

# Murdochville could become home to one of Canada's largest mines

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

MURDOCHVILLE – With the latest results released by Osisko Metals on the potential Gaspé Mines deposit in Murdochville, all signs point to the project entering the global big leagues if it comes to fruition.

On April 14, the company indicated the deposit could contain 1.834 billion tonnes of ore grading 0.27% copper, following a 118,000-metre drilling campaign in 2025. Another 50,000 metres of drilling is planned for 2026.

With such a volume, the mine could become a major player amid the metal's growing scarcity.

"This potentially represents a large mine that will extract low-grade ore. But the fact remains that it will be massive. We're talking about a mining operation that would produce 10 times more on a daily basis than the former Mines Gaspé," comments CEO Robert Wares, who worked as a geologist during the initial mine's operations. With such a volume, Mines



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

About 100 residents attended Osisko's presentation on the Gaspé Mines project.

Gaspé would become a major global player.

"Almost. World-class—we're talking about a copper mine that can produce 200,000 tonnes of copper metal per year. The operation we're planning is over 150,000 tonnes. That's very substantial. It would be the largest mine in Canada," says Mr. Wares.

With such a volume, the mine could operate for approx-

imately 40 years.

"When you look at the metal value over 40 years, we're easily talking about \$100 billion in wealth creation. That \$100 billion is divided among operating costs, taxes, royalties, shareholder equity, profit, and so on. The real wealth creation is what we extract from the ground. It's huge," he says.

If the 2026 drilling campaign yields the expected re-

sults, the lifespan could be extended even further.

"We're very optimistic about the potential to increase the resource. I hope to come back next year and announce a mine that could last 50 years," says Mr. Wares.

**Favourable global context**

Osisko based its profitabil-

ity calculations on a copper price of \$4.50 per pound. The current market price is around \$6.

Before moving to production, the preliminary economic assessment will determine whether a restart is viable.

"If we get good drilling results this summer, we'll want to include them in the study. The smart thing to do would be to delay the study by perhaps six months. Following that, we'll embark on the feasibility study, which will take 18 months," says Mr. Wares, noting the report was initially expected by late 2026 or early 2027.

Part of the production could be processed at the Horne smelter in Rouyn-Noranda.

"If this project moves forward, we dare to hope that the government will proceed with completing the rail link between Port-Daniel and Gaspé. The government will certainly want as much ore as possible to go to Horne rather than to Europe. But it will be up to the government to negotiate with

**Cont'd on Page 2**

# New partnership aims to boost construction opportunities for First Nations

GILLES GAGNÉ

GESGAPEGIAG – The Mi'gmawei Mawiomi Business Corporation and PEC Enterprises announce the launch of Mawitu'gw, a civil engineering and infrastructure firm co-owned by Mi'gmaq and non-Mi'gmaq partners, created to win construction contracts in Gespe'gewa'gi, the traditional land of the Gaspé Peninsula First Nations.

Through their partnership, the Mi'gmawei Mawiomi Business Corporation, MMBC, the financial arm of the Gaspé Peninsula three First Nations communities, and PEC want to plan, deliver, and manage construction projects, particularly in road and bridge infrastructure.



Photo: Gilles Gagné

Representatives from PEC Enterprises and Mi'gmaq communities across the Gaspé Peninsula gathered for the April 16 announcement held in a building owned by Gesgapegiag.

The partners are also positioning themselves to take part in infrastructure development

tied to the 6,000 megawatts of wind energy announced in August 2025 by the Quebec gov-

ernment, Hydro-Québec and the Eastern Alliance, a municipal partner in several wind

farms in eastern Quebec.

The creation of Mawitu'gw is intended to generate employment, build local capacity and support long-term economic development within Mi'gmaq communities.

"For us, this is about building something that lasts. Mawitu'gw is another step in strengthening Mi'gmaq ownership and an active role in projects, while creating real opportunities for our people through jobs, training, and long-term economic growth," says Fred Vicaire, chief executive officer of MMBC.

"Partnership is at the core of our approach. Our collaboration to create Mawitu'gw

**Cont'd on Page 7**

## OSISKO:

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Glencore to ensure that a portion of the ore from Gaspé goes to Horne," the executive says. However, the potential volume generated at Murdochville would exceed the smelter's capacity in Rouyn-Noranda.

"The Horne's capacity is approximately 500,000 tonnes of concentrate per year. That is what we plan to produce at Mines Gaspé. Mines Gaspé could supply Horne for decades. But Horne already imports concentrate. The government will certainly want to promote processing in Quebec," he says.

#### Draining the pit

Work is ongoing to determine how to drain the pit, in-



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

*Osisko CEO Robert Wares discusses the latest developments in the Gaspé Mines project on April 14 in Murdochville.*

cluding treating water to remove copper before releasing it into the York River. The National Institute for Scientific

Research is involved in the process.

"Once we've determined all the engineering details and costs, we'll apply for permits. We hope to have the permits within four months. I hope to start pumping in a year," says Mr. Wares.

"There are many companies that think this isn't feasible, but we're convinced it will be a success," says Mr. Wares.

At the same time, a comprehensive study of flora and fauna will be conducted in an area covering 170 square kilometres around Murdochville to assess the project's impacts. Environmental impact remains a major concern.

"It's a major concern, as is usual: noise, vibration, dust. All of this will be subject to in-depth studies. The BAPE

will tell us if the game plan holds up," says the CEO.

#### Community interest and cautious optimism

About a hundred residents attended the meeting.

"We can sense the interest in the project. It's great to have the support of the local community," says Mr. Wares.

Murdochville Mayor Stéphane Gamache says the newly elected council continues to support the project while seeking the best possible outcome for the town.

"The new council is very supportive. But we want to try to secure the best possible economic terms for the Town, improve it, and make it more attractive. The idea is to minimize commuting so that people come to live here," the mayor comments.

Interest in new businesses and services is already emerging.

"People are asking questions and seeking information. That's a positive sign. It needs to be done in an orderly manner and not for speculative purposes, but with the goal of developing the town," the mayor explains.

However, he stressed the project remains uncertain.

"We must always keep in mind that this is still hypothetical. The people at Osisko keep telling us that. It's a positive sign. Things are moving in the right direction, but it will be three or four years before we get final approval. We need to stay cautious and play our cards right. We're operating under a lot of uncertainty, but we have no choice but to work this way," says Mr. Gamache.

# Osisko reports major increase in copper resources

## NELSON SERGERIE

MURDOCHVILLE – Osisko Metals reports a significant increase in estimated resources at its Mines Gaspé revitalization project following its 2025 drilling campaign.

According to an update released on April 14, the project now contains 1.834 billion tonnes of ore grading 0.27% copper, based on 118,000 metres of drilling completed in 2025.

An additional inferred resource of 240 million tonnes grading 0.41% copper has also been identified.

These new figures represent a 119% increase compared with estimates released in November 2024.

The mining company further states that this is "one of the largest undeveloped copper-molybdenum deposits in North America, with 10.8 billion pounds of contained copper, as well as significant quantities of molybdenum totaling 673 million pounds and silver totaling 93 million ounces."

The inferred resources alone could add an estimated 2.2 billion pounds of copper, 83 million pounds of molybdenum and 14 million ounces of silver.

In November 2024, Osisko reported a resource of 824 million tonnes grading 0.34% copper and 670 million tonnes grading 0.38%, for a total of 4.91 billion pounds of copper.

"We are very proud to announce this update to the mineral resource estimate for

the Mines Gaspé copper project. The 2025 drilling program successfully converted and expanded the 2024 extent into the measured and indicated resource categories, and added significant new inferred resources at higher grades further south. An additional 50,000-metre drilling program will begin later this month, with the goal of converting the remaining inferred resources to the indicated category and extending the deposit's boundaries to the southwest, toward the former Mount Needle pit," says chief executive officer (CEO) Robert Wares.

"The Mines Gaspé copper project has all the hallmarks of a potentially generational mine, as a major Canadian copper project under development located in one of the world's safest mining jurisdictions. This deposit could once again become the main economic driver of the Gaspé Peninsula for decades to come. This significant asset has the potential to become a key component of Quebec's strategy for the development of critical minerals, which aims to supply the essential metals for advanced technologies and global decarbonization initiatives," adds the CEO.

The 2026 drilling program will aim to convert the remaining inferred resources, extend the mineralization upward toward Mount Needle, which will involve infill drilling within the pit outline and testing for additional mineralization beyond the current southern and south-

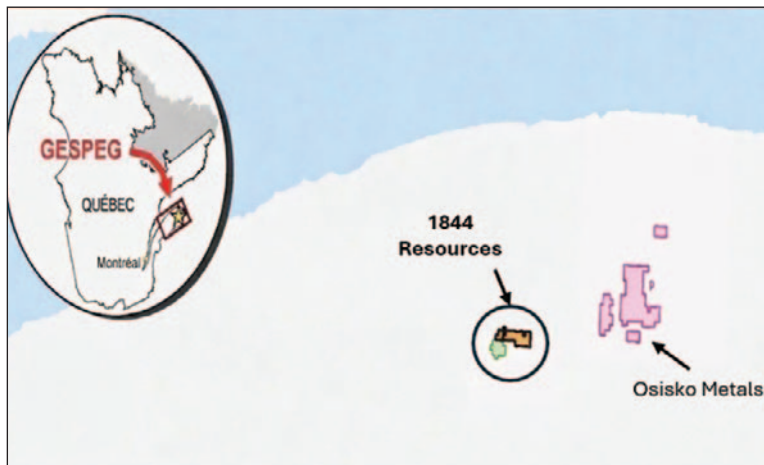


Photo: 1844 Resources

*The project site being developed by 1844 Resources near Murdochville.*

western pit boundaries, as well as testing the down-dip extensions of the deep-seated Mont Porphyre deposit, located northeast of the Mount Copper pit.

#### Additional exploration activity in the region

Meanwhile, another company is advancing a separate project in the Murdochville area.

1844 Resources has received the necessary drilling permits for its flagship copper project, known as SV2 (Sullipek/Vortex/Vallières), located 22 kilometres west of Osisko's site.

The mining company holds 130 claims covering approximately 68 square kilometres in the Gaspé Copper Belt.

"After years of regulatory constraints, we have now obtained the required permits and are able to advance SV2 toward a modern exploration program. Thanks to a combi-

nation of historical data, recent geophysical surveys, and a favourable geological context within the Gaspé Copper Belt, we believe the project has strong potential for new discoveries," says President and CEO Sylvain Laberge.

"Historically, exploration in the Gaspé region has focused on high-grade copper discoveries exceeding 1%, which spurred the initial development in Murdochville. Today, progress on Osisko

Metals' Gaspé Copper project, with grades below 1%, is transforming the exploration model: the focus is now on the extent and continuity of mineralization rather than on grade alone. This shift significantly increases the potential of new and existing projects within the same favorable geological settings and paves the way for a new wave of high-tonnage copper exploration opportunities in the region," notes geologist Bernard-Olivier Martel, Chief Operating Officer of 1844 Resources.

The Vallières project is operated under a 50-50 joint venture agreement with Glencore.

The Sullipek property contains an estimated 2.24 million tonnes grading 1.09% copper. Drilling conducted in 2012 intersected 29.8 metres grading 0.94% copper.

The company is finalizing its 2026 work program and plans to provide additional details ahead of a drilling campaign scheduled for late summer or early fall.





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# Day camp shortage leaves Gaspé parents scrambling

NELSON SERGERIE

GILLES GAGNÉ

GASPÉ – Parents who were unable to secure a spot for the camp Été jeunesse Gaspé expressed their discontent, sometimes quite vehemently, on social media, prompting the Town of Gaspé to call for calm.

On April 7, online registration opened, and according to camp organizers, the available spots were reserved in moments, prompting comments from parents frustrated by the situation.

“The Town does not manage day camps. These services are primarily offered by volunteer organizations. I do not accept the harsh criticism directed at these volunteers,” says mayor Daniel Côté, who notes that there appears to be a shortage of spots.

“We need to document the situation. Are we talking about four, 40, or 400 young people who don’t have childcare spots? The Town is putting a form online to indicate the actual needs. Once identified, we will work with organizations to find possible solutions,” the mayor explains.

The mayor compared the situation to the ongoing shortage of daycare spaces, citing a lack of facilities and staff.

“There seems to be fewer spots available. There have been closures in recent years that have put pressure on the camps. In short, this issue has evolved in recent years. Other day camps haven’t even opened registration yet,” he notes. This is the case, in particular, in Saint-Maurice-de-l’Échouerie and Rivière-au-Renard.

The mayor does not rule out opening the Town’s coffers if the needs are well documented. The Town is in contact with the organizers to explore possible solutions.

## Reaction from Été jeunesse Gaspé

The camp Été jeunesse Gaspé (Summer Youth Gaspé camp) understands parents’ frustration. Its creation dates back more than 20 years, according to the organization, after taking over the municipal camp which was managed by the Town at the time.

On social media, the volunteer organizers specified that the camp’s capacity—120 to 130 children—was filled in two minutes. A combination of



Photo: Musée de la Gaspésie

*The Musée de la Gaspésie camp has only a few spots available for the summer.*

factors led to this rapid surge in registrations.

“We expected the spots to fill up quickly. The sports camp at Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles had already closed the previous year. The Camp des débrouillards would not be in Gaspé in 2026. We are left with two camps that aren’t going to operate,” explains the organization’s vice-president, Marie-Ève Joncas.

These two camps could accommodate approximately 200 people, which puts pressure on other organizations. “We need a space large enough to accommodate the children. We want the children to spend as much time outdoors as possible, but when the weather isn’t cooperating, we need a sufficiently large indoor space. There aren’t that many of those in Gaspé. And recruitment isn’t easy,” she says.

The camp takes place at Saint-Rosaire School. Ms. Joncas applauds the Town of Gaspé’s initiative to assess the need for available spaces.

“It’s like a starting point for improving or developing new day camps. We were caught off guard by the loss of two camps. We didn’t experience this before when the other two camps were running,” Ms. Joncas continues.

“What can we do? Can we create a Gaspé Youth Summer 2.0 with another parents’ committee? The important thing is to understand supply and demand and discuss the possibilities to find solutions. We can’t leave parents without a place for their children for seven weeks in the summer. It’s like reliving the same problem as the CPEs (early childhood centres),” she notes.

The camp must also meet the standards of the Quebec Camps Association. Technically, it would be difficult to add spaces for this year’s camp. “We couldn’t accommodate more children and maintain the

safety standards,” stresses Ms. Joncas.

The Town has no intention of taking over the management of day camps at this time.

“We’re not there yet. The Town provides financial and technical assistance. Why should the school system take care of these children for 10 months of the year, and then the municipality take over in the summer? There’s a philosophical question to consider. Should we change a system that usually works very well with volunteers? An institutionalized service could ultimately cost more and be less effective,” the mayor adds.

## So useful for parents

Rebecca MacDonald, a

Gaspé mother of one, has used a summer camp in the past and hopes to use it again in 2026.

“Summer break is long and without a structured program, most parents are often left scrambling to balance work responsibilities with full-time childcare. It means having to rearrange work schedules, using up vacation days just to cover regular weekdays, or relying heavily on family and friends for help,” she explains.

“Beyond the logistics part, there could also be a concern about the child’s well-being. Camps provide so many positives. Examples include social interaction, physical activity, and a sense of routine. Without them, some parents may worry their child is not spending enough time outdoors, too much time on their screens, or may even start feeling isolated from peers. It also removes opportunities for children to build independence, try new activities, and create new summer memories,” Ms. MacDonald adds.

“Financially, the alternative solutions can add up quickly, such as babysitters, or reduced work hours, which cause a strain on already tight budgets. Instead of summer being a break, it feels like a daily challenge just to keep everything afloat in the house,” analyzes Rebecca MacDonald.

## The Museum is also practically full

The Musée de la Gaspésie also saw its day camp spots disappear quickly when registration opened on March 16. Within 24 hours, 80% of the spots were filled. Roughly 50 spots are offered each week.

Technically, the museum couldn’t do any more. “We’ve come to the conclusion that we have to work with the human resources we have,” admits Gabrielle Leduc, the museum’s management coordinator, who indicates that there is still one staff position to fill.

“But we are very encouraged that we have enough activity leaders for the registrations we’ve received,” notes Ms. Leduc.

There are still a few spots available for 7-8 year olds and a handful in the other age groups. A waiting list is in place. The museum will assess the situation this fall.

“It’s difficult to plan ahead. We’re happy to offer between 50 and 52 spots each year. We’re a small team, and running a day camp as a non-profit organization is quite challenging. If we can offer more, we’ll try to do so. But we have to ensure we have the human resources and the space,” points out Camille Leduc.

## Employment services call for help

Nelson Sergerie

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS – Employment assistance organizations in the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region have reached a point of no return as the Quebec government imposes a new \$225,000 cut for the upcoming fiscal year. Since 2022, budgets have been steadily reduced.

“The situation is such that since 2022, we’ve lost \$1.2 million in cuts across all organizations. These are significant shortfalls. We’re aware that the regional office has seen a 41% cut to its budget for labour market development,” explains regional spokesperson and director of the Carrefour jeunesse emploi de la Haute-Gaspésie, Michel Rioux.

“Costs are rising for everyone. Inflation has affected us all. The cuts have direct impacts on services, human resources, and communities,” says Mr. Rioux.

These new cuts could result in potential disruptions to service delivery for local populations, the provision of virtual services for vulnerable clientele, the relocation of employability services to regional areas, the addition of exclusion criteria for certain client groups from public services, difficulties in retaining staff and the loss of on-the-ground expertise. Moreover, the elimination of positions in specialized organizations, a deterioration in working conditions and a decline in purchasing power, and the inability to keep pace with inflation-related cost increases could also affect service quality.

“The ministry has redefined the framework for employability initiatives, which means we are no longer able to reach students in vocational programs, temporary foreign workers, young people without a social insurance number, or young workers seeking a career change,” notes the spokesperson.

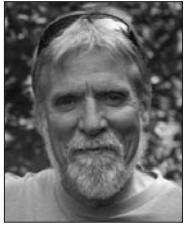
The organizations are therefore asking the Minister of Employment, Pascale Déry, to review the budget priorities of the Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity and to ensure adequate and stable funding for employment assistance services.

“In my field, the cut will amount to 48%. Currently, the financial assistance I receive from the ministry doesn’t even cover a single salary to provide a full range of services,” explains Mr. Rioux.

These new cuts come as employment statistics have shown a rise in youth unemployment over the past few months.

“If we’re here and we’re not just struggling to survive, we’ll eventually be able to be part of the solution for the labour market. That’s our goal,” the spokesperson maintains.

Each year, nearly 2,400 young people in the region turn to these services to get started, find a job or redefine their path in the labour market.



Gilles Gagné

## Commentary

### The Quebec battle gets tighter

Who would have thought that the Liberal Party of Quebec would be leading in the last survey carried out by Pallas Data, L'Actualité magazine and Québec 125.

