

Sunny Bank class action delayed again

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – The timeline for reconstruction work on the York West Boulevard bridge in the Sunny Bank sector of Gaspé continues to raise concerns among affected residents and Quebec’s Ministry of Transportation (MTQ).

In June 2022, the Sunny Bank Flood Committee won a class-action lawsuit against the MTQ. The court ordered the ministry to carry out remedial work to maintain an adequate service level for a flow rate of 600 cubic metres per second over the next six years.

During the proceedings, the ministry had already committed to carrying out approximately \$8 million worth of work on the road to improve the situation within that timeframe.

The ministry had also filed a request seeking an ad-



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

This section of West York Boulevard continues to be a point of contention between Sunny Bank residents and the Ministry of Transportation.

ditional seven-year extension. The request was made partly because regulations would have required the project to undergo an environmental impact assessment.

The victims’ lawyer, Marie-Anaïs Sauvé, challenged both the application of

the regulation and the length of the requested extension.

In that context, she requested expert fees and was awarded an initial amount of \$19,850.

A few weeks ago, the ministry indicated that even the additional seven years

would not be sufficient and that another extension request would be filed.

However, the request was never submitted. Instead, the lawyer received an email stating that the project would no longer be subject to the environmental impact assess-

ment process.

Affected residents are now waiting to learn what effect the removal of that requirement will have on the project timeline and are awaiting a revised schedule.

In a project notice, the ministry outlined plans to replace the current 11-metre-span bridge with a new 60-metre-span bridge. The project also includes dredging and widening a secondary branch of the York River over a distance of 200 metres and a width of 54 metres upstream from the proposed bridge.

The plans also call for widening road embankments over 300 metres in the aquatic environment due to raising the roadway by 0.5 metres, as well as re-profiling a ditch over 400 metres along the east side of the Sunny Bank Street intersection.

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Baie-des-Chaleurs Palliative Care Residence will be built in Maria

GILLES GAGNÉ

MARIA – After years of planning and community support, the Baie-des-Chaleurs Palliative Care Residence officially announced on May 27 that its future home will be built in Maria, on rue des Petits Chevaliers, marking a major milestone for a project aimed at improving end-of-life care across the region.

Board members, elected officials, donors, volunteers and community partners gathered for the unveiling of the future site, located approximately half a kilometre west of Maria’s hospital.

The president of the Baie-des-Chaleurs Palliative Care Residence, Simon Prévost, a general practitioner, pointed out that the announcement marks a major step forward for this deeply human project, which has been supported by the entire community for sev-

eral years now.

“Over my years of practice here, I have accompanied many people during their last days at the hospital. I remember precisely a moment in 2019, while at the coffee table of OGPAC and mentioning that the needs are there for a palliative care residence. We are one of the last regions of Quebec, if not the last, functioning without a palliative care home. It must be the cornerstone of quality palliative cares. It is not a luxury. It is a gift we are giving to ourselves,” he explains.

“The challenge was finding the right place in a vast region characterized by a population scattered along the coast,” adds Doctor Prévost.

The land for the future residence was donated by Sébastien Toussaint, a physician who practised in the Baie-des-Chaleurs region between 1997 and 2012 and retained



Maria mayor Patricia Chartier, Doctor Sébastien Toussaint, palliative care residence Director General Josée Viens and Doctor Simon Prévost unveil the sign announcing the location of the residence.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

ownership of more than one million square feet of land after leaving the area.

“When Simon called me to inquire about the land aspect, it was not a matter of deciding if I would say yes or no. I asked him how many square feet he needed,” points out Doctor Toussaint.

In total, he donated

150,000 square feet of land, including part of a wooded area.

“It represents the equivalent of 10 residential lots,” he adds.

Dr. Toussaint said his understanding of the importance of palliative care dates back to the beginning of his medical career in the region.

“I was just starting my practice and here comes this man who fights cancer, and whose family was quite slim in the area. He finds himself with no possibility of revenue because he had stopped working. His cancer got worse and it is evident that he

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UPA kicks off the 2026 agricultural season

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – May 14 officially marked the launch of the 2026 agricultural season in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands region, although many agricultural businesses had already been preparing for weeks — and in some cases months — before the official kickoff.

With warmer temperatures finally arriving, horticultural greenhouses have opened, field work has begun and farm stands and public markets are expected to return shortly across the region.

The goal of this day remains to highlight the region's agriculture in a positive light. Producers will use social media to share a glimpse into their daily lives using the following hashtags: #SaisonGIM2026 and #Season2026GMI. It's also an opportunity for stakeholders and the general public to wish a good season to those who feed the population.

"Agriculture in our region is thriving. Dynamic and present everywhere, it shapes the landscape and represents a significant economic contribution to the region. Today, we want the region's social media to be flooded with agricultural photos once again: plants, producers, the next generation, animals, fields, landscapes—



Photo: G. Gagné

UPA's councillor with enterprises Véronique Babin-Roussel, UPA vice-president Julie Bacon, UPA communications officer Karina Espinoza-Rivière, her daughter Amélie Rivière Lebel and Julie Lamoureux, co-owner with Mike Brash of Les Champs pourpres farm in New Richmond west, were on hand for the official of the 2026 season.

anything is possible," expresses in writing Sylvain Arbour, president of the UPA Regional Federation.

Across the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, more than 240 agricultural businesses work each year to produce food harvested, prepared and consumed throughout the region on territory representing approximately 4% of the region's total land area.

The region's primary agricultural activity remains cattle farming and forage production, followed by market gardening, fruit production and maple syrup operations.

The region also features a

wide diversity of agricultural activities, ranging from forestry and ornamental horticulture to aquaculture and even donkey milk production. Agricultural news regularly highlights the challenges and realities facing the sector.

Second International Year of Women Farmers

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has declared 2026 the International Year of Women Farmers. The goal is to highlight the roles of women in food systems and to demystify the challenges they face daily.

In the region, two projects are planned to highlight this important year for women, who are an integral part of agriculture through various initiatives.

The UPA Regional Federation of Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine is launching a campaign celebrating women farmers. Over the coming weeks, profiles will showcase the work of women involved in agriculture throughout the region.

Whether through their training, leadership, management skills, support for their families, or involvement in agriculture and their communities, these women represent a wealth of talent deserving of recognition.

Each participant featured in the campaign will highlight the importance of women's contributions to agriculture across the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands.

"We are fortunate to be surrounded by women with diverse and enriching backgrounds. Their experience and knowledge in agriculture are incredible assets for the development of our agricultural businesses," says Julie Bacon.

Sometimes, even often behind the scenes, they play key roles in the establishment and viability of our farms. This year, the FAO-supported Women Farmers' Day allows

us to seize the opportunity and highlight these exceptional women," explains Julie Bacon, vice-president of the UPA Regional Federation.

The second project will allow agricultural producers to share their experience and expertise with female farmers, primarily from Africa, during the "Come Walk My Land" workshop, organized by UPA International Development in partnership with the regional federation.

This workshop will take place in the Gaspé Peninsula in November 2026. A 100% female delegation of approximately 10 farmers from various agricultural organizations in Africa will travel to the Gaspé Peninsula to exchange ideas with local agricultural producers.

Meetings with regional partners and visits to various farms in the region are planned to facilitate knowledge sharing. The farmers will also be hosted by Gaspé farming families to fully experience Quebec agriculture on a daily basis.

The UPA Regional Federation of Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine is a union organization whose mission is to unite agricultural and forestry producers in the region to promote, enhance and defend their professional interests through active democratic participation.

Alleged fraud of more than \$500,000 at LM Wind Power workers' union

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – More than \$500,000 is alleged to have been embezzled by the former treasurer of the LM Wind Power Workers' Union in Gaspé, which is affiliated with the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN).

According to the union federation, the alleged fraud took place over a three-year period and ended earlier this year.

The former treasurer allegedly used several schemes, including falsified bank statements, forged signatures and fraudulent cheques, according to the CSN.

Union members were informed during a general meeting held on May 17.

"The assembly approved the CSN's audit report and

decided on the legal proceedings to follow," says CSN communications advisor, Thierry Larivière, following the meeting, without specifying whether a complaint had been filed with the Sûreté du Québec regarding this matter.

According to information obtained by The Gaspé Spec, a complaint has been filed with the Sûreté du Québec. In addition to legal proceedings, the union will attempt to recover the misappropriated funds.

The CSN delayed the meeting in order to allow the in-depth investigation to run its course.

The union federation says numerous measures have now been implemented to prevent a similar situation from happening again.

Among the new measures are additional signature requirements and more fre-



The LM Wind Power plant in Gaspé.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

quent financial reporting to the union executive. The union's treasury will also be administered by the CSN's Manufacturing Industry Federation until 2027.

CSN president remains cautious

While visiting Gaspé on May 13, CSN President Caroline Senneville did not com-

ment directly on the situation within the union.

"All unions collect union dues, and when money is involved, some people are honest and others are less so. We at the CSN work to ensure that this is not the case, and when it comes to our attention, that matters are resolved," she says.

"Unfortunately, that's what happened at LM Wind

Power. Often, when this happens, it involves people with addiction issues. These are things that can happen. We never like it, and we always try to take steps to minimize the likelihood of it happening. We continue to monitor our unions regarding this. It's the members' money. It's something very precious," the union leader simply states.



PUBLIC NOTICE

AVIS PUBLIC

INVITATION TO COMMENT ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OF WHARF 403 NEWPORT HARBOUR

INVITATION À SOUMETTRE DES COMMENTAIRES SUR LA RECONSTRUCTION DU QUAI 403 AU HAVRE DE NEWPORT

Transport Canada's Navigation Program administers the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act*.

Le Programme de protection de la navigation de Transports Canada administre la *Loi sur les eaux navigables canadiennes*.

In accordance with requirements of the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act*, Fisheries and Oceans Canada hereby gives notice that an application has been submitted to the Minister of Transport for the following works.

Conformément aux dispositions de la *Loi sur les eaux navigables canadiennes*, Pêches et Océans Canada donne avis, par la présente, qu'une demande a été déposée auprès du ministre des Transports pour les ouvrages suivants.

| Common Project Registry Number | Navigation Protection Program File Number | Project Description | Worksite location |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 14363 | 2022-308171 | Boom Breakwater Dock - commercial Turbidity Curtain | Baie des Chaleurs, Newport, 48° 17' 11.18" N, 64° 43' 14.80" W |

| Numéro au registre de projet en commun | Numéro de dossier du Programme de protection de la navigation | Description du projet | Emplacement de l'ouvrage |
|--|---|---|---|
| 14363 | 2022-308171 | Brise-lames Estacade Quai – commercial Rideau de turbidité | Baie des Chaleurs, Newport, 48° 17' 11.18" N, 64° 43' 14.80" O |

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Navigation Protection Program — Transport Canada

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Quebec, QC
G1J 0C8
NPP File number: 2022-308171
PPNQUE-NPPQUE@tc.gc.ca

Note:

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Posted at Newport, Quebec on June 3, 2026.

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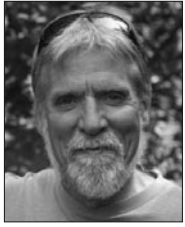
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Affiché à Newport (Québec), le 3 juin 2026.





Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Steven Guilbeault is off to greener pastures

Canada's former minister of the Environment and Climate change Steven Guilbeault, who held that position between 2021 and 2025, announced on May 27 his intentions to leave the Liberal Party and his seat in Laurier Sainte-Marie during the summer. He did it with class, without visible frustration.

That announcement came six months to the day after he stepped down from Mark Carney's cabinet. On November 27, 2025, he resigned as a cabinet minister, just after the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Prime Minister Mark Carney and Alberta's government to build a pipeline from Alberta's oil sands to the British Columbia coast.

On May 27, some people who know Mr. Guilbeault well were surprised that he had stayed that long. They initially thought that he would have resigned at the end of 2025, as he was particularly disgruntled by the receding environmental position of the federal government and the emphasis on oil and gas exploitation.

On the other hand, Green Party leader Elizabeth May, a friend since 1992, when he was a pure-bred environmentalist, still tried to convince Steven Guilbeault to remain a Member of Parliament on May 26, according to people who saw them speaking in a corridor of the building called the West Block, on Parliament Hill. She was hopeful that he would at least stay as an independent at the House of Commons. Her attempt was fruitless.

His departure is being celebrated in Alberta, where his opposition to oil and gas development earned him the status of "public enemy number one", notably from Premier Danielle Smith.

Criticized upon entering politics

Controversy characterized some periods of Steven Guilbeault's life. As a five-year old child, he climbed a tree in his native town of La Tuque to prevent a land developer from cutting it down. The tree was eventually cut anyway, but he decided from that day that he would protect nature.

In 2001, a few days before turning 31, he and British environment advocate Chris Holden climbed Toronto's CN Tower, precisely 340 metres of it, to unfurl a banner that read "Canada and Bush climate killers", with the Greenpeace signature at the bottom. They were protesting then prime minister Jean Chrétien and then American president George W. Bush's lack of determination in the fight against pollution and climate change.

That stunt was seen around the world. Steven Guilbeault and Chris Holden were charged with mischief and sentenced to one year of probation. It drew public attention one week before the United Nations' sixth conference on climate change, where the future of the Kyoto Protocol was to be decided.

A year later, Mr. Guilbeault and a few friends carried out another stunt, climbing onto then Alberta premier Ralph Klein's roof, allegedly to install solar panels.

Steven Guilbeault left Greenpeace in 2008 to return to Équiterre, a movement he had cofounded in 1993. He left Équiterre in the fall of 2018, preparing his political career. Most people were expecting him to join the Green party in 2019. He joined Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party instead, which drew harsh criticism from some of his former Équiterre and Greenpeace friends, who remarked that a governing party would tie his hands and his capacity to defend the environment.

In March 2022, a few months after being appointed minister of Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault released the country's first emissions reduction plan under the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act.

From then on, progress in emission reduction would be reviewed through reports issued in 2023, 2025, and 2027. Additional targets and plans would be produced for 2035 through to 2050. The 2030 Emissions reduction plan was Canada's first thorough roadmap to reach the country's emissions reduction target of 40 to 45 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

However, in April 2022, the New Democratic Party and environmental organizations, his former allies, heavily criticized Steven Guilbeault for his government's approval of an offshore oil project in Newfoundland's Bay du Nord property. He tried to defend the government's position through saying that the project would produce light crude oil, instead of the heavily pollutant output of Alberta's tar sands.

The money coming from Bay du Nord would be used to implement emission reduction projects. His former allies were far from convinced that such transition would take place.

Canada's new targets are worse than Stephen Harper's

In an interview given the day following his resignation, Steven Guilbeault explained that the two deals Mark Carney reached with Alberta will lead to targets that are worse than the goals set by former Conservative Party prime minister Stephen Harper before he was defeated by Justin Trudeau in October 2015.

Steven Guilbeault figures that, if Mark Carney's pipeline projects with Alberta take place, Canada's greenhouse gas emissions will only be reduced by 12 to 14% by 2030. Mark Carney maintains the 30% figure, but for 2040 now!

The Conservative Party had adopted a target of 30% for 2030. Whether Stephen Harper would have been able to fulfill that commitment is a completely different matter though. As for current leader Pierre Poilievre, he eludes any discussion about such targets, and chances are that he will no longer be around a year down the road, maybe less.

In Alberta, Danielle Smith might not be around for long either, given that a fair cross-section of Albertans is mad at the way she is playing the referendum game in an attempt to obtain gains from the federal government.

In the meantime, Mark Carney will have his hands full trying to navigate the coming months.

The departure of Steven Guilbeault over the next weeks will reduce the Liberal Party's majority from three seats to two. Whether other Members of Parliament will follow Mr. Guilbeault's footsteps remain to be seen, as trade relations between Canada and the United States lead more people to settle for traditional values like oil production.

However, a set of countries having adopted modern and environmentally friendly development methods will look for similar partners. Canada, which is looking for new strong trade friends, currently doesn't qualify as a modern and environmentally friendly partner.

Mark Carney might be well-advised to count the ridings where his party won with a low margin in April 2025 against the New Democratic Party and Bloc Québécois. His position on hydrocarbon growth is not greeted favourably in parts of Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia.

The prime minister could also be in for a battle a few months down the road, when a byelection will be necessary to replace Steven Guilbeault. Laurier-Sainte-Marie is a former Bloc Québécois stronghold. Its ex-leader Gilles Duceppe used to represent that riding. Quebecers are not too keen on pipelines.

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Police Report

Sûreté du Québec vehicle burns in Gaspé

A Sûreté du Québec pickup truck was destroyed by fire around 8:45 a.m. on May 27 on Douglas Boulevard in Gaspé. A patrol officer was driving a Ford F-150 when he smelled smoke. The officer managed to pull over before his vehicle was engulfed in flames. Emergency services responded and extinguished the fire. The officer was not injured.



