges future generations will face.




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# Moose hunting: more than 90 violations

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPE – More than 90 moose hunting violations were recorded by more than 70 wildlife officers during a blitz conducted on October 18, 19, and 20 in the Gaspé Peninsula.

The officers focused on specific areas during the operation, aiming to stop illegal practices such as hunting without a license or without a female moose hunting permit, exceeding the game limit, illegal possession of game, carrying a loaded firearm in a vehicle, and night hunting of big game.

In addition to the 90 offenses, eight investigation files have been opened to date and could lead to more than 90 charges being laid. Three moose were seized.

Among the offenses observed were: killing big game in excess of the quantity determined by regulation, possessing big game hunted in violation of the law, hunting big game without a license issued for that purpose, hunting big game at night with a spotlight, and possessing, while in or on a vehicle, a firearm containing an unfired cartridge in the chamber, magazine, or clip, when the clip is attached to the



Photo: Courtesy Anonymous source

*Wildlife officers intervened during moose hunting season in Gaspésie.*

firearm.

Other offenses included possessing a firearm at night in a vehicle without storing it in a holster, failing to detach the transport coupon from the hunting license and attach it to the animal immediately after the kill, hunting outside the authorized zone, obstructing a wildlife protection officer, hunting under the influence of alcohol, and knowingly obstructing another person legally engaged in hunting.

Fines related to a double kill can reach \$12,500 and may lead to the revocation of the hunter's licence.

The Ministry of Wildlife

explained that Hunting Zone 1 was chosen because of its high concentration of moose and the large number of hunters present during this time of year.

Operation Point de mire is based on information collected and reports received during Operation Panache, which took place during the 2023 and 2024 hunting seasons in the Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie regions.

All seized game was donated to charities and food banks.

Hunting zone 1 attracts about 26,000 moose hunters from all over Quebec, representing nearly 15% of Quebec's moose hunters.

## \$500,000 for confidentiality at Percé Courthouse

Nelson Sergerie

PERCÉ – The Quebec government will invest nearly \$500,000 to guarantee confidentiality for victims of crime.

The Société québécoise des infrastructures (SQI) says that the work involves renovating and soundproofing the premises of the Centre d'Aide aux Victimes d'Actes Criminels (CAVAC).

These measures are intended to enhance confidentiality and comfort in the areas dedicated to receiving and supporting victims, particular through improved soundproofing.

To limit the impact on the regular activities of the courthouse, the work is being carried out in three successive phases, outside of business hours.

Four companies submitted bids at the close of the tender period on September 24.

The lowest bidder, MFT et Fils Inc. of Chandler, proposed doing the work for \$458,700. The highest bid came from CB4S of Saint-Arsène, at \$563,000.

The bids must be reviewed to ensure compliance before awarding the contract to the lowest bidder.

## Nearly \$500,000 for confidentiality at New Carlisle courthouse

Nelson Sergerie

NEW CARLISLE – Following a similar investment announced for the Percé courthouse, the Quebec government will invest nearly \$500,000 to ensure confidentiality for the victims of crimes at the New Carlisle courthouse.

According to the Société québécoise des infrastructures (SQI), the project involves the re-development and soundproofing of the premises occupied by the Centre d'Aide aux Victimes d'Actes Criminels (CAVAC).

The improvements are designed to enhance both the confidentiality and comfort of the spaces used to receive and support victims, notably through better soundproofing.

To minimize disruption to the courthouse's regular operations, the work is being carried out in three phases, scheduled outside of business hours.

Two companies submitted bids for the project. The lowest bid, \$482,000, came from LFG of Carleton-sur-Mer, while Constructions Scandinaves, also of Carleton-sur-Mer, submitted a bid of \$536,000. The bids will be analyzed to confirm compliance before the contract is awarded to the lowest qualified bidder.

## Police report

Isaac Moffat Swasson to appear in court again on November 27

Isaac Moffat Swasson, a 34-year-old man from Listuguj, will return to the Quebec City courthouse on November 27 for the sentencing submissions related to the charges he was found guilty of on November 4, 2024. During the same court appearance, a criminal prosecutor will also present a dangerous offender application, following a report prepared by experts from the Louis-Philippe-Pinel Institute.

A year ago, Issac Moffat Swasson was found guilty of several criminal charges ranging from aggravated assault to vandalizing New Carlisle's prison, including uttering threats. Most offences were committed between February and April 2019.

Between November 2024 and July 2025, Isaac Moffat Swasson was given multiple opportunities to find a lawyer. At times, he appeared to have secured one, but in each case, the parties failed to reach an agreement.

"The gentleman could not find a lawyer, and as the judge was beginning to lose patience, the case was postponed until November (27) to proceed with sentencing and at the request of the public prosecutor to have him declared a dangerous offender", explains criminal prosecutor Fabien Villemaire, based in Quebec City and assigned to Isaac Moffat Swasson case over the last two years.

He was initially charged in February 2019 with uttering threats, unlawful confinement, aggravated assault, assault with a weapon, and robbery. His victims were two men. Isaac Moffat Swasson already had a lengthy criminal record at that time.

While incarcerated at the New Carlisle Detention Centre, he caused significant damage to the prison on April 30, 2019, breaking furniture, electronic devices, and plumbing fixtures such as a toilet and sinks. Sixteen cells were damaged and closed that day.

Inmates had to be transferred to another facility after tear gas spread throughout the prison, the courthouse, and the adjacent Sûreté du Québec (SQ) police station.

Erica Lynn Hottot sentenced to six months in the community

Erica Lynn Hottot, 33-year-old woman from Port Daniel, recently pleaded guilty at the New Carlisle courthouse on a charge of theft. Between September and October 2023, she stole prepaid cards and scratch lottery tickets worth \$10,400 from the Petro-Canada service station and convenience store in Paspébiac. According to CHNC, she is sentenced to a six-month term to be served in the community, followed by two years of probation and she is given 30 months to repay back the amount stolen.

Young driver's life no longer threatened

A driver in his twenties was hospitalized in very serious condition on October 29 in Gaspé after losing control of his vehicle in a curve, while he was driving in the L'Anse-à-Val-leau sector, very early in the morning. The vehicle veered off the road and struck a tree in the ditch. The same evening, his state had greatly improved and his life was no longer in danger. An expert in accident reconstitution was assigned to the scene. Fatigue is believed to be a possible factor in the crash.

Man found dead in the woods near Murdochville

The body of Philippe Arsenault, a 48-year-old man from Cascapédia-St.-Jules, was found in a wooded area near Murdochville on October 27, the day following a late evening emergency call for a search. He had been accompanying a group of hunters, although he was not hunting himself and was reportedly unfamiliar with the area.

Ghislain Pitre to return to court on December 1

Former Percé town planning director Ghislain Pitre will return to Superior Court on December 1, when a trial date could be set. Charged with fraud and breach of trust since February following an investigation conducted by Quebec's anti-corruption permanent squad (UPAC), Mr. Pitre appeared at the Percé courthouse on October 27-28 for witness hearings. The investigation suggests that between 2009 and 2023, some municipal employees under his supervision carried out work for his personal benefit. He is also alleged to have received a grant of more than \$5,000 for the restoration of his own house, while he was responsible for administering that restoration program for the Town of Percé.

# UPA requests better financial support from Quebec government due to rising production costs

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND - The Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands is calling for concrete action from the Quebec government to support the sector, which is going through a very difficult period because of rising production costs. At the same time, revenues are not following the same trend.

The group is particularly concerned that its members are bearing the brunt of the provincial carbon pricing system. Since its inception in 2015, that tax has represented a \$480 million cost for Quebec farmers, including \$85 million in 2025 alone.

"We are the only ones having to pay that carbon tax in Canada. It affects our competitiveness", pointed out Paul Doyon, first vice-president of the province-wide UPA.

The regional organization held its annual general meeting on October 29 in New Richmond and Mr. Doyon was delegated by the national UPA. About 25 of the 240 producers based in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands were represented. Alongside these activities, concrete commitments were requested from the provincial government and its new minister of Agriculture, Donald Martel, appointed on September 10.

"This is still a minister who will have a fairly short mandate to accomplish significant things, but what we're asking of him is to work with the Union of Agricultural Producers (UPA). It's the only way for him to achieve substantial gains," added Paul Doyon.

While the region's specific needs have not yet been quantified, the regional UPA is calling for a significant increase in agricultural budgets.

"It could come under different forms, including a renegotiation of the three-year sectorial agreement, which provides us with a total amount of \$2.6 million for the Gaspé Peninsula and \$800,000 for the Magdalen Islands", under-



Photo: G. Gagné

*UPA Gaspésie president Sylvain Arbour and province-wide UPA first vice-president Paul Doyon are adamant about the necessity of obtaining better financial support from the Quebec government for regional farmers.*

scored Sylvain Arbour, the president of the regional UPA.

Moreover, the Quebec-wide UPA is demanding reimbursement for costs associated with carbon pricing, which is still in effect in Quebec, considering that it has been abolished elsewhere. Paul Doyon observes that his members are feeling the repercussions.

"It affects everything we buy in terms of inputs. Everyone is passing the bill around, and when it comes to farmers. We can't pass the bill on to anyone. We want this to stop. We can't sustain such a large competitiveness gap with other provinces for long," explained Mr. Doyon, who is also a daily farmer in the Beauce region.

While the funds generated by this carbon tax are being used for the electrification of Quebec, Mr. Doyon believes that agricultural producers are seeing very little tangible benefit. "Electrifying certain agricultural activities is quite difficult. Electric tractors simply don't exist. Very, very little money has been returned to the agricultural sector," he adds.

#### **Programs must be adapted to regional realities**

The UPA also reiterates the importance of implementing

programs tailored to remote regions, which struggle to be competitive due to higher production costs, particularly transportation. The organization points out that distances to travel, climate, and crop yields can vary considerably from one region to another.

Sylvain Arbour, a sheep producer, points out that the production of hay has been declining for several years.

"We had only one hay harvest this year. The second cut won't happen, as hay is very short, barely standing off the ground," he explains.

"If we want agriculture to

thrive in regions like the Gaspé Peninsula, we need programs to support it. We've been asking for this for years", insists Paul Doyon.

Sylvain Arbour co-owns the Bergerie du Margot sheep farm in Bonaventure. He points out that it's becoming increasingly difficult for him and his fellow producers to make ends meet. He cites as an example the price of one of his tractors, which has jumped by \$60,000, from \$149,000 to \$219,000 in five years.

"That's what we're experiencing, with everything: machinery, diesel prices have

gone up. Everything has gone up! Plastic packaging has increased significantly," Mr. Arbour adds.

"Since 2019, my production expenses have increased by about 30%, while revenues have only risen by 10%. Much more is going out than coming in, that's what we're seeing," sums up Mr. Arbour.

As a consequence, it is common to see farmers who don't pay themselves a salary, he says.

"A lot of producers depend on the work of a family member outside the farm, sometimes two family members. In fact, there is an increase in the number of agricultural producer households dependent on wages earned off the farm", he deplures.

Paul Doyon laments that a little less than 1% of the provincial budget is allocated to the agricultural sector. For him, it's essential to help agricultural producers facing precarious and uncertain situations.

"Passion has to pay off at some point," he says, reminding everyone that the vitality of rural areas largely depends on agricultural production.

The upcoming months will demonstrate the importance the Quebec government places on food production made in the province, say Sylvain Arbour and Paul Doyon.

## **Annual report shows decrease in loans at the Agricultural Finance Corporation in Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine**

Nelson Sergerie

CAPLAN - La Financière Agricole granted 43 loans worth \$6 million for its 2024-2025 fiscal year, which ended on March 31. This was revealed by the organization when its annual report was filed on October 30.

This is a significant decrease from 2023-2024, when 65 loans were granted for a total value of \$9.4 million.

Over the past year, 101 customers who had purchased 2024 crop insurance received compensation totaling \$657,000. In comparison, 95 clients received \$1.8 million in compensation the year before.

Income stabilization insurance had 69 insured clients who received \$1.6 million in compensation, compared to 76 people who received \$2 million in compensation the year before.

The AgriStability program had 102 participants with payments totaling \$746,000. However, only \$364,000 had been paid to 100 participants last year.

The AgriInvest and Agri-Québec programs received a total government contribution of \$723,000, which is equivalent to the amount for 2023-2024.

Finally, 52 participants enrolled in the Agri-Québec Plus program shared \$132,000, a significant decrease from the 79 participants who received \$577,000 from the Quebec government the previous year.

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# Elections: Gilles Daraïche re-elected in Chandler

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER – The incumbent mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraïche, was re-elected with a strong majority following the November 2 election. He garnered 68% of the vote against Dominique Giroux, the former aquatic activities coordinator who was dismissed due to her ties with Adrenaline Rescue and unauthorized sponsorships.

"It's a great victory. I think people voted based on what I've done over the past four years: honesty, transparency, and listening to the community," said Mr. Daraïche, who has already scheduled meetings regarding housing in the coming weeks.

This defeat marks the end of Dominique Giroux's short political career. "It's over for me. It's been a lot of work. I gave it my all," she said. "I ran a clean campaign. Democracy has spoken."

## Elsewhere in Rocher-Percé

The incumbent mayor of Grande-Rivière, Gino Cyr, secured 78% of the vote against incumbent councillor Carol Moreau. He deplores the misinformation that circulated, particularly during the final week of the campaign.

"A lot of it was unverified content. We constantly had to correct course while remaining professional and providing accurate information by referring to the municipality's administrative staff," says Mr. Cyr.

In his opinion, the way campaigns are conducted needs to be reviewed.

"We need to ensure that debates focus on ideas or substance rather than denigration or misinformation. I don't find that very democratic," he believes.

In Percé, Daniel Leboeuf, who was elected in a by-election a year ago, was re-elected mayor with 65% of the vote, defeating Pierre Poirier and Michel Després.

"I'm happy. This means that the citizens appreciate the short time I've spent so far, even though I haven't made any major changes at Town Hall. It was about rebuilding the municipal team and restoring trust with the citizens," said the man who is pleased to have secured another mandate to continue the work he began.

In Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, incumbent mayor Roberto Blondin received



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

*Incumbent Chandler Mayor Gilles Daraïche wins by a strong majority against his opponent Dominique Giroux.*

41.6% of the vote, securing a majority of 23 votes over his closest opponent, Jacques Desbois. Alcide Hautcoeur was also a candidate.