The survey's results come only two months after the victory by acclamation of Charles Milliard at the helm of the Liberals.

It was also the first survey that followed the arrival of Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) new leader Christine Fréchette as premier. Although her victory over Bernard Drainville was not a surprise, the race was a

bit tighter than expected, at 57.9% of support for her.

The mid-April survey gives the Liberals 32%, up five points from February, compared to 29% for the Parti Québécois (PQ), down one point. The CAQ stands at 14%, unchanged, tied with the Conservative Party of Quebec, which slipped two points. Québec solidaire sits at 11%, up one point.

We can assume for now that province-wide, there is no "Fréchette effect". The survey will serve as a line in the sand. It will be possible from now on to assess progress or decline until the October 5 election.

The seemingly good performance of Charles Milliard hides a reality: the Liberal Party is overly strong in the Montreal area, and still very weak elsewhere, with the exception of the Outaouais region. The terrible regional cuts during Philippe Couillard's 2014-2018 tenure are still remembered by those living outside cities.

Among francophone voters, which is vital for an overall victory, the Parti Québécois of Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon is still ahead, with a 34% degree of

support, 16% ahead of the Liberal Party's 18%. In February, the gap was 19%. The 3% difference stays within the error margin of the survey, which is 3.2%, 19 times out of 20, the last norm used to specify that a survey is never 100% certain.

Support for the CAQ among francophones stands at 18%, while the Conservatives and Québec solidaire each receive 13%. Among non-francophones, the Liberals dominate with 64% support, compared to 15% for Éric Duhaime's Conservatives.

### Regional divides persist

There are interesting twists to the regional distribution of support highlighted by the survey. As mentioned above, once more, the Liberal Party dominates in the Montreal area, with a 41% rate of support, a 5% increase, compared to 27% for the Parti québécois (PQ). The other parties are less than competitive, with

*Continued on page 6*



Emma Buckley

## Guest Commentary

### Despised, disturbed, disregarded: birds vulnerable in the face of multiple threats

My partner saw it first. "What was that?" he exclaimed as we drove along a quiet country road. We were camping for a month in the national parks that lace Australia's eastern mountain ranges. I craned my neck, but we'd already turned a bend. "A huge bird", he marvelled, "eating something by the side of the road!" An hour later, we returned to our campsite along the same road and there it was: a wedge-tailed eagle, the largest raptor in Australia, and one of the biggest in the world. Startled, it launched itself into the air right beside the passenger window. My heart seemed to lift out of my chest at the sight: a huge, dark brown eagle pumping tawny wings, heaving itself into the sky. It had a massive, curved upper beak and feathered legs that looked almost comical, as though it were wearing fluffy pantaloons.

The next morning, we took the same road again. As we passed the bend that had brought such wonder the day before, we saw a dark mass beside the road. It was the eagle, dead.

We were gutted. "They're so heavy and slow to get up into the air", a local sympathized. "It would've been hit by a car, probably going too fast".

To see the eagle up close and wild one day, and lifeless the next, left us feeling hollowed out. No creature, I thought, not even a powerful apex predator is safe from the cascade of threats facing birds today. Almost 1 in 8 species of birds worldwide is threatened with extinction. Half the world's birds are declining in numbers. Climate change, habitat loss, pollution and invasive predators are key factors driving this decline. Migratory shorebirds such as plovers and sandpipers – which frequent our coast here in Gaspésie – are particularly vulnerable, as fragile coastal environments along flight paths are swallowed up by residential and industrial developments. These marathon flyers need undisturbed places to rest: even something as seemingly harmless as dogs off leashes on beaches can stress shorebirds, depleting energy reserves and reducing their chance of a successful flight.

In Australia, the wedge-tailed eagle has long been hostage to man's whims. The eagle was persecuted

mercilessly in the 20th century, as sheep graziers believed it killed their livestock. State governments established eradication programs, paying bounties for each bird killed. The Western Australian government declared the eagle "vermin" under a 1909 Act, stating that "all owners and occupiers of holdings" had a duty to destroy vermin "at all times, and at their own expense". Dead eagles strung up on roadside fences became a familiar sight in rural areas. Eagle numbers tumbled: almost 150 000 birds were killed in Western Australia alone between 1928 and 1968.

The conservation movements of the 1960's and 1970's helped change attitudes toward the eagle in Australia: so too did scientific research that found eagles were much more likely to target dead or dying lambs, rather than healthy animals. Their status flipped 180 degrees; from vermin, to protected in all Australian states and territories by the 1970's.

Wedge-tailed eagles continue to face threats, notably tree clearing and nest disturbance, illegal killing, and vehicle and infrastructure collisions. Despite these, the eagle has demonstrated surprising resilience. Numbers on the Australian mainland are increasing, contrary to the general trend for birds of prey worldwide. Environmental legislation, such as national parks and wildlife acts, has boosted eagle recovery. The raptor's wide distribution across a sparsely populated continent, and the diversity of its food sources have also helped eagle populations rebound.

Back in Australia, we stopped at a lookout a few days after our awful roadside discovery. The view was magnificent: a deep gorge etched between rocky hillsides. Suddenly, a movement above caught our eye: the distinctive wings of a wedge-tailed eagle, splayed like outstretched fingers. Hope springs eternal, the saying goes, and in that moment, hope sprang and then soared, in the shape of an eagle.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**We love wild birds and enjoy watching them be wild.** We attract them with what they need in nature. Hummingbirds need nectar from lilies, bluebells, fireweed, daffodils, apple and pea blossom, monkshood, as well as sap from woodpecker holes in poplar, birch or maple and insects, including mosquitoes. They are also important pollinators.

Other birds depend on chokecherries, pimbina fruit, mountain ash fruit, elderberries, rosehips, all present in autumn and winter, along with insects. Bird feeders can prevent birds from fulfilling their ecological roles and from remaining self-sufficient, in any season.

"Biodiversity may be reduced where a subset of species becomes dominant... there may be negative

effects, for example, increased disease transmission and malnutrition... and the zoonotic (animal to human diseases) risks to people. Aggressive encounters can increase within or between species..." says the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

According to the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA), "feeding birds can increase the spread of disease in three ways: by causing them to come into closer contact, by increasing defecation that harbours bacteria responsible for numerous diseases, and because mouldy bread can cause a fatal lung infection." The organization also notes that salmonella can occur. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), in its article "6 Reasons to Think Twice Before Getting a Bird Feeder," also highlights concerns related to bird feeding, including increased health risks. Ticks can also become a significant problem.

Bears, raccoons, squirrels, other rodents and raptors are attracted to bird feeders, creating conflicts and putting birds and people in danger with "unnatural congregations of birds" according to the BC SPCA

According to PBS Nature, "bird feeders can alter migratory behaviour, help invasive species outcompete native species and give predators easy access to birds and their nestlings."

Upsetting the balance of nature is always dangerous. Let's love wild birds naturally.

*Margret and Noël Grenier  
Douglstown, Quebec*

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# Police Report

## Drug bust in Rivière-au-Renard

The bail hearing for Frédéric-Denis Collin, 45, of Rivière-au-Renard, has been postponed until May 11. The man was arrested on April 2 following a drug search at his residence on Renard Boulevard West. Already charged with possession for the purpose of trafficking, he now faces additional charges with possession of stolen property and possession of Tadalafil, a medication used to treat erectile dysfunction. During the search, police seized more than 4,000 methamphetamine tablets, approximately \$4,000 in cash, as well as crack, cocaine and prescription medications. The investigation began in February following information received from the public. Anyone with information about drug trafficking can contact the Sûreté du Québec's Criminal Information Centre confidentially at 1-800-659-4264.

## Body of missing man found near Ristigouche South East

Dylan Barnaby, 32, of Listuguj, who had been missing since November 23, was found deceased on April 2 in his vehicle in a wooded area near Ristigouche South East. The Listuguj Police Department and the Sûreté du Québec had issued a public appeal on November 23 to help locate the man. Mr. Barnaby had last been seen nine days earlier, and his family was concerned for his health and safety. According to the Sûreté du Québec, no acts of violence were committed. The investigation is ruling out the involvement of a third party. Out of respect for the family, no further details will be released.

## Gordon Wadleigh passes away before his trial

Gordon Wadleigh, 83, of Chandler, who had been accused of sexually abusing minors, died recently. As a result, the charges against him were withdrawn on April 7. "Mr. Wadleigh passed away on March 22, 2026. Judge (Janick) Poirier granted the withdrawal of the charges on Tuesday (April 7). This is the procedure followed when an accused person dies during the proceedings. Charges had been laid against him on February 3, 2026. He faced a total of five charges involving three different victims. Indeed, two of the charges related to the same events during the same period," says criminal prosecutor Emilie Landry-Therriault. He was facing four charges of sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and gross indecency. The alleged offences were said to have occurred more than 30 years ago.

## Drugs and contraband cigarettes seized in Port-Daniel-Gascons

Sûreté du Québec officers intercepted a vehicle on Route 132 in Port-Daniel-Gascons on April 2 at approximately 2:15 p.m. as part of a tobacco smuggling investigation. A search of the vehicle resulted in the seizure of slightly more than 7,000 contraband cigarettes, a quantity of methamphetamine and illicit cannabis and approximately 10 grams of hashish; The driver, a 62-year-old

man, and the passenger, a 28-year-old woman, could face charges under the Tobacco Tax Act, as well as charges under the Criminal Code related to drug possession. Both individuals were released pending further proceedings.

Coordinated by the Ministry of Public Security, the ACCES Tabac (Concerted Actions to Counter Underground Economies) program is a government initiative which was established in 2001 to combat the illegal tobacco trade. Its objectives are to promote the integrity of Quebec's tax system, restore order to the tobacco trade sector, increase probity, reduce unfair competition caused by the illegal tobacco trade against legitimate businesses, clean up the industry, and combat a crime that often goes unreported. The Sûreté du Québec reminds the public that any information regarding tobacco smuggling can be reported confidentially to the Criminal Information Centre at 1-800-659-4264.

## Avalanches injure two skiers in separate incidents

Two avalanches, one in the Parc de la Gaspésie and one on Mount Lyall, about 10 kilometres from the park, caused serious injuries to two skiers. An adolescent suffered a broken arm on April 4 at Mount Lyall. It took 20 skiers to rescue the teenager partially buried in the snow. Two days later, on April 6, a group of three skiers were also swept by an avalanche. One man sustained broken legs. In both cases, firefighters from Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, along with police officers, paramedics and other skiers, assisted in the rescue operations.

## Fires leave multiple residents homeless

Eight people were left homeless after a fire completely destroyed an apartment building on Commerciale Street in Chandler on April 13. They were assisted by the Canadian Red Cross. Emergency services were called to the scene shortly before 2:30 p.m. Plumes of smoke were already visible from a distance when the firefighters left their station. The fire is believed to have started in the kitchen of one unit. The incident follows an April 8 fire in Sainte-Annes-des-Monts that left 10 people homeless. The cause of both fires remains under investigation.

## Murdochville man could face additional charges

The bail hearing for Éric Laflamme, 38, of Murdochville, has been postponed after he was unable to secure legal representation. Mr. Laflamme, who is known to police, has been in custody since his arrest on March 30 in Rivière-au-Renard. He is charged with possession of a prohibited firearm, specifically a handgun. The criminal prosecutor is expected to lay additional charges at the man's next court appearance. The charges stem from an alleged altercation that occurred around 12:30 a.m. on March 27 outside a bar on Rue de la Reine in Gaspé. The accused allegedly fled the scene in a vehicle. The victim, a man in his 30s, sustained injuries and was threatened.

## Coroner suggests redesigning intersection following fatal accident in Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE

GESGAPEGIAG – The layout of the intersection of Rue du Quai and Montée de Sandy Beach in the Sandy Beach neighbourhood of Gaspé may help explain the fatal accident that occurred on October 16, 2025, claiming the life of Érika Aubut, 24, of Grande-Rivière.

That afternoon, the woman was in the front passenger seat of a car that had come to a stop at the stop sign on Rue du Quai.

The driver then pulled out onto Montée de Sandy Beach while turning right, resulting in a side-impact collision on the driver's side.

When emergency responders arrived, the victim was unconscious and had no vital signs. She was pronounced



The intersection analyzed by the coroner in his report, where the accident occurred in October 2025.

Photo: Google Maps

dead within the following hour at the hospital.

In a report released on April 9, Coroner Nicolas Lutzerkirchen wrote that the incident resulted from a combination of contextual factors related to the road environment and the dynamics of the collision, with no mechanical

or technical issues identified as contributing factors.

"However, visibility was limited for the driver due to the configuration of the intersection, the presence of a building along the roadside, and vehicles parked in that building's parking lot," the coroner notes.

The car travelling on Montée de Sandy Beach toward downtown was circulating within the speed limit.

"It was only visible from the intersection about two seconds before the impact, travelling at 82 kilometres per hour—slightly above the 80-kilometre-per-hour speed limit in that zone, according to the information obtained," the coroner writes.

"The driver likely did not attempt any significant evasive maneuver prior to the impact. The absence of skid marks or a marked swerve is consistent with the vehicle suddenly appearing in the driver's field of vision, given the extremely short perception and reaction time," continues Mr. Lutzerkirchen.

The coroner consulted with the Town of Gaspé and the

Ministry of Transport to assess the possibility of implementing corrective measures aimed at improving road user safety. Since the section of road falls under the ministry's jurisdiction, "the MTQ (ministère des Transports du Québec) confirmed that steps are already being taken to conduct a safety analysis during the summer of 2026, which will help determine the most appropriate measures to ensure greater safety at the site," the coroner was informed.

"These initiatives appear appropriate under the circumstances. Consequently, no formal recommendations will be made," he says.

His report was submitted to the Town of Gaspé and the ministry.

The coroner concluded that the death was accidental.

# Housing construction booming in New Richmond

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

NEW RICHMOND — If the current pace continues, approximately 70 new housing units could be built in New Richmond by the end of 2026.

“We have 40 social housing units that broke ground in November and are expected to be completed by the end of the year; we have two eight-unit projects under construction. We have a new developer who has submitted a proposal for 16 units this spring,” says Mayor Éric Dubé.

Support programs and assistance for developers have been key factors in the municipality’s recent success.

“Is this a ripple effect now that the ball has started rolling? And it’s renting well. A 20-unit building completed in late January or early February is fully occupied. There’s a real need. It seems developers are finding it worthwhile,” the

mayor suggests.

The trend began about three years ago.

“With what we have under construction this year, we’ve built over 150 units in the last three years,” the mayor says proudly.

A study launched last year is examining whether local infrastructure can support the current pace of development, with results still pending.

“The challenge we wanted to assess isn’t related to the water supply. We have plenty of water. It’s more about distribution—making sure no one experiences low water pressure. We’re currently conducting studies,” the mayor explains.

As for the sewer system, the mayor says there are no major concerns.

“We were already in the process of upgrading our pumping stations. We have issues that aren’t related to our treatment ponds. We haven’t

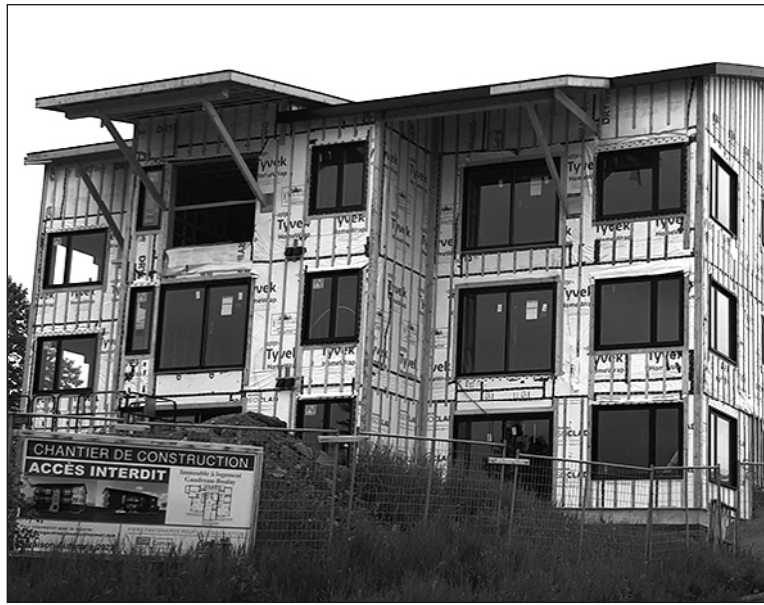


Photo: N. Sergerie

*Housing units are springing up in New Richmond.*

emptied them yet. We still have plenty of capacity,” the mayor continues.

Once the 2026 construction projects are complete, the municipality still has land available for development.

“We’ve just extended Rue des Érables. We still have a

few plots of land owned by private developers. With all the projects currently under construction, developers still have the capacity to build on them,” he says.

However, he cautioned that the pace may not be sustainable over the long term.

“We won’t be able to maintain this pace for many more years. But it’s clear that we’ll have 150 housing units built. We’ve never seen anything like this in the history of New Richmond in such a short time.”

The municipality’s goal in encouraging residential construction is both to increase property value and attract new residents.

Last December, 77 new residents had moved to New Richmond, according to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, bringing the population close to 4,000.

“We think we’ll be able to reach that mark next year. Demographic issues for services and businesses remain a challenge. We’re happy that this is increasing the population,” continues Mr. Dubé.

He estimates the vacancy rate is close to zero, given how quickly new units are being occupied.

## Waste management improving

NELSON SERGERIE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE — Each person generates nearly 1.5 tonnes of waste annually, a level the Régie intermunicipale de traitement des matières résiduelles de la Gaspésie (RITMRG) is aiming to reduce.

The figure is among the key findings in the agency’s 2025 report and is roughly equivalent to the weight of a car per person.

“This is a widespread trend in North America and in the Gaspé Peninsula; we can’t ignore it. This image is striking. It shows just how much waste we can generate across all categories. Incentive-based pricing encourages some reflection on this point,” comments the agency’s executive director,



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

*Too many items still end up in the landfill instead of the brown or blue bin.*

Nathalie Drapeau.

Waste still accounts for 42% of the materials generated within the agency’s territory, which includes the Rocher-Percé and Côte-de-Gaspé

MRCs: 46% for Rocher-Percé and 34% for Côte-de-Gaspé.

“Of that 42%, we conducted a characterization at the landfill. There is still a lot of organic waste and recyclables

in the trash. That means we haven’t finished our work. There is still 7% of the population that empties their trash bin less than 12 times a year. People are making an effort to reduce waste at home, but it’s an ongoing effort,” analyzes Ms. Drapeau.

Still, 63% of waste is diverted from landfill in Rocher-Percé, compared with 55% in Côte-de-Gaspé, for a regional average of 58%.

“That’s good. It still means a significant portion is being recycled. There was still an 18% decrease in total tonnage in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC. But a large proportion of that comes from industrial sources and the construction, renovation, and demolition sectors. Given that there were fewer construction sites, this is re-

flected in the statistics,” she says.

Reuse is also increasing, which is one of the agency’s objectives.