Photo: Facebook

Burned vehicle found in Douglastown

A Jeep was found burned out on a forest road in the Douglastown sector of Gaspé. The Sûreté du Québec was called around 12:50 p.m. on May 28 following the discovery. The vehicle was overturned in a stream and had no license plates. If the vehicle's serial number is illegible, investigators may have to use the forensic identification service to find the owner. The investigation remains ongoing.

Speeding and invalid licence results in \$2,591 ticket

On the night of May 18-19, officers from the Sûreté du Québec's Rocher-Percé MRC station intercepted a 22-year-old man from Bonaventure driving a small vehicle at 146 km/h in a 70 km/h zone on Boulevard Pabos. There were two occupants in the vehicle. The driver allegedly attempted to hide behind a residence but was quickly located by the officers. The driver will receive several tickets for speeding, fleeing the scene and driving with an invalid licence, totaling \$2,591, in addition to 14 demerit points. His vehicle was seized.

Pascal Bergeron's trial delayed until February 2027

The trial of Pascal Bergeron, a 44-year-old man from Bonaventure, charged with sexual assault since February 2025, will be held in February 2027. On May 26 at the New Carlisle courthouse, four days were aside for the trial, from February 16 to 19, with witness subpoenas to be issued. Initially, the trial was scheduled to take place this spring. "The indictment was amended following new evidence and statements from the alleged victim. The alleged events now cover the period between March 1, 2020, and September 1, 2023, in Nouvelle or elsewhere in Quebec," explains criminal prosecutor Sam Bernard. Quebec Court Judge Janick Poirier accepted this amendment. Initially, the alleged period covered was from September 1, 2022, to September 1, 2023. Until the initial charges laid against him 15 months ago, Pascal Bergeron was a well-known spokesperson for Environnement Vert-plus. He is also facing allegations of criminal harassment involving the same victim in a complaint filed in May 2025.

Murdochville's Eric Laflamme to remain behind bars

Eric Laflamme, a 39-year-old man from Murdochville, will remain behind bars until the end of court proceedings. Quebec Court Judge Jérôme Simard refused to release the suspect following a bail hearing held on May 25 at the Percé courthouse. The judge agreed with the criminal prosecutor's argument that Mr. Laflamme posed a danger to the public, had an extensive criminal record and had failed to comply with previous release conditions.

Mr. Laflamme has been incarcerated since his arrest on March 2 in Rivière-au-Renard. On February 28, around 12:30 a.m., Mr. Laflamme was allegedly involved in an altercation with another person outside a bar on Rue de la Reine in Gaspé. The

victim, a man in his thirties, sustained injuries and was allegedly threatened. Mr. Laflamme was charged with possession of a firearm, specifically a handgun, which was prohibited. The criminal prosecutor added charges of uttering death threats, criminal harassment, assault with a weapon, pointing a firearm and carrying a weapon for a dangerous purpose. Further charges could be laid following the discovery of a backpack belonging to Mr. Laflamme containing 51 grams of cocaine during his arrest. Mr. Laflamme's trial is scheduled for November 20.

Vigilant security guard leads to two arrests

The vigilance of a security guard at the Chandler hospital led to two arrests on the night of May 16-17. The guard observed two individuals checking vehicle doors in the hospital parking lot after parking their own vehicle at the far end of the lot. When police arrived, the suspects fled on foot into the woods behind the hospital. A 39-year-old man from Saint-Michel-du-Squatec and a 43-year-old woman from Témiscouata-sur-le-Lac were located near Highway 132 in Chandler during the early morning hours of May 17.

The man appeared in court on charges of theft, possession of stolen property, possession of methamphetamine, breach of conditions and failure to comply with a promise to appear. He was remanded in custody and is scheduled to return to the Percé courthouse. The woman was released and will face charges of theft and possession of stolen property.

Suspects charged with thefts in mailboxes

On May 14, Sûreté du Québec officers conducted an operation targeting mail lockers in an apartment building on Rehel Avenue in Chandler, as part of an investigation into fraud and theft. The operation was linked to a series of mail thefts and related offences that allegedly occurred between March 25, 2024, and March 19, 2026, in the Rocher-Percé MRC. The investigation led to the arrest of 29-year-old Gabriel Whitton of Chandler. He faces charges including fraud over \$5,000, theft over \$5,000, as well as drug- and weapons-related offences. He appeared in court and remains in custody. As the SPEC went to press on May 28, he was expected to return to court in early June. A 25-year-old woman was also arrested during the operation and released on a summons.

The searches resulted in the seizure of more than 5,000 methamphetamine tablets, \$1,000 in Canadian currency, a quantity of cocaine and GHB, as well as paraphernalia related to drug trafficking. Two firearms were also seized, along with other weapons. Police say the operation has advanced several investigations linked to the series of offences. The investigation remains ongoing.

Nearly 13,000 traffic tickets issued in one week

All police services in Quebec and the road safety officers of the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) recently released the results of interventions carried out as part of the National Coordinated Operation (NCO) on distracted and reckless driving, which took place from May 1 to 7, 2026. The reckless or inappropriate behaviours that were particularly monitored during this NCO included failure to comply with traffic signs, including stop signs, red lights, school bus signals, and the obligation to yield the right-of-way, reckless driving, including actions likely to compromise safety and repeated passing, following too closely and distracted driving, including using a cell phone while driving.

As part of the operations deployed, other problematic behaviours also resulted in fines, such as not wearing a seatbelt. During the period covered by the operation, 12,995 tickets were issued. Of these, 15% were for running red lights and stop signs, and 10% for distracted driving. The Sûreté du Québec doesn't provide a regional breakdown of that number.

New delay for Bruno-Pierre Godbout's case

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ – Another delay has been added in the fraud case involving Bruno-Pierre Godbout, the former Newport councillor from Chandler who is facing fraud-related charges.

Mr. Godbout, 37, faces three charges linked to expense claims submitted in 2021.

The defendant has retained a new lawyer, who requested additional time to review the evidence gathered by the Permanent Anti-Corruption Unit (UPAC) in the case.

The Crown and defence are

continuing discussions in an attempt to reach an off-court agreement.

The UPAC indicated in January 2024 that its investigation suggested that between February 1 and July 31, 2021, the individual who served as acting mayor during the suspension of former mayor Louise Langlois by the Quebec Municipal Commission allegedly produced and used false expense reimbursement claims.

The UPAC estimates the alleged fraud at approximately \$10,000.

Mr. Godbout faces charges of fraud, forgery and posses-

sion or trafficking of a forged document.

On May 1, Bruno-Pierre Godbout was sentenced to 36 months in prison after pleading guilty on January 20 to six of the 12 charges filed against him in a separate case.

He pleaded guilty to one count of sexual assault, one count of assault with a weapon, two counts of assault and two counts of criminal harassment.

Considering that Mr. Godbout had been detained since his arrest on April 15, 2025, he had approximately 17 months left to serve at the time of sentencing.

Wild adventure for three hikers

Nelson Sergerie

MURDOCHVILLE – Three hikers experienced quite an ordeal on May 22 near Murdochville after their canoe capsized deep in the forest.

The hikers, who appeared to be experienced outdoors enthusiasts, had ventured into the wilderness along the Bonaventure River southwest of Murdochville. They were equipped with navigation gear, food supplies and a satellite phone.

Around 11 a.m., the trio contacted emergency services after their canoe overturned.

Police officers and firefighters immediately launched a search operation using the GPS coordinates transmitted by the hikers. After several hours of travel by all-terrain vehicle to reach the remote location, rescuers located the group at approximately 5:45 p.m.

It was not until around 9:30 p.m. that the hikers and rescue personnel were finally able to make their way out of the forest.

Paramedics assessed the three hikers after they were brought to a motel in Murdochville.

Although they were evaluated by medical personnel, none required transportation to hospital and all were reported to be in good condition.

Interprovincial bridge to undergo major repairs

GILLES GAGNÉ

MATAPEDIA – The Matapedia interprovincial bridge will eventually undergo major repairs over the next two years. The bridge was inaugurated in 1974 and has not undergone major refurbishment in the last 52 years.

On May 6, Quebec's Department of Transport released the list of major Gaspé Peninsula construction projects planned for 2026-27 and 2027-28, and the Matapedia interprovincial bridge appears on that list.

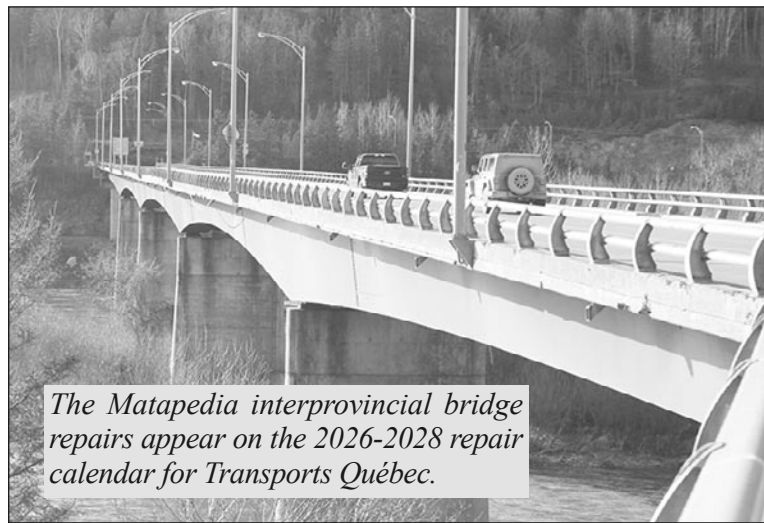
Of the \$301 million allocated for all transportation modes, \$161.4 million is earmarked for the road network, \$138.7 million for the railway and \$706,000 for the region's airports.

"The plans and specifications are currently being prepared, and the call for tenders is expected to be launched in the coming months," explains Sophie Gaudreault, spokesper-

son for Transports Québec in the Matapedia bridge file.

The rehabilitation work will encompass many aspects of the infrastructure. "The deck will be replaced, and various structural repairs will be carried out to ensure the bridge remains functional and safe for road users," adds Ms. Gaudreault.

Bridge users will need patience during a lengthy construction period. "The work, which will be carried out over a three-year period, will require various types of closures depending on the work to be done, ranging from alternating traffic to complete closure. Throughout the construction period, daytime traffic, between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m., will alternate on the bridge. Occasional closures, ranging from a few hours to a few days, between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m., are planned during key construction periods. However, the work will require complete nighttime closures, between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., during the



The Matapedia interprovincial bridge repairs appear on the 2026-2028 repair calendar for Transports Québec.

Photo: G. Gagné

2027 and 2028 construction seasons," stresses Sophie Gaudreault.

Local residents will be informed once a detailed schedule, including dates, is released. "The Ministry will collaborate with stakeholders in the sector to ensure that complete information is disseminated to users and the various affected services in a timely manner. Construction methods have been selected to minimize the impact on the movement of goods and peo-

ple, and a traffic management plan is in place for these closures," she assures.

There is currently no public estimate for the value of the refurbishment contract. Sophie Gaudreault notes that Transports Québec will not release the project cost estimate at this stage in order to avoid influencing the tendering process.

New Brunswick will manage the project

An agreement reached in

2024 between the governments of Quebec and New Brunswick stipulates that New Brunswick will act as project manager for the rehabilitation work.

Given that road infrastructure standards differ between the two provinces, the work will be carried out according to the requirements of the Canadian Highway Bridge Design Code. The cost of the work will be shared equally between Quebec and New Brunswick.

Aware that the bridge requires repairs after 52 years of service, and having witnessed signs of wear and tear, Matapedia Mayor Serge Normandeau says he will soon contact Transports Québec to learn more about the project.

"Among other things, we need to know when the bridge will be completely closed. Some Matapedia businesses greet customers from Flatlands and Mann Mountain and could be affected by construction work," he says.

Town council unanimously approves arena project submission to Quebec government

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Following the controversy sparked by the downtown councillor over the selection of Ministry of Transportation (MTQ) land for the new arena during the May 4 council meeting, Gaspé town council unanimously approved the submission of the project to the Financial Assistance Program for Recreational, Sports and Outdoor Infrastructure (PAFIRSPA) on May 19.

The issue appears to be generating less tension than it did earlier this month.

"We have a consensus on the town council even though we had a point of disagreement. It's not about the substance of the issue, and we've set those elements aside. What's important is to build the arena. We have a strong, united consensus on the overall issue," assures Mayor Daniel Côté.

A resolution was adopted to formalize the submission of the project.

"We passed a unanimous resolution authorizing the administrative team to submit the application for financial assistance under the PAFIRSPA program for the Transports Québec-owned (MTQ) land. That's important," the mayor notes.

The area that would be oc-



Photo: Town of Gaspé

The arena project will be submitted under the PAFIRSPA program.

cupied by the new arena represents less than one-third of the targeted property.

"We had done some rough estimates. We asked architects to draw up a more precise site plan. Now, we're at less than a third. We're actually closer to a quarter. Officially, we're at less than a third. Between two-thirds and three-quarters of the land will remain available for other proposals, partnerships, and development initiatives," Mr. Côté continues.

Parking and access areas are included in the calculations.

The urban development plan will include a specific framework for the downtown sector outlining what can and cannot be developed.

"We want to do this not

only for the remaining MTQ lots, but also for the current arena lots and all downtown lots. Not just for two lots," the mayor notes.

The Town turned to the MTQ-owned lots after the Chic-Chocs School Service Centre decided to retain the parcels originally intended for the arena project for its own future needs following the development of the vocational training centre at C.-E. Pouliot School.

Phase 2 planned for Logements HAN

The town of Gaspé is also providing financial support for Phase 2 of Logements HAN along the extension of Forest

Street.

The support follows political backing for the project.

"They needed financial support to finalize their funding structure. We are granting a 20-year property tax credit. The financial equivalent allows them to balance the budget and submit their request for financial assistance to the Société d'habitation du Québec," the mayor explains.

If the project proceeds as planned, funding decisions could be announced this fall, with construction beginning in 2027.

Logements HAN has already built 32 social and affordable housing units for people living with physical or intellectual disabilities or autism spectrum disorder.

The \$10.3-million project welcomed its first tenants in July 2025. The second phase could cost close to \$8 million.

Logements HAN is also currently building units in Chandler and New Richmond.

New name for wind turbine road

The road linking the Augustines and Sandy Beach industrial parks will be named Chemin Awtiget.

It will become the first place name written entirely in the Mi'gmaq language across

Gespeg territory, following a proposal from the Gespeg Mi'gmaq First Nation.

The word Awtiget means "to open a path" or "to clear a way."

"We already had names of Indigenous individuals: Domagaya and Jean Chou. We can take it literally or figuratively. Figuratively, it's the new passage, a new path of collaboration with the Gespeg First Nation. It's one way to collaborate by adopting place names," says Mr. Côté.

"Seeing our language officially incorporated into the landscape of Gaspé is a source of pride and an important milestone for our community. The choice of the word Awtiget perfectly illustrates our attachment to the territory and this shared desire to open new avenues of collaboration together for the future," states Gespeg Chief Céline Cassivi.

The proposal will now be forwarded to the Commission de toponymie du Québec for official approval.

Domagaya Street is named in honour of a young Iroquoian prince and interpreter from the village of Stadacona—now Quebec City—in the 16th century, and Jean Chou, an Indigenous chief from the Gaspé region and an ally of Samuel de Champlain in the early 17th century.

Pier-Luc Bujold still hopes to run for the PQ

NELSON SERGERIE

MARIA – The president of the Union of Nurses, Nursing Assistants, and Respiratory Therapists of Eastern Quebec, Pier-Luc Bujold, remains interested in representing the Parti Québécois (PQ) in Bonaventure during the October 5 general election.

The union leader had expressed his intention by filing his candidacy in September 2025.

“Currently, there are 122 ridings where candidates have not been confirmed. My candidacy is still active. It’s something I’m still interested in—being able to work for the citizens of Bonaventure,” says Mr. Bujold.

However, the future of the Bonaventure riding remains uncertain, as Bill 3 has so far been blocked by independent Member of National Assembly (MNA) Youri Chassin and Conservative MNA for Rimouski, Maïté Blanchette-



Photo: N. Sergerie

Pier-Luc Bujold remains interested in seeking the Parti Québécois nomination in Bonaventure.

Vézina, who has proposed her own version of legislation aimed at protecting the two Gaspé Peninsula ridings.

Should no legislation be adopted and the ridings eventually merge into a single Gaspé-Bonaventure riding, Mr. Bujold says he does not

want to speculate too far ahead.

“Every situation is different and will need to be analyzed. For now, my candidacy is filed for Bonaventure. The primary goal is to preserve the two ridings we currently have and to run as an official candidate—I hope—in Bonaventure,” he explains.

Mr. Bujold insists that his role as head of a major health-care union does not interfere with his political ambitions.