In Port-Daniel-Gascons, Henri Grenier was re-elected by acclamation, as was Samuel Parisé, prefect elected by universal suffrage.

## Bonaventure MRC

In Caplan: Incumbent mayor Lise Castilloux was re-elected with 77% of the vote, while her closest opponent, Sylvain Brière, garnered only 19.9%. Renaud Boissonnault finished third with 3% of the vote.

In Hope, incumbent mayor Hazen Whittom returned for another term with 72% of the vote, defeating Nadia Chapados.

A new mayor is in office in New Carlisle: Patrice Leclerc won with 66% of the vote against Benoît Maltais. Incumbent mayor David Thibault did not seek re-election.

In Saint-Godefroi, Genade Grenier made a successful political comeback with 76% of the vote against Linda Roussy.

In Paspebiac, outgoing councillor Jérémy Laplante won the mayoral position through obtaining 955 votes, compared to 706 votes for outgoing councillor Sandra Langlois and 122 votes for Louis Breton.

## Elected by acclamation:

Bonaventure: Pierre Gagnon re-elected by acclamation; Cascapédia-Saint-Jules: Incumbent Mayor Ashley Milligan re-elected by acclamation; Hope Town: Linda MacWhirter re-elected by acclamation; New Richmond: Éric Dubé re-elected by acclamation; Saint-Alphonse: Josiane Appleby re-elected by acclamation; Saint-Elzéar: Pâ-

querette Poirier re-elected by acclamation; Saint-Siméon: Denis Gauthier re-elected by acclamation; Shigawake: Rolande Couture Beebe re-elected by acclamation.

## Avignon MRC

In L'Ascension-de-Patapédia: Incumbent councillor Nancy Arsenaault was elected

mayor with a narrow majority, securing 52.7% of the vote against her opponent Éric Guénette, who received 47.3%. Incumbent mayor Guy Richard withdrew from the race.

In Pointe-à-la-Croix: Incumbent mayor Pascal Bujold was unchallenged, winning a decisive 85.6% of the vote against J. Alan Morrison.

## Elected by acclamation:

Saint-François-d'Assise: Rémi Lagacé is re-elected by acclamation; Saint-André-de-Restigouche: Councillor Jean-Paul Landry is elected by acclamation; Saint-Alexis-de-Matapédia: Cynthia Dufour is re-elected by acclamation; Matapédia: Serge Normandeau is elected by acclamation; Ristigouche Sud-Est: David Ferguson is re-elected by acclamation; Escuminac: Former MNA for Bonaventure, Sylvain Roy, is elected by acclamation;

Nouvelle: Richard Saint-

Laurent is elected by acclamation after stepping down in 2021; Carleton-sur-Mer: Mathieu Lapointe is re-elected by acclamation; Maria: Councillor Patricia Chartier is elected by acclamation.

## Côte-de-Gaspé

A page of history turns in Murdochville as Délisca Ritchie Roussy, in office for 21 years, must relinquish her seat to Stéphane Gamache, who garnered 55.6% of the vote.

In Cloridorme: outgoing councillor Nancy Cloutier becomes mayor, defeating incumbent councillor Normand Poirier with 70.6% of the vote.

## Elected by acclamation:

Gaspé: incumbent mayor Daniel Côté is re-elected by acclamation; Petite-Vallée: incumbent mayor Monika Tait is re-elected by acclamation; Grande-Vallée: incumbent mayor Noël Richard is re-elected by acclamation.

## The Riôtel Bonaventure closes

Nelson Sergerie

BONAVENTURE – The Riôtel Group has closed its Bonaventure location after determining that necessary improvements to the site were not feasible.

According to Riôtel, this carefully considered business decision reflects the company's long-term vision of strengthening its position as a regional leader and expanding its offerings in Quebec.

"It was a strategic decision that was difficult from a human perspective, but it was the right decision from a business standpoint," says Lucie Dumas, Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

The inability to make the necessary investments to meet customer needs led to this decision. "What we've realized over the past few years is that it's been difficult to meet the needs of our various customer segments. We have a business clientele. We didn't have many facilities to allow them to gather. We have a bus clientele, often older people, but the hotel has three floors and no elevator. We also have a family clientele who wanted a pool and some facilities for children," says Ms. Dumas.

The company had also attempted to acquire additional buildings for expansion, but those efforts were unsuccessful.

"We came to the conclusion that we wouldn't be able to upgrade the Bonaventure hotel to meet market needs," she explains.

The company is now open to discussions with potential buyers. "Anything is possible. You know as well as I do that there's a housing crisis. It could be a building that a company could use to house its employees. It could become a small inn that could be taken over by people who have this kind of dream. For now, we've made our intention known, and we'll be open to evaluating all the options that come our way," said Ms. Dumas.

This decision was made despite the excellent results of the last season. The establishment has 30 rooms.

All employees were offered the opportunity to join one of the group's three other hotels in Matane, Carleton-sur-Mer, or Percé for the 2026 season, with accommodation guaranteed during the summer months. According to the group, several employees have already confirmed their interest.

## The Mayor's Action

Mayor of Bonaventure Pierre Gagnon was informed of the decision by the company on November 3. His goal is to keep the hotel, which dates back to the early 1900s, within the community. "It's a very important hotel and a jewel for Bonaventure," commented Mr. Gagnon.

"For our part, we want to maintain the hotel aspect. We're currently trying to find a hotelier who could take it over. It might be a challenge. We're going to work very hard, and we've already approached some people," he said, hoping the hotel will be operational next spring.

Percé  
The Riôtel in Percé does not have a pool or facilities for hosting large-scale conferences. An outdoor terrace was added last summer, allowing guests to enjoy a drink while admiring Percé Rock. The hotel is only open during the summer. Winterizing the site to be open year-round has not been considered.

"Never say never. The main challenge in Percé is mobilizing all economic stakeholders to maintain services. If the hotel remains open but there are no restaurants or most attractions are closed, it's not appealing to tourists or even business travelers. The region needs to be mobilized to maintain some vitality during the winter months," says vice-president Lucie Dumas.

# Double celebration at Chantier Forillon

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – October 29 marked two significant milestones at the Forillon shipyard in Gaspé: the completion of the 10-boat search and rescue contract and the start of construction on a new diesel-electricity propelled research vessel for the Canadian Coast Guard.

In front of an audience of employees proud of the end of this chapter and the beginning of another, President and CEO Jean-David Samuel could hardly hide his satisfaction with his team's accomplishments and the company's growth over the past decade.

"There were 37 of us at the time when we got the contract in 2015. Today, we have nearly 100 workers. That's impressive growth. We've also grown in terms of management capacity. There were three or four of us at the time, and now we have a team structure that is ready to build just about any boat under 1,000 tons here in Gaspé," notes the manager.

The shipyard was first awarded a \$45 million contract in 2015 to build six search and rescue boats, with an option for four more added in 2018 for \$30 million. The final boat, the Baie-de-Gaspé, was delivered on October 29 at the Rivière-au-Renard port in the presence of Coast Guard representatives and crews.

Despite the pandemic and rising raw material costs, the project's overall expenses were only slightly affected. "We were lucky in a way. We had the four options in 2018. We had done a lot of long-term procurement. That helped us a lot. We had already purchased the steel and aluminum. The engines had already been purchased. It was really the smaller items that were more affected.



Photos: Nelson Sergerie

*The Baie-de-Gaspé, the latest search and rescue vessel built for the Coast Guard.*

The value was lower. That allowed us to remain competitive," calculates Mr. Samuel, who indicates that the impact will only have been a small percentage of the profit margin.

## Construction of the new research vessel

A year ago, the shipyard was awarded a \$55.5 million contract by the federal government to build the first diesel-electricity hybrid propelling semi-offshore fisheries research vessel for the Canadian Coast Guard. "We have received the steel. We have been actively building for several weeks now. The engineering is well advanced. The project is progressing well and we should have delivery in about two years," notes Mr. Samuel, as the entire design phase has been completed since the contract was awarded in October 2024.

The new vessel, whose name has not been announced but will refer to First Nations, will be equipped with a battery energy storage system designed to reduce fossil fuel consumption. Its design includes features focused on reducing

energy consumption, such as a hybrid propulsion system with a battery pack and energy-efficient electrical and deck equipment systems. The vessel will emit significantly less greenhouse gases than a non-hybrid vessel and will be capable of low-speed battery operation for 30 to 60 minutes per day.

In addition, the batteries can support nighttime operations to avoid the use of port generators, thereby emitting less pollution and ambient noise.

However, one of the shipyard's babies from 2013, the Peter-Fraser hybrid ferry that shuttles between L'Isle-Verte and Notre-Dame-des-Sept-

Douleurs, near Rivière-du-Loup, can no longer rely on its batteries, which have reached the end of their useful life. "The regulations were in their infancy. We go back to 2011 for the engineering of the Peter-Fraser. Fourteen years later, the regulations have changed. It is possible to change them, but modifications have to be made to the ship. Will it be the same in 10 years? Or will there be new technology? We can't predict what it will be in 10 or 15 years," says the manager.

The start of construction was marked with a coin ceremony on the ship's hull. "It's a maritime tradition. We want to bring good luck to the ship," says Mr. Samuel.

During peak periods, up to 40 workers will be involved in the ship's construction, with about 20 additional staff providing support. The workforce is fully in place to ensure the shipyard's activities run smoothly.

Other contracts are also in the pipeline. "We are targeting both the private and government sectors. The (maritime) sector is doing well. We are looking at everything that is happening. Yes, we want to continue our growth," says the president and CEO.

## Shipbuilding cluster

In December 2024, the Gaspé MRC dreamed of establishing a regional industrial cluster in shipbuilding over a five-year horizon, a concept that is proving valuable for the shipyard's development.

"Having the support of the MRC helps enormously. We don't feel alone. We have people, an ecosystem and suppliers who want to get involved. It's important because we can tell elected officials that we want to grow, not just for ourselves but for the entire local economy. It's promising for us," says Mr. Samuel.

The mayor of Gaspé and prefect of the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC, Daniel Côté, who was present at the ceremony, noted the industrial cluster in his short speech. "It is thanks to you that we are positioning the shipbuilding industry on a Quebec, Canadian, and global scale. Why? Because we believe there is incredible potential to develop the shipbuilding industry here to diversify our economy and secure the future of our region. It's thanks to your expertise," said Mr. Côté, who highlighted the Coast Guard's confidence in the shipyard.

# Uncertainty surrounding the Fisheries Fund

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – While the mayor of Gaspé hopes that the federal government will renew the Fisheries Fund, the federal government is offering no guarantees in this regard.

This is what Alexis Deschênes, Member of Parliament (MP) for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj, learned when he questioned Fisheries Minister, Joanne Thompson, during a recent meeting of the Standing Committee on Fisheries in the federal Parliament.

"As you know, we will have a budget tabled on November 4. The Fisheries Fund has been a phenomenal resource for the industry. It is an extremely important fund, but we will see on November 4," the minister replied to a question from the Bloc Québécois MP.

"I understand that you are not in a position to confirm today because many people are expecting it to be renewed



Photo: Alexis Deschênes' Facebook

*MP Alexis Deschênes during questioning at the Standing Committee on Fisheries about the Fisheries Fund.*

and want to prepare and submit their applications. Today, you cannot confirm that your government will replenish the Fisheries Fund?" the MP pressed.

The minister stood by her position. "I encourage you to write to the Minister of Finance, because this is a budgetary decision," suggested the minister.

Alexis Deschênes has since written to the Minister of Fi-

nance, François-Philippe Champagne, to raise awareness about the issue.

The \$42 million envelope, 70% funded by the federal government and 30% by the provincial government, was established in 2019 for a five-year period and extended for two more years because funds remained. It will expire next March.

Last week, during a meeting with Quebec Fisheries Minister Donald Martel, Daniel Côté the mayor of Gaspé asked for the fund to be renewed.

"The fishing industry needs to modernize, and that means investing in innovation in a context where labour is becoming increasingly scarce and of diversifying markets. This requires investment," said Daniel Côté, who noted that the fund is practically empty.

"This is a sign that it has served its purpose. We hope that new funds will be reinvested," said Mr. Côté.



*Rocky Vézina installed the coin on the Canadian Coast Guard's new research vessel.*

# Federal budget: Gaspé Peninsula projects included

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – Specific projects for the Gaspé Peninsula are included in the federal budget tabled by the Carney government in Ottawa on November 4, but the Bloc Québécois Member of Parliament (MP) for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj will vote against the budget as a whole.

The extension of the runway at the Îles-de-la-Madeleine airport, the Forillon shipyard and the Exploramer museum in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts are included. However, the Fisheries Fund is not.

“We have made major, historic gains that we have achieved through political will that will enable us to build a stronger economy, but a budget is not just about regional projects. We in the Bloc Québécois wanted to increase old age pensions, increase health transfers, and make proposals on housing, but everything was rejected,” notes Alexis Deschênes.

Some temporary measures for employment insurance are being renewed for three years, but not the most structural ones.

“There are setbacks on the environmental front. Mr. Carney continues to set back the environmental cause. He is removing the obligation to cap emissions for the oil sector, he is removing subsidies for vehicles, he is adding subsidies in the oil sector. Our expectations were based on the crises experienced by Quebecers. We are disappointed and we will vote against it,” Mr. Deschênes continues.

Regarding the Fisheries Fund, one of the MP's requests, there is nothing in the budget document.

“The Fisheries Fund is not being renewed in this budget. What I am being told by the minister's office is that the decision has not yet been made,



Photo: Daniel Côté's Facebook page

*The mayor of Gaspé and the Member of Parliament for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine see some interesting points in the budget.*

and that there may be a way to find funding elsewhere, which is indeed a possibility,” says the MP, who will continue to lobby for a way to replenish the fund.

He had written to Finance Minister François-Philippe Champagne to raise awareness before the budget.

“I am very pleased with the gains made at the regional level, and the lobbying efforts have paid off. I am very proud that after six months, with the invaluable support of my leader Yves-François Blanchet, who brought these projects to the attention of decision-makers, we have succeeded in obtaining political will for Chantier naval Forillon, Exploramer and the Îles-de-la-Madeleine airport. I congratulate the government for listening to our requests,” says the Bloc Québécois member.