“We’ve seen packaging producers step up to reduce the amount of packaging offered to users. These are steps that will lead to reductions in the coming years,” says Ms. Drapeau.

As the deposit system expands over the next few years, residual waste is expected to decrease.

Despite ongoing challenges, she says waste management efforts are moving in the right direction.

“Thumbs up! We’re on the right track. It’s encouraging. We’re hearing a bit more positive feedback. It’s a boost for the team,” concludes Ms. Drapeau.

— Continued from page 4  
*Liberal Party of Quebec:*

13% for the CAQ, 11% for Québec solidaire and a mere 7% for the Conservative Party, a 6% fall compared to February in the latter case.

If we separate the island of Montreal from the “450 ring”, the suburbs in other words, the Liberal Party support is even more dominant, at 57%. On the other hand, the PQ matches the Liberals results in the suburbs.

The Quebec City area remains a unique phenomenon

in terms of political choices. Dead last in Montreal with 7%, the Conservative Party is leading with 34% in the capital area, compared to 24% for the PQ, 20% for the CAQ, a 10% gain, a weak 13% for the Liberals, a fall of 7%, and 9% for the CAQ.

However, the sample of people consulted is low in and around Quebec City, with 150 citizens reached, which propels the error margin to 7%. The whole survey reached 956 people.

In the other Quebec areas, including the Gaspé Penin-

sula, the PQ lead remains, but at 33%, it has lost 8%. The Liberals gained 9% to reach 22%, while the Conservatives gained 2% to reach 20%. The CAQ is still diving, down 3% at 15%, while Québec solidaire won 3% to get to 11%.

The PQ will likely win in a wide range of regional ridings in October, given that other parties will split the vote.

### Leadership swings

People’s perceptions of the leaders show that the incum-

bents’ support is submitted to some swings.

For example, PQ’s Paul Saint-Pierre-Plamondon still gets a favourable impression from 33% of Quebecers. It is more than his opponents. However, a year ago, that rate was 44%. At the other end of the spectrum, 47% of Quebecers have an unfavourable impression about him, 9% more than a year ago. His recent right-wing interventions have probably played a role in that direction.

Still relatively unknown, Charles Milliard gets a

favourable impression from 31% of Quebecers, but an unfavourable one from 32% of voters. Time will soon tell in his case.

The new premier, Christine Fréchette gets a good impression for 30% of voters, but projects a bad impression from 34% of them. A proportion of 36% are neutral for now. The short-term will also be determining here.

The next poll will likely come before the summer break. It would be interesting to get a higher sampling outside Montreal.

allows us to deliver concrete benefits for communities while continuing to build strong, long-term working relationships in Gespe'gewa'gi," adds Guy Cayouette, chief executive officer of PEC Enterprises.

MMBC holds a 51% stake in Mawitu'gw, while PEC owns the remaining 49%. The majority ownership allows the company to bid on federal contracts designated for Indigenous businesses.

"The federal government is looking to get 5% of its procurements from native sources," stresses Fred Vicaire.

### Wind energy ambitions

Mawitu'gw hopes to benefit from the agreement reached in August 2025 to develop 6,000 megawatts of wind power.

"We believe that with this vehicle, we will be able to create a win-win situation (...) You know, windfarms of 6,000 megawatts represent \$18 billion (in investment). I have not made up these numbers. It is immense. If we can participate in such projects with our partnership, it will be beneficial, not only for the new firm, but for everybody in the Gaspé Peninsula," analyzes Guy Cayouette.

The capital invested in the new firm remains modest for now. "We haven't won any contract yet. We will invest more as contracts come," he adds.

Mawitu'gw is already preparing documents for a call for tenders that could pan out in August.

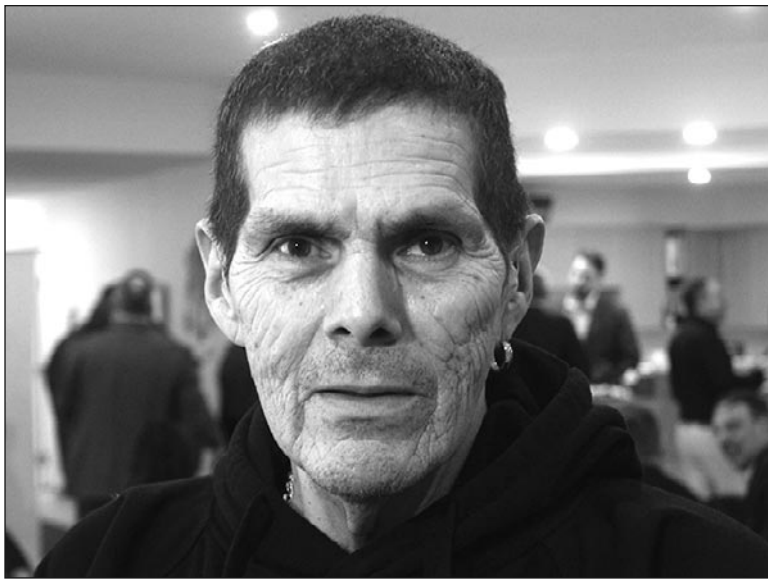


Photo: Gilles Gagné

*Benoit Martin of Gesgapegiag has worked for PEC Enterprises for seven years as a truck driver and heavy equipment operator. He believes the new partnership will create opportunities for Mi'gmaq youth to work closer to home.*

For now, the heavy machinery used for the first contracts will belong to PEC, which already owns over 100 such units of various sizes. The company operates four offices, its head office in Gaspé, as well as facilities in Bonaventure, Percé and Anticosti Island. Last year, 213 people worked for PEC at one point.

### Natives already work for PEC

Employing Mi'gmaq workers is not new for PEC. The company has carried out public works projects in Gesgapegiag since the 1970s and has regularly hired local workers.

"We currently have four workers from Gesgapegiag in our staff. At times, it reached 10 to 15 workers, during the winter (...) It was always vital for us," underlines Guy Cayouette.

Benoit Martin is one of those workers. He has been with PEC for seven years as a

truck driver and heavy equipment operator and welcomes the new partnership.

"I think it will be good for us, as Natives, because working, us and non-Natives is a good move, a positive one," says Mr. Martin.

He thinks the partnership might convince more native workers to work closer to home.

"A lot of our people work in construction, and a lot of our people work with heavy machinery. It might bring back some of these people to work here," adds Benoit Martin.

Mr. Martin has previously worked in the Quebec City region and for Gesgapegiag's public works department.

"I was approached by a gentleman working for PEC. He asked me to come and work for them. At first, I wasn't sure. At one point, I decided to give it a try and I have no regrets. I get along with everybody and I really like it," insists Mr. Martin.

Mawitu'gw means building together in Mi'gmaq.

## Shrimp quota rises 42% for 2026

*Nelson Sergerie*

GASPÉ — A 42% increase in the shrimp quota for 2026 appears significant, but in absolute terms, it represents a gain of only 1,600 tonnes compared with 2025.

The total allowable catch rises from 3,809 tonnes to 5,419 tonnes this year.

"Given the current situation, any increase is welcome. We're still a long way from the 30,000 or 35,000 tonnes that were available between 2010 and 2015," explains Patrice Element, director of the Quebec Shrimp Fishermen's Office.

In good years, between 35 and 40 Quebec shrimp fishermen would head out to sea.

Following the sharp decline between 2023 and 2024, only eight of them set sail in 2024 and 11 in 2025.

"This year, based on the information we have so far, 12 or 13 fishermen could head out to sea—so one or two more—but again, we're a long way from the good years," Mr. Element notes.

The massive increase in diesel fuel costs is very concerning.

"There are people who will have decisions to make. The cost of fuel will be a factor. It could mean we end up with fewer than 12 or 13 fishermen," Mr. Element continues.

Three main factors determine profitability: the quantity of shellfish to be caught, the price obtained, and the cost of harvesting the resource.

Last year, the average price paid to fishermen by processors was \$1.69 per pound.

Discussions began on March 27, but there is no urgency, as processors have already indicated they do not intend to buy until early May.

Rising operating costs are expected to weigh heavily on those discussions.

"The dramatic—not to say catastrophic—rise in diesel prices means the break-even point has gone up quite a bit if other factors remain the same. To be profitable, we'll need a higher price than last year," calculates Mr. Element.

"5,400 tonnes isn't much to keep two processing plants running. They'll need volume from other sources to round out their operations," the director notes.

Still, for the Gaspé Association of Owner-Captains, this increase is an encouraging sign.

"We're lucky to see the beginning of a recovery. We won't return to what it was three or four years ago, let alone 10 or 15 years ago. But at least, with this trend, we'll be able to help preserve jobs in the processing plants, consolidate jobs around the Rivière-au-Renard industrial zone, and maintain the expertise in trawl repair and manufacturing that is unique to Quebec. It's good news under the circumstances," comments the association's director, Claudio Bernatchez.

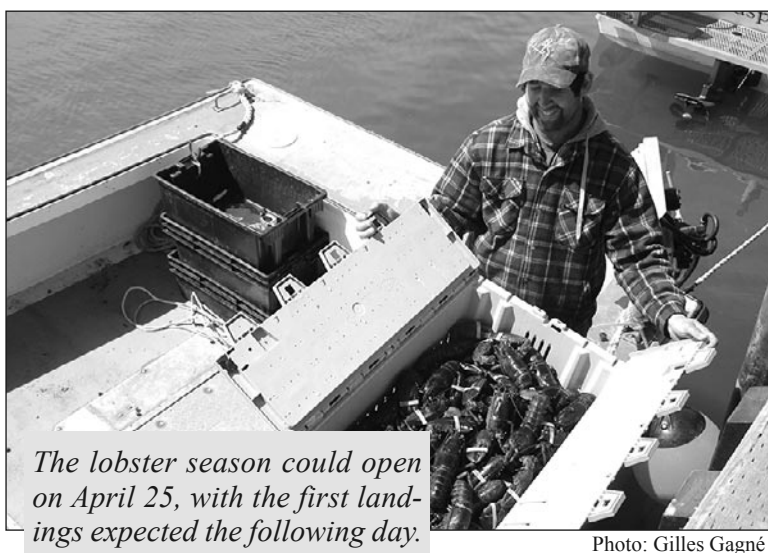
## Lobster season outlook relatively favourable

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON — As the SPEC was reaching its deadline, there was still some uncertainty regarding the start of the lobster fishing season in the Gaspé Peninsula, although, April 25 appears to be a strong possibility.

Beyond the opening date, several indicators for 2026 are favourable for the industry. One concern, however, is ongoing economic uncertainty linked to tensions between the United States and Iran, which continue to fuel inflation.

Bill Sheehan, vice-president of E. Gagnon et Fils, the biggest lobster buyer in the Gaspé Peninsula, notes that the exchange rate is once



*The lobster season could open on April 25, with the first landings expected the following day.*

Photo: Gilles Gagné

again working in favour of exporters.

"When the price of oil rises in American dollars, that dollar rises relative to ours. This is advantageous for exports. We're having good years. Like

last year, we are getting between 35% to 40% on our exports," he comments.

For now, Mr. Sheehan expects relatively good market conditions at the start of the season, partly due to low in-

ventories of frozen lobster.

"Lobster market conditions are volatile in the sense that it can adjust daily, and the price (paid to the fishermen) is determined every Monday, based on the average of the previous week," points out Mr. Sheehan.

In 2025, the first base price obtained by the fishermen following the first week of catches was \$7 per pound, compared to \$8 in 2024. The fishermen were not happy about the first base price last year. However, the season's average reached \$7.72 per pound in the Gaspé Peninsula last year.

Overall, the region surpassed the Magdalen Islands in both volume and value for

the first time in 2025, thanks to total landing revenues of \$132 million and catches of 7,726 metric tonnes, compared to catches of 7,147 tonnes and revenues of \$122 million in the archipelago.

The lobster sector generated landing revenues of \$299 million in Quebec last year, which is 60% of all the commercial fisheries' revenues of \$498 million. The North Shore, a region delivering low volumes of lobster just 10 years ago, contributed \$55 million to Quebec total in 2025.

In both value and volume, lobster has led Quebec's commercial fisheries over the past six years, surpassing snow crab.

# CSN-affiliated employees at LM Wind Power accept tentative agreement

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – After rejecting an initial tentative agreement on March 29, some 265 workers from the LM Wind Power-CSN Workers' Union in Gaspé voted 70% in favour of an agreement with the employer on April 11.

According to the union, the new five-year collective agreement, retroactive to January 1, will provide a 9% increase in the first year, for a total of 21% over the term of the agreement.

An inflation protection clause is included for the final two years.

Among other gains secured, the CSN notes that pension fund contributions will triple over the term of the collective agreement; there will be more hours of union leave paid by the employer; increased flexibility regarding



Photo: N. Sergerie

Workers who voted at the general meeting on April 11.

vacation pay; and the end of mandatory overtime.

On March 29, roughly 200 unionized workers rejected the tentative agreement by a 52% margin; the agreement would have raised the average wage to \$30.67 by the end of the

five-year term.

Production has gradually slowed over time, with only a single eight hour shift currently active, whereas in the recent past the plant operated with two 12-hour shifts.

About 400 workers are cur-

rently involved in manufacturing wind turbine blades for the U.S. market.

In February, union members had adopted pressure tactics in an attempt to renew their six-year collective bargaining agreement, which ex-

pired in December.

In January, the blade factory saw approximately 140 experienced Filipino workers at the plant face the threat of deportation in 2026 and 2027, due to new, stricter federal rules that are constantly tightening.

The new requirement imposed on companies to retain their temporary foreign workers involved high wage thresholds.

This threshold, which determines eligibility for the high-wage category, had already been raised by 20% in 2024 and was set at nearly \$35 per hour in June 2025.

At that time, the union stated that it had asked LM Wind Power to increase wages and benefits to \$35 per hour in the next collective agreement. The CSN indicated that its members were earning \$28 per hour at that time.

## Côte-de-Gaspé could gain two additional midwives by 2026

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Two additional midwives could be added to the Côte-de-Gaspé region in 2026, strengthening local services amid ongoing resource shortages.

“One has already signed a contract and will arrive in October, and we’re working with another who is possibly making arrangements to come here. We would effectively have three midwives in the long run,” notes the group’s spokesperson, Nastassia Williams.

Years of recruitment efforts are beginning to show results, thanks in part to a new development.

“I think the community birth centre project we’re developing is attractive to midwives because it involves a development aspect and a



Photo: G. Gagné

Nastassia Williams.

community initiative; I believe that motivates midwives to join us,” says Ms. Williams.

The midwives are affiliated with the Gaspésie CISSS and previously worked in the peri-

natal unit at the Maison de la famille Parenfant in Gaspé and with the Family Medicine Group at the Pavillon Cantin in Gaspé.

“Deliveries were taking place at the hospital, given that it takes two healthcare professionals to ensure a safe home birth,” explains the spokesperson.

One cares for the mother and the other for the baby.

“Once there are two of them practicing, they’ll be able to offer the option of home birth within a safe radius of the hospital. If they’re an hour away from the hospital, those aren’t necessarily safe conditions,” Ms. Williams continues.

Once the birthing suite is in place, expectant parents will have three options: giving birth at home, at the hospital, or at Maison de la famille Parenfant. Midwives complete four years

of training before being licensed to practice.

“We’ll have the same choices as families in Quebec City or Montreal. We’re really lucky because the project is supported by many professionals, the CISSS, and the community, and it will allow us to have this birthing suite in a unique model that meets our needs, but also to support people who live farther away and spend part of their labour outside the hospital,” says Ms. Williams.

The Midwife Access Committee has been active for 13 years, with the birthing suite project first launched in 2020.

“This fits into a context where we face challenges with shortages in obstetrics and staffing, but within the community, we firmly believe that midwives will be an asset,” says the spokesperson.

“But challenges remain. One contract has been signed, and the midwifery service is working on another contract, and we’ll need to find housing for them. It’s not easy to find housing. One of the interested midwives has a child and needs childcare. We’re counting on the magic of the community to find housing and childcare to ensure she’s welcomed and has good working conditions,” she notes.

One of the candidates is hoping to relocate in July, at the height of the tourist season.

“If anyone has suitable housing within a reasonable distance from the hospital, please don’t hesitate to contact us at the Midwife Access Service,” says Ms. Williams.

She notes that these challenges reflect broader issues faced by newcomers looking to settle in the region.

### CALL FOR TENDERS

The St. Andrews United Church Cemetery Committee is currently accepting bids on a contract to cut and trim grass on church properties.

Duties and responsibilities of the lawn maintenance contract include mowing/trimming the grass at the New Richmond and Black Cape cemeteries, and mowing/trimming the grass at the United Church Manse (210 Blvd Perron Ouest, New Richmond, Quebec).

Other responsibilities include removing debris and garbage from the cemetery grounds - to be done in the spring as early as possible - and levelling gravesites and grounds as needed. Topsoil and grass seed will be provided. Both clean up and grounds maintenance are to be billed separately from the lawn care contract.

Please submit your bid in writing/email to: St. Andrew’s United Church - 211 Perron Blvd. West, New Richmond, Quebec, G0C 2B0 - Email: st.andrewsuc@telus.net - Deadline for submission: Thursday, May 7, 2026.

# VIA Rail executives in the Gaspé Peninsula in May

NELSON SERGERIE

CARLETON-SUR-MER – As promised during their appearance before the Federal Standing Transport Committee in March, VIA Rail executives will be in the Gaspé Peninsula from May 4 to 6 to assess the state of the infrastructure.

“We’re extremely pleased, especially since we had a bad experience with the former president (Mario Péroquin). Five meetings and potential visits were announced, but they never materialized,” notes Micheline Saint-Onge, spokesperson for the Coalition for the Return of a Passenger Train Service to the Gaspé Peninsula.

“I’m satisfied and happy about this. This is what we



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

*The intermodal station could one day be used to accommodate passenger trains, something it hasn't seen since its construction in 2012, except for the Amiral tourist train in 2013 and 2014.*

agreed upon in March when interim CEO (chief executive officer) Mathieu Paquette appeared before the transportation committee. It’s important

that VIA Rail be able to gauge the situation on the ground and engage in dialogue,” says Alexis Deschênes, the Bloc Québécois Member of Parlia-

ment (MP) for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj.

“This is an extremely interesting first meeting, and we’re working together to bring the train back as quickly as possible,” notes the coalition’s spokesperson.

Before seeing the first train run between Matapédia and New Carlisle or Port-Daniel-Gascons, VIA Rail wants to assess the condition of the stations that will be used when service resumes and, in particular, negotiate a right-of-way with the government of Quebec for track use.

If one of the scenarios discussed involves separating the Chaleur train from the Océan train, with a departure from Quebec City, it will also be necessary to coordinate with

Canadian National (CN) to allow the train to run between Quebec City and Matapédia, since that section of track belongs to them.

“We no longer need to convince them to come back. It remains to be seen how we can work together to bring the train back as quickly as possible. The ultimate goal is to return to Gaspé, both for them and for us,” says Ms. Saint-Onge.