“Not at all. I really keep the two separate. I’m working on two different things. It’s important not to mix them up. I don’t want to give one an advantage over the other,” he maintains, asserting that he does so with complete transparency.

Méganne Perry Mélançon enters the race

Meanwhile, former PQ Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé Méganne

Perry Mélançon confirmed she will seek the party nomination in Gaspé ahead of the 2026 election campaign.

Ms. Perry Mélançon, who has served as the PQ’s national spokesperson since January 2023, says she wants to devote all her energy to defending the interests of the Gaspé Peninsula and contributing to its economic, social and political development within a future Parti Québécois government.

“It is with immense pride and enthusiasm that I announce my candidacy in the riding of Gaspé. Returning to the field, to be among the people here, means something deeply important to me. The people of Gaspé have seen me grow alongside them since the very beginning of my career, and I want to continue to be the voice of our region, drawing on all the experience I’ve gained over the past few years. I have the same passion I had when I first entered politics, but with even more experience,

determination, and energy to defend our community,” says Ms. Perry Mélançon.

Since her defeat in 2022, she has consistently stated her intention to run again in the next election.

The nomination candidate clarified that she is announcing her candidacy in the current Gaspé riding and not in the larger merged riding proposed under Quebec’s new electoral map.

According to Ms. Perry Mélançon and members of her party, it is still possible to avoid that scenario.

She also reaffirmed her intention to continue efforts aimed at preserving the two existing Gaspé Peninsula ridings as part of the electoral map revision process.

Méganne Perry Mélançon was defeated in the October 2022 election by current Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix, who received 40.4% of the vote compared with her 37.5%.

\$30,000 for new nurses at the CISSS de la Gaspésie

NELSON SERGERIE

MARIA – In an effort to recruit nurses, the CISSS (Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux) de la Gaspésie and the Union of Nurses, Nursing Assistants, and Respiratory Therapists of Eastern Quebec have agreed to offer a \$30,000 bonus to any new recruit joining the CISSS, provided they commit to remaining in the region for the next three years.

The agreement was announced as the CISSS reported that, as of April 30, it was short 34 nurses across its various facilities throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

“We secured \$2.1 million for recruitment and retention during the last round of na-

tional negotiations. We managed to reach an agreement with the CISSS to offer lump-sum payments to attract nurses to the region. We’re in a long-haul race to become independent of staffing agencies by October. We’re trying to implement as many measures as possible to fill the positions,” notes Pier-Luc Bujold, president of the nurses’ union.

The North Shore and James Bay regions are also offering incentives. “But we have a beautiful region. We hope to come out on top,” the president states bluntly.

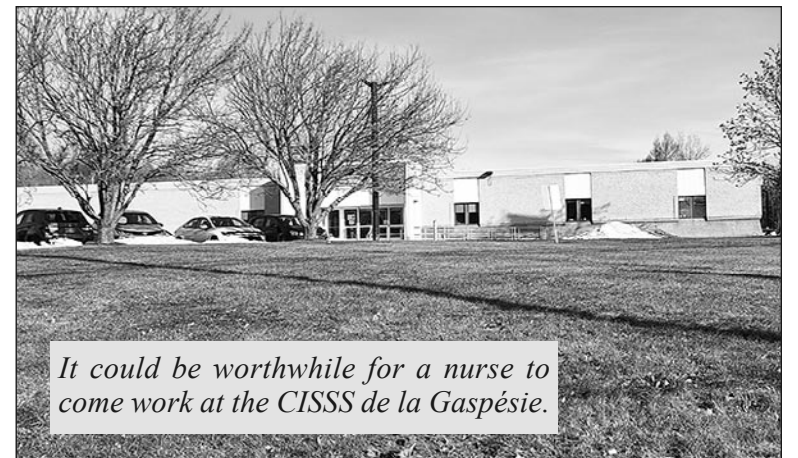
The timing may favour recruitment efforts, as 1,385 nurses passed the Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec licensing exam on

March 31.

“Many of our members have already received the good news because, before becoming licensed nurses, these individuals are candidates for the profession and are working in healthcare settings. Currently, there are nurses trying to find jobs in Montreal and Quebec City who are not succeeding. With the fixed-term contracts and new graduates, I hope people will see that in the Gaspé Peninsula, we welcome and hire them,” adds Mr. Bujold.

Approximately 15 incentives are available through the \$2.1 million budget.

“Barely 50% of the budget has been allocated. There is room to develop other projects. The funds are available. If this



It could be worthwhile for a nurse to come work at the CISSS de la Gaspésie.

Photo: N. Sergerie

works, we’ll consider seeking an extension,” the union representative notes.

The same incentive is offered for respiratory therapists, but it has not yet produced results.

“Respiratory therapists have contacted the CISSS, but

there’s no confirmation yet. Respiratory therapists are a fairly scarce resource. But there’s been a program in Rivière-du-Loup for two years that will produce its first graduates next year. We hope the region will get its share,” concludes Mr. Bujold.

SUNNY BANK:

▶ Cont’d from cover

A 70-metre-long channel outside the zero-to-two-year floodplain and the construction of a new culvert with a six-metre opening are also included in the plans, in addition to the replacement of four other culverts.

In its notice, the MTQ also proposed three additional alternatives as part of the impact study.

The first option involves removing all road embankments and relocating the road four kilometres farther

upstream to a less active section of the York River.

The second proposes removing all road embankments and constructing a multi-span bridge.

The third scenario, which could have the greatest impact, involves expropriating all residents living in the flood zone.

Compensation still pending

As for compensation payments to class members, the victims’ lawyer is awaiting a response from the ministry re-

garding a counterproposal submitted last March.

“The situation is exceptional, but we should have a response shortly,” says Ms. Sauvé.

In the meantime, although compensation has not yet been paid, interest has continued to accumulate since the legal proceedings began in 2013.

The court established guidelines regarding the compensation amounts victims could receive for emotional distress, as no fewer than 99 buildings were affected.

No final amount was de-

termined in court, but approximately \$3 million in compensation for victims had been mentioned at the outset of the proceedings.

From December 13 to 15, 2010, approximately 246 millimetres of rain fell in Gaspé.

The road linking the Sunny Bank and Wakeham sectors, rebuilt in 1977, obstructs the flow of the York River.

Previously, the road sat at water level, allowing the river to overflow onto the roadway during floods.

The road was raised by 1.5 metres in 1952, and it was

later acknowledged that the structure partially blocked the river’s flow.

In 1977, the road was raised by another two metres, further complicating water management.

The 2010 flood proved to be the final straw. Residents filed their lawsuit in 2013, and the court authorized the class action in 2015.

Since the 1977 reconstruction, flooding has occurred in 1977, 1980, twice in 1981, 1983, 1997, 1998, 2004, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2017.

CAQ rejects motion to keep wildlife offices open

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPE - The Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) government rejected a motion tabled by the Parti Québécois (PQ) in the National Assembly on May 14 aimed at preventing the closure of wildlife offices across Quebec.

The motion read as follows: “That the National Assembly take note that Quebec’s wildlife protection offices play an essential strategic role by ensuring a presence on the ground, rapid response capabilities, and effective coverage of vast territories, thereby contributing directly to the protection of natural resources and the safety of users. That the National Assembly call on the government to commit to maintaining all wildlife protection offices currently in operation across Quebec and to fully maintain the staffing levels and resources



Photo: N. Sergerie

Pascal Bérubé, Member of the National Assembly for Matane-Matapédia, was present in Chandler at the April 29 rally to keep the wildlife office open.

allocated to them.”

The motion was introduced by the Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Matane-Matapédia, Pascal Bérubé.

“They wanted to negotiate and discuss placing them where it was strategic. Then

they blocked the amendment. They refuse to confirm service extensions, particularly at the offices in Causapschal, Chandler, Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Matane, and elsewhere in Quebec,” explains the MNA.

In his view, the government

is trying to buy time to prevent this issue from becoming an election issue.

Catherine Blouin, the Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure and Minister of Family, announced on April 28 that the Chandler office would remain open for another year, just ahead of the April 29 demonstration.

“The next test is the review of the wildlife budget, with Pascale Déry. I will have the opportunity to question her specifically about the offices in Causapschal, Chandler, Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, and Matane,” promises Mr. Bérubé.

signed to the office.

“We won’t be satisfied even if they offer us one year. That’s not what we want. We want to stabilize the service, and to stabilize the service, we need a lease of at least five years with additional staff on the ground,” notes the mayor.

Mr. Daraïche continues to discuss the matter with the Quebec Wildlife Officers’ Union and the ministry in an effort to find a solution that satisfies the public.

According to statistics compiled by the Quebec Wildlife Officers’ Union, the Chandler office plays a significant role.

It ranks fourth in the Southeast District, which covers the vast territory between Thetford Mines and the Magdalen Islands, and first in the Gaspé Peninsula.

During the 1990s, the office employed 26 wildlife officers. Today, only two remain.

Mayor continues fight

Since the April 29 protest, which drew about 100 people to the Chandler wildlife office, Mayor Gilles Daraïche has continued efforts to secure a five-year lease extension with at least six staff members as-

Bear teeth sought in the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Quebec’s Ministry of Wildlife is asking bear hunters and trappers in the Gaspé Peninsula to submit bear teeth to help assess the current state of the black bear population.

Black bear teeth are used to determine the age of individual animals and help ensure responsible and sustainable wildlife management.

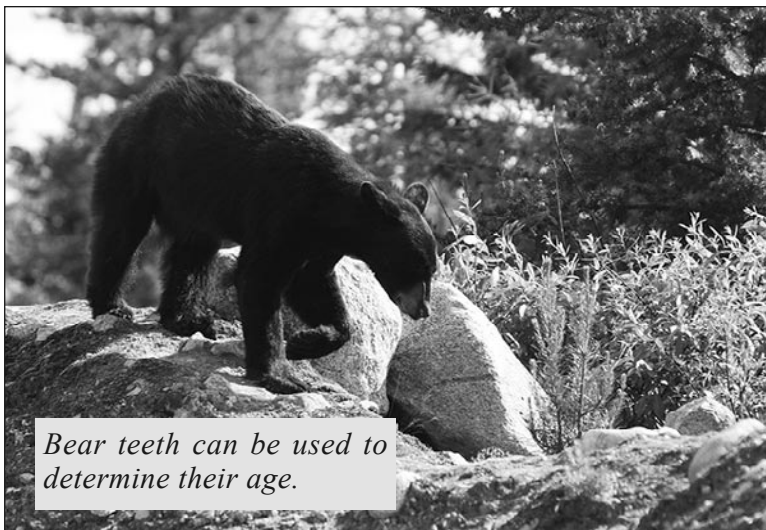
In addition to determining age, the teeth help calculate exploitation and productivity indicators, monitor population trends over time and adjust hunting regulations by region when necessary.

“Black bears are a species vulnerable to overexploitation because they reproduce relatively late. Sexual maturity is delayed, and females give birth only every two years because they nurse their cubs for a full year. For these reasons, the reproduction rate could be lower than the harvest rate,” explains Ministry of Wildlife biologist Marie-Claude Richer.

To determine the animal’s age, biologists cut into a tooth and count the growth rings, using a method similar to determining the age of a tree.

In 2023, a survey conducted in the Murdochville area found a density of 0.86 bears per 10 square kilometres.

In 2015, the density was estimated at 1.46 bears per 10 square kilometres.



Bear teeth can be used to determine their age.

Photo: Ministry of Wildlife

“We have an indication that our bear population may be declining. There are limitations to interpreting these results since they were from a single area, but we believe there was a good density of bears, hence the importance of collecting a sufficient number of teeth to ensure a representative sample,” says Ms. Richer.

Male bears generally begin reproducing between six and eight years of age, which limits the species’ reproduction rate. “This is the kind of data we’ll be able to collect,” the biologist adds.

Last year, 198 bears were harvested in the region, representing a slight decrease.

“These are positive figures, but there has been a slight decline over the past five years,” notes Ms. Richer.

Hunters can obtain a collection kit by visiting the government website and searching the

keywords “bear,” “tooth” and “Quebec.”

“This is done throughout the province. We didn’t solicit participants the way we do today. A sample of hunters used to receive a collection kit by mail, specifically those who had a successful hunt. But the response rate for these mailings is declining. That’s why we’re trying to reach more hunters and trappers,” she explains.

Wildlife reserves and controlled harvesting zones (ZECs) also have kits available.

The results of the study are expected to be available in the summer of 2027.

Bear hunting season remains open until June 30. Last year, 801 bear hunting permits were issued.

It is more difficult to estimate the number of trappers because trapping permits are broader in scope.



Forest firefighters at work.

Photo: SOPFEU

At least four forest fires during the long weekend

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – No fewer than four forest fires were reported between May 13 and 18, marking the first wildfires of 2026 in the Gaspé Peninsula.

The most recent broke out on the afternoon of May 18 and burned approximately 0.6 hectares on Chemin de la Petite Rivière-du-Loup, north of Pointe-à-la-Croix.

Industrial operations are believed to have caused the fire. It was declared contained late in the afternoon and was deemed under control by SOPFEU on May 19.

Firefighters from Pointe-à-la-Croix assisted SOPFEU crews in bringing the blaze under control.

Another fire destroyed 0.3 hectares on May 16 in Chandler. The fire occurred along Chemin Saint-François in the Saint-François sector. SOPFEU determined that residents had caused the blaze.

On May 13, 0.7 hectares burned near York Boulevard West in Gaspé. Once again, residents were responsible for the fire.

On May 14, a recreational fire affected a small area on Chemin du Dépotoir in New Carlisle. “This is a start to the season that resembles all our springs. Often, in the spring, we think that winter, with the snow, keeps things very damp. However, anything that dries out on the ground in the sun catches fire quickly. In recent weeks, fires have often been caused by trash burning. People should use alternative methods like composting,” says SOPFEU spokesperson Isabelle Gariépy.

“What we find on the ground isn’t completely green. The leaves are just beginning to sprout along with the buds on the trees. What we have as fuel are dead leaves or drier grass. When it’s wet, it’s fine, but it can dry out quickly,” she continues.

Since the start of SOPFEU’s season, the four fires have burned a total of 1.6 hectares.

Quebec's Electoral Map: Conservatives propose their own bill

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPE – Éric Duhaime's Conservative Party is proposing its own version of legislation aimed at protecting the two ridings in the Gaspé Peninsula.

The proposal is straightforward: maintain the two Gaspé Peninsula ridings, adding one seat instead of two to the National Assembly and, following the model of Bill 3, create a committee to review the criteria used to establish Quebec's electoral map. Under Ms. Blanchette-Vézina's proposal, the riding of Louis-Riel in Montreal would be abolished.

"We are adhering to what was unanimously adopted by all members of the National Assembly to protect Bonaventure and Gaspé through special status. We are adhering to what the Supreme Court has ruled as the powers the National Assembly may exercise. This is what we can do independently. It is never a good idea for political parties to interfere with the electoral map. The Chief Electoral Officer has told us this. The court has told us this," says

Conservative Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Rimouski, Maité Blanchette Vézina.

The proposed legislation is brief, and the MNA believes it could be adopted before June 12.

"Without bypassing the democratic process. If the parties truly want to protect the two Gaspé ridings, we have a bill that could actually do so," she believes, adding that targeted consultations could be held.

She also criticizes Bill 3, submitted at the beginning of May at the National Assembly, without success. "We're not meddling like the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), the Parti Québécois (PQ), Québec solidaire, and the Liberal Party are doing: they're taking a small piece of the 2022 map, a small piece of the 2026 map to serve the interests of the old parties, and adopting it without debate—that's undemocratic," asserts Ms. Blanchette Vézina.

The elected official also ensured that independent MNA Yuri Chassin, who blocked the rapid adoption of Bill 3,

supports her proposal. "We discussed it, he and I. What concerned him was the rapid acceleration of a bill that touches on the foundations of democracy. With what is being proposed, he will not oppose it and will return to the parliamentary process," she says.

"The old parties want to protect Montreal. They want to protect the Gaspé Peninsula only if Louis-Riel is protected," the MNA argues.

Mixed reactions

Her colleague from Gaspé welcomes the initiative but says the approach taken is not the right one.

"There is a bill that has achieved consensus among our parliamentary colleagues. It addresses issues specific to the Gaspé region. It also addresses other problematic issues raised by democratic growth in other counties. It has the approval of all colleagues except the representative from Saint-Jérôme. This initiative risks undermining the work our government has done with the opposition, on which a consensus has been

established. It's bound to hit a wall," believes Stéphane Sainte-Croix, MNA for Gaspé.

He noted that the parties represented in the National Assembly have been working toward a consensus for nearly three years.

"I would find it a shame if we chose a path that has more demobilizing effects than the proposed bill," notes the MNA for Gaspé. "In substance, it could have been a good proposal, but we have a problem: it requires the broadest possible consensus in the National Assembly to pass," notes Daniel Côté, the regional representative on the issue and mayor of Gaspé.