With this overview, he will still vote against it.

“But I am convinced that this budget will pass,” he adds.

### The mayor of Gaspé is satisfied

“If I were an independent member of the House of Commons, I would tend to vote in favour,” says Daniel

gion,” he laments. The municipal official sees regional projects included in the document.

“The Forillon Shipyard. It's possibly the boat launch project. There's a real need in that area. If we want to continue building boats that serve the country's interests, the shipyard is well-positioned. Very interesting,” notes Mr. Côté.

But there is disappointment at not seeing the Fisheries Fund in the budget.

“Is the Fisheries Fund included in broader funding envelopes for innovation or economic development? It's possible. However, it's not explicitly mentioned, just like the Gaspé Railway, in the budget statement.”

“There's money for rail infrastructure, but is the Gaspé Peninsula included? We don't

have the answer,” says Daniel Côté.

There's money for housing and municipal infrastructure, but an agreement must be reached with the Quebec government to secure the funds.

“God knows it takes a long time to reach this kind of agreement. Before I celebrate, I'll wait for an agreement, and that could take five years. We're a long way from seeing the money on the ground,” the elected official laments. The Quebec government doesn't want to impose conditions on obtaining the funds, based on blanket national standards.

“Can we finally loosen the reins a bit? We don't need conditions that are detrimental on the ground. Everyone has their part to play,” Mr. Côté suggested.

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**Notice of Application to Dispose of Waste or Other Matter at Sea**

Notice is hereby given that Fisheries and Oceans Canada, located at 104 Dalhousie Street, Québec, QC, intends on this 12th day of November 2025 to apply to Environment and Climate Change Canada for **four disposal at sea permits under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999** to load dredged material in the following harbours in the Gaspé Peninsula for the purpose of disposal at sea at the disposal sites mentioned below, and by the following methods: clamshell dredger or excavator or hydraulic dredge and towed scows.

Harbour	Quantity in cubic metres (m <sup>3</sup> ) place measure	Disposal site	Proposed dates for loading and disposal activities
Port-Daniel (48.18233° N. and 64.96150° W. NAD83)	4 000	PD-6 (48.13500° N. and 64.94167° W. NAD83)	From March 15, 2026 to March 14, 2027
L'Anse-à-Brillant (48.72117° N. and 64.28950° W. NAD83)	5 500	ABR-1 (48.73200° N. and 64.28200° W. NAD83)	From March 15, 2026 to March 14, 2027
L'Anse-à-Brillant (48.72117° N. and 64.28950° W. NAD83)	6 000	AB-5 (48.45000° N. and 64.25000° W. NAD83)	From March 15, 2026 to March 14, 2027
Saint-Godefroi (48.07310° N. and 65.11478° W. NAD83)	9 000	SG-2 (48.04500° N. and 65.08333° W. NAD83)	From March 15, 2026 to March 14, 2027

For further information regarding these activities, please contact:  
Maxime Doyon  
Project Technician  
Small Craft Harbours  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Québec Region  
104 Dalhousie Street  
Québec, QC  
G1K 7Y7  
maxime.doyon@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

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# First CISSS Board Meeting

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – The first CISSS de la Gaspésie board meeting since the creation of Santé Québec was held on October 21 in Gaspé, marking a new approach to governance and future development.

The biggest change lies in decision-making. Previously, the board adopted resolutions that management executed. Now, the board advises president and CEO Martin Pelletier, who has the final authority.

"I think the advice will be helpful to the CEO. There is a different way of doing things, but it will require teamwork upstream," says Mr. Pelletier.

The three-year institutional plan, which sets fundamental objectives, was also presented. "The plan will also allow us to do things differently in order to improve. Performance that is not only financial, but also in terms of human resources, which is a big challenge for me," notes the president and CEO.

The CISSS must phase out independent labour by October 2026. About 125 of the 4,000 positions remain outside the network, representing the difference between a deficit and a balanced budget. With one year left, the final stretch will be challenging.

"It's a lot. Trying to hire people who already live in the region. Some may want to



The new Board of Directors of the CISSS de la Gaspésie met on October 21 in Gaspé.

Photo: N. Sergerie

move here. But the number is big. We know we're not alone in Quebec," says Mr. Pelletier. In other words, he hopes to keep some independent workers in the region and be successful in recruiting people living outside the region.

The difficulty lies in recruiting the remaining personnel after major centres have already tapped the pool of self-employed workers.

"We are trying to be attractive and intense in our recruitment. We are doing everything we can to make it easier to hire them," insists Mr. Pelletier.

If the CISSS had not resorted to independent labour, the \$565 million budget would be balanced. Nevertheless, Mr. Pelletier, considers bringing these positions back

into the network a commendable goal.

The network's absenteeism rate is 10% for a variety of reasons. "We know we have a lot of room for improvement. There are various contributing factors over which we have no control, but we have a lot of work to do in terms of retention. This brings us to the work environment. Sometimes it's the environment between individuals or with a superior. Things happen, and we're working on them," says Mr. Pelletier, who hopes to make life easier for workers.

The Quebec government is also beginning to understand the specificities of the region, with four hospitals and three emergency rooms to operate. "I'm optimistic. Things are moving forward.

However, there are limits to the province's ability to pay. But I'm satisfied with the freedom we're given to take local initiatives to achieve the same objectives," he says.

The latest technical studies for the Maria hospital's emergency and intensive care units will be submitted soon.

"For us, we will have done our job. We are still waiting for confirmation that the project can move forward," says Mr. Pelletier. Funding decisions are expected in the next provincial budget, though Mr. Pelletier cannot say how the Maria project ranks among other Santé Québec initiatives.

Similarly, the delivery room project at the Maison de la famille Parenfant in Gaspé remains on the planning list.

"It's still on the to-do list.

For the next fiscal year, we are trying to include it in the planning. This is subject to there being no other budget restrictions," says Mr. Pelletier.

Recruiting doctors is becoming increasingly difficult, this is already the case in Haute-Gaspésie and is becoming so in Baie-des-Chaleurs and Rocher-Percé.

"There is a shortage of 2,000 family doctors in Quebec. We hope to be attractive. Remote areas are struggling," notes the president and CEO, citing La Matanie as an example.

"Few people decide to come to the Gaspé Peninsula. This is a major problem. We are trying to develop SNP clinics (Specialized nurse practitioner). Experienced specialized nurse practitioners will come to help us. We are experimenting with this in Haute-Gaspésie. It's a stopgap measure, but it doesn't replace a doctor," he explains.

Martin Pelletier, who took office in May 2022, sees his term ending next May. "I have a good relationship with the Quebec government. The rest is up to me. Right now, I would say yes, but I still have some time to think about extending my term," he says, admitting frankly that he did not expect this question. But he does not hide his desire to continue the work he began three and a half years ago.



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## 1988, a year of hope regarding project development

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – After a relatively good year in 1987, except for the uncertainty tied to the Murdochville mine, Gaspésians were entitled to expect further improvement in 1988, especially after the Socio-Economic Summit held in September. The situation did improve, but the commercial fisheries began to experience worrying layoffs.

**Vol 14, No 1  
January 5, 1988**

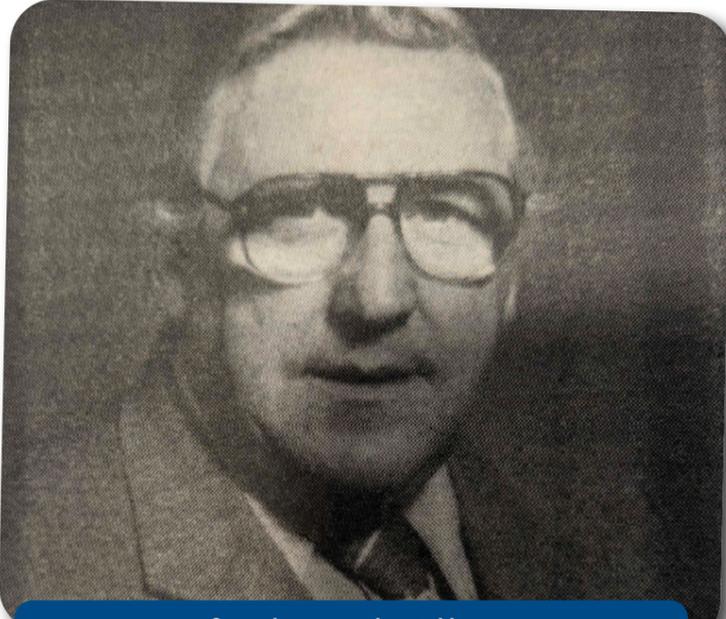
• In SPEC's first issue of 1988, dated January 5, "It was a very good year" makes the biggest headline. Sharon McCully notices that 1987 was much better than 1986, notably regarding the betterment of labour relations in Quebec. The wrap up covers tourism, the economy, changes in municipal and school board administration, postal service, the environment and the legal sector. The issue also includes "1988 agricultural outlook – highlights" and "Forillon National Park announces the opening of new cross-country ski trails for 1988" on the front page.

**Vol 14, No 2  
January 12, 1988**

• In issue 2, dated January 12, "Ottawa man wants tribute to René Lévesque" makes the main headline, as former journalist and communication consultant Bernard Bujold wants recognition for the New Carlisle house where Quebec's former premier was raised. Then house owner Georgette Bujold says that she has opened the door to 3,000 visitors since Mr. Lévesque was elected premier in 1976. "New Carlisle fundraising campaign well underway" to collect money for a future community centre, and "Polluted water upsets citizens" of Haldimand, also appears on page 1.

**Vol 14, No 3  
January 19, 1988**

• "Triple murder, suicide in Fox River" recounted in issue 3, dated January 19, the tragedy that made national



Gaspé loses prominent citizen.  
Mr. Albert Cassidy passed away on March 25, 1988.

headlines, claiming the lives of a father, Alfred O'Connor, who drowned his three sons before plunging in the bitterly cold waters of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. New Richmond's Sylvain "Langis considering leading county Liberals in election", the poll being federal, and "Employees lay-off due to lack of contracts" at Paspébiac's Chantier Maritime also make the front-page.

**Vol 14, No 4  
January 26, 1988**

• "High copper price may lead to mine re-opening" in Murdochville makes the headline of issue 4, dated January 26. More than 225 workers could be called back. "CBC regional news service paying the bills in Montreal", "SQ officers strive for mortality free 1988", "Road construction causing headaches for drivers" in New Carlisle and Paspébiac, and "Out of sight, out of mind: answer for Quebec's PCBs" also appear on page 1.

**Vol 14, No 5  
February 2, 1988**

• "Federal Liberals gear up for election", as a poll is expected in 1988 and "SPEC co-founder named city desk editor of Montreal Daily News", as Bernard Saint Laurent will now run the paper founded by Pierre Péladeau, make the headlines of issue 5, February 2. A page 1 photo shows oil drilling along New Carlisle's Fifth Range.

**Vol 14, No 6  
February 9, 1988**

• In issue 6, dated February 9, "The end of an era in Gaspé" reports on the closure of the Robins store, which had opened between 1906 and 1910. "A sewage plant – at what cost?" in Gaspé also makes page 1 headlines. "Community offers support to Loyalist Village project", "Women's group to open centre" in Bonaventure, "Common sense, peer pressure battle in minds of teen smokers", "Health minister visits region", "Treating more sick newborns strains our hospitals facilities" and "An 18-hole golf course for Gaspé" also make page 1.

**Vol 14, No 7  
February 16, 1988**

• "Chandler woman treated for dog bite", "Celebration 88 honors Gaspé athletes", "Committee formed to study passenger rail travel", "Cascadia Society rejects MLCP plan", and Saint-Siméon "Council to study zoning by-law to prevent bar opening" make the titles of issue 7, dated February 16.

**Vol 14, No 8  
February 23, 1988**

• "Mann's Settlement couple tired of Quebec language law", telling the story of the Irving family's grocery store near Matapédia, "Referendum widens gap in Port Daniel",

about the rejected amalgamation project, and "Indian Affairs conducting inquiry into Maria Band election", a complaint lodged by Guy Condo after Douglas Martin's win, make the page 1 titles of issue 8, February 23.

**Vol 14, No 9  
March 1, 1988**

• In the March 1 issue, "Citizens want Port Daniel left whole", a follow up on amalgamation as citizens want a calmer dialogue, "Rivtow buying, selling shares in Chantier Maritime" in Paspébiac, as the British Columbia main owner of the shipyard looks for another regional partner, "Law association revokes (permanently) licence of Chandler lawyer" Gilles Gaul for embezzling \$56,152.56 from 10 clients, and "Six killed Bay of Chaleurs plane crash" near Charlo, makes the headlines. The victims were union leaders expected to finalize a deal at the Gaspesia mill in Chandler.

**Vol 14, No 10  
March 8, 1988**

• In issue 10, dated March 8, readers see "Shipyard on hold, waiting for 1988 fishing quotas", regarding Paspébiac's firm, "Community invited to help (School) Board draft Aids policy", "English groups want Law 101 restrictions eased" and "Two cases of shellfish poisoning at Île Verte" on the front-page.

**Vol 14, No 11  
March 13, 1988**

• In SPEC's March 13 issue, number 11, "Auxiliary nurses claim Maria Hospital eliminating nurses", "Search is on for Liberal candidate in Bonaventure County", and "Bonaventure selected for Heritage Canada project", are the main headlines. Page 1 also features "County P.Q. rebuilding under Parizeau", "Gaspé sewage plant controversy rages on" and "Labour Commission rules in favor of fish plant owner", the latter case in E. Gagnon et Fils' 1987 decision to temporarily close the Gaspesia plant after an arbitrator

report.

**Vol 14, No 12  
March 22, 1988**

• March 22 issue 12 shows "Purdel cutback – 290 jobs lost" as the main headline. Purdel cut 290 of Rivière-au-Renard's fish plant's 340 jobs because of low demand for cod and turbot. "Bonaventure tea shop features enigma of St. Elzéar" tells the story of Spanish refugee Emmanuel de Valdes, who has settled in that village. "Women's Group questions sexual assault sentence", "Voyageur announces new benefits", "New publications on official language in business is launched", "NDP party active in Gaspé" and "Gaspé South selected for community futures assistance" also appear on page 1.