Regarding the priority given to freight trains, the MP notes that the issue may require further consideration.

“There could be a debate and a legislative change one day. We might decide that it’s not good public policy. But for now, it’s one of the things VIA Rail has to negotiate,” Mr. Deschênes says.

## Two public meetings planned on return of train to Chandler and Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE

MARIA – After holding a series of meetings last spring in the Bay of Chaleur, the Coalition for the Return of a Passenger Train to the Gaspé Peninsula is hitting the road again, with Chandler and Gaspé set to host the final stops on its regional tour this spring.

“It had been in the works since last year. By the time the meetings in Bay of Chaleur wrapped up, it was early spring and it was harder to organize. Afterward, we worked hard to mobilize support and put pressure on VIA Rail,” recalls the coalition’s spokesperson, Micheline Saint-Onge.

The coalition now has two representatives in these areas, and the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC Chamber of Commerce is helping with the organization.

The meetings focus on the history of passenger rail service in the Gaspé Peninsula, the roles of the various stakeholders involved and recent developments in the file.

The coalition says the meetings are being held with a major goal in mind.

“I’ll be there to listen to the specific needs regarding the return of the train to the Gaspé Peninsula,” says Ms. Saint-Onge.

The first meeting was held in Chandler on April 19, and the second is scheduled for



Photo: Archives

Spokesperson Micheline Saint-Onge.

May 3 at the Gaspé Intermodal Station.

“Now that VIA Rail has decided to return, we’ll put more pressure on the Quebec government. VIA Rail wants the train to run all the way to Gaspé. We will continue to mobilize people across the country, if necessary, to make it clear that the Gaspé Peninsula wants the passenger train back to Gaspé,” continues Ms. Saint-Onge.

The coalition would also like to see Ottawa cough up financial support, provided the Quebec government makes the request.

“It is absolutely essential that the Quebec government ask the federal government to collaborate instead of spending its time saying it’s too expen-

sive. Right now, about 60% of the route has been repaired. There’s about 30% left to go to reach Gaspé. Money has already been invested east of Port-Daniel-Gascons. We can’t leave it like this,” demands the spokesperson, who argues that the federal government has already invested elsewhere in Canada for railway repairs.

During its appearance before the Transport Committee in Ottawa on March 11, VIA indicated its intention to partially resume service in the Gaspé Peninsula—specifically to New Carlisle or Port-Daniel-Gascons—as soon as possible.

**TIME AND DATE:** Sunday, May 3, 2026, at 1 p.m. at the Gaspé Intermodal Station, 8 Rue de la Marina, Gaspé.

## Gino Cyr denies rumours of provincial candidacy

Nelson Sergerie

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE – The mayor of Grande-Rivière and executive director of GÎMXPORIT says he will not be a candidate for the Quebec Liberal Party in the provincial election next October, putting an end to recent speculation.

“I have not been approached, and I want to reassure people that I will not be a candidate in the upcoming provincial election, regardless of the party,” Gino Cyr states without hesitation.

He cites two main reasons for his decision.

“This is a year of austerity, and the fact that the two ridings are being merged, which makes no sense in terms of representation. It’s not the best context to be a candidate. I want to reassure people, my constituents—I will not be a candidate in the upcoming provincial election,” he insists.

Mr. Cyr says he enjoys serving as mayor, noting it allows him to remain close to residents while maintaining his professional network through his role at GÎMXPORIT.

However, he does not completely rule out a future run for higher office.

“If I ever intend to run, it won’t be in 2026,” says Mr. Cyr.

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# CAQ Leadership Race: Gaspé mayor laments slow progress on projects

**NELSON SERGERIE**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

**GASPÉ** – Since Premier François Legault announced earlier this year his intention to step down as leader of the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), government operations have slowed to a crawl, delaying progress on key issues, says Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté.

Daniel Côté made these remarks during the April 7 town council meeting.

“This period of uncertainty or ambiguity regarding the government’s leadership can sometimes be difficult. Take public transit funding, for example. We’ve raised this at the political level. We’re told: give us information. But we don’t know what the program will entail. Will there be additional funding? We’ll have to wait for the next premier,” the mayor of Gaspé explains.

The mayor, who also serves as president of the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Intermunicipal Transportation Authority, refers to discussions aimed at reversing a \$300,000 retroactive subsidy cut effective in 2025, which is threatening the future of the service.

The mayor is seeking explanations, noting that Transport Minister Jonatan Julien has stated there were no cuts to the program.

“I even feel that the Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and the ministers lack



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

*Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté.*

a captain at the helm of the ship. That makes things difficult,” the mayor continues.

Party members chose Christine Fréchette as the new CAQ leader on April 12, ahead of Bernard Drainville. She then became premier of Quebec.

“Power had been heavily concentrated in the premier’s hands, and ministers are waiting for a signal from above to act and to have a clear direction. In recent months, there didn’t seem to be a clear direction. We saw that with the rail issue and public transit,” says Mr. Côté.

He hopes the new leader will provide clear direction to ministers in the coming weeks.

“We need that kind of leadership, and this uncertainty is unsettling for our regional issues,” he says.

With the legislative session set to end in mid-June, the mayor remains hopeful clearer

directions will emerge.

## Support for the Community

The town council adopted a resolution supporting the demands of the community sector, which is calling for increased funding to better compensate staff and maintain services.

The Regroupement des organismes communautaires Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine recently reported that between 2021 and 2024, needs increased by 230% while funding rose by only 50%.

“We went to meet with community organizations during their walkout. We recognize the importance of community organizations in our towns and villages, especially for the most vulnerable populations. The services they provide are more cost-effective than if the government were to provide them through its own structures. We must support this mission,” says the mayor. Mr. Côté acknowledges that the Quebec government has increased funding in recent years.

“Has it been increased enough to meet the needs? It seems not, according to community organizations,” the mayor notes.

## First step for the Robin building

A mandate has been given

to an architectural firm, Atelier Balsa in Gaspé, to carry out a building assessment and explore future uses and design options for the Robin building in Rivière-au-Renard. The contract is valued at \$96,630.

“It is a building of great heritage value on Rue du Banc. We don’t have a precise construction date, but we’re talking about the 1840s or 1860s for its central core. Over time, the building has lost some of its original character,” notes Mr. Côté.

Vinyl siding currently covers the building, detracting from its original architecture.

“What can we do with this building? Is it structurally sound? We think so. What pur-

pose should we give it? There is demand from local organizations. There is potential for restoration. The equipment is still inside. There is the immersive multimedia project already housed there, and we need to improve access to it,” the mayor suggests.

The building’s historical significance could also play a role in its future.

“It potentially has a historical value quite similar to other buildings preserved in the Gaspé Peninsula. I’m thinking of the Paspébiac Fishing Wharf. It’s the kind of building with strong historical resonance, but it has lost its luster. We want to restore its charm,” maintains the mayor.

## Strike mandate adopted at Manoir Saint-Augustin in Gaspé

*Nelson Sergerie*

**GASPÉ** – Employees at Manoir Saint-Augustin in Gaspé, represented by the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), have voted 95% in favour of a strike mandate to be exercised at a time deemed appropriate.

The vote follows several rounds of negotiations, during which financial offers were deemed insufficient in the current inflationary context.

According to union president Sophie Laprise, talks have stalled over a proposed wage increase of \$2.05 per hour spread over five years, as well as the employer’s refusal to pay overtime after regular working hours.

Many employees, who earn little more than minimum wage, are denouncing the employer’s proposals.

The employer is maintaining its position and has requested conciliation.

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# Percé opposes new electoral map

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ – Even though the debate has reached the Supreme Court, the Town of Percé adopted a resolution on April 7 denouncing the new electoral map, which calls for the merger of the ridings of Gaspé and Bonaventure.

“We’re late to the game, but the Supreme Court of Canada hasn’t ruled yet. We stand with the organizations and municipalities that see it as impossible for a single Member of National Assembly to cover this vast territory, and that it also diminishes the representation of Gaspé residents,” says Mayor Daniel Leboeuf.

The Supreme Court of Canada is scheduled to hear the appeal filed by the Quebec government on April 22.

In May 2022, the Parliament passed a law protecting the Gaspé and Bonaventure ridings from the Electoral Representation Commission’s decision to merge Gaspé and Bonaventure to form Gaspé-Bonaventure.

Elected officials from the

Laurentians and Centre-du-Québec, among others, challenged the law in Superior Court, arguing it had a negative impact on their respective regions.

The Superior Court rejected their request to invalidate the law, but the Court of Appeal ruled in their favour.

## Business Hours

Since the village centre is considered a tourist zone, the Town of Percé has renewed its request to extend business hours beyond what is provided for by law.

“It’s a formality. There is a law that limits business hours. But certain tourist zones can request an exemption. We have to do this every five years,” notes the mayor, who learned in the process of the need to adopt a resolution to maintain this privilege.

## Assistance for two community centres

The Town will submit two renovation projects for the Val-d’Espoir and L’Oasis

community centres in the heart of Percé under the Financial Assistance Program for Recreational, Sports, and Outdoor Infrastructure.

Both centres require significant investments in roofing and insulation.

The decision to use this program may seem surprising, but the mayor has his reasons.

“L’Oasis has a gym, and Val-d’Espoir has a large common room. If we could make improvements to the community facilities, we’d kill two birds with one stone. We’re taking a chance,” says the mayor.

## Assistance to modernize septic systems

Percé intends to apply for the Individual Wastewater Treatment Unit Program (PUIT), a program for municipalities with fewer than 6,500 residents designed to help homeowners upgrade their septic tanks and leach fields.

The program provides \$5,500 in assistance per unit, and the Town will add addi-

tional support.

“The Town Council has agreed to supplement this with an interest-free loan of \$5,000, repayable over five years through the municipal tax bill. This will give middle and low-income families a little boost to bring their systems up to code,” explains the mayor.

To qualify for the program, Percé must identify 25 households willing to undertake major renovations.

## Drought

Since last June, a drought has affected the Gaspé Peninsula, and several residents of Percé have run out of water in their wells.

“We’re keeping a close eye on the situation. There’s more snow this winter than last winter. We’re keeping our fingers crossed. We’re hoping for better water retention. We’ll implement measures to supply households that are running low,” says the mayor.

A conference will be held in Gaspé in May on the progress of Université du



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

## Percé Mayor Daniel Leboeuf.

Québec à Rimouski (UQAR) researchers’ work on the state of the groundwater table in the region.

The Town provided a temporary water source in L’Anse-à-Beaufils and at the municipal garage last summer.

“We might add a few more, particularly at fire stations, to see if it’s feasible. That could help residents in a pinch. We’re looking into these possibilities and keeping an eye on the weather,” the mayor adds.

# Méganne Perry Mélançon denies rumours about candidacy

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ — Former Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Gaspé, Méganne Perry Mélançon, says she intends to run for the Parti Québécois (PQ) in the October 5 election, dismissing rumours suggesting otherwise.

Speculation had been circulating that the current PQ spokesperson might not seek nomination.

“I’m surprised to hear that. If it had reached my ears, I would have put a stop to it long ago. But I’m happy to say that’s not the case. My intention remains the same,” the PQ member replies bluntly.

Ms. Perry Mélançon has maintained that position since her defeat in 2022 to Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix, who won 41.4% of the vote compared with 37.5% for the incumbent.

“It’s always a bit of a hassle because I currently hold a national role, and perhaps people are confused. But my intention is to return home, with both feet firmly in the riding, and pick up where we left off in 2022. I can’t make any official announcements, but the inten-



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

tion has always been there, and I want to reiterate that,” she says.

## Gaspé or Gaspé-Bonaventure

The question of which riding she will contest remains unresolved, as the debate over electoral boundaries is now before the Supreme Court. A hearing is scheduled for April 22 regarding the 2024 law that maintained two ridings in the Gaspé Peninsula.

At the same time, discussions continue among political parties to preserve both Gaspé ridings.

Asked whether she would

run in a merged Gaspé-Bonaventure riding or in Gaspé should the current map be maintained, Ms. Perry Mélançon said no decision has been made.

“I don’t want to get too far ahead of myself. I haven’t made a decision yet because it’s a bit premature. I wonder why Québec solidaire has already announced a candidate for Gaspé-Bonaventure when there are still discussions in the National Assembly on an issue so important to the Gaspé Peninsula. I don’t want to send a contradictory message. I can already tell you that the intention is there for Gaspé, and I’m interested in a merged riding, but I think we can keep our two ridings,” she replies.

The uncertainty surrounding her candidacy is also tied to Parti Québécois rules, which do not allow an employee to run for nomination.

Once a nomination is officially announced, Ms. Perry Mélançon will have to step down from her role as spokesperson.

The nomination meeting for Gaspé is expected to take place before the end of the parliamentary session, which is scheduled to conclude on June

# The Regroupement of the MRC remains vigilant

Nelson Sergerie

CARLETON-SUR-MER – The Regroupement of the MRCs of the Gaspésie will keep a close monitor of the legal debate surrounding Quebec’s electoral map, which is scheduled to be heard on April 22 before the Supreme Court.

The Electoral Representation Commission had proposed eliminating one riding in the Gaspé Peninsula and one in Montreal to create new ridings in the Laurentians and Centre-du-Québec regions.

In May 2024, the Government of Quebec blocked the proposal by passing legislation to preserve the two ridings in the Gaspé Peninsula. However, that decision was challenged by elected officials from the Laurentians and Centre-du-Québec.

The law was initially upheld by the Superior Court, but later overturned by the Quebec Court of Appeal. The provincial government subsequently brought the case before the Supreme Court prior to the Christmas holiday break.

The coalition continues to stand firm in its position: maintaining two ridings in the Gaspé Peninsula. “We will closely monitor the Supreme Court’s guidance, and there will also be a cabinet reshuffle in Quebec City at the same time. We’ll see, step by step, what the Supreme Court’s position is regarding whether it will hear the case and which minister will be responsible for this issue in Quebec City,” comments President Mathieu Lapointe. Despite the uncertainty, the elected official remains confident. “This will be the region’s top priority over the next two weeks,” he notes.

While there appears to be political support across several parties—including the Coalition Avenir Québec, Quebec’s Liberal Party, Parti Québécois, and Québec Solidaire—to adopt legislation if needed to preserve the two ridings, recent comments by Éric Duhaime, leader of the Conservative Party of Quebec, suggest he views the matter as a legal rather than political issue.

That position does not weaken the coalition’s resolve. “No, because we really feel the political support. We believe we can rally everyone. Maité [Blanchette Vézina, now the Conservative MNA for Rimouski and former minister responsible for the Gaspé Peninsula] has often, openly, and strongly positioned herself in favour of defending the regions. I expect the Conservative Party to support our request,” concludes Mr. Lapointe.

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## 1999, another painful year

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – Our regular readers noted in the last supplement that 1998 was a violent year, marked by murders, including two unresolved cases, and a murder trial. Truth be told, 1999 was far from quiet, with several tragedies and two major industrial closures.

**Vol 25. No 1  
January 10, 1999**

- Issue 1, dated January 10 headlines with “Our region, our future: study shows Anglos find jobs”, as 70% of the participants have found employment since 1994. St. Jules’ “Guy Sexton a ‘Caring Canadian’” and “1998, a turbulent year” also make headlines. “Escuminac: \$1.5M to be invested in sugar bush” and “VIA cuts phone access to stations” are other page 1 titles. Inside, Ken Annett resumes his historical features.

**Vol 25. No 2  
January 17, 1999**

- Issue 2, dated January 17 headlines with “Murdochville: Extent of acid spill not known until spring”, Chef “Desmond Ogden: feeding the soul as well as the body” and “Chandler: 1,500 demonstrators tell Abitibi to save jobs” at the Gaspesia mill. “Brenda “Gedeon-Miller enjoys top post at AFN” (Assembly of First Nations), “School program aims to reduce drug use” and “Gaspé: used English books for sale” also appear on page 1.

**Vol 25. No 3  
January 24, 1999**

- Issue 3, dated January 24, headlines with “Canadian Tire: Purchase option made in Paspebiac”, “Percé: Tourism Office wants general tax for development” and “Great white delight”, showing kids gliding on the snow. Inside, “Port Daniel arena a total loss”, due to the January 15 fire, and “Murdochville: about 20% of acid mopped up, cause of leak not yet determined” make other page 1 titles.



St. Jules boasts an active youth choir. The town is one of the few in the area which is growing.

**Vol 25. No 4  
January 31, 1999**

- “Gaspesia: Cédric may become majority shareholder – battle over cutting rights” and “EI protest: Demo planned on Feb. 13 - \$74 million cut from Gaspé economy” headline issue 4, dated January 31. Inside, “Newport: (Douglas) Hunt to help with dev’t initiatives” makes page 3.

**Vol 25. No 5  
February 7, 1999**

- “St. Jules celebrates 50 years” and “Murdochville fighting for its very survival – Economic diversity plan being implemented” headline issue 5, dated February 7. The latter article covers the phasing down of mining activities for later in 1999. About 300 of Mines Gaspé’s 600 workers will be laid off. The smelter will remain in operation.

**Vol 25. No 6  
February 14, 1999**

- Issue 6, released on February 14, headlines with “Health care: Regional access plan finally approved by Cabinet”, “EI Crisis: busing available to February 13 demo in New Richmond” and “Wakeham-York: Carnival raises \$2,500”.

**Vol 25. No 7  
February 21, 1999**

- Issue 7, dated February 21, features “Employment insurance: (minister Pierre) Pettigrew rejects protest postcards”,

“Gaspesia: Petition launched to save paper machine, jobs” and “Gaspé Legion elects first female President”, namely Shirley Morin, as headlines. Inside, readers see “Gesgapegiag: Framework agreement signed” with Quebec government regarding economic development and “Murdochville: Fire consumes commercial building”.

**Vol 25. No 8  
February 28, 1999**

- Issue 8, dated February 28, headlines with “Biggest poachers’ bust in Quebec history” and “Port Daniel: Biolyse Pharma moves to Ontario – 100 potential jobs gone west”. Claude Mercure, whose firm extracts paclitaxel from small yew trees, says Ontario offers more funding. Inside, “Lis-tuguj: Band files injunction against natives” loggers.

**Vol 25. No 9  
March 7, 1999**

- “Régie working with hospi-

tals to cut debtload”, “Port Daniel: Langlois’ disappearance likely a murder: police” and “Gaspé Boys Triumph”, at a provincial basketball tournament headline issue 9, dated March 7. “Langlois” is Will Langlois, who accompanied Rodrigue Boudreau, who pleaded guilty in November 1998 of arson causing the December 25, 1996 death of Daniel Langlois. “Will” had witnessed Boudreau’s acts and testified in the preliminary hearing, held shortly before his February 5, 1998 disappearance. Police arrested three people for the murder of Will, but they were released due to insufficient evidence. His body was never found.