"There are one or two members who disagree with a consensus of 123 out of 125 members. The most consensual approach is the one on the table. Regardless of the means, it's the outcome that matters. We'll lose sight of the end goal by quibbling over the means. That's what we elected officials in the Gaspé wanted to avoid," continues the mayor of Gaspé.

"I have great respect for Maité Blanchette Vézina, but



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Maité Blanchette Vézina, Conservative Member of the National Assembly for Rimouski.

with all due respect to her, what she is doing is dividing the National Assembly. Let them rally behind the will of 123 out of 125 members of the Assembly, who are demonstrating true democracy. Let them set aside their ideological principles and uphold a democratic principle that they are currently failing to respect. That is the heart of the matter," concludes Mr. Côté.

Federal map: Court of Appeal has yet to set hearing date

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – The Federal Court of Appeal has still not scheduled a hearing date for the appeal of the February 21 decision that upheld the abolition of the former Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia riding.

The appellant in the case, Alexis Deschênes, says he has not yet received any indication as to when the matter will be heard before the court.

According to the Bloc Québécois Member of Parliament (MP) for Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine–Listuguj, the court has chosen to wait for the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling on the appeal filed by the Attorney General of Quebec concerning the electoral map and the possibility of maintaining two ridings in the Gaspé Peninsula.

In addition, a case involving Prince Edward Island could also have an impact on the upcoming hearings.

Both parties filed their briefs in 2025 — Alexis Deschênes in the summer and the Attorney General of Canada in the fall.

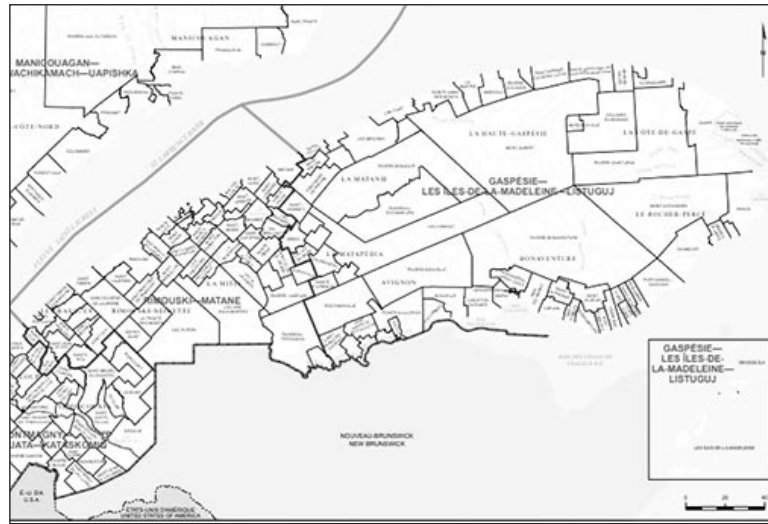


Photo: Electoral Representation Commission

Ottawa requests that the current map be retained.

The Attorney General asked the Court of Appeal to dismiss the motion.

The Attorney General wrote in his brief that "contrary to the appellant's claims, the Commission did not disregard the area factor nor create a 'too large' riding in the Gaspé Peninsula. Rather, it considered the arguments regarding area and weighed them against all the relevant factors provided for by the Act. As the trial judge concluded, his decision is reasonable. There is no basis for this Court to intervene," the brief

states.

Alexis Deschênes filed his brief in July based on three main arguments: that the law states an electoral district must not be too large; that geographic area must be a factor in the analysis; and that the Electoral Representation Commission did not conduct a rational analysis in that regard.

On February 21, 2025, Federal Court Judge Sébastien Grammond wrote in his 32-page decision that "the reasons given by the Commission to justify the elimination of the Avignon–La Mitis–

Matane–Matapédia riding were reasonable and consistent with the principle of effective representation established by the Supreme Court. Indeed, relative parity of electoral power is its essential component. The Commission was aware of the issues related to the size of electoral districts in rural or remote areas, but it was reasonable to conclude that these issues no longer justified the existence of a district whose population was nearly 36% below the average population of Quebec electoral districts."

He added that "the Commission fully understood the legal principles governing its

mandate. It took into consideration the arguments presented to it during the public hearings. It adopted certain suggestions made to it and modified the boundary between the proposed electoral districts of Rimouski–La Matapédia and Gaspésie–Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine–Listuguj to align with the boundaries of the MRCs. However, it maintained its recommendation to abolish the electoral district of Avignon–La Mitis–Matane–Matapédia. Although the petitioners disagree, this is a reasonable decision. I was not convinced that the Commission made the errors the petitioners allege."



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PALLIATIVE CARE:

▶ Cont'd from cover

can't win the battle. He was alone at the hospital, with that impression of failure. It was quite sad," he recounts.

Municipal services for free

The mayor of Maria, Patricia Chartier, is glad to greet another health-related service in her town, even if palliative care is the last step before death. "It remains a determining passage," she stresses.

The Municipality of Maria

cannot specify the amount of money it will earmark for the project as of now.

"We will provide the water and sewer, lengthen the street to the residence and install streetlights. We are also planning to build a path along the street between the residence and the sea, since it is close. We will only be able to put an amount on that set of services once the plans and specifications are completed, but we are talking about many tens of thousands of dollars," underlines Ms. Chartier.

Josée Viens, Director General of the organization, says

the announcement represents much more than the selection of a building site.

"It reflects a genuine collective commitment to our future facility," she says.

Ms. Viens added that "the wooded area will allow the new building to keep the private character of the home."

Asked whether the organization's fundraising campaign had reached its \$5 million target, Ms. Viens indicated that another announcement is expected on June 25.

The future residence will include six beds. Operating costs are estimated at approx-



Doctor Simon Prévost.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

imately \$260,000 per bed annually. At present, the Government of Quebec provides funding of \$112,600 per bed,

although palliative care organizations across the province are lobbying to increase that amount to \$177,000.

Gas prices remain high in Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – The Competition Bureau is examining gas prices in Rimouski, Gaspé, Chandler, and part of Baie-des-Chaleurs, where prices for regular gasoline are among the highest in Quebec.

The figures come from the Régie de l'énergie's gasoline price survey conducted on May 20.

Gas stations raised the price of a litre of regular gasoline to \$2.029 on the afternoon of May 19, though some stations were still charging \$1.96 by mid-morning on May 20.

At \$2.029, the average profit margin ranged from 11 to 12 cents, depending on the area. That compares to an annual average of 9.1 cents in Rocher-Percé, 9.3 cents in Baie-des-Chaleurs and 10 cents in Gaspé.

Only the Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Northern Quebec had higher prices on May 20.

In Haute-Gaspésie, gas prices remained at \$1.96, while prices in Matane were \$1.90.

Competition Bureau visits Rimouski

The Competition Bureau visited Rimouski in early May.



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Gaspé still ranks third among the places where a litre of regular gasoline is most expensive in Quebec.

Investigators met with gas station operators to better understand how gas prices are set in the Rimouski region.

On social media, the bureau stated that it used the visit to remind retailers that it is illegal to enter into agreements with competitors to fix gas prices. The bureau also noted that proving the existence of a cartel is difficult. The agency does not confirm whether investigations are underway.

On July 18, 2024, investigators visited gas stations in the Gaspé Peninsula and concluded that the information obtained did not demonstrate anti-competitive activity in the retail gasoline sector.

In an email at the time, the agency emphasized that it would continue to closely monitor the retail gasoline market and would take action against illegal practices if credible evidence emerged of a vi-

olation under the Competition Act.

The 2025 Annual Report on the Retail Gasoline Market by the Régie de l'énergie du Québec, published in February, once again highlighted high gasoline retailer margins in the Gaspé Peninsula.

In 2025, the average posted price in the Gaspé Peninsula was \$1.58, compared to the Quebec average of \$1.53. That placed the region second among Quebec regions with the highest prices at the pump.

Northern Quebec, due to its distance, ranked first. Montreal tied with the Gaspé Peninsula, also posting an average price of \$1.58, a figure explained by additional public transit taxes.

That makes the high prices in the Gaspé Peninsula harder to explain, as the region benefits from a 4.6-cent provincial tax credit, with the exception of areas bordering New Brunswick. Those areas receive a higher credit within a

20-kilometre radius of the border to remain competitive with prices in the neighbouring province. (see chart)

The credit was intended to offset higher transportation costs, which the Régie set at five cents last year.

Taking all of the Régie's data into account, it is increasingly difficult to justify the high prices. Profit margins may explain part of the discrepancy.

Gaspé motorists do not appear to be benefiting from the abolition of the price floor. The average profit margin was 13 cents in 2025, down two cents from 2024, but still well above the Quebec average of nine cents.

A report commissioned by the Quebec government and authored by researcher Robert Clark found in 2024 that the pre-tax price per litre of gasoline sold in the Gaspé Peninsula had been the highest in Quebec over the past decade.

Tax credit application from the New Brunswick border:

| Distance | Reduction |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Less than 5 kilometres | \$0.08 |
| 5 to less than 10 kilometres | \$0.06 |
| 10 to less than 15 kilometres | \$0.04 |
| 15 to less than 20 kilometres | \$0.02 |

Fair Haven Bible Camp New Carlisle, Quebec

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Little Campers (A) | 7 - 9 years | July 5 - 10 |
| Girls Camp | 10 - 12 yrs | July 12 - 17 |
| Little Campers (B) | 7 - 9 yrs | July 19 - 24 |
| Boys Camp | 10 - 12 yrs | July 26 - 31 |
| Teen Camp | 13 - 17 yrs | August 2 - 7 |

ACTIVITIES:

Beach Time, Group Games, Field Sports, Water Sports, Picnics, Hikes, Camp Fires, Tuck Time, Crafts and Chapel.



CITQ 085164

Rate: \$140 (includes \$30 non-refundable registration fee).

To reserve: e-transfer your registration fee to **darykandnicole@onehopecanada.ca** or mail payment to Nelson Roussy, 371 rte 132 east, New Richmond, QC, G0C 2B0

Include camper's name and which camp they are attending.

Gaspé Peninsula lobster season sees high prices, strong catches and rising costs

GILLES GAGNÉ

SAINT-GODEFROI — The first weeks of the lobster fishing season in the Gaspé Peninsula have brought strong prices for fishermen, while catches have steadily improved over the past 25 days, after a slow start caused by a late spring.

Most Gaspesian lobster fishermen set their traps on May 3 under cold and often choppy conditions caused by strong winds. Initial catches were modest before increasing considerably in recent weeks.

Shigawake fisherman George Skene is pleased to be receiving good prices since the start of the season, especially since his catches have been better for the past three weeks.

"The price is very good, at \$8.48 a pound, after two weeks at \$8.38, but we must say that fuel and bait costs are very high this year. It increases the operating costs quite a bit. I have two helpers, including my son, and I like to pay them well," says Mr. Skene, who has 43 years of experience fishing lobster.

He and four other lobster fishermen recently purchased the licence of a retiring fisherman. The acquisition added 40 traps for each fishermen, helping them better absorb rising operating costs, even if the acquisition also comes with a financial toll.

"It also adds a bit of additional work every day," remarks George Skene, who says he intends to continue fishing as long as he enjoys being on the water.

High prices

The price paid to fisher-



For the past three weeks, after a slow start to May, lobster catches have been quite plentiful in the Gaspé Peninsula, including in Saint-Godefroi.

Photos: Gilles Gagné

men was \$8.38 per pound during the first two weeks of the season before increasing to \$8.48 during the third week — an unusual occurrence since the weeks following Mother's Day generally lead to a decline in prices. The holiday traditionally marks the first major sales peak for lobster.

"There's something illogical about the prices so far. The market remains difficult, both here and in the Magdalen Islands. The weekly price is based on the three largest sales invoices from producers, regardless of location. I'm still trying to understand what's going on. There's fierce competition among the large producers in the Islands. Were the transactions only for large lobsters? The price doesn't reflect the current market," asserts Roch Lelièvre, president of Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan, a company based in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé.

Larger lobsters generally command higher prices. The

weekly price Mr. Lelièvre is referring to was originally the method used to determine the income of fishermen in the Magdalen Islands. In the late 2010s, this method, based on an equation that takes into account the previous week's transactions, was also adopted by buyers and processors in the Gaspé Peninsula, due to the dissatisfaction of lobster fishermen.

Roch Lelièvre notes that the continued high prices after Mother's Day may be explained by the limited quantity of lobster available on the market leading up to May 10, a consequence of the season's late opening. In the Magdalen Islands, the first catches were not landed until the day after Mother's Day.

Mr. Lelièvre points out that a typical start to the lobster season in the Gaspé Peninsula is usually characterized by a price drop after the first or second week. This year, however, the price increased during the third week of sales.

"The market is slow to respond in the United States as well. The price is high for both, processed and live lobster. Yet, in New Brunswick, fishermen received \$8 a pound two weeks ago, and \$7 last week," explains Mr. Lelièvre, whose processing plant employs 225 people, including 98 temporary foreign workers from Mexico.

A new trend?

Still in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, Bill Sheehan, vice-president of E. Gagnon et Fils, another major lobster processor, recalls that in 2025, the landing price of lobster remained high even after Mother's Day.

"The price only dropped once during the 10-week fishing season. This is a new trend. Last year, it must be said that the catches were low in the Maritimes. This year, landings are strong everywhere. It (the price) could drop in the coming days. Last week, it was \$7.34 in Newfoundland, \$7.50 in Prince Edward Island, but \$8.50 in Cape Breton," explains Mr. Sheehan.

The E. Gagnon et Fils plant processes snow crab in addition to lobster. Weak snow crab catches this year have increased lobster's importance in maintaining production levels for the company's 350 workers, including 120 Mexican employees.

"Temporary drops in catches are often caused by the weather. Otherwise, the catches could be a little ahead of last year. Phase 2 of the exploratory permits is playing a

role, on the northern side of the Gaspé Peninsula. I think we're going to break our record," believes Bill Sheehan, while still aware that there are six weeks left in the fishing season.

Although market prices are responding more slowly to increased supply than they did in 2025, both Mr. Sheehan and Mr. Lelièvre remain confident that North American consumers will return strongly to the market through June and July.

"There will be Father's Day, Quebec Day, Canada Day and American Independence Day one after the other," notes Mr. Sheehan.

Consumers' situation

Despite higher prices being paid to fishermen so far this season, consumers are generally paying prices similar to those seen in 2025 at fish markets and grocery stores.

"I sell lobster for \$9.95 a pound live and \$1.50 more cooked. It's comparable to 2025. The specials at the major chains are over for now. They were for Mother's Day, and also for Patriots Day (Victoria) this year," explains Roch Lelièvre, who also owns a fish market adjacent to his processing plant.

In 2025, the Gaspé Peninsula surpassed the Magdalen Islands for the first time in total lobster landing value, generating \$132 million in revenue — approximately \$10 million more than the archipelago.

Lobster catches in the Gaspé Peninsula reached 7,726 metric tonnes last year, compared to 7,147 metric tonnes in the Islands. The addition of 34 exploratory permits on the north side of the peninsula was a significant factor in this shift at the top of the dominant Quebec maritime lobster-producing sectors.

Around 2010, lobster catches in the Gaspé Peninsula totalled approximately 1,000 metric tonnes annually and generated \$10 million in revenue.

Measures designed to protect spawning adults, reduce fishing pressure through licence buybacks and trap reductions, as well as habitat improvement initiatives, have changed the situation.



Rising bait and fuel costs are reducing profit margins for lobster fishermen.

Spruce budworm continues to spread across the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – The spruce budworm continues to expand its territory in the Gaspé Peninsula, spreading across an additional 100,000 hectares. The insect now affects approximately 1.7 million hectares of forest in the region.

As a result, the Société de protection des forêts contre les insectes et les maladies (SOPFIM) plans to intensify its control efforts.

“We’re seeing the epidemic spread in the Gaspé Peninsula. However, the severity of infestations has decreased this year,” notes SOPFIM executive director Marie-Louise Dubé.

Despite the reduced sever-

ity, SOPFIM says it is too early to conclude that the outbreak is slowing down.

Most of the affected territory now falls within the moderate defoliation category, followed by mild and severe zones, surface-wise.

To help slow the spread of the pest, aerial spraying operations will increase significantly this year.

“The spraying strategy will cover 151,000 hectares, compared with 107,000 hectares in 2025,” she notes.

Operational bases will be established in Bonaventure, Charlo, (New Brunswick), Gaspé and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, in addition to forestry teams already working in the

field.

Spraying flights are expected to begin in mid-June, weather permitting.

Aircraft operations will be coordinated from New Richmond, Gaspé and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

Infestations also increasing elsewhere in Quebec

The spruce budworm is also spreading elsewhere in the province.