**Vol 14, No 13  
March 29, 1988**

• The March 29 issue, number 13, shows "Commercial salmon fishermen to appear in court", "Cancer treatment room inaugurated at Maria Hospital" and "CASA to send letter of support to Language Commissioner" as main titles. "Gaspesia fares well at Eastern Quebec Games", "National recreational fisheries policy announced" and "Quebec tax forms a comedy of errors" also make page 1.

**Vol 14, No 14  
April 5, 1988**

• "United Church divided on admission of homosexuals to ministry", "Single industry town has known better times", about Murdochville, and "A new president of CASA", as in Weston White, make the headlines of April 5th, issue 14. Inside, an article presents the high occurrence of twins in Port Daniel. The unsigned feature of Murdochville's situation is thorough.

**Vol 14, No 15  
April 12, 1988**

• "Wanted: dance partner

From Page 13

over 100” presents Annie Thibodeau Vicaire, Restigouche Reserve’s oldest resident, aged 106, in issue 15, dated April 12. The other headline is entitled “\$750,000 invested to help Purdel workers” following the layoff of 290 of them. “Closing post offices, an election issue”, “Young author blind at 27”, the author being Ken McColm, and “Dalhousie mayor downplays prospect of nuclear submarine base” also make page 1.

Vol 14. No 16  
April 19, 1988

- In SPEC’s issue 16, dated April 19, “Hydro accident results in PCB spill”, in New Richmond, and “Gray (Darryl) responds to call for resignation” make the main titles. “Project helps 24 women re-enter work force”, courtesy of Femmes en Mouvement, “World renowned organist to perform in Paspebiac” and “Several thousand visit car show” in New Richmond also appear on page 1. Inside, a long article features the birth of Environnement Vert-Plus.

Vol 14. No 17  
April 26, 1988

- The April 26 issue, number 17, shows “Community big winners at concerts staged by volunteers”, as Cascapedia-St. Jules singers and musicians perform regularly to support community causes. In “Businesses battling Quebec Language Law”, Art Jones reports on three Gaspé town firms that have kept English on their signs despite the language law policy. “Coast to coast for rural post”, “Board approves motion to request new school in New Carlisle” and “RSBG first to take concrete action on AIDS issue” also make page 1.

Vol 14. No 18  
May 3, 1988

- “Report says mechanical failure contributed to mining disaster” informs readers of the May 3, number 18 issue that the April 1, 1987, fire in Murdochville that claimed the life of miner Ange-Marie Kenney was notably triggered by a blocked conveyor roller, which reached a temperature of 600 degrees and ignited a belt. “Commercial salmon fishermen victims of discrimination” presents a wrap up of the April 29 trial. Judge Jean Bécu wants the Quebec government to pay compensations to the seven fishermen of the Miguasha area. They would have preferred fishing, says Cecil Court. “Temporary solution for Purdel laid off workers” and “New Carlisle businessman fined \$25,000” complete the front-page. Former mayor Barry Tennier pleaded guilty to 51 charges of unemployment insurance fraud. Inside, “Mines Gaspé future optimistic” reports on the company’s decision to rebuild the underground mine’s conveyor. A 16-year-old Cullen’s Brook girl, Sonya Bonenfant, is reported missing on page 1.

Vol 14. No 19  
May 10, 1988

- “Sprinklers turned off during mine fire” gives the coroner’s report on the Murdochville mine fire of 1987, providing details about the tragic end of victim Ange-Marie Kenney. “High risk occupation ties family together” draws a profile of Port Daniel’s Arnold Walker’s family as fishermen. “J.A. Campbell made honorary member of Provincial Association”, (of Protestant School Board) complete page 1 titles of the May 10, issue 19.



Thousands of dollars have been injected into community programs by the group of large spirited individuals with talent. Herbert and Elaine Cochrane of Cascapedia along with Edwin and Helen Campbell, Donna Meredith, Raynold Sexton, Kenny Willett, Carol Lepoidvin and others have performed on nineteen different occasions.

Vol 14. No 20  
May 17, 1988

- “RSBG’s decision angers parents”, the decision being of transferring Murdochville’s grades 10 and 11 students to Gaspé, and “Transport director says detour was unexpected” along highway 132 in Paspebiac, are the main front-page titles of issue 20, dated May 17. “Channel Islands Society to be formed on Gaspé Coast”, “Board changes policy on teacher conference”, “Rexfor rescues 160 (forestry) jobs” in Saint-Alphonse and “Quebec families, the main priority of Levesque budget” also appear on page 1.

Vol 14. No 21  
May 24, 1988

- “Language officials order English poster removed” explains in issue 21, dated May 24, the situation of Gaspesia School Board representative Terry Stanley, who was ordered by an Officer de la Langue Française and security guards to remove an English sign during a Gaspé education event. Francophones around Mr. Stanley were supportive and embarrassed, he explains. “A million plus for health serv-

ices in Bonaventure county”, “Loyalist Corp. on solid ground”, “Wide range of themes covered at first junior public speaking competition”, “Salon Info-services surpasses expectations”, “Employee dismissed for speaking imperfect French” at New Richmond’s VIA Rail station and “Chief Jacques confident fishing agreement will be signed” are the other page 1 titles.

Vol 14. No 22  
May 31, 1988

- “Tourist season begins” and “Tele-University expanding to rural anglophones” are the main titles of issue 22, dated May 31. “Hydro injects \$12 million”, “Audience entertained, enlightened by orators” and Fred “Sams Grocery closes after 60 years in business” are the other main titles.

Vol 14. No 23  
June 7, 1988

- In SPEC’s issue 23, dated June 7, “Gaspé MRC big loser at forum” informs us that the first step of the Social-Economic Forum of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands left only two of the top 50 projects to the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC, thus leading to

insinuations that the votes were marked by collusion. Two page 1 photos show lobster traps brought ashore by a storm and the remains of Cascapedia’s blaze-destroyed Bonbright fishing camp. “Mines Gaspé employees accept new contract”, “Election battle in Port Daniel West heats up”, future of “Shigawake post office in doubt” and “Canada Post tails Rural Dignity across Canada” complete page 1 titles.

Vol 14. No 24  
June 14, 1988

- “Official opening of new wharf” in Sandy Beach”, “Groundbreaking ceremony held for new non-profit housing project”, “Shipbuilding (Gaspé’s Solmer) company launches first boat” (Eaux vives, a trawler), “\$1.4 billion for Official Languages” and “Councillor resigns” in Gaspé make the front-page titles of the June 14, number 24 issue. Councillor Marc Carbonneau stepped down because of the council’s failure to approve a \$150,000 loan that would have paved the way to Rivière au Renard’s water supply project. A short article reports on a food inspection drive conducted in trucks. Inside, Gary Briand, one of SPEC founders, runs a farewell message to news editor Sharon McCully, who leaves for Cowansville.

Vol 14. No 25  
June 21, 1988

- “Gaspesia (mill) employees will raise over \$55,000” for Chandler’s hospital foundation, “Miguasha school board to be host of an all Canadian colloque”, “Forty new jobs created for the Gaspé”, a re-entry labour market program,

Page 15



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From Page 14

“Inshore fisherman (Leroy Leggo) predicts bleak future”, “Agreement on salmon conservation between the natives of Restigouche and the MLCP” and “\$210 million to be invested in Eastern Quebec” are the front page titles of issue 25, dated June 21. A photo-caption shows Manon Loisel, a Paspebiac student who won a private showing of “The Box” for her and 500 friends. The \$210 million comes from a five-year federal-provincial program. Inside, Provigo inaugurates Matapedia’s new \$6 million warehouse.

**Vol 14, No 26  
June 28, 1988**

- “Langlois – newly elected mayor” of Port Daniel West makes the headline of issue 26, dated June 28. Mr. Langlois received 64% of support. Gaspé’s “Town council agrees on sewer plant”, “Gaspé hosts third annual triathlon”, “Darryl Gray announces federal grants for his riding”, “25 years later – bridge tragedy remembered” and “Art exhibit – Elise Kohl” also make page 1. The bridge collapse took place in 1963 over the York river and claimed the lives of six men in four cars on their way to work in Murdochville.

**Vol 14, No 27  
July 5, 1988**

- In SPEC’s issue 27, dated July 5, “24-hour emergency service to open at CLSC” in Paspebiac, “Police clamp down on truckers” and “Local man bikes to raise money for handicapped”, Murdochville’s Dale Miller, make the headlines. “Late Robert Williams honored at Belle Anse School”, “English speaking social worker for the area” and “Lord Lansdowne fishes Cascapedia 100 years after grandfather” are the other titles of page 1. Kenneth Annett runs “Tozer Family Notes”.

**Vol 14, No 28  
July 12, 1988**

- Paul Zaleski, SPEC’s new journalist, runs “English-only poster was illegal: Office” in

issue 28, dated July 12. It is a follow up on a May article during which a poster was removed during an education event in Gaspé. Oddly, the poster was printed by Quebec’s Education Department. “Restigouche fishing season ends with a bang”, and “A surprise traveller on the boulevard”, a moose observed on the bank adjacent to Gaspé boulevard, also make page 1. The Restigouche bang occurred when native fishermen, opposed to an agreement with the Quebec government over salmon quotas, confronted game wardens.

**Vol 14, No 29  
July 19, 1988**

- In issue 29, released on July 19, Art Jones reports on Saint-Maurice de l’Échouerie’s “Citizens (who) protest Canada Post modifications”, as they block highway 132. “Wandering bacteria hit Avignon beaches”, “Conference on Alzheimer’s”, “Mandeville kicks off summer concerts”, “Malbay plans annual festival” and “Elimination of Jeunes volontaires angers school board” make front-page titles. A photo of kids at the beach completes page 1.

**Vol 14, No 30  
July 26, 1988**

- “Gagnon seeks Liberal nomination”, as Patrick Gagnon wants to represent that party in the upcoming federal campaign in Bonaventure-Magdalen Islands, “Gaspé Liberals hold convention”, “Move from Bonaventure (Polyvalent School) looms larger”, “Bonaventure Zoo future uncertain” and “Restigouche fishermen charged”, including chief Ronald Jacques, Alphonse Isaac and 11 other men, who must face obstruction of justice charges, fill page 1 of issue 30, dated July 26.

**Vol 14, No 31  
August 2, 1988**

- Four photos fill the front-page of issue 31, dated August 2, bearing the title “Summer Festival Time”. Inside, Paul Zaleski reports on Pointe-à-la-Garde’s castle and owner Jean Roussy. Cindy Richards also reports on Bonaventure’s Raoul Babin, who retires after 43 years at CN and VIA Rail.

**Vol 14, No 32  
August 9, 1988**

- Issue 32, dated August 9, features “Malbay festival enjoys best ever year”, “School move on hold”, about deciding if Bonaventure Polyvalent School will be phased out, and “Lévesque memorial has council in a quandary” on the front page. Then New Carlisle mayor Bob Cormier says that something will be done to honour René Lévesque, without rush.

**Vol 14, No 33  
August 16, 1988**

- Issue 33, dated August 16, features “Hydro-Québec won’t budge on chemical spraying” and “PQ brass on regional tour”, with a photo of Guy Chevrette and leader Jacques Parizeau. A picture and caption show Joan Hicks and the Maritime Express, in a performance at New Carlisle’s first Folk Festival.

**Vol 14, No 34  
August 23, 1988**

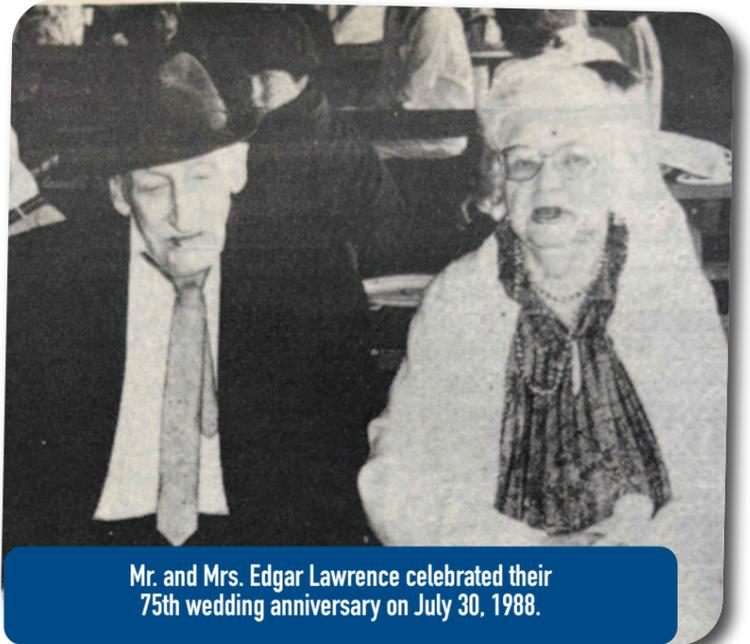
- Issue 34, dated August 23, shows “Novi-Pêche shut down” as the main headline. The Paspebiac plant is closed indefinitely due to poor market conditions. “Gaspé lawyer runs for Liberal candidacy” pertains to Delton Sams’ intention to be the candidate in Gaspé riding. Yvon “Caron withdraws from Liberal nomination”, also in Gaspé, “\$500,000 for new fishing and aquaculture projects” and “Acadian Museum set for major expansion” also make page 1.

**Vol 14, No 35  
August 30, 1988**

- Issue 35, released on August 30, features the Battle of Restigouche “Museum to close for four months” due to repairs stemming from constant inside humidity. “Environmentalists oppose power plant” informs readers that NB Power wants to add a generating station on the north side of the province.

**Vol 14, No 36  
September 6, 1988**

- Two photos fill a big space of issue 36, dated September 6. They show the Gendron store



Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Lawrence celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary on July 30, 1988.

moving from Caplan to New Richmond’s Loyalist Village. Black Cape’s Campbell house arrives the same day, and two more buildings were awaited. The other photo goes with “Gaspé PCB sites don’t meet standards”. “MRC Côte de Gaspé to appeal judgement” prohibiting the building of roads near rivers, “English Gaspesian (Cynthia Dow) named Quebec head for commissioner of Official languages”, “Sams wins Gaspé Liberal nomination” and “Routhier takes Liberal nomination in Bonaventure” also make page 1.