**Vol 25. No 10  
March 14, 1999**

- Issue 10, dated March 14, headlines with “Buses cancelled, Route 132 closed as snowstorm rages”, “EI Coalition: ‘Outlook is not rosy’, says CSN” and Gaspé’s Ross “Bechervaise wins national award from Big Brothers”. Inside, “CASA reopens Gaspé office” after a request from the locals.

**Vol 25. No 11  
March 21, 1999**

- Issue 11, dated March 21, headlines with “Hospitals accused of harassment” towards the employees, “Cod ban won’t be lifted for years – ‘Retrain’, fishermen advised” and “Two die in St. Pat’s Day storm”. Smaller titles, “Six million for Gaspé tourism”, Ronald “Jacques trial outcome April 20”, (for sexual assault), “Eastern Shores: Still no deci-

sion on budget help” and “CSN wants to unionize truckers” also make the front-page.

**Vol 25. No 12  
March 28, 1999**

- Issue 12, dated March 28, headlines with “Ambulances: Action plan aims to cut delays”, “Grand Cascapedia: Users want integrated management of forest cuts – ‘we want to prevent another Lake Branch situation’” and “Chandler: Concert wows crowd at polyvalent”. The Lake Branch issue refers to clear cuts that had an impact on the sedimentation of two salmon rivers. Inside, Andy “Patterson creates Sunny Bank website”, where the teacher documents 230 years of English presence.

**Vol 25. No 13  
April 4, 1999**

- Issue 13, dated April 4, headlines with “Paspebiac: Canadian Tire to build a \$5M. store”, “Statistical study shows Anglo population stable” and “Over 300 attend BPS variety show”. Inside “Gesgapegiag: (Amanda) Larocque off to Miss Indian World Pageant”, in New Mexico between April 21-24.

**Vol 25. No 14  
April 11, 1999**

- “Gaspesia: Wood to be processed far from Chandler”, “Grand Cascapedia: Coalition asks for logging moratorium – Cédric refuses to make more ‘concessions’” and “Little lambs, who made thee?” headline issue 14, dated April 11. The lambs live on Dennis Ross’ farm in Shigawake. Cédric finds itself entangled in two controversies. The company projects a partnership to co-own the Gaspesia mill with Abitibi-Consolidated, but plans to process the mill public wood supply outside the Gaspé Peninsula. As for Grand Cascapedia, Cédric still wants to cut wood near the Lake Branch, despite the sedimentation of past years.



Jessica Synnott was crowned Queen at the annual Wakeham-York Winter Carnival. The carnival was held from January 29 to February 8.

From Page 13

**Vol 25. No 15**  
**April 18, 1999**

- “Congratulations, Provincial Champs” regarding the Bonavignon Zone Bantam CC winning a provincial tournament in Rivière-du-Loup, and “Complaints against (New Richmond mayor Jean-Marie) Jobin founded, says Ministry” of Municipal Affairs headline issue 15, dated April 18. An audit found that Mr. Jobin committed infractions worth approximately \$100,000.

**Vol 25. No 16**  
**April 25, 1999**

- Issue 16, dated April 25, headlines with “Eastern Shores: Cost-cutting measures to be decided Saturday” and “Cause of crash still unknown”, the crash having killed four people near Gaspé airport. “Listuguj Chief found not guilty” of sexual assault, “CASA, (Lynden) Bechervaise leave Alliance Quebec” and “Municipalities send message to Quebec” make smaller page 1 titles. Lynden Bechervaise explains that CASA’s calmer approach towards obtaining better English services have fallen on deaf ears. Inside, “Gaspesia: Cédrico boss wants to cut wages” make page 2, and “Bears triumph at provincial level!”, the Midget CC team from Forillon, makes page 3. Kathleen Casey-Campbell wins New Richmond’s Personality of the year award.

**Vol 25. No 17**  
**May 2, 1999**

- Issue 17, published May 2, headlines with “New Richmond parents furious”, because of Eastern Shores School Board’s decision to send secondary I and II students to New Carlisle for 1999-2000 to cut costs. “Forestry inventory over-estimated – Sawmills will have to cut back”, “Caisse pops lose ground in 1998”, and “Retired pilot questions safety of Gaspé airport” make smaller page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 18**  
**May 9, 1999**

- Issue 18, dated May 9,

headlines with “Eastern Shores: Council agrees to status quo at NRHS”, thus rescinding the previous week’s decision, and “Cousteau Society finds Hortus project ‘fantastic’”, Hortus being a marine garden based around New Richmond. “Costly Vancouver trips for local boy”, Vincent Denis of Paspébiac who suffers from cerebral palsy, “Gaspé: Temporary closure of airport canned”, due to reconstruction work, and “Gaspé invaded by 640 Judo enthusiasts” also make page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 19**  
**May 16, 1999**

- “Surgicure: Absence of promoter leaves creditors wondering...”, “Unemployment rate change means less benefits” and “Is this really May 7?!” headline issue 19, dated May 16. May 1999 was marked by unusual weather, like 30 degrees on May 3, but then 10 centimetres of snow on May 11. The title goes with a picture of women suntanning at Haldimand. Surgicure was a New York company that had promised to create 100 jobs in Gaspé through fabricating surgical tools. As for the unemployment rate, it has gone from 25.7% to 21.3% between April 1998 and 1999, despite a slump.

**Vol 25. No 20**  
**May 23, 1999**

- Issue 20, dated May 23, headlines with “Expansion joint causes second spill” of sulfuric acid in Murdochville, “Half-way house project rejected by 87% of St. Godefroi voters” and “Public speaking contest impressive” at Shigawake Port-Daniel School. “Federal Liberals make no promises”, “Canada Day: April Wine to perform in Gaspé” and “Gaspé wants \$1.5 million for roads” complete page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 21**  
**May 30, 1999**

- Issue 21, released on May 30, headlines with “Coalition demonstrates outside Ministry - Conciliator named by government to find solution” and “Bonaventure: Drowning victim’s body found May 21”. The demonstration held in Caplan pertains to the wood vol-



**Congratulations, Provincial Champs!**  
The Bonavignon Zone’s Bantam CCs came home victorious from last weekend’s provincial championship in Rivière du Loup.

ume allocated near the Lake and Salmon branches, two tributaries of the Cascapedia River. “Relief worker (Robin Boney) wants to return to Kosovo”, “Gespeg will negotiate self-government” and “Senior (Maria’s Albert Leblanc, 75) heads off to 2000 Games – by bike” complete page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 22**  
**June 6, 1999**

- “Denis Albert accused of second-degree murder” and “Profile: Richard Adams – Famous guide starts 77th season on the Matapedia” fill most of the front-page of issue 22, dated June 6. Richard Adams, aged 88, started guiding at 11. Newport’s Denis Albert, 36, is charged with the non-premeditated slaying of his former girlfriend Michelle Blais, 35, of Pabos. “Malbaie: Plans underway for celebration in 2001” also makes page 1. Inside, Cynthia Dow reports on Eagle Feather, the band of Michael Jerome and J. Hubert Francis, as well as Listuguj’s Manny Metallic, who releases a New Testament version in Mi’gmaq.

**Vol 25. No 23**  
**June 13, 1999**

- “Couple drowns during boating mishap” on the Cascapedia River, and “Groupe Cédrico pulls out of Gaspesia deal” make the headlines of issue 23, dated June 13. Faye Coull and James Barney were going down the river when their boat hit a tree. As for Cédrico, president Gilles Bérubé blames his decision on the workers’ refusal to take a 10% pay cut. Union president Denis Luce replies that the workers were ready to trade the cut for

shares in the company.

**Vol 25. No 24**  
**June 20, 1999**

- Issue 24, dated June 20, headlines with “Gaspesia mill to be closed June 20”, for an undetermined amount of time, “Tourism dev’t fund increased to \$7.6 million” and “Trash and Treasures!”, as NRHS students found little treasures while beach-cleaning. “Interest in fishery courses up”, Bill “Sams, at age 72, takes on challenge”, cycling from Montreal to Gaspé, and “AQ to seek members across Quebec”, complete page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 25**  
**June 27, 1999**

- Issue 25, dated June 27, headlines with “Gaspesia closure threatens railway”, “\$4.2 million re-injected into regional health system” and “82nd Anti-Tank vets hold reunion” in New Carlisle, an event organized by SPEC’s Legion correspondent Dave Doherty, that brought in 34 veterans and 43 wives.

**Vol 25. No 26**  
**July 4, 1999**

- “Nurses’ strike: Many operations delayed at Hôtel-Dieu”, car “Rally to be held this weekend” and “Escuminac’s class of 99” headline issue 26, dated July 4. “Maria: Scanner goal to be met soon”, “Normandeu solves smelt problem” in Escuminac and “Goldbloom files his last Official Languages report” make smaller page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 27**  
**July 11, 1999**

- Issue 27, dated July 11, headlines with “Cross Point: Two dead after police chase through (Listuguj) reserve” and “Mediator’s report: concerns founded” about further logging around Salmon and Lake branches, two tributaries of the Cascapedia River. The youths who lost their lives are Allen Metallic, 28, and Nadia Lagacé, 21. She was from Matapedia. Her car was struck head-on by Allen Metallic’s vehicle. Gaspé’s “Treatment centre helps clean up Bay” and “Judge keeps murder suspect (Denis Albert) behind bars” make smaller page 1 titles. Inside, readers see “Discouraged Gaspesia workers leave the Coast”.

**Vol 25. No 28**  
**July 18, 1999**

- Issue 28, dated July 18, headlines with “Matapedia: Quebec moves to confiscate private waters – Camp employees could lose jobs”, “Murdochville: Blast causes rockfall at Mines Gaspé” and “What’s so funny, Leonard” Hayes, who releases his book, “Listen to this one, me son”. “Early salmon catches up”, “Martin Parisé: meeting Shania (Twain) is a dream come true” and “CBC reporter not expected until fall” complete page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 29**  
**July 25, 1999**

- “Regional dairy pleads for support”, “Coalition accepts Cédrico’s amended logging plan” and John Landry, “Singer with Gaspé roots tops Hit Parade” headline issue 29, dated July 25. The Carleton dairy is selling for 64% of its breakeven point and needs to reach it soon. As for the Lake and Salmon branches, Cédrico has agreed to cut its logging goal from 150,000 to 115,000 cubic metres. Other page 1 titles are “30 young Liberals off to convention”, “St. Jules & Cascapedia officially invited” and “Cold Spring (camp) will also fight govt. plan” to privatize river waters.

**Vol 25. No 30  
August 1, 1999**

- “Gaspésians just miss deadly truck accident”, “Wanted: seamstresses! - Manufacturer to set up shop in Gaspé” and “Chicoine brothers battle it out!” at Malbay Festival’s lumberjack competition headline issue 30, dated August 1. “Cement plant: (Guy) Rousseau cuts construction budget”, “Shigawake: Ag. Soc. Celebrated 90th”, “Avignon: Merchants win access to info. case” and “Fiddlin’ around at Old Home Week” also make page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 31  
August 8, 1999**

- Issue 31, dated August 8, headlines with “Irving cleaning up St. Omer swamp”, following a truck spill, “New Carlisle: Town rejects halfway house unanimously” and gymnast with Gaspesian roots Julie “Beaulieu wins PanAm gold”. “Murdochville: Noranda to consolidate foundry”, newspaper “La Peninsule closes due to economy”, “United Churches celebrate” and “Prisoner says program makes him feel ‘loved and cherished’” make other page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 32  
August 15, 1999**

- Issue 32, dated August 15, headlines with “MEQ approves deficit budget – but wants ‘recovery’ plan by November” and “Queenie LeGresley celebrates 100 years!”. “Dairy situation improves”, “Gaspé wants to expand airport runway” and “Char production a promising industry for the Coast” also make page 1.

**Vol 25. No 33  
August 22, 1999**

- Issue 33, dated August 22, headlines with “New rules mean students must pay loans sooner” and “Clouds stole the show”, as Percé was Quebec’s top spot to see a solar eclipse. “Financial problems at forefront of British Heritage Centre AGM”, namely a \$56,235 debt, and “Barachois: Police ignore residents’ concerns”



**Gaspé Boys Triumph!**  
Gaspé Poly Boys' Basketball team came home winners from the recent provincial championship.

about illicit drag races, complete page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 34  
August 29, 1999**

- Issue 34, dated August 29, headlines with “New Richmond: Jean Charest visits British Heritage Centre”. The Liberal leader asked many questions about the attraction. A photo-caption combo announces inside coverage of the Shigawake Fair, while “Tourist season visitors less numerous than last summer”, “Gaspé: Joncas seeks a second term”, “Paspébiac: Work well underway on new Canadian Tire store” and “Smurfit-Stone mill in New Richmond charged 263 times” for environment infractions, complete page 1.

**Vol 25. No 35  
September 5, 1999**

- Issue 35, dated September 5, headlines with “McAlpine sentenced in death of local priest” and “Gaspé: CASA focus group tackles varied issues”. Sydney McAlpine enters a guilty plea of manslaughter. Local priest Laurent Leblanc was killed on July 17, 1998. The investigation conducted by the police during his month-long disappearance revealed that he had a double life, entertaining male escort relations, going to strip joints and offering beer to youths. “Avignon merchants accuse government of favouring natives”, “Petition protests telephone hikes” and “Gaspé CEGEP: Half the (English section) students from New Brunswick” complete page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 36  
September 12, 1999**

- In issue 36, dated September 12, readers see “Canadian Tire store to hire 70 people” and Amédée “Dumaresq wants to be Gaspé’s mayor again” as headlines. “Bishop (Raymond Dumais) ignorant of priest’s double life” and “School starts under shadow of strike” also make front-page titles.

**Vol 25. No 37  
September 19, 1999**

- Issue 37, dated September 19, headlines with “Students ‘innocent victims’ of work to rule”, as 150 students protest to voice their opposition to the teachers’ decision to stop extra-curricular activities, and “Fight brewing over ATVs inside Park” (de la Gaspésie). “Eastern Shores School Board: School enrollment down by 40”, “Gaspé: union and Town his impasse” and “Leahy to perform” in New Richmond, complete page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 38  
September 26, 1999**

- Issue 38, released on September 26, headlines with “Port Daniel & Gascons: Referendum on merger delayed once more”, environmental group “EVP celebrating victory over ATVs” in Gaspésie Park and “Terry Fox runs bring in over \$10,000”. Smaller titles are “Murdochville: still no approval for economic plans”, “Quebec City group will help Gaspé patients” and “Weather, demo

derby complicate NR Fair results”.

**Vol 25. No 39  
October 3, 1999**

- Dated October 3, issue 39 headlines with “Parents will demonstrate to support teachers”, “St. Jules’ Fall Fest: frolicin’ fun in the fall sun” and “SQ will use TV spots to revisit unsolved murders”, namely those of Gessapegiag’s Linda Condo in Miguasha and Sonia Raymond in Maria. “Coalition to hold forum on logging”, “Paspébiac: Federal Ministers make no promises”, “Supreme Court OKs Micmac treaties” and “Gaspé hosting Quebec (Anglican Church) Synod” also make page 1.

**Vol 25. No 40  
October 10, 1999**

- “One Listuguj Micmac fishing lobster this fall”, “Teachers mark their special day with demo” in Gaspé and “Coalition repairing Cédric logging site” around Lake and Salmon branches fully cover the front-page of issue 40, dated October 10. Logged in 1995 and 1996, the areas that the Coalition for the Integrated Management of Grand Cascapedia Watershed are trying to repair, show no sign of recovery. Cynthia Dow’s editorial is a tribute to Dave Doherty, the dedicated Legion columnist who passed away suddenly.

**Vol 25. No 41  
October 17, 1999**

- Issue 41, dated October

17, headlines with “Listuguj traps seized but natives intend to fish”, “Aquaculture should create 220 new jobs by the year 2003” and “Leahys thrill sellout crowd” at New Richmond concert hall.

**Vol 25. No 42  
October 24, 1999**

- Issue 42, dated October 24, headlines with “Use of scanner started Monday” at Maria hospital, “Train services once again in peril”, as the Chemin de fer Baie des Chaleurs may cease its service east of New Richmond because of the Gaspesia mill closure, and “Logging impact: Coalition warns it could become radical” if Cédric goes too far in wood harvest. “Gaspé election: Chamber president (Arthur Drolet) runs for mayor”, “Matapedia area residents want French paper back” and “Percé elections: (Raymond) Sheehan takes on two mayors” complete page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 43  
October 31, 1999**

- Dated October 31, issue 43 headlines with “Escuminac (school) addition officially opened”, Allison “Metallic confirmed as (Listuguj) Chief after close result”, as he won by two votes over Ronald Jacques, and “Turnips, anyone?”, a photo-caption combo showing Ivan Dow’s huge turnip. “Gaspé: record number up for council seat”, “CHAU opens new TV station”, “CASA and school board to work together on distance Ed” and “Dumaresq wants to cut expenses” in Gaspé, make smaller titles. Cegep teacher Fred Kraenzel is now running a regular column.

**Vol 25. No 44  
November 7, 1999**

- “Chandler may appropriate mill to save jobs” and “PD (Port Daniel) to vote on fusion November 14” headline issue 44, dated November 7. Mayor Jean Paquin favours the expropriation of Gaspesia following the October 28 mill’s permanent closure,

From Page 15

leaving at least 467 workers jobless. “Eastern Shores: \$77,000 Deficit confirmed by audit”, “Emploi Québec: D-G says the Gaspé well served” and “Wreath business branching out” complete page 1 titles. Inside, Jack A. Yeo praises Legion columnist Dave Doherty, who recently passed away.

**Vol 25. No 45  
November 14, 1999**

- “Chandler citizens insist ‘this mill is ours’” dominates issue 45, dated November 14. Up to 1,000 people demonstrated in the streets of Chandler in reaction to Abitibi-Consolidated’s October 28 decision to close the mill permanently. The firm could sell it if newsprint is no longer produced there. “New Carlisle election may involve recount”, Raymond “Sheehan takes Percé from Aubert”, “Drolet celebrates promising change” and “Dairy committee brags of results” complete page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 46  
November 21, 1999**

- Issue 46, dated November 21, headlines with “A ‘Wave of silence’ for our vets...”, “Chandler suspends expropriation move”, a decision

made by the new municipal council, and “Gascons nixes merger with Port Daniel”. “New Carlisle: Recount confirms Tennier’s seat”, “Meeting on deer future Nov. 20”, “CSN criticizes Caisse cuts” and “Gaspé: Sawmill project just needs wood” make other page 1 titles.

**Vol 25. No 47  
November 28, 1999**

- Issue 47, dated November 28, headlines with Quebec minister of Finance Bernard “Landry promises equal support” for the Gaspé, amidst the region’s economic blows. He adds \$10 million to a development envelope that was already endowed with \$13 million. “CRCD develops next fiveyear plan for economy” and (Gascons’) “Norma Garrett receives rare honour” from the Red Cross, make smaller headlines. The front-page is completed by “Cancer group (OGPAC): Régie funding decision next month”, “Grand River sawmill may close” and “Talent show Friday for Blanche-Goulet” shelter.