The insect is now present over approximately 17.5 million hectares provincewide, up from 14 million hectares previously.

In total 647,000 hectares will be sprayed, including

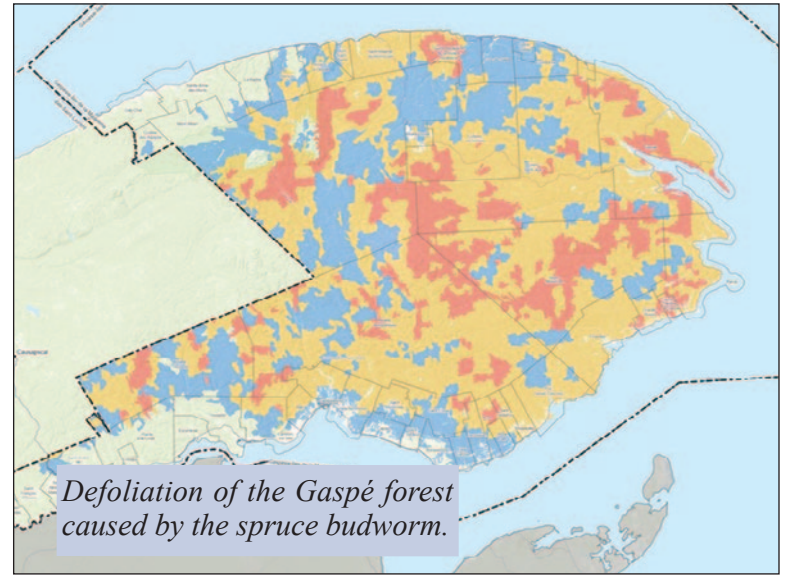


Photo: SOPFIM

180,000 in the Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean region.

The Gaspé Peninsula ranks second in the province in terms of forest area requiring protec-

tion, accounting for roughly one-quarter of the total treated area.

SOPFIM’s 2026 operating budget stands at \$60 million.

Rocher-Percé MRC unhappy over loss of SOPFIM

NELSON SERGERIE

PORT-DANIEL-GASCONS – The decision by SOPFIM to remove its operational base from the Rocher-Percé Airport has sparked frustration within the Rocher-Percé MRC, whose elected officials are questioning the reasons behind the move.

Municipal officials are particularly concerned because approximately 15% of the 150,000 hectares scheduled for protection against the spruce budworm in 2026 are located within the MRC.

“I deplore the situation, especially since the Quebec government has invested over \$10 million in the airport. It also deprives us of significant revenue at the airport,” explains Henri Grenier, deputy prefect and mayor of Port-Daniel-Gascons.



The Rocher-Percé MRC wants SOPFIM to maintain operations at the Rocher-Percé Airport in the fight against the spruce budworm.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

The loss is estimated at nearly \$40,000, including approximately \$20,000 in rental income and another \$20,000 linked to fuel sales.

“The information received from SOPFIM was that the absence of a base was due to budget cuts and the areas requiring pesticides,” explains Mr. Grenier.

“There is some positive news, however. Our executive director contacted them, and there is a possibility SOPFIM could return next year,” he adds.

The MRC plans to intensify lobbying efforts this fall in hopes of convincing SOPFIM to re-establish operations at the airport. SOPFIM stands for

Société de protection des forêts contre les insectes et les maladies.

Airport viewed as essential

Mr. Grenier also stresses the importance of the airport’s role in supporting medical transportation services in the region.

“In my view, the hospital transport service to major medical centres is able to provide care for a segment of our population that we don’t have in the region. It costs about \$200,000 for some 17,000 people, which works out to about \$10 per resident. It’s worth the cost” he adds.

Mr. Grenier notes that efforts continue to diversify and expand activities at the airport.

Last fall, the Rocher-Percé MRC conducted a public con-

sultation as part of a strategic planning exercise aimed at determining the future development of the airport and identifying the needs and expectations of residents.

Among the ideas discussed were cargo transportation, regular commercial air service and charter flights. At present, the airport mainly serves private pilots and government aircraft.

Major infrastructure upgrades to the airport, originally inaugurated in 1986, were completed in the fall of 2024.

The final phase of the project included a \$2.5-million renovation and expansion of the terminal building.

In 2020, the airport’s runway was extended, while the weather station and runway lighting systems were upgraded as part of a separate \$10.4-million investment.

RéGÎM: An agreement is about to be reached

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – The Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Intermunicipal Transportation Authority (RéGÎM) has received a draft memorandum of understanding from Quebec’s Ministry of Transportation regarding payment of the \$1.1 million subsidy for 2025 that has still not been paid.

During the Union des municipalités du Québec (UMQ) convention in Quebec City, RéGÎM president Daniel Côté happened to meet senior Ministry of Transportation officials responsible for the file and

raised the issue directly with them.

“Things finally started moving. The cheque hasn’t been mailed yet. It hasn’t been cashed yet. But we have a glimmer of hope that we might—I hope—avoid service disruptions this summer,” the president comments.

When the unpaid portion of the 2026 subsidy is added, the total amount owed rises to \$1.9 million.

“We’ve been patient for 18 months. We won’t wait another 18 months. We’re already 18 months behind. We hope that settling 2025 will

pave the way for settling 2026 more quickly,” says Mr. Côté.

In April, the Gaspésie Prefecture’s Table agreed to provide an emergency loan of \$50,000 to help maintain the organization’s short-term operations.

RéGÎM’s \$1.5-million line of credit is nearly maxed out.

Meanwhile, Quebec’s Ministry of the Environment is also seeking repayment of \$30,000 from the organization as part of an accountability process linked to the Green Fund.

After Mr. Côté publicly denounced the “bill,” the ministry indicated it would show



Photo: N. Sergerie

RéGÎM vehicles could be taken off the road within weeks if the Quebec government does not pay the subsidies owed for 2025.

flexibility given the organization’s financial situation.

RéGÎM had already been forced to revise its services in February after a retroactive

\$300,000 reduction in its financial assistance for 2025.

The agency’s 2026 operating budget stands at \$5.8 million.

20,000 overnight stays booked at Forillon Park

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – If the current trend continues, Forillon National Park is on track for another strong tourism season, with 20,000 overnight stays already booked.

After a 32% increase in reservations on the first booking day, February 4, the pace has slowed somewhat. However, park managers still report a 5% increase compared with the same period in 2025.

“We’re on track for an excellent season. Last year was already an excellent season. That’s an indicator we use. But we still encourage people to plan their visit. There is still space available at the basic campsites in July and August. Otherwise, for campgrounds with services and alternative accommodations, you’ll need to look for availability in June, September, and October. There may still be a few spots left in July and August,” notes Mathieu Côté, director of the Gaspésie Field Unit for Parks Canada.

In addition, the Otentik tents in the southern sector will now be heated.

“It’s a little extra to extend the tourist season,” notes the



Photo: Parks Canada

Restoration of the Elias-Gavey House will begin in the coming weeks.

director.

The Strong Canada Pass is also returning this year, meaning admission to Parks Canada sites will be free from June 19 to Sept. 7.

During the same period, campers will receive a 25% discount on camping stays and alternative accommodations.

Flagship activities return

Thanks to partnerships with various organizations, the park’s major cultural and sports activities are returning this season.

These include the Aysanabee sunrise concert at Cap-Bon-Ami on Aug. 9 in partnership with Musique du Bout du Monde, the Mawiom and Gespeg Mi’gmaq Nation Powwow on August 22 in the north sector near the visitor and discovery centre, and the fourth edition of Ultra Trail Forillon, organized by Événements Gaspésia, from September 18 to 20.

Le Petit Café de L’Anse will also present a series of performances at the former visitor information centre at Trait-Carré, located along

Route 132 between Rivière-au-Renard and L’Anse-au-Griffon.

“We also have two new features: mobile apps, including the Parks Canada app. Last year, we launched the ‘Sam and the Beaver’ activity in the beaver pond area, and this year we’re adding ‘Sam and the Forest,’ which is a series of games and discoveries along the Le Pic Bois trail,” notes Mathieu Côté.

In collaboration with Tourisme Gaspésie, the app The Forgotten Chronicles of the Mountains will offer activities for all ages in the Mont Saint-Alban sector.

Heritage restoration work continues

As part of the Grande-Grave heritage lodging project, restoration work will continue this summer on the Joseph-Gavey House.

“We’re now in the second season of work on the house. Last year, we focused on decontamination and structural work on the house. The project has resumed. This year, the contractor will focus on the roof and interior work. Restoration work is expected

to be completed in October,” says Mathieu Côté.

Work will also begin this spring on the Elias-Gavey House, another heritage property in the sector.

“We’ll be demolishing the shed before starting the work. This year, work is scheduled on the foundation and structure and will last for a period of three years,” points out the director.

For just over 10 years, the park has been undertaking major renovations of its facilities as well as maintenance work on existing infrastructure.

“We’ve likely invested some \$120 million over the past decade in maintaining and upgrading our infrastructure,” estimates Mr. Côté.

Once restoration work on all four heritage houses is completed — which remains the park’s priority — additional projects could follow, although no announcements are expected in the short term.

Access to the buildings at the Grande-Grave heritage site, including the Blanchette House, the Dolbel-Roberts House and the Hyman & Sons General Store, will reopen on June 19.

Gaspé Peninsula approaching one million tourists

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPE – If current tourism growth continues, the Gaspé Peninsula could surpass the symbolic mark of one million visitors during the 2026–2027 season.

That is the hope expressed by Tourisme Gaspésie after the region welcomed 945,100 visitors during the 2025–2026 season, representing a 5% increase over the previous year. Tourism activity generated approximately \$613 million in economic impact, a 9% increase.

“I’d really love that. I’ve always said that the day we reach one million visitors will be truly exciting. We’re not far off at 945,000. If we see a solid increase, we’ll be very close. If we had the same growth as last year, we’d hit our million. We’re working hard toward that,” says the organization’s director, Joëlle Ross.

“If we look at the numbers compared to 2021–2022, we still have a 42% increase in economic impact and a 10% increase in visitor numbers. What’s most important is the economic impact that allows



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Tourists continue to flock to the Gaspé Peninsula, according to Tourisme Gaspésie.

our enterprises to stay in business,” admits Ms. Ross.

According to Ms. Ross, while the COVID-19 pandemic and the current geopolitical climate may have provided an additional boost to tourism in the Gaspé Peninsula, the region would likely have continued growing regardless.

“Yes, because people who aren’t going to the United States are staying in Quebec. People who came during the pandemic wanted to come back. Over the past two years,

we’ve seen an increase of about 50,000 overnight stays. People need to take the time to make reservations before coming here,” she believes.

According to tourism stakeholders, the 2026 summer season is shaping up to be comparable to last year’s strong season.

“That’s what people are telling us, as reservations are going very well and they’re confident. Quebecers are going to stay in Quebec. These are the lines of thinking that lead us to believe we’ll have a good

tourism season,” says Ms. Ross.

Although the phenomenon is becoming increasingly visible, Tourisme Gaspésie does not currently measure the impact of “van life” tourism — travellers using small self-sufficient motorhomes capable of venturing into forested areas.

“We know it exists, just as there’s off-trail snowmobiling in winter. These aren’t things we promote. We hope these people spend money. It’s like overnight stays, which were hard to calculate 10 or 15 years

ago. Today, we’re able to do that. Possibly, in the not-too-distant future, we’ll be able to get data on that,” says Ms. Ross.

The most recent winter tourism season was also positive thanks to abundant snowfall across the region.

“It was very good. We had snow. People were happy. Bookings were strong. It was a good winter that made us forget the last two winters, which were tougher for businesses,” says Ms. Ross.

Last year in numbers

945,100 visitors, a 5% increase; \$613.5 million in economic impact, a 9% increase; 676 memberships with Tourisme Gaspésie; 11.4 million page views across tourism platforms; 107,000 visitors to tourism information offices; \$1.7 million invested in tourism promotion in Quebec and the Maritime provinces across all seasons; \$490,000 awarded through development programs; a \$5-million budget and an organization considered to be in excellent financial health.

Many organizations fear for the future of adult education and vocational training

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE - The Coalition avenir Québec government could soon propose new legislation that would restrict access to adult education and vocational training in the English public school system by extending the application of Bill 101 to adult learners.

That is the fear of a group of organizations involved in adult education and vocational training centres in the Gaspé Peninsula, Eastern Quebec and across the province. Those organizations underline the fact that such legislation could be tabled by the National Assembly as soon as the beginning of June. The current session will end on June 12.

As of May 28, SPEC's deadline, the bill had not been announced for debate and adoption by the Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) government.

Regionally, the organizations voicing their concern on the issue consists of Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), Vision Gaspé-Percé Now, the Eastern Quebec Literacy Council, the North Shore Community Association (NSCA), the Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders (CAMI) and Heritage Lower Saint Lawrence.

The proposed changes to Bill 101 would allegedly require eligibility for English elementary and secondary education in order to access English adult education and vo-

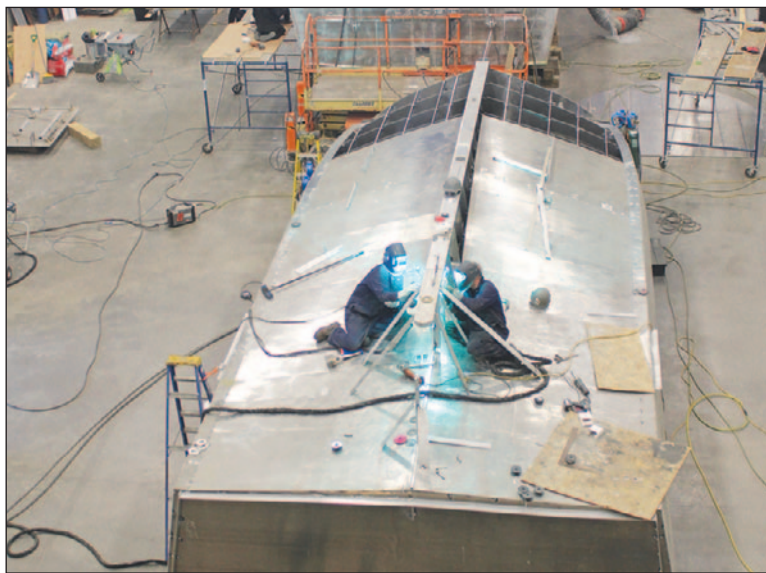


Photo: Gilles Gagné

Skilled workers are needed by the region's businesses, and adult education is often the pathway leading to further training in vocational schools.

cational training.

Jessica Synnott, executive director of Vision Gaspé-Percé Now, explains that while the proposed changes are presented as measures to strengthen the French language, in practice they risk weakening regional workforce development, increasing labour shortages, reducing access to training and destabilizing institutions that are essential to the vitality of rural and remote communities.

"This is something that, from our perspective, would have immediate impacts in the region. I don't even think it would be a matter of language. It clearly will impact the number of students who are in a position to form a group in adult education and vocational training. Sometimes, we need francophone and anglophone

students to form a group. The certificate of eligibility (for English elementary and secondary education) that would be necessary to start a group would be a barrier to reaching the required enrollment," analyzes Ms. Synnott.

Essential sectors are already facing labour shortages, including health care, construction, childcare, administration, mechanics, welding, hospital-ity and other priority fields.

Both linguistic groups would then be penalized, she adds, giving the example of shipbuilding training that is currently provided in Gaspé. Some groups needed students from both linguistic communities in order to reach the amount of students necessary to start a classroom.

"It could have a devastating

effect. It is really the economic impact that matters here. The region and Quebec in general are experiencing a shortage of skilled labour. Restricting access to adult education and vocational training can only make it worse," adds Jessica Synnott.

The potential change to the application of Bill 101 would nevertheless affect English-speaking Quebecers to a greater extent, she thinks.

"When we consider the socio-demographics reality of the anglophone community, it is struggling in terms of income and employability. Our population is so small that we have a problem getting the proper numbers to start a (vocational training) group. Any factor that could make it more difficult for us in that regard will not only hurt the anglophone community but the economy in general. It's everybody that could suffer," insists Jessica Synnott.

She agrees with the Eastern Shores School Board (ESSB) position that once these pathways to adult education and vocational training are closed, they will not reopen.

"Vulnerable people can be affected here. If the Adult Ed centre doesn't exist anymore, it will have a huge domino effect. It would also affect Francophones good enough to access English programs," says Ms. Synnott.

The English-speaking community agrees with the requirement that people in Quebec should ideally have a working knowledge of French.

"Stages are typically done in French. We use the French word in English! What better place to learn the terminology than being immersed in it? Most of the internships are done in French," underlines Jessica Synnott.

Ideally, the modification of Bill 101 will not be tabled, but nobody is certain at this time. Francophones could be hurt by the extension of Bill 101 in a way that the Quebec government has not anticipated.