**Vol 14, No 37  
September 13, 1988**

- In issue 37, dated September 13, “Governor general (Jeanne Sauvé) visits Gaspé”, and “Decisions on homosexuals angers church community”, because the acceptance of homosexuals is considered anti-

democratic, make the headlines. “Decorations for bravery awarded to (Magdalen) Islanders”, “Close call for local fisherman” Herbert Hackett, and “Controversy over services in Escuminac”, as the municipality decides to no longer remove snow on Mongo, a private road, make the front-page.

**Vol 14, No 38  
September 20, 1988**

- Paspebiac’s Anglican Church “Graveyard hit by vandalism” makes the headline of issue 38, dated September 20. A photo-caption combo shows asphalt finally being laid again on Paspebiac’s highway 132. “\$10,000 for Loyalist village”, “\$350,000 for New Carlisle’s Community Centre”, “Out-

Page 16

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breaks of salmonella at Maria Hospital”, “Hockey players face beefed up safety rules”, “Barachois citizens follow the village dream” (turning the old school into a residence) and a “New fish plant for l’Anse à Brillant” are mentioned on page 1.

**Vol 14. No 39  
September 27, 1988**

- “Summit injects \$102 million into region”, a Carleton event that had been in preparation for at least a year, and “Sod turning at Loyalist Village” take all the front-page space of issue 39, dated September 27. The Summit money is available for 73 projects, over four years.

**Vol 14. No 40  
October 4, 1988**

- In issue 40, released on October 4, “Gold exploration set to go in Maria”, “VIA Rail improves services”, “Continental stores on the block”, “First season a success for tree farm” in Paspébiac, and “Irving Oil reduces Paspébiac operation” at its marine terminal, occupy all of page 1. VIA Rail’s improvements pertain to the return of hot meals from Matapédia to Gaspé and extra sleeping accommodations.

**Vol 14. No 41  
October 11, 1988**

- “And now – rue René Lévesque” makes the main title of issue 41, dated October 11. New Carlisle’s town council has decided to change centennial street for the name of Quebec’s former premier, who was raised near that street. “Three new faces run in Bonaventure and Gaspé counties” (Delton Sams in Gaspé, Germaine Poirier and Lyse Routhier in Bonaventure), “Candidates off and running” for the November 21 federal election and “New society for terminally-ill cancer patients” complete page 1 titles. OGPAC provides their services to cancer patients.

**Vol 14. No 42  
October 18, 1988**



**Private Shawn Hamilton (left) handles the new C-7 rifle while Corporal Don Urysty (right) looks on. Shawn is the son of Mr. and Mrs. George Hamilton who reside in Gaspé, Quebec.**

- Issue 42, dated October 18, shows “School Board boosts spending on staff development”, “Bonaventure man waits for compensation” and “Near catastrophe at Consolidated Bathurst” in New Richmond as headlines. The Bonaventure man is Hugh Campbell and his house has been damaged by road work. The catastrophe could have come from an overheating boiler.

**Vol 14. No 43  
October 25, 1988**

- Issue 43, dated October 25, features “Municipal elections slated for Escuminac”, “Church battles erosion in New Richmond” and “New Democrats choose candidate for Gaspé County”, in Bertrand Rehel on the front-page. The United Church’s graveyard is the place battling erosion. Inside, Wise buys six Gaspé Continental stores.

**Vol 14. No 44  
November 1, 1988**

- In issue 44, dated November 1, “Gaspé CEGEP students on strike”, and “Poirier (Germaine) hammers Gray (Darryl) in Bonaventure” over abolition of isolated area tax deduction, make the headlines. “Quebec dairy farmers uneasy about future under Free Trade”, “Routhier unveils platform” and “Rhinos launch hysterical campaign” also make page 1. Inside, readers learn that the body of Linda Condo was found in Miguasha. She was shot in the head.

**Vol 14. No 45  
November 8, 1988**

- Issue 45, dated November 8, shows “Fire in New Carlisle”, “Garneau visits the Coast” and “Future of tax break uncertain” as main titles. The fire destroyed the skating rink chalet. Garneau is Raymond Garneau, Canada’s Liberal Party lieutenant for Quebec. The tax break relates to isolated area tax deductions. Smaller page 1 titles are “No bone specialist left in the Gaspé” and “Grande Hermine school commission honours teachers”.

**Vol 14. No 46  
November 16, 1988**

- Paspébiac’s “CLSC expansion hits snag” because of salary issues, “Remembering the fallen”, tied to Remembrance Day coverage, and “School Board drops policy on pregnancy” fill issue 46’s front-page, dated November 15. The policy was requiring staff to inform parents about a student pregnancy.

**Vol 14. No 47  
November 22, 1988**

- In issue 47, released on November 22, “Drinking water still polluted” hits a dozen Haldimand families in Gaspé. Their water tastes and smells like gas. Gaspé town “Handicapped lose services” because of government fund-

ing shortcomings. “Cabestan delivers vital help” for handicapped and “New epilepsy group formed” complete page 1 titles.

**Vol 14. No 48  
November 29, 1988**

- In issue 48, dated November 29, “Tory wave sweeps Peninsula” covers the second victory of Darryl Gray in Bonaventure-Magdalen Islands and Charles-Eugène Marin in Gaspé following the federal poll. In “Murder established in girl’s death”, police officers conclude that Bonaventure’s Sonya Bonenfant, 16, of Cullen’s Brook, reported missing on April 18 after leaving her house and found with a fractured skull in the woods in Bonaventure, was killed. In “Gaspé fossil is world’s oldest insect” readers learn that Dr. Francis Hueber, of the Smithsonian Institute, found a 390 million year old insect in Cap-aux-Os.

**Vol 14. No 49  
December 6, 1988**

- In issue 49, dated December 6, readers see St. Jules’ “Pavillon Mary to close doors” following an order from the Quebec government. The 20-bed seniors’ residence is judged underutilized because it is isolated. “Haldimand residents get run

around again” and “Board pushes ahead with Bonaventure move” to send students back to feeder schools of New Carlisle and New Richmond also make page 1.

**Vol 14. No 50  
December 13, 1988**

- Issue 50, dated December 13, features “New Carlisle fights erosion”, “School Board under attack over move” to close Bonaventure Polyvalent, because they are delaying the construction of a gymnasium at Shigawake-Port Daniel School, notably. “Environment minister (Clifford Lincoln) visits Gaspé”, and “Journeaux Seafood expanding”, as it invests \$300,000 to raise its freezing and storage capacity, creating 20-25 jobs, and “New Carlisle town budget up for approval”, also make page 1.

**Vol 14. No 51  
December 20, 1988**

- Issue 51, dated December 20, runs “Handicapped win back services” at Gaspé’s Cabestan, and “Chandler mill invests \$48 million” in Gaspesia plant to bring the daily production from 650 to 710 tons daily. Up to 40% of that production is sold to the New York Times, which owns 49% of the plant employing 740 workers.

## Linda Condo’s slaying remains unresolved

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – On October 25, 1988, a hunter found the body of a woman along a Miguasha forestry road. Linda Condo, 37, from Gesgapegiag had been shot in the head. She had been travelling frequently and had returned from the United States on October 8, contacting a cousin two days later. More than 37 years later, the murder remains unresolved. At the end of the 1990s, a Sûreté du Québec investigator told Le Soleil newspaper that potential suspects had been interviewed by police. One even underwent a lie detector test, but the results did not lead to any charges. The case resurfaces occasionally, especially when other unresolved murders in the Gaspé region attract media attention. Ms. Condo was a mother, and she would have been a grandmother today.



This project has been made possible by the Community Media Strategic Support Fund offered jointly by the Official Language Minority Community Media Consortium and the Government of Canada.



# Eastern Quebec Literacy Council

*Formerly the Gaspésie Literacy Council*



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# A train in Port-Daniel-Gascons around November 15

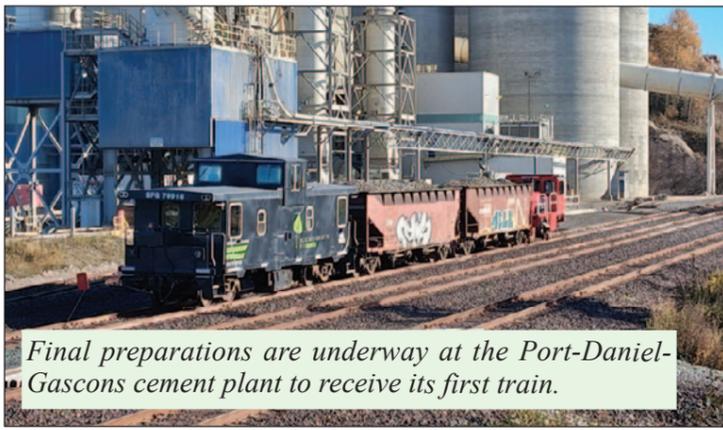
NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

NEW RICHMOND – If all goes as planned, the first freight train could arrive in Port-Daniel-Gascons in mid-November. It will be a first freight or VIA Rail train in 14 years to circulate east of New Carlisle. That mid-November date is targeted by the management of the Société du Chemin de Fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG).

Over the past few weeks, a lot of work has been underway to finalize the section between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons. The company is preparing to begin transporting cement quickly, well before the completion of the St. Mary's Cement terminal currently under construction.

"Since we know that we will no longer be transshipping cement in New Richmond, all our mobile equipment is being transferred to the railway right-of-way adjacent to the cement plant," explains the company's president, Éric Dubé.

This will eliminate the need to travel 100 kilometres by truck between Port-Daniel-Gascons and New Richmond. A single rail car can carry the



Final preparations are underway at the Port-Daniel-Gascons cement plant to receive its first train.

Photo: Anthony Bernard Prince

equivalent of two and a half trucks.

"It will be much more efficient, and we will be able to transship while waiting for the cement plant site to be ready and enter directly into their yard," notes Mr. Dubé.

The savings for the company will be "significant," he adds.

The president has set a tentative schedule for the first train's arrival.

"The latest updates I had were that there were still a few inspection compliance issues on certain structures, and signage had been ordered because there are a lot of private crossings. The signage needs to be changed because the regulations have changed. We are hoping for mid-November, but

we are allowing ourselves a margin until the end of November to bring down our first equipment," explains Éric Dubé.

"There is no more major work to be done. We want to make sure that everything will be necessary, and I would like to take this opportunity to ask people to remain cautious because it has been years since people have seen trains passing by," said Mr. Dubé.

## A terminal in 2026

St. Mary's Cement welcomes the imminent completion of the railway repairs between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons.

"For our part, we have received the environmental cer-

tificate of authorization for the installation and operation of the loading station for the rail terminal at the cement plant. Construction began this year and will be completed in 2026. According to current schedules, the loading station should be operational in the summer of 2026," wrote spokesperson Lyse Teasdale in an email.

The estimated construction cost for the terminal is approximately \$12 million.

St. Mary's Cement has declined to disclose the exact share of cement production that will be transported by rail in the future.

"St. Mary's Cement's distribution network uses various combinations of road, sea, and rail transport (the latter two modes of transport have a lower environmental impact than road transport). Although there may be a slight increase in the volume of cement transported by rail once the section is completed, our main objective is to reduce our use of trucks between Port-Daniel-Gascons and New Richmond and the resulting emissions," the spokesperson said.

## Four years later

The initial deadline for the completion of the Port-Daniel-Gascons section was set for 2022 by Transports Québec, the owner of the Matapédia to Gaspé railway.

"Finally, mission accomplished, all qualifiers are good. For us, it's really about maximizing cement transport from Port-Daniel-Gascons. It will be a source of great pride," says Mr. Dubé.

On section three between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé, the company wanted to meet with the Department of Transportation at the end of the summer to take stock, but the municipal elections suspended the meeting window.

"As of now, the elections are over. We will reschedule a meeting with the ministry and meet with the new minister, who has already served as minister for the region [Jonatan Julien] and is quite familiar with the issue. We will reiterate our requests and objectives and ask where the ministry stands," said Mr. Dubé, who is expected to be reappointed as president shortly.

He hopes to have this meeting with minister Julien before the holidays.

## Family Ties wraps up the "Do you see what we're saying?" art workshop series

PAID ADVERTISING

By Dave Felker

Throughout the late spring and summer months, eight local artists gave a total of 56 art workshops in the communities of Shigawake, New Carlisle, New Richmond and Cascapedia-St-Jules. Those workshops, funded through Canadian Heritage, covered everything from painting, mixed media, embroidery, and wood carving to screen printing, book nook creation, photography and collage.

Participants were asked to interpret their favourite Gaspesian expression into a work of art. The workshops were led by experienced crafters who shared their skills and techniques with participants, resulting in a collection of English speaking community inspired art.

To showcase a small portion of these artistic masterpieces, an exhibit was created and displayed during the market at the Fall Fest in Cascapedia-St-Jules. The market saw hundreds of visitors, and the exhibit certainly captured the attention

of attendees who were asked to vote for their favourites.

A small collection of these works will be commemorated in the Family Ties 2026 calendar, which will be available soon. The challenge of selecting which art works would make their way into the calendar was determined by a combination of Fall Fest voting results and a selection committee who further refined the

options to ensure representation from each community and a wide variety of mediums.

The workshops gave participants the chance to learn new skills while finding inspiration in classic Gaspesian ex-

pressions. Below are just a few examples from the over 100 pieces of art created: 1) God bless your cotton socks – Arianna Major – Wood carving with Melissa Belanger. 2) Arse over kettle – Nikki Hayes – Mixed media with

Dawn Smith. 3) Boilin' the kettle – Janice Ross – Screen printing with Camillia Buenestado Pilon.

Be sure to watch the Family Ties Facebook page for an upcoming series of workshops this winter!



"Arse over kettle," an expression captured by Nikki Hayes through a mixed media workshop.



"God bless your cotton socks," an expression captured by Arianna Major through a wood carving workshop.



"Boilin' the kettle," an expression captured by Janice Ross through a screen-printing workshop.



# Escale Gaspésie has short season

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Only 16 cruise ships anchored in the Gaspésie in the summer of 2025, three fewer than expected due to whims of Mother Nature.

"It's a slump we were expecting, and unfortunately, it's been confirmed. Things were salvaged thanks to two large ships that boosted the number of passengers. Fortunately, they didn't cancel, otherwise it would have been a much more difficult year," comments Igor Urban, port manager for Escale Gaspésie.

In total, 9,233 cruise passengers and 5,069 crew members docked in Gaspé or Percé, bringing a total of 14,302 people.