**Vol 25. No 48  
December 5, 1999**

- “Gaspesia workers take concerns to Montreal”, by holding demonstrations in front of the Abitibi-Consolidated head office, and “Transport 2000 fears Chaleur (train) on cancellation list” headline issue 48,



**Trash and Treasures!**  
New Richmond High School students picked up ten large bags of garbage. Above are Robert Duthie, Corey Martin and Jason Russell Budd.

dated December 5. Inside, “Natives, fishermen ready to cut deal” announces the integration of Mi’gmaq people to commercial fisheries, following the Marshall decision. Abitibi-Consolidated president John Weaver writes a commentary explaining the firm’s decision to close the Chandler mill.

**Vol 25. No 49  
December 12, 1999**

- Dated December 12, issue 49 headlines with minister Pauline “Marois refuses federal funding for English health and social services” and “Miguasha (Park) added to World Heritage List”. Smaller titles are “Cegep profs promise more walk-outs”, “Oil leak at Black

Cape wharf” and “Action-Chômage ‘hopeful’ – found new HRD minister ‘open’”. Inside, Cédrido announces its interest to make another type of paper in Chandler, coated paper used for magazines.

**Vol 25. No 50  
December 19, 1999**

The SPEC News Editor in 1999 was Cynthia Dow.

The SPEC Office Manager in 1999 was Joan Sawyer Imhoff.

- Issue 50, dated December 19, headlines with (Gaspé Peninsula) “Hospitals rack up \$7 million in deficits” and a picture-caption entitled “Sarah and Santa!”, with photos covering pages 14-15. Inside, Bloc Québécois forestry critic René Canuel suggests forest farms for the Gaspesia public land supply.

The SPEC Publisher in 1999 was Sharon Renouf Farrell.

The SPEC Sales Manager in 1999 was Kevin O’Connor.

## Links between 1999 and 2026:

# In a way, 2026 benefits from the hardships of 1999

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – After a particularly violent year in 1998, 1999 did not provide much relief. Accidental tragedies, such as drownings and head-on collisions, followed a year already marked by too many murders.

Economically, 1999 provided two of the hardest blows the Gaspé Peninsula has ever experienced, the October 14 closure of the Murdochville copper mine and, exactly two weeks later, the announcement that the Gaspesia mill in Chandler would be permanently closed. At least 850 well-paid industrial jobs disappeared within 14 days.

The Murdochville mine closure had been anticipated for a year. Noranda Mines had gradually reduced exploration efforts as richer, cheaper deposits in South America became more competitive. The company kept the Murdochville smelter operating using imported ore.

The Chandler situation was different. Abitibi-Consolidated failed to modernize the mill, 15 years after adopting an already outdated process in the mid-1980s. The company also made costly acquisitions in the newsprint sector in an attempt to control prices, only to face declining demand as computers and online information became more widespread. Large corporations are not always managed wisely.

It is somewhat ironic that copper mining could return to Murdochville in the coming years, driven by increased demand linked to the energy transition and telecommunications.

# Future of two Gaspé ridings uncertain ahead of October election

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPE – Unless the Supreme Court confirms the validity of the law passed in May 2024 allowing the Gaspé Peninsula to retain two ridings, it remains uncertain whether voters will elect two representatives from the region in the October 5 provincial election.

That uncertainty was raised by Parti Québécois (PQ) Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Pascal Bérubé, who represents Matane–Matapédia.

Mr. Bérubé himself would be affected by the proposed redistribution if it is upheld and he is re-elected. Under the new map, Haute-Gaspésie would be integrated into his riding, while a new Gaspé–Bonaventure riding would include the MRCs of Côte-de-Gaspé, Rocher-Percé, Bonaventure and Avignon.

“Nothing is certain. Currently, based on the data we have, the new electoral map will take effect on July 1 unless otherwise notified. If there were a possibility of taking legislative action, everyone would need to be on board. The Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) government must take the ini-



Photo: Courtesy of Pascal Bérubé

Pascal Bérubé.

tiative. The Liberal Party and Québec solidaire must agree. We’d need to verify if the will is still there, and I’ll add a new development: there is now a Quebec Conservative Party member in the National Assembly—a defector—and her political party opposes the idea of maintaining two ridings in the Gaspé Peninsula,” says Pascal Bérubé.

“I heard Éric Duhaime say

very clearly that we should let the Chief Electoral Officer proceed with his proposal. That means not taking action to maintain the Gaspé Peninsula’s political weight,” adds the MNA for Matane-Matapédia.

## Legal process takes precedence

When asked to comment, Quebec Conservative Leader Éric Duhaime points out that this is a legal matter, not a political one.

“I find it sad that Mr. Bérubé is trying to drag me through the mud and play politics this way. The reality is that there is a conflict between the Chief Electoral Officer of Quebec and the members of the National Assembly,” states the Conservative leader.

He refers to the proposal to eliminate one riding in the Gaspé Peninsula and one in Montreal, while creating new ridings in the Laurentians and in Centre-du-Québec.

“There is a legal conflict. It went to court. The court ruled

in favour of the Chief Electoral Officer. Currently, we are operating under the new map in preparation for the next election. But there are still challenges and a possible injunction. We’ll see what the courts decide. But as we speak, it is no longer in the hands of the National Assembly. It is no longer a political issue, but a legal one,” adds Mr. Duhaime, referring to the Quebec government’s appeal to the Supreme Court.

Mr. Duhaime declined to speculate on potential legislative action should the Supreme Court uphold the Court of Appeal’s decision.

That is when the National Assembly could pass a law to create a special status to maintain two ridings in the Gaspé Peninsula for the next election.

“It’s hard to know whether we would be for or against it since we don’t know what will be proposed. It’s going to be tough to go against a Supreme Court decision. The election law is designed to ensure fairness among voters in Quebec.

We’ll have to see what legislative tool the government uses to block the new electoral map. For now, all parties are operating under the new electoral map,” explains Mr. Duhaime.

In fact, Québec solidaire shares a similar position to the Conservative leader, who has already announced a nomination meeting for the Gaspé–Bonaventure riding.

More broadly, he argues that Quebec’s electoral law will need to be revised.

“It’s not up to political parties to decide where the boundaries will be drawn. We should rely on very specific demographic criteria and stop each party from pulling the blanket to its own side. The criteria must be objective, and every vote in Quebec must count—there should be as much equality as possible, not diluted because voters live in mega-riding districts,” he argues, noting that his party received 530,000 votes in the last election — about 13% of the total — without securing a seat in the National Assembly.



L'école Bourg, partially destroyed by fire on January 26.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

## Demolition begins at fire-damaged L'école Bourg

Nelson Sergerie

CARLETON – Demolition work on the section of L'école Bourg in Carleton-sur-Mer that was damaged by fire on January 26 began on April 14 and is expected to be completed by mid-May.

“The central section will be demolished. This includes the electrical room in the administrative wing and the offices located in the centre of the school. It will be completely demolished down to the structure to be rebuilt. Afterward, we will inspect the adjacent sections for any traces of smoke or soot,” says Sandra Nicol, director of the René-Lévesque School Service Centre.

The demolition contract, valued at \$146,350, was awarded to Géniam of Quebec City following a call for tenders.

At the same time, architects and engineers are working on plans for reconstruction. “We want to get a head start. If the scope is larger, we’ll adjust the plans,” says the director.

While it is too early to estimate the total reconstruction cost, the project is expected to reach into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The 170 students and 25 staff members affected by the fire are continuing their school year at Saint-Paul School in Maria, which has returned to its original purpose.

Given the scale of the work, it is almost certain that the 2026 school year will begin at the end of August at the temporary location in Maria. The fire was caused by an electrical problem in a floor-cleaning machine.

## Health & Social Services Community Network Bursary



2026-2027

McGill and CASA are collaborating to provide financial support to students in health and social services programs that wish to work in their home regions to better serve their communities.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- are Canadian citizens (or permanent residents) who have resided in their Quebec home region for at least 24 months
- have the appropriate English and French language skills to provide health and social services in a health and social services institution in Quebec
- are pursuing studies in a government recognized educational institution located INSIDE or OUTSIDE their home region
- are accepted into or currently pursuing full-time studies in an eligible health and social service program that permit the students to work professionally in Quebec upon completion of studies
- are registered full-time for the 2026-2027 academic year
- are committed, following completion of studies, to working in their home region
- agree to participate in any follow-up, monitoring or evaluation of the program conducted by Dialogue McGill and / or the community network

**DEADLINE** Thursday, May 7, 2026



Please visit [Dialogue McGill](http://dialoguemcgill.ca) website for more information and application forms:

[www.dialoguemcgill.ca](http://www.dialoguemcgill.ca)

Completed application forms can be emailed to Ashley Renouf

[ashley@casa-gaspe.com](mailto:ashley@casa-gaspe.com)

In person at the CASA Office:

168 Gerard D. Levesque  
New Carlisle, GoC 1Z0

# CAQ MNAs highlight human side of Premier

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Premier François Legault officially stepped down on April 12 after announcing on January 14 that he would leave the leadership of the Coalition Avenir Québec. Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) Catherine Blouin (Bonaventure) and Stéphane Sainte-Croix (Gaspé) are highlighting the human side of the man who led Quebec for seven and a half years.

“He gave his all for Quebec. It sounds cliché, but he truly loved Quebec. It’s a tremendous act of self-sacrifice, involving many personal sacrifices. His most important legacy is still having founded a political party and brought it to power in seven and a half years,” comments Catherine Blouin.

Elected in 2022, the Member for Bonaventure has been working with Mr. Legault’s team since 2018.

“The family spirit is very real. We’ve formed close friendships. Mr. Legault told me he won’t miss politics, but he will miss the people,” says Ms. Blouin.

“Mr. Legault had a great sense of humour. He liked to work in a fun atmosphere. He was rigorous and very serious



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

*François Legault flanked by Stéphane Sainte-Croix and Catherine Blouin during the September 2022 election campaign.*

when it came time to tackle issues. I had a good relationship with him, I’d say a very cordial one. We shared some wonderful moments,” the MNA recounts.

According to her, Mr. Legault also had a deep love for the Gaspé Peninsula.

“At every caucus meeting, he would mention the Gaspé Peninsula. He was very proud of the economic development and potential in our region. I’m thinking of wind power, where he recognized our expertise. He was an ally for the Maria hospital, the electoral map—where he wanted to keep both ridings—and the political clout of the regions,” she recalls.

Ms. Blouin believes she may have influenced Mr.

Legault’s shift in stance on wind power, after he had previously criticized the sector while in opposition.

“I humbly dare to believe so. In 2018, the narrative was entirely different. I was able to work with him in the weeks following the election and give a presentation on wind power, and it didn’t take long once he saw the numbers and the potential. Mr. Legault is an accountant. As soon as we gave him the right figures, he moved forward,” says Ms. Blouin.

Stéphane Sainte-Croix says the tributes paid to Mr. Legault in the National Assembly reflected the deep respect he commanded among colleagues.

The Member for Gaspé recalls meeting Mr. Legault when considering whether to run as a CAQ candidate.

“He is a man who listens and is very open-minded, with great trust in his members. When we finished our discussion, he gave me 24 hours to make my decision. I remember it as a great pleasure—a frank, honest, open discussion—and a deep respect for Quebecers and the regions. That is what will remain etched in my memory for the rest of my life,” says Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

Coming from a background in tourism, Mr. Sainte-Croix said Mr. Legault was already familiar with his experience.

“Humbly, I cherished the dream of becoming a representative for my hometown. Quite honestly, I never asked to be appointed as a minister. That is his prerogative,” says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

During the swearing-in ceremony following the October 2022 election, Mr. Legault jokingly referred to him as “Mr. Tourist” as he signed the register formalizing his role as Member for Gaspé.

“I’d be lying if I told you he beat around the bush on the matter. He made me feel that I could do this job. Given my professional background, he had done his homework. That

little phrase stirred up a lot of emotion in me and raised a lot of expectations among the people who supported me. It didn’t pan out,” Stéphane Sainte-Croix admits frankly, recalling Mr. Legault’s own background in tourism, including his role at Air Transat.

He adds that the Gaspé Peninsula had a clear place within the caucus.

“He was a good listener to his entire team. He enjoyed hearing about our regions. He made it a point to gather all the information needed to inform his stance on the issues facing the population. Mr. Legault didn’t need to be coaxed into talking about the Gaspé Peninsula. He was aware of the region’s unique characteristics,” says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

Mr. Sainte-Croix says the premier had a strong interest in completing the rail restoration project to Gaspé.

“Mr. Legault had an extraordinary interest in the progress, investment, and satisfaction of the Gaspé Peninsula regarding the rail project. He had promised it. He made the announcement. I don’t recall a single week without having at least some discussion about the rail line with Mr. Legault. Quite honestly, he was firmly committed to seeing it through to the end,” says the Member for Gaspé.

## All Behind Christine Fréchette

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) members chose Sanguinet Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Christine Fréchette as the party’s leader and de facto premier of Quebec on April 12 in Drummondville.

CAQ Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure, Catherine Blouin, who supported Ms. Fréchette in the leadership race, says she is delighted, while her colleague from Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, has rallied behind the members’ choice.

“I am very happy with the result that Christine Fréchette is the leader of the CAQ and premier of Quebec,” the Bonaventure MNA says.

“It’s historic to have our second female premier of Quebec. She’ll have time to make her mark,” believes Ms. Blouin, referring to Pauline Marois’s two-year term as head of the Quebec government under a Parti Québécois (PQ) administration from



Photo: Catherine Blouin’s Facebook page

*Catherine Blouin and Christine Fréchette in Drummondville during the meeting of members who selected the Sanguinet MNA as leader of the Coalition Avenir Québec.*

2012 to 2014.

“Now is the time to rally and unite the party’s forces and look ahead to what comes next. The next battle will take place on October 5 for the upcoming general election,” says Stéphane Sainte-Croix, the MNA for Gaspé.

Polls had predicted a 70%–30% result in favour of

Christine Fréchette. The actual result was closer to 58%–42% for the Sanguinet MNA.

This came as no real surprise to Bernard Drainville, who had campaigned and held events in Gaspé during the leadership race.

“Honestly, from the inside, no. Bernard fought a relentless battle with rigour, discipline, and vision. There was a turning point starting with the debates. Ms. Fréchette said it in her speech: ‘You made me better, Mr. Drainville.’ That speaks volumes about Bernard’s impact in this race,” analyzes Mr. Sainte-Croix.

“At first, people were talking about a coronation. Analysts in various media outlets were asking, ‘Will Mr. Drainville stick it out until the end?’ We fought a titanic battle against Ms. Fréchette, and I believe this serves the party’s interests in terms of ideas and bringing our values back to the forefront,” he continues, pledging his support.

The National Assembly

work has been prorogued until May 5 for a short five-week session that will end on June 12 if nothing changes.

“It’s a short period of parliamentary work, but until then, we’re working hard. There’s a lot to do. It’s a big challenge. We’ll use the next few days to develop our strategy. It will be an opportunity to accomplish as much as possible during this short period,” says the Bonaventure MNA.

“The timeframe will be short, which is why Ms. Fréchette is keen to rally her team and move forward swiftly. I’m thinking of reorganizing the working groups, ensuring a pragmatic cabinet that gets to work quickly,” says the Gaspé MNA.

Christine Fréchette’s priorities are to ease the financial burden on Quebecers, promote homeownership, strengthen the economy to reinvest in health and education—perhaps with private-sector help—and rebuild Quebecers’ confidence.

“Regarding issues in the

Gaspé Peninsula, I’ve had the opportunity to discuss several matters with her in recent weeks: the Maria hospital, the railway, the electoral map, and wind power. She addressed some of these issues in her two debates. She understands the region’s potential, and I’m very eager to start working with her,” says the Member for Bonaventure.

On the rail issue, the two MNAs intend to continue working toward the track’s rehabilitation.

“This is a major issue we’ve been working on for eight years. We’re keeping a close eye on things and discussing them with the Minister of Transport. We’ll meet with him during the budget estimates. We’re proceeding with the bidding process and continuing what was started last year,” notes Mr. Sainte-Croix.

Among his other priority issues, housing, daycare spaces, community services and health care are on the Gaspé MNA’s radar.

# With the opening of the southern Gulf fishing zone, crab prices could dip slightly

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – The price paid to Gaspé and Magdalen Islands fishermen operating in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence is expected to be slightly lower than in 2025, at least at the beginning of the season. Two factors are pulling prices in opposite directions: fuel costs and economic uncertainty.

Bill Sheehan, vice-president of E. Gagnon et Fils, a company based in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, was still hesitant to predict what the price will be, as of April 14, as the crab boats set sail for the 2026 season.

“Here in southern Gaspé, it will be close to \$7 when we set out, or at least \$6.50 when the first crab is landed, but I don’t know if it will last. Last year, when the fishing season started, I had POs (purchase orders), and now I don’t,” says Mr. Sheehan on April 14. E. Gagnon et Fils is the largest processor of combined snow crab and lobster in Quebec.

The cost of fuel paid by crab fishermen is putting upward pressure on prices, while economic uncertainty is pulling them down.

Another factor that could contribute to a high price for fishermen, and by extension for consumers, is a significant scarcity of snow crab on the market. However, Bill Sheehan believes that the economic insecurity linked to tensions, if not war, between the United States and Iran could prevail.

“Since the war with Iran, the price of fuel has climbed to \$2 a litre. When a consumer puts \$300 worth of gas in their pickup truck, they might end up eating pasta on Saturday instead of crab. Imagine a couple with two vehicles! It really



Photos: Gilles Gagné

*Snow crab could be slightly less expensive for consumers in 2026.*

comes down to the consumer,” explains Bill Sheehan.

He also notes that snow crab consumers are more often American, as E. Gagnon et Fils’ sales are primarily made in the United States.

## The shadow of 2022 and 2023

Bill Sheehan vividly remembers the context of 2022 and 2023, and what he sees this spring is quite similar.

“It’s a strange, not-so-funny recipe that resembles 2022. We weren’t getting orders, gas was also \$2, and there was the war in Ukraine. Currently, I sense nervousness among American buyers. This year in Boston (at Seafood Expo North America, the major seafood trade show, in March), there were no Japanese (buyers). The economy is struggling in Japan, where the price of rice is a major concern, and in the United States, none of the grocers want to buy 200 containers of snow crab,” he observes.

The processing plants paid fishermen around \$8 per pound for snow crab in 2022.

However, the market did not respond, leaving processors with significant losses.

“Sales of snow crab are spread out over almost the entire year. The price paid by the plants was too high, and consumers didn’t buy it at that price. As a result, there was a lot of inventory left over in the spring of 2023, and the price paid to fishermen plummeted to \$2.75. Nobody wants to go through that again,” he says.

“When the crab is already paid to the fishermen, it’s not possible to ask them to send us a check to reimburse us because we overpaid,” says Bill Sheehan.

“The only difference I see when I compare 2026 and 2022 is that the Russians aren’t here this year to dump crab in the United States,” he adds.