"There are a lot of courses given in English that are not available in French. We agree that we have to learn the (official) language of the province, but Francophones would like to have a working knowledge of English. It also brings the two communities together. These courses can help bridge that as well," concludes Jessica Synnott.

The groups advocating for the protection of adult education and vocational training are asking citizens to contact local MNAs, mayors, community leaders, business representatives, and decision-makers.

"Urge them to intervene now to protect access to adult education and vocational training in the English public system, before legislation is introduced, and to reject this divisive political approach. Once these pathways are closed, they will not reopen. The consequences will affect future students, families, and communities across Quebec," they state in a press release.

Côte-de-Gaspé MRC examines municipal governance models

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Faced with increasingly complex challenges, the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC has launched a process to examine different municipal governance models.

"We want to assess the situation. We are seeing a lack of resources—whether financial, technical, or human—in many of the municipalities in the region," says Prefect Daniel Côté.

He pointed to the growing difficulty in recruiting chief administrative officers, the senior officials responsible for municipal operations.

"Should we pool services? Move toward municipal



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Daniel Côté, Prefect of the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC.

mergers? Perhaps that too!" the prefect suggests.

The initiative follows a brainstorming session among

elected officials.

Municipal councils throughout the territory adopted resolutions mandating the MRC to commission a study.

The mayors' council formally authorized the study during its public meeting on May 20.

"If a study concludes that we should encourage groupings, it will be up to elected officials and the public to make the necessary decision. At present, we are not in a position to say," Mr. Côté continues.

One example already cited as successful is the shared waste collection service involving Grande-Vallée, Pe-

tite-Vallée and Cloridorme.

However, the vast territory and the presence of three main population centres make the exercise more complicated.

"Once we have the independent studies, we'll have to rack our brains to figure out what conclusions to draw. We'll discuss it among ourselves before taking it to the municipal councils and the public," says the prefect.

"We need to take the emotion out of this debate."

Mr. Côté notes that consolidating municipalities or services is generally easier in more densely populated areas, which is not necessarily the case along the Gaspé Coast.

Season underway at Bonaventure campground

NELSON SERGERIE

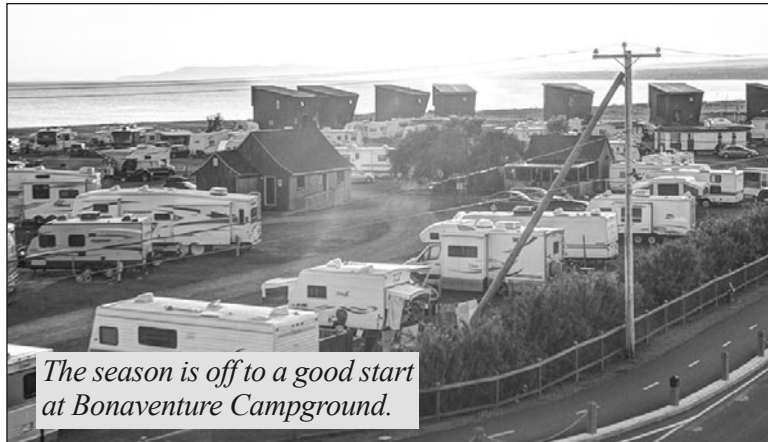
BONAVENTURE – With tourists gradually beginning to arrive in the region, Bonaventure Campground is already seeing strong traffic at the start of the summer season.

Recreational vehicles have started appearing on roads throughout the Gaspé Peninsula as visitors tour local attractions ahead of what Tourisme Gaspésie expects will be a promising tourism season.

“The campground has been open for the past few days, and we already have people who have spent the night there,” says Mayor Pierre Gagnon.

After pausing modernization investments over the past few years, the Town now plans to reinvest in improving the campground.

“We’ll be discussing this again at the council meeting in the coming weeks. We’ve al-



The season is off to a good start at Bonaventure Campground.

Photo: Bonaventure Campground

ready allocated funds for work at the Bonaventure campground,” explains Mr. Gagnon.

The Town’s three-year capital investment plan includes \$200,000 for campground improvements in 2027 and another \$200,000 in 2028.

This year, construction is expected to begin on a new self-contained mini-golf course, a participatory project valued at \$200,000, including a \$100,000 contribution from the municipality.

The mini-golf course will be built on the former volleyball court and is expected to be completed by the end of the summer.

In 2023, the Town suspended part of a planned campground renovation project due to rising costs.

The project included upgrades to water, sewer and electrical infrastructure in the eastern section of the campground to provide 30-amp and 50-amp electrical service for recreational vehicles.

Pin Rouge and Gesgapegiag renew partnership agreement

NELSON SERGERIE

NEW RICHMOND – Pin Rouge Resort and the Gesgapegiag Mi’gmaq First Nation have renewed their partnership agreement through 2030 following two successful winter seasons.

The agreement extends a partnership first launched in 2025 that provided 200 seasonal passes for skiing and tubing, including equipment rentals and access to snow sports lessons.

According to Gaëlle Gabin, the renewed agreement also expands the program. “We were thrilled with the first year, and after a second season that was a huge success, we renewed the agreement while enhancing the offer through 2030,” says the ski centre’s director general, Gaëlle Gabin.

New passes are even being added. “This year, we’re enhancing the offer by adding 50 passes for tubing,” she adds.

The Gesgapegiag community receives a preferential flat-rate agreement similar to the rates offered to organized groups visiting the resort.

“We are very proud to see this partnership continue and grow stronger in the coming years. It allows many young people and families in Ges-



Photo: Pin Rouge

The alpine village at Pin Rouge will undergo upgrades over the next two years.

gapegiag to enjoy winter activities while contributing to the development of a recreational and tourism infrastructure that is important for the entire region,” says Amanda Larocque, executive director of the Gesgapegiag community.

Ms. Gabin says the partnership also benefits the resort itself. “It helps support the resort’s operations and allows the community—which previously had less access—to benefit from the infrastructure, sports, and outdoor activities,” continued Ms. Gabin.

Pin Rouge Resort recorded a 30% increase in attendance last winter, and management believes the partnership contributed to that growth.

“We really saw people of all ages. It was diverse within the community. It was fun to see that everyone benefited,” she

comments.

Although the resort has not yet approached the Listuguj Mi’gmaq First Nation about a similar partnership, Ms. Gabin says such discussions could eventually take place.

The alpine village at Pin Rouge is also scheduled to undergo upgrades over the next two years, while modernization of the resort’s information technology systems is already underway.

Thanks to a strong winter season, the resort expects to post a financial surplus that will be reinvested into infrastructure improvements.

“We had a positive year. It gives us some breathing room and allows us to reinvest the money in our infrastructure,” she says, noting the previous two winters had been difficult because of limited snowfall.

Regional Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day celebration to be held in Percé

Nelson Sergerie

PERCÉ – The Société nationale Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine has chosen Percé to host the regional Fête nationale celebration on June 23. About 20 celebrations will take place across the Gaspé Peninsula this year.

In Percé, a concert featuring the Paspebiac band Quimorucru will be presented on June 23. Activities on June 24 will focus more on families and will include a variety of events, including science-related activities, as the celebrations will take place at the Percé Geopark.

This year’s theme pays tribute to Guy Lafleur, the former National Hockey League star from Thurso, who would have turned 75 this year.

“Activities will be announced for each festival, but this will be a tribute to a Quebecer who brought quite a few people together around hockey games, as we’re seeing right now. The organizers are planning hockey games and 10-hour celebrations, all centred around the theme,” says the organization’s board chairman, Louis Poirier.

Each local celebration generally attracts between 100 and 150 people. Last year, the regional celebration held in Caplan drew about 200 participants.

“What’s important is that everyone can participate in a festival in their own community, region, or locality. One of the special features we’ve developed this year in the Gaspé Peninsula is that we’ll have a special patriotic speech. We put out a call to writers in the region, and Mr. Jean-Claude Clavet’s speech was selected and will be read at each of the festivals throughout the Gaspé Peninsula,” he says.



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Patrimoine Gaspésie propose renaming Gaspé Boulevard

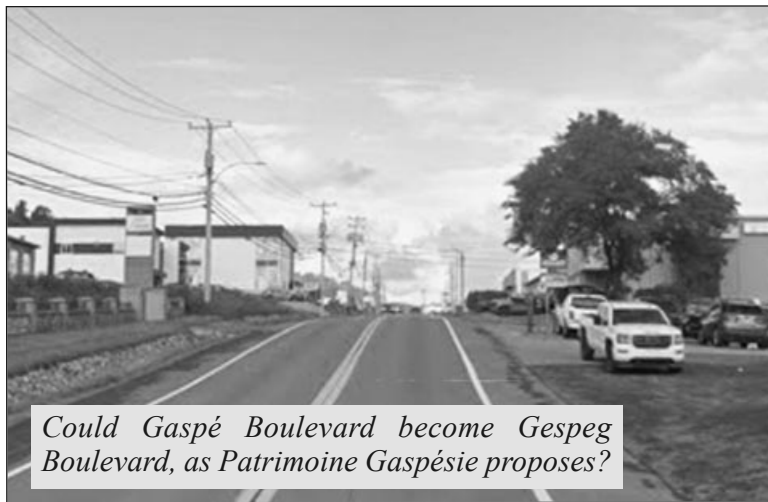
NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – After receiving a lukewarm response to its proposal to name the windmill blade road “Chemin Bernard-Landry,” Patrimoine Gaspésie is putting forward a new idea: renaming Boulevard de Gaspé as Boulevard de Gespeg.

The organization’s request is made “with the aim of giving Indigenous peoples a more fitting place in Gaspé’s place names than an industrial road,” writes President Jean-Marie Fallu in a letter sent to the mayor of Gaspé.

The idea itself was proposed by Serge Dunn. “In its place names, Gaspé recognizes the European peoples who founded Gaspé. The French presence is represented by Jacques-Cartier Street, and the British presence by Queen Street,” explains Mr. Fallu in his letter.

“Since Gaspé Boulevard is the main thoroughfare leading



Could Gaspé Boulevard become Gespeg Boulevard, as Patrimoine Gaspésie proposes?

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

to the heart of downtown Gaspé, Patrimoine Gaspésie supports Mr. Dunn’s idea to rename it Boulevard de Gespeg. By doing so, and following a public consultation, the Town of Gaspé would grant First Nations a prominent place on par with that already accorded to Francophones and Anglophones. This public consultation could also address the proposed designation for the road used by the wind energy industry,” he believes.

Proposal to be reviewed

Asked about the proposal, mayor Daniel Côté did not reject the idea outright, but indicated the matter would first be referred to the Town’s place-naming committee.

However, the mayor acknowledged having reservations about the practical implications of changing the name of a major boulevard.

“I wonder how this pro-

posal will be received by the many residents and the forty or so businesses and institutions located on this boulevard, which would have to deal with a change of address, letterhead, business cards, signage, suppliers, etc. There would need to be social acceptance,” the mayor states.

The proposal has generated mixed reactions on social media.

If the Town ultimately rejects the renaming of Boulevard de Gaspé, Le Pharillon, the weekly newspaper, has suggested renaming Montée de Corte-Réal instead, where the administrative offices of the Gespeg Mi’gmaq First Nation are located.

“The same principle applies to the hundreds of residents of Montée de Corte-Réal. The goal is laudable, but changing the name of an existing street raises substantial practical issues that must be analyzed in depth,” notes Mr. Coté.

Following the Town council’s recent decision to name the windmill blade road “Chemin Awtiget,” Jean-Marie Fallu criticized the choice, saying the proposed toponym “is more a political decision than one based on historical reality.”

The future Mi’gmaq name means “to open a path” or “to clear a way.” During the May 19 council meeting, mayor Côté explained that adopting the name was one way for the Town to collaborate with the Gespeg Mi’gmaq First Nation.

Gaspé already has two streets named in honour of Indigenous figures.

Domagaya Street commemorates a young Iroquoian prince and interpreter from the village of Stadacona, now Quebec City, during the 16th century. Jean Chou Street honours an Indigenous chief from the Gaspé region who was allied with Samuel de Champlain in the early 17th century.

Grande-Rivière industrial park reaches final major modernization phase

NELSON SERGERIE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE – The final major phase in bringing the Grande-Rivière industrial park up to modern standards is about to begin, as the Town has issued a call for tenders for reconstruction of the park’s outfall system.

Nearly four years after the Quebec government transferred ownership of the industrial park to the municipality, work continues to modernize the infrastructure following discussions with the Quebec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food



The Grande-Rivière Industrial Park.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

(MAPAQ) that stretched over nearly 40 years.

The project includes the installation of sewer pipes over approximately 195 metres, construction of a new outfall extending 387.6 metres, modifications to the existing pre-

treatment chamber, installation of four sewer manholes, construction of a new road foundation and asphalt paving, as well as restoration of the site.

In June 2022, the Quebec government provided the Town with \$4.7 million to carry out

several infrastructure upgrades, including improvements to the outfall, pumping station and electrical supply system.

Since then, the wastewater pumping station and electrical connection have been rebuilt.

The final remaining component is the reconstruction of the marine outfall. All required government permits have now been obtained.

Once bids are received, the Town will have 90 days to award the contract, a timeline expected to allow consultations with First Nations to be completed.

If all proceeds according to schedule, municipal officials hope work on the five-month project can begin in July.

As construction costs rose because of inflation, the Quebec government later agreed to provide an additional \$1 million to support the upgrades. Project managers maintain that the budget is being managed carefully.

Mayor Gino Cyr had made modernization of the industrial park a key campaign issue during the 2017 municipal election, which led to his first term in office.

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Public forum launched on municipal infrastructure costs

NELSON SERGERIE

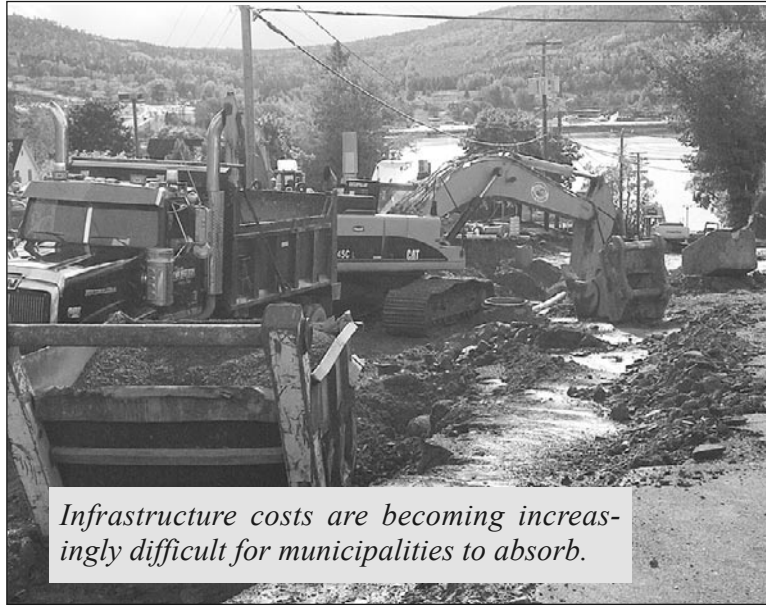
CARLETON-SUR-MER – The Government of Quebec is launching a province-wide consultation on the cost and financing of municipal infrastructure, an initiative welcomed by the Gaspésie Prefects' Table.

For several years, municipalities across Quebec have argued that the provincial government is not providing enough financial support to maintain and modernize aging infrastructure systems, particularly water and sewer networks.

The new consultation and public forum will focus primarily on the rising costs associated with municipal infrastructure and the challenges of financing those projects.

"This is good news. The cost of infrastructure and all related work is a critical issue. It's an issue we'll be highlighting during the election campaign. Sixty percent of public infrastructure in Quebec is located in municipalities and is underfunded," notes the table's president and mayor of Carleton-sur-Mer, Mathieu Lapointe.

Municipal elected officials



Infrastructure costs are becoming increasingly difficult for municipalities to absorb.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

are expected to put forward several proposals during the consultation process.

"We need to find solutions. Every year, there is an estimated 8% increase in costs. Nearly half of this increase is due to new standards and new requirements being implemented," says Mr. Lapointe.

"We need to reduce infrastructure costs to do more with taxpayers' money. This online consultation will lay the groundwork for our general assembly. The private sector will play an important role, including in promoting best practices. Quebec will remain a partner to our municipalities, particularly on fiscal

matters, and together we will establish a new partnership focused on efficiency, stability, and predictability," says Minister of Municipal Affairs Samuel Poulin.

Several infrastructure projects completed in recent years across the Gaspé Peninsula have experienced significant cost overruns due to inflation, particularly since the pandemic.

In many cases, contractors' bids have greatly exceeded the estimates prepared by govern-

ment officials.

"There are a multitude of factors causing costs to skyrocket. Mr. Poulin wants to address these various issues, both in terms of fiscal matters and the standards applied. There will be a comprehensive review, and that is what we hope for," Mathieu Lapointe says.