In 2024, 22 ships called at the Gaspé Peninsula.

"We have a projected rebound in 2026 with 23 ships, and for 2027, we're talking about 32 ships. We're coming out of the trough," the port manager continues. The absence of a team at Escale Gaspésie in 2022 contributed to these results.

"These things take time. To be on a route, it takes three years to get back on the map. We had to work hard to re-



Photo: N. Sergerie

*Fewer cruise ships visited this summer.*

build the connections," he notes.

## Winter 2027

Confirmations have come in, and questions are being asked about touring possibilities and resupply for the 2027 winter season.

"We're more optimistic. We're waiting for 2027; things can change. It's encouraging. We're still expecting three ships with the Commandant Charcot."

Last winter, 32 pallets of supplies were delivered to the ship during three port calls.

But that wasn't the case for the ships last summer.

"Unfortunately not. There were a few small orders, but

nothing major like what happened last winter. For various reasons, the routes are already established with suppliers in Montreal, Quebec City, or American cities. We're continuing to work in that direction," says Mr. Urban.

Smoked salmon and sauerkraut were still able to be loaded onto the ships.

The idea of selling seafood is obviously on everyone's mind.

"Definitely. It's a long-term project. The procedures have been in place for a long time. How can we promote products from Gaspé? Is it even possible at the legislative level? There are several things to explore to see if we can do a little more," he suggests.

# Chandler takes over management of performances

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER – The Town of Chandler is taking over management of the Thomas-Morisey Salle de Spectacle, as the Sapinart arts organization winds down its operations.

"The Town has a cultural goal of offering the highest quality shows and cultural activities possible. Sapinart has done an extraordinary job for several years. We are happy to take over," explains outgoing mayor Gilles Daraïche.

The lack of volunteers explains why the Town is taking over.

"After some 40 years, volunteerism is running out of steam and people want to pass the torch," he says.

"We don't want shows to leave New Richmond and go directly to Gaspé without stopping in Chandler. We want to



Photo: Taken from Sapinart's Facebook page

*Chandler's Salle de Spectacle is now operated by the Town.*

offer the same quality of shows as in other towns," says Mr. Daraïche, speaking on behalf of both his town administration and the Rocher-Percé MRC.

The town's culture department already has the staff needed to put a program together. "They are capable of

doing the job. We don't need to hire additional resources. We want to offer shows as soon as possible," says the elected official.

The existing agreements with the René-Lévesque School Service Centre, which owns the performance hall, remain unchanged.

## Budworm destruction

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – The spruce budworm epidemic continues to spread westward in the Gaspé Peninsula, with the total area of defoliation now reaching 1,690,000 hectares.

This is nearly 100,000 hectares more than last year, when the area was estimated at 1,596,000 hectares, according to the 2025 seasonal report from the Société de protection des forêts contre les insectes et les maladies (SOPFIM).

"The maps speak for themselves, and when we compare 2024 and 2025, we see an increase in the extent of the infestation. It covers almost the entire Gaspé Peninsula. We also see an interesting fact, which is a decrease in intensity," notes Executive Director Marie-Louise Dubé.

The Rocher-Percé sector is particularly affected. When one looks at the map, it is the most affected sector, even though the severity is decreasing.

Approximately 500,000 hectares are slightly affected by the insect, 892,000 hectares are moderately affected, and another 300,000 hectares are severely affected.

During the 2025 spraying campaign, 112,064 hectares were protected, exceeding the 107,000 hectares initially planned.

The budworm continues to spread west of Route 299, a trend observed for several years. "We can see that in 2025, it has moved westward," notes the director.

Despite this expansion, it's too early to determine the protection measures required for 2026. "We are not able to confirm the program for 2026 because we are still collecting data in the field. As soon as that is complete, we will work on our action plans. I would venture to say that, given the overall progression across the province, we can expect a large-scale program," says Ms. Dubé.

Across Quebec, the total affected area has increased from 14.3 million hectares to 17.5 million hectares.

## 1995 Referendum: 30 Years Later with Marcel Landry

Nelson Sergerie

CARLETON-SUR-MER – The former Bonaventure Member of the National Assembly (MNA) and former Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) for the Parti Québécois (PQ) at the time of the 1995 referendum believes that the party should focus on creating the winning conditions for a future referendum, rather than holding one at all costs, should it form government in 2026.

Marcel Landry recalls this idea from former premier Lucien Bouchard, noting that the sovereigntist party could regain power from the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) in October 2026.

"One of the things we got stuck with in 1994-1995 was the intense pressure on the Parti Québécois to hold a referendum within a year. I think we need to stay in control of the timetable. If there's one place where we messed up, it was in doing it within a year," comments the former elected official.

A sovereignty activist since 1966, the 78-year-old still hopes to see a successful referendum in his lifetime.

"I will repeat the words of Mr. Bouchard at the time. We must find the winning conditions. We must work on that," he said.

Mr. Landry notes that young people aged 18 to 34 are showing growing support for independence, giving him a glimmer of hope "within four or five years."

"I have some hope, even definite hope. I look at my descendants and they know how to vote," says Mr. Landry, who entered the National Assembly in a February 1994 by-election following the November 1993 death of Liberal MNA Gérard D. Lévesque, and was re-elected in September 1994.

"There had been the failure of Meech Lake and the Bélanger-Campeau Commission, and the Parti Québécois, led by Jacques Parizeau, had resolutely positioned itself in favour of sovereignty. I was completely invested in it," says Mr. Landry.

Mr. Landry also reflected on the controversy surrounding Mr. Parizeau's speech on the night of the 1995 defeat.

"He didn't say 'ethnic votes' but 'some ethnic votes.' Some people criticized and demonized him. For me, Mr. Parizeau remains a man of great intellectual capacity," recalls the former MNA, who listened to the 1995 defeat speech again before granting the interview.

For early advocates of Quebec sovereignty like him, Mr. Landry believes the 2026 election could represent their last opportunity to witness Quebec independence within their lifetime, if the Parti Québécois returns to power.

# Regional Panorama is positive for the Gaspé Peninsula

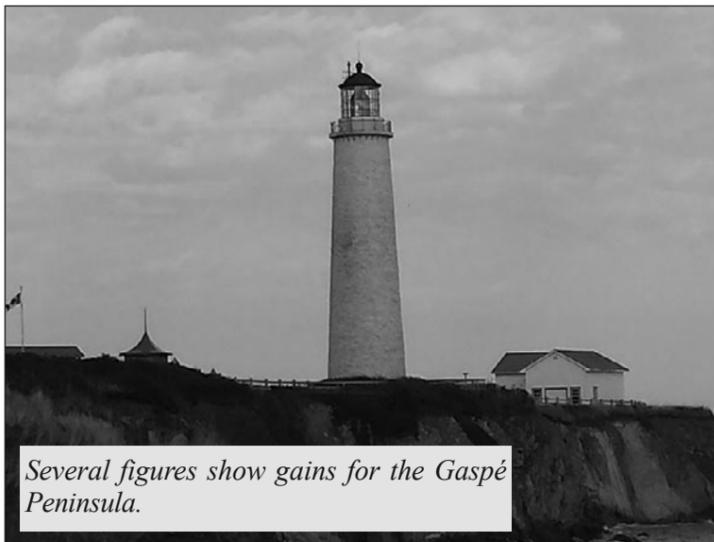
NELSON SERGERIE

**GASPÉ** – The Regional Panorama published on October 27 by the Institut de la statistique du Québec shows that the Gaspé Peninsula is making slight progress in several areas.

The regional population grew by 277 inhabitants to reach 92,336 people on July 1, 2024.

The Côte-de-Gaspé MRC surpassed the 18,000 mark with a total of 18,002, followed closely by Bonaventure with 17,938. These represent increases of 157 and 62 people, respectively. Avignon and Rocher-Percé MRCs also saw gains.

In the case of Rocher-Percé, after experiencing losses for the past two years, 11 new residents were added, bringing the total to 17,179. Conversely, Haute-Gaspésie experienced a decline for the



Several figures show gains for the Gaspé Peninsula.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

second consecutive year, dropping to 11,015 residents.

The population continues to age, with the average age in the region now reaching 49. The proportion of people over 65 has reached 34.5% in Haute-Gaspésie and 34.3% in Rocher-Percé, where the average age is now 51.3 in the Chandler region. There are

5,890 seniors in Rocher-Percé and 3,797 in Haute-Gaspésie. The average age in this area is 50.8.

The youngest MRC is Avignon, with an average age of 46.8.

Average income rose by 0.9% to \$34,068, which remains below the Quebec average of \$36,531. The median

family income was \$87,400, down from \$89,443 in the previous year's calculations. Only Côte-de-Gaspé exceeds the regional average, at \$34,448.

The Haute-Gaspésie region has the lowest average income at just \$30,692, with growth of only 0.7%. Only the MRCs of Les Sources, Pontiac, and Kativik Regional Council perform worse than Haute-Gaspésie in this regard. Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine ranks 13th out of 17 regions in Quebec.

After a 23% increase last year, the value of homes rose by 11.2% to \$232,050. The Magdalen Islands contributed significantly to this increase, with a gain of 18.5%. In Gaspésie, the highest average value is on the Côte-de-Gaspé at \$247,090, a gain of 10.5%. Once again, Haute-Gaspésie brings up the rear with an average value of \$171,572. The

Quebec average is \$474,001.

The employment rate remains the lowest in Quebec at 68.5%, resulting in the highest unemployment rate in the province at 8.8%. Nevertheless, since 2019, this rate has fallen by 4.3%.

Gross domestic product totaled \$4.3 billion in 2023, a 4.3% increase over the previous year. Per capita, it represented \$47,049, ranking the region 12th out of 17 in Quebec.

The main economic sectors in Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine were health care and social assistance, which accounted for 12.8% of the regional economy, construction (10.8%), public administration (9.9%), and manufacturing (9.2%).

The value of agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting was not published, as this data is considered confidential.

## A forum on local food

NELSON SERGERIE

**GASPÉ** – As part of Quebec's National Food Supply Strategy, a national forum was held in Montreal and a regional forum was organized in Gaspé on October 23.

The Gaspé event, organized by Gaspésie Gourmande, brought together 31 partners to discuss local food issues, as the purchase of Quebec food is on the rise.

"We realize that even if it's the theory of small steps, we can see that today, there are great results. We had a panel with four institutions talking about what they do with our local products on their menus. When we have a CISSS in Gaspésie telling us that 56.6%



Around thirty people discussed local food at a forum in Gaspé.

Photo: Gaspésie Gourmande

of their products are from Quebec and Gaspésie, we say wow! And they want to do

more and more," notes Johanne Michaud, director of Gaspésie Gourmande.

"We're making progress, even if we don't see it every day. An event like today's allows us to see it," she continues.

Redfish is one example of a Gaspé product with strong potential for wider distribution.

"That's what we want. Les Pêcheries Gaspésiennes was with us. They're going to process more of it. The goal is for this fish to carve out an increasingly important place in our institutions. It may be a long road, but there are great opportunities ahead and there is interest on the part of the institutions," says Ms. Michaud. Proximity also remains a key strategy for local producers when selling to institutions.

"What we were told was that meeting with producers is a winning strategy. We have nothing to envy the big producers in the Montérégie region. There are institutions that have agreements with producers to produce a certain quantity of food, and that's only possible because of proximity," explains Ms. Michaud. Looking ahead, the primary objective is to increase the presence of local products in local institutions.

"We didn't start out with a specific goal, but it was a day of networking. The goal, in fact, is that we realized we're on a roll. We're on the right track and we need to keep going," concludes Ms. Michaud.

## Local purchasing campaign by the CCIBDC

NELSON SERGERIE

**BONAVENTURE** – The Baie-des-Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIBDC) is relaunching a local purchasing campaign with a dedicated card to stimulate sales in the region.

The initiative was first tested before the pandemic.

"It was a huge success. This year, we are partnering with the Avignon MRC and the Bonaventure MRC as part of their local purchasing campaign, and Desjardins is supporting us in this wonderful



Photo: CCIBDC

Around fifty partners are joining the adventure this year.

project," explains director Valentine Palma.

A prepaid card called

Hello allows people to purchase amounts on the chamber's website and spend the

money at participating merchants in Baie-des-Chaleurs.

"These are amounts that are reinvested in the community," says Ms. Palma, noting that the card works like a gift card and is intended specifically for local use.

"It's really limited to our participating merchants who have activated their devices to accept it. If you go elsewhere, you'll be surprised to find that it doesn't work. The idea is to reinvest the money in the community," she insists.

The campaign comes at a

time when online shopping has surged, particularly since the pandemic.

"For many people who shop here, you'll find that you often get very good service, or even better service because you get a personalized approach. You have merchants who know you and listen to you. There's everything to gain from reinvesting money here," says Ms. Palma.

An evaluation will be conducted once the experiment is complete, and bonuses could be introduced if the program proves successful.

# The Musée de la Gaspésie on a tightrope

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPE - The Musée de la Gaspésie is stretched to its limit, with no room to maneuver. Without additional support from the Quebec government, it could soon reach a breaking point.

The museums of Eastern Quebec, including the Musée de la Gaspésie, held a press conference at the National Assembly on October 28 to once again demand \$2.5 million from the Quebec government to ensure the survival of 43 museums in remote regions.

"We have had three consecutive years of deficits. We have drawn on our reserves. Our financial auditors have written to us: without additional funding, the museum's sustainability is compromised," said Martin Roussy, director of the Musée de la Gaspésie, who led the press briefing in Quebec City.

Fifty percent of the regional museum's revenue comes from independent sources.

An exhibition that comes



Photo: Courtesy of Eastern Quebec museums

*The directors of the museums of Gaspésie (Martin Roussy), Rimouski (France Leclerc), Bas-Saint-Laurent (Mélanie Girard), Côte-Nord (Mélicha Lacroix), de la Mer aux Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Carole Lemieux) and Jean-François Royal, president of the Société des musées du Québec, held a press conference on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, to inform the government and the public of the urgent need to adjust their funding.*

to the Musée de la Gaspésie costs twice as much as an exhibition in the Montreal area due to logistics and transportation costs, which translates into a form of financial inequity.