## Quotas reduced across the board

In 2026, quotas are being reduced across the board in the areas where Quebec crab fishermen operate, notably in zones 12 and 12F, zone 16 on the Middle North Shore, and zone 17 in the Estuary, in the latter case on both sides of the St. Lawrence River, up to an imaginary line between Pointe-des-Monts and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, the eastern

limit.

In zone 17, the snow crab fishery began nearly two weeks ago, just before Easter, under a quota that has been reduced by 15%, to 1,130 metric tonnes, compared to the 2025 quota. In zone 16, crab fishermen are dealing with an 8% reduction.

The reduction in quotas in 2026 in areas accessible to Quebec crab fishermen stems primarily from the species’ growth, which operates in cycles of varying lengths. Scientific surveys conducted by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans in 2025 reveal a healthy abundance of juvenile crab, which will contribute to the commercial biomass starting in 2027 and even more so in 2028.

In zones 12 and 12F, the quotas are set at 12,868 and 1,125 metric tonnes respectively. This represents a 12.6% decrease in zone 12. It’s no surprise that the combined quota for the two zones, at 13,993 tonnes, is prompting buyers from southern Gaspé, the Magdalen Islands, and New Brunswick to bid against each other on price.

“It’s a different reality and a different market in zone 12. Red Lobster pays for crab from the southern Gulf. Our crab is bigger. In zone 17, the crab is primarily sold on the

local market, then in the rest of Quebec. At our processing plant, at least 75% of the volume is exported. The price offered on the north side of the Gaspé Peninsula or in Rimouski is never as high as in the southern Gulf. That’s why I don’t use it to estimate what it will be here tomorrow or in two days,” explains Bill Sheehan.

He is instead watching developments in Newfoundland more closely, where snow crab landings are projected to increase in 2026, reaching between 150 million and 160 million pounds, or roughly 70,000 metric tonnes.

“I can only say that it’s in our interest for the fishery to take off in our area before Newfoundland, which will give us a better price on the markets, and therefore a better price for the fishermen, because our product will be sold first,” explains Bill Sheehan.

After season openings on April 2 and 5 in 2024 and 2025, the April 14 start date appears late this year. The delay is attributed to a slightly harsher winter, which caused more ice to form in the New Brunswick harbours. These harbours must be ice-free so that all crab fishermen in the southern Gulf, from the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, can begin their season at the same time, a principle applied by Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Gaspé harbours, which are in deeper water, have been ice-free for weeks.

“The idea is to start the season as early as possible to avoid interactions with North Atlantic right whales. We don’t want to repeat the situation of 2017,” summarizes Bill Sheehan.

Since several North Atlantic right whales died in 2017 due to entanglements or vessel strikes, strict area closure rules are now enforced when the endangered species is detected.



*Bill Sheehan fears a situation similar to that of 2022, due to tensions between the United States and Iran.*

Year	Quota (in metric tonnes)
2023	31,466t
2024	22,236t
2025	14,720t
2026	12,868t

# Quebec, Mi'gmaq to negotiate salmon fishing terms

**NELSON SERGERIE**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

**GASPÉ** — The Quebec government and the Mi'gmaq First Nations of the Gaspé Peninsula will soon begin discussions on salmon fishing, including the establishment of catch quotas as the resource continues to decline.

The issue could create friction with recreational fishermen, who will once again be required to release their catches to help ensure the species' sustainability.

In recent years, agreements have allowed members of Mi'gmaq communities to harvest salmon under specific conditions.

In Gespeg, for example, members fish in the three rivers of Gaspé under an annual community fishing permit issued by the Quebec government, which sets the terms for both individual and community use.

Last year, the permit allowed two gillnets across the three rivers, and the harvest of large salmon was authorized only until quotas set for May through July were reached. Those quotas were based on previous runs and conservation thresholds.

In Gesgapegiag, the Quebec government provided up to \$1.3 million under an agreement that allowed a partial resumption of salmon net fishing, which ended on March 31. The agreement covered certain activities on the Cascapédia River, in accordance with the community fishing permit.

In both cases, the Quebec government says discussions for the 2026 season will begin



Photo: Archives

*Salmon will be the subject of discussions between the Quebec government and the Mi'gmaq First Nations of the Gaspé Peninsula.*

shortly. “The ministry will also soon begin discussions regarding the Indigenous community fishing permit for the 2026 season. The Indigenous community fishing permit allows for a catch limit that has not yet been determined. The community is mindful of the status of the Atlantic salmon population,” the ministry states in an email.

As for the situation in Listuguj, “the department supports Listuguj in its activities to monitor and protect Atlantic salmon fishing by its members through a financial assistance agreement. Once again, the department will also soon begin discussions regarding the Indigenous community fishing permit for the 2026 season,” the statement notes.

### Hunting agreement for Gespeg

A decree published in March in the Gazette officielle du Québec confirms a renewed agreement with the Gespeg

First Nation regarding hunting for food, ritual or social purposes.

The agreement aims to balance conservation and wildlife management with Indigenous practices, while promoting co-existence and strengthening relations with the community.

The three-year agreement renews the previous one that was in effect from 2022 to 2025.

Several species are covered. For community purposes, the Nation may authorize the annual harvest of up to 18 moose, five white-tailed deer and 15 black bears.

The hunting territory is located east of Route 299.

“However, specific conditions may apply in certain areas, such as protected areas. Generally, the harvest takes place during the regular hunting season in Zone 1, but the agreement allows for other dates throughout the year if necessary, should the quota not be met,” the ministry explains.

# What happened to the king of the rivers since 2022?

*Nelson Sergerie*

**GASPÉ** — After record salmon runs in 2022, populations in the rivers of the Gaspé Peninsula have dropped sharply, forcing recreational anglers to release their catches again this year.

What happened in 2023 and 2024 remains unclear, and the Ministry of Wildlife is working to find answers.

“The juveniles—the young salmon—that left the rivers in 2023 appear to have faced particularly difficult conditions for survival as they migrated from the rivers to the Gulf of St. Lawrence during the winter of 2023–2024, when mortality rates seem to have been higher,” explains biologist Valérie Bujold.

One hypothesis points to water temperature, which may have affected the availability of food.

“For the salmon that returned to the rivers in 2024, we saw a significant decline in abundance. It appears to have happened at sea. There are research projects underway,” the specialist notes.

Large salmon, which spend two winters at sea, returned in 2025 in low numbers.

“Since they likely experienced the same conditions at sea, we saw a low abundance of large salmon in 2025. That’s the general observation. Pinpointing the cause is multifactorial,” Ms. Bujold explains.

Biologists from the ministry are working with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to better understand the issue.

At one point, sports fishermen pointed to overfishing in Greenland, but that factor has been ruled out.

“It really was in the Gulf of St. Lawrence where something happened in the winter of 2023–2024, or in the Strait of Belle Isle (between Newfoundland and Labrador),” she notes.

The impact has been observed across salmon rivers in Eastern Canada.

Despite the uncertainty, there are some signs of hope.

“Last year, we saw small salmon returning in greater numbers. Perhaps 2023–2024 was exceptional. Perhaps there is some return to normalcy at sea. We hope that the larger salmon that have spent two winters at sea will return in greater numbers. Another encouraging sign: fluctuations in abundance and survival at sea are nothing new. For example, 2014 was a difficult year, and in the years that followed, we saw runs increase,” she explains.

However, what occurred in 2024 with small salmon was unprecedented.

“It really scared us. With some recovery, we tell ourselves, ‘Ah... it was just a bad year.’ We’re keeping our fingers crossed. But the research projects will continue,” she concludes.

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# After four years, Quebec confirms final funding for Exploramer project

NESLON SERGERIE

**SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS** — After four years of waiting, the Quebec government has confirmed \$1.2 million in funding to complete the financing package for Exploramer, allowing construction of its shark pavilion to begin in the coming weeks.

The project's plans have been ready since 2022.

Last November, the federal government committed up to \$3.1 million towards the project and could contribute slightly more to the final funding package.

"Finally, we believed it. It's finally D-Day," says Exploramer director Sandra Gauthier.

The project was drafted and budgeted in 2020, in the midst of the pandemic.

"The project was announced in 2022 with these budgets set for two years later. Bids were issued in 2023," states the director, not-



Photo: From Facebook

*The Exploramer Museum will finally be able to build its shark pavilion.*

ing the challenges in securing full financing.

The project's cost has since increased from \$8 million to \$18 million.

The work includes the construction of a shark pavilion featuring a circular tank for small sharks and rays, a children's exhibit, an immersive virtual experience and an

educational laboratory for visitors and university research.

The facility is expected to open in the summer of 2027.

Exploramer aims to boost attendance by at least 38% upon opening, followed by an additional 10% growth over the next three years, bringing annual visitation to more than

50,000 by 2029.

The Quebec government had already invested \$3.7 million in 2022.

"This is the largest project to be launched in Haute-Gaspésie, with the exception of wind mills, surpassing the hospital at the time," Ms. Gauthier says, referring to the facility opened in 1974. "It is significant in terms of tourism benefits, but also from an educational and research perspective," the director emphasizes.

Criticized over the years for the slow pace of funding the project, Gaspé Member of National Assembly (MNA) Stéphane Sainte-Croix explains.

"We had to ensure a proper understanding of the project's cost overrun, which went from \$8 million to \$18 million. There was a significant discrepancy, so we had to gather information, and we completed the analysis of the file last March after receiving the revised business plan and

the bids," explains Mr. Sainte-Croix.

Mr. Sainte-Croix added that growing interest in sharks in the St. Lawrence River is helping generate public curiosity about the project.

While the closure of the Marineland aquatic centre in Niagara Falls, Ontario, following controversy over the treatment of captive marine animals, has raised concerns elsewhere, Mr. Sainte-Croix said he is not worried about similar issues affecting the project.

"There is an issue here. We will need an adequate communication plan. We need to properly position the project and the organization's mission, which will enhance knowledge and research. This is an issue we will have to work on, while highlighting the opportunity to work with living species for the ecological diversity of the St. Lawrence," says the MNA, who remains confident nonetheless.



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# Easter weekend storms blanket Gaspé Peninsula in snow

NELSON SERGERIE

**GASPÉ** — Two consecutive storms swept across the Gaspé Peninsula over the Easter weekend, dumping significant amounts of snow, sleet and ice across the region.

In the Bay of Chaleur, about 45 centimetres fell, while Gaspé recorded 37 centimetres.

According to Environment Canada data, the April 3 system brought 20.1 centimetres of snow to both Gaspé and New Carlisle.

A second system on April 5, Easter Sunday, added another 17.2 centimetres in Gaspé and 25 centimetres in the New Carlisle area.

Snowfall totals in the Bay of Chaleur varied depending on location.

Including snowfall from April 1, Gaspé had received 49.7 centimetres by April 7, already surpassing the monthly normal of 39 centimetres.

New Carlisle recorded 60 centimetres over the same period.

Since the start of the cold season, Gaspé has received 330 centimetres of snow, com-

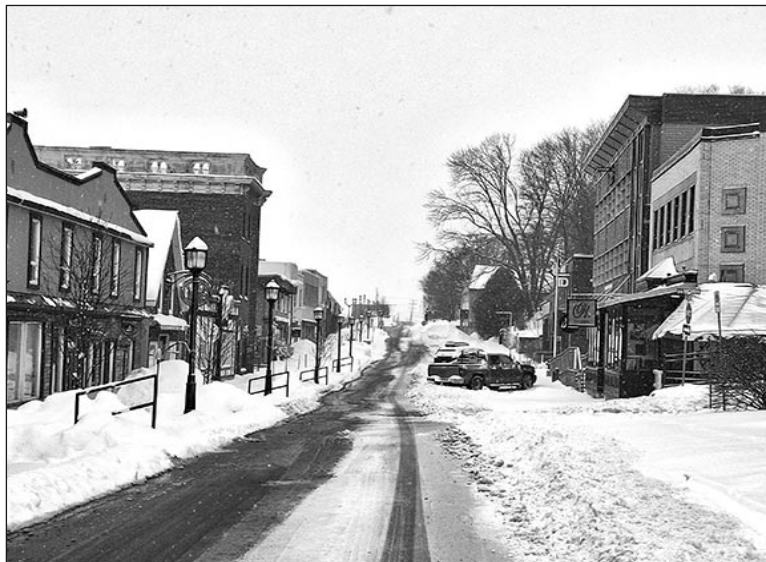


Photo: Nelson Sergerie

*Rue de la Reine in Gaspé after the rain on April 5.*

pared with the seasonal normal of 385 centimetres.

## March Still “Dry”

March continued a trend of below-average precipitation that has persisted since June 2025.

According to Environment Canada’s monthly report, only 62 millimetres of water equivalent precipitation fell at Michel-Pouliot Airport in Gaspé — about 60% of the normal 104 millimetres.

Snowfall for the month

reached 51.8 centimetres, compared with a normal of 79 centimetres.

Only one major storm was recorded, on March 11 and 12, bringing 30 centimetres of snow at Gaspé’s Michel-Pouliot Airport.

By the end of March, total snowfall for the season had reached 280 centimetres, below the normal of 341 centimetres for the same period.

Temperatures were also slightly below average, with an average of -6.3 C, about 0.9 degrees below normal.

## Tough day after Easter for motorists

Nelson Sergerie

**GASPÉ** — For the first time since July 2022, gasoline prices neared \$2 per litre on April 7 and even surpassed that psychological threshold at a few stations.

The Petro-Canada-Sprint chain led the increase, setting a uniform price of \$1.999 per litre across the Gaspé Peninsula.

That marked a jump of about 13 cents from the regional average of \$1.86 to \$1.87 per litre. Before the increase initiated by Petro-Canada — and quickly followed by other companies — retailers were losing an average of three cents per litre on gasoline sales, according to data from the Régie de l’énergie.

Motorists had nevertheless enjoyed a brief respite during the Easter holiday prior to the hike.

Only one station had crossed the \$2 mark as of April 8: the Ultramar on Montée Wakeham in Gaspé, where the price reached \$2.054 per litre that evening.

During the war in Ukraine, gasoline reached \$2.07 per litre on May 9, 2022, and peaked at \$2.26 on June 7.

## Unemployment rises in March

Nelson Sergerie

**GASPÉ** — The Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region lost 600 jobs in March, causing the unemployment rate to rise by 0.4 percentage points to 11.4%, according to Statistics Canada.

Approximately 35,700 people were employed last month, down 600 from February. Of these, 500 were full-time positions.

Meanwhile, the number of unemployed people rose from 4,500 in February to 4,600 in March.

The labour force—that is, those working and those looking for work—fell from 40,800 in February to 40,300 in March.

## Better than in 2025

Despite this decline in employment, the data is still more favourable than in March 2025. At that time, only 35,100 people were employed, representing a gain of 600 jobs year-over-year. The number of full-time workers also increased by 300 compared to March 2025.

However, the most significant difference is among the unemployed. There were 800 fewer unemployed people in March 2026 compared to March 2025, when the count stood at 5,400.

The unemployment rate was 13.3% a year ago.

## Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



## The calendar says spring, the weather disagrees

Every year, without fail, the calendar confidently announces the arrival of spring. The vernal (spring) equinox this year took place on Friday, March 20, at 10:46 a.m. It does so boldly, decisively, and with absolutely no regard for what’s happening outside your front door. Winter likes to hang on. It is not yet time to put away the boots or bring out the lawn furniture. You will not yet be able to tiptoe through the tulips.

It’s past mid-April and there are still mornings when we have to scrape frost off the windshield and we scan the 10-day forecast, hoping for warmer temperatures with zero chance of snow. Who is in charge here? It certainly isn’t the calendar. We certainly know better than to think that.

In 1816, Gaspésians had a very real reason for being alarmed about the weather. It was the “Year Without a Summer.” Highly unusual weather that year caused famine across the Northern Hemisphere, and that included on the Gaspé. It is believed that the cause was the eruption of a volcano, Mount Tambora in Indonesia. It was the greatest eruption in over 1,000 years. That combined with a year of low solar activity meant that crops did not grow.

In theory, spring arrives in March. In practice, especially here in our corner of Canada, spring tends to wander in like a late guest who forgot the address and stopped at Tim’s for coffee. One day it may be sunshine and birds singing their hearts out. The next day you’re back in a winter coat and boots. Complain to whomever will listen, but it won’t make the spring weather hurry along.

Gaspésians are resilient people, though. We are descended from hearty stock who settled here with very little to make life easy. We know better than to go by the calendar alone. We are grateful for a mild afternoon, but keep the snowbrush within reach. Experience has taught us that putting away the snowbrush too soon is a rookie mistake, one that will almost certainly summon a surprise snowfall out of spite. Mother Nature does not like us to get too confident.

We are an optimistic bunch. The moment the temperature creeps above zero, you’ll see someone in shorts. Usually, a teenaged boy who must know something that we do not. Meanwhile, the rest of us are wary and still dress in layers, something like onions, ready to peel off or add more layers as needed.

On the Gaspé Peninsula, where spring sometimes seems to lag a full season behind, we remain hopeful. Seeds are waiting to be planted, but not yet. While the calendar says it’s time for budding trees, walks on the beach and gentle maritime breezes, the Gaspé can still be firmly in winter’s grip, as if no one bothered to send the memo from the calendar to the weather.

Maybe there is something comforting in all this unpredictability. If spring arrived perfectly on time every year, we’d lose that shared sense of surprise. Life would be predictable and therefore boring. There would be no whining when a few snowflakes appear and no celebration of the first truly warm day when you can wear a light jacket.

And when that day does come, and it certainly will, it feels like we earned it. The sun lingers a little longer, and the air smells like spring, all warm and earthy. The boots are finally put to the back of the closet and the snowbrush is tossed into the trunk. At last, the weather catches up with the calendar.

Until those days arrive, we carry on in that uniquely Canadian in-between world. Not winter, but not quite spring. The calendar may tell us one thing, but we know better. Around here, the seasons don’t follow dates. They just take them as a suggestion. Mother Nature does what she wants, when she wants.

# Announcements



## Obituary



### BRIAND: Cinderella Lemieux

We are sad to announce the sudden passing of Cinderella Lemieux Briand on Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at the age of 95 years and 8 months.

She was predeceased by her husband, Harvey; parents, Philip and Laura (Coombs); siblings, Rena (Harvey), Phyllis, Owen (Verna), and Sydney (Sarah). She is survived by many nieces, nephews, and friends who will miss her dearly.

Burial to take place at a future date.



## In Memory

### ASSELIN: Anthony

January 28, 1926 to April 10, 2002

### ASSELIN: Kevin

January 28, 1953 to April 19, 1983

*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 awake,*

*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.

### BOURGAIZE: Nelson

### BOURGAIZE: Eunice

In loving memory of a dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather who passed away April 29, 1985. Also our sister Eunice who passed away February 4, 2020.