The Union of Quebec Municipalities has put forward several recommendations, and municipalities are ready to do their part as long as the Quebec government does the same.

According to the provincial government, the consultation will help gather the perspectives of the public, municipal elected officials, municipal administration staff, and stakeholders in the construction sector.

The information collected will help define priorities for action and identify opportunities to optimize infrastructure investments while ensuring the long-term sustainability of essential community infrastructure.

An online questionnaire is available to the public, while written submissions may be filed until June 10.

The process will continue over the coming months through a public forum scheduled before Quebec's June 24 national holiday, discussions at the Table Québec-Municipalités and the work of an expert committee bringing together representatives from municipalities, ministries, government agencies and infrastructure specialists.

A final report containing recommendations is expected in December 2026.

What will be analyzed

The consultation will examine: the use of municipal taxation powers to maximize available flexibility; the creation of more efficient, flexible and predictable funding models; ways to prioritize municipal infrastructure maintenance needs; standards and requirements that could be revised to reduce infrastructure construction costs.

Carleton-sur-Mer participates in a survey on municipal services

Nelson Sergerie

CARLETON-SUR-MER – Carleton-sur-Mer is participating in a survey conducted by the firm Léger to gauge residents' opinions on the quality of municipal services and their level of satisfaction with their community. "This is part of a process of continuous improvement. We wanted to see how residents view the services and the work done by the Town and the municipal council so we can improve. It's also part of the renewal of our strategic planning. We wanted to gauge public sentiment to see how we should guide our decisions and actions for the coming years," says Mayor Mathieu Lapointe.

The mayor has no preconceived notions about the feedback citizens will provide. "We want a different kind of input—from people who aren't just making requests. We want an overall picture to see if we're heading in the right direction in terms of land use planning, community activities, and the role of the council; that's what we want to look at in the survey."

The Town is part of a broader, streamlined process that involves conducting the same exercise with other municipalities. "This will allow us to compare ourselves to other similar municipalities to see where we stand," says the mayor.

Among the topics covered are infrastructure management, satisfaction with council members and the mayor, and the Town's services as a whole. Each household will receive an invitation to complete the online survey. The results will be released later this spring.

"We want to update the strategic plan next fall. Come fall, we'll announce the new strategic plan and discuss the survey results," says the mayor. The review takes place every four years, once the new council is fully established.

Source alimentaire Bonavignon receives major community impact award

MARY ROBERTSON

MARIA - At a time when food insecurity continues to rise across the Bay of Chaleurs, Source alimentaire Bonavignon has received a major financial boost to help meet growing community needs.

The Maria-based food assistance organization was selected as one of only two Quebec recipients of the PepsiCo Foundation "Community Impact Award," receiving \$13,868 in recognition of its efforts to support residents from St-Alphonse to Nouvelle struggling to put food on the table.

The organization provides food assistance and access to healthy meals for people facing financial hardship throughout the region. With grocery prices and living costs continuing to climb, staff members say the demand for help has increased significantly in recent years.

Last fall, David Hamel, a sales representative for Frito-Lay in the Bay of Chaleurs region, informed staff at Source alimentaire Bonavignon that he had nominated the organization for the award through his employer, PepsiCo. Lori Munro, who works at the centre, completed the application process and submitted the required documents, despite knowing there would be strong competition from organizations across North America.

The PepsiCo Foundation is the philanthropic arm of PepsiCo. Its mission is to support local organizations that positively impact workforce development, food security, access



Photo: Source alimentaire Bonavignon

Source alimentaire Bonavignon receives the cheque from David Hamel, sales representative for Frito-Lay in the area.

to safe water, and farming initiatives across North America.

The foundation aims to recognize and support initiatives that create meaningful change for people and the planet. It believes in grassroots leadership and investing in community-driven solutions.

This year's award recipients were nominated by PepsiCo employees and selected for their commitment to the communities they serve. A total of 100 grants were awarded across North America, including 30 in Canada. Only two organizations were selected in Quebec, one being the Source alimentaire Bonavignon in Maria, in recognition of its efforts to help feed the community. In addition to nominating the organization, Mr. Hamel has volunteered his time helping with the centre's Supermarket Recovery Program by collecting unsold grocery items from Marché Richelieu and Marché Metro

S. Allard.

Earlier this year, Suzanne Lamarre, director of Source alimentaire Bonavignon, also received the King Charles III Coronation Medal during the annual general meeting of Banques alimentaires du Québec in Montreal. The medal recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to their communities. Through more than 25 years of dedication and volunteer work, Ms. Lamarre has helped expand the organization's services and strengthen food support programs throughout the area.

Source alimentaire Bonavignon is open to anyone in need of food assistance in the region. Donations can be dropped off at the centre in Maria or made by mail or online.

The organization can be reached at 418-759-8000. - 706A, boulevard Perron Est, Maria, Que., G0C 1Y0.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



Wildflowers and the passing of summer

On the Gaspé Peninsula, summer does not arrive all at once. It arrives quietly, even though we are looking for signs of summer every day.

First the fields and lawns turn green. Then, one day without warning, hundreds of dandelions appear across the lawn. The bees are grateful because they can begin their long season of gathering nectar to make honey.

Soon after, lupines are among the first wildflowers to bloom along roadsides and in fields. Their magnificent purple, pink and blue blossoms stand proudly, transforming the Gaspesian landscape into a veritable explosion of beauty. Summer has truly begun.

Not long afterward come the brown-eyed Susans, with their golden petals and dark centres staring toward the sun. Daisies dance in the fields. Many of us recall making crowns of daisies to wear and perhaps pluck off the petals of a few while reciting "He loves me. He loves me not."

Fireweed tries to be more colourful and beautiful than lupines and, although majestic and tall, it does not possess the same variety of colours. If you look closely in the grass, you will also notice tiny buttercups. Each type of wildflower is unique and beautiful.

Wildflowers become summer's calendar, reminding us how quickly the season passes. Each flower takes its turn and, when its days are done, fades into a colourful memory. Summer slips away far too quickly.

Mostly all beautiful objects, wildflowers and even people, have only a limited time to dazzle us. Perhaps the lesson is to appreciate them while we can. Slow down and notice the beauty around you.

The lupines will not stand forever. The brown-eyed Susans will eventually bow their heads as their petals scatter in the wind. Autumn waits quietly for its turn to impress us.



On the Gaspé Peninsula, wildflowers bloom and quietly remind us that time is marching on. We accept that everything changes. Stop and savour the delicate beauty of Gaspesian wildflowers while you can.

Enjoy reading The Gaspé Spec on your tablet, smartphone, or laptop.

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Creating Safer Festivals: Festif & Safe returns for the summer season

WENDY DAWSON

NEW CARLISLE - Spring may feel endless this year, but summer is just around the corner — bringing with it another busy and exciting festival season across the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands.

In 2023, following allegations of sexual assault and reports of GHB poisonings during the 2022 festival season, the Table de concertation féministe Gaspésie–Les Îles launched the Festif & Safe initiative, aimed at making women’s safety a priority at festivals and public events.

Charlotte Agostini, Development officer for the Table states, “Since launching the initiative, enthusiasm for the Festif & Safe project has continued to grow among festival attendees. They fully grasp the importance of having a safe space for serious interventions but also as a place for sup-



Photo: Courtesy

Look for the Festif & safe logo like the one worn here by Table member Charlotte Agostini.

portive listening and conversation with our facilitators.”

This summer, the Festif & Safe initiative will be present at nine festivals and events throughout the Gaspé Penin-

sula and the Magdalen Islands.

Safe spaces

The primary goal of the initiative is to ensure that each participating festival offers a designated “Safe Space” — a clearly identified location where festivalgoers can receive support and rapid assistance from Festif & Safe professionals, representatives from CALACS (Centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel), and other community workers.

These spaces may provide basic first aid, drink safety lids, or simply a calm and quiet environment for rest and recovery. Most importantly, they are intended to welcome anyone seeking support without judgment.

Safe Spaces will be clearly marked at festival sites, and trained workers will be easily identifiable through Festif &

Safe branded clothing.

Workers and volunteers will also use outreach and prevention techniques to identify potentially problematic situations within festival crowds. When necessary, they may accompany individuals in distress to secure areas on-site.

The measures put in place aim not only to reduce harm, but also to ensure the wellbeing of festivalgoers who wish to safely enjoy the region’s many summer attractions.

Supporting festival organizers

Table de concertation féministe Gaspésie–Les Îles also provides training and support to help festival organizers prepare staff and volunteers for a variety of situations that may arise during events.

The goal is to equip organizers with the tools needed to respond appropriately when

interacting with potential victims of sexual assault or individuals who may have been unknowingly intoxicated.

Support may also include assistance with awareness campaigns, the development of harm reduction kits, and the promotion of preventative safety measures such as the Buddy System — encouraging friends to look out for one another and establish clear meeting points in case they become separated.

Festival organizers are also encouraged to adopt and promote a clear code of conduct so that everyone attending understands the expected attitudes and behaviours that contribute to a safe and respectful environment.

Additional information is available through the Table’s festival organizers’ toolkit at <https://femmesgim.qc.ca/en/festif-safes-toolbox/> or by contacting Charlotte Agostini at cagostini@femmesgim.qc.ca.

FIPEQ president meets with members in Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – With elections approaching, Anne-Marie Bellerose, the president of the Fédération des intervenantes en petite enfance du Québec (FIPEQ-CSQ) met with members in Gaspé on May 24 to discuss challenges facing Quebec’s early childhood education network.

Two major issues emerged from the discussions: a critical shortage of childcare spaces and a persistent labour shortage.

According to the union, 361 children are currently on waiting lists across the region.

“In regions like the Gaspé Peninsula, finding workers is an additional challenge. For example, in 2023, only four people graduated. That’s not enough,” notes Anne-Marie Bellerose.

The program is not currently offered at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles because of insufficient enrolment.

According to the union, several aspects of the profession need to be improved.

“It’s a major challenge; although we’ve made gains in starting salaries for educators, it’s still insufficient to be competitive. We lack support for

caring for children with special needs, as well as pedagogical support. We need to work on the profession as a whole to properly prepare them, but above all to ensure they remain in the system,” notes Ms. Bellerose.

Among the solutions proposed are salary increases and mentoring programs, given that approximately 50% of educators leave the profession within two years.

Many educators choose to move to school service centres, where salaries and benefits are often better than those offered in early childhood centres.

Home-based childcare also needs support

The union president also stressed the importance of promoting home-based childcare services, where spaces remain available but underused.

“These are high-quality settings. Since they aren’t valued by the government, and since the portal isn’t adapted to their reality, parents aren’t aware that they have access to educational services. We need to address this issue,” says Ms. Bellerose.

Quebec’s objective remains to provide spaces for all children currently on waiting lists.

“We hope so, but there are



Photo: FIPEQ-CSQ

still many challenges. Family-based settings are closing every day, every week. We sometimes create new ones, but we lose them at the same time. We need a long-term vision, and that’s what we hope for. That would be our dream at FIPEQ: one child, one spot,” says Ms. Bellerose.

Reducing workloads will also be necessary to improve employee retention.

The new Minister of Families and Bonaventure Member of the National Assembly (MNA), Catherine Blouin, has been mandated by premier Christine Fréchette to convert 5,000 childcare spaces into subsidized spaces.

However, no announcement has yet been made regarding the creation of additional spaces.



Bourg School will not welcome students back in September.

Photo: CSSRL

Bourg School in Carleton-sur-Mer will remain closed in September

Nelson Sergerie

CARLETON-SUR-MER – Students from Bourg School in Carleton-sur-Mer, which was partially destroyed by fire on January 26, will not be returning to the school for the start of the 2026-2027 academic year.

Students will continue attending classes at Saint-Paul School in Maria until reconstruction work is completed.

The measure is included in the René-Lévesque School Service Centre’s three-year building allocation plan adopted on May 19.

“This is the only change we’ve made to our three-year plan. We already know that students from Bourg School will be at Saint-Paul at the start of the school year,” explains service centre director Sandra Nicol.

Since April 14, demolition work has been underway in the school’s central section.

The work includes the electrical room located in the administrative wing, as well as offices situated in the middle portion of the building.

One positive development is that soot damage did not spread to adjacent sections of the school. “We had the central section where we had to demolish the interior. We are currently drawing up the reconstruction plans, which will need to be submitted to the Ministry of Education. There are still a few steps to take before we can move forward with the reconstruction,” notes Ms. Nicol.

No timeline has yet been established for the return of students and staff to Bourg School.

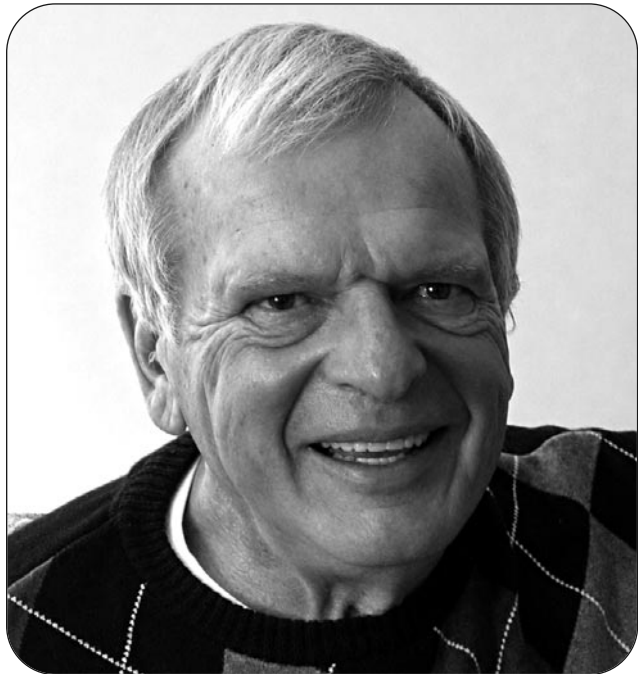
Before the fire, the school served approximately 170 students and employed 25 staff members.

An electrical malfunction involving a floor-cleaning machine was identified as the cause of the fire.

Announcements



Obituaries



BISSON: David Charles

With deep love and sadness, we announce the passing of David Charles Bisson at his residence in Port Daniel, Quebec, on May 24, 2026, at the age of 80.

Born on October 7, 1945, in Campbellton, New Brunswick, David was the son of the late Herbert Bisson and Isabel Hubert. He is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, Ursula (née Dea); his daughters, Rebecca and Jodi (Paul Park); and his two adored granddaughters. After several moves over the years, David and his family ultimately called Oakville, Ontario, home.

David dedicated his entire professional career to Scotiabank, a journey that took his talents to Montreal, Toronto, the Caribbean, and Central America. Outside of his professional success, David was a man of simple pleasures and deep passions. He was an avid sports enthusiast, a master griller, and a profound dog lover whose loyal canine companion was never far from his side. In his later years, he embraced the role of "Papa" with joy, finding delight in watching his grandchildren grow and sharing in their impish adventures. David spent his retirement summers in the place he loved most, pouring his heart into turning his Port Daniel property into a beautifully manicured masterpiece.

David's strength, sharp wit, and dedication to his loved ones will live on in the hearts of his family.

In expression of sympathy, the family welcomes donations to a charity of your personal choice.



MAJOR: Elizabeth Powell

It is with deep sadness and immense love the family of Elizabeth Powell Major announces her peaceful passing on the morning of Friday, May 8, 2026, at the age of 79.

Elizabeth, known as Betty or Betty-Ann, brought warmth wherever she went. Her bright smile, kind heart, and gift for conversation made everyone feel welcome. Whether sharing a cup of tea, enjoying a game of Scrabble, or preparing a meal for those she loved, Betty found joy in life's simple moments and in the people around her. She had a deep love for music, a passion for good food, and a special ability to make ordinary days feel meaningful.

Betty treasured her family. She was a devoted mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, and friend whose love and guidance will continue to live on in the hearts of those who knew her.

Predeceased by her parents, Ervin Powell and Violet Campbell, and by her beloved husband, Kenneth Major, Betty leaves behind a family who will miss her dearly: her children, Myles (Sonia), Angela (John), Jason (Tammy), Heather (Andy), and stepdaughter Shelley (Colin). She will be lovingly remembered by her granddaughters Andrea (Ashley), Jillian (Alan), Brooke (Billy), Alyssa, and Shelby; and by her cherished great-granddaughters Lauren-Makynleigh, Riley and Arielle.

She also leaves to mourn her brother Eldon (Anola), sister Evelyn (Gerald), as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins, treasured friends, and extended family members whose lives were touched by her kindness and gentle spirit.

Betty's family finds comfort in the many memories she created, the laughter shared around the table, the conversations that lingered long after the tea was poured, and the

love she gave so freely throughout her life.