"If, for example, the Musée de la Gaspésie wants to present a traveling exhibition that was created in Mon-

tréal for people living within a 200-kilometre radius of Montreal, the cost is \$15,000, but once it arrives at the Musée de la Gaspésie, the cost is \$30,000," explains Mr. Roussy.

"Every dollar invested by the Museum Operating Assistance Program is only worth 65 cents in our regions," he

adds.

In the last provincial budget, regional museums requested a \$2.54 million envelope from the Quebec government to offset these additional expenses and cover extra operating costs — a plea that went unanswered.

"We are here to demand swift action from the government to prevent the closure of museums in Eastern Quebec, to correct an injustice, and to protect our regional identities," said the museum spokesperson.

Meetings have been held with opposition culture critics, regional ministers, and members of the National Assembly to raise awareness of the situation.

The same request is being made again, and it is very urgent.

"If nothing is done, the Musée de la Gaspésie, like other museums in remote areas, risks becoming a ghost ship that will take with it a part of our history and our identity. But if we act now, we can ensure that this memory

will continue to enlighten our regions," says Mr. Roussy, who has set a deadline of December for action.

According to the group, the solution lies in introducing a remoteness supplement for regional museums, a formula that already exists in other Quebec government programs.

The situation is equally critical at other museums across Eastern Quebec: The Rimouski Museum had to close its doors for eight months this year, the Musée de la Mer in the Magdalen Islands has been closed since October 10, the Musée de la Côte-Nord has reduced its opening hours and its staff is responsible for maintaining the buildings, and the Musée du Bas-Saint-Laurent is facing major financial strain.

"An amount of \$2.54 million is modest in terms of a government budget, but it would make a huge difference for our communities and the preservation of our collective heritage," concludes Mr. Roussy.

## CMA 2029: A president for the organizing committee

NELSON SERGERIE

CAMPBELLTON, N.B. — Sylvain Godin has been appointed president of the organizing committee for the 2029 World Acadian Congress (CMA), which will take place in the Baie-des-Chaleurs region.

Godin, a trained historian, worked at the Acadian Historical Village from 1996 to 2005. After a distinguished career in education as a teacher and school principal in New Brunswick's French-language system, he became the village's executive director in 2013.

"We are delighted that Sylvain Godin has accepted the nomination as chair of the organizing committee for the 2029 CMA (World Acadian Congress, or Congrès mondial acadien) in our region. With his impressive background, experience, and passion for Acadian culture, this choice was a natural one," says Jean-Guy Lévesque,



Sylvain Godin.

chair of the congress nomination committee.

"It is with deep gratitude that I accept the nomination as chair of the organizing committee for the 2029 World Acadian Congress. In this role, my vision is clear: to bring together the many driving forces on both sides of Chaleur Bay to welcome our extended Acadian family from the diaspora in 2029.

My goal is simple: to ensure that Acadians from around the world are warmly welcomed in our homes, while strengthening the permanent bond of communication embodied by the CMA," notes Sylvain Godin.

The 8th World Acadian Congress will run from August 8 to 18, 2029, in Quebec and New Brunswick sides of the Baie des Chaleurs and Restigouche river, including Indigenous communities on both sides of the border.

No fewer than 100,000 visitors are expected for this major event, which will culminate on August 15 with a large gathering in Petit-Rocher, New Brunswick.

The budget is estimated at \$11 million, with a projected direct economic impact of \$20 million. The opening ceremony will be held in Bonaventure, and the closing in Bathurst.

An earlier attempt to host the congress in 2024 was unsuccessful.

Photo: Courtesy of the 2029 World Acadian Congress

## Grande-Rivière industrial park: modernization continues

Nelson Sergerie

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE – Three years after the Quebec government transferred the Grande-Rivière industrial park to the municipality, work continues to modernize the facilities.

Then MAPAQ Minister, André Lamontagne, visited Grande-Rivière to announce the transfer, which had been under discussion for 36 years.

In June 2022, the Quebec government provided the town with \$4.7 million to carry out various projects, including upgrading the outfall, the pumping station, and the power supply.

The wastewater pumping station and the electrical system have already been redone. The only major task remaining is the reconstruction of the outfall at sea. Plans and specifications for this work are about 75% complete.

Before construction can begin, however, several studies must still be submitted to the Ministry of the Environment.

The municipality hopes to obtain the necessary certificates of authorization by February.

Once the plans and specifications are finalized, the total cost of this final phase of modernization will be known. If all goes as planned, calls for tenders will be issued in February, with construction expected to begin next summer.

Amid rising inflation in the construction industry, the Quebec government agreed to provide an additional \$1 million to help complete the upgrade. Project managers say the funds are being used prudently.

Mayor Gino Cyr made the industrial park's development an election issue in 2017, before winning his first term in office.

The Grande-Rivière industrial park plays a key role in the region's economy. It is the third-largest fishing port out of 89 in Quebec, based on the value and volume of landings recorded in 2021.

SPECS@GLOBETROTTER.NET  
418-752-5400 (Call or Text)

# Drought continues in October

NELSON SERGERIE

**GASPÉ** – The months go by with little change, as rain remains in short supply.

Between October 1 and 15, only 17.78 millimetres of rain fell at the Gaspé airport, far below the normal 121.92 millimetres for the entire month.

“This drought is continuing across virtually all of Eastern Canada. In the Gaspé Peninsula, it has persisted since June. We only received 36 millimetres in June,” says meteorologist Peter Kimble.

The driest October on record was in 1930, with just 2.8 millimetres of rain. If October had ended on the 15th, October 2025 would have ranked fourth.

This drought has been ongoing since June. For the meteorological summer, from June to September, 184 millimetres of rain fell, 32% below the normal 270 millimetres. September alone saw only 28 millimetres, compared with a normal 91 millimetres.



Rainfall remains well below average in October.

### Just as dry in Baie-des-Chaleurs

As of October 15, rainfall was equally scarce in the Baie-des-Chaleurs region.

Carleton-sur-Mer has received only 11.3 millimetres since October 1, while New Carlisle fared slightly better with 21.1 millimetres.

Several municipalities in the Gaspé Peninsula are asking residents to reduce their water consumption as wells

show fairly low levels. The latest to join the list is Saint-Alphonse, which issued a notice to residents on October 15.

“As rainfall has been less abundant lately, it is important to review some of our consumption habits, even if only for a short time,” reads a note sent to residents.

The population is encouraged to take showers instead of baths, to wait until they have a full load of laundry before using the washing machine, only use the dishwasher when it is full, and avoid frequent washing of vehicles or outdoor surfaces.

“Each of these actions can make a real difference in preserving our drinking water supply,” notes the municipality.

### The five driest Octobers in Gaspé's history

- 1930:** 2.8 millimetres
- 1918:** 9.7 millimetres
- 1928:** 10.0 millimetres
- 2013:** 26.8 millimetres
- 1984:** 26.8 millimetres

# Water becoming scarcer in New Richmond

Nelson Sergerie

**NEW RICHMOND** – Residents who rely on artesian wells for their drinking water are running out of water, creating growing concerns throughout the community.

Mayor Éric Dubé estimates that at least ten residents are facing this problem, and the numbers could rise.

“In recent weeks, we've seen several people come to us because of water shortages and ask for permits to dig new wells. The water shortage we had this summer is starting to catch up with people,” said the mayor.

And with winter fast approaching, the situation isn't expected to improve.

“Our fear is that with the ground about to freeze, even if we get a little rain, we're afraid that others will run out of water this winter,” said the mayor.

This situation is virtually unprecedented in New Richmond and is causing widespread concern among residents.

“In the history of the town, we have never heard of so many people running out of water. Even to get someone to dig a well, the wait times are long. The well digger is booked solid until Christmas,” says the mayor of New Richmond.

“We thought we were safe from this because we're surrounded by water. I've never seen the rivers so low. The lack of precipitation is catching up with us,” says Mr. Dubé.

From the beginning of October until October 29, only 46 millimetres of rain were recorded at the New Carlisle weather station, compared with a normal of 116 millimetres.

Since June, only 174 millimetres of rain have fallen, about half the normal amount of 363 millimetres.



Access to water is a challenge for some New Richmond residents.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

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# Sports Section - Badminton/Swimming

## Yves Côté Awarded "Official of the Year"

JEANIE LELACHEUR

**GASPE** - Once again, Gaspé's Yves Cote is being recognized for his passion and dedication to the badminton community. The "Official of the Year" award was presented to him by Badminton Quebec's Sara Lapierre Langlais at the September 6 Gala held in Orford Quebec.

Although Mr. Cote has retired from the BWF (Badminton World Federation), having reached the mandatory retirement age of 65, he remains an active member of the PanAm (PanAmerican) Badminton Assessors Committee, Badminton Quebec and Badminton Canada. As part of these roles, he will serve as referee at the 2026 YONEX Canadian Masters Championship in Kelowna, BC, in April 2026.

His current position as Assessor reflects both his teaching and extensive badminton experience. He is also looking forward to the Badminton Canada Nationals to be held in Winnipeg from May 16 to 23, 2026, where he will assess

six umpires.

He was also head referee at the National Badminton Circuit Tournament in Québec City on November 1.

Mr. Cote is still considered one of the top ranking badminton referees in the world. He has worked tirelessly to achieve his dreams, advancing through the regional, provincial, and national levels as a line judge, umpire, and service judge, before earning BWF Certification in 2018. He was later selected as one of only eleven referees worldwide, and the only Canadian, to officiate at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Prestigious, yes, but Mr. Côté says he has already fulfilled his dream in part by officiating and assessing across Canada and by taking part in the 2020 Olympics. Perhaps his greatest goal throughout his career has been to pass on his knowledge to the next generation.

There is no doubt that he has shared his vast experience within the badminton circuit, guiding both upcoming players and officials. Beyond badminton, there is also a more



*BWF Referee Yves Côté received the Official of the Year Award, pictured alongside Yves Lacroix, who was also honoured during the 2025 Orford Gala with his induction into the Badminton Québec Hall of Fame for his outstanding badminton photography.*

Photo: Yves Lacroix

academic side to Mr. Côté. He works as a supply teacher at Gaspé's C.E. Pouliot in both the English and French sectors and shares his love of leatherworking through workshops where he teaches students sewing skills.

Badminton has always been

a passion for Yves Cote, in his own words, "it has allowed me to travel and experience my own country, Canada, and its provinces. It has provided me with opportunities to see the world and experience different cultures in places like Malaysia, Germany, Slovakia

and Tokyo."

As he is once again acknowledged and applauded for his contributions and continued work in the badminton world, it's clear that hard work, perseverance, and passion have truly given wings to his dreams.

## Eli Pelletier, four-time medalist at the Canada Games

NELSON SERGERIE

**GASPÉ** - Swimmer Éli Pelletier of the Barracudas de Gaspé swimming club is more than satisfied with his mid-August haul of four medals at the Canada Games in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

"I feel accomplished. I really enjoyed the experience. It's a precious moment and I'm grateful to have done it," the athlete explained in an interview on August 19, upon his return to Gaspé after a week in the Atlantic province.

Éli Pelletier captured two gold medals in the 50-metre freestyle and 4 x 100-metre freestyle relay.

"I'm happy to have come in first at this competition. It was also fun to do it as a team of four," he said, referring to

the relay race with his Team Quebec teammates.

"We had training camps to practice together. We knew how it was going to go. Everything was planned," explains the junior athlete. The swimmer also earned silver in the 50-metre backstroke and bronze in the 100-metre freestyle.

"I had to keep training all summer until the Games," adds the 11-year swimming veteran. He explained the journey that led him to Newfoundland and Labrador. "It's by swimming every day and loving it. I would also say never miss training and give it your all," he says.

Ranked among the best swimmers in Canada in the two stroke, he isn't necessarily aiming for the Olympics.

"Sure, it would be nice, but I prefer to set less ambi-

tious goals for myself and see them through before thinking about the Olympics," he says.

Next year will be his last year as a junior. "I think my goal will be to continue to perform well and push myself," says the athlete.

Éli Pelletier excels in sprints, short distances, backstroke, and freestyle. The Barracudas member also supervises young athletes aged seven to nine and does not rule out becoming a coach in the future.

For now, the swimmer plans to take a break over the next few weeks and practice other sports before returning to the pool.

"I've done other sports in my life, and swimming is possibly the most demanding, especially in terms of training, since I do sprints. It's intense over a short period of time. It's demanding," insists the medalist.



*Eli Pelletier with his medal in the 50-metre freestyle.*

Photo: Canada Games

# Announcements



## In Memory

### GIRARD: Flora

August 4, 1931 - November 11, 2023.

*I don't need a special day,  
To bring you to my mind.  
The days I don't think of you,  
Are very hard to find.  
Each morning when I wake up,  
I know that you are gone.  
And no one knows the heartache,  
As I try to carry on.  
My heart still aches with sadness,  
And secret tears still flow.  
What it meant to lose you,  
No one will ever know.  
My thoughts are always with you,  
Your place no one can fill.  
In life I loved you dearly,  
In death I love you still.*

Sadly missed by Marlee and Boyd.



### LEGRAND: Evelyn

November 7, 1932 - November 6, 2018.

In loving memory of a wonderful wife, mother and grandmother.

*So dearly loved and never forgotten.*

Loved and remembered by the family.

### RENOUF: Ernest:

A dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather who passed away May 28, 1991 and

### RENOUF: Annie Sawyer:

A dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, who passed away November 15, 2007.

*Though their smiles are gone forever,  
And their hands we cannot touch.  
Still we have so many memories,  
Of the ones we loved so much.  
Their memory is our keepsake,  
With which we'll never part.  
God has them in His keeping,  
We have them in our heart.*

Always remembered and sadly missed by daughter Pearl and granddaughters, Joan and Brenda and their families.

### Announcement Deadlines:

**November 19** for the November 26 issue

**December 3** for the December 10 issue

**December 10** for December 24 issue

[specs@globetrotter.net](mailto:specs@globetrotter.net)

**Obituary:** 150 words - \$50  
150-250 words - \$55  
250+ words - quote will be provided

**In Memory:** 150 words - \$35  
150-250 words - \$45

**Funeral, Celebration of Life,  
Card of Thanks, Engagement,  
Birth, Prayer, Birthday - \$35  
Wedding - \$55**

*Please add an additional \$10  
if including a photo.*

## COAST ROUND-UP

COAST ROUND-UP: \$8 per week  
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### Coast Round-up

#### YORK:

##### ACW

**November 15:** The York ACW will be hosting its Christmas sale and afternoon tea beginning at 2 p.m. at the York Hall. There will be baked goods, handicrafts, mystery parcels, raffle tickets and a white elephant table. Afternoon tea will be served for \$7. All are welcome.