*No matter how our lives may change,*

*Or whatever we may do.*

*We will never forget those precious times,*

*The ones spent with you.*

*We hold you close within our hearts,*

*And there you shall remain.*

*To walk throughout our lives,*

*Until we meet again.*

Forever in our hearts and deeply missed by Dolly, Merle, Clayton (Eleanor), Bradford (Shirley) and families.



### COPAGE: Raymond Dalton

In loving memory of a dear husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather who passed away on April 1, 2020.

*We do not need a special day,*

*To bring you to our minds.*

*The days we don't think of you,*

*Are very hard to find.*

*Each morning when we wake,*

*We know that you are gone.*

*And no one knows the heartache,*

*As we try to carry on.*

*Our hearts still ache with sadness,*

*And secret tears still flow.*

*What it meant to lose you,*

*No one will ever know.*

*Each day recalls the memories,*

*Of you gone to rest.*

*And those who think of you,*

*Today are those who loved you best.*

*You left us with beautiful memories,*

*Your love is still our guide.*

*And though we cannot see you,*

*You are forever by our sides.*

Remembered by wife: Doreen; children: Michael (Linda), Terry (Kelly), Donna (Cantal), Beverly (Bob), and Brenda; grandchildren and great-grandchildren. xo



### COULL: Fay

It's hard to believe it's already been one year since we lost Mrs. Fay Coull on April 30, 2025.

A loving wife, mother and grandmother. We are keeping her in our hearts forever.

### YOUNG: Clarke

November 10, 1943 - April 27, 2022.

*We're missing you a little more,*

*Each time we hear your name.*

*We've cried so many tears,*

*Yet our hearts broken just the same.*

*We miss our times together,*

*Things in common we could share.*

*But nothing fills the emptiness,*

*Now you're no longer here.*

*We've many precious memories,*

*To last our whole life through.*

*Each one of them reminders,*

*Of how much we're missing you.*

*Some days are just unbearably hard,*

*Yet we bare them.*

Barb and family.

### Prière infaillible à la Vierge Marie

Fleur toute belle du Mont-Carmel, vigne fructueuse, splendeur du ciel, mère bénie du fils de Dieu assistez-moi et montrez-moi, ici même, que vous êtes ma mère de Dieu, reine du ciel et de la terre, je vous supplie du fond du cœur de m'appuyer dans cette demande. Personne ne peut résister à votre puissance.

Ô Marie conçue sans péché priez pour nous qui avons recours à vous (trois fois). Saint Marie, je remets cette cause entre vos mains (trois fois). Faites cette prière trois jours de suite et vous devez publier. La faveur demandée vous sera accordée.

D.J.

## Announcement Deadlines:

**April 29** for the May 6 issue

**May 13** for the May 20 issue

**May 27** for the June 3 issue

**June 10** for the June 17 issue

**June 24** for the July 1 issue

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## Classifieds

### CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: Estate sale

**May 2-3:** Estate sale at the MacNaughton home located at 312 Route 299, Cascapédia-St. Jules. The sale will include furnishings, household items, outdoor furniture, tools, etc. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Coast Round-up

### GASPÉ:

#### Forillon AGM

**June 17:** The association of the expropriated people of Forillon and their descendants are inviting you to the Annual General Meeting beginning at 7 p.m. At the Auberge de La petite école de Cap-aux-os. Please pass this invitation to family and friends.

### GASPE:

#### Gaspé County W.I.

**September 12:** It's time to register with the Gaspé W.I.

for the W.I. craft fair competition. The fair will take place at the York Hall. The registration fee is \$15, and participants may enter as many craft, cooking and/or garden items as they wish. To register contact Bonita Annett at 418-368-3453 or gaspe22@gmail.com. She will provide a copy of the 2026 fair list. The deadline to register is July 31.

### SHIGAWAKE:

#### Shigawake

#### Community Centre

**May 9:** Mother's Day breakfast from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Cost: adults \$12, children \$6.

**June 1:** Summer gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m., canteen available.

### SHIGAWAKE:

#### Shigawake Music

#### Festival and Agricultural Fair

**May 2:** Gaspesian Musician Night. A variety of musicians performing all evening. Doors open at 7 p.m. Dona-

tions at the door.

**May 10:** Mother's Day brunch. Doors open at 8 a.m. Cost: adults \$15, children \$8.

**May 23:** Country Decades Show featuring The Nash Stanley Band. Doors open at 7 p.m., \$10 entry. Dress code is Country Dance.

### HOPE TOWN:

#### Hope Town Sports Club

**May 2:** A bingo will be held at the Hope Town Community Centre starting at 7 p.m.

### HOPE:

#### Hope Baptist Church

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

### NEW CARLISLE:

#### 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 plus club

**April 25:** A turkey supper will take place from 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. The cost is \$20 for adults and \$12 for children under 12. Takeout is available. For additional information, please contact 418-392-4338.

### UNITED CHURCH

#### HOPE TOWN

**Sunday, April 26**

10 a.m. Service

**Sunday, May 3**

2 p.m. Service

### PARISH OF GASPÉ

**Sunday, April 26**

**St. Andrews, York**  
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**Sunday, May 3**

**St. Andrews, York**  
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

### CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: Book Room

**Wednesdays:** The book room will be open from 1 - 4 p.m. For information please contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

### UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND

**Sunday, April 26**

10 a.m. Service

**Sunday, May 3**

10 a.m. Service

### ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

**Sunday, April 26**

**New Carlisle**

10 a.m. Morning Prayer

**Hope Town**

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**Port Daniel**

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**Sunday, May 3**

**Shigawake**

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**Port Daniel**

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

## HOROSCOPES - April 20 to April 26

### ARIES - Mar 21/Apr 20

You approach a task with wisdom and insight this week, Aries. Your measured approach paves the way to finding a solution that will benefit all involved.

### TAURUS - Apr 21/May 21

It is key to treat yourself this week, Taurus. A purchase or experience could bring you long-term joy. Just be careful about spending too much.

### GEMINI - May 22/June 21

Gemini, you are full of clever solutions more often than not. If there is a problem, you're often the one who can crack it. This will be the case this week as well; your knack is put to the test.

### CANCER - June 22/July 22

Cancer, let others in and reap the rewards of a welcoming attitude. Your social circle expands and others embrace opportunities to spend time with you.

### LEO - July 23/Aug 23

Leo, start a project you have been thinking about as soon as possible, especially when the creative spark ignites. If you wait too long, the inspiration may vanish.

### VIRGO - Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you are surprisingly relaxed about something that used to stress you out a lot. Growth looks good on you, so remain committed to any positive changes you have implemented.

### LIBRA - Sept 23/Oct 23

Romantic feelings or friendships seem to flow easily right now, Libra. Any connections you make will feel balanced and purposeful. Prioritize those who bring you the most joy.

### SCORPIO - Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you are engaging every bit of energy you have to go into deep work mode. You will be focused and unstoppable for the next several days.

Others may not see you for a while.

### SAGITTARIUS - Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, good news or good timing show up just when you need it. It might provide the inspiration needed to start a project you're excited about.

### CAPRICORN - Dec 22/Jan 20

Family life is going very smoothly right now, Capricorn. Stability will prevail in the days ahead. Embrace the peaceful atmosphere and encourage others to follow.

### AQUARIUS - Jan 21/Feb 18

Share your perspective with all who are ready to listen to your story, Aquarius. Keep in mind that your voice carries weight and you have the ability to spur change.

### PISCES - Feb 19/Mar 20

Your financial confidence grows, Pisces. You might see a salary increase at work, now is the time to consider implementing notable financial changes.

## HOROSCOPES - April 27 to May 3

### ARIES - Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, your energy is at an all-time high. If you've been sitting on a wild idea, Tuesday is the day to pitch it to someone. Your charisma is your superpower right now.

### TAURUS - Apr 21/May 21

Expect a spotlight moment, Taurus. Whether it is a compliment from a stranger or a win at work, the universe will validate your hard work this week. Keep your chin up.

### GEMINI - May 22/June 21

Adventure is calling you this week, Gemini. Even if it is a new coffee shop or a different route home, no voyage is too small. A spontaneous conversation midweek could lead to an opportunity.

### CANCER - June 22/July 22

Treat yourself, Cancer. The stars suggest that a little luxury could go a long way for your mental health right now. A small investment in your comfort will

pay off in productivity.

### LEO - July 23/Aug 23

The mental or physical clutter in your life is finally clearing out, Leo. You will find a lost item or a solution to a nagging problem by the end of the week. The relief will feel good.

### VIRGO - Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, your discipline is producing tangible results. Take a moment to look back at where you were three months ago. You have climbed higher than you realize. Celebrate the progress.

### LIBRA - Sept 23/Oct 23

Your social calendar is buzzing right now, Libra. You are the main character in your friend group this week, and your ability to connect people will spark a brilliant new collaboration.

### SCORPIO - Oct 24/Nov 22

A lingering tension with a loved one melts away this weekend, Scorpio. It will be replaced by laughter and mutual understanding. It's a great time for a reset.

### SAGITTARIUS - Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, your brain is a lightning bolt of innovation right now. Write down every thought you have, even if they seem weird. One of them will be a game changer.

### CAPRICORN - Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, your intuition will be 100 percent accurate this week. Trust your gut on a new opportunity; it's leading you toward something that feels like home. Comfort is coming your way.

### AQUARIUS - Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, this week you are shedding an old skin and it feels amazing. A boost in your confidence makes you feel untouchable in the best way possible. Own your power this week.

### PISCES - Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, creativity is overflowing. Whether you are painting, cooking or solving problems, your flow state is easy to find. Expect a sweet message from someone you are missing.

# Volunteer Week shines a light on community spirit

HOLLY SMITH

NEW CARLISLE - As communities across Canada mark National Volunteer Week from April 19 to April 25, it is an opportunity to recognize the thousands of people who give their time, energy and skills to make a difference every day. From helping at local events to supporting essential services, volunteers are the backbone of many organizations, especially here on the coast.

According to Volunteer Canada, more than 24 million Canadians volunteer each year, contributing nearly five billion hours of service. That's the equivalent of about 2.5 million full-time jobs, a powerful reminder of just how vital volunteerism is to the country's social and economic well-being.

Volunteers play a crucial role in keeping community organizations running. Whether it's assisting with events, helping seniors, supporting youth programs or contributing to local media, their impact is felt in countless ways. In many cases, these organizations rely heavily, sometimes entirely, on volunteers to continue offering services and programming.



Photo: Facebook

*Ann Hall is a dedicated volunteer at The Gaspé Spec, giving her time and energy to support the newspaper and the community it serves. Her work highlights the important role volunteers play behind the scenes.*

While statistics highlight the scale of volunteerism across Canada, the true value of volunteering is often found in the smaller, everyday moments that don't always make headlines. It's the person who shows up early to set up chairs, the one who stays late to clean up, or the volunteer who quietly checks in on a neighbour who may need a little extra support. These actions may seem simple, but they are what help build strong, connected communities.

On the Gaspé Coast, that sense of community has al-

ways been one of our greatest strengths. People look out for one another, lend a hand when it's needed and step up during times of challenge. Volunteerism is woven into daily life here, whether through local events, school activities, fundraising efforts or community organizations working behind the scenes.

For younger generations, volunteering can also open doors. It provides opportunities to learn new skills, explore potential career paths and build confidence. For students, it can be a valuable addition to resumes or school

requirements, but more importantly, it helps foster a sense of responsibility and belonging within the community. Many lifelong volunteers say they first got involved at a young age, simply by being encouraged to help out.

At the same time, organizations are adapting to meet people where they are. Not everyone can commit to long-term or regular volunteering, and that's okay. Many groups now offer flexible opportunities, whether it's helping out for a single event, contributing remotely, or volunteering for short-term projects. Every contribution, no matter how small it may seem, adds up.

Despite this strong tradition of giving back, many groups are currently facing a shortage of volunteers. Changing work schedules, family commitments and an aging volunteer base have made recruitment more challenging. As a result, many local organizations are always on the lookout for new people willing to lend a hand.

That includes The Gaspé Spec, your community newspaper. Volunteers help support a variety of activities, from contributing story ideas and assisting with community outreach to helping preserve

the region's rich history through archives and special projects.

Volunteering doesn't just benefit the organization; it also offers personal rewards. Studies have shown that volunteers often report improved mental health, stronger social connections and a greater sense of purpose. It's also a great way to gain experience, build skills and stay engaged in your community.

National Volunteer Week is also a reminder to say thank you. Volunteers don't do what they do for recognition, but taking the time to acknowledge their efforts goes a long way. A simple thank you, a kind word or a moment of appreciation can make a difference and encourage others to get involved as well.

During Volunteer Week, residents are encouraged to consider how they might get involved. Even a few hours can make a meaningful difference.

Those interested in volunteering with The Gaspé Spec can contact Holly Smith at 418-752-5400 or by email at [holly.smith@globetrotter.net](mailto:holly.smith@globetrotter.net).

Whether you have a little time or a lot to give, your contribution matters, and your community will be stronger for it.

Volunteer Week: April 19<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026: *Mission- Volunteering!*

Dear Volunteer

*Thank you* 

For all you do to support our community and our organization. We really appreciate YOU!

With love from

  
**Family Ties**

WITH GRATEFUL HEARTS, OUR PARISH THANKS THE VOLUNTEERS WHO SERVE WITH LOVE.

PARISH OF CHALEUR BAY ANGLICAN CHURCHES, ST-JAMES-PORT-DANIEL, ST-PAUL'S-SHIGAWAKE


**HELP KEEP LOCAL NEWS ALIVE!**

By volunteering with The Gaspé Spec, you help ensure that local voices, events, and stories continue to be shared. Every contribution makes a difference.

Join us today!

*Happy Volunteer Week!*





# The ripple effect: How one volunteer can change everything

HOLLY SMITH

NEW CARLISLE - It often starts small. Someone agrees to help out “just this once.” Maybe it’s selling tickets at a local event, helping set up chairs, or lending a hand behind the scenes. It doesn’t seem like much at the time, just a simple favour.

But that’s how volunteering begins. And more often than not, that one small step creates a ripple effect that reaches much farther than anyone expects.

From April 19 to April 25, National Volunteer Week highlights the impact of volunteers across Canada. While the numbers are impressive, millions of Canadians contributing billions of hours, the real story is in those small moments that grow into



*Every helping hand adds to a stronger, more connected community.*

something bigger.

One volunteer helps at an event. That event raises funds. Those funds support a program. That program helps people in the community.

And suddenly, that one small decision has made a lasting difference.

In smaller communities on the coast, that ripple effect is even more powerful. One

person stepping forward often inspires another. A neighbour sees a neighbour getting involved. A friend invites a friend. Before long, what started as a single act turns into a shared effort.

Volunteering also has a way of bringing unexpected rewards. People often say they signed up to help, but end up gaining just as much in return. New friendships are formed, confidence grows, and there is a real sense of pride in being part of something that matters.

It’s also one of the few things that doesn’t require special training or experience to get started. There is no perfect time, no perfect skill set. Just a willingness to show up and be part of something.

Right now, many organizations are hoping for that

one person, the one who decides to step in and help, even in a small way. Because that one person can make all the difference.

And that ripple doesn’t stop where you think it does. It carries forward in ways that aren’t always visible right away. The event you helped with becomes a yearly tradition. The people you meet become part of your circle. The organization you supported grows stronger and is able to reach more people.

Over time, those ripples overlap and build something lasting, a sense of belonging, pride and shared responsibility for the place we call home.

That is the real power of volunteering. Not just what gets done in the moment, but what continues long after.





We are incredibly grateful for the hard work and dedication of our entire team. Their contributions are invaluable, and we appreciate their commitment to our shared success.

Wishing our fishermen a safe and prosperous 2026 season

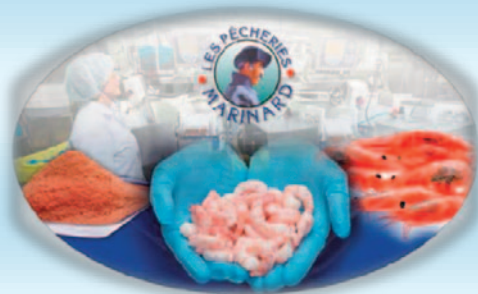
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# CLASSIC LOBSTER ROLL

4 servings

## Ingredients:

- 2 cups cooked lobster
- 1 tbsp chopped chives
- 2-3 tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- Salt & black pepper (to taste)
- 1-2 tbsp finely chopped celery (for crunch)
- 4 hotdog buns
- Optional: lettuce

## Recipe:

1. In a bowl, gently mix together: lobster meat, mayonnaise, lemon juice, celery and herbs. Season with salt and pepper and chill for 15 minutes (optional).
2. Heat skillet over medium heat and butter buns on both sides. Toast the buns until golden brown.
3. Assemble: Optional - place lettuce leaf in each bun. Generously fill with the chilled lobster mixture. Serve immediately!



## Lobster Fisherman's Love Affair

Emily Hocquard Roussy

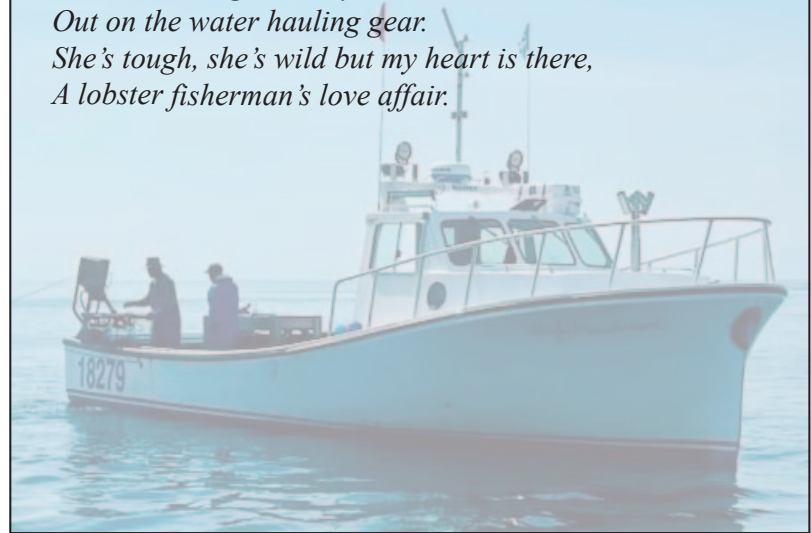
*The sea is my partner, wild and free,  
She gives me lobster, I give her me.  
Some days she's calm, the wind just right,  
But she's known to turn and put up a fight.*

*She teases me with gentle waves,  
Then tosses me when she misbehaves.  
We share our moments, full of grace,  
As the sunrise glows across my face.*

*When she is cranky, look out we know,  
She'll drown my boat and steal the show!  
She gives me beauty with many frights,  
Yet never could I give up this life.*

*My father sailed these tides before,  
His line across this ocean floor.  
He passed his passion onto me,  
And now I fish the same cold sea.  
I hope one day my girls will see,  
These waves run strong in our family.*

*So here I am again this year,  
Out on the water hauling gear.  
She's tough, she's wild but my heart is there,  
A lobster fisherman's love affair.*



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