In keeping with her wishes, there will be no formal service. Her family encourages those who knew and loved her to remember her in their own special way, perhaps with a warm cup of tea, a favourite song, or a game of Scrabble shared with someone dear.



In Memory

ALMOND: Carol Sweetman

1944 - 2025

Carol went to be with the Lord one year ago.

Carol, thank you so much for the 56 years, 8 months and 7 days. I will always love and miss you. I will close with one of your sayings.

I love you to the moon and back.

From your grieving, loving husband, Peter.

ANNETT: Emily (Nee Tuzo) and Francis

In loving memory of a dear mother, mother-in-law, grandmother and great-grandmother, who passed away 28 years ago on May 2, 1998 and a dear father, father-in-law and grandfather, who passed away 28 years ago on May 14, 1998.

Though your smile is gone forever,

And your hand we cannot touch.

Still we have so many memories,

Of the ones we loved so much.

Your memory is our keepsake,

With which we'll never part.

God has you in His keeping,

And we have you in our hearts.

Sadly missed and forever loved by daughter, Bonnie, son-in-law, Daniel, granddaughter, Janna and grandson, John (Evelyne) and great-granddaughter, Violette.



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GASPÉ:
Forillon
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.

PORT DANIEL:
3 Star Golden Age Club
June 26: Mini lotto raffle: 5 tickets for \$10, \$1,000 prize. Winning ticket will be the last 3 numbers of mini lotto.
July 10: Money and gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m.
July 25-26: Garage sale from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., to

rent a table is \$10.
August 8: Spaghetti or Lasagna supper, more information to follow.
PORT DANIEL:
St. James Anglican Church
June 7: A bake and plant sale will begin at 12:30 p.m. followed by a musical concert beginning 2 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.

NEW CARLISLE:
St. Andrews Anglican Church
June 13: A spring potluck supper from 4:30 p.m. - 6 p.m. in the basement of the church. Cost: adults \$15, children \$7. Take out

UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN
Sunday, June 7
2 p.m. Service

available from 4 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., no delivery available.

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.

PARISH OF GASPÉ
Sunday, June 7
St. Andrews, York
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Holy Confirmation
Sunday, June 14
St. James, Wakeham
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, June 7
10 a.m. Service
Sunday, June 14
10 a.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
Sunday, June 7
New Carlisle
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Port Daniel
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Sunday, June 14
New Carlisle
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Shigawake
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist



POEMS CREATIVE WRITING PUZZLES WHAT'S THIS CHALLENGE SPEC GETS AROUND RECIPES

HOROSCOPES - June 1 to June 7

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
Your energy is infectious this week, Aries. This is the perfect time to launch a passion project. Expect a surprise compliment from someone you admire.
TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Taurus, treat yourself to a little luxury. You have earned a slow morning of coffee and a crossword puzzle. A cozy discovery brings you a smile.
GEMINI – May 22/June 21
Your social calendar is buzzing with exciting new connections. Use your natural wit to spur the conversation and you'll be the star of every chat you have with others.
CANCER – June 22/July 22
Creative inspiration hits you mid-week, Cancer. Be sure to keep a notebook handy. Your intuition is very sharp right now, leading you to a special breakthrough.
LEO – July 23/Aug 23
Whether you are looking for it or not, the spotlight is finding you, Leo. Shine bright and share your ideas. The world is ready to applaud your vision.
VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Organization will be your superpower this week, Virgo. Everything finally clicks into place. Examine the small details around you. You will find peace in them and productivity.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, balance will come easily as you blend work and recreation in perfect ways. An invitation to a local event adds some sparkle to your weekend.
SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
Your magnetism is at an all-time high, Scorpio. Exciting opportunities are being drawn toward you, so you will need to trust your gut on a new venture.
SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
Adventure is calling your name this week, Sagittarius. An optimistic outlook can turn a minor detour into a grand adventure. Get ready for some exciting days ahead.
CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
Take a moment to celebrate your wins with a favorite treat or a good book, Capricorn. You have been hitting your stride and smashing goals with impressive ease.
AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
Your big ideas are drawing some attention, Aquarius. Many people are ready to help you build on them. Stay curious and open to a clever suggestion from a friend.
PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Your imagination is taking the driver's seat this week, Pisces. A heartwarming moment with a loved one reminds you how much others care.

HOROSCOPES - June 8 to June 14

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
Collaboration is your secret weapon this week, Aries. Putting two heads together will be better than one. Take a walk or exercise to get away and gain perspective.
TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Taurus, you may find yourself getting a small bonus or increase in pay, proving your financial luck is looking up this week.
GEMINI – May 22/June 21
Gemini, this is a great week for writing or presentations since you will have creativity flowing through you. A fun text message can be a catalyst for a great weekend.
CANCER – June 22/July 22
Your nesting instincts are in full swing right now, Cancer. You might be inspired to turn your space into a peaceful sanctuary. A family-related piece of news can bring peace.
LEO – July 23/Aug 23
Courage may come naturally this week, Leo. Speak your truth right when it is needed. Your warmth can be a magnet for others and new friendships may develop.
VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, learning a new skill will be easy for you right now. Take pride in your progress. You are becoming more versatile and vital.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
Share your heart and listen closely to what a partner has to say, Libra. A romantic or platonic relationship will reach a high point. The connection built will be exciting.
SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
You're at peak productivity right now as you tackle your to-do list with great focus, Scorpio. By the end of the week you'll be ready to dive into a mysterious or fun hobby.
SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
A sense of humour will be a great asset this week, helping to diffuse any tension by laughing, Sagittarius.
CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
Wisdom is flowing through you and you may find you are the go-to person for solid advice, Capricorn. Your grounded nature helps everyone around you.
AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
Aquarius, innovation will help you find clever shortcuts for problems that have proven tough to solve. Your unique style may start earning you praise, but remain humble.
PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Empathy allows you to connect with others on a deep level, Pisces. A creative project that you have been building finally starts to bloom in unexpected ways.

Math Blocks

Fill in the missing blocks with numbers between 0-20.
The numbers in each row add up to the totals on the right.
The numbers in each column add up to the totals on the bottom.

| | | | |
|----|----|----|----|
| 10 | 6 | | 20 |
| | 8 | | 18 |
| | 15 | 11 | 29 |
| 14 | 29 | 24 | |

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to the great outdoors.

I R B S D

Answer: Birds

“How they say that in...”

English: Vacation
Spanish: Vacaciones
Italian: Vacanza
French: Vacances
German: Urlaub

Early childhood forum brings together professionals from across the Baie-des-Chaleurs region

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Approximately 60 early childhood professionals from the Avignon and Bonaventure MRCs gathered in Carleton on May 14 for the sixth Baie-des-Chaleurs Early Childhood Forum.

Held every two years, the event focuses on issues affecting children aged 0 to 5 and the families who support them.

The Gaspé SPEC spoke with Heather MacWhirter, coordinator at Family Ties, who has helped organize the forum since its creation.

According to Ms. MacWhirter, the organizing committee included Nancy Valois, director of the Centre d'action bénévole St-Alphonse-Nouvelle; Catherine Arsenault-Dionne,



Photo: G. Gagné

The forum gives professionals the opportunity to network with others working in the same field, according to Heather MacWhirter.

parental support worker at P'tit Bonheur; Anne-Julie Landry, territorial development officer in social development coordination at the

Avignon MRC; as well as several representatives from the CISSS de la Gaspésie, including Taméra Plourde-Day, Laurence Porlier, Patricia Leclerc and Danielle Lagacé.

Asked why ongoing training in early childhood development remains important, Ms. MacWhirter explained that the forum allows professionals to stay informed about current practices and research.

“The forum offers up to date knowledge and best practices from specialists who understand particular factors for people working with 0-5 children and their families across the province,” she says.

The topics discussed throughout the day covered a wide range of issues related to child development and family support.

When asked why men remain underrepresented at such

events, Ms. MacWhirter pointed to the fact that caregiving professions continue to be dominated by women.

“Traditionally, women work more in caring professions and community organizations, which also tend to be lower-paid jobs that do not attract many men,” she notes.

“However, this is something that should be addressed because many boys and men could benefit from seeing more male role models working in these fields,” she adds.

Ms. MacWhirter also emphasized the importance of ensuring linguistic inclusion during the event by translating English material displayed on the large screen.

“If we want to be inclusive and improve services, professionals from the English-speaking and First Nations communities also need access

to new ideas and training in their own language,” she says.

One of the key benefits of the forum, according to Ms. MacWhirter, is the opportunity for networking among professionals working with the same families and communities.

“The forum gives workers a chance to connect with others working in the same field and often supporting the same families,” she explains.

She adds that one presentation by Mélanie Bilodeau focused heavily on the importance of maintaining healthy relationships with families.

“The conference talked a lot about the approach to take when dealing with families — how to be open and honest while still maintaining the relationship,” says Ms. MacWhirter.

Seniors gather for Spring Fling

GILLES GAGNÉ

GESGAPEGIAG – CASA brought together close to 100 participants on May 14 at the Galgosiet Centre in Gessgapegiaig to celebrate another successful season of Wellness Centre activities.

The Spring Fling event was organized to thank seniors and participants who took part in Wellness Centre programming over the last eight months and to wish them well before activities resume in the fall.

The gathering featured a meal, social activities and a very popular 50-50 draw led by Trudy Brown.

The majority of attendees were women, reflecting the strong participation of women in Wellness Centre activities throughout the region.

Representatives from several community organizations were also present to meet participants and share information about their services.

Rebecca MacDonald attended on behalf of the Eastern Quebec Literacy Council, while The Gaspé Spec was represented by Jillian O'Connell, Holly Smith and Emily Hocquard.

Between November and March, The Gaspé Spec collaborated with CASA on three historical scavenger hunts held in Matapedia, Escuminac and Port-Daniel as part of the newspaper's 50th anniversary celebrations.

Additional scavenger hunts were also organized in New Carlisle in partnership with Family Ties, and in Gaspé in collaboration with Vision Gaspé-Percé Now and the Eastern Quebec Literacy Council.



The Gaspé Spec team members Jillian O'Connell, Emily Hocquard and Holly Smith welcomed attendees interested in learning more about the newspaper.



Close to 100 Wellness Centre participants attended CASA's Spring Fling event on May 14.

Photos: Gilles Gagné



The 50-50 draw, led by Trudy Brown, was highly successful, with all tickets selling quickly.

Riôtel Bonaventure still searching for buyer

NELSON SERGERIE

BONAVENTURE – The future of Riôtel Bonaventure remains uncertain as no serious buyer has yet come forward for the Château Blanc property, according to Pierre Gagnon the mayor of Bonaventure.

“I spoke with François Rioux in recent days, and he explained to me that he had not received any offers on the table. Both he and we, as facilitators, are actively hoping that an offer will be accepted by the Riôtel Group,” comments Pierre Gagnon.

The mayor hopes a transaction can be completed quickly enough for the 30-room tourist establishment to reopen this summer.

The Town says it may be prepared to assist in encouraging a potential acquisition.

“We can explore different scenarios to encourage a buyer, but we don’t have anyone yet. We can look at current regulations, perhaps incentives, to encourage someone to take over the Château Blanc,” says Pierre Gagnon.

“We may need an innovative approach. The Town Council will have the final say on everything. We’ve already had programs like tax credits,” the mayor adds cautiously.

The Riôtel Group announced in November that it would close the Bonaventure location after concluding that the property’s development potential could not realistically be achieved.

At the time, the company stated that the carefully considered business decision reflected its long-term strategy to strengthen its position as a regional tourism leader while expanding its offerings elsewhere in Quebec.

According to the company, the inability to make the investments needed to meet customer expectations — particularly those of business travellers — played a major role in the decision.

The absence of an elevator also complicated marketing efforts, especially with tour bus operators and older clientele.

The company also attempted unsuccessfully to acquire neighbouring buildings in order to expand the site.

“We came to the conclusion



The future of the Riôtel Bonaventure remains uncertain as no buyer has yet emerged.

Photo: From the Riôtel Group’s Facebook page

that we would not be able to upgrade the Bonaventure hotel to meet market needs,” the Riôtel Group stated in November.

Employees affected by the

closure were offered transfers to one of the group’s hotels in Matane, Carleton-sur-Mer or Percé for the 2026 season, with housing provided during the summer months.

Bon Cop, Bad Cop series: Patrick Huard wanted to understand the Mi’gmaq reality before writing

GILLES GAGNÉ

GESGAPEGIAG – Actor and screenwriter Patrick Huard considered adding an Indigenous component to a potential Bon Cop, Bad Cop 2 film as early as the beginning of the 2010s. However, he found himself caught between two waves: the success generated by the first film in 2006 and the anticipation surrounding the sequel.

About fifteen years ago, during his spare time, Patrick Huard had already developed strong ties to the Gaspé Peninsula, a paradise for salmon fishing enthusiasts and the birthplace of his father, who was originally from Paspébiac. It was while salmon fishing that he met guide and rapper Quentin Condo from Gesgapegiag.

“At one point, I realized that people in the community really loved Bon Cop Bad Cop. They saw it and they loved it, like many others. And then I thought, ‘Wow, after the first film, everyone around here recognized me because of that’. They loved it, and I completely forgot about them in the story. I had made a Canadian film. I had included Francophones and Anglophones. And I thought, ‘Wait! I didn’t include them,’” he recounts.

The actor discussed the matter with Quentin Condo during a fishing trip.

“I said to him, ‘What do you think if, in Bon Cop, I bring in a third police officer, who is Indigenous? Do you



Photo: Gilles Gagné

Christine Beaulieu, Patrick Huard and Anik Jean were eager to present the first two episodes in Gesgapegiag on April 17.

think that could work?’ He was happy and said, ‘That would be awesome!’ And then we started brainstorming together. And then it came time to make the second film, and I didn’t feel ready to write about that again. So, I created my other story within the film,” explains Patrick Huard.

Bon Cop, Bad Cop 2 was released in 2017 and proved just as successful as the original film. Both productions are now considered among the most successful films in Canadian cinema history.

The series takes shape

After completing the second film, Patrick Huard returned to the idea while writing the six-episode Bon Cop, Bad Cop series, which began airing on Crave on May 7.

Patrick Huard seasoned it with several elements, such as the disappearance of the Gesgapegiag chief, the emergence of a young Indigenous police officer, and various clashes, like the one between David Bouchard, the character played by Patrick Huard, and his daughter, who has become a police officer; the clash of cultures; and the clash between Bouchard and his now female boss, in a previously male-dominated world. Not to mention the alleged construction of a pipeline across the territory bordering Gesgapegiag.

The actor was still plagued by doubts. “I told myself: I’m not good enough yet to write about Indigenous issues. I’m not an expert. When you write about things you know, it’s easier. I knew a little about the community, I know the places, I know the people. So, I drew

inspiration from everyone I know to create the characters,” he says.

His partner in life and professionally, Anik Jean, a producer, director, and composer originally from Bonaventure, where she still has deep roots, has been part of the creative process from the beginning.

“Quentin was with us from day one, when we started writing, right up until today... In the story, he suggested all sorts of things. He wrote with us... There were things I wrote, and he would tweak them a bit, both in terms of language and intentions. ‘We [the Mi’gmaq] would have done it this way.’ And he also had ideas that became entire episodes. Episode 3 is based on a story Quentin told us. He allowed us to go and observe, to meet with the 41 First Nations chiefs in Quebec City during an assembly, and we included that assembly in the film,” explains Patrick Huard.

Although he was happy about the result of the series before being put on the air, he will be really satisfied a few weeks down the road. “The real verdict comes from the public”, he concludes.

Anik Jean and Christine Beaulieu

Anik Jean wore three hats in the series Bon Cop, Bad Cop. “It was a lot, a lot of work. It’s the project that has demanded the most work and energy of my life,” she says with conviction.

Four directors contributed to the six episodes of the series. Patrick Huard wanted Anik Jean to direct one. She was keen to do so as well, despite her rather unusual schedule.

“I had just finished *Les hommes de ma mère*. We co-produced it together. I did the music for Bon Cop 2, but I also did the music for the entire series. It’s so demanding! It’s more than six hours of footage. It took me six months to create the music. I play all the instruments,” she explains.

In the series, actress Christine Beaulieu plays Kim Dupuis, head of the Sûreté du Québec in Montreal. Although she was not in the Gaspé Peninsula during filming in Gesgapegiag in June 2025, she made a point of attending the April 17 launch event where community members were invited to watch the first two episodes.

“It was really important that the launch be here. I never turn down an invitation to a launch in the community. I’m so excited. Also, he (Patrick Huard) wanted to give more screen time to women in Bon Cop, Bad Cop compared to the film. So, the character of Sarah-Jeanne Labrosse (David Bouchard’s daughter in the series) and mine are very prominent. They’re police officers with just as much guts as the guys. He makes me do a lot of things; I have to fight at times” she chuckles.

The first episode aired May 7 on the Crave network.

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