#### HALDIMAND:

##### Christmas Market

**November 22:** Camp Fort Haldimand will be hosting a Christmas Market (baked goods, handmade items and unique gifts) at the Gaspé Elementary School from 9 a.m. to noon. Tables are available to rent for \$15 by contacting Rhonda Stewart at [forthaldimand@gmail.com](mailto:forthaldimand@gmail.com)

#### BARACHOIS:

##### BADC

**November 29:** The 10th anniversary Barachois Christmas market will begin at 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Belle Anse School (in the

basement) 1298 Route 132 East. Handmade Christmas gifts and decorations, art, local crafts, baking, knitting, jams and more. To reserve a table contact Sandy Coombs at 581-887-1417.

#### BARACHOIS:

##### Mountain View Golden Age

**Tuesdays:** Weekly indoor curling beginning at 1:30 p.m.

**Wednesdays:** Weekly evening card games at 7 p.m. starting October 22.

**November 17:** Annual General Meeting for members only beginning at 1:30 p.m. Please note that membership fees for 2026 will be increased to \$25 on January 1. Early bird rate of \$22 to the end of the year. Please contact Janet Harvey at 418-355-4899 for more information.

#### HOPE TOWN:

##### Sports club

**December 13:** Christmas gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m. at the Hope Town Community Centre. Organized by the Hope Town Sports club.

#### HOPE:

##### Hope Baptist Church

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

#### NEW CARLISLE:

##### L.I.F.E Association

**November 25:** L.I.F.E. Association will hold its Annual General Meeting at The Anchor beginning at 4 p.m. Come and learn what our association has been doing for mentally handicapped adults this past year, and get a report on our financial situation. All are welcome.

#### NEW CARLISLE:

##### New Carlisle Legion

**December 6:** Annual Christmas gift bingo.

**December 13:** Christmas dance with Tammy Adams.

##### UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND

**Sunday, November 16**

10 a.m. Service

**Sunday, November 23**

10 a.m. Service

**December 14:** Santa visits the legion.

**December 31:** New Years eve dance, details to follow.

#### 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.

#### CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

##### 50+ Club

**December 6:** From 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. the Cascapedia 50 plus club will be hosting the grand opening of our new book room. There will be a book reading for children. Come take a tour of our beautiful new book

##### UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN

**Sunday, November 16**

10 a.m. Service

**Sunday, November 23**

2 p.m. Service

room.

**November 17:** Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.

**December 21:** Annual General Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.

##### PARISH OF GASPÉ

**Sunday, November 16**

**St. Paul's, Gaspé**

10 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**Sunday, November 23**

**St. Andrew's, York**

10 a.m. Holy Eucharist

##### ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

**Sunday, November 16**

**New Carlisle**

10 a.m. Morning Prayer

**Hope Town**

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**Shigawake**

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**Sunday, November 23**

**New Carlisle**

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**Port Daniel**

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

THEGASPESPEC.COM

# Christmas Markets

## A Made on the Gaspé Coast Christmas

MARY ROBERTSON

CASCAPEDIA - As the days grow shorter and we wait for the first snowflakes to fall, some Gaspésians are busy making products to take to their local Christmas markets.

Soon, community halls, schools, and local shops will be filled with twinkling lights, homemade goods, and tables filled with unique handmade items and gifts to give to family and friends. These markets turn Christmas shopping into a fun experience and bring people together to celebrate the festive holiday spirit.

Gaspésians have always been known for their resourcefulness, imagination, and craftsmanship. Long before there was such an abundance of factory-made items and online shopping sites, people relied on their skills, handiwork and creativity to make what they wanted and needed for Christmas gift-giving. They knit warm wool sweaters, mittens, hats and socks. They made furniture and wooden toys for their children out of trees that were cut in the nearby forests. They stitched together quilts, wall hangings, kitchen necessities, clothing and dolls. Artists painted pictures and holiday greeting cards that illustrated everyday life on the Gaspé. And after a day's work was done, many of these crafts were made in the evening, sitting around the



*Christmas markets are a wonderful way to celebrate the season while supporting talented local makers.*

kitchen table as storytellers told stories and musicians played a few tunes. Today, these same skills and traditions continue to thrive on the Coast, and a wide variety of items made by locals can be found for sale at Christmas markets, home studios, and small businesses at this time of year.

The Gaspé Coast has many talented artists, knitters, fibre artists, soap, candle and jewellery makers, woodworkers, and photographers. There are also pottery and ceramic makers who are often inspired by the nature and beauty of the region. Several artisans use locally available resources and recycled goods to make their unique items, which adds more authenticity and value to their products. Others bake and grow produce to transform into delicious and must-have items.

Christmas markets are more than just shopping events, for they reflect an important part of community life on the Coast. They bring together people who enjoy creating and those who are looking to find something unique and special that reflects who we are and what we value as Gaspésians. The holiday market tables are filled with a large variety of artwork, handcrafted goods, food items and holiday decorations that are made with care, time and dedication to creative work. Choosing handmade, home-baked and locally grown gifts this Christmas is a way of giving something that means just a little bit more than the mass-produced items that are often made in foreign countries. This season, the initiative to buy local is showcasing the talent of artists, artisans, craftspeople, bakers and growers. When we buy an item from someone in our community, we are supporting a creative marketplace that gives back to the Coast in many ways. It is also a means to invest in our Gaspésian future because our money stays in the community and strengthens the local economy. Every purchase helps an artisan, maker, or grower to continue doing the work that they enjoy, and it helps to support them and their families. It encourages creators to follow their passions, and it keeps our local traditions and culture active

and vibrant. A small percentage of the funds from some of the marketplaces also support different organizations whose mission is to give back to their community.

So, this year, as the holiday lights begin to twinkle around the Coast, we may discover that the magic of Christmas is not found in big box stores or online marketplaces, but at the Christmas markets in our own communities.

### Upcoming Christmas Markets on the Gaspé Coast

This is a list of some of the Christmas Markets, but as the season progresses, there will surely be more. There are also artists, artisans and crafters who will be selling from their homes and art studios.

**Gaspé Marché de Noël du Bout du Monde Christmas Market** - November 14, 15 and 16 at the Nation Micmac de Gespeg.

**Camp Fort Haldimand Gaspé Christmas Market** - November 22 at Gaspé Elementary School.

**Perce Christmas Market** - December 6 and 7 at the Centre Communautaire l'Oasis de Percé.

**Douglastown Christmas Market** - December 13 at the

Douglastown Community Centre- Sponsored by Vision Gaspé Now.

**Barachois Christmas Market** - November 29 at Belle Anse School.

**Paspébiac Christmas Market** - November 15 and 16 at the Centre Culturel Paspébiac.

**New Carlisle Christmas Bazaar** - December 6 at New Carlisle High School.

**St-Siméon Christmas Market** - November 8 and 9 at the Centre Communautaire.

**New Richmond Christmas Market** - December 6 and 7 at the Carrefour Baie des Chaleurs Shopping Centre.

**Cascapedia-St Jules Christmas Market** - November 15 at the 50 Plus Club.

**Gesgapegiag Christmas Market** - November 22 at the Galgoasiet Centre.

**Maria Salon des Artisans Christmas Market** - November 21, 22 and 23 at the Centre Communautaire de Maria.

**Nouvelle Christmas Market** - November 29 and 30 at Quatre-Temps School.

**Pointe-à-la-Croix Christmas Market** - November 29 at the Centre polyvalent.

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# CAR CARE



**Remember**  
In Quebec, all vehicles must be equipped with winter tires with the obligatory snowflake pictogram by **December 1.**

## Shift safely into winter

*Emily Hocquard*

**PORT DANIEL** - As the temperature drops and roads become slick with ice and snow, ensuring your vehicle is ready for winter is essential for reliability and most importantly, your safety this upcoming season. Cold weather takes a toll on a car, preparing early can save you headaches, money and frustration during the harsh months ahead! Here's a simple guide to help you get winter-ready!

**Tires/Tread:** Your tires are your vehicle's first line of defence against slippery winter roads. In Quebec, all vehicles must be equipped with winter tires with the obligatory snowflake pictogram by December 1. They're made of a softer rubber compound that stays flexible in cold temperatures, providing better grip and control. Drivers who do not comply are liable to fines. Checking the tread depth of your tires is very important. This step helps ensure your vehicle will have traction on snow and ice. The recommended depth of the grooves on your tires for winter is at least 4.8 mm (millimetres) deep. However, winter tires and their condition are no guarantee against accidents. Adjusting our driving to the weather and road conditions remains key. Slow down and stay further away from vehicles ahead. Another important step is checking tire pressure regularly. The cold air can cause pressure to fluctuate and drop quickly.

**Battery:** Cold weather significantly reduces a car battery's ability to hold a charge. Before winter hits, it is a good idea to have your battery tested. Other useful tips are cleaning any corrosion from the terminals and being sure the connections are tight. If your battery is getting old, consider replacing it. A weak battery on a freezing morning can leave you stranded when you need your car the most!

**Fluids:** There are several important fluid levels to check regularly. Some of these would be antifreeze (coolant) which prevents your engine from freezing in low temperatures, oil (winter-grade oil if your manufacturer recommends it). Also, top up essentials like windshield washer fluid with one that won't freeze in cold temperatures.

**Lights and Wipers:** Visibility is critical during winter storms and darker days. Check that all lights are functioning properly, including headlights, brake lights, and turn signals. It is crucial to see, and to be seen by other motor-vehicles on the road. Replace worn windshield wipers before winter and using heavier duty wipers can be an extra advantage for ice and snow.

Taking the time to prepare your vehicle for winter can make all the difference in staying safe and avoiding costly breakdowns. A little maintenance now means peace of mind when the snow starts to fall! Winter driving is challenging enough—make sure your car is ready to handle it!



## Emergency Supply Kit Checklist

Extreme winter weather can make vehicle breakdowns especially dangerous. Drivers should be prepared at all times by keeping these items in the trunk:

- ✓ Properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench & tripod jack
- ✓ Jumper cables
- ✓ Multipurpose utility tool
- ✓ Flashlight & spare batteries
- ✓ Reflective triangles & brightly colored clothing
- ✓ Compass
- ✓ First-aid kit
- ✓ Nonperishable food items
- ✓ Drinking water
- ✓ Reflective vest
- ✓ Car cell phone charger
- ✓ Fire extinguisher
- ✓ Duct tape
- ✓ Rain poncho
- ✓ Warm clothing & blankets
- ✓ Cat litter for tire traction



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# Preparing your home and yourself for winter

HOLLY SMITH

PORT DANIEL - Winter brings quiet mornings, crisp air, and cozy evenings by the fire. It's a season to enjoy comfort, warmth, and simple pleasures. Preparing your home and taking care of yourself can make these months feel even more peaceful and enjoyable. A little planning now can help you settle in and savour the season.

## Preparing your home

**1. Keep the heat flowing** - A warm home is the heart of winter. Have your furnace, boiler, or heat pump checked, and replace filters if needed. If you use gas heating, make sure your carbon monoxide detector is working. A cozy home is always better when it's safe, too.

**2. Seal windows and doors** - A little draft here and there can make a room chilly. Weatherstripping or caulking helps keep warmth inside. Heavy curtains add another

layer of comfort, making your home feel snug and inviting.

**3. Protect your pipes** - Insulating pipes in unheated areas, like basements or attics, keeps water flowing smoothly. Letting a faucet drip during very cold nights can prevent pipes from freezing. Knowing where your main water shut-off is located is another simple step that brings peace of mind.

**4. Roofs and Gutters** - Clearing gutters and checking the roof keeps everything running smoothly. Leaves and snow can be removed, and a small checkup ensures that water flows as it should. These little touches make your home welcoming and cozy.

**5. Lighting and comfort** - Shorter days mean we rely on light a bit more. Make sure your home feels bright and cheerful. Soft lighting, a warm throw, and favourite blankets make for the perfect winter retreat.

**6. Walkways** - A clear pathway makes moving around your home easier and safer. Keep sand or ice melt handy,



and make sure shovels are within reach. That way, stepping outside can be simple and comfortable.

**7. Fireplaces and wood stoves** - If you enjoy a fire, have your fireplace or wood stove checked and cleaned. It's a wonderful way to add warmth and charm to your home, and keeping it in good shape ensures it's safe and cozy.

## Caring for Yourself

**1. Dress for comfort** - Layering keeps you comfortable and warm. Sweaters, warm socks, scarves, and hats make moving around easier and more pleasant. A little

extra warmth goes a long way.

**2. Keep Well** - Eating nourishing meals, staying hydrated, and moving gently every day helps maintain energy and well-being. Seasonal vaccines, like the flu shot, support health and allow you to enjoy winter activities with confidence.

**3. Stay Prepared** - Having a small emergency kit with water, snacks, medications, blankets, and a flashlight is reassuring. Keeping a list of important contacts close by adds an extra layer of peace of mind.

**4. Car Comfort** - If you drive, simple steps like checking your tires, brakes, battery, and antifreeze can make jour-

neys easier. Keeping a blanket, ice scraper, and small shovel in your car adds comfort and reassurance.

**5. Enjoy the Season** - Shorter days are an invitation to slow down, enjoy hobbies, read, or connect with friends and family. A warm drink, a favorite book, or a quiet moment by the window can brighten your day.

Winter can be a season of comfort, reflection, and joy. With a few thoughtful preparations, you can make your home a warm, welcoming place and enjoy every cozy moment. And remember, sometimes the best part of winter is a favourite blanket, a warm drink, and a quiet smile.

## One stop for all your needs

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Photo Credit: Sara Gagnon



SOCIÉTÉ  
DU CHEMIN DE FER  
DE LA GASPÉSIE

The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie would like to inform residents of the Baie-des-Chaleurs region that rail traffic will soon be active 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, between New Richmond and Port-Daniel. Trains will also continue to operate between Matapédia and New Richmond.

**Please stay alert at railway level crossings, obey all signage, and avoid trespassing railway property at all times.**

**These precautions are essential for your safety and the safety of your loved ones.  
Thank you and be careful.**